



Northern Ireland
Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR INFRASTRUCTURE MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2021

SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Ms Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)
Ms Martina Anderson MLA (*via Starleaf*)
Mr Roy Beggs MLA (*via Starleaf*)
Mr Cathal Boylan MLA (*via Starleaf*)
Mr Keith Buchanan MLA
Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA (*via Starleaf*)
Ms Liz Kimmins MLA (*via Starleaf*)
Mr Andrew Muir MLA (*via Starleaf*)

Apologies: Mr David Hilditch MLA (Deputy-Chairperson)

In Attendance: Mr Vincent Gribbin (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Alison Ross (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Jonathan Lawless (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr William Kinnear (Clerical Supervisor)

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

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Chairpersons Business

The Chairperson advised Members of a typographical error in the agreed Minutes of Proceedings of 16 December 2020 and, in accordance with Standing Orders, the amended Minutes of Proceedings will be included in the meeting next week for Committee approval.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 10 February 2021.

4. Matters Arising

The Committee considered a report by the Committee for Regional Development into un-adopted roads in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward a copy the report to the Department requesting an update on each of the recommendations and that they be considered in conjunction with the consultation on the review of planning.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing from the Department on un-adopted Roads.

5. Correspondence

Correspondence from Bluesona welcoming changes to the Road Traffic Offenders Order 2020 and the use of Mobile phones to promote safer driving.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

Correspondence from the Transport Hub Alternatives Group (THAG) requesting Committee support for a review of the planning application for the Transport Hub.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

Copy of the Examiner of Statutory Rules Twenty-Third Report of the 2021-2022 Session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the report.

Correspondence from the Friends of Knock Iveagh regarding planning issues.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Minister for comment on the issues raised and to ascertain why she has not met with the Friends of Knock Iveagh.

Response from Belfast Harbour to Committee correspondence regarding facilities for drivers at ports.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

Response from Foyle Port to Committee correspondence regarding facilities for drivers at ports.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

Correspondence from the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the appointment of the Chair to the Board of the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company (NITHC).

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

Correspondence from the Minister for Infrastructure regarding the Taxi Driver Financial Assistance Scheme (TDFAS) 2.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

Response from Warrenpoint Harbour to Committee correspondence regarding facilities for drivers at ports.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

Response from the Road Haulage Association to Committee correspondence following briefing on 20 January 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

Department for Infrastructure response regarding issues arising from the Committee meeting on 27 January 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister to request that she engages with the sector to ensure that the issues from the first Bus and Coach Operator Scheme are not replicated in the new scheme.

Agreed: The Committee noted the high number of applications refused in the first Bus and Coach Operator Scheme and agreed to write to the Department requesting that the criteria be reviewed to inform the second scheme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting that the new draft Bus and Coach Operator Scheme be brought to the Committee for consideration in advance of being finalised.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting information on the human resourcing of Roads Division to enable it to meet the needs of the road infrastructure and how staffing has changed over time.

Correspondence from Coach Operators Northern Ireland regarding financial assistance for the bus and coach sector.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and consider it at next week's meeting.

Correspondence from the Department for Infrastructure regarding a Call for Evidence, Review of the Implementation of the Planning Act (NI) 2011.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to ascertain what engagement the Department will have with the Committee and how the Committee can input into the review.

Copy of the Examiner of Statutory Rules Twenty-Fifth Report of the Sessions 2020-2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the report.

Correspondence from Phoenix Law Ltd in relation to financial assistance for taxi operators.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister reiterating its support for a bespoke financial assistance package for taxi operators.

6. SL1 - The Ballyboley Road, Larne (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021

The Committee considered SL1 - The Ballyboley Road, Larne (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021.

Agreed: The Committee was content with the proposal for the Statutory Rule.

7. SR 2021-33 The Taxi Driver (Coronavirus, Financial Assistance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

The Committee considered SR 2021-33 The Taxi Driver (Coronavirus, Financial Assistance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021. The purpose of the rule is to provide financial support for taxi drivers during the on-going pandemic.

Ms Anderson MLA, registered her objection to the pro rata aspect of the Statutory Rule.

Agreed: The Committee considered SR 2021-33 The Taxi Driver (Coronavirus, Financial Assistance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021, and, subject to the Examiner of Rules has no objection to the rule.

8. Subordinate Legislation - SRs - Not Subject to Assembly Proceedings

- The Committee considered the following SR's not subject to Assembly proceedings.
 - SR 2021-34 The Schools (Part-Time 20mph Speed Limit) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021
 - SR 2021-35 The Waiting Restrictions (Bryansford) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021
 - SR 2021-36 The Parking and Waiting Restrictions (Belfast) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the Statutory Rules.

9. Briefing from all Northern Ireland Ports - Brexit & Current Issues

The representatives joined the meeting at 10:42 am.

Mr Ricardo Ponelli, General Manager/Director, Port of Larne (*via Starleaf*)
Mr David Holmes, Chief Executive Officer, Warrenpoint Port (*via Starleaf*)

Mr Brian McGrath, Chief Executive, Londonderry Port and Harbour (*via Starleaf*)
Mr Maurice Bullick, Finance & Compliance Director, Belfast Harbour Commissioners
(*via Starleaf*)

The representatives provided the Committee with an oral briefing.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

A question and answer session followed.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

The representatives left the meeting at 11:47 am.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister for Infrastructure to encourage her to provide assistance for infrastructure projects that the NI Sea Ports have indicated they have ready, in order to assist in meeting the challenges of Covid and Brexit.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Committee for Finance requesting information on what monies were returned by Departments in the Monitoring Round and to encourage the implementation of an early alert system to ensure the return of as little money as possible.

10. Briefing from Retail NI - Brexit & COVID Issues

The representative joined the meeting at 11:50 am.

Mr Glyn Roberts, Chief Executive, Retail NI (*via Starleaf*)

The representative provided the Committee with an oral briefing.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

A question and answer session followed.

The Chairperson thanked the representative for their attendance.

The representative left the meeting at 12:34 pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Retail NI seeking its views on how best to benefit rural towns through the Rural Towns Infrastructure Investment Fund and what the solutions might be to the lack of connectivity in the Hubs.

11. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the Draft Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

12. Any Other Business

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department for information on what contact there has been between the Department and the UK Government Union connectivity Review, which party initiated the contact, what was discussed and to request a copy of the Minister's response to the Union Connectivity Review.

13. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The Committee agreed that the next meeting would be on Wednesday, 24 February 2021 at 9:30 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Committee adjourned at 12:38 pm

Ms Michelle McIlveen MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Infrastructure

24 February 2021