



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

## **Committee for Infrastructure**

### **Minutes of Proceedings**

**20 November 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 Andrew McMurray MLA

**Via Video conference:** Mr Mark Durkan MLA

**Apologies:** 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 10:07 am.



## Northern Ireland Assembly

### **1. Apologies**

As above.

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

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

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

None.

### **4. Draft Minutes**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 13 November 2024.

### **5. Matters Arising**

The Committee noted correspondence from the Minister for Infrastructure providing an update on the distribution of the additional capital and resource funding allocated to the Department following the October Monitoring Round.



## Northern Ireland Assembly

### 6. Correspondence

Response from the Minister for Infrastructure regarding issues raised by the National Association of Funeral Directors on the classification of Class C licensing for funeral limousines.

**Agreed:** To forward the correspondence to the National Association of Funeral Directors for information.

It was noted that a number of Members have received correspondence raising similar issues regarding Wedding Car Hire, which will be formally considered at the Committee meeting on 27 November 2024.

Correspondence from the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) providing a copy of the Instructions to Tenderers from the 2018 tender process for the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) Vehicle Testing Equipment Contract.

**Agreed:** To request a copy of the agreed contract for Vehicle Testing Equipment arising from the tender process from DVA.

The Committee noted the following items of correspondence:

- Response from the Minister for Infrastructure following the Review of South East Flooding Autumn 2023 evidence session on 23 October 2024;
- Northern Ireland Youth Assembly's response to the Draft Programme for Government 2024-2027; and
- Northern Ireland Water's Annual Integrated Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024.

### 7. Utility Regulator for Northern Ireland – NI Water PC21 Mid-Term Review - Oral Evidence

The following representatives from the Utility Regulator for Northern Ireland joined the meeting at 10:13 am:

- John French, Chief Executive;



## Northern Ireland Assembly

- Peter Russell, Executive Director for Price Controls, Networks and Energy Futures;
- Elaine Cassidy, Director of Price Controls; and
- Ciaran McCann, Head of Price Controls (Gas and Water).

The representatives provided the Committee with an update on the Utility Regulator's Final Determination on the Mid-Term Review for PC21 for NI Water.

Mr Mark Durkan joined the meeting at 10:21 am.

A question and answer session followed.

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The representatives left the meeting at 11:11 am.

**Agreed:** To ask the Utility Regulator to provide:

- Details of its enforcement procedures;
- Information on the financial penalties that the Regulator may impose under the current legislation and how these are calculated;
- Details of the number and types of complaints/disputes received against NI Water during the PC21 period and an overview of the outcomes of those investigated by the Regulator; and
- An overview of the specific role and functions of the 'Reporter' including the level of access to NI Water's data and how robust the process is when undertaking work for the Regulator as part of the Price Control process.

**Agreed:** To request clarification from DfI on where oversight responsibility for NI Water's day-to-day operations and policies and its decision making rests.

### **8. Implementation of the Reservoirs Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 – Update on the Reservoir Regulations – DfI – Oral Evidence**

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



## Northern Ireland Assembly

- Alison Clydesdale – Director, Water and Drainage Policy Division;
- Ryan Robinson – Head of Flooding & Drainage Policy;
- James Kelly – Head of Rivers Operations; and
- Violeta Morosan – Head of Reservoirs Operations & Engagement Branch.

The officials provided the Committee with an update on further implementation of the Reservoirs Act (Northern Ireland) 2015.

A question and answer session followed.

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

Members noted that five proposals for subordinate legislation relating to the Reservoirs Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 had been included on the Agenda for consideration at today's meeting.

**Agreed:** To ask the officials to provide updated SL1s providing more detailed information on the purpose and implications of each proposed item of subordinate legislation.

**Agreed:** To defer consideration of the proposals for subordinate legislation at Agenda items 9–13 and to schedule further oral evidence once the updated SL1s have been received.

The officials left the meeting at 12:22 pm.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to move to Agenda item number 14.

### **9. SR 2024-187 The Coopers Mill Park, Dundonald (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024**

The Committee considered the SR 2024-187 The Coopers Mill Park, Dundonald (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024.

Mr Cathal Boylan left the meeting at 12.27pm.



## Northern Ireland Assembly

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

**Agreed:** That the Committee for Infrastructure has considered SR 2024-187 The Coopers Mill Park, Dundonald (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024 and has no objection to the rule.

### **10. SR 2024-188 The Drumna Walk, Lurgan (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024**

The Committee considered the SR 2024-188 The Drumna Walk, Lurgan (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.

**Agreed:** That the Committee for Infrastructure has considered SR 2024-188 The Drumna Walk, Lurgan (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024 and has no objection to the rule.

### **11. SR 2024-190 The Waring Street, Lurgan (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024**

The Committee considered the SR 2024-190 The Waring Street, Lurgan (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.

**Agreed:** That the Committee for Infrastructure has considered SR 2024-190 The Waring Street, Lurgan (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024 and has no objection to the rule.



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

**12. SL1 - The Marcus Ward Street, Belfast (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024**

The Committee considered the SL1 - The Marcus Ward Street, Belfast (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024.

Mr John Stewart left the meeting at 12:31 pm.

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

**13. Subordinate Legislation – SRs Not subject to Assembly Procedure**

The Committee noted the following Statutory Rule that has been laid in the Business Office, which is not subject to Assembly Proceedings:

- SR 2024-193 The Roads (Speed Limit) (No. 5) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024.

**14. 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 Waiting Restrictions (Whitehead) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024;
- SL1 - The Waiting Restrictions (Draperstown) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024; and
- SL1 - The Schools (Part-Time 20mph Speed Limit) (Amendment No.2) Order (Northern Ireland) 2024.

**Agreed:** To ask DfI to clarify whether Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) fall within the definition of a variable message traffic sign.



## Northern Ireland Assembly

### **15. Active Travel Delivery Plan – Department for Infrastructure - Public Consultation**

The Committee noted the launch of the public consultation on the Active Travel Delivery Plan.

**Agreed:** To consider this matter further when the results of the consultation and the proposed way forward are available.

### **16. Forward Work Programme**

Mr John Stewart returned to the meeting at 12:35 pm.

The Committee considered the Draft Forward Work Programme.

The Committee noted that the interim Regional Planning Commission are unable to attend the meeting on 27 November 2024 as scheduled and that an informal strategic planning session has instead been proposed for that date.

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

### **17. Any Other Business**

The Chairperson reiterated concerns expressed during the oral evidence session on the implementation of the Reservoirs Act (Northern Ireland) 2015 regarding the development of a grant scheme.

**Agreed:** To ask the Minister for Infrastructure for further information on the current position on the development of a grant scheme and the associated business case.





Northern Ireland  
Assembly

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

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, 27 November 2024 at 10:00 am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:37 pm.

**Mrs Deborah Erskine**  
**Chairperson, Committee for Infrastructure**  
**27 November 2024**