



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

DRAFT MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

TUESDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2013

SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

- Present: Ms Anna Lo MLA (Chairperson)
Ms Pam Brown MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Cathal Boylan MLA
Mr Colum Eastwood MLA
Mr Tom Elliott MLA
Mr Alban Maginness MLA
Mr Ian McCrea MLA
Mr Barry McElduff MLA
Mr Ian Milne 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)
Ms Roisin Kelly (Assembly Bill Clerk – item 5)
- Apologies: Lord Morrow MLA

The meeting commenced in public session at 1:14pm.

1. Apologies

Apologies were indicated as above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson advised members of an invitation she had received from NIEA to attend a dinner with Lord Deben ahead of his briefing to the Committee at the meeting on 5 December.

Agreed: the Committee was content for the Chairperson to attend this dinner.

3. Draft Minutes

The minutes from the meeting of 21st November 2013 were agreed subject to minor amendments.

4. Matters Arising

4.1 The Committee considered a Departmental letter regarding the salary determination for new Council Chief Executive posts.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ask for further information as to how the Council interviews are to be scheduled for candidates

The Committee went into closed session at 1:19pm to consider the draft Committee report on the Carrier Bags Bill.

5. Consideration of the draft Committee report on the Carrier Bags Bill

The Committee considered the wording of a Departmental amendment to be brought forward at Consideration stage to specify that Phase 2 charging will not come into operation before 5 January 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to defer further consideration of the draft amendment until its meeting on 12 December 2013.

The Committee considered a draft report on the Carrier Bags Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft report, subject to minor amendments, and ordered it to be printed.

Question put and agreed:

‘That the Report be the Fifth Report of the Environment Committee to the Assembly.’

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

The meeting moved back into public session at 1:22pm

6. Departmental briefing on the taxis reform programme and synopsis of responses to the consultation on taxi driver testing

Ian Greenway (Principal Officer, Road Safety & Vehicle Regulation Division), Alex Boyle (Road Safety & Vehicle Registration Division) and Michael O’Neill (Taxis Act Implementation Team) briefed the Committee on the taxi reform programme and the synopsis of responses to the consultation on taxi driver testing.

Mr Eastwood joined the meeting at 1:32pm

Mr McElduff joined the meeting at 1:35pm

The main areas discussed were the cost implications of testing for taxi drivers, the time required to carry out testing and the rationale for the testing of existing drivers.

Mr Maginness joined the meeting at 1:46pm

Mr Eastwood left the meeting at 1:48pm

Mr McElduff left the meeting at 1:54pm

Mr Maginness left the meeting at 1:59pm

Agreed: the Committee agreed to defer consideration of the Department's timetable for taxi legislation until after the briefing with the Enforcement Team at its meeting on 12th December 2013. The Committee also agreed to write to the Department requesting information on the growth of the taxi industry in Northern Ireland over the last 5 years.

7. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the forward work programme.

8. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.

9. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 28th November 2013 at 9:00am in the Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 2:07pm

Anna Lo, MLA
Chairperson, Committee for the Environment
5 December 2013