



**IoD NI: ACTION PLAN**

# Getting infrastructure and investment back on track

In collaboration with:



Danske Bank



SONI is Northern Ireland's independent electricity Transmission System Operator (TSO). We manage the electricity grid to ensure that power can flow from where it is generated to where it is needed.

Our team of experienced, expert engineers manage the electricity grid, second-by-second, every day of the year, to ensure power can flow safely, securely and reliably to homes, farms, businesses and public services across Northern Ireland.

Electricity systems across the world are changing. At SONI, we have the crucial task of transforming the electricity system to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and support Northern Ireland's collective clean energy and climate action goals. That means changing how we operate and strengthening and building out grid infrastructure to introduce more and newer forms of renewable energy, supporting economic growth and a resilient society.

The level of transformation required is unprecedented but with collaboration between industry, government and the public and accelerated action, we can deliver a cleaner, more affordable, secure energy future for everyone in Northern Ireland.

KPMG in Northern Ireland is a key part of KPMG Ireland's integrated Infrastructure Advisory practice; the largest advisory team of its kind on the island. From our Belfast office, we are deeply embedded across Northern Ireland's infrastructure and government landscape, supporting departments, agencies and investors as they navigate a complex environment, shifting policy priorities and significant public scrutiny.

We work across transport, energy, digital, water, housing and regeneration, providing clear, independent, end-to-end advisory services that help our clients navigate the full lifecycle of infrastructure projects - from strategy and planning, business cases through to procurement, funding and major project delivery.

Our multidisciplinary teams blend local knowledge with national expertise and world class global capability, ensuring clients can move from long term ambition to practical, resilient and sustainable infrastructure outcomes.



Gravis Planning is an integrated Planning and Strategic Communications consultancy, active across all sectors of built development in the UK and Ireland.

With over 25 years industry experience, our consultancy services and strategic advice have helped over 600 clients to deliver significant investment.

Our Planning team provides advice across all aspects of the planning process. We manage applications for some of the largest development projects as well as small applications for one off clients.

Our Strategic Communications team devises and manages a strategic approach to stakeholder engagement and public relations for all types of development including some of NI's largest infrastructure projects.

With offices in Belfast, Dublin, Edinburgh and London, we are in a unique position to offer these integrated services, making us an innovative market leader in our sector.

Danske Bank is a leading bank in Northern Ireland and a growing bank in the rest of the UK. Headquartered in Belfast, the bank has been helping people and businesses thrive for over 200 years.

Danske Bank serves the needs of personal and business customers through its digital banking channels, branch network, award-winning local customer contact centre and a large team of business relationship managers.

Since 1824 we've supported the changing needs of Northern Ireland industry, been there for our customers, become part of the fabric of local society and established ourselves as key stakeholder in the economy.

Customers get the best of both worlds – the strength and technology of a strong international parent, combined with the bank's local presence, local decision-making and local expertise.

# Acknowledgements

**Thank you to those who contributed to the Infrastructure and Investment Forum and the final Action Plan, 'Getting infrastructure and investment back on track', including participants, speakers and IoD members.**

A special acknowledgement to Gravis Planning for facilitating and compiling the Action Plan. Thanks also to our partners, Danske Bank, KPMG, and SONI, for their ongoing support.

Finally, thanks to all our guest speakers and to Gravis Planning, Danske Bank, SONI, NI Water, KPMG, and the NI Utility Regulator for hosting workshop sessions.



# Introduction

**In February 2025, the IoD, in partnership with Gravis Planning, Danske Bank, KPMG and SONI established an Infrastructure and Investment Forum to identify key issues impacting delivery of infrastructure and to make specific recommendations to government.**

This Forum consisted of senior leaders and organisations drawn from right across the business community, supported by expert-led evidence and knowledge from key sectors and industries. This unprecedented level of expertise was harnessed through a series of workshops with all outputs analysed, priorities identified and policy positions developed. Five workshops were held throughout 2025 and over 200 people have engaged with the Forum. A survey of IoD NI members was also carried out. The significant work underpinning this report reflects the scale of the challenge we seek to address.

