

Northern Ireland Assembly News – April 2024

Assembly Business

None This Month

Executive Committee Business

None This Month

Ministerial Statements

[North/South Ministerial Council: Plenary Meeting](#)

The First Minister made a statement on the 27th plenary meeting of the North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC), which was held on 8 April 2024. The Council discussed environmental challenges, including those facing our watercourses, such as Lough Neagh, and agreed that both jurisdictions would share learning, expertise and research. Ministers noted the significant challenges faced in both Administrations in addressing climate change and the loss of biodiversity and agreed that all NSMC sectoral meetings will consider those issues so that a report of the discussions can be brought to the next plenary meeting

Committee Business

None This Month

Private Members' Business

[NI Water Challenges](#)

Members debated and passed a motion proposed by Mr Nesbitt MLA and amended by Mrs Erskine MLA: *That this Assembly recognises the failure of existing water and waste infrastructure to meet current and future demand; further recognises that existing funding models have restricted NI Water's ability to meet commitments to maintain and develop services for residential and business needs; believes additional investment in water and sewerage capacity throughout Northern Ireland is critical to driving economic growth, ending regional inequalities in provision and protecting the environment; and calls on the Minister for Infrastructure to provide a detailed options paper on restructuring NI Water to include consideration of mutualisation.*

[Ban Petroleum Licensing and Fracking](#)

Members debated and passed a motion proposed by Mr McGuigan MLA and amended by Ms McLaughlin MLA : *That this Assembly recognises that tackling climate change is a global priority and, to be successful, must be grounded on the principles of fairness and a just transition away from fossil fuel dependency towards a fairer and greener society powered by renewable energy; further recognises that we need to develop solar, tidal, onshore and offshore wind resources across the island of Ireland and off our coast; believes that a move towards renewable energy with a diversity of sources can increase energy security by reducing reliance on fossil fuel imports, which are more susceptible to international markets; acknowledges the deep concerns communities have about the environmental and public health risks associated with practices such as hydraulic fracturing; and calls on the Minister for the Economy, as an important first step in moving away from fossil fuel dependency, to introduce legislation to ban petroleum licensing, drilling and extraction before the end of 2024.*

Adjournment Debate

None this Month

Member Statements

[River Pollution](#)

Answers to Written Questions

First Minister and deputy First Minister

[Legislation - Ethnic Equality monitoring in the workplace](#)

Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

[Import/ sale of non-native seed species and the All-Island Pollinator Plan](#)

[Endangered wildlife species in Northern Ireland](#)

[Compliance assessment sampling at wastewater treatment works](#)

[Funding provided to environmental groups](#)

[Rivers Trust's State of our Rivers 2023 report](#)

[Impact of major planning projects on DAERA proposed climate action plan](#)

Minister for Communities

[Update – Departmental Climate Change Action Plan](#)

Minister for the Economy

[Support available for households wishing to install solar panels](#)

[Departmental target of 80% of electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2030](#)

[Update - The GeoEnergy NI project](#)

[Remit of Utility Regulator to include decarbonisation and climate change targets](#)

Minister of Education

[Woodland Trust School Scheme](#)

[Value of residential outdoor education](#)

[Number of \(i\) CO2 monitors; and \(ii\) HEPA filters in schools](#)

Minister of Finance

[Climate considerations in the budget process](#)

[Review of building regulations to ensure climate change objectives will be met](#)

Minister for Infrastructure

[Commitment to spend 10 % of Departmental transport budget on active travel](#)

[Implementation recommendations in the All-Island Strategic Rail Review](#)

[Decarbonising the Translink fleet](#)

[Promotion of active travel](#)

[How his Department will help promote biodiversity](#)

[Growth of electric vehicle charge points](#)

[Penalty Charge Notices issued to vehicles parked in a cycle lanes](#)

Oral Answers to Questions

Minister of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs

[Tree Planting: 2030 Target](#)

[Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism](#)

Minister for Communities

[Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund](#)

Minister of Finance

[Update - Shared Prosperity Fund](#)

Assembly Committee Meetings April 2024

COMMITTEE	DATE	AGENDA/ Highlights
AERA	18 April Watch Again	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing - PCI Consulting – Mobuoy illegal waste site • Briefing from The Department of Agriculture, Environment & Rural Affairs – Emission Trading Scheme • Overview of Proposals to Produce a Statutory Policy Statement on Environmental Principles

<p>Infrastructure</p>	<p>10 April Watch Again</p>	<p>The Committee held the following evidence sessions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the role and functions of the Utility Regulator for Northern Ireland • Consultation on Water, Flooding and Sustainable Drainage – Department for Infrastructure • Planning in Northern Ireland – NI Audit Office and Public Accounts Committee Reports
	<p>24 April Watch Again</p>	<p>The Committee received oral and written evidence from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dept for Infrastructure & from NI Water on the Water, Flooding and Drainage Bill – Pre-legislative Scrutiny. • The Committee also received written evidence from NI Audit Office on the Funding Water Infrastructure in NI

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