



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Regional Development

Legacy Report of the 2011-2016 Mandate of the Northern Ireland Assembly

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Report: NIA 322/11-16 Committee for Regional Development

Powers

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 current membership of the Committee is as follows:

- Mr Trevor Clarke MLA (Chairperson)
- Mr Sean Lynch MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
- Mr Adrian Cochrane - Watson MLA
- Mr John Dallat MLA
- Mrs Brenda Hale MLA
- Mr Chris Lyttle MLA
- Mr Declan McAleer MLA
- Mr Daniel McCrossan MLA
- Mr David McNarry MLA
- Mr Stephen Moutray MLA
- Mr Cathal Ó hOisín MLA

Information on the changes of membership throughout the mandate is provided at Appendix 1.

Legacy Report for 2011-2016 Mandate

This report covers the work of the Committee for Regional Development during the 2011-2016 Assembly mandate and provides a source of information for the incoming Committee for Infrastructure (CFI). It also gives consideration to some workstreams that the incoming Committee may wish to consider as it determines its work programme for 2016-2017.

Committee Achievements

Throughout this mandate the Committee saw a total of 18 changes to its membership. Despite the considerable changes, the Committee successfully delivered on its statutory responsibilities with regard to scrutinising the work of the Department for Regional Development; it contributed to the development of policy and consulted with its full range of stakeholders with respect to the Department for Regional Development as it held the Department to account. The Committee also considered initiating, but decided not to take forward, primary legislation; further details on this is provided in the “Issues for consideration by the incoming Committee for Infrastructure” section of the report.

More detailed information on the work of the Committee in previous parliamentary sessions is included in the Committee’s End of Session Reports. Follow these links to access the reports: [2011/12](#); [2012/13](#); [2013/14](#); [2014/15](#).

As per the direction of the Chairpersons’ Liaison Group, the Committee conducted strategic planning events at the start of the 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16 parliamentary session.

The 2013/14 strategic planning exercise looked back at the Committee’s achievements from the start of the mandate to that date. It considered that the most significant achievements for the Committee included engagement in the European Parliament during the early stages of the CEF/TEN-T policy development; it also identified the networks developed as a result of the inquiries conducted in relation to the transport sector and agreed that similar networks should be developed in relation to other areas, particularly the water sector. The Committee also produced 3 inquiry reports and a Bill report during this time – these related to: [Inquiry into Unadopted Roads](#), [Inquiry into Better Use of Public and Community Sector Funds for the Delivery of Transport Options](#), [Inquiry into Comprehensive Transport Delivery](#) and [Water & Sewerage Services \(Amendment\) Bill](#).

Looking at the achievements of 2013/14, Members identified, as an ongoing piece of work, European developments with regard to CEF/TEN-T as a significant achievement that included engagement with the Scottish Parliament’s Infrastructure and Capital Investment Committee. It also felt that its continued scrutiny of investment in the rail network, including the Enterprise service, was an important piece of work. The Committee reflected on its visit to Warrenpoint Harbour and the evidence received from Belfast Harbour Commissioners and tour of the harbour as part of its scrutiny of the Department’s PfG target in this area. The Committee also felt that its continued scrutiny of the Belfast Rapid Transit System, and the impact that its work has had on this project, was a significant achievement. The Committee’s [Inquiry into the Benefits of](#)

[Cycling to the Northern Ireland Economy](#) was also agreed to be a significant achievement for the Committee in terms of the influence that it had in relation to cycling policy within the Department. Other areas that were heavily scrutinised by the Committee, and are seen as significant achievements, relate to the governance and strategic infrastructural considerations of NI Water and also the major strategic road projects of Transport NI.

Achievements for the 2014/15 session included the publication and debate in the Assembly of the [Inquiry into the Benefits of Cycling to the Economy](#) and also the conclusion of the [Inquiry into the Coleraine to Londonderry Rail Track Phase Two Project](#). The Committee also took forward Committee Stage of the [Off-Street Parking \(Functions of District Councils\) Bill](#) and reported to the Assembly on this Bill.

