

COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**TUESDAY 2 JUNE 2015
ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr William Irwin MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Joe Byrne MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Sydney Anderson MLA
Mr Tom Elliott MP MLA
Mr Ian Milne MLA
Mr Declan McAleer MLA
Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA
Mr Edwin Poots MLA

In attendance: Ms Stella McArdle, Committee Clerk
Ms Elaine Farrell, Assistant Clerk
Mr Mark O'Hare, Clerical Supervisor
Ms Dagmar Walgraeve, Clerical Officer

1. 32 p.m. The meeting commenced in Open Session.

1. Apologies

There are no apologies.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson advised Members that Further Consideration Stage of the Reservoirs Bill is scheduled for Tuesday 9 June 2015. Members are advised to inform the clerk if they wish to have an informal briefing with Rivers Agency officials prior to this.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 and 28 May 2015

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meetings held on

26 and 28 May 2015.

4. Matters Arising

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence date 27 May 2015 from the Department in respect of issues raised at the Committee meeting on 12 May 2015; and agreed to forward an extract on Environmental NGO's to NI Environment Link for information.

5. Oral Briefing DARD: 2014/15 Performance Targets Outturn Report, provisional Outturn & Savings Delivery Plans Update, June 2015 Monitoring Round Proposals & 2015/16 Main Estimates

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 1.35 p.m.

Graeme Wilkinson, Grade 5
Colette McMaster, Grade 5
Pauline Rooney, Acting Grade 5
Norman Fulton, Grade 5
Rodger Downey, Grade 6

The officials briefed the Committee and this was followed by a question and answer session.

1.35 p.m. Mr McAleer joined the meeting.
1.48 p.m. Mr McCarthy left the meeting.
1.51 p.m. Mr McCarthy rejoined the meeting.
1.55 p.m. Mr McCarthy left the meeting.
2.01 p.m. Mr Milne left the meeting.
2.04 p.m. Mr Anderson joined the meeting.
2.14 p.m. Mr Elliott joined the meeting and Mr Milne rejoined the meeting.
2.20 p.m. Mr Poots joined the meeting.
2.40 p.m. Mr McMullan left the meeting.
2.48 p.m. Mr McCarthy rejoined the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward any unanswered questions to the Department for answer.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request an update on the progress made in respect of contracts and payments to the Rural Community Development Support Service.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content to support the Department's Monitoring Round Proposal for June 2015.

6. Oral Briefing DARD: Rural Development Programme Regulations (NI) 2015

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.51 p.m.

Colette McMaster, Grade 5
Pauline Keegan, Grade 5
Paddy Savage, Staff Officer

The officials briefed the Committee and this was followed by a question and answer session.

3.08 p.m. Mr Anderson left the meeting.

3.11 p.m. Mr McAleer left the meeting.

3.11 p.m. Mr Anderson left the meeting.

3.18 p.m. Mr McAleer and Mr McMullan rejoined the meeting.

3.31 p.m. Mr Poots left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department for clarification on the standard operating procedure for Power of Entry for a Monitoring Officer.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request that it forwards the definition of agricultural land for the agri-environment climate scheme prior to the publication of the same.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the regulations should move to the next legislative stage.

7. Written Briefing DARD: Consultation Outcome Simplification of Fishing Vessel Licensing

Noted: The Committee noted the written briefing from the Department on the outcome of the Consultation on the Simplification of Fishing Vessel Licensing.

8. Written Briefing DARD: SR 2015/248: the Less Favoured Area Compensatory Allowance (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015

Question put and agreed:

That the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development has considered SR 2015/248: The Less Favoured Area Compensation (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015, and has no objections to the rule.

9. EU Commission Report: Mandatory Food Labelling

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence from the NI Assembly EU Affairs Manager on reports on Mandatory Food Labelling; and agreed to request the Assembly Research Officer to track the progress of both reports.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request the views of the Department on the reports on Mandatory Food Labelling.

10. Committee Review: DARD Response to TRPSI Position Paper

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft letter to the Minister expressing concern over the lack of progress to date on the implementation of the recommendations within the TRPSI Position Paper.

11. Correspondence

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 22 May 2015 from the UFU in respect of its concerns regarding the impact of Universal Credit on self-employed persons; and agreed to forward it to the Social Development Minister asking to be updated on any developments.

3.45 p.m. Mr Elliott left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence dated 29 May 2015 from Rural Community Development Support Service in respect of the contract/payments from DARD to support their existing contracts. The Committee agreed to write to DARD to urge an early resolution to this issue.

12. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft itinerary for the visit to AFBI Loughgall on 25 June 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider a visit to the National Ploughing Championships in September 2015.

Noted: The Committee noted the date of 9 June 2015 at 12.30 p.m. for the joint meeting with the ETI Committee to discuss the Agri-Food Strategy Board: Going for Growth.

13.AOB

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek an oral briefing from the Department on the increase in the number of cases of Bovine TB and an update on the TVR project.

14.Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development will take place on Tuesday 9 June 2015 at 2.00 p.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

3.52 p.m. The meeting adjourned.

William Irwin, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

Date