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| Report on | Conferences, Seminars & Training |
| Date of Meeting | 26 March 2020 |
| Reporting Officer | Philip Moffett, Head of Democratic Services |
| Contact Officer | Eileen Forde, Member Support Officer |

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| Is this report restricted for confidential business? | Yes | |
| If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon | No | x |

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| 1.0 | Purpose of Report |
| 1.1 | Provide an update on seminars and conferences received. To seek approval for (i) elected member attendance and the payment of registration/ attendance fees and associated costs, as incurred and, (ii) council officer approvals. |
| 2.0 | Background |
| 2.1 | Costs associated will be set against 2019-20 member Conference, Seminar and Training allocations. |
| 3.0 | Main Report |
| 3.1 | Approval for Consideration of Attendance by Elected Members There are occasions when it is beneficial to Members to attend training, conferences and seminars to better equip them in their role as elected representatives. Approval for attendance as detailed in Appendix A to this report is sought. |
| 3.2 | Officer Approvals There are occasions when it is beneficial to the council for Officers to attend conferences and seminars. Approval for attendance as detailed in Appendix B to this report is sought. |
| 4.0 | Other Considerations |
| 4.1 | Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications Financial: Costs to be set against Members 2019/20 conference/seminar/training allocation. Any costs incurred above annual allocation to be incurred by Member |

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|------------|--|
| | Human: not applicable |
| | Risk Management: not applicable |
| 4.2 | Screening & Impact Assessments |
| | Equality & Good Relations Implications: not applicable |
| | Rural Needs Implications: not applicable |
| 5.0 | Recommendation(s) |
| 5.1 | Approval for attendance at the conferences, seminars and training by members and council officers as required. |
| 6.0 | Documents Attached & References |
| | Appendix A Member Conferences, Seminars & Training Appendix B Officers Approvals |

Appendix A

Member Training

| Provider/Course | Date & Time | Location | Costs | Attendee Requests |
|-----------------|-------------|----------|-------|-------------------|
| | | | | |

Conferences

| Provider/Course | Date & Time | Location | Costs | Attendee Requests |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Agenda NI Northern Ireland Infrastructure Investment Conference 2020 | Thursday 28th May 2020 • | La Mon Hotel, Belfast | £225 plus travel & Subsistence | |
| Agenda NI Engaging the NI Assembly 2020 | Thursday 30 April 2020 | Stormont Hotel, Belfast | £275+VAT | |

Cancellations/Postponements Notified Due to Ongoing Health Crisis

| Provider/Course | Date & Time | Location | Costs | Attendee Requests |
|--|--------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| The Computer says No: How 'Welfare' Algorithms Punish the Poor." | Wednesday 25 March 2020 5.30pm | Conor Lecture Theatre, Belfast Campus, Ulster University, York Street, Belfast | Free Travel and subsistence | Cllr Molloy |
| NILGA - Caring Councils: A local government response to poverty, addiction and improving mental health | Friday 27 March 2020 | Girdwood Community Hub Belfast | Travel and subsistence | |

Northern Ireland Infrastructure Investment Conference 2020

Thursday 28th May 2020 • La Mon Hotel, Belfast

Sponsored by



Media partner



agendaNi is organising the annual Infrastructure Investment Conference which will examine the key elements required to create sustainable 21st century infrastructure. Infrastructure investment is a key building block for sustainable economic growth and is a key element in the New Decade, New Approach deal. This event will bring together key stakeholders to look at the sectoral challenges and examine the overall future direction for infrastructure.

Expert Speakers Include:

- Nichola Mallon MLA, Minister for Infrastructure
- Martin Spollen, Head of Investment Strategy, Strategic Investment Board
- Emer Murnaghan, Head of Responsible Sustainable Business, Graham
- Conal Henry, Chair, Fibrus
- Northern Ireland Water
- Chris Conway, Group Chief Executive, Translink;
- Trevor Anderson, Infrastructure and Business Transformation Director, Belfast Harbour

The expert panels will comprehensively address:

Priorities for future infrastructure investment
Delivering responsible and sustainable infrastructure
Making Belfast a resilient city
Investing in public transport
Water infrastructure: supporting the Northern Ireland economy
Investing for our digital future: delivering connectivity

Register now:

Delegate fee £225 + VAT @ 20% = £270.00

W: <https://www.ni-infrastructure.agendani.com>

E: registration@agendani.com

T: +44 (028) 9261 9933.

A black and white photograph of the Stormont Hotel in Belfast, a grand neoclassical building with many windows and a portico. The image is partially obscured by large, overlapping red and black geometric shapes on the left and top right.

agendaNi seminar

Engaging the Northern Ireland Assembly 2020

Thursday 30th April 2020
Stormont Hotel, Belfast

Engaging the Northern Ireland Assembly 2020

Following the restoration of devolution in the first month of the first year of the new decade, the Northern Ireland Assembly is set to be a hive of activity once again. With a fresh impetus in New Decade, New Approach – a document replete with ambitious priorities – local legislators will once again be accountable for actions which will have impactful repercussions across the public, private and voluntary sectors. The Assembly's committees have resumed business with scrutiny of cross-sectoral policy issues for each portfolio. Aside from Executive ministers, a broad cross-section of society will be called to give evidence to the committees, including senior civil servants, business leaders, directors of NGOs, church leaders and industry experts. As legislators strive to reassure the public of the new devolved institutions' longevity, the Assembly will become a focal point for the future of Northern Ireland. As such, individuals and organisations must seek to reengage with it.

This seminar offers those who will need to interact and influence the Assembly an insight into its inner workings. It is for both seasoned practitioners and those who are new to the functions and operations 'on the hill'.

Who should attend? If you work in...

Public affairs or communications

This seminar is a must if you work in the public affairs arena. Since each of the major local parties signed the New Decade, New Approach document and the subsequent restoration of devolution in January 2020, the Assembly is set to move ahead with a full legislative agenda and committees that are addressing a wide range of issues across all policy areas.

Northern Ireland public sector

Knowing how the local political system operates is vital to the role of any public sector official. This seminar will familiarise you with the processes of the Assembly, providing an understanding of how things work on a day-to-day basis.

Business sector

One aspect of the legislative process in Northern Ireland is the engagement of the private sector. Now that locally conceived legislation is once again set to directly impact upon local companies, it is essential that the business community continues to interact with MLAs and engage with committees in order to further the business agenda.

Voluntary or community sector

The third sector is arguably the most active in relation to directly engaging MLAs and indeed lobbying the local legislature as a whole. It is essential that those working with charities and NGOs remain cognisant of how the Assembly operates.

Session one

Introducing the Northern Ireland Assembly 2020

This session will contextualise the re-establishment of Northern Ireland's devolved institutions in January 2020. Mark Devenport, BBC NI's veteran political editor will examine the wider context of the New Decade, New Approach agreement and provide delegates with an insight into the immediate challenges and opportunities for devolution. Jon Tonge, University of Liverpool academic, political commentator and author of several notable books relating to Northern Ireland, will explore the political composition of the Assembly and deliver a progress report on the restored legislature. One of the most experienced local public affairs practitioners, Gravis Planning's John Fullerton will comprehensively detail why it is important to engage with the Assembly.

09:30 **Chairman's introduction: The road to the 2020 Assembly**

Mark Devenport, Political Editor
BBC NI

09:45 **New Decade, New Approach: Devolution progress report**

Professor Jon Tonge, Department of Politics,
University of Liverpool

10:00 **Why engage with the Assembly: A practitioner's perspective**

John Fullerton, Director, Strategic Communications, **Gravis Planning**

10:30 Questions and discussion

10:45 Refreshments and networking break



Session two

The Northern Ireland Assembly in operation

Understanding the Assembly means possessing a practical knowledge of how it works on a daily basis. This session will consider the main components underpinning the Assembly's function. Dolores Kelly MLA will present a detailed analysis of the role of an MLA paying particular attention to the weekly workload undertaken by our legislators. The Assembly's committees are central to scrutiny of legislation, departments and ministers. Education Committee chair Chris Lyttle MLA will outline the workings of committees at a practical level. Gareth McGrath will explain the functional procedures of the Northern Ireland Assembly, while Roy Beggs will detail the crucial work carried out by the Public Accounts Committee.

- 11:15 **Beyond the basics: The role of an MLA**
Dolores Kelly MLA
- 11:35 **A guide to the workings of the Assembly**
Gareth McGrath, Director of Parliamentary Services, Northern Ireland Assembly
- 11:55 **The role and workings of the committees in the Northern Ireland Assembly**
Chris Lyttle MLA, Chair
Committee for Education *(invited)*
- 12:15 **The Public Accounts Committee**
Roy Beggs MLA, Deputy Chair
Public Accounts Committee
- 12:35 Questions and discussion
- 12:45 Networking lunch



Session three

A practical guide to engaging with the Assembly

The final session will offer guidance to individuals and organisations on interacting and engaging with the Northern Ireland Assembly. Speakers from across the business sphere and the community and voluntary sectors will impart their experiences of lobbying the Assembly and offer advice to those undertaking public affairs campaigns. In addition, former SDLP SPAD Michael McKernan will explore the new role of special advisors. The session will conclude with a media panel which will debate the performance of the Assembly, barriers to the legislative process and identify the best performing legislators.