Statistical information on the work of the Committee throughout the mandate is provided at Appendix 2.

The Committee's approach to its work programme throughout the mandate

The Committee, at each of its strategic planning exercises, critically reviewed its approach to its work programme and identified how best to improve that approach.

At its 2013/14 exercise, the Committee felt that its approach to scrutiny was broadly effective and that stakeholder engagement, particularly with disability groups, was very beneficial to the work of the Committee in relation to transport issues. Critically, the Committee agreed that more needs to be done in relation to communications with constituents to ensure that public opinion is received during its engagement events and it was felt that a communications plan would help to address this issue. The Committee also, importantly, agreed that there is too much attention paid to low-level constituency based issues, that a more strategic regional approach is needed, and that when necessary the chairperson and / or deputy chairperson could meet with interest groups outside of the formal committee setting.

During 2014/15, for the Committee, saw increased focus on regional issues and less time spent on constituency-level issues; this led to a more effective use of the committee's time and a more strategic approach to the planning of its work programme. The Committee also agreed that there should be more use of social media in order to communicate more effectively with interest group and the general public. The strategic planning exercise for the year included a more joined-up approach to planning and included a much greater input from the Assembly's Research and Information Service when identifying potential areas of inquiry for the Committee.

The 2015/16 year, for this Committee as with many others, was dominated by legislation and inquiries. The Committee concluded Committee Stage on the [Road Traffic \(Speed Limits\) Bill](#) and the [Water and Sewerage Services Bill](#). The Committee also concluded its work on the Inquiry into Primary Legislation for the Consumer Council and the Inquiry into Departmental Programme for Government Targets. It also received pre-

legislative briefings on the Land Acquisition and Compensation (Amendment) Bill and saw this Bill through to its conclusion with Final Stage passed on 15th March 2016.

Work of the Committee during the 2015-2016 parliamentary session

In the absence of a separate End of Session report on the work of the Committee during the final session of this mandate, information on this session is included at Appendix 3.

Issues for consideration by the incoming Committee for Infrastructure

This section provides an indication of a number of workstreams that the incoming Committee for Infrastructure (CFI) **may** wish to consider taking forward in the new mandate. Whilst under no obligation to take forward these issues, they were considered important to the Committee for Regional Development and are matters that the Committee would have concluded if time and circumstances had permitted.

The Committee, during its strategic planning event in September 2015 not only looked to the 2015/16 session but also beyond the 2016 election when the new CFI comes into operation; these, and issues that arose during the 2015/16 session are detailed below.

Issues that the Committee agreed to recommend to the incoming Committee included:

Transport

- Implementation of the recommendations in relation to Integrated Transport. The Committee received an update briefing from Departmental Officials on the pilot project on integrated passenger transport proposals at its meeting on 3 February 2016 and would recommend that the CFI monitors the implementation of the proposals;
- On 9 March 2016, the Committee held a stakeholder engagement event aimed at addressing issues around public transport in Belfast City Centre, particularly issues in relation to the taxi ranks for public hire taxis. This is an issue that has been ongoing for a considerable period and, whilst it is an issue for which there is no quick fix and some work has been done to attempt to solve the problems, this is something that should be taken forward by the new Committee. The Committee produced an [issues paper on the event](#) and requested that the Department responds to the Committee for Infrastructure on the issues raised;
- Problems experienced by blind and partially sighted people using public transport caused considerable concern to this Committee. The Committee had been scheduled to visit the premises of [RADAR](#) on 17 February 2016 to tour their facilities and also to receive a tour from the [RNIB](#) but this visit had to be cancelled. The Committee would strongly recommend to the new Committee that it visits RADAR and takes these tours so as to appreciate more the difficulties that blind and partially sighted people experience every day when using public transport.

