



Committee for Infrastructure

Minutes of Proceedings

14 January 2026

Meeting Location: Room 29, Parliament Buildings, Stormont, Belfast

Present:

Mr Peter Martin MLA (Chairperson)
Mr John Stewart MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Cathal Boylan MLA
Mr Harry Harvey MLA
Mr Andrew McMurray MLA
Mr Stephen Dunne MLA
Mr Peter McReynolds MLA

Via Video Conferencing: Mr Maoliosa McHugh MLA
Mr Justin McNulty MLA

In Attendance:

Mr Michael Potter (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Aoife Keating-Fitzpatrick (Senior Assistant Clerk)
Mr Philip Pateman (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Jonathan Lawless (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Oliver Briant (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 10:04 am in public session.



1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declaration of Interests

Mr Cathal Boylan MLA and Mr Stephen Dunne MLA both declared an interest as a members of the Public Accounts Committee.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson referred to correspondence included in Members' packs which he had received regarding accessibility standards for temporary street works in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: That the Clerk would liaise with the Clerk to the Public Accounts Committee to establish whether the matters relating to accessibility standards impact the PAC's ongoing review on road openings by utilities.

Agreed: To write to the Department enclosing the correspondence and to seek further information on:

- detail of the applicable legislation permitting such works in Northern Ireland and the equivalent standards adopted in Great Britain
- whether it intends to undertake any review of the guidance on 'Accessibility Standards for Temporary Street Works' to ensure it remains fit for purpose; and



- how it ensures adherence to ensure that the public and, in particular, vulnerable groups including those living with a disability are not put at unnecessary risk.

Mr Justin McNulty MLA joined the meeting at 11:09 am.

The Chairperson referred to correspondence included in members' packs which he had received from Belfast89 regarding a proposed Road Safety Campaign.

Agreed: To write to Belfast89 to suggest that it engages with the Department for Infrastructure to ascertain how he could seek to support any road safety campaigns and associated processes.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 10 December 2025.

5. Matters Arising

None.

6. Correspondence

Response from the Minister for Infrastructure to Committee correspondence regarding the Egyptian Arch Billboard, Newry.

Agreed: To write to the Minister to seeking:



- Copies of all correspondence issued by the Department and responses received in respect of this issue;
- How the Department determined the ownership of the billboard in the absence of any survey;
- The Department's assessment of who would be liable or responsible in the event of a catastrophic failure of the billboard;
- The Department's assessment of the sanctions at its disposal when seeking to uphold improper signage or advertising, the precedence being set by the Department by failing to act and the impact of the potential increased instances of similar billboards across Northern Ireland;
- Detail of what permissions, if any, were sought from the Department or Translink due to the proximity of the billboard to the road and railway network.

Response from the Minister for Infrastructure to Committee correspondence regarding the introduction of subordinate legislation to deal with the inconsiderate pavement parking.

Agreed: To note and schedule oral evidence at a suitable date to consider the proposals.

Response from the Minister for Infrastructure to Committee correspondence requesting further clarification on subordinate legislation relating to rail safety and the associated timeframe for its introduction.

Agreed: To note and schedule oral evidence at a suitable date to consider the proposals.

Response from the Minister for Infrastructure to Committee correspondence to Committee correspondence requesting an update on the Transformation Fund.

Agreed: To write to the Department to request quarterly updates on the 'Appointed Persons' project.



Response from the Minister for Infrastructure to Committee correspondence on issues highlighted in the course of the December Monitoring Round evidence on 3 December.

Agreed: To note and schedule an evidence session in the Forward Work Programme on major capital projects following the conclusion of High Court proceedings.

Agreed: That the Clerk will seek establish an updated indicative timeframe for proceedings.

Response from the Minister for Infrastructure to Committee correspondence requesting further detail on the process by which decisions to halt housing developments due to inadequate provision for wastewater.

Agreed: To request a paper from the Assembly Research and Information Service summarising the process and collating the figures by council area.

Response from the Minister for Infrastructure to Committee correspondence requesting quarterly updates on the progress of the associated actions from the O&M Resilience Review.

Agreed: To note and await the provision of vacancy rates in other NICS Departments.

Copy of the Department for Infrastructure Business Plan 2025-2026 & Mandate Plan 2025-2027.

Agreed: To write to the Department seeking:

- The quantifiable impacts under each strand of the Minister's three-pronged approach; and
- An overview of other issues that will be required to support delivery when seeking to address the historic under investment in the water network and associated timescales for each.

Agreed: To write to the Department to respond to the concerns expressed by Members surrounding:



- The insufficient delivery of winter service caused by a lack/inconsistency of replenishment of gritting boxes;
- The apparent lack of a co-ordinated approach between local councils and the Department and how this can be improved;
- The apparent inadequacy of gritting for arterial routes during the recent freezing weather; and
- The apparent inadequacy of gritting of roads within the vicinity of agricultural land to support farmers.

Correspondence from the Department for Infrastructure on the temporary appointment of Mr Declan McGeown as the Department's Permanent Secretary until the completion of the permanent recruitment competition.

John Stewart MLA left the meeting 11:01 am

Agreed: To write to the Department for Infrastructure to formally record the Committee's thanks to the outgoing Permanent Secretary, Dr Denis McMahon, and to wish him the best in his retirement.

Mr John Stewart MLA rejoined the meeting at 11:03 am.

Responses from the Minister for Justice and the Minister for Infrastructure to Committee correspondence on the recording of images at road traffic accidents.

Agreed: To write to the Minister for Infrastructure to establish whether she concurs with the position as highlighted by the Minister of Justice in her response and to establish that, within the specific example of creating an offence of recording images at road traffic collisions, whether responsibility rests with DfI to bring forward legislative change.

Response from the Department for the Economy to Committee correspondence to Trading Standards in relation to parking enforcement.

Agreed: To note and consider when legal advice on car parking enforcement has been received.

Copy of a Pivotal briefing paper - 'Northern Ireland's multi-year budget: challenges and opportunities'.



Agreed: To note and include in the papers for the next budget evidence session from departmental officials.

Request from the Northern Ireland Assembly Engagement Team for Committee involvement in the Balmoral Show from Wednesday 13 May – Saturday 16 May 2026.

Agreed: Not to attend the Balmoral Show as a Committee, but individual Members may be attending in their party capacity.

The Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

- Notification of intention to make an oral statement on Thursday 11 December 2025 regarding Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) on the topic of renewable and low carbon energy.
- Response to Committee request for confirmation on whether the Department is progressing both the review of Arm's Length Bodies and the ALB Pay Landscape review.
- Response to Committee correspondence requesting further information on the issues delaying the gully cleaning pilot project.
- Response to Committee correspondence requesting an update on cross pavement charging solutions.
- Response to Committee correspondence requesting details of how the Department intends to prevent pollution of Belfast Lough in the absence of the Living with Water Programme.
- Response to Committee correspondence requesting further detail, by each community transport provider, on the numbers of staff who are employed or volunteer to deliver their services and the average age of buses within their fleets.
- Response to Committee correspondence requesting a detailed overview of the considerations used by the Department in providing a response to Assembly questions when deciding what operational matters for an organisation are, for which the Department has responsibility or oversight.
- Publication of the 2025 Annual Report to Fermanagh and Omagh District Council (FODC) area.
- Publication of the 2025 Annual Report to Belfast City Council.



- Publication of the Autumn Roads Report, for the Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council area.
- Response to Committee correspondence requesting more detail on the process for deciding the allocation of funds in the Monitoring Round.
- Consultation regarding the Draft Master Plan for Belfast Harbour 2025-2050.
- Response to Committee correspondence following the briefing providing an operational and financial update on 26 November 2025.
- Copy correspondence to the Department regarding the Translink Night-mover Service.
- Invitation to an Offshore Wind Farm Development: Securing the Benefits for NI Event on Wednesday 28 January 2026.

7. Assembly Northern Ireland Audit Office – Active Travel Report – Department for Infrastructure – Oral Evidence

The following officials joined the meeting at 11:09 am.

- Mr Colin Hutchinson – Director of the A.5 Western Transport Corridor and Active Travel
- Mr Peter McParland – Deputy Director for Active Travel
- Ms Sharan Dustagheer – Head of the Programme Management Office for Active Travel

A question and answer session followed.

Harry Harvey MLA left the meeting at 11:31 am.

The Chairperson left the meeting at 11:42 am and Mr John Stewart MLA assumed the role of chairperson.



The Chairperson rejoined the meeting at 11:46 am and resumed the role of chairperson.

The officials left the meeting at 12:43 pm.

The Committee suspended at 12:43 pm.

The Committee recommenced at 12:51 pm with the following members present:

Mr Peter Martin MLA (Chairperson)

Mr John Stewart MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Andrew McMurray MLA

Mr Stephen Dunne MLA

Mr Justin McNulty MLA

Via Video Conferencing: Mr Maoliosa McHugh MLA

The Committee agreed to move to agenda item number 10.

10. Water, Sustainable Drainage and Flood Management Bill

The Committee considered a Clerk's memo in relation to the scrutiny of the Water, Sustainable, Drainage and Flood Management Bill.

Agreed: To receive oral evidence from the organisations as proposed in the Clerk's brief.

Agreed: That Committee staff scope potential options for an external visit in February 2026, subject to stakeholder availability



11. SR 2025-194 The U5390 Church Hill, Jonesborough (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2025

The Committee considered the SR 2025-194 The U5390 Church Hill, Jonesborough (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2025.

Agreed: That the Committee for Infrastructure has considered SR 2025-194 The U5390 Church Hill, Jonesborough (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2025 and has no objection to the rule.

Mr Justin McNulty MLA reiterated his opposition to the rule.

12. Subordinate Legislation - SRs Not Subject to Assembly Procedure

The Committee noted the following Statutory Rules, which were not subject to Assembly Proceedings:

- SR 2025-196 The Parking Places (Disabled Persons' Vehicles) (Amendment No. 6) Order (Northern Ireland) 2025; and
- SR 2025-200 The Schools (Part-Time 20mph Speed Limit) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2025.

Agreed: To note the Statutory Rules.

13. SL1 - The On-Street Parking (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026

The Committee has agreed that, as part of the new arrangements for handling delegated legislation, to note each proposal (SL1) in the first instance and to publish all supporting documentation on the Assembly website and issue a 'Call for Views' on Citizen Space to inform the Committee's future consideration.



Agreed: To note the proposal (SL1) for 'The On-street Parking (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026' and publish the relevant documents on the Assembly's webpage and issue a 'Call for Views' on Citizen Space.

14. SL1 - The Road Races (Circuit of Ireland Rally) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026

Agreed: To note the proposal (SL1) for 'The Road Races (Circuit of Ireland Rally) Order (Northern Ireland) 2026' and publish the relevant documents on the Assembly's webpage and issue a 'Call for Views' on Citizen Space.

15. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the draft Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: To proceed with the scheduled evidence as set out in the draft Forward Work Programme and to reflect to any changes agreed during the meeting.

The Committee moved to agenda item number 8.

8. Active Travel Delivery Plan – Department for Infrastructure – Oral Evidence

Agreed: The Committee agreed to reschedule the evidence session at a suitable date in the Forward Work Programme and to receive oral evidence from Cycling UK.



The Committee agreed to move to agenda item number 16.

16. Any Other Business.

Mr Peter McReynolds MLA referred to a road traffic fatality involving a cyclist which occurred in 2024.

Agreed: To write to the Department to seek its assessment of the operation of traffic signals in the vicinity during the period of when the incident occurred.

Mr Justin McNulty MLA highlighted a recent article 'Newry Next' in the Irish Times setting out an ambitious plan to increase the availability of housing and that he will engage with the team involved with the project to provide written evidence for the Committee's future consideration.

17. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, 21 January 2026 at 10:00 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings

The meeting was adjourned at 1:09pm.

Mr Peter Martin
Chairperson, Committee for Infrastructure

14 January 2026