



# Committee for Infrastructure

## Minutes of Proceedings

10 November 2021

**Meeting Location:** Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Mr Jonathan Buckley MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr David Hilditch (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Roy Beggs MLA  
Mr Cathal Boylan MLA  
Mr Pádraig Delargy MLA  
Mr Andrew Muir MLA

**Present by Video or Teleconference:**

Ms Cara Hunter MLA  
Ms Liz Kimmins MLA

**Apologies:** Mr George Robinson MLA

**In Attendance:** Mr Vincent Gribbin (Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Jim McManus (Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Jonathan Lawless (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr William Kinnear (Clerical Supervisor)



The meeting commenced at 10:06 am in public session.

## 1. Apologies

As above.

## 2. Chairpersons Business

The Chairperson advised Members that the Committee has been invited to a Sustrans event on Wednesday 10 November 2021 in Parliament Buildings to familiarise Members with E-Bikes.

The Chairperson raised the issue regarding the recent bus attacks in Belfast and Newtownards.

**Agreed:** The Committee for Infrastructure condemns the recent attacks on public transport and extends its sympathy and thoughts to Translink staff and passengers who have been affected.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to Translink to express the Committee's sympathies to those bus drivers and recognising that it has been a very difficult time for Translink staff.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to both Translink and the Police Service of Northern Ireland to express the Committee's view that public transport should be respected and consistently available; to ask for their views on future actions that should be taken to alleviate concerns of Translink staff and customers; and to obtain details of the extent of attacks on Translink staff and vehicles in general.

The Chairperson drew members' attention to a Department for Infrastructure press release in relation to the establishment of an electric charging infrastructure task force.



**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request a briefing from the Department regarding the task force.

### 3. Draft Minutes.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 3 November 2021.

### 4. Matters Arising

The Committee considered an amended motion for its Inquiry into Decarbonisation of Road Transport in Northern Ireland.

“That this Assembly approves the Report of the Committee for Infrastructure on its Inquiry into the Decarbonisation of Road Transport in Northern Ireland [NIA 136/17-22]; and calls on the Minister for Infrastructure and her Executive colleagues to implement the recommendations contained in the Report.”

The question was put that the Committee is content with the proposal.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to table the motion in the Business Office.

### 5. Correspondence

Copy correspondence from Baroness Vere to Lord Jay - Protocol - Intelligent Speed Assistance.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to Lord Jay for clarification on any potential impacts or unintended consequences of following EU



regulations rather than GB regulations, on the production of right-hand-drive vehicles for the Northern Ireland market.

Copy correspondence from Baroness Vere to Lord Jay - Protocol – Vehicle Safety Technologies.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

Correspondence from Investing Strategy for Northern Ireland providing a copy of the Department for Infrastructure Investing Activity Report – October 2021.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

Correspondence from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) requesting to brief the Committee on a sustainable approach to development.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing in the Forward Work Programme.

Response from the Association of British Insurers (ABI) to Committee correspondence regarding MOT and Insurance issues.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting an update on numbers of HGV drivers being trained and an update on the extent of apprenticeships that have been set up in respect of HGV drivers including those over 25 years of age.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Haulage Industry for an update on the issues facing the sector.

Correspondence from the Department for Infrastructure regarding the proposed Consultation on The Railways (Safety Management) (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2022.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request a briefing on the outcome of the consultation.



Response from the Minister for Infrastructure to issues arising from the Committee meeting on 20 October 2021.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to send the relevant extracts of the response to the organisations who raised the issue.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting further information in regards to the Department's retention of information in relation to the Controlled Parking Zones Review.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department regarding the court decision in relation to the North South Interconnector and the impact on future planning applications.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Minister to request that she explore whatever steps that can be taken to extend flexibility to funeral directors in relation to the application of Taxi Licensing, whilst recognising that such vehicles operate under the Taxi Act.

Correspondence from the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the outcome of the October Monitoring Round.

**Agreed:** The Committee write to the Minister highlighting its concerns in relation to adequate funding to ensure the provision of clean drinking water and invite her to brief the Committee on the impact of the outcome of the October Monitoring Round on the work of her Department.

