



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY, 20 MARCH 2014

SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

- Present: Ms Anna Lo MLA (Chairperson)
Mrs Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Cathal Boylan MLA
Mr Colum Eastwood 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 Jennifer McCullough (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies: Mr Tom Elliott MLA

The meeting began in closed session at 10:13.

1. Briefing by Assembly Legal Services on legal advice on the Committee inquiry into wind energy

The Committee received a briefing from Assembly Legal Service on advice provided in respect of the significance of a recent ruling from the European Court. The Committee also considered a response from the Department regarding similar issues raised by a member of the public.

Mr McCrea joined the meeting at 10.28.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the Departmental response to the original correspondent.

2. Apologies

Apologies were indicated as above.

3. Chairperson's Business

No Chairperson's business was discussed.

Mr Weir left the meeting at 10.37.

Mr Eastwood joined the meeting at 10.40.

4. Draft minutes

The minutes from the meeting held on 13th March 2014 were agreed.

5. Matters arising

5.1 The Committee noted a Departmental reply in relation to the planning agreement with Belfast City Airport.

5.2 The Committee noted a written statement from the Minister on Councillor Remuneration.

Mr Weir re-joined the meeting at 10.48.

6. Statutory Instrument 2014/ 502 – the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme (Amendment) Order 2014

The Committee noted the Statutory Instrument 2014/502 The CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme (Amendment) Order 2014.

7. Departmental briefing on DVA job losses

Paul Duffy (DVA Chief Executive), Trevor Evans (DVA Deputy Chief Executive) and Dennis Walsh (DVA Human Resources) briefed the Committee in relation to the recent announcement of DVA job losses.

The main areas discussed were the impact on staff, the possible redeployment of staff and the profile of staff affected.

The briefing was recorded by Hansard.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask to be kept informed of any developments regarding this issue.

Lord Morrow left the meeting at 11:27.

Mr Milne left the meeting at 11:35.

8. Briefing from DEFRA and Departmental Officials on synopsis of responses to consultation on Selection and Designation of Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs)

Kathleen Cameron (Head of Marine Protected Area, DEFRA) briefed the Committee on proposed MCZs throughout UK waters; Ken Bradley (Environmental Protection Division), Geraldine McEvoy (Environmental Policy Division), Joe Breen (Marine Division) and Colin Armstrong (Marine Division) briefed the Committee on the synopsis of responses to the Departmental consultation on the draft guidance on the Selection and Designation of Marine Conservation Zones in the Northern Ireland inshore region.

Mr McElduff left the meeting at 11:39.

The main areas discussed were the recent stakeholder workshop and its outcomes, the designation of regional MCZs and the principles for identifying future sites.

Mr Maginness left the meeting at 12.07.

Mr Eastwood left the meeting at 12.28.

9. Correspondence

The Committee considered correspondence from Mr J Agnew regarding the High Hedges Act (NI) 2011

Agreed: The Committee agreed to advise Mr Agnew that it does not become involved in individual cases and that he should contact his local council to resolve this matter.

The Committee considered correspondence from Rural Community Transport Partnerships requesting an opportunity to brief the Committee on bus operator licensing.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to receive a briefing from Fermanagh Community Transport at its meeting on 3rd April.

The Committee considered an invitation to meet with Dr Hugh Ellis, Head of Policy at the Town and Country Planning Association.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that Committee staff should make arrangements for an informal meeting.

The Committee noted the following correspondence:

An AQW response from the Minister relating to taxi provision at Ravenhill rugby ground

Correspondence from the Regional Development Committee with regards to its inquiry into the benefits of cycling

Copy of a response from the Department to the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development in relation to the Reservoirs Bill

Correspondence from the Department in response to the Finance and Personnel Committee inquiry into flexible working in the NI public sector

Correspondence from the Finance and Personnel Committee regarding the Investment Strategy (ISNI) Project Delivery Portal

10. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the forward work programme.

11. Any Other Business

There was no other business discussed.

12. Date, time and place of next meeting

The Committee was advised that, due to the Committee visit to Scotland, there will be no meeting on Thursday 27th March 2014.

The next meeting will be held on 3rd April 2014 at 10:00am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.39.

Anna Lo, MLA
Chairperson, Committee for the Environment
3 April 2014