Investment in infrastructure, such as energy and grid, water and transport, is essential for the success of a thriving modern economy. Research has shown that well-designed infrastructure investments have long-term economic impact; they can raise economic growth, productivity and land values, while providing significant positive spillover benefits.<sup>1</sup>

Better-quality infrastructure allows an economy to be more efficient, which improves its productivity; competitiveness; and raises living standards. It can also improve lives in other ways such as improving air quality, protecting the environment and creating more attractive places to live and work.<sup>2</sup>

While there have been some significant developments, such as Belfast Grand Central Station and Ulster University, in recent years Northern Ireland has typically struggled to deliver infrastructure projects of scale. These challenges were reported by the NI Audit Office in their 2024 report into Major Capital Projects. This outlined that many projects were subject to delay and with a total overspend of £2.45 billion across the portfolio of major projects.<sup>3</sup>

It is acknowledged that public finances are constrained and delivering physical infrastructure is highly complex, however, to remain competitive as a region it is essential that we find new methods of delivery and that we bring global best practice to Northern Ireland.

We need to effectively prioritise and ensure our investment decisions are based on objective need, not simply what our capital funding allows. An Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland should be published urgently to provide clarity on long-term capital spend.

If our required need exceeds what is available then we must be prepared to look beyond traditional allocation of funding and implement best practice from elsewhere, including greater use of the private sector. Just as the Fiscal Council and Commission have provided rigour and impartial advice in relation to the public finances, an empowered Infrastructure Commission or Council can support evidence-based decision making in relation to infrastructure. This approach has been successful in other jurisdictions in the UK and Ireland.

We also need to ensure a pro-development approach to our planning system and drive best practice across all those with responsibility in this area, to improve efficiency, quality and speed of decision making with greater joined-up thinking. Impacting all aspects of development is the issue of wastewater infrastructure, and it is essential that all our elected representatives face this challenge head on and with urgency.

As we look ahead to the planned Northern Ireland Assembly elections of May 2027, we hope this practically focused Action Plan will help shape and inform policy making. Our IoD members and the business community want to see new and dynamic approaches taken to infrastructure and investment, providing significant economic, social and environmental benefits to Northern Ireland.

We look forward to working closely with all those with responsibility for the recommendations within this Action Plan and offer partnership with their implementation.

1 <https://cep.lse.ac.uk/LSE-Growth-Commission/files/LSEGC-infrastructure-growth.pdf>

2 <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06594/SN06594.pdf>

3 <https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/publications/major-capital-projects-follow-report>

# Recommendations

## 1 Facilitate sustainable growth and a cleaner energy future

**We need to ensure that as a region we can capitalise on the transition to Net Zero and the economic opportunities which this will present. Northern Ireland has been a world leader in the integration of renewables, comfortably exceeding the 40% by 2020 target for renewable electricity generation.**

In more recent years our progress has slowed due to political inactivity and the lack of a renewable incentive policy. It is crucial that we harness the potential of the transition to Net Zero in the years to come, which will provide long-term energy security for our region.



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### We need to:

- Move towards a 'plan-led' approach for grid development, which strategically aligns generation, energy storage, demand and the necessary grid infrastructure to enable anticipatory investment.
- Expedite and remove barriers to the delivery of the North South Interconnector and other key transmission grid upgrades. This should include raising public awareness of the importance of grid infrastructure to the transition to Net Zero to increase public support.
- Ensure the Renewable Energy Price Guarantee (REPG) scheme is introduced and passed within the current Stormont mandate, to encourage investment in renewable generation to ensure long-term energy security and as we move away from reliance on fossil fuels.
- Urgently progress legislation within this mandate governing Offshore Renewable Energy Installations and decommissioning. This should ensure liability protection and provide regulatory certainty for safety zones, navigation rights, and the legal requirements for full or partial removal of installations upon cessation of operation. This will protect government and the consumer should projects fail.
- Building on the success of the Vehicle Emissions Trading scheme, set appropriate policies to encourage and incentivise decarbonising of heating and transport at demand level. This should include encouraging businesses and households to invest in technologies such as heat pumps and electric vehicles.

## 2 Improve planning performance

**It has been over a decade since planning powers were devolved to local councils. While this has generally been a welcome development, there can be significant variations in approaches and performance levels between different councils, and those responsibilities which still sit at Departmental level.**

Planning decision timelines lag considerably in Northern Ireland compared to other parts of the UK and Ireland. This impacts our perception as a region which is open for investment. Both the UK and Irish Governments are advancing legislation to speed up planning and infrastructure delivery, and it is essential we do not fall further behind.