- 14:00 **Open for business? Transacting the business agenda with the Assembly**
Aodhán Connolly, Director
Northern Ireland Retail Consortium
- 14:20 **Getting your message across: How do we get MLAs to listen?**
Paschal McKeown, Charity Director
Age NI
- 14:40 **The inner workings of an all-party group**
John McLean, Chief Executive
Radius Housing Association
- 15:00 **The new role of Special Advisors**
Michael McKernan, former Special Advisor, SDLP
- 15:20 **Panel discussion: Performance and prospects of the Assembly**
Allison Morris, The Irish News
Alex Kane, Commentator and
Vincent Kearney, RTÉ *(invited)*
- 15:50 Questions and discussion
- 16:00 Chairman's concluding remarks and seminar close



Speakers

Session one:



Mark Devenport

Mark Devenport is BBC Northern Ireland's Political Editor. Mark has reported for the BBC since the 1980s and worked as the Corporation's Ireland Correspondent throughout the 1990s, including at the time of the Good Friday Agreement. Previously, Mark worked as the BBC's United Nations Correspondent based in New York and has reported from around the globe. Mark is the author of two books *Man of War*, *Man of Peace*, a biography of Gerry Adams (co-author with David Sharrock) and *Flash Frames*, an anecdotal account of working as a reporter in Belfast.



Jonathan Tonge

Jonathan Tonge is Professor of Politics at the University of Liverpool. He was Principal Investigator of the 2010, 2015, 2017 and 2019 Economic and Social Research Council Northern Ireland General Election studies. Books include co-authored membership studies of the Democratic Unionist Party and the Ulster Unionist Party in *The Ulster Unionist Party: Country Before Party?*, Sinn Féin and the SDLP and the Orange Order in *Loyal to the Core: Orangeism and Britishness in Northern Ireland*. Jon co-edits the journal *Parliamentary Affairs*. He has edited studies of the last six general elections in the Britain Votes series, published by Oxford University Press.



John Fullerton

John Fullerton graduated in Law from the University of Dundee in 2009 and also holds a Master's Degree from the University of Edinburgh. On a day-to-day basis he advises clients on all aspects of engagement with politicians, the media and other key stakeholders as well as managing projects through the statutory Pre-Application Community Consultation process. Prior to joining Gravis Planning, John held senior policy roles within a major political party in Northern Ireland and at a leading national business organisation, where he worked closely with elected representatives at Westminster and Stormont on various high-profile campaigns and policy issues.

Session two:



Dolores Kelly MLA

Dolores Kelly has represented the constituency of Upper Bann since 2003. She is a member of the Policing Board and the Assembly Social Development Committee. At a local level, Dolores served on the Craigavon District Council between 1993 and 2010 and was elected as Mayor of Craigavon in 1999. Previously, she chaired the Assembly Employment and Learning Committee having formerly chaired the Environment Committee. More recently, Dolores served as vice-chair of the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee.



Gareth McGrath

Gareth McGrath is Director of Parliamentary Services at the Northern Ireland Assembly. He leads a team of around 150 staff responsible for the management of meetings of the Assembly Plenary and its committees, for the official record of proceedings ('Hansard'), and for the Assembly's Communications, Public Engagement and Information Systems services. This includes marshalling the provision of advice to the Speaker, Deputy Speakers, committee chairpersons and MLAs on parliamentary procedure and practice; and managing the passage of legislation. Gareth joined the Assembly in 2008, having previously worked in the chemical industry, management consulting and the Civil Service. In his spare time he is chair of the Board of Governors of Drumlins Integrated Primary School.



Roy Beggs MLA

Roy Beggs was first elected in 1998 as an Ulster Unionist MLA for East Antrim. In June 2001, he was also elected to Carrickfergus Borough Council, where he served as a local councillor for 10 years. Currently he is Deputy Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, having previously served on several Assembly committees. Roy is currently a Deputy Speaker of the Assembly and has also been active on a number of All Party Assembly Groups, including the All Party Assembly Group on the Community and Voluntary Sector.

Session three:



Aodhán Connolly

Aodhán Connolly is the Director of the NI Retail Consortium, responsible for engagement with the NI Assembly, Westminster, the Oireachtas and Europe. He has worked with government at all levels to champion 21st Century high streets including on planning reform. He recently published a go to guide for councillors on retail for local government partnership working.



Paschal McKeown

Paschal McKeown is Charity Director with Age NI, responsible for services, programmes and activities which aim to improve outcomes for older people and ensure everyone can enjoy a better later life. Paschal had worked in the voluntary sector for nearly 30 years in a number of roles, including Head of Policy and Influencing at Age NI; interim Director and Head of External Relations and Community Action at Mencap.