Rail Services

- Health and Safety issues and proposed revisions to the timetable for the Enterprise service from Belfast to Dublin were of significant concern to the Committee in the closing months of the mandate and it would ask that the new Committee follows up on these issues with the new Department. The Committee received a number of briefings on these issues and met with Professor Austin Smyth in relation to the significant concerns that he had in relation to the Enterprise train service, and other rail services throughout Northern Ireland and into the Republic of Ireland, and feels that this is a hugely important issue that needs to be addressed. The Committee received a [paper from Professor Smyth](#) on the proposed timetable for the Belfast to Dublin Enterprise Service that it forwarded to the Department requesting that it responds to the Committee for Infrastructure on the issues raised.

Roads

- Departmental Flagship Projects – having received regular updates on DRD’s major flagship projects, the Committee would urge the CFI to continue to scrutinise these projects that include: A5 and A6 road schemes; Belfast Rapid Transit System; and the Belfast Transport Hub;
- The Committee would also recommend that the CFI monitors a number of additional transport infrastructure projects that include: the A4 and A26 road schemes; Phases 2 and 3 of the North West Rail upgrade; plans to reopen the Ulster Canal; and the railway between Londonderry and Sligo (Western Arc).

Cycling

- Implementation of the Department’s Cycling Strategy is essential if people are to stop using cars as their main mode of transport and the Committee is strongly of the view that the Assembly and government departments should do all within their power to push cycling as a preferred mode of transport.

Airport Noise

- Airport noise, particularly at Belfast City Airport, was also concerning to the Committee and included issues in relation to the need for increased independent regulation of all airport related matters and concerns relating to flight times and deviation from flight paths. The Committee would ask the new Committee to consider taking this issue forward.

Water & Sewerage

- Implementation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) was considered by the Committee to be an essential part of building projects to alleviate flooding and the Committee sought an amendment to the recent Water and Sewerage Service Bill to include the installation of soft SuDS in development projects. The Committee would recommend that the CFI gives significant consideration to the issue of SuDS and to monitoring and scrutinising the Department’s guidance that is being developed as a result of the Committee’s consideration of the Bill;
- Departmental Officials suggested that there may be need for a Flooding Bill, particularly given the responsibilities of the new DFI, and the Committee should be mindful that this may come forward early in the mandate;

- The issue of bonds for unadopted private sewers was also an issue of significant concern to this Committee and it would urge the CFI to continue to monitor the Department's review of this matter.

Financial Scrutiny

- Financial scrutiny should be of major significance to the new Committee, not just in terms of the newly constituted department but also in relation to the large scale flagship projects and major road projects that it will progress in the next mandate.

Other issues for consideration

- The transition from the Department for Regional Development to the Department for Infrastructure (DFI) will see the new Department having responsibility for a range of additional functions as well as a larger workforce and a much larger estate. The Committee would recommend that the new Committee carefully scrutinises the transition both operationally and in relation to its budgets;
- EU Funding and the potential to influence EU policy. In addition to the issue of funding, the Committee also responded to the OFMdfM Committee's [Report on Assembly Committees' Priorities for European Scrutiny in 2016](#) and the issues raised in that response might provide a starting point for the incoming Committee's work on European issues;
- Consumer Council for Northern Ireland (CCNI) – proposed Primary Legislation. The Committee, as detailed in Appendix 3, concluded its inquiry into the need to legislate on transport issues for the Consumer Council and, having considered the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) now in place between the CCNI and the Department, agreed to recommend to the incoming Committee that it monitors the operation of, and adherence to, the MOU going forward;
- The Department achieved 3 of its 6 Programme for Government (PfG) targets during this mandate and whilst the PfG targets will be different in the next mandate, the Committee would suggest that the new Committee considers those targets not met and monitors the Department's progress on these important issues. The Committee agreed an [Issues Paper](#) on this matter at its meeting of 10 February 2016.