In our recent IoD NI survey, 89% of respondents said their business has been impacted by delays to planning or delivery of infrastructure. While recognising that the Department for Infrastructure has commenced a Planning Improvement Programme, there is a need to implement further reforms to significantly increase the quality and speed of decision making.

**89%**

of respondents said their business has been impacted by planning delays and / or lack of delivery of infrastructure in Northern Ireland

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### We need to:

- Appoint a Planning Champion for Northern Ireland to drive good practice across councils and all responsible agencies, as has been successfully implemented in Scotland.
- Introduce a time limited 28 days 'Use it or lose it' policy with presumed consent, to encourage prompt and substantive responses from statutory consultees to planning applications. This is in line with the current statutory response targets.
- Amend legislation to shorten the time limit for seeking leave for a judicial review from 3 months to 6 weeks for infrastructure or planning related issues and consider limiting the ability for major projects to be blocked due to minor process points. Our IoD NI survey also found that 9 out of 10 businesses think there should be changes to legislation, to raise the threshold against which infrastructure projects can be challenged.
- Amend the Development Management regulations to ensure thresholds for classes of development are appropriate for new and changing technologies - particularly in the renewable energy sector. For example, the same size of wind turbines can generate more electricity now than was the case ten years ago, so policy should adapt. This should ensure that only the most critical projects are deemed "regionally significant" under planning policy and determined by the Department of Infrastructure. We understand that the Department is currently reviewing these regulations.
- Review the status and sponsoring department of the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC) to ensure it has the appropriate accountability mechanisms and resources to deal with its caseload of major and regionally significant applications.

### 3 Investing in Northern Ireland's water infrastructure

**The underfunding of our water infrastructure has become a cross-cutting issue impacting environmental protection, delivery of social and affordable homes and economic growth. The NI Fiscal Council has concluded that the current funding model is unsustainable and new funding streams are required.<sup>4</sup> There is a need for policymakers to grasp this issue which has reached a crisis point.**

When asked in our latest IoD NI survey, four out of five respondents said that they would accept a small yearly increase in their domestic or non-domestic rates bill, if it meant delivery of better water infrastructure. The NI House Price Index is now 19% higher than it was in Q1 2023<sup>5</sup>, while average rental rates have increased by 26% between 2021 and 2024 (£709 to £896).<sup>6</sup>

While there are other issues to consider, lack of supply due to appropriate wastewater infrastructure is a contributing factor.<sup>7</sup> It is estimated that 19,000 properties require a wastewater connection to proceed.<sup>8</sup> The failure to resolve this issue is already having far reaching implications including environmental impacts on Belfast Lough and Lough Neagh.

#### We need to:

- Introduce an Infrastructure and Environmental Protection Levy, collected via the rates system and ring-fenced for capital investment in essential infrastructure. This funding would prioritise upgrades to water and wastewater systems, enabling the delivery of new housing and other social infrastructure projects currently constrained by capacity issues, while supporting environmental protection and long-term resilience.
- Prioritise necessary investment in water infrastructure, targeted to areas of greatest need, to protect the environment, facilitate building of homes and economic development.
- In tandem with addressing immediate funding issues, commission a speedy and “comprehensive review of alternative arrangements, led by suitably qualified experts” into our water infrastructure, as recommended by the NI Audit Office in 2024.<sup>9</sup> This should also include examining NI Water’s capacity and ability to borrow to invest.
- Increased public education in the water cycle/ systems and high value of water to help incentivise lower use per head of population to address over usage and wastage of drinking water. This should build on current education programmes which run in school settings.



4 <https://www.nifiscalcouncil.org/files/nifiscalcouncil/documents/2025-06/WEB%20VERSION%20-%20Sustainability%20Report%202025%20special%20focus%20-%20Water%20FINAL%20copy.pdf>

5 <https://www.finance-ni.gov.uk/articles/northern-ireland-house-price-index#toc-0>

6 [https://www.ulster.ac.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0010/1719433/4260\\_AHSS\\_PrivateRentalReport\\_H2-2024\\_AC.pdf](https://www.ulster.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1719433/4260_AHSS_PrivateRentalReport_H2-2024_AC.pdf)

7 <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-12/dfc-housing-supply-strategy-2024-2039.pdf>

8 NIHE evidence to IoD workshop on Water Infrastructure - 16th May 2025

9 <https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/publications/html-document/funding-water-infrastructure-northern-ireland>

