

# INFRA

## NI YEAR OF INFRASTRUCTURE 2018

January 9, 2018

### INAUGURAL INFRA2018: NI YEAR OF INFRASTRUCTURE LAUNCHED

THE inaugural Infra2018: NI Year of Infrastructure was launched today (Tuesday January 9) at an event in the Titanic Hotel with over 100 delegates from a range of industries including education, finance, construction, architecture, medical and digital in attendance.

Infra2018 has been developed to help tell the story of infrastructure and create better awareness amongst the Northern Ireland public of how it transforms our lives. Throughout the year-long initiative, the underlying theme is how social and economic infrastructure makes Northern Ireland liveable.

Each month in 2018 will have a different theme to tie in with major events throughout the year starting in February with *Water* – exploring how we get it, how to make the most of it and how to protect the natural cycle. An interactive website - [www.infra2018.org](http://www.infra2018.org) - has also been created to show the public how the home, and our quality of life, is made liveable through infrastructure.

As part of the launch of Infra2018, a fully representative survey of over 1,000 adults (16+) was commissioned with results showing that a third of those surveyed were unable to cite any unprompted association with the term infrastructure. When asked to give examples of projects that help improve lives, people living west of the Bann were three times more likely to cite the development of A5 and A6 dual carriageways, and twice as likely to reference the building of new motorways, compared to the remainder of the sample. Residents of Belfast were twice as likely to cite the building of new hospitals when asked about infrastructure projects that would make Northern Ireland a better place, compared to the rest of those surveyed.

Richard Kirk, Regional Director of the Institution of Civil Engineers said: “As the recent study revealed, a third of people in Northern Ireland don’t have any top of mind associations concerning infrastructure. It is everywhere we look and the kind of things we take for granted including water, power supply, roads, schools, hospitals, bridges and railways.

Through Infra2018: NI Year of Infrastructure, we aim to show the Northern Ireland public how infrastructure connects, protects and enables investment and tourism and builds our quality of life. And a good way to start educating people on infrastructure is by bringing it into their home. When we use our taps, toilets, light switches, gas or broadband we expect them to work and this is thanks to infrastructure,” Richard continued.

“To help with this learning process, we have created a dedicated website providing lots of fun information and people can even put in their postcode to find out where your water has come from, how long it takes to get to you and where it ends up once you’ve used it. We also hope the campaign will inspire the next generation to get involved in infrastructure and encourage them to consider a career in this exciting industry,” Richard added.

[more...]

Peter May, Department for Infrastructure Permanent Secretary said: "For any region to be successful, world class infrastructure needs to be in place. It enables economic growth, builds the connections to markets and opportunities and helps grow a highly skilled workforce. People can very often take for granted what they rely on every day. I therefore welcome this focus on the many varied and vital elements of infrastructure.

"The reality is that creating and maintaining quality infrastructure takes long term planning and investment and in a difficult and uncertain budget position that creates a major challenge. Decisions cannot be driven solely by a focus on the present. While we need to take account of the realities and constraints we face today, we must also look forward and anticipate and plan for the needs of the region and the economy in the future."

Sister Carol Reid has seen the importance of infrastructure for herself through the building process of the new Omagh Hospital and Primary Care Complex and is backing the initiative.

Sister Carol Reid said: "Through the building of the new Omagh Hospital and Primary Care Complex, which has been specifically designed with patients in mind, I have witnessed first-hand the importance of infrastructure and the difference it can make to people's lives. Moving to a purpose-built area has not only improved the quality of life for both patients and staff, but has further motivated medical staff to provide the highest standard of care in modern, well-designed surroundings using the latest technologies and equipment."

For further information on Infra2018: NI Year of Infrastructure and to find out more about how infrastructure helps you at home, go to [www.infra2018.org](http://www.infra2018.org).

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**MEDIA ENQUIRIES:** For further information, please contact Fiona Brown of Fiona Brown Communications on 07887 864641 / [fiona@fionabrowncommunications.com](mailto:fiona@fionabrowncommunications.com)

**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

There are established monthly themes to tie in with major planned events in 2018:

**JANUARY – Infra2018: NI Year of Infrastructure**

**FEBRUARY - WATER**

*Keeping us and our environment healthy*

Life cannot exist without water, but that's easy to forget when we have constant access to taps, toilets and baths. Many of us don't know where our water comes from – how it is stored and distributed, taken away and cleaned again. February is the month for exploring how we get our water, how to make the most of our water and how to protect the natural water cycle.

**MARCH - WASTE**

*Making the most of our resources*

Waste isn't what it used to be. Modern innovations have opened up the possibility of repurposing or recycling 100% of our waste, rather than sending it to landfills. Energy from waste facilities are on the horizon for Northern Ireland, which turn our waste resources into heat, power and electricity.

**APRIL - ENERGY**

*Keeping us warm and switched on*

Natural resources are at the heart of our energy infrastructure. More and more, we are relying on renewable energy sources like wind, tidal and solar power. This month focuses on how we harness nature to give us the energy sources we need.

## **MAY - PLACEMAKING**

*Places for us all to live, learn, work, visit and play*

Whether old or new, big or small, buildings and the spaces between them are key to our quality of life. Celebrate the heritage of Northern Ireland's iconic places and our ever-changing skylines.

## **JUNE - MOBILITY**

*Connecting people and opportunities*

Mobility isn't just about driving. It's about moving people from A to B in the quickest, safest and most sustainable ways possible. Of course we need our roads – but we need other connections, too. Greenways, public transport and pedestrianised areas are all part of mobility. How mobile are you? Try a new way to be mobile and see where it takes you.

## **JULY - OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT**

*Making a world of difference*

It's easy to take our infrastructure for granted. Our bridges, water, structures and roads are all held to high standards of safety. However, too many countries still have extremely limited infrastructure. This month is all about outreach – helping those for whom infrastructure will make a world of difference.

## **AUGUST - BRIDGES**

*Inspiring and connecting communities*

From the Belfast Cross-Harbour Bridges to the humblest medieval stone structure, bridges unite us both physically and symbolically. Northern Ireland boasts iconic bridges that attract visitors from all over the world: Carrick-a-Rede, the Gobbins and the Derry- Londonderry Peace Bridge, to name a few. Learn about our rich heritage of bridges and how they have transformed communities across Northern Ireland.

## **SEPTEMBER - HERITAGE**

*Celebrating the past*

Infrastructure is what enables civilisations to thrive. Join in celebrating Northern Ireland's heritage of engineering ingenuity and innovation, and commemorate our most beloved and iconic infrastructure projects.

## **OCTOBER - RIVERS**

*Minimising flood impact*

Just as we manage nature's power to deliver our water and energy, so must we protect ourselves against nature's force. Northern Ireland needs defence infrastructure to minimise flooding during periods of heavy rain. In addition, resilient communities are now becoming an important part of keeping our people and critical infrastructure safe.

## **NOVEMBER - DIGITAL**

*Building the future*

The way we build infrastructure is rapidly changing. The emergence of digital technologies such as augmented reality and virtual reality, the internet of things and artificial intelligence means that we can deliver smart infrastructure which can better deal with future uncertainties. We also expect more from mobiles, devices and the internet and digital infrastructure is critical to supporting this.