Membership of the Committee: 2011 - 2016

Membership of the Committee changed on a number of occasions throughout the mandate. 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 Trevor Clarke MLA (Chairperson) ¹²
- Mr Sean Lynch MLA (Deputy Chairperson) ⁶
- Mr Adrian Cochrane - Watson MLA ^{4, 15}
- Mr John Dallat MLA ⁵
- Mrs Brenda Hale MLA ^{8, 17}
- Mr Chris Lyttle MLA ^{10, 13}
- Mr Declan McAleer MLA ⁷
- Mr Daniel McCrossan MLA ^{11, 16, 18}
- Mr David McNarry MLA ^{2, 3}
- Mr Stephen Moutray MLA ^{9, 14}
- Mr Cathal Ó hOisín MLA

¹ With effect from 06 June 2011 Mr Stewart Dickson replaced Mr Trevor Lunn

² With effect from 26 September 2011 Mr Michael Copeland replaced Mr Mike Nesbitt

³ With effect from 06 February 2012 Mr David McNarry replaced Mr Michael Copeland

⁴ With effect from 23 April 2012 Mr Ross Hussey replaced Mr Roy Beggs

⁵ With effect from 23 April 2012 Mr John Dallat replaced Mr Joe Byrne

⁶ With effect from 02 July 2012 Mr Seán Lynch replaced Mr Pat Doherty as Deputy Chairperson

⁷ With effect from 10 September 2012 Mr Declan McAleer was appointed as a Member

⁸ With effect from 01 October 2012 Mr Alex Easton replaced Mr Stephen Moutray

⁹ With effect from 16 September 2013 Mrs Brenda Hale replaced Mr Ian McCrea

¹⁰ With effect from 01 October 2013 Mr Kieran McCarthy replaced Mr Stewart Dickson

¹¹ With effect from 07 October 2013 Mr Joe Byrne replaced Mrs Dolores Kelly

¹² With effect from 24 September 2014 Mr Trevor Clarke replaced Mr Jimmy Spratt as Chairperson

¹³ With effect from 29 September 2014 Mr Chris Lyttle replaced Mr Kieran McCarthy

¹⁴ With effect from 06 October 2014 Mr Stephen Moutray replaced Mrs Brenda Hale

¹⁵ With effect from 30 June 2015 Mr Adrian Cochrane - Watson replaced Mr Ross Hussey

¹⁶ With effect from 7 September 2015 Ms Claire Hanna replaced Mr Joe Byrne

¹⁷ With effect from 5 October 2015 Mrs Brenda Hale replaced Mr Alex Easton

¹⁸ With effect from 12 January 2016 Mr Daniel McCrossan replaced Ms Claire Hanna

APPENDIX 2

Committee for Regional Development

Committee Meetings & Visits

Session	Number of meetings held	Percentage minutes public / closed	Number of meetings held outside Parliament Buildings	Number of committee visits
2011/2012	40	2.07	9	3
2012/2013	31	1.39	3	7
2013/2014	35	2.52	8	2
2014/2015	36	5.59	7	3
2015/2016	24	5	0	2

Bills

Session	Name of Bill	Committee report (Ordered to print)
2011/2012	n/a	
2012/2013	Water & Sewerage Services Amendment Bill	23 January 2013
2013/2014	Road Races (Amendment) Bill	N/A (Granted Accelerated Passage)
2014/2015	Off-Street Parking (Functions of District Councils) Bill	8 December 2014
2015/2016	Road Traffic (Speed Limits) Bill	14 October 2015
	Water and Sewerage Services Bill	18 November 2015
	Land Acquisition & Compensation (Amendment) Bill	N/A (Granted Accelerated Passage)

