



Northern Ireland
Assembly

**COMMITTEE FOR INFRASTRUCTURE
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

WEDNESDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2020

SENATE CHAMBER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

Present: Ms Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)
Mr David Hilditch MLA (Deputy-Chairperson)
Ms Martina Anderson MLA
Mr Roy Beggs MLA
Mr Cathal Boylan MLA
Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA (*via Starleaf*)
Ms Liz Kimmins MLA (*via Starleaf*)
Mr Andrew Muir MLA

Apologies: Mr Keith Buchanan MLA

In Attendance: Mrs Alison Ross (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Vincent Gribbin (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Johnny Lawless (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr William Kinnear (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced in open session at 10:25 am.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Chairpersons Business

Agreed: The Committee agreed to formally record its agreement to the accelerated passage of The Harbours Bill and to write to the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly informing him of the Committee's decision.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 11 November 2020.

4. Matters Arising

None.

5. Correspondence

Copy correspondence from the Committee for the Economy to the Minister for Infrastructure regarding airport connectivity.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister requesting information on the support available for Northern Ireland's Airports to mitigate against the current pandemic.

Copy of the Examiner of Statutory Rules Twenty-Seventh Report of the Session 2019-2020 Report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the report.

Correspondence from the System Operator for Northern Ireland (SONI) regarding their Consultation on the Transmission Development Plan for Northern Ireland (2020 - 29) and request to brief the Committee.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing in the forward work programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing from Northern Ireland Electricity in the forward work programme.

Copy of the Examiner of Statutory Rules Twenty-Eighth Report of the Session 2019-2020 Report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the report.

Copy correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office to Michael Gove MP regarding the Future Relationship with the European Union.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

Correspondence from Karen McDowell regarding the resumption of driving tests following the week extension to the COVID restrictions.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the correspondence to the Department for information and comment.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Ms McDowell advising her that she should correspond directly with the Department on this matter.

Ministerial response regarding Committee concerns regarding the Transport Regulations Unit.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister noting that the Minister's email inbox has been closed on Friday afternoons preventing Members of the Committee from informing her of relevant issues and to request that she provide an alternative process for actioning correspondence on these occasions.

Correspondence from the Examiner for Statutory Rules in relation to SR 2020-218 The Planning Act 2011 (Review) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and SR 2020-222 Amendments to the Carriage of Dangerous Goods and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment Regulation (NI) 2010.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister for Infrastructure raising the concerns highlighted in the Examiner of Statutory Rules regarding SR 2020-218 The Planning Act 2011 (Review) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and requesting that her Department implement a solution to pre-empt any problems that may arise in the future.

6. Subordinate Legislation – SL1's – Not Subject to Assembly proceedings

The Committee considered the following proposals for Statutory Rules not subject to any Assembly proceedings.

- SL1 - The Parking and Waiting Restrictions (Donaghmore) Order (Northern Ireland) 2020
- SL1 - The Parking and Waiting Restrictions (Londonderry) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2020
- SL1 - The Parking Places on Roads (Coaches) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2020
- SL1 - The Waiting Restrictions (Lisburn) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2020
- SL1 - The Parking Places on Roads and Waiting Restrictions (Cookstown) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2020

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it is content to note the proposals for the Statutory Rules.

7. SR 2020-249 The Taxi Driver (Coronavirus, Financial Assistance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

The Committee considered SR 2020-249 The Taxi Driver (Coronavirus, Financial Assistance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020. The purpose of the Rule is to provide financial assistance to mitigate the economic impact of Covid-19 on taxi drivers.

Agreed: The Committee considered SR 2020-249 The Taxi Driver (Coronavirus, Financial Assistance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020, and, subject to the Examiner of Rules has no objection to the rule.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister requesting that she engage with the Minister for Communities to ensure that the financial assistance provided to taxi drivers under the scheme will not impact on any Universal Credit or other benefits they may receive.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Committee for Communities advising it of the possible adverse impact that the Taxi Drivers Scheme may have on those recipients of the Scheme who may also be in receipt of benefits and that they may wish to take this issue up with the Department for Communities to ensure that a solution is found.

8. Joint Briefing - Department for Infrastructure & Sustrans Active Travel

The representatives and Departmental officials joined the meeting at 10:37 am.

Ms Caroline Bloomfield, Director, Sustrans
Ms Anne Madden, Policy and Media Advisor, Sustrans
Ms Liz Loughran, Director of Transport Policy, Department for Infrastructure
Ms Claire Mulvenna, Active Travel Branch, Department for Infrastructure

The representatives and Departmental officials provided the Committee with an oral briefing.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

A question and answer session followed.

Mr Andrew Muir declared an interest as a previous member of Ards and Down Borough Council, and ex-employee of Translink and a volunteer for Sustrans.

Mr Cathal Boylan left the meeting at 11:50 am.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives and Departmental officials for their attendance.

The representatives and Departmental officials left the meeting at 12:04 p m.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department on the following issues:

- What findings and feedback there has been on the pilot projects of school traffic calming and safer schools measures.
- A list of schools identified as in urgent need of school crossing facilities.
- Information on discussions the Department has had with the Education Authority about changes the numbers of school road Patrol Officers.
- Information on the plans for linking Carrickfergus to the Belfast Cycling Network.
- An update on the application to the Special European Union Programmes Body for funding for Derry Active Travel Hub.
- Ensure that the Department promotes green travel opportunities within the Covid Recovery Steering Group.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Sustrans requesting a copy of the evaluation report of the Rural Safe Routes to School Programme.

9. Departmental Briefing - Living with Water in Belfast

The Departmental officials joined the meeting at 12:05 pm.

Mr Simon Richardson, Director of Living with Water Programme,
Mr Stuart Wightman, Programme Manager Living with Water Programme

The Departmental officials provided the Committee with an oral briefing.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

A question and answer session followed.

The Chairperson thanked the Departmental officials for their attendance.

The Departmental officials left the meeting at 12:49 pm.

10. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the Draft Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

11. Any Other Business

None

12. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The Committee agreed that the next meeting would be on Wednesday, 25 November 2020 at 10:00 am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The Committee adjourned at 12:50 pm

Ms Michelle McIlveen MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Infrastructure

25 November 2020