John McLean

John McLean is Chief Executive of Radius Housing Association since its formation in 2017. He is also Chief Executive of Fold Housing Association Ireland, based in Dublin. He was formerly Chief Executive of Fold Housing Association. John is a Chartered Engineer and has been Commercial Director with NIE, the Tyco Group and the Rotary Group. He has worked overseas and in the UK in the Oil and Gas, Electricity Utility and Manufacturing sectors.



Michael McKernan

Michael McKernan joined the Board of Mutual Energy in January 2018. An economist by training, Michael has 25 years' experience working in government, north and south and in senior roles in the Irish energy sector. Most recently, Michael served as Special Advisor to a number of SDLP ministers in the Northern Ireland Executive. Formerly, he was Interconnector Business Manager at NIE. In his earlier career, Michael was a professionally qualified Housing Manager in the Northern Ireland Housing Executive. He subsequently joined the Department of Finance in Dublin, where he was a national trade negotiator in Brussels and Geneva and a Director of the National Standards Authority of Ireland.

Media panel:



Allison Morris

Allison Morris began her reporting career more than 20 years ago, working in the weekly newspaper industry. She joined the *Irish News* in 2007 and since then has gone on to collect several awards for her work. Allison is the *Irish News* security correspondent and is also a regular columnist.



Alex Kane

Alex Kane is a columnist for both the *News Letter* and the *Irish News*, as well as being a regular contributor to the *Belfast Telegraph*. Specialising in political commentary, he is also a frequent guest across a range of BBC, UTV and RTÉ. Alex is also a former UUP Director of Communications.

Registration form

I wish to:

☐ Reserve ____ delegate places at the Engaging the

Northern Ireland Assembly 2020
Conference delegate fee: £275 + VAT @ 20% = £330.00
Voluntary sector rate: £250 + VAT @ 20% = £300.00
Fee includes documentation, lunch and other refreshments served during the conference and is payable in advance. Fee does not include accommodation or travel.

☐ Receive details of exhibition opportunities

☐ Receive details of future agenda publications and events

Personal details

Name: _____

Job title: _____

Organisation: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Tel: _____

Email: _____

Payment options

☐ I enclose a cheque for £ _____
Payable to 'bmf Business Services'.

☐ Please invoice me

☐ Please debit my Visa / Mastercard

Card no.

[illegible]

Expiry date _____ Security code _____

Name of card holder _____

Signature _____

(Please provide card billing address if different from company address)

Cancellations / Substitutions

For those unable to attend, a substitute participant may be sent at any time for no additional charge. Alternatively for cancellations received in writing, by fax or email, the following charges will apply:

More than 14 days before the conference: 25% fee

Less than 14 days before the conference: 100% fee

Failure to attend: 100% fee.

Acknowledgement of registration

Confirmation of registration will be sent to all delegates, following receipt of registration details. If you have not received your acknowledgement within 48 hours, please email registration@agendani.com to confirm your booking.

You can unsubscribe from receiving information at any time, please let us know by emailing info@agendaNi.com or phoning 028 9261 9933.

Key questions addressed at the seminar

- How does the Assembly work in practice?
- How do organisations get involved with the Assembly?
- How can we build and develop working relationships with the Assembly?
- How can we practically engage with MLAs and committees?
- What is the day-to-day role of Assembly staff, MLAs and committees?

- Gain an understanding of the workings of the Northern Ireland Assembly
- Comprehend the different stages of the legislative process
- Hear from expert speakers involved with the Assembly
- Learn the practicalities of engaging with MLAs
- Discover how the committee system works and how committees take evidence

How to register



By phone
028 9261 9933



By email
registration@agendani.com



Online
www.agendani.com



By post
Davidson House
Glenavy Road Business Park
Moirá, Co Down
BT67 0LT

Appendix Approval Sought –MARCH COUNCIL

Retrospective Approval

| Conference & Seminar | Date | No. of Attendees | Location | Attendance Fee (Yes/ No) |
|--|----------|------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Planning for a Resilient Future Conference | 6/3/20 | 1 | UU, Belfast | Yes |
| Manufacturing NI Visit to Manchester & Sheffield | Date TBC | 1 | Manchester & Sheffield | No |
| | | | | |

Approval

| Conference & Seminar | Date | No. of Attendees | Location | Attendance Fee (Yes/ No) |
|-----------------------------|---------|------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| Sports Safety Conference 20 | 27/3/20 | 2 x PHI | Portstewart | No |
| Women's Leadership Seminar | 12/5/20 | 1 | Dundalk | No |
| | | | | |