



Committee for Infrastructure

Minutes of Proceedings

3 March 2021

Meeting Location: Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

Present: Ms Michelle McIlveen MLA (Chairperson)
Mr David Hilditch MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Keith Buchanan MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Ms Martina Anderson MLA
Mr Roy Beggs MLA
Mr Cathal Boylan MLA
Mrs Dolores Kelly MLA
Ms Liz Kimmins MLA
Mr Andrew Muir MLA

Apologies: None

In Attendance: Mr Vincent Gribbin (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Alison Ross (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Jonathan Lawless (Assistant Assembly Clerk)



Mr William Kinnear (Clerical Supervisor)

The meeting commenced at 10:05 am in open session

1. Apologies

None.

2. Chairpersons Business

The Committee considered arrangements for the concurrent meeting with the Committee for the Economy and the Committee for Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs on 24 March 2020¹ to receive a briefing from the Trader Support Services and HMRC.

Agreed: The Committee agreed discuss the matter further at its meeting on 10 March 2021.

The Committee considered the initiation of its Inquiry on the Decarbonisation on Northern Ireland Transport.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Terms of Reference, the methodology and the timeframe for the Committee Inquiry.

The Committee discussed the Department's consultation on the review of planning.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department requesting that the consultation period for the Review of the Planning Act is extended beyond the 4 weeks currently given to 8 weeks to allow consultees to fully engage in the review and provide assurance that the Review is meaningful.



3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 24 February 2021.

4. Matters Arising

The Committee considered the briefing with officials on the SL1 - Further Financial Assistance for Bus and Coach Operators due to Coronavirus at its meeting on 24 February 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister highlighting concerns that there has been no further engagement by the Department with Bus and Coach Operators since last week's meeting and to ask her if she is minded to make any amendments to the proposals for the scheme to reflect the concerns of the industry.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister to ask her to advise the Committee of her Department's intentions with regard to a programme of rolling support going forward to avoid the continuing hardship for the sector in the future.

5. Correspondence

Correspondence from the Northern Ireland Assembly EU Affairs Manager regarding structures of intergovernmental relations and EU exit.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.



Copy correspondence from the Minister for Infrastructure to the Committee for Communities regarding the redevelopment of Casement Park.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

Copy of the Examiner of Statutory Rules Twenty-Sixth Report of the 2020-2021 session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the report.

Correspondence from the Committee for Justice regarding a call for evidence in relation to the Protection from Stalking Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to forward the Call for Evidence to the Department for comment and request that it outlines the extent to which it considers safety and security of the public in its infrastructure projects and the development of its policies.

Correspondence from a member of the public regarding periodic training for taxi drivers.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and write to the individual and advise him to contact his local elected representative and that the Committee would no longer be corresponding with him.

Response from the Minister for Infrastructure to issues arising from the Committee meeting on 10 February 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department regarding the confusion that remains for individuals around booking MOT appointments and asking if the issuing of Temporary Exemption Certificates will be extended and that adequate notice is given in respect of people having to book MOT's.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to Minister in respect of her response to the Haulage Industry and her comment that Covid had not had an impact on that industry, despite the fact that retail and other sectors that the Industry relies on have been closed due to the pandemic.



Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister requesting that she engage with taxi operators to provide better support.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking more detailed information on the staffing and capacity issues within the roads maintenance division, what the capacity issues are and where they are, and on its plans to recruit further staff to enable it to conduct its work.

Correspondence from a member of the public regarding concerns over cycle paths in Ballymena and the need to create green cycle paths.

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

Correspondence from Aristidas Balcetis regarding an Industrial Tribunal claim against Translink.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence and refer him to his local elected representatives.

Correspondence from the House of Lords – European Union Committee regarding EM 13944/20: Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning batteries and waste batteries, repealing Directive 2006/66/EC and amending Regulation (EU) No. 2019/1020.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.

Copy of the Examiner of Statutory Rules Twenty-Seventh Report of the 2020-2021 session.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the report.

Copy correspondence from Bus and Coach NI Ltd to the Department for Infrastructure regarding the SL1 - Further Financial Assistance for Bus and Coach Operators due to Coronavirus.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note the correspondence.



6. Subordinate Legislation - SL1s - Not Subject to Assembly Proceedings

The Committee considered the following SL1 not subject to any Assembly proceedings.

- SL1 - Parking and Waiting Restrictions (Crumlin) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021
- SL1 - The Parking and Waiting Restrictions (Londonderry) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it was content with the proposals for the Statutory Rules.

7. SL1 - The Planning (Development Management) (Temporary Modifications) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

The Committee considered the SL1 - The Planning (Development Management) (Temporary Modifications) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.

The Departmental officials joined the meeting at 10:38 am.

Ms Irene Kennedy, Head of Planning Policy Legislation Branch (*via Starleaf*)

Mr David Doherty, Planning Policy Legislation Branch (*via Starleaf*)

A question and answer session followed.

The Departmental officials left the meeting at 10:41 am.

Agreed: The Committee was content with the proposal for the statutory rule.



8. Departmental Briefing – Programme for Government

The Departmental officials joined the meeting at 10:41 am.

Ms Liz Loughran, Director of Transport Policy (*via Starleaf*)

Ms Sian Kerr, Director of Corporate Policy and Planning (*via Starleaf*)

Mr John Irvine, Director of Major Projects & Procurement (*via Starleaf*)

Ms Adele Watters, Head of Corporate Policy Unit (*via Starleaf*)

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 12:03 pm.

9. Briefing from the Construction Employers Federation

The representatives joined the meeting at 12:03 pm.

Mr Mark Spence, Managing Director, Construction Employers Federation (*via Starleaf*)

Mr David Fry, Director of External Affairs, Construction Employers Federation (*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 Andrew Muir left the meeting at 12:38 pm.

Mrs Dolores Kelly left the meeting at 12:46 pm.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives for their attendance.

The representatives left the meeting at 12:55 pm.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department of Finance highlighting the concerns of the Construction Employers Federation on issues such as:

- The negative impact of one year budgets and need for longer-term budgeting processes.
- The current budget process is only concluded in April / May and shortens the tendering processes, which leaves the industry unsighted about what projects will come online.
- The concern of the Cabinet Office guidance that allows Councils in England to more readily procure on a more local basis.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department for Infrastructure highlighting the concerns of the Construction Employers Federation on issues such as:

- Costs of materials have significantly increased due to the new customs arrangements.
- The conditions of planning applications are sometimes unreasonable.



- The planning review should consider providing more time for statutory consultees to respond to pre-planning application consultation.
- The concern of the Cabinet Office guidance that allows Councils in England to more readily procure on a more local basis.

10. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the Draft Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to schedule a briefing from the Minister for Infrastructure after Easter recess.

11. Any Other Business

None.

12. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The Committee agreed that the next meeting would be on Wednesday, 10 March 2021 at 10:00 am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.



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The meeting was adjourned at 12:57 pm.

Ms Michelle McIlveen MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Infrastructure

10 March 2021