

## **Committee for Regional Development**

### **End of Session Report 1 September 2013 – 31 August 2014**

The Committee for Regional Development is a Statutory Departmental Committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly established in accordance with paragraphs 8 and 9 of strand one of the Belfast Agreement, section 29 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 and under Standing Order 48 of the Northern Ireland Assembly. The Committee has a scrutiny, policy development and consultation role with respect to the Department for Regional Development and has a role in the initiation of legislation.

The Committee has the power to:

- Consider and advise on departmental budgets and annual plans in the context of the overall budget allocation;
- Consider relevant secondary legislation and take the Committee Stage of relevant primary legislation;
- Call for persons and papers;
- Initiate inquiries and make reports; and
- Consider and advise on matters brought to the committee by the Minister for Regional Development.

The Committee is appointed at the start of every Assembly, and has power to send for persons, papers and records that are relevant to its inquiries.

## Membership

The Committee has 11 members, including a Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson, and a quorum of five members. The membership of the Committee is as follows:

- Mr Jimmy Spratt MLA (Chairperson)
- Mr Sean Lynch MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
- Mr Joe Byrne MLA<sup>3</sup>
- Mr John Dallat MLA
- Mr Alex Easton MLA
- Mrs Brenda Hale MLA<sup>1</sup>
- Mr Ross Hussey MLA
- Mr Declan McAleer MLA
- Mr Kieran McCarthy MLA<sup>2</sup>
- Mr David McNarry MLA
- Mr Cathal Ó hOisín MLA

<sup>1</sup> *Mrs Brenda Hale replaced Mr Ian McCrea on 16 September 2013*

<sup>2</sup> *Mr Kieran McCarthy replaced Mr Stewart Dickson on 1 October 2013*

<sup>3</sup> *Mr Joe Byrne replaced Mrs Dolores Kelly on 7 October 2013*

## **End of Session Report for 2013-2014**

This report covers the work of the Committee for Regional Development during the parliamentary year from 1 September 2013 to 31 August 2014.

During this period the Committee for Regional Development held 35 meetings. Where possible meetings were held in public session but on 8 occasions it was necessary for the meeting to go into closed session, constituting 1.86% of meeting time.

The majority of these meetings were held in Parliament Buildings; however the Committee held 8 external meetings in the following locations:

1. Craigavon Borough Council Offices, Craigavon
2. Loughry College, Cookstown
3. Chamber of Commerce House, Belfast
4. Construction Employers Federation Headquarters, Belfast
5. Mulranny Park Hotel, Mulranny, Co Mayo
6. Hilton Hotel and Country Club, Templepatrick
7. Belfast Harbour Commissioners Office, Belfast
8. Roe Park Resort, Limavady

The Committee undertook two visits outside Northern Ireland. The locations of these visits are as follows:

1. Brussels (Trans European Network for Transport Information Day)
2. Edinburgh & Dunfermline (Meeting with the Scottish Parliament Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee; meeting with the Transport and the Environment Committee in Edinburgh City Council; meeting with Scottish Water Senior Management Team)

### **Primary Legislation:**

#### ***Road Races (Amendment) Bill***

*A Bill to amend the Road Races (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 to provide for contingency days to be specified in an order authorising the use of roads in connection with road races and for the substitution of a contingency day for a day specified in such an order.*

The Committee considered over 800 responses to the public consultation on the [Road Races \(Amendment\) Bill](#). The Committee also received an in-depth briefing from Minister Danny Kennedy on [9 October 2013](#), in relation to the timing of the Bill and how this would affect the 2014 road racing season. Members unanimously agreed to grant the Bill accelerated passage.

**Road Traffic (Speed Limits) Bill**

*A Bill to set a maximum speed limit on residential roads of 20 miles per hour.*

The Committee has received three pre-legislative briefings on the [Road Traffic \(Speed Limits\) Bill](#); from the Bill Sponsor (Mr Pat Ramsey MLA), the Department for Regional Development and the PSNI. The Second Stage of the Bill is expected to be scheduled for early in the new session.

**Off-Street Parking (Functions of District Councils) Bill**

*A Bill to transfer to district councils certain functions in relation to off-street parking places*

The Committee has received a pre-legislative Departmental briefing on the Off-Street Parking (Functions of District Councils) Bill. The Bill is expected to be introduced early in the new session.

