



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Infrastructure

Minutes of Proceedings

5 March 2025

Meeting Location: Room 29, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Mrs Deborah Erskine MLA (Chairperson)
Mr John Stewart MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Cathal Boylan MLA
Mr Keith Buchanan MLA
Mr Andrew McMurray MLA
Mr Peter McReynolds MLA

Apologies: None

Via Video Conference: Ms Nicola Brogan MLA
Mr Stephen Dunne MLA
Mr Mark Durkan MLA

In Attendance:

Ms Barbara Love (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 10:00 am.



1. Apologies

None.

2. Declaration of Interests

None.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson wished to acknowledge and express the Committee's sympathy following a recent road traffic fatality in Dungannon.

The Committee considered the offer from the Minister for Infrastructure during the oral evidence session on 26 February 2025 to review her diary to allow the earlier scheduling of a further oral evidence session to explore issues not explored during the meeting due to time constraints.

Agreed: To write to the Department to formally seek alternative dates for a further briefing from the Minister for Infrastructure and to ensure that sufficient time can be set aside at a future meeting.

The Chairperson drew members' attention to the recently agreed Programme for Government (PfG).

Agreed: To schedule oral evidence with the Department to understand its assessment of its funding requirements to support delivery of the PfG, the key milestones and associated timescales for completion.

Agreed: To schedule oral evidence with the Strategic Investment Board to understand how the Investment Strategy will be implemented in the context the PfG.



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The Chairperson drew members' attention to the recent statement from the Minister of Finance on Public Sector Transformation and the associated funding allocated to the Department for Infrastructure.

Agreed: To schedule oral evidence on each of the proposals at a suitable date in the Forward Work Programme.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 26 February 2025.

5. Matters Arising

Mr Peter McReynolds highlighted that, following the oral evidence from the Minister for Infrastructure the previous week which referenced a number of publicly available reports relating to the funding models for Northern Ireland Water however, he was having difficulty in locating them.

The Committee noted that correspondence requesting copies of these reports referred to in the session will be issued in due course.

The Committee further noted its previous agreement to schedule oral evidence from the Fiscal Council as originally intended.

Agreed: To schedule an oral evidence session with the Fiscal Council on funding models for Northern Ireland Water.

6. Correspondence

Copy of the Draft Budget 2025-26 – Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) from the Department for Infrastructure.



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Agreed: To write to the Minister to clarify:

- whether the intended distribution of the Department's capital budget will be at the same level, in percentage terms to the levels contained in the EQIA once the agreed budget allocation is finalised; and
- an assessment of what improvements will be delivered by other business areas based upon this distribution.

Agreed: To write to Translink to seek its assessment on the costs for procuring new buses against those recently reported in the media.

Response from the Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) relating to correspondence recently shared by the Committee following its oral evidence on 11 September 2024.

Agreed: To write to MAG to highlight that the Committee has, and will continue to advocate for all road users as part of its continuing scrutiny of the Department's approach to road safety.

The Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

- Notice of the Minister for Infrastructure's intention to make an oral statement to the Assembly on BRT2;
- Press Release from the Minister for Infrastructure notifying of the appointment to the Chair of the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company;
- Correspondence from the Department of Finance providing the quarterly sickness absence for the Northern Ireland Civil Service;
- Correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding National Insurance Contributions;
- Report from the Public Accounts Committee on the 'Northern Ireland Non-Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive scheme: Assessing progress with the implementation of the Public Inquiry recommendations';
- Department for Infrastructure Investing Activity Report – February 2025; and



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- Correspondence from a member of the public regarding the investigation of the Department for Infrastructure by an ex-army corporal.

7. Wastewater Capacity in Northern Ireland: Compliance and environmental matters - Northern Ireland Environment Agency

The following officials joined the meeting at 10:15 am:

- David Reid, Chief Executive Officer, Northern Ireland Environment Agency;
- Dr Richard Crowe, Director of Regulation and Enforcement Division, Northern Ireland Environment Agency; and
- Mark Cherry, Head of the Regulation Unit, Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

The officials provided the Committee an overview of its role in compliance and environmental matters in the context of the wider issue of waste water capacity in Northern Ireland.

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

Agreed: To write to the Northern Ireland Environment Agency requesting further detail on a range of matters arising in the course of the evidence.

The representatives left the meeting at 11:32 am.

The Committee suspended at 11:32 am.

The Committee recommenced in public session at 11:39 am with the following members present:

Present: Mrs Deborah Erskine MLA (Chairperson



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Mr John Stewart MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Cathal Boylan MLA

Mr Keith Buchanan MLA

Mr Andrew McMurray MLA

Mr Peter McReynolds MLA

Via Video Conference: Ms Nicola Brogan MLA

Mr Stephen Dunne MLA

Mr Mark Durkan MLA

8. Wastewater Capacity in Northern Ireland: Compliance and environmental matters – Northern Ireland Water

The following representatives joined the meeting at 11:39 am:

- Dr Gary Curran - Director of Engineering & Sustainability, Northern Ireland Water;
- Paddy Brow - Head of Living with Water Programme, Northern Ireland Water; and
- Angela Halpenny - Head of Environmental Regulation, Northern Ireland Water.

The representatives provided the Committee with an update on compliance and environmental matters relating to wastewater capacity in Northern Ireland.

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

Agreed: To write to the Northern Ireland Water requesting further detail on a range of matters arising in the course of the evidence.

Agreed: To write to the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to request to be updated of any ongoing engagement and proposals



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relating to the Statement of Regulatory Principles and Intent (SORPI);
and

Agreed: To explore the scope for undertaking an external visit to a wastewater treatment facility at a suitable date within the Forward Work Programme.

The representatives left the meeting at 12:50 pm.

9. SL1 – The Planning (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2025

The Committee considered SL1 – The Planning (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2025.

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

10. Subordinate Legislation – SL1s Not subject to Assembly Procedure

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

- SL1 - The Loading Bays on Roads (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2025; and
- SL1 - The Traffic Weight Restriction (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2025.

Agreed: To write to DfI to seek clarity on what consideration is given to the impact on road users, for example, agricultural users when implementing weight restrictions on applicable roads including whether these should be for a specified period to allow for any necessary improvement works to be undertaken.



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11. Forward Work Programme

The Committee considered the draft Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: To proceed with the scheduled evidence as set out in the draft Forward Work Programme, subject to any changes agreed during the meeting.

12. Any Other Business

None.

13. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, 12 March 2025 at 10:00 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm.

Mrs Deborah Erskine
Chairperson, Committee for Infrastructure
12 March 2025