

COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY, 18 JUNE 2015

RIVERVIEW SUITE, LA MON HOTEL

Present: Ms Anna Lo MLA (Chairperson)

Mrs Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Barry McElduff MLA Mr Alban Maginness MLA Mr Gary Middleton MLA Mrs Sandra Overend MLA

In Attendance: Miss Ciara McKay (Assembly Clerk)

Mr Mark McQuade (Assistant Clerk) Mr Neil Sedgewick (Clerical Supervisor) Miss Allison Ferguson (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Cathal Boylan MLA

Mr Colum Eastwood MLA

Mr Ian Milne MLA Lord Morrow MLA Ian McCrea MLA

The meeting began in public session at 9.52am with the following Members present: Ms Anna Lo (Chairperson); Mrs Pam Cameron; Mr Barry McElduff; and Mr Alban Maginness. In the absence of a decision-making quorum proceedings commenced in line with Standing Order 49(5).

1. Apologies

The apologies are noted above.

2. Chairpersons Business

The Committee noted correspondence from the British Ecological Society regarding its Parliamentary Shadowing Scheme for Environmental Scientists.

3. Departmental Briefing: Guidance on Community planning

The Committee moved to agenda item 9.

The Committee was briefed by:

Ms Liz Loughran Director of Local Government Division, Department of

the Environment

Ms Nicola Creagh Local Government Planning Division, Department of

the Environment

Mrs Overend joined the meeting at 9.57am.

4. Minutes

The Committee moved to agenda item 3.

The minutes from the meeting held on 11th June 2015 were agreed.

5. Matters arising

The Committee moved to agenda item 4.

The Committee noted correspondence from Mr Danny Kennedy MLA and George Gallagher Metals Ltd regarding concerns relating to a Departmental consultation on Financial Provision.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an oral briefing from the Department on the synopsis of responses for this consultation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite waste management licence holders to brief it on concerns about the consultation.

The Committee noted a response from the Department about the REFIT Programme, EU funding and the Biodiversity Strategy.

The Committee noted a response from the Department about a Land Strategy.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite officials to brief it on European issues following summer recess.

The Committee noted a response from the Department about issues raised in news articles regarding sand extraction from Lough Neagh.

Agreed: The Committee noted that it is awaiting a response from the Department on issues raised by sand extraction traders, and agreed to keep a watching brief on this matter.

The Committee noted a response from the Department about the planning application for the North South Interconnector.

The Committee noted a response from the Department about funding arrangements for the Centre for Archaeological Fieldwork and the Natural Heritage Research Partnership.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to Queens University which raised this matter with it.

6. Environmental Better Regulation Bill.

The Committee moved to agenda item 5.

The Committee noted that the Environmental Better Regulation Bill was expected to be introduced on Monday 22^{nd} June, with the second stage debate due on Tuesday 30^{th} June and the Committee stage starting on 1^{st} July.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a draft call for evidence notice for the Environmental Better Regulation Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to issue the call for evidence notice once the Bill had been introduced.

Agreed: The Committee agreed a list of organisations to write to directly, as part of its call for evidence.

7. SL1 - The Draft Local Government (Community Planning Partners) Order (NI) 2015

The Committee moved to agenda item 6.

The Committee considered the Draft Local Government (Community Planning Partners) Order (NI) 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department for further information in relation to a suggested engagement protocol; and to query whether the Regulation could be amended in the absence of defining government bodies as statutory partners within the Order.

8. SL1 - The Hazardous Waste (Amendment No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

The Committee moved to agenda item 7.

The Committee considered the Hazardous Waste (Amendment No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Agreed: The Committee was content for the Department to make the Rule.

9. SR 2015/273 The Planning (Development Management) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015

The Committee moved to agenda item 8.

Question put and agreed:

The Committee for the Environment has considered 2015/273 The Planning (Development Management) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015 and, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objection to the Rule.

10. Committee Inquiry into Wind Energy - Briefing from Windwatch NI

The Committee was briefed by:

Dr Dan Kane Wind Watch
Mr Owen McMullan Wind Watch
Professor Alun Evans Wind Watch
Mr Val Martin Wind Watch

Mr Middleton joined the meeting at 11.00am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to hold the Department's briefing on 25th June on the Minister's response to the Wind Energy inquiry in closed session.

11. Correspondence.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister regarding a planning application for an underground mine in Omagh.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department for information regarding community concerns to the planning application.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the Joint Ministerial Council (Europe) Report.

The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Social Development Committee to the Department on illegal obstruction of pavements.

The Committee noted correspondence from Friends of the Earth about Lough Neagh.

The Committee noted an invitation to a conference on the benefits of Zero Waste.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that a member of staff from the Assembly Research and Information Service would attend the conference on its behalf and prepare a report.

The Committee noted correspondence from the taxi industry regarding concerns about classification of taxis and licensing requirements.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department regarding issues raised in the correspondence.

12. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted its Forward Work Programme.

13. Any Other Business

No other business was discussed.

14. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The Committee agreed that its next meeting will be held at 10.00am on Thursday 25th June 2015 in Room 30, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11.38am.

Anna Lo, MLA Chairperson, Committee for the Environment 25 June 2015