



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

## **Committee for Infrastructure**

### **Minutes of Proceedings**

**15 May 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 Peter McReynolds MLA

**Apologies:** None

**In Attendance:**

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

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



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The Chairperson proposed that Mr Andrew McMurray MLA be invited to join the meeting as a non-nominated member in advance of his expected appointment to the Committee for Infrastructure.

**Agreed:** That Mr McMurray joins the meeting as a non-nominated member.

### **1. Apologies**

As above.

### **2. Declaration of Interests**

None.

### **3. Chairperson's Business**

None

### **4. Draft Minutes**

Mr Cathal Boylan joined the meeting at 10:05.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 8 May 2024.

### **5. Matters Arising**

None.



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### 6. Correspondence

Correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding the Draft Executive Budget 2024-2025.

Members noted that the debate and vote on the Draft Budget 2024-25 has been provisionally scheduled for 28 May 2024 and that Department for Infrastructure (DfI) officials have indicated that they will not be in a position to provide oral evidence on the outworkings of DfI's budget allocation until 29 May 2024.

**Agreed:** To advise the Minister for Infrastructure of members' concern that the Committee will not receive oral evidence on DfI's 2024-25 Budget position before the debate and vote on 28 May 2024.

**Agreed:** To inform the Committee for Finance that the Committee will not receive evidence from the Department for Infrastructure on its budget allocation until 29 May 2024.

**Agreed:** To provide the Committee for Finance with a copy of the Official Report from the oral evidence of 20 March 2024 along with the Department's written evidence for that meeting.

Correspondence from the Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA) expressing concerns over the delivery of the York Street Interchange Project.

**Agreed:** To forward the correspondence to DfI for its views the proposals contained and clarification of whether these, or similar proposals, are being considered to progress the project.

Correspondence from the Northern Ireland Federation of the National Association of Funeral Directors (NIFD) requesting a meeting to discuss the impact of Taxi & Passenger Service Vehicle (PSV) regulations on undertakers.

**Agreed:** To arrange an informal meeting with the Northern Ireland Federation of the NAFD.

Correspondence from a Public Hire Taxi Driver regarding the actions and conduct of the Driver and Vehicle Agency's (DVA) Taxi Licensing and Enforcement.

**Agreed:** To respond to the individual highlighting the Committee's scrutiny, policy development and consultation role and suggesting that the individual contact their local MLAs.



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Correspondence from Mobile UK requesting to provide evidence to the Committee regarding planning concerns in Northern Ireland.

**Agreed:** To forward the correspondence to the Department for Infrastructure for a response to the issues raised.

The Committee noted the following item of correspondence:

- Brussels Report – January – March 2024 - Northern Ireland Executive Office.

### **7. Overview of the Role of Department for Infrastructure Rivers – Department for Infrastructure oral evidence**

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 10:11 am.

- Jonathan McKee, Director – Rivers Development, DfI;
- Gary Quinn, Director – Rivers Operations, DfI; and
- James Kelly, Rivers Operations, DfI.

The departmental officials provided the Committee with an overview of the role of Department for Infrastructure Rivers.

A question and answer session followed.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The officials agreed to provide further information requested during the evidence session.

The Departmental officials left the meeting at 11:30 am.

**Agreed:** To receive a response to any other questions not raised during the evidence session.



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**8. Planning System matters – SPPS on Climate Change; regional strategic planning policy on Renewable and Low Carbon Energy; and Planning Application Validation Checklists – Department for Infrastructure oral evidence**

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 11:30 am.

- Alistair Beggs – Chief Planner & Director of Regional Planning Policy & Casework, DfI;
- Joy Hargie – Regional Planning Policy & Casework, DfI;
- Kathryn McFerran – acting Director of Regional Planning, Governance and Legislation, DfI; and
- Nola Jamieson – Regional Planning, Governance and Legislation, DfI.

The departmental officials provided oral evidence on Planning System matters relating to the SPPS on Climate Change; regional strategic planning policy on Renewable and Low Carbon Energy; and Planning Application Validation Checklists

A question and answer session followed.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The officials agreed to provide, in confidence, a copy of the report on the Review of Regional Strategic Planning Policy for Renewable and Low Carbon Energy.

The officials also undertook to raise the process for engaging with the Committee on consultation reports prior to the publication of final policy proposals with the Minister for Infrastructure.

The Departmental officials left the meeting at 12:39 pm.

**Agreed:** To forward the Minister's response regarding the North Channel Wind project to North Channel Wind, and advise that issues relating to planning have been identified as a strategic priority for the Committee and their request to meet with the Committee will be considered at an appropriate time in the forward work programme.



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**Agreed:** To respond to Forum for Better Homes NI advising that issues relating to planning have been identified as a strategic priority for the Committee and their request to meet with the Committee will be considered at an appropriate time in the forward work programme.

### 9. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the Draft Forward Work Programme.

The Committee noted the Department's request to provide oral evidence on proposals for two forthcoming Statutory Rules. These relate to a proposal for a stopping up order in Warrenpoint, for which a number of objections were received, and proposal relating to regulations for a Zero Emissions Vehicles Mandate.

**Agreed:** To schedule oral evidence from the Department for Infrastructure on both on the proposed Statutory Rules.

The Committee considered the Draft Forward Work Programme.

**Agreed:** To update the draft Forward Work Programme to reflect any decisions taken today.

### 10. Any Other Business

None.

### 11. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, 22 May 2024 at 10:00 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 pm.



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**Mrs Deborah Erskine MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Infrastructure**  
**22 May 2024**