



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**THURSDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2014**

**SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

- Present:** Ms Anna Lo MLA (Chairperson)  
Mrs Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Cathal Boylan MLA  
Mr Tom Elliott MLA  
Mr Alban Maginness MLA  
Mr Ian McCrea MLA  
Mr Barry McElduff MLA  
Mr Ian Milne MLA  
Lord Morrow MLA  
Mr Peter Weir MLA
- In Attendance:** Mrs Sheila Mawhinney (Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Sean McCann (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Neil Sedgewick (Clerical Supervisor)  
Ms Antoinette Bowen (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies:** No apologies were received

*The meeting began in public session at 10:07.*

Before the start of the formal proceedings, Committee members expressed their support for the Chairperson and condemned the recent racial abuse directed towards her.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were indicated as above.

## **2. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson advised members that she had received a request to meet with NIRIG in relation to the wind energy inquiry.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to decline this request, but to advise NIRIG that members may schedule an oral briefing as part of its inquiry.*

The Chairperson advised members of an invitation from the Rural Community Transport Partnership to attend a briefing on current proposals for bus operator licensing.

*Agreed: The Committee was content for the Chairperson agreed to attend the briefing.*

The Chairperson advised members that training in the use of Microsoft OneNote is to be provided to Members, Secretariat and party staff on 26 February and 13 March.

The Chairperson advised members that the Assembly IS Office has requested permission to forward a copy of an electronic meeting pack to a software developer for possible formatting improvements.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content for the pack to be made available to the developer.*

## **3. Draft minutes**

The minutes from meetings held on 11<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> February 2014 were agreed.

## **4. Matters arising**

4.1 The Committee noted a Departmental reply regarding taxi enforcement.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting a geographical breakdown of enforcement actions and fixed penalty notices issued. Members also asked the Department to clarify the level of its co-ordination with the PSNI to address possible illegal activities occurring in taxi depots.*

*The Committee commented on the high number of cases of vehicles with no PSV licence and requested information on the sanction applied for such an offence.*

*The Committee also sought further clarification on the comparatively low number of withdrawal of taxi operator licences and prosecutions.*

4.2 The Committee noted the content of a Freedom of Information response.

## **5. Consultation on Amending the Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013**

The Committee considered a consultation on Amending the Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to request a copy of the synopsis of responses.*

**6. Consultation on draft Planning (Hazardous Substances) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 – synopsis of responses**

The Committee considered the synopsis of responses relating to the Consultation on draft Planning (Hazardous Substances) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014

*Agreed: The Committee was content for the Department to proceed with making the policy.*

*Mr Elliott joined the meeting at 10:26*

**7. SL1 – The Planning (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014**

The Committee considered an SL1 proposal for The Planning (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014.

*Agreed: The Committee was content for the Department to proceed with making the Rule.*

**8. SL1 – The Motor Vehicles (Taxi Drivers' Licences) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) Driving Licence Standards – Vision and Epilepsy**

The Committee considered an SL1 proposal for The Motor Vehicles (Taxi Drivers' Licences) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) Driving Licence Standards – Vision and Epilepsy.

*Agreed: the Committee was content for the Department to proceed with making the Rule.*

*Members also reiterated their position that they would not be prepared to consider the remainder of the subordinate legislation required to implement the Taxis Act 2008 until the single tier taxi licensing issue is resolved.*

*Mr McElduff left the meeting at 10:30*

**9. Draft Statutory Instrument – the CRC Energy Efficiency (Amendment) Order 2014**

The Committee noted the draft Statutory Instrument the CRC Energy Efficiency (Amendment) Order 2014.

**10. Local Government Bill – Agreement of Committee report**

The Committee considered a draft report on the Local Government Bill

*Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft report and ordered it to be printed.*

*Agreed: The Committee was content to include in its report the relevant extract of minutes of this meeting without further approval.*

*Question put and agreed:*

*'That the Report be the Sixth Report of the Environment Committee to the Assembly.'*

## **11. Departmental briefing on synopsis of responses to Consultation on Secondary Legislation relating to the HGV Road User Levy Act 2013**

*Mr McElduff re-joined the meeting at 10:37*

Alex Boyle and Jeremy Logan briefed the Committee in regard to the consultation responses and the proposed legislation.

The main areas discussed were the exemption for certain roads; the costs associated with applying the levy; and how enforcement of the levy is to be carried out.

The Committee noted a letter from the Secretary of State for Transport on the fairness and economic impact of the Levy, together with the Minister's response..

*Agreed: The Committee noted the synopsis of responses and agreed to consider the SL1 pertaining to the synopsis at its next meeting.*

## **12. Correspondence**

The Committee considered a letter from the Ulster Farmers' Union regarding illegal tyre disposal in rural areas.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the letter to the Department for comment.*

The Committee considered correspondence from the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, enclosing a copy of the London School of Economics Report – 'Gone with the wind: valuing the local impacts of wind turbines through house prices'.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to include the correspondence in its Wind Energy Inquiry report.*

The Committee considered a memo from the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee seeking the Committee's thoughts on policy implications of the Reservoir Bill.

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

The Committee considered correspondence from the Chairman of West Tyrone Against Wind Turbines regarding the recent ruling from the European Court on the breach of the Aarhus Convention.

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

*The Committee also agreed to forward the correspondence to Assembly Legal Services for advice on the implications of the ruling.*

The Committee considered an email from Windwatch regarding the Wind Turbine Good Practice Guide.

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

The Committee noted the following correspondence:

Letter from Hastings Hotels supporting the introduction of the single tier taxi legislation.

Correspondence from the OFMdfM Committee regarding Departmental performance – Competitive European Funding.

Copy of the October 2013 Barroso Task Force Desk Officers' Report.

Copy of letter sent to the Department by the Regional Development Committee seeking a response to its Inquiry into the Benefits of Cycling to the Economy.

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

The Committee noted the forward work programme.

The Chairperson highlighted the upcoming NILGA conference to members, and advised that Committee secretariat would contact them to ascertain if they wished to attend the afternoon session.

### **14. Any Other Business**

Mr Milne highlighted the recent Spotlight programme regarding illegal dumping and requested a Departmental update.

*Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department and request an update on the timeframe for the Departmental response to the Mills Report on illegal waste activities in Northern Ireland.*

### **15. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2014 at 10:00am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11:45.*

**Anna Lo, MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for the Environment**  
**27 February 2014**