## 4 Connecting people and place

**Transport and digital infrastructure are crucial to connect people with opportunities and allow business supply chains to function appropriately. As a small region, connectivity within Northern Ireland as well as interconnectedness with Great Britain and the rest of the island of Ireland, is crucial for our economy. While there is a necessary shift to greater public transport and active travel, we also need to ensure we have a safe, resilient and suitable road network connecting our major towns and cities.**

Recognising that NI's current Capital Budget is limited (circa £2.5 billion) it will not be possible to deliver all of what is identified below in the immediate term. However, prioritisation, taking initial delivery steps and finding alternative means to fund infrastructure, is essential if we are to address need. This should include leveraging funding streams such as the Shared Island Fund, National Wealth Fund, PEACEPLUS Programme and Union Connectivity Development Fund where possible.

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### We need to:

- Establish an overarching Transport Authority to provide strategic leadership for transport services and infrastructure. By setting a clear, long-term vision for mobility and integrating oversight of all transport modes alongside an overarching funding strategy, the Authority would enable coordinated funding strategies across transport modes to deliver much needed investment in transport infrastructure and services. This approach would create a single body focused on delivering sustainable, efficient and future-proof transport solutions for Northern Ireland, ensuring resources are used effectively to support economic growth and environmental commitments.
- Build on the success of Belfast Grand Central Station with further investment in public transport, with the prioritisation of Glider Phase 2, and rail connections to Belfast International Airport and Belfast City Airport. In addition to capital grants, draw on the learning of other jurisdictions in their ability to deliver public transport infrastructure with alternative funding models.
- Commit dedicated resources and funding to deliver the key recommendations of the All-Island Strategic Rail Review. This should include establishing a clear implementation programme with timelines, governance and prioritised projects, ensuring Northern Ireland plays a full role in advancing connectivity with a view providing regional balance (e.g. Portadown to Derry / Londonderry) and to unlock economic, social and environmental benefits.
- Approve legislation during the current Assembly mandate to enable the ONS to reclassify Trust Ports, increasing borrowing capacity and unlocking the full potential of Belfast Harbour, Foyle Port, Warrenpoint Harbour and Coleraine Harbour.
- Ensure NI benefits from wider UK investment in 5G and 6G so that rural businesses and communities have mobile and digital connectivity.
- Develop and enhance urban and rural greenways/ National Cycle Network across Northern Ireland to ensure it is accessible for everyone and fulfils the Department for Infrastructure's Strategic Plan for Greenways.
- Prioritise delivery of key roads upgrades, including realistic action plans of when these can be delivered. Schemes to consider should include the A5 and York Street Interchange, and completion of the A6; and options for dualling the A4/N16 road from Ballygawley to Enniskillen to Sligo. Delivery of these projects may require reviewing and potentially amending elements of the Climate Change Act. In 2024, Scotland removed its target of 75% reduction in emissions by 2030, while maintaining its longer-term target of Net Zero emissions by 2045.
- Given the importance of regional inter-connectivity, bring forward a dedicated Aviation Strategy for Northern Ireland, including potentially using underutilised airports as Centres of Excellence for Aviation. Explore and continue to make the case for reduction in short-haul Air Passenger Duty (APD).

## 5 Funding and managing infrastructure delivery

**Infrastructure projects can be incredibly complex and more sensitive to inflation than other areas. The Northern Ireland Audit Office report into Major Capital Projects found that of those reviewed, only 9 of the 77 projects were expected to meet both their original time and cost estimates, with 41 of 45 projects having cost overruns and experiencing or expected to experience delays.<sup>10</sup>**

While there have been notable recent successes, such as Belfast Grand Central Station, how we manage, fund and deliver infrastructure and capital projects of scale in this region can be done better and faster. There are changes that we can introduce which are not costly which can improve decision making and processes. While resources are constrained, effective prioritisation and greater use of private sector finance can support delivery of key projects.

