



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee

## Minutes of Proceedings

**3 October 2024**

**Meeting Location:** Room 30

**Present:**

David Brooks MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Steve Aiken MLA

Jonathan Buckley MLA

Joanne Bunting MLA

Declan Kearney MLA

Kate Nicholl MLA

Emma Sheerin MLA

Eóin Tennyson MLA

**Apologies:**

Philip McGuigan MLA (Chairperson)

**In Attendance:**

Marie Austin (Assembly Clerk)

Christopher Dickison (Senior Assistant Clerk)

Jessica Jacques (Senior Assistant Clerk)

Sinead Kelly (Senior Assistant Clerk)

Oliver Bellew (Clerical Supervisor)

Damien Brown (Clerical Officer)

Shelley Garner (Clerical Officer)

**In Attendance by Video:**

Leigh Gibson (Senior Assistant Clerk)

Victoria Bourquin (Assistant Clerk)

The meeting commenced at 10.01am in public session.

The Deputy Chairperson welcomed Jonathan Buckley MLA back to the Committee and thanked Stephen Dunne MLA for his past contributions.

**1. Apologies**

As above.

**2. Declaration of Members' Interests**

No interests were declared.

**3. Committee Procedures**

Members considered proposed changes to the questions asked as part of the Committee's Citizen Space surveys on EU legislation.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the proposed changes to the Citizen Space questions to ensure that all respondents understand that for an act to have a significant impact specific to everyday life of communities in Northern Ireland in a way that is liable to persist, that significant impact must be negative.

**Agreed:** Members agreed to move to public session at 10.06 am.

The meeting commenced at 10.06 am in public session.

#### **4. Draft Minutes**

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2024.

#### **5. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

#### **6. COM (2023) 769 Proposal for Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the welfare of dogs and cats and their traceability – Departmental Oral Evidence**

The Deputy Chairperson reminded Members that, in May 2024, the Cabinet Office informed the Committee of a proposed new EU act on the welfare of dogs and cats and their traceability, which the EU considers to be within the scope of the Windsor Framework, and therefore may seek to add it to the Framework via Article 13(4). Subsequently, the Committee agreed to request an assessment of impact from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, and to hear oral evidence.

The following officials joined the meeting at 10.07am:

Neal Gartland                      Director, of Animal Health and Welfare Policy Division,  
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Christopher Andrews Acting Director, Animal Health and Welfare Policy  
Division, Department of Agriculture, Environment and  
Rural Affairs.

The officials gave oral evidence on the proposed new EU act.

Jonathan Buckley joined the meeting at 10.25am.

A question and answer session followed.

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The officials left the meeting at 10.35am.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to monitor the progress of the proposed new EU act as it progresses through the EU legislative system.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request that the Department provides a revised assessment of impact if any changes to the act are proposed by the Council of the EU or the European Parliament, which would have a significant impact specific to everyday life of communities in Northern Ireland in a way that is liable to persist.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request that the UK Government provides an update on its engagement with the European Commission.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request that RaISe monitors the progress of the proposed new EU act, including negotiations in the Parliament and Council, and submits quarterly updates, or more often as appropriate, to the Committee.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to seek the views of stakeholders on the proposed new EU act and on the Council of the EU's negotiating mandate, via Citizen Space. The Committee also agreed to add Causeway Coast Dog Shelter and local councils to the list of stakeholders identified by RaISe.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to inform the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs that the evidence session was held and that the Committee agreed to monitor the proposed new EU act.

## **7. Committee Travel – Proposed Committee Visit to Westminster**

The Senior Assistant Clerk updated Members on the proposed visit to Westminster.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that Members should indicate their availability to take part in the visit which is provisionally scheduled for 3 - 4 December 2024.

## **8. Correspondence**

**8.1** The Committee noted a response from the Chair of the Committee on Procedures to its request that provision be made in Standing Orders for substitute members and proxy voting for the Committee during periods of recess.

Members noted that the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson intend to meet with the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Procedures Committee to discuss the matter.

**8.2** The Committee noted a response from the UK Government providing an update on the transition to the UK Internal Market Scheme and the establishment of Intertrade UK.

## **9. Chairperson's Business**

No business was raised.

## **10. Any Other Business**

Steve Aiken raised the issue of the UK Government's recent decision on 'not for EU' labelling.

A discussion on the remit and functions of the Committee followed.

Dr Aiken proposed that the Committee commissions research from RaiSe on the implications of the UK Government's recent decision on 'not for EU' labelling, and to inform the relevant statutory committees (Economy, Agriculture, Environment

and Rural Affairs, and The Executive Office) that the research was being commissioned.

The Committee divided: Ayes 4; Noes 4; Abstain 0.

**Ayes**

Mr David Brooks

Mr Steve Aiken

Mr Jonathan Buckley

Ms Joanne Bunting

**Noes**

Mr Declan Kearney

Ms Kate Nicholl

Ms Emma Sheerin

Mr Eóin Tennyson

The votes in the division were equal. Therefore, the proposal was not carried.

**11. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10.55am.

**Philip McGuigan, MLA**

**Chairperson, Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee**