



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR INFRASTRUCTURE
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

WEDNESDAY, 9 DECEMBER 2020

SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

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

Apologies: None

In Attendance: Mrs Alison Ross (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Johnny Lawless (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr William Kinnear (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced in open session at 9:23 am.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Chairpersons Business

None.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 2 December 2020.

4. Matters Arising

None.

5. Correspondence

Copy of the Examiner for Statutory Rules' Thirty-Second Report of the 2019-2020 Session

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the Report.

Correspondence from Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland providing a copy of the Department for Infrastructure Investing Activity Report – November 2020.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the Report.

Copy of the Examiner for Statutory Rules' Thirty-Third Report of the 2019-2020 Session

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the Report.

Committee for the Economy correspondence providing a copy of the Department for Economy response regarding NIE new home Wayleave agreements.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

Ryse Hydrogen response providing further information following the briefing to the Committee on 11 November 2020.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response.

Department for Infrastructure written briefing paper on its Road Safety Strategy.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the briefing paper.

Minister for the Economy response to Committee correspondence regarding Wrightbus & Ryse Hydrogen Briefing

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response and forward to Wrightbus & Ryse Hydrogen for information

Committee for Finance - Analysis of Forecast Outturn - Quarterly Report

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note then response and forward to the Department for Information.

Minister for Infrastructure response to issues arising from Committee Meeting 18 November 2020.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

Union Connectivity Review - Terms of Reference and Call for Evidence.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the response and forward to the Department for information and requesting a copy of its submission should they make one.

Response from the Committee for Health regarding Community Transport Funding.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and to write to the Department for Health for comment.

Correspondence from the Examiner of Statutory Rules regarding outstanding SR's to be reported on that will be included in the next report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

6. SL1 - The Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 (Public Service Obligations in Transport) (Revocation) (EU Exit) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020

Mr Graham Banks, EU Exit Legislation and Rail Safety Branch, Department for Infrastructure joined the meeting at 9:32 am.

The Committee considered SL1 - The Regulation (EC) No 1370/2007 (Public Service Obligations in Transport) (Revocation) (EU Exit) (Northern Ireland) Regulations 2020.

The Departmental official provided the Committee with an explanation as to why the legislation required to be revoked.

Mr Andrew Muir declared an interest as a former employee of Translink.

Mr Graham Banks left the meeting at 9:50 am

Agreed: The Committee agreed to consider the proposal for the Statutory Rule at its meeting on 16 December 2020.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek legal advice in advance of the briefing next week on the Committee's position regarding revocation of a Statutory Rule due to conflicting legal advice provided by the Department.

7. SR 2020-292 The Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2020

The Committee considered SR 2020-292 The Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2020. The SR sets out types of development which can be undertaken without requiring a planning application.

Agreed: The Committee considered SR 2020-292 The Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2020, and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules has no objection to the rule.

8. SR 2020-299 The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) (Amendment No. 2) (Coronavirus) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

The Committee considered SR 2020-299 The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) (Amendment No. 2) (Coronavirus) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020. The purpose of the Statutory Rule is to amend the Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996 (“the Driving Licence Regulations”) in order to further extend the validity of driving theory test pass certificates that expire during the periods prescribed.

Agreed: The Committee considered SR 2020-299 The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) (Amendment No. 2) (Coronavirus) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020, and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules has no objection to the rule.

9. Briefing from Northern Ireland Taxi Operators - Financial Assistance for Taxi Operators

The representatives joined the meeting at 9:53 am.

Mr Stephen Anton, Communications Manager, Fonacab
Mr Christopher McCausland, Managing Director, Value Cabs
Mr Eamonn Corrigan, Depot Owner, Regency Taxis
Mr Eamonn O'Donnell, Manager, North West Taxi Proprietors
Mrs Cathy Mallie, Depot Owner, Clanrye Taxis (*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.

Agreed: The representatives agreed to provide the Committee with details of the number of drivers (Fonacab) who had taken an insurance holiday.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

Mr Cathal Boylan left the meeting at 11:18 am

The representatives left the meeting at 11:21 am.

Mr David Hilditch left the meeting at 11:22 am

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing from Departmental officials to address the issues raised by the taxi operators including

- why there is a differential made between Taxi and Coach operators regarding the availability of Covid funding despite the similarity of the issues facing both sectors.
- Why overhead cost reimbursement, which comes under the vires of the Department for Infrastructure funding scheme, have not been taken into account despite substantial overheads being built into the requirements for a Taxi Operators licence.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department for the Economy highlighting the hardship felt by Taxi Operators as a result of Covid and asking that Department why part B restrictions of the Regulations for the Covid Funding Scheme did not take into consideration the full extent of the costs incurred the Taxi Operators due to the pandemic.

10. Briefing from Northern Ireland Electricity - Infrastructure for a Green Recovery

The representatives joined the meeting at 11:24 am.

Mr Cathal Boylan re-joined the meeting at 11:25 am.

Mr David Hilditch re-joined the meeting at 11:26 am.

Mr Paul Stapleton, Managing Director, NIE Networks
Mr Randal Gilbert, Head of Network Strategy, NIE Networks

The representatives provided the Committee with an oral briefing.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

A question and answer session followed.

Mr Andrew Muir declared an interest as a former member of Ards and North Down Borough Council.

Mrs Martina Anderson left the meeting at 12:17 pm.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

The representatives left the meeting at 12:21 pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Department of the Economy for information on what plans existed for the derogation of EU Directive 2019/433 to allow electricity network operators to own and develop recharging points where the private sector has not entered the market.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister for information on how her department is utilising the EU Interreg funding for electric charging infrastructure.

11. Departmental Briefing – Roads Procurement & Major Projects

The Departmental officials joined the meeting at 12:24 pm.

Mr John Irvine, Director of Major Projects & Procurement
Mr Philip Hamilton, Strategic Road Improvements & Procurement

The Departmental officials provided the Committee with an oral briefing.

Mrs Martina Anderson re-joined the meeting at 12:28 pm

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

A question and answer session followed.

The Chairperson thanked the Departmental officials for their attendance.

The Departmental officials left the meeting at 13:02 pm.

Agreed: Departmental officials agreed to provide the Committee with further information on the status and what the allocated funding allows in terms of progression of the various Park and Ride schemes.

Agreed: Departmental officials agreed to provide the Committee with further information on what, if any, discussion had been had in respect of longer term projects to alleviate traffic issues in the Harbour and Titanic area of Belfast.

12. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the Draft Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

13. Any Other Business

Agreed: The Committee agreed to explore the laying of an urgent oral question on the hardship faced by the Taxi sector.

14. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The Committee agreed that the next meeting would be on Wednesday, 16 December 2020 at 09:30 am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Committee adjourned at 13:06 pm

Ms Michelle McIlveen MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Infrastructure

16 December 2020