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### We need to:

- Publish the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI) including the 10-year investment and spending plan and ensure it is needs based. If shortfalls in capital funding do not match identified need, then assess other funding mechanisms such as: Shared Island Funding, National Wealth Fund and Land Value Capture.
- Examine the potential devolution of the Crown Estate, as has been successfully administered in Scotland, to unlock funding for infrastructure projects. Crown Estate Scotland returned over £270 million to the Scottish Government between 2017 and 2024.<sup>11</sup> Welsh local authorities are also advancing the case for devolution of the Crown Estate in Wales.
- Appoint an independent Infrastructure Commission or Council including experts with experience in delivering projects in other jurisdictions to help manage and prioritise infrastructure in an impartial and evidence-based way. This body should be empowered to ensure regular reporting and accountability. This is supported by 92% of businesses in our latest IoD NI survey. Other jurisdictions in the UK have utilised infrastructure commissions, while in Ireland an Accelerating Infrastructure Taskforce has been introduced to aide delivery of critical projects.
- Review procurement practices to ensure sufficient skills, insight and expertise are embedded within the decision-making process to ensure NI public sector acts as an 'informed client' with full understanding of contracts and risk management for large scale infrastructure projects. This will greatly increase the chances of a positive outcome and timely delivery of infrastructure projects.
- Develop greater partnership between the private sector and government, with government taking an active role in de-risking investment and using available lands to facilitate regeneration. Copenhagen provides an example of how this can be achieved successfully (see case study in Appendix 1). In addition, regeneration powers should be devolved to local councils to enable more responsive, place-based decision-making and unlock access to borrowing and innovative funding models, reducing reliance on the financial constraints of Executive departments and accelerating delivery.
- Recognising limitations in NI capital budget, explore alternative means of financing infrastructure projects, including best practice from other jurisdictions. This should include examining the potential of tolling which helped deliver key infrastructure in Ireland – enabling the development of over €3.4 billion in roads capital projects<sup>12</sup> and generated €476 million in revenue in 2024.<sup>13</sup> In our recent IoD survey, 93% of respondents thought that more private and alternative finance should be utilised for funding infrastructure.
- Publish the most recent review of the Strategic Investment Board to ensure it is best positioned to support future growth and investment.

10 <https://www.niauditoffice.gov.uk/publications/major-capital-projects-follow-report>

11 <https://www.crownestatescotland.com/>

12 Lifting the Lid: the Private Financing of Motorway PPPs in Ireland - <https://personalpages.manchester.ac.uk/staff/nuno.gil/Journal%20articles/Palcic%20et%20al%202018.pdf>

13 <https://www.irishtimes.com/business/2025/11/14/the-toll-operators-who-collected-500m-in-fees-from-motorists-on-irish-roads-last-year/>

# Concluding remarks

**The recommendations outlined in this Action Plan respond directly to the challenges consistently raised by many NI business leaders: slow and inconsistent planning decisions, uncertainty around major infrastructure priorities and a lack of stable, long-term investment signals. This plan is based on insights collected from the business community gathered through a series of workshops held by our Infrastructure and Investment Forum. These insights are further supported by evidence from industry leaders and experts, along with survey data from IoD NI members.**

While the fiscal constraints impacting the Executive's capital budget are well documented, the recommendations in this Action Plan can assist politicians in making better, more informed decisions. A critical first step is to publish the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland, which should include a prioritised programme of investment.

Measures such as introducing a Planning Champion to drive standards and ensure best practice, and appointing an empowering Infrastructure Commission or Council, can support the delivery of much-needed key infrastructure and bring about other short-term changes that can be relatively easily implemented. An efficient expert-led review of alternative arrangements should be carried out to inform future investment in water infrastructure.

This can help provide our elected representatives with the confidence to make difficult decisions and deliver on Programme for Government commitments. We need to drive a culture change in which working in partnership with the private sector is the norm. It is increasingly the case in city regions across the UK, Ireland and Europe that government and businesses can work successfully in tandem to deliver positive change. Examining alternative funding models is vital to this objective.

The prize for getting this right is significant, with long-term economic, social and environmental benefits if infrastructure is delivered successfully.

Developing infrastructure at scale is a long-term process, but the steps we take today will influence the outcomes we see over the next 15-20 years, ultimately determining the success of our region as a place to live, work and do business.

As a business community, we stand ready to play our part in implementing these recommendations to ensure the infrastructure and investment decisions we make enable our economy to realise its full potential.

# Appendix 1

## Learning from the Copenhagen experience of regeneration

In 1995, Copenhagen had a declining and ageing population, with high unemployment, outdated housing and a municipal budget on the verge of collapse. Three decades later, it ranks as the world's most liveable city and one of Europe's most competitive urban economies.<sup>14</sup> The progress that Copenhagen has made since the 1990s was not the result of one plan or project, but rather the result of one coherent, long-term, cross-sector effort. There was a clear culture of co-responsibility, planning as learning, and with policy direction maintained across election cycles.

