



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Infrastructure Minutes of Proceedings

24 April 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 Jim McManus (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Philip Pateman (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Jonathan Lawless (Clerical Supervisor)

The meeting commenced at 10:02 am in public session.



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Apologies

1. As above.

Declaration of Interests

- 2.

The Chairperson reminded members of their responsibilities under Standing Order 69(5) that all Assembly Members are required to register any relevant financial and other interests in the Register of Members' Interests and the requirement to declare, at various times, any relevant financial or other interests which relate to the work of any committee of which they are a member.

Cathal Boylan declared an interest in relation to a family member who is employed by the Department for Infrastructure.

- 3.

Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson informed members that she had received an invitation to the Maritime UK Awards 2024 but is not available to attend. It was suggested that, subject to his availability, the Deputy Chairperson attends as a representative of the Committee on her behalf.

The Chairperson advised members of an invitation from Transmission Investment Ltd to attend a reception relating to the new electricity interconnector between Scotland and Northern Ireland, which was issued directly to all Committee members.

Agreed: That any member wishing to attend the reception may do so in their capacity of the Committee for Infrastructure.



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Draft Minutes

4. **Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 17 April 2024.

Matters Arising

5.
None.

6. Correspondence

Correspondence from Transport Hub Alternatives Group (THAG) relating to previously highlighted issues in respect of the redesign of plans for the Boyne Bridge and the oral evidence session with Translink on 20 March 2024.

The Chairperson advised of her understanding that THAG is engaging with relevant constituency MLAs on its concerns.

Agreed: To respond to THAG to outline the purpose of the oral evidence session with Translink and to recommend that it continue to engage with constituency MLAs on its concerns.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Downpatrick and County Down Railway inviting the Committee to discuss the impact of flooding on heritage related infrastructure.

Agreed: To give further consideration to the issues raised when considering flood related matters as part of the Committee's future work programme.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Royal Society of Architects highlighting concerns over projected delays in progressing the York Street Interchange Project.



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Agreed: To consider the issues raised in the correspondence upon receipt of a substantive response from the Minister for Infrastructure to the Committee's concerns over delays to the project.

The Committee noted copy correspondence from the Committee for Communities to the Minister for Infrastructure seeking to establish the actions being taken to address capacity issues on the wastewater system in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: To receive from the Department a copy of its response to the Committee for Communities once issued.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance providing an update on issues relating to the Victoria Square Residential Tower in Belfast.

The Committee noted the Eighth and Ninth reports of the Examiner of Statutory Rules.

7.

Water, Flooding and Drainage Bill - Pre-Legislative Scrutiny – Department for Infrastructure

The following Departmental officials joined the meeting at 10.08 am.

- Alison Clydesdale – Director of Water and Drainage Policy Division, DfI;
- Julie Ann Dutton – Water and Drainage Policy Division, DfI; and
- Ryan Robinson – Water and Drainage Policy Division, DfI.

The Departmental officials provided the Committee with oral evidence on the proposed content of the Water, Flooding and Draining Bill.

A question and answer session followed.

AGREED: To receive, as undertaken by officials, further detail on a number of issues discussed during the evidence session and a response to areas not covered during the session.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Departmental officials left the meeting at 10.54 am.



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Water, Flooding and Drainage Bill - Pre-Legislative Scrutiny – Northern Ireland Water

8. The following representatives joined the meeting at 10.54 am.
- Mark Ellesmere, General Counsel and Company Secretary, Northern Ireland Water;
 - John Burke, Senior Lawyer, Northern Ireland Water; and
 - Gary Lawther, Head of Development Services, Metering and Billing, Northern Ireland Water.

The representatives provided the Committee with oral evidence on the Water, Flooding and Drainage Bill.

A question and answer session followed.

AGREED: To receive, as undertaken by the representatives, further detail on a number of issues discussed during the evidence session and a response to areas not covered during the session.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The representatives left the meeting at 11.42 am.

The meeting was suspended at 11:42 am.

The meeting resumed at 11:51 am in public session with the following members 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



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Mr Peter McReynolds MLA

Northern Ireland Audit Office – Northern Ireland Audit Office Report ‘Funding Water Infrastructure in Northern Ireland’ – Written Evidence

9.

The Committee considered the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) Report ‘Funding Water Infrastructure in Northern Ireland’.

Mr Durkan returned to the meeting at 11:53 am.

The Committee noted correspondence from the Public Accounts Committee outlining its decisions regarding Primacy, which indicated that the NIAO report ‘Funding Water Infrastructure in Northern Ireland’ is on hold pending that Committee’s decision on an inquiry.

Mr Boylan and Mr Stewart both declared an interest stating that they were members of the Public Accounts Committee.

Agreed: To write to the Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee to request that it expedites any decision on whether to undertake an inquiry on the NIAO Report ‘Funding Water Infrastructure in Northern Ireland’.

10. Mr Buchanan left the meeting at 11:56 am.

SL1 The Alleyway to the rear of No2. 92-122 Royal Avenue, Belfast (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024

The Committee considered SL1 – The Alleyway to the rear of Nos. 92-122 Royal Avenue, Belfast (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024.

AGREED: The Committee was content with the proposal for the Statutory Rule.



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Subordinate Legislation – SL1 – Not Subject to Assembly Proceedings

11. The Committee noted The Road Races (Tour of the Sperrins Rally) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024, which is not subject to Assembly Proceedings.

Mr Buchanan returned to the meeting at 11:58 am.

Forward Work Programme

12.

The Committee considered the Draft Forward Work Programme.

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

17.

Any Other Business

None.

18.

Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, 1 May 2024 at 10:00 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.00 pm.



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Mrs Deborah Erskine MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Infrastructure
1 May 2024