



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Infrastructure

Minutes of Proceedings

9 October 2024

Meeting Location: Room 29, Parliament Buildings

Present:

- Mrs Deborah Erskine MLA (Chairperson)
- Mr John Stewart MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
- Mr Danny Baker MLA
- Mr Cathal Boylan MLA
- Mr Keith Buchanan MLA
- Mr Stephen Dunne MLA
- Mr Mark Durkan MLA
- Mr Andrew McMurray MLA
- Mr Peter McReynolds MLA

Apologies: None

In Attendance:

- Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Assembly Clerk)
- Mr Phil Pateman (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
- Mr Jonathan Lawless (Clerical Supervisor)
- Mr William Kinnear (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced in public session at 10:00 am.



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1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declaration of Interests

Mr Mark Durkan joined the meeting at 10:01 am.

Mr Cathal Boylan declared an interest in relation to a family member who works for the Department for Infrastructure (DfI).

Mrs Deborah Erskine declared an interest in relation to a relative of her husband who resides along the A5 route.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson welcomed the announcement of an investigation into the incident involving a Translink school bus on 7 October 2024 and, on behalf of the Committee, expressed best wishes to all those involved in the incident.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 2 October 2024.

5. Matters Arising

The Committee noted correspondence from the National Franchise Dealers Association in follow up to the oral evidence from DfI officials on the Vehicle



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Emissions Trading Scheme (Amendment) Order 2024 at the meeting on 2 October 2024.

6. Correspondence

Correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding unfulfilled Northern Ireland Civil Service vacancies.

Agreed: To seek written evidence from DfI providing a breakdown of vacancies by grade within each business area and an overview of plans to fill vacant posts.

An invitation from Queen's University Belfast for the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson, or other representatives of the Committee, to the launch of the University's Centre for Public Policy and Administration on Friday 25 October 2024.

Agreed: That any member wishing to attend should notify the organiser of the event directly.

Update on the Older People's Parliament and an invitation to attend a round table event on 12 October 2024.

Agreed: That any member wishing to attend should notify the Committee Clerk.

The Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

- Department for Infrastructure Roads Southern Division – 2024/25 Annual Report to Newry, Mourne and Down District Council;
- Department for Infrastructure Roads Western Division – 2024/25 Annual Report to Mid Ulster District Council;
- Department for Infrastructure update regarding the suspension of the Strangford Lough Ferry Service;
- Committee for Finance correspondence regarding the Outturn and Forecast Outturn Date – June/July 2024;



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- Copy of Minister of Finance Written Ministerial Statement – Budget Sustainability Plan;
- Correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding the UK Shared Property Fund;
- Responses from Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council (CCGBC) and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council (ABC) regarding grass cutting and road safety;
- Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee Work Programme for 2024-2025;
- Further correspondence from a member of the public relating to taxi licensing issues;
- Northern Ireland Youth Assembly Newsletter – September 2024;
- Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) and the Department for Infrastructure:
 - DFI Driver, Vehicle, Operator and Enforcement Statistics 2024/25 Quarter One;
 - Household Water Usage Factsheet 2023/24;
 - Northern Ireland Planning Statistics: First Quarter 2024/25 Statistical Bulletin; and
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland - Department for Infrastructure – Investing Activity Report – September 2024.

7. Draft Programme for Government 2024-27 – Department for Infrastructure – Oral Evidence

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 10:05 am:

- Alison Clydesdale – Director Water and Drainage Policy Division, DfI;



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- Rosemary Daly – Director Regional Planning, Governance and Legislation, DfI; and
- Liam McEvoy – Director of Road Asset Development, DfI.

The officials provided an overview of the Department's responsibilities in respect of the draft Programme for Government.

A question and answer session followed.

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The officials undertook to provide a detailed briefing from the Department's Director of People Development on the level of vacancies across the Department and details of the action being taken and programmes being implemented to address existing gaps.

The Departmental officials left the meeting at 11:00 am.

The Committee discussed key issues and themes for inclusion in its response to the Committee for the Executive Office, which is coordinating the response to the Programme for Government on behalf of statutory committees.

Mr Mark Durkan declared an interest stating that he resides on an unadopted housing development.

Mrs Deborah Erskine declared an interest stating that she resides on an unadopted housing development.

Agreed: To consider a draft response to the Committee for the Executive Office at the meeting on 16 October 2024.

