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Your reference:  
Our reference: DFI/2020-0134

6 July 2020

Dear Mr. McLaughlin

**Re: Details of express bus services in Northern Ireland**

Thank you for your email dated 12<sup>th</sup> June 2020 requesting, under the Freedom of Information Act, any information held by this office to include:

- 1) 1) A list of all the Express Services included within the Translink Service Agreement when the agreement was signed;
- 2) 2) The total number of permits for Express Services issued by the Department under the Commercial Bus Service Permit system since its inception in October 2015; and
- 3) 3) A list of all Express Services currently operating in Northern Ireland (both Translink & Commercial)

In considering your request on behalf of the department I have determined that the information requested falls under the aegis of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, as opposed to the FOI Act 2000.

A guide explaining the Environmental Information Regulations can be found at:  
<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-environmental-information-regulations/what-are-the-eir/>.

In response to your request, I can confirm that:

- 1) The Public Service Agreement, put in place with Translink in 2015, was developed following the provisions of the Transport Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 which stipulated that “*the Department must... secure that most public passenger transport services continue to be provided by the Holding Company and its subsidiaries*”. Recognising that requirement, the Public Service Agreement provides for Translink to deliver the extensive public transport within Northern Ireland however it does not stipulate “Express Services” within it and, therefore, we cannot provide this information. It is worth noting that Express Services are defined within the Commercial Bus Service Permit operator

guidelines and do not apply to services provided under a service agreement.

- 2) There have been a total of six Commercial Bus Service Permits issued under the category of Express Service since October 2015.
- 3) A list of all live Commercial Bus Service Permits is available on the Department's website at: <https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/current-list-commercial-bus-service-permits-northern-ireland>

On this list there are two live Express Service permits operated as detailed below:

- i. EXS/005/2016 operated by Rooney International Coach Hire Ltd between Hilltown Square, Hilltown and Queens University, Belfast;
- ii. EXS/006/2016 operated by Yellow Line Coach Hire between Church Street, Rostrevor and University of Ulster, Jordanstown.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to:

Departmental Information Manager  
DfI Information Management Unit  
Clarence Court  
10-18, Adelaide Street  
Belfast  
BT2 8GB  
[dfiimu@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk](mailto:dfiimu@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk)

Please remember to quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF.

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Yours Faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'SG', followed by a wavy line.

**Stuart Gilmore**  
**Head of Public Transport Regulation**