The city began its transformation by improving housing and developing neighbourhood renewal plans. This had the added advantage of facilitating and including residents into the process. This began with urban renewal and long-term strategic planning, supported by both public and private investment.

The city initiated comprehensive urban renewal efforts, driven by state and municipal investments and regulations, aimed at restoring or removing deteriorating buildings and neglected urban spaces. By upgrading housing quality and enhancing the urban realm to improve liveability, Copenhagen successfully reattracted families and rebuilt a strong tax base.

Denmark implemented mobility infrastructure projects, hand in hand with a regenerative housing policy, which remain vital to Copenhagen's liveability. One of the main ways Copenhagen strategically began to invest in its urban transformation and reverse the decline in population was to build its M1 and M2 metro systems. The metro allowed the city to develop economically by providing direct transport from the airport and connect areas of the inner city and suburbs to each other.



<sup>14</sup> The Copenhagen Way (2025). Written by Bloxhub, Ramboll and Urban Plotters. [https://assets.ctfassets.net/q053rw9kwhaj/2Aj7xShDnT6h4NevVK3kqN/3c07c44a2c33c442080c56450e7278c8/The\\_Copenhagen\\_Way\\_-\\_Insight\\_and\\_Action\\_at\\_a\\_Critical\\_Moment\\_for\\_European\\_Cities\\_2nd\\_Edition.pdf](https://assets.ctfassets.net/q053rw9kwhaj/2Aj7xShDnT6h4NevVK3kqN/3c07c44a2c33c442080c56450e7278c8/The_Copenhagen_Way_-_Insight_and_Action_at_a_Critical_Moment_for_European_Cities_2nd_Edition.pdf)

This illustrated how public-private partnerships were utilised to modernise and expand Copenhagen's transport. This involved a partnership between the Danish Government and private construction firms that resulted in a modern metro that enhances mobility and supports sustainability.<sup>15</sup> As the public funding of physical upgrades came to an end in the late 1990s, it became necessary for municipalities to promote public and private funding partnerships to continue urban development.

Notably, the Danish government completely upgraded the publicly owned Ørestad area. This was 300 hectares of state-owned land, including a former military base. The land was then rezoned from "protected" to residential, commercial, retail and educational use. This rezoning increased the value of the land and made development possible.<sup>16</sup>

The focus on human-centred development has been an integral part of Copenhagen's urban transformation since the 1990s. The growth of cycling and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, the reimagining of public spaces, gradually saw Copenhagen emerge as a city known for its commitment to people-focused urban planning. These overlapping policies, frameworks, and initiatives laid the groundwork for Copenhagen to be named the world's most liveable city by Monocle magazine's Liveability Index in 2008.

Another key component to the redevelopment of Copenhagen was the upgrade of the city's harbour. The harbour had declined to a point in the 1990s where it was largely brownfield sites and derelict. The city's harbour front was then transformed from a once-polluted industrial harbour to a vibrant waterfront district. This created a close relationship between land and water and now focuses on the transition by offering recreational options both next to and on the water.

This required new thinking on the part of politicians, landowners and investors to see the potential in redeveloping these urban districts, which would appeal to home seekers, firms, tradespeople, creative entrepreneurs and visitors.

Since the 1990s, there has been a cultural shift in Copenhagen, where there is now an enthusiasm for enhanced mobility, sustainability and more prosperity in a liveable urban centre, that has been made possible by these critical infrastructure investments.

Culture has been embedded into long-term development strategies as a means to revitalise districts, activate public spaces, and anchor new urban areas in a strong sense of identity.<sup>17</sup>

The Copenhagen model of strong partnership across government and with the public sector, utilising government owned land and investment in sustainable transport and active travel provides a model to aspire to for Northern Ireland's urban centres and city regions.

15 The Role of Public-Private Partnerships in Denmark's Infrastructure Overhaul. Radner press release, 24.05.2025. <https://radner.dk/public-private-partnerships-denmark-infrastructure/>

16 The Copenhagen Model: A publicly owned, privately run corporation- case study. World Bank Group. [https://www.thegpsc.org/sites/gpsc/files/5\\_copenhagen.pdf](https://www.thegpsc.org/sites/gpsc/files/5_copenhagen.pdf)

17 The Copenhagen Way, page 17.

# Appendix 2

## IoD Infrastructure and Investment workshops

In February 2025, the IoD established an Infrastructure and Investment Forum containing a range of businesses and organisations with an interest in issues related to infrastructure and investment in Northern Ireland.

