



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ECONOMY

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

30 NOVEMBER 2016

CULTRA MANOR, CULTRA, 10:00am

Present:

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

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)
Mr Brendan Corr (Bursary Student)

Apologies:

Mr Mervyn Storey

The meeting began at 10:04am in open session

1. Apologies

As noted above.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: the Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting on 23rd November 2016.

3. Chairpersons Business

The Chairperson reminded Members that the Committee would not have a formal meeting next week as the Committee will be travelling to Dublin for a series of informal meetings on Wednesday 7th December 2016 and Thursday 8th December 2016.

The Chairperson informed Members that the Committee meeting scheduled to be held in Coleraine on 25th January 2017 has now been re-scheduled for 26th April 2017.

The Chairperson also highlighted to Members that a paper for the Tourism NI evidence session had not been cleared and was not available. As this was not the first instance of this occurring, the Chairperson indicated that he would seek a meeting with the Economy Permanent Secretary to discuss the issue.

4. Evidence Session with National Museums Northern Ireland

The representatives joined the meeting at 10:06am

Members received a briefing from Mrs. Kathryn Thomson, Director & Chief Executive NMNI, and Ms Pamela Baird, Head of Strategic Research and Planning, NMNI.

The key issues discussed included the forthcoming Tourism Strategy, the social and economic impact of investment in museums in Northern Ireland, ambitions for the Cultra site and developing a collaborative strategy across different sections of the local tourism market.

Sinead Bradley joined the meeting at 10:27am

The representatives left the meeting at 11:10am

5. Evidence Session with the Assembly Research and Information Service (RaISe)

The official joined the meeting at 11:11am

Members received a briefing from Mr Aidan Stennett, Research Officer, Assembly Research.

The key issues discussed included an overview of the tourism market in Northern Ireland based on the most recent statistics, a comparative analysis of differing policies being used in other countries towards tourism, the growth of the role of the private sector in tourism and potential proposals for the Tourism Strategy.

The official left the meeting at 11:23am

6. Evidence Session with Tourism Northern Ireland

The representatives joined the meeting at 11:23am

Members received a briefing from Mr John McGrillen, Chief Executive, Tourism NI, and Ms Susie Brown, Interim Director, Corporate Development, Tourism NI.

The key issues discussed included the forthcoming Tourism Strategy and Economic Strategy, cross border tourism, strategic marketing, Tourism Ireland, skills issues, hotel occupancy, export focus, potential for business tourism and the success of the Northern Ireland Year of Food and drink.

Caoimhe Archibald joined the meeting at 11:35am

Gordon Lyons left the meeting at 12:15pm

Gordon Dunne left the meeting at 12:22pm

The representatives left the meeting at 12:25pm

7. Matters Arising

The Deputy Chairperson took the Chair at 12:25pm

The Chairperson referred Members to the Committee's draft response to the Committee for the Executive on its priorities within the European Commission Work Programme 2017.

Agreed: to forward the response to the Committee for the Executive Office.

Noted: Members noted a report from the London Assembly Economy Committee regarding the UK exit from the EU and the financial services sector.

Noted: Members noted a response from Invest Northern Ireland concerning the governance structure of Bedford Street Developments Ltd (BDSL) group.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from Patrick Murdock, The Hub, Newry, over concerns that the rent charges of the Innovation Factory based in Belfast are lower than comparable private sector facilities.

Noted: Members noted an invitation from the Innovation Factory, to hold a meeting at the Belfast premises, and the invitation was included with the list of external meetings to be considered in the planning meeting in September 2017.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA) agreeing to an evidence session on 1 March 2017 and enquiring as to the schedule for forthcoming secondary legislation.

Agreed: that the committee will wait a response from the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI) to the Committee's previous request for detail of its forward work programme.

Noted: Members noted a chart detailing the Department's current Divisional structure.

Noted: Members noted a Ministerial response on an agri-food marketing body.

Agreed: that the Committee will consider the response again at the Committee's evidence session with Northern Ireland Food and Drink on 1st February 2017.

Agreed: to forward the response to the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs for information.

Conor Murphy left the meeting at 12:25pm
Gordon Lyons joined the meeting at 12:26pm
Gordon Dunne joined the meeting at 12:26pm
Alan Chambers left the meeting at 12:28pm

8. SR 2016/406 The Offshore Installations (Offshore Safety Directive) (Safety Case etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

Members considered the SR 2016/406 The Offshore Installations (Offshore Safety Directive) (Safety Case etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Question put and agreed:

"That the Committee for the Economy has considered SR 2016/406 The Offshore Installations (Offshore Safety Directive) (Safety Case etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rule's report, has no objection to the rule."

9. Correspondence

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Committee for Justice regarding its call for evidence on its Review of the Need for Stalking Legislation in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: Members considered an invitation from the Northern Ireland Commonwealth

Games Council, to a forum to be held on Tuesday 13th December 2016 at 4:30pm at the MAC theatre and agreed to notify the Committee Office of their availability to attend. The forum will look at how decisions made by hosts, statutory agencies, sporting federations, suppliers, sponsors, and others can have far reaching human rights implications.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Chairperson of the Committee for Education to the Minister informing him of that Committee's Inquiry into Educational Underachievement.

Agreed: members considered an invitation from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission to its Annual Statement Launch, to take place on Thursday 8th December 2016 in the long gallery at 10:30am, and agreed to notify the Committee Office of their availability.

Alan Chambers joined the meeting at 12:32pm

10. Any Other Business

Members considered the Department's interaction with the Committee, since June 2016 to the present time, on budget issues, policy briefings in general and the Department's forward work programme.

Agreed: that the Committee will still meet on 14th December 2016, as scheduled, with evidence sessions on five of the Department's eight Programme for Government Delivery Plans.

Noted: the Committee noted Ms Bradley's proposal that the Committee should have an additional meeting focused on scrutiny of the budget for next year once it becomes available.

11. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will be at 10:00am on Wednesday 14th December 2016 in room 29 at Parliament buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12:43pm

Mr Conor Murphy MLA
Chairperson
Committee for the Economy
14th December 2016