



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Infrastructure

Minutes of Proceedings

15 October 2025

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

Present:

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

Via Video Conference:

- Ms Nicola Brogan MLA
- Mr Cathal Boylan MLA

Apologies:

- Mr Peter McReynolds MLA

In Attendance:

- Mr Michael Potter (Assembly Clerk)
- Mr Philip Pateman (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
- Mr Jonathan Lawless (Clerical Supervisor)
- Mr Oliver Briant (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced in public session at 10:07 am



1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declaration of Interests

Mr Peter Martin declared an interest as having a family member who works for the Department for Infrastructure.

Mr Cathal Boylan joined the meeting at 10:10 am.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson notified the Committee of his informal meeting with the Minister for Infrastructure.

The Chairperson sought agreement from the Committee as to its approach to the publication of responses received to its Call for Evidence on the Water, Sustainable Drainage and Flood Management Bill.

Agreed: To publish individual responses as they are received, following consideration by the Committee.

Mr Justin McNulty joined the meeting at 10:14 am.

The Chairperson made reference to the ongoing controversy surrounding a billboard on Camlough Road in Newry that was erected without the requisite planning permission.

Agreed: To write to the Minister for Infrastructure to seek detail on the issue relating to the billboard erected in the vicinity of the Egyptian Arch, Newry, to establish:

- What permission was sought to place the billboard on DfI land;



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- Departmental action taken in relation to the billboard, to include when it became aware of the billboard, actions taken and current/future enforcement action;
- Detail of actions taken by the Department in other cases when unauthorised billboards are placed on DfI land and the time elapsed to commence enforcement;
- How DfI reconciles its position when seeking to commence enforcement action in other cases and the apparent inaction in this case;
- Details of any assessments undertaken to establish the structural integrity of the billboard given its close proximity to the road network.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 8 October 2025.

5. Matters Arising

The Committee discussed the upcoming session with Northern Ireland Water on its Annual Report and Accounts and any potential lines of questioning.

Agreed: To write to Northern Ireland Water to invite them to provide an operational update and to examine its financial position, impacts arising from a constrained budget and assessment of cost and spend to build capacity at pumping stations to support new developments.



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6. Correspondence

Response from the Minister for Infrastructure providing clarification around what assurances were sought from DAERA prior to informing the decision to proceed with the project.

Agreed: To write to the Minister to seek clarification on why the High Court judgment states that there was no evidence being provided by DAERA to DFI in relation to the project.

Response from the Minister for Infrastructure to MPANI's assertion of why new road projects are being commenced when there is insufficient funding to sustain the existing road network.

Agreed: To forward to the Mineral Products Association Northern Ireland for information.

Correspondence from Build Homes NI requesting to meet the Committee to discuss the wastewater infrastructure issues facing the planning and building sectors.

Agreed: To request written evidence setting out the issues in advance of consideration of scheduling a formal oral evidence session.

Correspondence from a member of the public regarding a request for further information regarding the York Street Interchange.

Agreed: To write to the individual advising them to direct their request to the Department for Infrastructure for comment.

The Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

- Copy correspondence from the Minister for Infrastructure to the Committee for Health providing information on what discussions my Department has had in relation to improving community transport and resolving licensing issues that this important sector is currently facing;
- Response from the Department for Infrastructure to Committee correspondence awaiting response.
- Response from the Department for Infrastructure to Committee correspondence regarding entry for connections for miscommunications;



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- Copy of the Belfast City Centre Network Performance Report for September 2025;
- Invitation from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation to the Chairperson to a roundtable event to mark International Eradication of Poverty Day; and
- Copy correspondence from a member of the public regarding a complaint of maladministration against the Department for Infrastructure for failure to commence ROMPs.

7. Water, Sustainable Drainage and Flood Management Bill – Northern Ireland Water – Oral Evidence

The following representatives joined the meeting at 10:35 am.

- Sara Venning, Chief Executive Officer, Northern Ireland Water;
- Paddy Brow, Head of Living with Water Programme, Northern Ireland Water; and
- John Burke, Senior Lawyer, SEC Company Secretariat, Northern Ireland Water.

The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

The representatives provided the Committee with an introductory briefing.

A question and answer session followed.

The representatives left the meeting at 12:06 pm.

Agreed: To write to Northern Ireland Water seeking:

- A copy of the 'wish list' of issues included in its submission to the Department in February 2020;
- A summary of the costs incurred for tankering water in response to extreme weather events/periods of drought;



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- An assessment of the how the Bill goes beyond the provisions of the SPS2015, PPS15 Water and Sewerage Services Act 2016; and
- An assessment of the economic impact arising from the lack of capacity in the water network.

8. Final budget decisions 2025-26 – Department for Infrastructure - Oral Evidence

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 12:06 pm.

- Susan Anderson – Director of Finance;
- Declan McGeown – Deputy Secretary for Water and Departmental Delivery;
- Colin Woods – Deputy Secretary for Transport and Road Asset Management; and
- Peter Rice – Acting Director of Public Transport Operations.

The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

The Departmental officials provided the Committee with an introductory briefing.

A question and answer session followed.

9. Spending Review/Budget Sustainability Plan – Department for Infrastructure – Oral Evidence

The following Departmental officials continued the meeting at 12:59 pm.

- Susan Anderson – Director of Finance;
- Declan McGeown – Deputy Secretary for Water and Departmental Delivery;



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- Colin Woods – Deputy Secretary for Transport and Road Asset Management; and
- Peter Rice – Acting Director of Public Transport Operations.

The evidence session was recorded by Hansard.

The Departmental officials provided the Committee with an introductory briefing.

A question and answer session followed.

The Departmental officials left the meeting at 1:11 pm.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding the alignment of the budget to the Programme for Government.

Agreed: To write to DFI seeking:

- A table of resource and capital opening allocations for the 2024-25 financial year;
- To receive a written update on active travel spending with a view to scheduling oral evidence;
- Its assessment of the valuation of land and assets on land vested by the Department when undertaking road projects including plans for disposal and associated timescales for each project;
- Confirmation of how much of the Shared Island funding has been spent to date towards progressing the A5 project; and
- DfI's assessment of the business improvements implemented and efficiencies that have been realised as a result.

Agreed: To write to the Minister of Finance to establish whether there will be a October monitoring round and if not, why not, and to seek confirmation that there will be a multi-year budget going forward into the next financial year.



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10. End of Session Report 2024-2025 – Consideration of Draft Report

The Committee considered the content of the End of Session Report 2024-2025.

Agreed: To note the report and publish it on the Committee webpage.

11. Assembly Research and Information Service - Sustainable Drainage Systems – Written Evidence

The Committee considered an Assembly Research and Information Service paper on Sustainable Drainage Systems.

Agreed: To note the report and publish on the Committee webpage and include in the Committee Bill folder.

12. SR 2025 -154 The U324 Cannyreagh Road, Donaghadee (Stopping-Up) Order (Northern Ireland) 2025

The Committee considered SR 2025-154 The U324 Cannyreagh Road, Donaghadee (Stopping-Up) Order (Northern Ireland) 2025.

Agreed: That the Committee for Infrastructure has considered SR 2025-154 The U324 Cannyreagh Road, Donaghadee (Stopping-Up) Order (Northern Ireland) 2025 and has no objection to the rule.

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.



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14. Any Other Business

None.

15. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, 22 October 2025 at 10:00 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 pm.

Mr Peter Martin
Chairperson, Committee for Infrastructure

22 October 2025