8. Ports Review Consultation - Department for Infrastructure – Oral Evidence

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 11:12 am:

- Sian Kerr – Director of Transport Planning and Policy;
- Seamus O'Hare – Head of Gateways Branch; and



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- Adele Campbell – Gateways Branch.

The officials gave evidence on a number of matters that have been identified for inclusion in a consultation on ports policy.

A question and answer session followed.

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Departmental officials left the meeting at 11:44 am.

9. SL1 – The Trunk Road T3 [(Western Transport Corridor – Sion Mills (North) to Ballygawley (West))] Order (Northern Ireland) 2024

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 11:45 am:

- Colin Hutchinson – Director of the A5 Western Transport Corridor and Active Travel;
- Seamus Keenan – Deputy Director of the A5 Western Transport Corridor; and
- David Millar – DfI Roads.

The officials gave evidence on the proposals to make two statutory rules relating to the A5 Western Transport Corridor.

A question and answer session followed.

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Departmental officials agreed to provide the Committee with a copy of the Vesting Pack that will be issued to landowners impacted by the A5 scheme.

The Departmental officials left the meeting at 12:18 pm.

The Committee considered SL1 - The Trunk Road T3 [(Western Transport Corridor – Sion Mills (North) to Ballygawley (West))] Order (Northern Ireland) 2024, which will be subject to the negative resolution procedure.



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Agreed: That the Committee was content with the proposal for the Statutory Rules.

The Committee considered SL1 - The Private Accesses on the A5 Western Transport Corridor – Sion Mills (North) to Ballygawley (West) (Stopping-Up) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024, which will not be subject to Assembly procedure.

Agreed: That the Committee was content with the proposal for the Statutory Rules.

10. SR 2024-165 The Armagh Road Moy (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024

The Committee considered SR 2024-165 The Armagh Road Moy (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024.

The Committee noted that the Examiner of Statutory Rules had raised no concerns regarding the technical aspects of the Statutory Rule.

Agreed: That the Committee for Infrastructure has considered SR 2024-165 The Armagh Road Moy (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024 and has no objection to the Rule.

11. SR 2024-166 The Moyraverty Centre, Craigavon (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024

The Committee considered SR 2024-166 The Moyraverty Centre, Craigavon (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024.

The Committee noted that the Examiner of Statutory Rules had raised no concerns regarding the technical aspects of the Statutory Rule.

Agreed: That the Committee for Infrastructure has considered SR 2024-166 The Moyraverty Centre, Craigavon (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024 and has no objection to the Rule.



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12. SL1 - The Coopers Mill Park, Dundonald (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024

The Committee considered SL1 - The Coopers Mill Park, Dundonald (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024.

Agreed: That the Committee will defer consideration of the proposal for the statutory rule until further information relating the circumstances of retrospective abandonment has been received from the Department.

13. SL1 - The Drumna Walk, Lurgan (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024

The Committee considered SL1 - The Drumna Walk, Lurgan (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024.

Agreed: That the Committee will defer consideration of the proposal for the statutory rule until further information relating the circumstances of retrospective abandonment has been received from the Department.

14. Subordinate Legislation – SRs Not Subject to Assembly Proceedings

The Committee noted the following Statutory Rule that has been laid in the Business Office, which is not subject to Assembly Proceedings:

- SR 2024-175 The Cycle Routes (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024.



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15. Subordinate Legislation – SL1s Not Subject to Assembly Proceedings

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

- SL1 – The Parking and Waiting Restrictions (Belfast) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024;
- SL1 – The Parking Places (Disabled Persons' Vehicles) (Amendment No. 4) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024;
- SL1 – The Parking Places (Disabled Persons' Vehicles) (Amendment No. 5) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024;
- SL1 – The Parking Places on Roads (Electric Vehicles) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024; and
- SL1 – The Parking and Waiting Restrictions (Derry/Londonderry) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024.

16. Proposals in a range of Road Traffic and Vehicle Policy Areas – Department for Infrastructure – Written Briefing

The Committee noted written evidence from Department for Infrastructure on proposals in a range of road traffic and vehicle policy areas, including drink and drug driving, graduated driver licensing and illegal use of mobile phones.

17. 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.



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18. Any Other Business

Concerns were raised by a Member about issues relating to the discharge of planning conditions for new housing developments, which delays people moving into new homes.

Agreed: To ask the Department for its assessment of the reasons for delays in discharging planning conditions and number of newly built houses or developments across Northern Ireland that are affected.

19. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 2 October 2024 at 10:00 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:33 pm.

Mrs Deborah Erskine
Chairperson, Committee for Infrastructure
16 October 2024