



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE ECONOMY**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**21 SEPTEMBER 2016**

**ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, 10:00am**

Present: Mr Conor Murphy (Chairperson)  
Mr Steve Aiken OBE (Deputy Chairperson)  
Ms Caoimhe Archibald  
Mr Tom Buchanan  
Ms Sinead Bradley  
Mr Alan Chambers  
Mr Gordon Dunne MBE  
Dr Stephen Farry  
Mr Gordon Lyons  
Mr Alex Maskey  
Mr Mervyn Storey

In Attendance: Mr Peter Hall (Assembly Clerk)  
Ms Angela McParland (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Ms Sinead Kelly (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Michael Greer (Clerical Supervisor)  
Mr Craig Mealey (Clerical Officer)

Apologies:

*The meeting began at 10:04am in open session*

**1. Apologies**

As noted above.

## **2. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson informed Members of an invitation to the Chair and Deputy Chair from Catalyst Inc. to the INVENT 2016 awards on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

*Agreed:* to respond to Catalyst Inc. that the Chair will attend the event and to forward apologies from the Deputy Chair who has a prior engagement.

The Chairperson informed Members that next week's Committee meeting will be held in the Southern Regional College.

*Agreed:* that Members confirm their attendance with the Committee Office.

The Clerk provided an update to the Committee on an informal meeting which the Chair had held with Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) in regards to current licensing laws.

*Agreed:* to write to the Committee for Communities regarding the range of issues discussed at the meeting.

## **3. Draft Minutes of Meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2016**

*Agreed:* the Committee agreed the draft Minutes of the meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

## **4. Oral Briefing by the Minister**

*The Officials joined the meeting at 10:10am*

Members received a Departmental overview briefing from Simon Hamilton MLA, Minister, Department for the Economy, and Dr Andrew McCormick, Permanent Secretary, Department for the Economy.

The key issues discussed included the need to support sectors where Northern Ireland can be 'world-class', current challenges within energy policy, Invest NI support for first time export companies, Higher Education, Further Education, broadband availability and the forthcoming Apprenticeship Levy.

*The officials left the meeting at 12:07pm*

## **5. Oral Briefing by The Open University**

*The representatives joined the meeting at 12:07pm*

Members received an overview briefing from Mr John D'Arcy, National Director, The Open University, and Mr Michael Blower, External Strategy and Innovation Manager, The Open University.

The key issues discussed included tuition fee loans for part-time undergraduates, The Open University continuing to be at the cutting edge of technology as an online digital course provider, collaboration with social enterprises in developing third sector employees and an innovative nursing programme.

*Mervyn Storey left the meeting at 12:42pm*

*The representatives left the meeting at 12:46pm*

## **6. Matters Arising**

There were no items of business for Matters Arising.

## **7. Legislation: SL1 The Mines Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016**

Members considered SL1 The Mines Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Members considered a written briefing from the Department providing further information that the Committee had asked for.

*Agreed:* that the Committee is content with the policy implications of the proposed legislation.

## **8. Legislation: SL1 The Gas (Designation of Pipelines) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016**

Members considered SL1 The Gas (Designation of Pipelines) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016.

*Agreed:* that the Committee is content with the policy implications of the proposed legislation.

## **9. Legislation: SL1 The Student Fees (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016**

Members considered SL1 The Student Fees (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016.

*Agreed:* that the Committee is content with the policy implications of the proposed legislation.

**10. Legislation: SL1 Proposed Insolvency (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016**

Members considered SL1 Proposed Insolvency (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016.

*Agreed:* that the Committee is content with the policy implications of the proposed legislation.

**11. Legislation: SL1 Proposed Insolvency (Monetary Limits) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016**

Members considered SL1 Proposed Insolvency (Monetary Limits) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016.

*Agreed:* that the Committee is content with the policy implications of the proposed legislation.

*Tom Buchanan left the meeting at 12:51pm*

**12. Programme for Government**

Members considered correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office regarding a briefing from Department Officials on the analysis of the consultation on the draft Programme for Government Framework 2016-21.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to note as part of its scrutiny of the development of the draft Programme for Government.

**13. The Consumer Council Annual Report and Accounts 2015-16**

*Noted:* Members noted the Consumer Council Annual Report and Accounts 2015-16.

**14. Committee Strategic Planning**

*Noted:* Members noted papers in relation to the Careers Strategy.

**15. Correspondence**

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance in regards to restructured baselines of budgets.

*Agreed:* to provide the Committee for Finance with information on any restructured baselines and to write to the Minister requesting further information on the matter.

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from the Committee for the Executive regarding the Brussels Report.

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from an individual detailing difficulties faced in registration for the Government Gateway Online Self-Assessment.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to write to the Department for Finance asking it to respond to the individual and to copy this Committee into its response.

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from an individual regarding a training scheme run by the EOS Works Ltd.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to forward the correspondence to the Committee for Communities asking it to address the concerns of the individual, as the issue falls under the remit of the Department for Communities.

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from the Public Accounts Committee to The Executive Office in regards to the provision of financial assistance to United Airlines.

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from The House of Lords EU Internal Market and External Affairs Sub-Committees regarding the launch of a joint Inquiry on the subject of trade in goods and non-financial services after the UK exit from the EU.

*Agreed:* that the Committee consult with the relevant umbrella bodies and provide a submission to the Inquiry.

## **16. Any Other Business**

There were no additional items of business.

## **17. Date, Time and Place of Next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2016 at 10.00am in the Southern Regional College.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 13:04pm*

---

**Mr Conor Murphy**  
**Chairperson**  
**Committee for the Economy**

**28<sup>th</sup> September 2016**