



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

DRAFT MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

THURSDAY, 5 JUNE 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 Tom Elliott MLA Mr Ian McCrea MLA Mr Barry McElduff MLA Mr Alban Maginness MLA Mr Peter Weir MLA
In Attendance:	Mrs Sheila Mawhinney (Assembly Clerk) Mr Neil Sedgewick (Assistant Assembly Clerk) Mr George McClelland (Clerical Supervisor) Ms Allison Ferguson (Clerical Officer)
Apologies:	Mr Ian Milne MLA

The meeting began in public session at 10:10.

1. Apologies

Apologies were indicated as above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson advised Members that a motion to extend the Committee Stage of the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill will be brought to the Assembly for consideration on 16th June 2014.

The Chairperson reminded Members that the Minister for the Environment is scheduled to brief the Committee on 19th June 2014 and requested that any issues that they wished to raise should be forwarded to the Clerk.

3. Draft minutes

The minutes from the meeting held on 29th May 2014 were agreed.

4. Matters arising

4.1 The Committee noted a Departmental update on European Union proposals to introduce a mandatory requirement for eCall technology in vehicles.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to request the Department to keep it informed on the progress of the proposed Regulations.

Mr. Maginness joined the meeting at 10:19.

Mr. Eastwood joined the meeting at 10:20.

4.2 The Committee noted correspondence from Mr. Cormac McAleer enclosing responses received from other Departments on the Dalradian gold mine planning application.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to ask the Department for further information on the number of planning applications relating to gold-mining which are current in Northern Ireland, and to seek clarification on planning procedures for an explosives store.

4.3 The Committee noted a Departmental response on the enforcement of planning conditions.

4.4 The Committee noted a Departmental reply regarding the demolition of a house on the Dalradian site.

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

Agreed: The Committee also agreed that it would no longer respond on individual planning cases unless wider policy issues are raised, and that such correspondents would be advised to contact their local council or MLAs.

4.5 The Committee noted a Departmental reply regarding the proposed Gaelectric project near Larne

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

Mrs. Cameron joined the meeting at 10:28.

4.6 The Committee noted the Departmental update on taxi reform.

Mr. Elliott joined the meeting at 10:30.

4.7 The Committee noted further information from the Departmental on the enforcement of the HGV Road User Levy.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek further information from the Department on the number of vehicles paying the levy.

5. Consultation on the Marine Conservation (Fixed Monetary Penalties) Order (Northern Ireland) 2014

The Committee considered the public consultation on the Marine Conservation (Fixed Monetary Penalties) Order (Northern Ireland) 2014.

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

6. Consultation on Continuous Insurance Enforcement

The Committee considered the public consultation on Continuous Insurance Enforcement.

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

7. Consultation on draft Disability Action Plan 2014 - 2017 -Synopsis of Responses

The Committee considered the synopsis to the consultation on the draft Disability Action Plan 2014 – 2017, and an amended copy of the Plan.

Mr. Maginness left the meeting at 10:35.

Agreed: The Committee was content for the Department to proceed with the Plan.

8. Consultation on Noise Policy Statement - Synopsis of Comments

The Committee considered the synopsis of responses to the public consultation on the Noise Policy Statement.

Agreed: The Committee was content for the Department to proceed with finalising the Noise Policy Statement.

9. SR 2014/147 - The Sulphur Content of Liquid Fuels (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014

The Committee considered the Statutory Rule SR 2014/147, The Sulphur Content of Liquid Fuels (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland).

Question put and agreed:

The Committee has considered SR 2014/147, The Sulphur Content of Liquid Fuels (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2014, and, subject to the Examiner's report, has no objection to the Rule.'

Mr. Maginness rejoined the meeting at 10:39.

10. Correspondence

The Committee considered correspondence from Belfast Public Hire Taxi Drivers enclosing a report from the Law Commission on taxi and private hire services.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department of the Environment for comment.

The Committee considered a news release from Community Transport Association on the availability of road safety grants.

Agreed: The Committee noted that the closing date for applications from community and voluntary groups for funding for road safety projects is 20th June 2014.

The Committee considered correspondence from David Hawthorne requesting that Dr. Mike Hill brief the Committee about fracking.

Agreed: The Committee noted the correspondence and agreed to consider liaising with the Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Investment on the issue at a later date.

The Committee noted the following correspondence:

Correspondence from West Tyrone Against Wind Turbines on an article in the Irish Times on the health effects from wind turbines.

Departmental correspondence on the The Waste Management Charging (Northern Ireland) Scheme 2014.

Correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel on the main estimates for 2014-15 and the Budget (No.2) Bill 2014.

Correspondence from the Committee for the Office of First Minister and deputy First Minister on the proposed cut to the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission Annual Budget.

The May e-Bulletin from Northern Ireland Environment Link.

Correspondence from the Minister for the Environment on the notice of intention to announce a decision on a planning application of extension of Demesne Quarry, Glenarm.

Correspondence from the Minister for the Environment on the notice of intention to announce a decision on a planning application of comprehensive missed use development in Newry.

Correspondence from the Central Committee Office on a guide to the powers and operation of Statutory Committees for Chairpersons and Members.

11. Committee Inquiry into Wind Energy - Briefing by Chartered Institute of Environmental Health

Gary McFarlane, Paul McCullough and Dr Chris Jordan from the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health briefed the Committee on its Inquiry into Wind Energy.

The main areas discussed were issues around the planning process for onshore wind turbines and ETSU-R-97 noise legislation.

Mr. Weir left the meeting at 11.13.

Mr. Eastwood left the meeting at 11.34.

Mr. McCrea left the meeting at 11.47.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the representatives should provide them with further copies of maps identifying wind turbine sites, on adverse impacts of wind turbines and on wind turbine applications awaiting planning permission.

The meeting moved into closed session at 11.56.

12. Inquiry into Wind Energy - proposed visit

The Committee discussed how members wished to proceed with a proposed visit to a wind farm site as part of its Inquiry into Wind Energy.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to visit the Crighshane and Church Hill Wind Farms in Co. Tyrone on 26th June 2014 and to meet with local residents in that area.

13. Inquiry into Wind Energy - Stakeholder Event

The Committee noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Renewables Industry Group requesting an invitation to attend the event on 12th June 2014.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to decline NIRIG's request.

The Committee discussed the format for the event.

Mrs. Cameron left the meeting at 12.23.

The meeting moved back into open session at 12.23.

14. Forward Work Programme

The Committee noted the Forward Work Programme.

15. Any Other Business

A concern was raised regarding the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to confirm if the information regarding decision-making, and specifically lobbying, at Section 8.1

(j) refers to the Planning Committee only or to all Council Committees

16. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 12th June 2014 at 10:00 in the Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings in the form of a Wind Inquiry stakeholder event.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.26.

Anna Lo, MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Environment

19 June 2014