



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY, 25 JUNE 2015

ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Ms Anna Lo MLA (Chairperson)
Mrs Pam Cameron MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Barry McElduff MLA
Ian McCrea MLA
Mr Ian Milne 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 Alban Maginness MLA
Mr Gary Middleton MLA
Lord Morrow MLA

The meeting began in public session at 10.14am with the following Members present: Ms Anna Lo (Chairperson); Mrs Pam Cameron; Mr Barry McElduff; and Mr Ian Milne. In the absence of a decision-making quorum proceedings commenced in line with Standing Order 49(5).

1. Apologies

The apologies are noted above.

Mr McCrea joined the meeting at 10.16am.

2. Chairpersons Business

Agreed: The Committee agreed to delegate authority to the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson during summer recess to submit views on the releasing or withholding of information in any non-routine or contentious Freedom of Information requests received.

The Committee noted that the Chairperson's Liaison Group has agreed that Committee hard copy meeting packs will no longer be provided to Members from September 2015.

The Committee noted the Notice of Amendments for the Consideration Stage of the Road Traffic Amendment Bill.

The Committee noted that an informal meeting with John J Doyle Ltd had been arranged following the Committee meeting on Thursday 2 July 2015.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a session on the scrutiny of legislation on 17th September 2015, subject to the availability of the Daniel Greenberg.

3. Minutes

The minutes from the meeting held on 18th June 2015 were agreed.

Mrs Overend joined the meeting at 10.22am.

4. Update on Programme for Government and Business Plans - Departmental Briefing

The Committee moved to agenda item 9

The Committee was briefed by:

Mr Leo O'Reilly Permanent Secretary, Department of the Environment

Mr Paul Duffy Chief Executive, Driver and Vehicle Agency

Mr Wesley Shannon Acting Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Mr Simon Kirk Planning Manager, Strategic Planning Division, Department of the Environment

Agreed: Officials agreed to provide to the Committee details of the quality of waste that is recycled; and a briefing paper on the DOE functions that will be transferred to other departments including progress in preparing for the transfer.

Mr McCrea left the meeting at 11.15am.

Agreed: Officials agreed to provide the final figures, once available, on the outcome of the voluntary exit scheme.

5. Matters arising

The Committee moved to agenda item 4.

The Committee noted an update from the Department regarding the civil service voluntary exit scheme.

The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding issues raised by Monkstown Community School

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the response to Monkstown Community School.

The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding the European Union Circular Economy Strategy consultation

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department to provide it with a copy of the UK-wide response to the consultation.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department providing the Delegated Powers Memorandum for the Environmental Better Regulation Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the Delegated Powers Memorandum to the Examiner of Statutory Rules for consideration.

The Committee noted a press release regarding the Environmental Better Regulation Bill

The Committee noted a response from the Department regarding Pollution Incidents on Six Mile Water.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Department providing a breakdown of the environment groups that have received funding from the Natural Environment Fund.

6. Consultations

The Committee moved to agenda item 5.

The Committee noted a consultation on the Local Government Reorganisation (Compensation for Diminution of Emoluments) Regulations (NI) 2015.

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

The Committee noted a consultation on mandatory wearing of helmets on motor tricycles.

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

The Committee noted a consultation on the Waste Management Licensing (Amendment No 3) Regulations 2015.

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

7. SL1 - The Nitrates Action Programme (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015.

The Committee moved to agenda item 6.

The Committee considered the Nitrates Action Programme (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015.

Agreed: The Committee was content for the Department to make the Rule; and to advise the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development of the Committee's decision.

8. SL1 - The Waste Management Licensing (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015.

The Committee moved to agenda item 7.

The Committee considered the Waste Management Licensing (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2015.

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

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request an oral briefing on proposed amendments to the Waste Management Licensing Regulations.

9. SR 2015/274 The Smoke Control Areas (Exempted Fireplaces) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

The Committee moved to agenda item 8.

Question put and agreed:

The Committee for the Environment has considered 2015/274 The Smoke Control Areas (Exempted Fireplaces) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objection to the Rule.

10. Update on transfer of functions to local councils – Briefing from NILGA

The Committee was briefed by:

Cllr Sean McPeake Office Bearer/Vice President, NILGA

Ald Arnold Hatch Office Bearer, NILGA

Mr Derek McCallan Chief Executive, NILGA

Ms Claire Bradley Policy Officer, NILGA

Mr McCrea rejoined the meeting at 11.51am.

Agreed: Officials agreed to provide to the Committee a paper on the issues raised during the oral session. The Committee agreed to write to the Department highlighting the issues that have been raised.

11. Correspondence.

The Committee noted correspondence from Ms Atkinson outlining issues she is experiencing as a result of growth of Japanese knotweed.

The Committee also noted correspondence from Knotweed NI offering to brief the Committee on the impact that knotweed can have and the lack of protection in legislation in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to invite Knotweed NI to brief it on this matter.

Agreed: The Committee to request a research paper on the legislative differences between Northern Ireland, GB and Ireland in relation to Japanese Knotweed.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward Ms Atkinson's letter to MLAs for the North Belfast Constituency.

The Committee noted the EU Matters newsletter June 2015.

The Committee noted correspondence from Research and Information Service regarding Explanatory Memorandum for proposed European Union legislation.

The Committee noted correspondence from Ballyvesey Recycling Solutions Ltd regarding the Financial Provisions consultation. The Committee noted that it has already requested an oral briefing on this consultation, which will be scheduled in the next session.

The Committee noted a press release regarding Driver and Vehicle Agency customer service.

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 2nd July 2015 in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

Mrs Cameron left the meeting at 12.30pm.

The Committee moved to closed session at 12.30pm.

15. Committee Inquiry into Wind Energy – Departmental briefing

The Committee was briefed by:

Mr Angus Kerr	Director, Planning Policy Division, DOE
Mr Philip McGowan	Acting Principal Planner, DOE
Ms Joy Hargie	Planning and Policy Division, DOE
Mr Simon Kirk	Planning Manager, Strategic Planning Division, Department of the Environment

Agreed: Officials agreed to provide to the Committee an update on its meeting with HSENI in relation to the incident in County Tyrone; and to clarify whether any findings will be published. Officials also agreed to provide the Committee with a hard copy of its opening statement.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the new local councils about the recommendations made in its Inquiry into Wind Energy.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.08pm.

Anna Lo, MLA
Chairperson, Committee for the Environment
2 July 2015