

**COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE 2020  
THE SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

Present: Mr Declan McAleer MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Philip McGuigan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Ms Clare Bailey MLA (via teleconferencing)  
Mrs Rosemary Barton MLA  
Mr John Blair MLA  
Mr Harry Harvey MLA  
Mr William Irwin MLA

Apologies: Mr Maurice Bradley MLA  
Mr Patsy McGlone MLA

In attendance: Ms Stella McArdle, Committee Clerk  
Ms Barbara Love, Committee Clerk  
Ms Marion Johnson, Clerical Supervisor

*The meeting commenced at 3.01 p.m. in open session*

**1. Apologies**

As above

**2. Draft Minutes**

*Agreed:* The minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2020 were agreed.

*Agreed:* The note of the informal meeting held on 18 June 2020 was agreed.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to publish the note of the informal meeting on the Committee webpage.

### **3. Matters arising**

*Noted:* The Committee noted the correspondence from the Department on issues raised at the meeting on 4 June and 11 June 2020.

### **4. Oral Briefing from RaISe**

Suzie Cave and Mark Allen, Assembly Research Officers joined the meeting at 3.03 p.m. The Research Officers briefed the Committee on their research paper entitled, “The Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol – An overview and potential issues”.

This was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the Research Officers for their presentation.

### **5. Oral departmental briefing: Draft DAERA Business Plan 2020-21**

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 4.00 p.m.:

Dr Denis McMahon, Permanent Secretary  
Norman Fulton, Deputy Secretary, Food and Farming Group  
David Small, Deputy Secretary, Environment, Marine & Fisheries Group  
Roger Downey, Grade 5, Finance Director

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

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request further detail on targets identified within the Business Plan.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request written briefings on Green Growth and the potential in local tourism in light of travel uncertainty due to Covid-19.

**6. SR 2020/95: The Sea Fish Industry (Coronavirus) (Fixed Costs) (Amendment) Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2020.**

The Committee considered SR 2020/95: The Sea Fish Industry (Coronavirus) (Fixed Costs) (Amendment) Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2020, which makes a minor amendment to SR 2020/76 in order to define the length overall of a fishing vessel.

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs has considered SR 2020/95: The Sea Fish Industry (Coronavirus) (Fixed Costs) (Amendment) Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2020, and recommends that it be confirmed by the Assembly”.

**7. SL1: The Direct Payments to Farmers (Controls and Checks) (Amendment) Scheme (Northern Ireland) 2020.**

The Committee considered the SL1 which proposes a minor amendment to the Commission Implementing Regulations (EU) 809/2014 which lays down the rules for the application of EU Regulations 1306/2013 in respect of the integrated administration and control system, rural development measures and cross compliance for claim year 2020 due to Covid-19.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that the policy should proceed to the next legislative stage.

**8. Departmental Written Briefing: Covid-19 Update**

*Agreed:* The Committee noted the departmental written briefing on Covid-19 and agreed to publish it on the Committee webpage.

**9. Correspondence**

The Committee noted the following:

- I. Correspondence from the Department of Finance which clarifies the source of the additional £25m funding for farmers and the horticultural industry.
- II. Correspondence from the Committee for the Economy on a House of Lords International Agreements Sub-Committee Inquiry into UK-US Trade Negotiations. The Committee will consider the outcome of the Inquiry in due course.

- III. Correspondence from the Department on the closing of the Significant Water Management Issues Consultation.
- IV. Correspondence from the Department providing a summary of stakeholder engagement on the review of HE Tuition Fee Charging Policy at CAFRE.
- V. The Thirteenth Report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules 2019-2020.
- VI. An invitation to the Chairperson from the UFU to speak at the AGM on 25 July 2020.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Communities in respect of social distancing for people with visual impairments.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department asking it to respond to the Committee for Communities directly.

The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Infrastructure on Shared Expert Service Governing Waste and Minerals Planning.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department for a response.

## **10.AOB**

There was no other business.

## **11.Date, time and place of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs will take place on Wednesday 1 July 2020 at 3.00 p.m. in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

*The meeting moved into Closed Session at 4.54 p.m.*

## **12.Departmental Briefing: The Climate Change Agreements, CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme and Energy Savings Opportunity Scheme (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020**

The Committee considered the written briefing from the Department alongside a letter from the Minister regarding the future legislative programme.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department regarding a number of issues pertaining to the written briefing which are unclear and to seek clarity.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Minister, copied to the Permanent Secretary, requesting that he addresses issues of concern around engagement with the Committee on the potential number of Statutory Instruments to be extended to the Department at the meeting on 1 July 2020. The Committee further agreed to request the numbers of Statutory Rules that are anticipated in order to implement the Protocol by 31 December 2020 and to indicate the level of complexity, procedure to be used and any planned consultation with stakeholders.

### **13. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee discussed the arrangements for the informal meeting with the House of Lords EU Sub Committee which will take place on Thursday 25 June 2020 at 10.00 a.m.

The Committee discussed correspondence from the Chairpersons' Liaison Group regarding a proposal by the Speaker to change plenary sitting days.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed a response to the Chairpersons' Liaison group to reflect the views of Members to the proposal.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

*The meeting adjourned at 5.26 p.m.*

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Declan McAleer, Chairperson, Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development

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Date

