



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of Proceedings

20 February 2025

Meeting Location: Room 30

Present:

Ciara Ferguson MLA (Chairperson)

David Brooks MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Steve Aiken MLA

Declan Kearney MLA

Peter Martin MLA

Emma Sheerin MLA

Present by Video:

Jonathan Buckley MLA

Kate Nicholl MLA

Eóin Tennyson MLA

Apologies: None

In Attendance: Marie Austin (Clerk)
Christopher Dickison (Senior Assistant Clerk)
Jessica Jacques (Senior Assistant Clerk)

Sinead Kelly (Assistant Clerk
Suzanne Walsh (Clerical Supervisor)

Shelley Garner (Clerical Officer)

In Attendance by Video:

Leigh Gibson (Senior Assistant Clerk)
Victoria Bourquin (Assistant Clerk)

Damien Brown (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 10.03am in closed session.

The Chairperson acknowledged that this was her first meeting as Chairperson of the Committee and thanked Philip McGuigan MLA for his contributions as the previous Chairperson.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declaration of Members' Interest

None.

3. COM (2024) 577 - Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) 2021/2115 and (EU) 2021/2116 as regards the strengthening of the position of farmers in the food supply chain - Legal Advice

Caroline Byers, Legal Adviser, Assembly Legal Services, joined the meeting at 10.05am.

Eóin Tennyson MLA joined the meeting at 10.05am.

Members considered the following proposed EU act:

COM (2024) 577 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) 2021/2115 and (EU) 2021/2116 as regards the strengthening of the position of farmers in the food supply chain.

The Legal Adviser provided advice on whether it appears likely that the proposed EU act differs significantly (in whole or in part) from the content or scope of the EU act it is amending/replacing.

A question and answer session followed.

Emma Sheerin MLA joined the meeting at 10.08am.

David Brooks MLA joined the meeting at 10.09am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to continue its consideration of the proposed replacement EU act in public session.

The Legal Adviser left the meeting at 10.16am.

Agreed: Members agreed to move to public session at 10.17am.

The meeting commenced at 10.17am in public session.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2025.

5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

6. **COM (2024) 577 - Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) 2021/2115 and (EU) 2021/2116 as regards the strengthening of the position of farmers in the food supply chain - Departmental Oral Evidence.**

The Committee considered the following proposed EU act:

COM (2024) 577 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) 2021/2115 and (EU) 2021/2116 as regards the strengthening of the position of farmers in the food supply chain.

The following officials joined the meeting at 10.17am:

Elaine McCrory	Head of Supply Chain Transition Branch, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
Samantha Swann	Head of Poultrymeat, Eggs, Dairy, Hops, Hemp, Wines & Spirits Policy Branch, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

The officials gave oral evidence on the proposed EU act.

A question and answer session followed.

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The officials left the meeting at 10.33am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to monitor the progress of the proposed replacement act, pursuant to paragraph 7(1) of Schedule 6B to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a revised departmental assessment of impact if any changes to the act are proposed by the Council of the European Union 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 Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs provides a summary of the responses from relevant stakeholders to the European Commission's consultation on the proposed EU act.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to share a link to the European Commission's consultation on the proposed EU act on the Committee's webpage and on social media.

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

7. Committee Work Planning

The Committee considered the most recent update provided by the Executive Office on proposed new and replacement EU acts which had started their legislative passage before the Committee was established.

Members noted a progress report on the actions agreed by the Committee on 12 September 2024, following a work planning exercise.

The Chairperson informed Members that the Committee Secretariat had conducted an exercise to identify actions that could be taken to start gathering evidence on a number of proposed EU acts that are likely to be notified to the Committee when published.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request departmental assessments of impact on the following proposed EU acts:

- a) COM(2023) 217 - Detergents and surfactants;
- b) COM(2023) 462 - Safety of toys;
- c) COM(2023) 192 - Medicinal products for human use;
- d) COM(2023) 193 - Authorisation and supervision of medicinal products for human use;
- e) COM(2023) 411 - New genomic techniques;
- f) COM(2023) 258 – EU customs code reform;
- g) COM(2023) 451 – End of life vehicles;
- h) COM(2023) 770 – Live transport of animals; and
- i) COM(2024) 561 – Measuring instruments: electric vehicle supply equipment, compressed gas dispensers, and electricity, gas and thermal energy meters.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request updates from the Cabinet Office on the following EU acts:

- a) Regulation (EU) 2023/956 - Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism;
- b) Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 - Artificial Intelligence Act; and
- c) Regulation (EU) 2023/1115 - Deforestation Regulation.

Members noted that the 2025 European Commission Work Programme has been published and that RaISe has been asked to identify anything in the Work Programme that could potentially be a new or replacement act.

8. Correspondence

8.1 The Committee noted a response from the Secretary of State regarding the Independent Review of the Windsor Framework.

Steve Aiken declared an interest that he will meet with the Reviewer in March 2025.

8.2 The Committee considered a response from the Paymaster General and Minister for the Cabinet Office regarding the operation of the Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee, engagement on reserved matters and provision of Explanatory Memoranda to the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response. Some Members indicated that they would raise issues separately as part of the Independent Review of the Windsor Framework.

8.3 The Committee considered an updated UK Government Explanatory Memorandum on Regulation (EU) 2025/41 on the import, export and transit measures for firearms, essential components and ammunition.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to publish the Explanatory Memorandum on its webpage.

8.4 The Committee noted correspondence regarding the Women's Parliament and an invitation to attend a roundtable discussion event with participants.

9. Chairperson's Business

9.1 The Chairperson informed Members that both she and the Deputy Chairperson met with the Chairperson of the House of Lords Northern Ireland Scrutiny Committee, Lord Carlile of Berriew, on Thursday 6 February 2025. The Committee noted a written summary of the meeting and subsequent correspondence from Lord Carlile of Berriew.

Steve Aiken declared an interest that he also met with Lord Carlile during the same visit.

9.2 The Chairperson informed Members that both she and the Deputy Chairperson met with the Federation of Small Businesses on Tuesday 18 February 2025, and outlined the issues discussed. The Committee noted that a written summary of the meeting would be provided in the next meeting pack.

10. Any other business

None.

11. Date, time, and place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 6 March 2025 at 10:00am in Room 30.

The meeting was adjourned at 10.51am.

Ciara Ferguson, MLA, Chairperson, Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee