



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of Proceedings

5 March 2026

Meeting Location: Room 30

Present:

Ciara Ferguson MLA (Chairperson)

David Brooks MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Steve Aiken MLA

Cathal Boylan MLA

Peter Martin MLA

Eóin Tennyson MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Jonathan Buckley MLA

Apologies:

Pádraig Delargy MLA

In Attendance:

Marie Austin, Clerk

Chris Dickison, Senior Assistant Clerk

Jessica Jacques, Senior Assistant Clerk

Oliver Bellew, Assistant Clerk

Carla Campbell, Clerical Supervisor

Damien Brown, Clerical Officer

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Sean McCann, Assistant Clerk

Lisa Chestnutt, Clerical Supervisor

Shelley Garner, Clerical Officer

The meeting commenced at 10.04am in closed session.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declaration of Interests

Cathal Boylan MLA declared an interest under Agenda item 8.

Steve Aiken MLA declared an interest under Agenda item 15.

Eóin Tennyson joined the meeting at 10.04am.

3. Regulation (EU) 2026/471 amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) No 251/2014 and (EU) 2021/2115 as regards certain market rules and sectoral support measures in the wine sector and for aromatised wine products and Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 as regards certain labelling rules for spirit drinks – Legal Advice

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

The Committee considered a notification from the Cabinet Office in relation to the following published replacement EU act:

Regulation (EU) 2026/471 amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) No 251/2014 and (EU) 2021/2115 as regards certain market rules and sectoral support measures in the wine sector and for aromatised wine products and Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 as regards certain labelling rules for spirit drinks.

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

Peter Martin MLA joined the meeting at 10.08am.

The Committee noted that further consideration of the published replacement EU act would take place in public session.

The Legal Adviser left the meeting at 10.12am.

4. COM/2025/993 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulations (EC) No 561/2006, (EU) 2018/858, (EU) 2019/2144 and (EU) 2024/1257 as regards the simplification of technical requirements and testing procedures for motor vehicles and repealing Council Directive 70/157/EEC and Regulation No 540/2014 – Legal Advice

Simon Kelly, Legal Adviser, Assembly Legal Services, joined the meeting at 10.13am.

The Committee considered a notification from the Cabinet Office in relation to the following proposed replacement EU act:

COM/2025/993 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulations (EC) No 561/2006, (EU) 2018/858, (EU) 2019/2144 and (EU) 2024/1257 as regards the simplification of technical requirements and testing procedures for motor vehicles and repealing Council Directive 70/157/EEC and Regulation No 540/2014.

The Legal Adviser provided advice on whether it appears likely that the proposed replacement 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.

The Committee noted that further consideration of the proposed replacement EU act would take place in public session.

The Legal Adviser left the meeting at 10.22am.

The Committee moved into public session at 10.23am.

5. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2026.

6. Matters Arising

None.

7. Regulation (EU) 2026/471 amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) No 251/2014 and (EU) 2021/2115 as regards certain market rules and sectoral support measures in the wine sector and for aromatised wine products and Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 as regards certain labelling rules for spirit drinks - Departmental Oral Evidence

The Committee continued its consideration of Regulation (EU) 2026/471 amending Regulations (EU) No 1308/2013, (EU) No 251/2014 and (EU) 2021/2115 as regards certain market rules and sectoral support measures in the wine sector and for aromatised wine products and Regulation (EU) 2024/1143 as regards certain labelling rules for spirit drinks.

The Committee considered an assessment of impact from the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs on the published replacement EU act.

The following officials joined the meeting at 10.25am:

Samantha Swann	Head of Poultrymeat, Eggs, Dairy, Hops, Hemp, Wines & Spirits Policy Branch, Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs
----------------	---

Dr Samantha Stewart	Head of Food Security, Beef, Sheep and Pig Policy, Department of Environment and Rural Affairs
---------------------	--

The officials gave oral evidence on the published replacement EU act.

A question and answer session followed.

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The officials left the meeting at 10.40am.

The Committee noted that, in order to meet its statutory requirements, it must decide whether or not to hold an inquiry into the published replacement EU act.

The Committee had regard to:

- (i) the legal advice on whether it appears likely that the replacement act significantly differs (in whole or in part) from the content or scope of the EU instrument which it amends or replaces, and
- (ii) the departmental assessment on whether it appears likely that the replacement act 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 not to hold an inquiry into the published replacement EU act, pursuant to paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 6B to the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The Committee noted that its decision will be published on the Committee webpage.

8. COM/2025/993 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulations (EC) No 561/2006, (EU) 2018/858, (EU) 2019/2144 and (EU) 2024/1257 as regards the simplification of technical requirements and testing procedures for motor vehicles and repealing Council Directive 70/157/EEC and Regulation No 540/2014 - Departmental Oral Evidence

The Committee continued its consideration of COM/2025/993 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulations (EC) No 561/2006, (EU) 2018/858, (EU) 2019/2144 and (EU) 2024/1257 as regards the simplification of technical requirements and testing procedures for motor vehicles and repealing Council Directive 70/157/EEC and Regulation No 540/2014.

The Committee considered an assessment of impact and written answers from the Department for Infrastructure on the proposed replacement EU act.

The following officials joined the meeting at 10.43am:

Caroline Hobson	Director of Driving and Vehicle Policy and Legislation, Department for Infrastructure
Roy Kennedy	Head of Vehicle Policy Branch, Department for Infrastructure
Connor Murray	Deputy Principal, Vehicle Policy Branch, Department for Infrastructure

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

A question and answer session followed.

Cathal Boylan MLA declared an interest as a member of the Committee for Infrastructure.

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The officials left the meeting at 11.15am.

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request that the Department(s) provide revised assessments of impact if any changes 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 RaISe monitors the progress of the proposed replacement EU act, including negotiations in the European Parliament and Council of the European Union, and submits quarterly updates, or more often as appropriate, to the Committee.

9. COM/2023/411 Proposal for a Regulation on plants obtained by certain new genomic techniques and their food and feed, and amending Regulation (EU) 2017/625

The Committee noted updated assessments of impact from the Department of Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Affairs and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland on the provisionally agreed text of COM/2023/411 Proposal for a Regulation on plants obtained by certain new genomic techniques and their food and feed, and amending Regulation (EU) 2017/625.

10. COM/2025/1020 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulation (EU) No 528/2012 as regards the extension of certain data protection periods

The Committee noted a UK Government Explanatory Memorandum and an updated assessment of impact from the Department for the Economy on COM/2025/1020 Proposal for a Regulation amending Regulation (EU) No 528/2012 as regards the extension of certain data protection periods.

11. Committee Notifications – April 2026

The Chairperson proposed that notifications from Cabinet Office of any relevant replacement EU acts that have been proposed by the European Commission, and any relevant replacement EU acts that have been published by the European Union, be paused on 2 April 2026.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that notifications be paused on 2 April 2026.

Members noted that Cabinet Office and the relevant people would be advised accordingly.

12. Committee Travel

The Committee considered proposed travel arrangements for a visit to Brussels in April 2026.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the travel arrangements.

13. Committee Work Planning

The Committee noted an update on all the proposed EU acts which it is monitoring and gathering evidence on, and on others which had been notified.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to advise the Executive Office that the volume of requests for information from departments is likely to increase in the near future as a result of the rise in the number of proposed and published EU acts notified, or due to be notified, to the Committee.

14. Correspondence

- 14.1 The Committee noted a UK Government Explanatory Memorandum on Regulation (EU) 2026/405 on detergents and surfactants, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 648/2004.
- 14.2 The Committee noted an update from RaISe on COM/2023/258 Proposal for a Regulation establishing the Union Customs Code and the European Union Customs Authority, and repealing Regulation (EU) No 952/2013.
- 14.3 The Committee noted an update from RaISe on COM/2023/451 Proposal for a Regulation on circularity requirements for vehicle design and on management of end-of-life vehicles, amending Regulations (EU) 2018/858 and 2019/1020 and repealing Directives 2000/53/EC and 2005/64/EC.
- 14.4 The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the UK Government to the House of Lords Northern Ireland Scrutiny Committee regarding a Commission Delegated Regulation as regards the persistent organic pollutants tetrabromodiphenyl ether, pentabromodiphenyl ether, hexabromodiphenyl ether, heptabromodiphenyl ether and decabromodiphenyl ether.

- 14.5 The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the UK Government to the House of Lords Northern Ireland Scrutiny Committee regarding the addition to the Windsor Framework of Regulation (EU) 2025/14 on the approval and market surveillance of non-road mobile machinery circulating on public roads and amending Regulation (EU) 2019/1020.
- 14.6 The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the UK Government to the House of Lords Northern Ireland Scrutiny Committee regarding Regulation (EU) 2025/2650 amending Regulation (EU) 2023/1115 as regards certain obligations of operators and traders.
- 14.7 The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the UK Government to the House of Lords Northern Ireland Scrutiny Committee regarding Commission Regulation (EU) 2025/2052 laying down ecodesign requirements for external power supplies, wireless chargers, wireless charging pads, battery chargers for portable batteries of general use and USB Type-C cables, pursuant to Directive 2009/125/EC and repealing Commission Regulation (EU) 2019/1782.

15. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson informed Members that she and the Deputy Chairperson would meet with Senator Mark Daly, Cathaoirleach of the Seanad and Chair of the Seanad Select Committee on EU Scrutiny and Transparency, to discuss the work of the Democratic Scrutiny Committee, and that a note of the meeting would be provided to Members.

Steve Aiken MLA declared an interest in that he advised Senator Daly to request a meeting with the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson.

16. Any Other Business

None.

17. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 12 March 2026 at 10am in Room 30.

The meeting was adjourned at 11.27am.

Ciara Ferguson MLA

Chairperson, Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee

12 March 2026