



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

## COMMITTEE FOR INFRASTRUCTURE MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

WEDNESDAY, 2 DECEMBER 2020

ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

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

Apologies: None

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 9:38 am.*

### 1. Apologies

As above.

### 2. Chairpersons Business

The Committee discussed an informal meeting it held on 30 November 2020, with representatives for taxi drivers, regarding concerns relating to the Department for Infrastructure's Taxi Drivers Covid Financial Assistance Scheme.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Minister for Infrastructure expressing its concerns in relation to the issues outlined by the representatives for taxi drivers and what the Minister intends to do, including a change in the regulations in relation to amending the criteria for the scheme related to insurance cover to allow more drivers to benefit from the scheme.

### **3. Draft Minutes**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 25 November 2020.

### **4. Matters Arising**

None.

### **5. Correspondence**

Correspondence from the Department for Transport in relation to the Common Frameworks Response to Parliamentary Scrutiny.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

Response from the Minister for Finance to Committee correspondence regarding Wrightbus & Ryse Hydrogen.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the response and forward to Wrightbus & Ryse Hydrogen for information.

Correspondence from SOLACE NI & NILGA regarding EU Successor Funding in Northern Ireland: Position Paper for Society of Local Authority Chief Executives NI.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and schedule a briefing in the Forward Work Programme.

Copy of the Examiner of Statutory Rules Thirty-First Report of the 2019-2020 Session.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the report.

Copy correspondence from Safety Before LNG to the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Infrastructure regarding Breach of Ministerial Code of Conduct complaint against Minister Mallon.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

Assembly Research and Information Service briefing paper on a Strategic Approach to Infrastructure Planning.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the paper and schedule a briefing in the forward work programme.

Correspondence from the Examiner of Statutory Rules regarding SR 2020-249 The Taxi Driver (Coronavirus, Financial Assistance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

Correspondence from Sustrans in response to Committee correspondence following their briefing on Wednesday 18 November 2020.

*Mr Andrew Muir declared an interest as a previous employee of Translink.*

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department for Infrastructure for information around the gap in revenue required to staff the active travel centre within the North West Transport Hub and which is preventing the active travel centre's opening.

Correspondence from Bridge Taxis, Antrim regarding concerns over the financial support available to taxi company owners.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and forward it to the Department for Infrastructure for comment.

## **6. Subordinate Legislation – SL1 – Not Subject to Assembly proceedings**

- The Committee considered the following SL1 not subject to any Assembly proceedings.
  - The Parking Places on Roads and Waiting Restrictions (Newry) (Amendment No. 2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2020

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with the proposal for the Statutory Rule.

## **7. SL1 - The Planning (Environmental Assessments and Technical Miscellaneous Amendments) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020**

The Committee considered SL1 - The Planning (Environmental Assessments and Technical Miscellaneous Amendments) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it is content to note the proposal for the Statutory Rule.

## **8. SR 2020-276 The Port Services (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020**

The Committee considered SR 2020-276 The Port Services (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020. The amendments in this Rule addresses deficiencies in the EU Port Services Regulation, which arise because of the UK's withdrawal from the EU. For example, the obligations of Member States are being amended so that these obligations transfer to the Department and the notification requirements to the European Commission are being removed, as they will not apply after the implementation period completion day.

*Agreed:* The Committee considered SR 2020-276 The Port Services (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020, and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules has no objection to the rule.

**9. SR 2020-277 The Railways (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020**

The Committee considered SR 2020-277 The Railways (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020. The purpose of the Rule is to address failures of retained EU law to operate effectively and other deficiencies (in particular under paragraph 3 of schedule 2) arising from the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union.

*Agreed:* The Committee considered SR 2020-277 The Railways (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020, and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules has no objection to the rule.

*Ms Martina Anderson joined the meeting at 9:52 am*

**10. SR 2020-282 The Bus Operator (Coronavirus, Financial Assistance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020**

The Committee considered SR 2020-282 The Bus Operator (Coronavirus, Financial Assistance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020. The First Minister and deputy First Minister, acting jointly, made a determination on 3rd November 2020 that exceptional circumstances exist for licensed bus operators as a consequence of the outbreak of Coronavirus. These exceptional circumstances include financial hardship arising from the loss of business. The determination states that it is desirable to provide financial assistance to mitigate the effect of the outbreak on licensed bus operators.

*Agreed:* The Committee considered SR 2020-282 The Bus Operator (Coronavirus, Financial Assistance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020, and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules has no objection to the rule.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department for Infrastructure for information on the consultation that took place with the Bus and Coach Sector on the development of the regulations and the criteria considered for eligibility.

*The Committee agreed to move to agenda item number 18.*

**18. SL1 - The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) (Amendment No. 2) (Coronavirus) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020**

The Committee considered SL1 - The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) (Amendment No. 2) (Coronavirus) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed that it is content to note the proposal for the Statutory Rule.

*The Committee agreed to move to agenda item number 11.*

**11. Briefing from Belfast International Airport – Financial Impact of COVID-19 on Belfast International Airport**

*The representatives joined the meeting at 9:53 am.*

Mr Graham Keddie, Managing Director, Belfast International Airport (via Starleaf)  
Mr Emmanuel Menanteau, Chairman, Belfast International Airport (via Starleaf)

The representatives provided the Committee with an oral briefing.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

A question and answer session followed.

*Mr Roy Beggs joined the meeting at 10:08 am*

*Ms Liz Kimmins joined the meeting at 10:13 am*

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

*The representatives left the meeting at 10:34 am.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Minister for Infrastructure expressing its concerns relating to the current financial situation of Belfast International Airport and encouraging her to engage urgently in dialogue with the airport and the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Economy to provide emergency funding.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Minister for Infrastructure for an explanation to why Belfast International Airport is the only airport in Northern Ireland that has to fund its own police force and why the Airport was not included in the emergency funding provided to city of Derry Airport and Belfast City Airport.

## **12. Departmental Briefing - Flood Management Plans Briefing including Reservoirs**

*The Departmental officials joined the meeting at 10:34 am.*

Mr Jonathan McKee, Director of Rivers (via Starleaf)  
Mr Damian Curran, Acting Director, Water and Drainage Policy Division (via Starleaf)  
Mr Mark Stranaghan, Head of Flooding & Drainage Policy (via Starleaf)

The Departmental officials provided the Committee with an oral briefing.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

*Mr Cathal Boylan declared an interest as having relatives employed by Rivers Agency.*

A question and answer session followed.

*Agreed:* The Departmental officials agreed to provide the Committee with further information on a range of issues;

- Background information on the Homeowner Flood Protection Grant Scheme and details of its uptake.
- A list of the nine reservoirs that have been identified as at risk and in bad state of repair and to share the engineer reports.
- An explanation of how reservoirs were left out of the Transfer of Functions Order.

The Chairperson thanked the Departmental officials for their attendance.

*The Departmental officials left the meeting at 11:52 am.*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Minister for Infrastructure expressing its concern at the delay in the regulations transferring Reservoirs to the Department of Infrastructure and asking if the timescale for implementation can be shortened by progressing them as a collective package of measures rather than consecutively.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to reschedule items 13 and 14 for its meeting on 9 December 2020.

## **15. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered the Draft Forward Work Programme.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

## **16. Any Other Business**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department for an update on its engagement with the Haulage Sector regarding Covid mitigation support.

## **17. Date, Time and Place of next meeting**

The Committee agreed that the next meeting would be on Wednesday, 9 December 2020 at 10:00 am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

*The Committee adjourned at 12:01 pm*

**Ms Michelle McIlveen MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Infrastructure**

**9 December 2020**