



EXPLANATORY NOTES

Road Races (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2014

Chapter 1

ROAD RACES (AMENDMENT) ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND) 2014

EXPLANATORY NOTES

INTRODUCTION

These Explanatory Notes relate to the Road Races (Amendment) Act (Northern Ireland) 2014 which received Royal Assent on 17 January 2014. They have been prepared by the Department for Regional Development in order to assist the reader in understanding the Act. They do not form part of the Act and have not been endorsed by the Assembly.

The Notes need to be read in conjunction with the Act. They are not, and are not meant to be, a comprehensive description of the Act. So where a Section or part of a Section does not seem to require any explanation or comment, none is given.

BACKGROUND AND POLICY OBJECTIVES

Motor racing on roads in Northern Ireland is facilitated by the Road Races (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. It enables the Department for Regional Development to make road closing orders which suspend both normal use of the roads comprising the route of the race and certain aspects of road traffic law.

One of the premier motor cycle road races held in Northern Ireland, the North West 200, was cancelled in 2013 due to torrential rain which prevented the running of those races, other than two laps of the first race. This was the second occasion in three years that the races, due to bad weather, had to be cancelled. In addition, the Dundrod 150 motor cycle race in August 2013 and the 2008 Ulster Grand Prix were cancelled in similar circumstances.

It was not possible to re-schedule the races because the Road Races (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 does not permit that flexibility. Consequently alternative dates or times from those quoted in the road closing order made to facilitate the event could not be used.

The major road racing events, such as the Ulster Grand Prix Week and the North West 200 Festival, provide major financial investment, attracting thousands of spectators from home and abroad. An Economic Assessment of the 2010 North West 200 commissioned by the event organisers, The Coleraine & District Motor Club and prepared by "Tourism & Transport Consult International" of Bangor concluded that it attracted some 90,000 visitors during "Race Week"; that the net additional value in terms of the impact based on expenditure was £4.45m and that for every £1 of public monies spent there was a return of £30.21.

As a result of the considerable negative reaction caused by the cancellation it was thought desirable to consider introduction of more flexible arrangements.

CONSULTATION

The Department's proposals for amending to the Road Races (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 were consulted on between 10 July 2013 and 7 October 2013. 871 responses were received and 92% of respondents indicated that they were fully in support of the proposals.

Although there is presently no bar to Sunday racing, a small number of respondents (6%) living in the areas of Portrush, Portstewart and Coleraine that were in support of the proposals expressed opposition to the potential for Sunday racing.

Some 26% of respondents, taking into account the inaccuracy of weather forecasting, expressed the view that the 48 hour notice period proposed should be reduced to 24 hours.

The Consultation Paper may be viewed at
<http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-details.htm?docid=9008>

The Consultation Report may be viewed at
<http://www.drdni.gov.uk/index/publications/publications-details.htm?docid=9457>

OVERVIEW

The Act consists of one Section.

COMMENTARY ON SECTIONS OF THE ACT

The Act contains only one Section. Subsection (2) of Section 1 amends Article 3 of the Road Races (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 to provide that not more than two contingency days may be specified in a road closing order and that a contingency day must be one of the two days falling immediately before or immediately after a day specified in a road closing order.

Where a contingency day is to be a Sunday the Department is to be satisfied that disruption to the local community is minimised so far as is reasonably practicable. Where a Sunday is to be used as a contingency day for the North West 200 races racing shall not commence before 1.30 or continue after 6.00pm.

Subsection (2) also provides that race promoters may apply in writing to the Department to put a contingency arrangement into effect. Such applications must be submitted not later than 24 hours before the event and may be submitted electronically.

Applications would be approved by a direction from the Department which may also be issued electronically.

Subsection (3) of Section 1 inserts a new paragraph (8A) into Article 3 of the 1986 Order requiring the Department to secure that such public notice as it considers necessary is given to ensure that the effect of any direction made is brought to the attention of the public.

HANSARD REPORTS

The following table sets out the dates for the Hansard reports for each stage of the Act's passage through the Assembly.

Stage	Date
Introduction to the Assembly	18 November 2013
Accelerated Passage Debate	26 November 2013
Second Stage Debate	26 November 2013
Consideration Stage	2 December 2013
Further Consideration Stage	9 December 2013
Final Stage	10 December 2013
Royal Assent	17 January 2014

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