



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for the Environment

OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Scrap Metal Dealers Bill:
Consideration of Clauses

28 January 2016

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

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Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Ms Anna Lo (Chairperson)
Mrs Pam Cameron (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Paul Girvan
Mr Ian Milne
Mrs Sandra Overend

The Chairperson (Ms Lo): I refer members to a briefing paper from the Committee Clerk that outlines the Committee's consideration to date and summarises the evidence that we heard from officials last week. We also have the up-to-date clause-by-clause table. I believe that good progress was made at a meeting between departmental officials and Roy. There seems to have been a meeting of minds on amendments. Ciara, you had a word with the Department this morning.

The Committee Clerk: Yes, I had a quick conversation with officials on the back of their meeting yesterday with Mr Beggs. My understanding is that there has been agreement on how the Bill should now proceed. I think that Mr Beggs accepts the difficulties that the Department has on the implementation of the licensing aspects of the Bill. The licensing element will be removed from the Bill. Of course, this is all subject to ministerial approval. It will all dovetail into the waste management licence system. They will retain the ID aspect, and they are looking at making clause 10, the issue of cashless transactions, a matter of enabling legislation for DOE.

Mr Girvan: Apologies for interrupting. You alluded to the identification issues: is that what you said?

The Committee Clerk: That will be retained.

Mr Girvan: It will be retained as part of the Bill.

The Committee Clerk: Yes.

Mr Girvan: Can that not be included as part of the licensing approach?

The Committee Clerk: They are looking at how all of that can fit into the Bill. A drafter has been instructed to come back to the Department with amendments, which will need ministerial approval. My understanding of what has been agreed is that there will not be a separate licensing regime, so everything will be included within the waste management system. The ID aspect will still be retained.

Officials are available to brief the Committee next week on the policy aspects of what the new amendments will look like. They will not have the amendments ready because they are still being drafted and are subject to ministerial approval.

The Chairperson (Ms Lo): Members, with your agreement, we will schedule an extra meeting next Tuesday so that the departmental officials can talk to us on the policy content of what they propose to do. They will not be able to bring the amendments on Tuesday but, hopefully, we will receive them by Thursday. Tuesday's proposed meeting is to go over the policy content.

The Committee Clerk: My understanding is that there was agreement between the sponsor of the Bill and the Department. It is the Department that will bring forward the amendments. I have not yet spoken to Mr Beggs so I am not aware of whether he is planning to table any additional amendments over and above what the Department is proposing.

Mr Girvan: Has the Department indicated any changes in regulation that they do not require a Bill to go forward with?

The Committee Clerk: That will all be done in the waste legislation, so those aspects of the Bill will be removed. That is my understanding.

Mr Girvan: All of them?

The Committee Clerk: The clauses relating to the licence, yes.

Mr Girvan: I would like to see what the Bill will look like then.

The Committee Clerk: Yes. Bear it in mind that I had only a brief conversation with the officials this morning so —

Mr Girvan: If you remove all those from the Bill, what does it become?

Mrs Overend: Clauses 1 to 6 will probably be removed.

The Committee Clerk: Yes, that is my understanding. Clauses 1 to 6, which relate to the licensing aspects, will be removed.

The Chairperson (Ms Lo): The DOE's waste management regulations will bring in all those licensing aspects, so there is no point in duplication. However, on cashless transactions, it will be enabling legislation for the future.

The Committee Clerk: That will be brought in in consultation with the industry and relevant stakeholders.

The Chairperson (Ms Lo): It will be a short Bill.

The Committee Clerk: Officials are content to brief the Committee if members are content to hold an additional meeting on Tuesday to discuss the policy content.

The Chairperson (Ms Lo): It will be a short one. Hopefully, next Thursday, we will see some amendments and will be able to start our clause-by-clause consideration.

The Committee Clerk: We had scheduled our deliberations today, but, given that there has been such significant movement, it would be nugatory work for the Committee to look at the Bill in detail today. It might be best to wait until we hear from officials next week, if members are content.

Members indicated assent.