



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Infrastructure

Minutes of Proceedings

8 May 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 Jonathan Lawless (Clerical Supervisor)
- Mr William Kinnear (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 10:05 am in public session.



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Apologies

1. As above.

Declaration of Interests

2. None.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson informed members that neither she nor the Deputy Chairperson was available to attend the Maritime UK Awards 2024 on 5 June.

Agreed: Any member wishing to attend on behalf of the Committee should contact the Clerk.

- 4.

Draft Minutes

5. **Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 1 May 2024.

Matters Arising

None.



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Correspondence

6. Response from the Minister for Infrastructure to issues arising from the Committee meeting on 10 April 2024.

Agreed: To forward the extract from the Minister's letter to North Channel Wind for information and to request a written briefing on the planning related-challenges for the project.

Agreed: To include original correspondence from North Channel Wind and the extract from Minister's letter in the meeting pack for 15 May 2024 for the oral evidence session on planning.

The Chairperson welcomed the update on measures to improve safety on the A1, which was included in the Minister's letter.

Correspondence from the Committee for Finance providing the Memorandum of Reply to the Public Accounts Committee report "Planning in Northern Ireland".

Agreed: To defer its consideration of the Memorandum of Reply until the Public Accounts Committee has completed its work.

Mr John Stewart and Mr Cathal Boylan declared interests as Members of the Public Accounts Committee.

Correspondence from the Forum for Better Homes Northern Ireland regarding social and private affordable housing.

Agreed: To include the correspondence meeting pack for 15 May 2024 for the oral evidence session on planning.

Correspondence from the Electric Vehicle Association for Northern Ireland requesting to brief the Committee on the issues and opportunities around Electric Vehicles (EVs).

Agreed: To request a written briefing from the Electric Vehicle Association for Northern Ireland.



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The Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

- Response from the Office of Road and Rail regarding the Role of the Office of Road and Rail (ORR) in Northern Ireland and the nature and timescales for the review of Translink's network statement.
- Correspondence from the Speaker regarding a Public Petition 'Completion of A1 Road Improvements.'
- Investment Strategy Northern Ireland – Department for Infrastructure Investing Activity Report April 2024.
- Copy correspondence from the Minister for Infrastructure to the Committee for Communities regarding wastewater challenges.
- Response from the Utility Regulator clarifying who has responsibility for determining the ratios for offsetting storm water and how this is enforced.

7.

Overview of the role and functions of Waterways Ireland - oral evidence

The following representatives joined the meeting at 10:11 am.

- Mr John McDonagh, Chief Executive Officer, Waterways Ireland;
- Mrs Linda Megahey, Director of Finance & Personnel, Waterways Ireland; and
- Mr Garret McGrath, Northern Regional Manager, Waterways Ireland.

The representatives provided the Committee with an overview of the role and functions of Waterways Ireland.

A question and answer session followed.

The oral evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The representatives left the meeting at 11:14 am.



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Cathal Boylan left the meeting at 11:15 am.

The Committee noted correspondence from Strabane Greenways regarding obstacles to the development of greenways.

Agreed: To inform Strabane Greenways that the issue of greenways was raised during the oral evidence session with representatives from Waterways Ireland; and that the Committee will also take the opportunity to discuss the issues raised with Department for Infrastructure officials during a forthcoming oral evidence session on active travel.

8. **SR 2024-000 The Period Products (Department for Infrastructure Specified Public Service Bodies) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024**

Cathal Boylan returned to the meeting at 11:16 am.

The Committee considered SR 2024-000 The Period Products (Department for Infrastructure Specified Public Service Bodies) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024.

The Committee noted that the Examiner of Statutory Rules had raised no concerns regarding the technical aspects of the Statutory Rule.

9. **Agreed:** That the Committee for Infrastructure has considered the Draft SR 2024-0000, The Period Products (Department for Infrastructure Specified Public Service Bodies) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024 and recommends that it be approved by the Assembly.

SR 2024-62 The Gilmore Street, Ballymena (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024

The Committee considered SR 2024-62 The Gilmore Street, Ballymena (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024.

The Committee noted that the Examiner of Statutory Rules had raised no concerns regarding the technical aspects of the Statutory Rule.



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Agreed: That the Committee for Infrastructure has considered SR 2024-62 The Gilmore Street, Ballymena (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024 and has no objection to the rule.

SL1 The Planning (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2024

10. The Committee considered the proposal for a Statutory Rule to provide for an inflationary uplift of approximately 4% to planning fees based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) figure for January 2024.

The Committee noted the response from the Minister of Infrastructure providing information on fee increases over the last three years and the Department's assessment of how the increases are determined against CPI statistics published by the Office of National Statistics.

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

11.

Subordinate Legislation – SL1 – Not Subject to Assembly Proceedings

The Committee noted two proposals for Statutory Rules, which are not subject to Assembly Proceedings:

- SL1 - The Road Races (Drumhorc Hill Climb) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024.
 - SL1 - The Waiting Restrictions (Eglinton) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024.
- 12.

Subordinate Legislation – SRs – Not Subject to Assembly Proceedings

The Committee noted one Statutory Rule, which is not subject to Assembly Proceedings:

- SR 2024-104 The Road Races (Spamount Hill Climb) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024



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Forward Work Programme

13. 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, 15 May 2024 at 10:00 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:23 am.

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