



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Infrastructure

Minutes of Proceedings

13 November 2024

Meeting Location: Northern Ireland Water, Moyola Water Treatment Works,
Magherafelt

Present:

Mrs Deborah Erskine MLA (Chairperson)
Mr John Stewart MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Cathal Boylan MLA
Mr Keith Buchanan MLA
Mr Stephen Dunne MLA
Mr Mark Durkan MLA
Mr Andrew McMurray MLA

Apologies:

Mr Danny Baker MLA
Mr Peter McReynolds 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 11:13 am.



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1. Apologies

As above.

2. Declaration of Interests

Mrs Deborah Erskine declared an interest as having a family members who are employed by Northern Ireland Water.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson expressed thanks on behalf of the Committee to representatives from NI Water for providing a tour of the Moyola Water Treatment Works and for facilitating the Committee meeting at the site.

The Chairperson advised Members that she met with representatives from the Financial Conduct Authority on 12 November 2024 to discuss issues relating to motor insurance in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: To schedule oral evidence from the Financial Conduct Authority in the forward work programme at an appropriate date in the future.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 6 November 2024.

The Committee considered the draft Minutes of Proceedings of the concurrent meeting with the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs on Tuesday, 12 November 2024.



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The Chairperson informed Members that a minor amendment is required to accurately reflect those Members present during the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 12 November 2024, subject to this amendment.

5. Matters Arising

The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister for Infrastructure advising of a potential legal challenge to the decision to proceed with the A5 Western Transport Corridor (A5WTC).

6. Correspondence

Correspondence from BT Group providing its response to the Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027.

Agreed: To ask the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) for its assessment of the viability of converting of BT street furniture to EV charging points and how this could be facilitated through the planning system; and for comment on the issues raised regarding the time taken to assess planning applications for mobile technology and how this compares to other jurisdictions.

Copy of the Oral Statement by the Minister of Finance on Public Expenditure 2024-25 October Monitoring Round.

Agreed: To seek clarification from the Department for Justice on the reasons for reclassification of Resource to Capital DEL and the associated amounts for the NI Road Safety Partnership.

Agreed: To ask DFI for details of how the funding received in the October Monitoring Round will be allocated.



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The Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

- Response from the Minister for Infrastructure providing further information following oral evidence on DfI's Budget position, including: costs of the bilingual road signs pilot; funding for the A5WTC; current provision for developer contributions to water and wastewater infrastructure; how 'transport spending' is determined for the purposes of the Climate Change Act (NI) 2022; and DfI's October Monitoring submission to the Department of Finance.
- Response from the Minister for Infrastructure providing an update on the pilot scheme to allow Class A and Class C taxis to use specified city centre bus lanes.
- Response from the Minister for Infrastructure regarding planning decisions and statutory consultee response times.

7. Capacity Constraints within the Wastewater Systems in Northern Ireland - Northern Ireland Water – Oral Evidence

The following officials joined the meeting at 11:22 am:

- Sara Venning, Chief Executive, NI Water; and
- Ronan Larkin, Director of Finance & Regulation, NI Water.

The representatives provided the Committee with an update on the current capacity constraints within the wastewater systems in Northern Ireland and issues regarding Lough Neagh.

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

Mrs Deborah Erskine declared an interest stating that she resides on an unadopted housing development.

The representatives left the meeting at 12:52 pm.

Agreed: To schedule joint evidence on wastewater capacity issues from Northern Ireland Water and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency at a future date in the Forward Work Programme.



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- Agreed:** To ask Northern Ireland Water to provide:
- Background information pertaining to the rationale for determining 5 years as the threshold for automatic loss of connection rights for unoccupied properties; and
 - A breakdown of external consultancy expenditure incurred by NI Water over the last 5 years in relation to wastewater capacity and optimising processing for wastewater treatment.
- Agreed:** To seek an update on any action that has been taken in respect of the recommendation by Northern Ireland Audit Office for an expert-led review of funding options for NI Water.

8. Residents' Parking Review – Draft Report – Written Evidence

The Committee noted a draft report from DfI on the delivery and implementation of Residents' Parking Schemes.

- Agreed:** To schedule an on evidence session from DfI into the forward work programme.

9. Part-time 20mph Speed Limits at Schools - Review of Initiative after Tranches 1 & 2 – Written Evidence

The Committee considered the Department's report 'Part-time 20mph Speed Limits at Schools - Review of Initiative after Tranches 1 & 2'.

- Agreed:** To seek further detail from DfI on:
- The disaggregation of spending of the £4 million as contained within the report;
 - The criteria applied for assessing the appropriateness of a 20mph speed limit for a school; and



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- A cost benefit analysis of Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) compared to part-time speed limits.

10. 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.

11. Any Other Business

None.

12. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 20 November 2024 at 10:00 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:03 pm.

Mrs Deborah Erskine
Chairperson, Committee for Infrastructure
20 November 2024