Copy correspondence from the Committee for Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs to the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the Planning Review.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to request a copy of the Department's response to the Committee for Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs.

Correspondence from a member of the public regarding HGV Licensing and qualifications.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.



Copy of the Examiner of Statutory Rules fifth report of the Session 2021-2022.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to note the report.

Response from the Mid-Ulster District Council regarding the Planning Advice Note.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed forward to the Department for information and comment.

Correspondence from Lower Old Park Community Association regarding weed spraying in the Lower Old Park Area.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed forward to the Department for information and comment.

Correspondence from the Minister for Infrastructure regarding an oral statement to the Assembly on the British Irish Council Transport Ministerial Meeting.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

## **6. Subordinate Legislation – SL1s – Not Subject to Assembly Proceedings**

The Committee considered the following SL1's not subject to any Assembly proceedings.

- SL1 - The Parking Places (Disabled Persons' Vehicles) (Amendment No.8) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021
- SL1 - The Road Races (Targa Rally) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021 104
- SL1 - The Roads (Speed Limit) (No. 2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021 106
- SL1 - The Roads (Speed Limit) (No.3) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021



**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with the proposals for the Statutory Rules.

#### **7. SL1 - The Rockfield Park, Portaferry (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021**

The Committee considered the SL1 - The Rockfield Park, Portaferry (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with the proposal for the statutory rule.

#### **8. Departmental Briefing – Common Frameworks**

The Departmental officials joined the meeting at 10:28 am

Ms Bernie Rooney, Director Gateways & EU Relations  
Mr Graeme Banks, Acting Head of Rail Safety Branch  
Mr Philip Gallagher, Head of Freight Policy Branch  
Ms Jo Campbell, Driving Policy Branch

The Departmental officials provided the Committee with an oral briefing.

A question and answer session followed.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the Department will provide further information on the impact of the Rail Technical Standards Framework Outline Agreement on Heritage railways in Northern Ireland.



Mr David Hilditch left the meeting at 11:28 am.

The Chairperson thanked the Departmental officials for their attendance.

The Departmental officials left the meeting at 11:39 am.

## 9. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the Draft Forward Work Programme.

## 10. Any Other Business

The Committee considered a proposal to write to the Department in relation to the distances people have to travel to attend driving theory tests.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department asking that officials explore options for the provision of theory tests such as hubs or mobile test centres so as to reduce the distances individuals have to travel to attend theory tests.

The Committee considered a proposal to write to the Department in relation to waiting times for re-tests for people who have failed their driving test.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request that the Department explore the possibility of creating a reserve list for those who have failed their test in order to enable them to avail of an earlier retest.

The Committee considered a proposal to invite departmental officials to provide oral evidence in relation to the impact of the reduction in the budget for road resurfacing.





**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting that officials brief the Committee on road resurfacing issues and for an update on the issues surrounding road resurfacing contracts.

Mr David Hilditch re-joined the meeting at 11:45 am.

The Committee considered a proposal to write to the Department in relation to concessionary taxi fares.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting that the Department provide an update on the issue regarding concessionary fares for black taxis.

The Committee considered a proposal in relation to the long waiting times for MOT tests resulting in the inability to renew vehicle excise duty.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting information on any issues occurring on the taxing of vehicles due to drivers' inability to obtain an MOT test appointment.

**Agreed:** To ask the PSNI to provide details of the number of fines that have been issued to drivers driving an untaxed vehicle but with an MOT test appointment.

The Committee considered a proposal in relation to departmental budgets for road maintenance and road construction.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to provide advance notice to the Department that, when officials attend the Committee in relation to the outcomes of the October Monitoring Round they will be questioned in relation to the balance between the allocations of budgets to road maintenance and road construction.

## **11. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting**

The Committee agreed that the next meeting would be on Wednesday, 17 November 2021 at 10:00 am in the Tullyglass House Hotel, Ballymena and will be followed by a visit to Wrightbus.



The meeting was adjourned at 11:53 am.

**Mr Jonathan Buckley MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Infrastructure**

**10 November 2021**