Committee Inquiries

Session	Name of report	Committee Report (ordered to print)	Date debated in Plenary (if applicable)
2011/2012	Inquiry into Unadopted Roads	7 November 2012	4 December 2013
2012/2013	Inquiry into the Better Use of Public and Community Sector Funds for the Delivery of Transport Options in Northern Ireland	22 May 2013	2 July 2013
	Comprehensive Transport Delivery Structures	18 September 2013	4 November 2013
2014/2015	Inquiry into the Benefits of Cycling to the Economy	14 January 2015	23 March 2015
	Inquiry into the Coleraine to Londonderry Rail Track Phase Two Project	16 July 2015	N/A

Statutory Rules

Session	Number agreed by Committee
2011/2012	47
2012/2013	18
2013/2014	28
2014/2015	24
2015/2016	18

Committee Reports (excluding Bill and Inquiry Reports)

Session	Name of report	Date (date approved by Committee)
2011/2012	End of Session 11/12	12 November 2012
2012/2013	End of Session 12/13	19 November 2013
2013/2014	End of Session 13/14	17 November 2014
2014/2015	End of Session 14/15	20 October 2015
2015/2016	Legacy Report 11/16	16 March 2016

Witnesses

Session	Number of Organisations who gave evidence to the committee
2011/2012	39
2012/2013	45
2013/2014	38
2014/2015	44
2015/2016	29

Work of the Committee during the 2015-2016 parliamentary Session

The 2015/16 year, for this Committee as with many others, was dominated by legislation and inquiries. The Committee concluded Committee Stage on the [Road Traffic \(Speed Limits\) Bill](#) and the [Water and Sewerage Services Bill](#). The Committee also concluded its work on the Inquiry in Primary Legislation for the Consumer Council and the Inquiry into Departmental Programme for Government Targets. It also received pre-legislative briefings on the Land Acquisition and Compensation (Amendment) Bill.

In response to its call for evidence to the Inquiry into Primary Legislation for the Consumer Council (CCNI), only 1 submission was received; from the Consumer Council. Subsequent to this, the CCNI signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department and it was agreed that no further work was required in relation to this inquiry. In response to its call for evidence on the Inquiry into Departmental Programme for Government Targets, the Committee did not receive any responses. As a result, the Committee considered a research paper and briefing from the Assembly's Research and Information Service and a also from the Department. The Committee agreed that, rather than produce an inquiry report, it would produce an issues papers for consideration by the Department.

From September 2015 to March 2016 the Committee met on 24 occasions, 2 of which were external to Parliament Buildings. The Committee held an external meeting in Londonderry in October and combined this with a visit to Londonderry Port and Harbour in relation to the strategic role of ports to the Northern Ireland economy. The Committee also held an external meeting in Cardiff in November 2015 in relation to the Water and Sewerage Services Bill and also to views sites where Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) have been installed. In February 2016 the Committee also visited SuDS sites in Belfast, Conlig and Dundonald. A number of the Committee member also joined the Agriculture Committee on a visit to see the operation of the Lough Neagh Sluice Gates at Toome.

On 9 March 2016, the Committee held a stakeholder engagement event aimed at addressing issues in relation to public transport in and around Belfast City Centre. The findings of this event were produced as an [issues paper](#) for consideration by the incoming Committee for Infrastructure and the Committee requested as response from the Department on the issues raised.

Expenditure for the period 1 September 2015 – 29 March 2016

Budget area	Details	Expenditure
Committee Travel - committee members and staff travel and subsistence in relation to visits and meetings outside Parliament Buildings	3 External Meetings and / or visits to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Londonderry Port and Harbour • Cardiff • Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) sites 	£3294.96
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"> • Water and Sewerage Services Bill • Inquiry into Primary Legislation on the Consumer Council • Inquiry into Departmental Progress against PfG Targets 	£2473.61
Refreshments & Hospitality	Refreshments for 24 meetings, hospitality for visits/external meetings	£1379.30
General expenses	Room hire for external visits/meetings, staff seminar and witnesses expenses for attendance at Committee meetings	£1670.90
Total Expenditure		£8818.77

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