Five workshops were held during 2025, each one focused on a specific theme. At all sessions an expert panel with significant knowledge and expertise in that sector provided information based on their experience and insights.

All sessions featured an interactive Question & Answer session between Forum members and the expert panel. These discussions were facilitated by David Kerr, Managing Director of Gravis Planning. A written record from each session was captured with the objective of shaping recommendations for the IoD Infrastructure and Investment Action Plan.

**The workshops which took place are outlined below:**

- 1. Energy & Grid Infrastructure**  
Hosted at Danske Bank on 25 February 2025
- 2. Planning**  
Hosted at SONI, Castlereagh House on 3 April 2025
- 3. Water Infrastructure**  
Hosted at NI Water, Westland House on 16 May 2025
- 4. Transport Infrastructure**  
Hosted at KPMG, the Soloist Building on 23 June 2025
- 5. Funding and Financing Infrastructure**  
Hosted at Utility Regulator for NI, Millennium House on 20 October 2025



# Appendix 3

## Survey of IoD NI members

To support the findings of the Infrastructure and Investment Forum, a survey was issued to IoD members across Northern Ireland.

274 consultees have been engaged in total through survey responses, participation with the Infrastructure and Investment Forum and direct engagements with the IoD NI team.

The aim of the survey was to ascertain the impact which infrastructure related issues have had on IoD member organisations and assess their views on the policy recommendations which were emerging from the discussions of the Forum.

### Some headlines from the survey are outlined below:<sup>18</sup>

**89%**

of respondents said their business has been impacted by planning delays and / or lack of delivery of infrastructure in Northern Ireland

**90%**

of respondents said growth in their organisation is being held back by a lack of investment in infrastructure in Northern Ireland

**92%**

of respondents would support IoD NI's call to establish an independent Infrastructure Commission to address the delay in delivering major infrastructure projects

**88%**

of respondents think there should be changes to legislation to raise the threshold against which infrastructure projects can be challenged

**81%**

of respondents said they would be prepared to accept a small yearly increase in their domestic / non-domestic rates bill if it secured better water infrastructure in Northern Ireland

**93%**

of respondents thought that more private and alternative finance should be utilised for funding infrastructure

**81%**

of respondents were in favour of increasing the scope of government powers to raise revenue for infrastructure delivery

**69%**

of respondents felt that instigating a judicial review process to delay an infrastructure project was easy

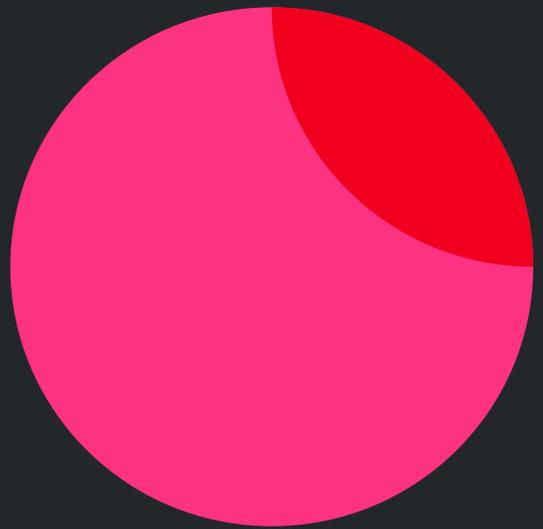
<sup>18</sup> The survey had 72 respondents and was open from 30/07/2025 – 15/09/2025.



The Institute of Directors is a non-party political organisation, founded in 1903, with 20,000 members. Membership includes directors from right across the business spectrum, from media to manufacturing, professional services to the public and voluntary sectors. Members include CEOs of large corporations as well as entrepreneurial directors of start-up companies.

The IoD was granted a Royal Charter in 1906, instructing it to “represent the interests of members and of the business community to government and in the public arena, and to encourage and foster a climate favourable to entrepreneurial activity and wealth creation.” The Charter also tasks the Institute with promoting “for the public benefit high levels of skill, knowledge, professional competence and integrity on the part of directors”, which the IoD seeks to achieve through its training courses and publications on corporate governance.

For information on how to join the IoD’s thriving membership community, visit our website [iod.com](http://iod.com)



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