

**The Department for Regional Development<sup>1</sup>**

**And**

**The General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland**

## **Memorandum of Understanding**

### **1. Purpose**

The joint aim of the Department and the Consumer Council in drawing up this agreement is to secure effective, mutual working relationships for the benefit of consumers. The Memorandum of Understanding (the Memorandum) is not intended to cover detailed operations between the parties. Rather, it is a statement of the principles which will guide the development of working arrangements that will enable both parties to discharge their respective statutory responsibilities effectively in a complimentary manner where possible and without duplication of effort.

### **Principals of cooperation**

This Memorandum sets out the agreement between the General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland and the Department for Regional Development with regard to the functions set out in the General Consumer Council (Northern Ireland) Order

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<sup>1</sup> The Department for Infrastructure will exercise the existing water and sewerage responsibilities of the Department for Regional Development from 9 May 2016

1984, the Water and Sewerage Services Order (Northern Ireland) 2006 (the Water Order) and the Transport Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (the Transport Act).

### **Agreement on Principles**

The principles agreed by the Department and the Consumer Council are:

- to foster mutual understanding and effective relations generally between the two bodies;
- to ensure that each other's ability to fulfil their respective statutory functions is not hampered through action or inaction by the other body;
- to minimise duplication of effort by consulting on forward work programmes, specific issues of concern and any other appropriate tasks as and when they arise;
- to ensure consistent treatment of matters in those areas in which both organisations have a mutual interest;
- to ensure that information is shared as necessary to enable both bodies to carry out their respective functions in a proper manner, subject to any limits imposed by statute, or secondary legislation, including the need to respect personal or commercial confidentiality;
- to adopt a "no surprises" approach. Each party will notify the other, as far in advance as possible, where there is a likelihood of significant announcements and/or developments in policy.

We will meet regularly and work together to deliver this Memorandum.

This Memorandum will be formally reviewed every two years.

## **Annex A**

This Annex is to set out the role of the Consumer Council (CCNI) in relation to road and railway passenger transport services within the overall Memorandum of Understanding between it and the Department for Regional Development (the Department).

The Department recognises the defined statutory basis of the Consumer Council's role to safeguard and protect the interests of consumers and consider any matter affecting road or railway passenger transport services and facilities in Northern Ireland as set out in the Transport Act (Northern Ireland) 1967, the Transport Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and the General Consumer Council (Northern Ireland) Order 1984.

The CCNI shall have a consultative role during the annual Translink Corporate Planning process. This will include any fare reviews and service changes which form part of this process.

CCNI shall be entitled to be consulted in relation to any fare reviews and significant service changes outside of the Corporate Planning process.

CCNI shall have a role in relation to the handling of customer complaints relating to road or railway passenger transport services and facilities in Northern Ireland.

CCNI shall have a key role in the publication of advice and information to promote road or railway passenger interests.

Translink and/or the Department shall consult with CCNI on areas such as customer complaint procedures, significant changes to ticketing products, changes to passenger information and other changes to business activities that may affect consumers.

## Annex B

This Annex is to set out the role of the Consumer Council (CCNI) in relation to water and sewerage services within the overall Memorandum of Understanding between it and the Department for Regional Development (the Department).

The Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 gives the statutory duty to the Consumer Council to act as the consumer representative on water and sewerage service issues, including the handling of complaints and enquiries.

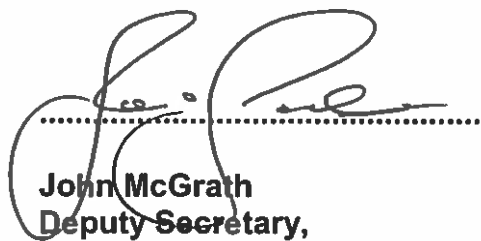
The Department and the Consumer Council agree to meet regularly to review matters of interest to consumers, including for example:

- Water and sewerage policy, regulation and strategic issues;
- Standards of service and performance issues;
- Budgets and Forward Work Programmes;
- Information sharing; and,
- Consultation exercises.

Both bodies agree to identify contact points within their organisations to be responsible for the exchange of information and communication links.

In addition, within the governance framework of water and sewerage services there will be formal contact between the Department and the Consumer Council as per the meeting arrangements set out in the Ministerial Water Stakeholders Partnership Agreement.

**Signed:**



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**John McGrath  
Deputy Secretary,  
Department for Regional Development**



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**John French,  
Chief Executive  
Consumer Council of Northern Ireland**

