



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

## **Committee for Infrastructure**

### **Minutes of Proceedings**

**18 September 2024**

**Meeting Location:** Room 29, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Mrs Deborah Erskine MLA (Chairperson)  
Mr Cathal Boylan MLA  
Mr Stephen Dunne MLA  
Mr Andrew McMurray MLA  
Mr Peter McReynolds MLA

**Via video conference:** Mr Danny Baker MLA

**Apologies:** Mr John Stewart MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Keith Buchanan MLA  
Mr Mark Durkin MLA

**In Attendance:** Mrs Kathy O'Hanlon (Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Phil Pateman (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Jonathan Lawless (Clerical Supervisor)  
Mr William Kinnear (Clerical Officer)

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



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### **1. Apologies**

As above.

### **2. Declaration of Interests**

None.

### **3. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson welcomed the recent announcement by the Minister for Infrastructure of the increase of 4.2% to the 2024-25 opening budget allocation for Community Transport.

The Chairperson highlighted the recent decision by the UK Government to pause funding for some City Deals, and suggested that Members may wish take the opportunity to explore the implications for projects that fall to the Department for Infrastructure during the planned evidence with the Minister for Infrastructure on 25 September 2024.

### **4. Draft Minutes**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 11 September 2024.



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### 5. Matters Arising

The Committee considered a request from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) for a copy of correspondence from the National Franchised Dealers Association (NFDA) relating to the proposed Draft Statutory Instrument on The Vehicle Emissions Trading Schemes (Amendment) Order 2024.

**Agreed:** To forward the NFDA correspondence to DfI for information.

### 6. Correspondence

Correspondence from the Committee for the Economy proposing a cross-committee informal event to consider planning challenges to the achievement of targets contained within the Energy Strategy.

**Agreed:** To explore the scope for participating in the event including the format and suggested stakeholder group that have an interest to matters under the remit of DfI.

Correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office regarding a consultation on the Draft Programme for Government.

**Agreed:** To schedule an oral evidence with the DfI on the Draft Programme for Government.

Correspondence from the Office of Environmental Protection on the Review of the Implementation of the Water Framework Directive Regulations and River Basin Management Planning in Northern Ireland.

**Agreed:** To request DfI's response to the recommendations relevant to the Department, when available.

The Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

- A response from the Minister for Infrastructure providing the Department's transformation proposals.



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- Department for Infrastructure press release – publication of Public Transport Statistics Northern Ireland 2023-24.
- Correspondence from the Committee for the Economy providing an update on night time transport issues and the hospitality sector.
- A copy of Phoenix Energy's Responsible Business Report.
- Correspondence from Pivotal on the publication of its recent report on 'The first seven months of the restored Northern Ireland Executive.'
- Department for Infrastructure – Investing Activity Reports for June, July and August 2024.

### **7. Electric Vehicle Association Northern Ireland (EVANI) – Oral Evidence**

The following representatives joined the meeting at 10:00 am:

- Mark McCall, Chair, EVANI;
- Darren Henderson, Director, EVANI; and
- Mark Anderson, Director, EVANI.

The representatives provided the Committee with an overview of the issues facing the electric vehicle users in Northern Ireland.

A question and answer session followed.

Mr Danny Baker joined the meeting at 10:33 am.

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The representatives agreed to provide the Committee with further information on 'green lane' proposals for planning applications for electric vehicle charging.

The representatives left the meeting at 11:04 am.



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- Agreed:** To schedule oral evidence with Northern Ireland Electricity on challenges with connection to the grid and action taken to improve access for new charging infrastructure.
- Agreed:** To schedule oral evidence with the Utility Regulator on the impact that difficulties in connecting to the grid has on increasing charging infrastructure for electric vehicles and views on how the challenges and barriers can be overcome.
- Agreed:** To ask the Electricity Supply Board (ESB) for an update on the use of levelling up funding to overhaul and modernise the EV charging network across Northern Ireland, including clarification of: expenditure of the levelling up funding to date; whether there is an end date by which the levelling up funding must be spent; and options for reallocating any unused funding from ESB to another charging point installer.
- Agreed:** To seek an update on progress of the EV Taskforce's 6 point plan from DfI.

### **8. Provision of Class B Private Hire Vehicles – Inclusive Mobility and Transport Advisory Committee (IMTAC) – Oral Evidence**

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

- June Best, Vice-Chairperson, IMTAC;
- Michael Lorimer, Secretary, IMTAC; and
- Dermot Devlin, IMTAC member (and Convenor of the People, Streets and Places Working Group), IMTAC.

The representatives provided the Committee with an overview of the lack of provision of Class B Private Hire Vehicles in Northern Ireland and the impact this has on those living with a disability.

A question and answer session followed.

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.



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The representatives left the meeting at 12:07 pm.

Mr Peter McReynolds left the meeting at 12:07 pm.

The meeting was suspended at 12:07 pm.

The meeting resumed at 12:11 pm.

**Agreed:** To ask the Department for its response to the issues and proposals in IMTAC's revised position paper on taxis, including details of any consideration given to schemes or regulations in operation in Great Britain aimed at improving availability and reducing costs of inclusive and accessible taxis.

**Agreed:** To write to the Guide Dogs Association for the Blind and MENCAP to ascertain what detail, if any, is held on the amount of complaints or instances that have been reported by those living with disabilities or visual impairments when being refused service by Class B taxis in Northern Ireland.

**Agreed:** To ask the Department for infrastructure for details of the process for dealing with complaints made against taxi drivers and taxi firms.

Mr Peter McReynolds returned to the meeting at 12:12 pm.

### **9. Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) 2024-25 Business Plan - Written Briefing**

The Committee considered a written briefing paper on the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) 2024-25 Business Plan.

**Agreed:** To request written evidence providing a mid-year update on the progress of implementation of the actions contained in the Business Plan.



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**10. Road Safety Strategy - Action Plan 2024-2025 – Written Briefing**

The Committee considered and noted a written briefing on the Road Safety Strategy - Action Plan 2024-2025.

The Committee noted the response from the Police Service of Northern Ireland providing further information in follow up to the oral evidence session on 5 June, including : the process of installing speed indicator devices (SIDs); and the costs and funding model for the NI Road Safety Partnership and the Fixed Penalty Processing Centre.

**11. Department for Infrastructure – 2024-2025 Business Plan - Written Briefing**

The Committee considered a written briefing on the Department for Infrastructure – 2024-2025 Business Plan.

**Agreed:** To ask the Department to provide an update on progress of the actions contained in the business plan following completion of the quarter 1-2 monitoring in October.

**12. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered the Draft Forward Work Programme from September.

**Agreed:** to proceed with the scheduled evidence as set out in the Draft Forward Work Programme.

**13. Any Other Business**

None.



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**14. Date, Time and Place of next meeting**

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, 25 September 2024 at 9:00 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:19 pm.

**Mrs Deborah Erskine**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Infrastructure**  
**25 September 2024**