



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for the Economy

Minutes of Proceedings

24th 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 Stewart Dickson MLA

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Mr Peter Weir MLA
Mr John O'Dowd MLA
Ms Claire Sugden MLA

Apologies: Mr Stephen Dunne MLA

In Attendance: Mr Peter Hall (Assembly Clerk)
Mr Thomas Armstrong (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Ms Sinead Kelly (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Michael Greer (Clerical Supervisor)



Northern Ireland
Assembly

The meeting commenced at 10:09am in open session.

1. Apologies

As noted above.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Minutes from 17th November 2021.

3. Chairperson's Business

Noted: Members noted the minutes of the Chairperson's Liaison Group Meetings of the 8th & 16th November.

Agreed: Members agreed to write to the Department in relation to the Hatch Regeneris Report on Petroleum Licensing and the timeline for the Energy Strategy.

Agreed: Members agreed to write to the Minister and the Committee for the Executive Office in relation to re-establishing a forum for engagement with businesses around Covid measures and mitigations.

4. Domestic Abuse (Safe Leave) Bill – Briefing from the Bill Sponsor Rachel Woods MLA

Members received a briefing from:
Rachel Woods MLA Bill Sponsor

Agreed: Rachel Woods agreed to provide further information to the Committee in relation a number of matters raised.

The witness left the meeting at 11:22am



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Agreed: Members agreed that the Chair would speak on the Second Stage debate on the Bill.

5. Small-Scale Green Energy Bill: Briefing from Renewable NI

Members received a briefing from:

Steven Agnew
Stuart Hobbs

Head of Renewable NI, Renewable NI
Director of Energy Services, SSE Airticity

The witnesses left the meeting at 11:56am.

6. Small-Scale Green Energy Bill: Briefing from Dr Patrick Keatley, Ulster University

Members received a briefing from:

Dr Patrick Keatley

Lecturer in Energy Policy and Infrastructure, Ulster
University

The witness left the meeting at 12:15pm.

7. Matters Arising

Agreed: Members noted a response from the Department to the Committee's queries regarding whether BEIS is considering applying windfall taxes or VAT related interventions on conventional energy and if NI will receive a portion of the levy from the carbon offset to help tackle fuel poverty; and agreed to write to DAERA and the Department for Communities on these issues.

Agreed: Members considered a response from the Department regarding Funding for the Energy Payment Support Scheme and agreed to write to the Minister regarding the impact of the reallocation of funding on the Economic Recovery Action Plan.

8. Small-Scale Green Energy Bill



Northern Ireland Assembly

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

Members considered a copy of the Citizen Space summary report.

9. SR 2021/000 The High Street (Coronavirus, Financial Assistance) Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

Members considered SR 2021/000 The High Street (Coronavirus, Financial Assistance) Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for the Economy has considered SR 2021/000 The High Street (Coronavirus, Financial Assistance) Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report.”

10. Departmental Written Briefing: NI City and Growth Deals

Members noted a written update on the NI City and Growth Deals.

11. Departmental Written Briefing: Outcome of the European Social Fund Third Call

Members noted that this item was delayed and will be rescheduled for a later date.

12. Correspondence

Agreed: Members noted a memo from the AERA Committee regarding issues that have been raised about the connectivity of farm holdings that have a renewable energy source on site to the electricity grid and agreed to write to the Department and NIE for a response.



Northern Ireland Assembly

Noted: Members noted a statement from ESB regarding £3.27million it is been awarded from the Levelling Up Fund to ‘transform’ the Electric Vehicle charging network in the North.

Agreed: Members noted correspondence from an individual regarding the pricing of surplus energy from their own solar panel micro-generation system and agreed to include as part of its evidence on the Small-Scale Green Energy Bill.

Noted: Members noted a copy of the CBI Northern Ireland Covid 19 Working Group notes from 17th November.

Noted: Members noted a copy of an invitation from the Dairy Council to register for the EU Sustainable Dairy Symposium on 24th November.

Noted: Members noted a memo from the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs regarding a webinar to discuss the consultation on the draft Green Growth Strategy on Monday 29th November.

Noted: Members noted a response from the DALO to the Committee for Finance with an update on the levels of DfE Covid Support Scheme overpayments and writing off payments made in error under the Small Business Support Scheme.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from DfE regarding the delay in the laying of the accounts for the Department for 2020-21.

Noted: Members noted a letter from the Chair of the Protocol Sub-Committee to Paul Scully MP about amendments and corrections of CR (EU) 2021/850.

Noted: Members noted a copy of NI Fiscal Council report – “The public finances in Northern Ireland: a comprehensive guide”.

Noted: Members noted a copy of NI Fiscal Council response to the 2021 Spending Review.

13. Advanced Research and Invention Agency Bill

Members noted correspondence from the Minister regarding the Advanced Research and Invention Agency Bill.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Agreed: Members agreed to invite officials to provide an oral briefing in relation to the Bill and proposed Legislative Consent Motion at the next meeting.

Agreed: Members agreed to write to stakeholders to seek their views in anticipation of a Legislative Consent Motion being laid.

14. Any Other Business

None was brought forward

15. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 1st December 2021 in Room 30, Parliament Buildings at 10am.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.41pm.

**Dr Caoímhe Archibald MLA
Chairperson, Committee for the Economy
1st December 2021**