



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Committee for the Economy

## Minutes of Proceedings

17<sup>th</sup> November 2021

**Meeting Location:** Room 30, Parliament Buildings

**Present:** Dr Caoimhe Archibald (MLA (Chairperson))  
Mr Matthew O'Toole MLA (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Keith Buchanan MLA  
Mr Mike Nesbitt MLA  
Mr John O'Dowd MLA

**In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:**

Mr Peter Weir MLA  
Mr Stewart Dickson MLA  
Ms Claire Sugden MLA

**Apologies:** Mr Stephen Dunne MLA

**In Attendance:** Mr Peter Hall (Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Thomas Armstrong (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Michael Greer (Clerical Supervisor)



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**In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:**

Ms Sinead Kelly (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

The meeting commenced at 10:06am in open session.

**1. Apologies**

As noted above.

**2. Draft Minutes**

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Minutes from 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021.



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### 3. Chairperson's Business

**Noted:** Members noted the launch of an inquiry by the NI Affairs Committee into 'Investment in Northern Ireland'.

**Noted:** Members noted an invitation to the launch of the 2021 Annual Human Rights Statement in the Long Gallery on Thursday 9 December.

**Agreed:** Members noted a summary of the informal meeting with Klarna, the global retail bank and agreed to write to Invest NI and retail stakeholders to ascertain their knowledge of Klarna and its approach.

**Noted:** Members noted the Advice of the Examiner of Statutory Rules in relation to the Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Bill.

**Noted:** Members noted that the Committee has agreed to 'sponsor' an event in the Long Gallery for Ulster University's Confucius Institute on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> November.

### 4. Small-Scale Green Energy Bill: Briefing from Power NI

Members received a briefing from:

William Steele  
Philip Carson

Director of Customer Solutions, Power NI  
Power NI

The witnesses left the meeting at 11:02am.



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**Agreed:** Members agreed to invite NIE to give oral evidence on the Bill.

## 5. Small-Scale Green Energy Bill: Briefing from RaISE

Members received a briefing from:

Aidan Stennett                      Research Officer, RaISE

Orla Drummond                      Research Officer, RaISE

The officials left the meeting at 11:42am.

**Agreed:** Members agreed that the Clerk would write to RaISE requesting a number of pieces of additional research in relation to the Bill.

**Agreed:** Members agreed to forward the scrutiny points raised in the RaISE paper to the Bill sponsor and the Department for comment.

**Agreed:** Members agreed to seek legal advice around the interaction between the Bill and EU Directive 2019/944 on common rules for the internal market for electricity.

## 6. Matters Arising

**Noted:** Members noted correspondence from the Minister regarding the High Street Scheme review process.

**Noted:** Members noted a copy of the Hansard of 8<sup>th</sup> November on the clause-by-clause on the Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Bill.

**Noted:** Members noted a copy of the Hansard of 10<sup>th</sup> November on the consideration of Committee Report on the Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Bill.

**Noted:** Members noted a response from the Department to the Committee's queries around widening the powers of the Utility Regulator.



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**Noted:** Members noted a copy of the Notice of the Committee's Amendments for Consideration Stage of the Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Bill.

**Agreed:** Members noted a copy of a response from the Department for Communities to the Committee's letter regarding the Ballantine Solutions Insulate Concrete Framework and agreed to forward a copy to Ballantine.

**Agreed:** Members noted a copy of the Employment (Zero Hours Workers and Banded Weekly Working Hours) Bill which was introduced on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> November and agreed to invite Jemma Dolan to provide a briefing.

### 7. Small-Scale Green Energy Bill

Members considered a number of written submissions on the Small-Scale Green Energy Bill.

**Agreed:** Members agreed to hear oral evidence from Renewables NI and Dr Patrick Keatley on 24<sup>th</sup> November; and from the Utility Regulator, NIE and the Department on 1<sup>st</sup> December.

**Agreed:** Members agreed to write to the Bill Sponsor, John O'Dowd, for a response on the issues raised within the written evidence.

**Agreed:** Members agreed to provide a copy of the written responses to the Department in advance of their oral evidence session.

### 8. Departmental Written Briefing: Tourism Recovery Action Plan

**Noted:** Members noted that this paper had been deferred by the Department until the next meeting.



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### 9. Correspondence

**Noted:** Members noted a copy of correspondence from the Executive Office Committee to the Minister regarding the provision of further financial support for travel agents.

**Noted:** Members noted a copy of correspondence from the AERA Committee to the Minister regarding the EU Commission's "Fit for 55" measures to reduce carbon emissions and the introduction of a Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism.

**Agreed:** Members noted a memo from the Public Accounts Committee regarding its inquiry into the NIAO report on 'Broadband Investment and agreed to respond to the PAC indicating that the Committee awaits the finding of its report but that it is unlikely that it will wish to take forward any significant work given its legislative workload up until the end of the Mandate.

**Noted:** Members noted a copy of correspondence from the BEIS Minister to the Chair of the Lords' Protocol Sub-Committee regarding the Advanced Research and Invention Agency Bill.

**Noted:** Members noted a copy of a fact sheet from the Department on Online Job-Posting Trends.

**Noted:** Members noted a copy of correspondence from the Committee for Communities to the DALO regarding the increase in domestic energy costs.

**Noted:** Members noted a response from the BEIS Minister to the Chair of the Lords' Protocol Sub-Committee in relation to the proposed regulation on general product safety.

**Noted:** Members noted a copy of the Royal Irish Academy Higher Education Futures Taskforce paper.

**Noted:** Members noted a memo from the EU Affairs Manager regarding the first meeting of the Trade Specialised Committee on Level Playing Field for Open and Fair Competition and Sustainable Development



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## **10. Any Other Business**

Members discussed recent appointments to the Board of Firmus Energy and the importance of ensuring that the appropriate rules are applied to all such appointments.

Agreed: Members agreed to ask the Department for an oral briefing to provide an update on the Economic Recovery Action Plan.

## **11. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021 in Room 30, Parliament Buildings at 10am.

**The meeting was adjourned at 12.02pm.**

**Dr Caoímhe Archibald MLA  
Chairperson, Committee for the Economy  
24<sup>th</sup> November 2021**