



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of Proceedings

7 March 2024

Meeting Location: Room 30

Present:

Philip McGuigan MLA (Chairperson)

David Brooks MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Steve Aiken MLA

Joanne Bunting MLA

Sorcha Eastwood MLA

Declan Kearney MLA

Emma Sheerin MLA

Present by Video:

Patrick Brown MLA

Apologies:

Jonathan Buckley MLA

In Attendance: Ms Marie Austin (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Sinead Kelly (Senior Assistant Clerk)
Ms Leigh Gibson (Senior Assistant Clerk)
Mr Oliver Bellew (Assistant Clerk)
Ms Marion Johnson (Assistant Clerk)
Ms Suzanne Patton (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 10:01 a.m. in public session.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 29 February 2024.

4. Matters Arising

The Chairperson informed Members that a meeting with Members of the European Scrutiny Committee, House of Commons, had been arranged for 21 March 2024, and that further details would issue in due course.

Declan Kearney joined the meeting at 10.03am

5. Current proposed EU legislation relevant to Northern Ireland

The following officials joined the meeting at 10.04am:

Tom Reid	Deputy Secretary, Inter-governmental and Internal Relations, Executive Office
Stephen Hamilton-Shields	Assistant Director, Post EU Exit Coordination Group, Executive Office
Kerry Curran	Director, GB and EU Trade Division, Department for the Economy.

The officials briefed the Committee on current proposed EU legislation relevant to Northern Ireland.

The briefing was followed by a question and answer session.

The Chairperson thanked the officials for their attendance.

The officials left the meeting at 11.06am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a revised table of proposed EU legislation providing fuller and more consistent information, and to consider further briefing when the table is complete.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request information on capability and capacity issues within departments, in terms of supporting the work of the Committee, and how any gaps are to be addressed.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a copy of the EU consultation process map setting out how the Northern Ireland Civil Service will be involved in EU consultation processes on post- election new legislative proposals.

The Committee considered correspondence from the British Dental Association, Northern Ireland, in relation to a proposal to amend Regulation (EU) 2017/852 on mercury.

Agreed: Given that the Committee anticipates it will be notified when the replacement act is published by the European Union, it agreed to commence an evidence gathering exercise and invite the British Dental Association, Northern

Ireland, to give evidence on the proposal to amend Regulation (EU) 2017/852 on mercury at its meeting on 14 March 2024.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Health and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs requesting views on the proposal to amend Regulation (EU) 2017/852 on mercury.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the UK Government to ask for its views on the proposal to amend Regulation (EU) 2017/852 on mercury, including the position in the other jurisdictions and associated timelines for phasing out mercury/dental amalgam.

6. Committee Procedures: Meeting Schedule

The Committee considered its meeting schedule for the Easter recess period.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Secretary of State to request that the weekly notification due on Thursday 28 March is paused, with weekly notifications commencing again on Thursday 4 April 2024.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to provisionally schedule a meeting for 28 March 2024, to deal with any urgent business should it arise.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to not schedule a meeting for 4 April 2024.

7. Correspondence

7.1. The Committee considered correspondence from the House of Lords European Affairs Sub-Committee on the Windsor Framework to the Minister for Biosecurity, Animal Health and Welfare regarding Regulation (EU) 2016/2031 on plant health. Members noted that they would be copied into any response.

7.2 The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee on Procedures seeking views on potential priority areas of work for its strategic planning.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask that the Committee on Procedures considers taking forward work to provide for the Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee in Standing Orders.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask that the Committee on Procedures considers undertaking exploratory work to identify options that would provide in Standing Orders for: substitute Members for the Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee; rules on substitution; and, proxy voting.

8. Chairperson's Business

No business was raised.

9. Any Other Business

A Member sought clarification on the approach the Committee would take in considering the revised table of proposed EU legislation referred to in agenda item 5.

A Member asked that consideration be given to whether European Parliament recess periods would have an impact on the work of the Committee.

10. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 14 March 2024 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 11.29 am.

Philip McGuigan, MLA

Chairperson, Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee