



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Infrastructure

Minutes of Proceedings

26 November 2025

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

Present:

- Mr Peter Martin MLA (Chairperson)
- Mr John Stewart MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
- Mr Stephen Dunne MLA
- Mr Harry Harvey MLA
- Mr Maoliosa McHugh MLA
- Mr Andrew McMurray MLA

Via Video Conferencing: Mr Justin McNulty MLA

Apologies:

- Mr Cathal Boylan MLA
- Mr Peter McReynolds 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)

The meeting commenced at 10:07 am in public session.



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The Chairperson welcomed Mr Maoliosa McHugh MLA to the Committee.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declaration of Interests

None.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson highlighted to members the recent announcement by the Office for Environmental Protection of its intention to undertake an investigation into the Department for Infrastructure, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs and the Utility Regulator over the regulation of sewage discharges into Belfast Lough

Agreed: To write to the Minister for Infrastructure to establish that, in the absence of progressing the Living with Water Programme in Belfast, what specific actions are being undertaken to address the pollution of Belfast Lough.

Agreed: To write to the Office for Environmental Protection to seek further detail on its terms of reference for its review and an indicative timescale for its conclusion.



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- Agreed:** To write to the Department for Infrastructure to seek a more detailed explanation of what is meant by 'operational matters' when responding to Assembly questions tabled by Members. .
- Agreed:** That the Clerk liaises with the Clerk to the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to examine what action, if any, it has taken to address similar concerns with the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in respect of pollution of Belfast Lough.

4. Draft Minutes

- Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 19 November 2025.

5. Matters Arising

The Committee noted a summary of the issues discussed by the Committee for Finance in relation to the proposed level of Assembly control for regulation making powers under Clause 17 of the Administrative and Financial Provisions Bill.

- Agreed:** To write to the Committee for Finance confirming that, given the potential for the regulations powers being made under Clause 17 of the Administrative and Financial Provisions Bill will enable Department for Infrastructure to apply a fee as specified, the Committee was supportive of the view to amend the Assembly procedure to affirmative resolution.



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6. Correspondence

The Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

- Gravis Planning correspondence regarding the Draft Masterplan for Belfast Harbour 2025-2050; and
- Invitation to the launch of its Annual Human Rights Statement 2025 on 8 December, 12:00 – 2:00 pm, in the Long Gallery.

7. Northern Ireland Water – operational and financial update – Oral Evidence

The following representatives joined the meeting at 10:30 am.

- Sara Venning – Chief Executive, Northern Ireland Water;
- Ronan Larkin – Director of Finance and Regulation, Northern Ireland Water; and
- Gary Curran – Director of Engineering & Sustainability, Northern Ireland Water.

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

A question and answer session followed.

The representatives left the meeting at 11:59 am.

Agreed: To write to Northern Ireland Water to seek further detail on:

- The number and costs associated for maintaining dormant reservoirs that Northern Ireland Water has responsibility for;
- Its analysis of the economic impact/consequences arising for the historical under-investment of Northern Ireland's water network; and



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- Its assessment of the how the use of artificial intelligence technology has enabled it to progress innovative approaches to manage the wastewater network and how it considers such approaches could be adopted more widely across the public sector to improve outcomes at a time of financial constraint.

Agreed: To write to the Department for Infrastructure seeking detail on the number of planning applications that have been granted but subsequently paused due to issues relating to connection to the water network.

The Committee suspended at 12:05 pm.

The Committee recommenced at 12:15 pm with the following members present:

Mr Peter Martin MLA (Chairperson)

Mr John Stewart MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Stephen Dunne MLA

Mr Harry Harvey MLA

Mr Maoliosa McHugh MLA

Mr Andrew McMurray MLA

Via Video Conferencing: Mr Justin McNulty MLA

8. Update on Community Transport Review and Cross Departmental Working Group – Department for Infrastructure

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 12:15 pm.

- Peter Rice – Interim Director of Public Transport Operations, Department for Infrastructure;



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- Leona Lees – Public Transport Operations, Department for Infrastructure; and
- John Conville – Public Transport Operations, Department for Infrastructure.

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

A question and answer session followed.

The departmental officials left the meeting at 13:01 pm.

9. Water, Sustainable Drainage and Flood Management Bill - Consideration of Responses received to date

The Committee noted written submissions in response to its 'Call for Evidence' from:

- Construction Employers Federation;
- British Red Cross;
- Committee for Finance; and
- Derry and Strabane District Council.

Agreed: To publish the responses on the Committee webpage.

10. Operation and Maintenance Resilience Review – Department for Infrastructure – Written Evidence

The Committee noted written evidence from the Department for Infrastructure following its review of 'Operation and Maintenance Resilience.'



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The Committee expressed concern over the findings emerging from the review and noted that it stated that *‘Long-standing and systemic challenges have eroded levels of trust and engagement across the entire workforce, leaving the business unit struggling to meet its essential mission.’*

Agreed: To write to the Department for Infrastructure to seeking:

- Quarterly updates on DfI’s action plan in response to the review;
- Its assessment of the impact on spending to undertake improvements or projects as a direct result of its 38% vacancy rate;
- a summary of the grades and/or specialisms that are vacant and how these rates compare to other Departments and average vacancy rates across the industry;
- the impact the findings of the review have on the broader delivery of the Minister’s ‘three-pronged’ approach; and
- To schedule oral evidence at a suitable date in the Forward Work Programme; and

11. Subordinate Legislation - SRs Not Subject to Assembly Procedure

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

- SR 2025-181 The Parking and Waiting Restrictions (Belfast) (Amendment No. 2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2025;
- SR 2025-182 The Waiting Restrictions (Portstewart) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2025; and
- SR 2025-184 The Parking Places (Disabled Persons’ Vehicles) (Amendment No. 5) Order (Northern Ireland) 2025.



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Agreed: To note the Statutory Rules.

12. Subordinate Legislation – SL1s Not Subject to Assembly Procedure

The Committee noted the following proposals for Statutory Rules, which are not subject to Assembly Proceedings:

- SL1 - The Parking Places (Disabled Persons' Vehicles) (Amendment No. 6) Order (Northern Ireland) 2025; and
- SL1 - The Parking Places on Roads (Coaches) (Amendment No. 2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2025; and
- SL1 – The Waiting Restrictions (Springfield Road, Belfast) (Amendment) Order 2025.

The Committee considered the SL1 - The Parking Places (Disabled Persons' Vehicles) (Amendment No.6) Order (Northern Ireland) 2025.

In considering the proposals, the Committee noted that the SL1 did not contain sufficient information to specify the locations of parking spaces that would be impacted under the proposed rule.

Agreed: To write to the Department for Infrastructure to request further detail of the parking spaces affected under the proposal and to request that, for future proposals of a similar nature, SL1 letters should contain the relevant data on locations of where changes are proposed.

Agreed: To defer consideration of the proposal until the additional information has been received.



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13. 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.

14. Any Other Business

None.

15. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, 3 December 2025 at 10:00 am in Antrim Civic Centre.

The meeting was adjourned at 13:12 pm.

Mr Peter Martin
Chairperson, Committee for Infrastructure

3 December 2025