**Water and Sewerage Services (Amendment No 2) Bill**

*A Bill to enable the Department for Regional Development to continue to make payments to water and sewerage undertakers for a limited period*

The Committee has received a pre-legislative Departmental briefing on the Water and Sewerage Services (Amendment No 2) Bill. The Department will enact a number of recommendations that came out of the Committee Inquiry into Unadopted Roads through this Bill. The Bill is currently out for public consultation and is expected to be introduced in the new session.

**Subordinate Legislation:**

The Committee considered 104 proposals to make subordinate legislation and 28 Statutory Rules during this session and took oral evidence from Departmental officials where appropriate.

Although the Committee was content with the majority of the intended subordinate legislation, it did vote against the policy proposals of the following:

- The Penalty Charges (Prescribed Devices) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014
- The Penalty Charges (Additional Contraventions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014
- Public Passenger Transport (Service Agreements and Service Permits) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014

The Committee also requested written briefings from the Department in relation to the following:

- The Parking Places (Disabled Persons' Vehicles) (Amendment No 6) Order (Northern Ireland) 2012

- The Frederick Street, Belfast (Footpath) (Abandonment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013
- The Parking Places and Loading Bays on Roads (Glengall Street, Belfast) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2013.

### **Inquiries:**

#### ***Inquiry into Comprehensive Transport Delivery Structures***

The Committee agreed at its meeting on 7 November 2012, to commence its inquiry into Comprehensive Transport Delivery Structures. The Committee wrote to a number of organisations, identified by Members, inviting them to make written submissions based on the terms of reference of the inquiry. Following consideration of the written submissions received, Members agreed to invite the following organisations to make oral presentations to the Committee:

1. Department for Regional Development
2. Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company/Translink
3. Community Transport Association
4. Professor Austin Smyth
5. Office of Fair Trading
6. Consumer Council for Northern Ireland
7. Transport Planning Society
8. Transport Salaried Staffs' Association
9. Northern Ireland Transport Working Group
10. Belfast Taxis Community Interest Group

The Committee considered and agreed its final report on 18 September 2013. Click [here](#) to view the Committee Report.

The Committee Report was debated in Plenary Session on 4 November 2013, with the Assembly approving the Report and calling on the Minister for Regional Development, in conjunction with the relevant bodies, to implement the recommendations. A transcript of the debate can be viewed [here](#).

#### ***Inquiry into the Benefits of Cycling to the Economy***

The Committee agreed at its meeting on 8 January 2014, to commence its inquiry into the Benefits of Cycling to the Economy. The Committee wrote to a number of organisations, identified by Members, inviting them to make written submissions based on the terms of reference of the inquiry. Following consideration of the written submissions received, Members agreed to invite the following organisations to make oral presentations to the Committee:

1. Department for Regional Development
2. Department of the Environment

3. Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety
4. Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
5. Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
6. Sustrans
7. CTC – The National Cycling Charity
8. Key Stakeholders from Great Western Greenway
9. Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland
10. Connswater Community Greenway
11. Northern Ireland Environment Link
12. Sport NI
13. NI Assembly All Party Group on Cycling

The Committee also undertook three study visits in the duration of the Inquiry:

- Maximising the Potential of Walking and Cycling Infrastructure in Touristic Areas Seminar (Clifden, Co Galway)
- Great Western Greenway (Mulranny, Co Mayo)
- Chain Reaction Cycles Headquarters (Doagh, Co Antrim)

The Committee intends to consider and agree its final report in December 2014.

### **Budget Scrutiny:**

During this session, the Committee received regular briefings on the Departmental monitoring rounds.

An area of particular concern for the Committee was the availability of EU Funding for major infrastructural projects, such as the proposed Belfast Transport Hub. The Committee subsequently visited the site of the proposed hub and received a presentation from Translink on this issue.

The Committee also raised concerns on the financial package for the Department's newly created Cycling Unit and continued to monitor this situation throughout its Inquiry into the Benefits of Cycling to the Economy.

The Committee also received a briefing on the Department's 2014/15 Capital Budget Exercise and followed this up with further briefings on the Department's Railway Investment Prioritisation Strategy.

A delegation from the Committee met with Mr Peter Balazs, EU TEN-T Coordinator of the North Sea-Mediterranean Corridor, in June 2014 to discuss funding opportunities for Northern Ireland.

### **Policy Scrutiny:**

During this session the Committee considered a number of important policy areas, including Trans-European Networks Transport (TEN-T), Belfast Rapid Transit, Price Control 15 for Water and Sewerage Services and the Department's Long Term Water Strategy.

The Committee has also used its scrutiny powers to ask the Department to re-evaluate the policies around the awarding of a Public Transport Contract and the establishment of Enforcement Cameras in Bus Lanes.

### **Engagement:**

#### ***Loughry College, Cookstown***

On 4 December 2013, the Committee for Regional Development held its weekly meeting in CAFRE Loughry College, Cookstown.

The Committee invited a delegation of CAFRE students to speak to Members about their experiences of rural transport.

The Committee then received a briefing from the Stakeholder Group involved in the Dungannon Integrated Transport Pilot Scheme.



*Members of the Committee for Regional Development with the delegation of CAFRE students at Loughry College.*

### ***Warrenpoint Harbour***

On 9 April 2014, the Committee for Regional Development visited Warrenpoint Harbour to meet with members of its Senior Management Team.

Members received a presentation on the history of the harbour and its future plans, before undertaking a tour of the site.



*Members of the Committee for Regional Development visiting Warrenpoint Harbour in April 2014*

### ***Mulranny, Co Mayo***

On 7 May 2014, the Committee for Regional Development visited the Great Western Greenway in Mulranny, Co Mayo, as part of its Inquiry into the Benefits of Cycling to the Economy.

As well as taking the opportunity to cycle along the Greenway, Members met with key stakeholders from the area, including a representative from Mayo County Council.





*Members of the Committee for Regional Development take a break during their cycle along the Great Western Greenway.*

### ***Chain Reaction Cycles***

On 28 May 2014, the Committee for Regional Development held its weekly meeting in the Hilton Hotel, Templepatrick.

The Committee received three briefings during the meeting, both in relation to the Committee's Cycling Inquiry. Members were briefed by Sport NI, CTC and Northern Ireland Environment Link.

Following the meeting, Members visited the Headquarters of Chain Reaction Cycles and met with the Senior Management Team. The visit included a tour of the bicycle showroom, warehouse and call centre.



*Members of the Committee for Regional Development at Chain Reaction Cycles*

### ***Belfast Harbour Commissioners***

On 18 June 2014 the Committee for Regional Development held its weekly meeting in Belfast Harbour Commissioners Headquarters.

The Committee received two briefings in relation to Long Term Water and Sewerage Services.

Following the meeting the Committee took to the waves for a boat tour of the Belfast Harbour Estate.



*Members of the Committee for Regional Development on their tour of Belfast Harbour Estate*

### **Committee Motions:**

During this period the Committee for Regional Development tabled one motion for debate.

This motion was on the Committee's Inquiry into Comprehensive Transport Delivery Structures and a debate took place in the house on 4 November 2013. [Click here to view the transcript.](#)

### **Likely Key Priorities for the Next Session:**

The Committee will have a busy legislative programme with three Bills likely to be introduced in the new session:

- The Road Traffic (Speed Limits) Bill
- The Off-Street Parking (Functions of District Councils) Bill
- The Water and Sewerage Services (Amendment No 2) Bill

Budget and saving delivery plans will continue to be a priority focus of the Committee, particularly in respect of Translink.

Members have also indicated a desire to undertake further work on a number of other issues including Strategic Road Projects, EU Funding opportunities and the budget for Waste Water Treatment Plants, specifically work required around Belfast Lough.

## ANNEX A

## Committee for Regional Development

## Expenditure for the period 1 September 2013 – 31 August 2014

Budget area	Details	Expenditure
Committee Travel - committee members and staff travel and subsistence in relation to visits and meetings outside Parliament Buildings	Includes the cost of committee visits to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brussels</li> <li>• Edinburgh/Dunfermline</li> </ul> and 8 meetings held outside Parliament Buildings	£12,004.32
Printing of committee reports	Includes the cost of committee reports on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inquiry into Comprehensive Transport Delivery Structures</li> </ul>	£835.40
Advertising – the cost of public notices relating to committee inquiries, the committee stage of Bills and meetings held outside Parliament Buildings	Includes the cost of public notices in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inquiry into the Benefits of Cycling to the Economy</li> </ul>	£624.65
Consultancy support - the cost of specialist advisers appointed by the committee and commissioned research, also the cost of drafting Standing Orders	Specialist adviser to the Committee	NIL
General expenses	Cost of refreshments for committee meetings, working lunches, seminars, and room hire, and witness expenses, gifts provided by the committee during visits and conference fees for members.	£2,813.93
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>£16,278.30</b>