



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Infrastructure

Minutes of Proceedings

6 March 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

Attending via video conference: Mr Patrick Brown MLA

Apologies: None

In Attendance:

- Mr Jim McManus (Assembly Clerk)
- Mr Philip Pateman (Assembly Clerk)
- Mr Jonathan Lawless (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
- Mr William Kinnear (Clerical Supervisor)



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Mr Ryan Feeney (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 10:09 am in public session.

1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declaration of Interests

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.

Mrs Deborah Erskine declared an interest stating that she is encountering difficulties in securing an MOT Test for her vehicle and that the Driver and Vehicle Agency employs a member of her family.

Mr Cathal Boylan declared an interest stating that the Roads Service in the Department for Infrastructure employs a member of his family.

Mr Keith Buchanan declared an interest stating that he is encountering difficulties in securing an MOT Test for his vehicle.

3. Chairperson's Business

Agreed: To consider agenda Item 9 before agenda Item 8.



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4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 28 February 2024.

5. Matters Arising

None.

6. Correspondence

Correspondence from an owner and resident in respect of a number of issues to the Victoria Square Residential Tower in Belfast.

Agreed: To request an update from the Committee for Finance on its approach to the issues raised.

The Committee noted correspondence from the House of Lords regarding the wholesale energy market.

The Committee noted the Investing Strategy for Northern Ireland – Department for Infrastructure Investing Activity Report – February 2024.

Correspondence from the Association of British Insurers (ABI) outlining its publication of 10 steps aimed at tackling the cost of motor insurance for drivers.

The Chairperson declared an interest as she had previously submitted an insurance claim as a result of damage to her vehicle caused by a pothole.

Agreed: To raise the Committees concerns with the Minister on: rising motor insurance costs; to ascertain the Department's role in engaging with



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the insurance sector; and to receive a response from the Minister on the ABI's 10 steps initiative.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority to ascertain their roles and powers when working with and regulating motor insurance providers and to get those organisations' assessment of the validity of rising insurance for motorists.

Second Report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules for the 2023-2024 session.

Agreed: The Committee noted the report.

The Committee agreed to move to closed session at 10:15 am

7. Assembly Research and Information Service – Infrastructure Committee: Potential Issues for Consideration - Oral Briefing

The Assembly officials joined the meeting at 10:17 am.

- Mr Desmond McKibbin, Researcher;
- Ms Suzie Cave, Researcher.

The Assembly officials provided the Committee with an oral briefing.

A question and answer session followed.

The Assembly Officials left the meeting at 11:14 am.

Agreed: To commission research from RalSe to identify any trends amongst consumers and vehicle manufacturers around the supply of electric vehicles and future scope for emerging alternative forms of green technology for motor vehicles including hydrogen powered cars.



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- Agreed:** To commission research from RalSe to examine whether different MOT testing requirements exist between internal combustion engine vehicles and electric vehicles and an assessment of any areas where skills gaps arise due to the advancements in electric vehicle technology.
- Agreed:** To receive an update to the statistical information contained within the research paper.
- Agreed:** To invite Drains for Development to provide updated written evidence on water and wastewater infrastructure in Northern Ireland.

The Committee moved to public session at 11:17 am.

9. Overview of DFI's Water and Departmental Delivery – High Level Financial Overview including Rivers and Flooding – Departmental Officials – oral and written evidence

The Departmental officials joined the meeting at 11:18 am.

- Mr Declan McGeown, Deputy Secretary – Water and Departmental Delivery Group, Department for Infrastructure;
- Ms Alison Clydesdale, Director of Water & Drainage Policy, Department for Infrastructure;
- Mr Jonathan McKee, Director of Rivers Development, Department for Infrastructure;
- Mr Simon Richardson, Director of Living With Water Programme, Department for Infrastructure; and
- Ms Susan Anderson, Director of Finance, Department for Infrastructure.

The Departmental officials provided the Committee with oral evidence.

A question and answer session followed.



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Agreed: To receive a copy from the Department, of the Northern Ireland Water report on the impact in completing identified projects due to financial constraints.

Agreed: To identify a suitable date in the Committee's Forward Work Programme to receive oral evidence on the intended provisions contained within the planned Water, Flooding and Sustainable Drainage Bill.

The Departmental Officials left the meeting at 12:20 pm.

The Deputy Chairperson left the meeting at 12:20 pm.

Agreed: To receive a breakdown from the Department of the locations of fluvial and coastal assets classified as failing or having failed.

Agreed: To receive a breakdown from the Department of the locations of the 45,000 properties in Northern Ireland that are located in areas at risk of flooding.

Agreed: To receive a response from the Department to any of the areas identified in its paper not covered during the session.

8. Overview of DfI's Climate, Planning and Public Transport and Driver Vehicle Licensing Agency - Departmental Officials – oral and written evidence

The Departmental officials joined the meeting at 12:22 pm.

The Deputy Chairperson returned to the meeting at 12:22 pm.

- Ms Julie Thompson, Deputy Secretary – Climate Planning and Public Transport Group, Department for Infrastructure;
- Mr Jeremy Logan, Chief Executive, Driver and Vehicle Agency; and
- Dr Chris Hughes, Director of Safe & Accessible Travel, Department for Infrastructure.



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The Departmental officials provided the Committee with oral evidence.

A question and answer session followed.

The Departmental Officials left the meeting at 1:15 pm.

Mr Danny Baker left the meeting at 1:15 pm.

Agreed: To receive the Department's assessment of the maximum capacity for MOT testing at each of the testing centres, to include a breakdown of the number available lanes prior to and post the COVID pandemic.

Agreed: To ascertain from the Department what consideration has been given to prioritising traders of motor vehicles whose businesses may be constrained due to difficulties in accessing MOT tests.

Agreed: To receive a response from the Department to any of the areas identified in its paper not covered during the session.

10. SL1 - The Dungannon Road, Portadown (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024

The Committee considered the SL1 - The Dungannon Road, Portadown (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024.

Agreed: The Committee is content for the Department to make the rule.

11. Forward Work Programme.

The Committee considered the Draft Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: To receive a copy of the Minister's First Day Brief for inclusion in papers to inform the evidence from the Minister at its meeting next week.



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- Agreed:** To schedule evidence from the Department for Infrastructure's public road network parking enforcement contractor, NSL Services Group.
- Agreed:** To schedule evidence from the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland on its assessment of issues relating to parking enforcement on privately owned and managed sites and other related matters.
- Agreed:** To schedule written evidence from Sustrans in the Forward Work Programme at a future date.

Mr Stephen Dunne left the meeting at 1:34 pm.

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

12. Any Other Business.

None.

13. Date, Time and Place of next meeting.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, 13 March 2024 at 10:00 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 pm.

Mrs Deborah Erskine MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Infrastructure
13 March 2024