



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ECONOMY

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

22 JANUARY 2020

Room 29, Parliament Buildings, 10.00am

Present: Ms Caoímhe Archibald (Chairperson)
Ms Sinéad McLaughlin (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Alan Chambers
Mr Gordon Dunne MBE
Mr Gary Middleton
Mr John O'Dowd
Mr Christopher Stalford
Ms Claire Sugden

In Attendance: Mr Peter Hall (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Sinead Kelly (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Michael Greer (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Thomas Manning (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Stewart Dickson

The meeting began in closed session at 10.00am

1. Arrangements for Committee Meetings

Noted: members noted the paper outlining the arrangements for Committee Meetings.

2. Staff Contact Details

Noted: members noted the paper outlining the Committee Staff details.

3. Committee Induction Plan and arrangements for Strategic Planning Meeting

Agreed: Members agreed that the Committee should hold a Strategic Planning Meeting in February 2020 and the Clerk will provide further details.

4. Outcomes of an Effective Committee

Noted: members noted the paper on outcomes of an Effective Committee.

The Committee moved to open session at 11:05am

5. Committee approach to dealing with correspondence and requests for meetings which are not linked to strategic priorities or statutory duties

Agreed: Members agreed that, in principle, correspondence to and from the Minister and Permanent Secretary; however, Members understand that there will be occasions when this will not be appropriate.

Agreed: The Clerk will write to the Acting Permanent Secretary informing him of the Committee's decision.

6. Committee approach to meeting preparation and witness questioning

Noted: members noted the paper outlining the range of approaches to questioning.

Agreed: Members agreed that pre-meeting briefing and discussion sessions should be organised as required.

7. Protocol on conduct and courtesy at Committee Meetings

Agreed: Members agreed to the protocol on conduct and courtesy at Committee Meetings as discussed.

8. Committee approach to the use of social media

The Committee discussed the various options around social media and agreed that a Facebook page and a profile on Instagram should be setup to sit alongside the existing Twitter account.

Agreed: Members agreed that the Clerk should proceed to setup Facebook and Instagram accounts on the Committee's behalf.

9. Apologies

As noted above.

Members offers their best wishes to Mr Dickson for a speedy recovery.

10. Committee Membership

Noted: members noted the current Committee Membership.

11. Declaration of Members Interests

No declaration of Interests were disclosed.

12. Committee Procedures

Members discussed the papers on Committee Procedures.

Gary Middleton left the meeting at 10.59am

Agreed: Members agreed to write to all Arm's Length Bodies advising them that the Committee has been re-established and requesting an outline of their current priorities and challenges.

Agreed: Members agreed to consider which other stakeholder groups should receive similar correspondence and bring lists back to the Committee.

Gary Middleton returned to the meeting at 11.04am

13. Guidance on timescales for interaction between Committees and Departments

Noted: members noted guidance on timescales for interaction between Committees and Departments.

14. Subordinate Legislation: Delegation of Technical Scrutiny to the Examiner of Statutory Rules

Members discussed the delegation of Technical Scrutiny to the Examiner of Statutory Rules.

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for the Economy, under Standing Order 43, resolves to delegate to the Examiner of Statutory Rules the technical scrutiny of statutory rules referred to the Committee under the above mentioned Standing Order.

The Committee further resolves that in carrying out this function the Examiner shall be authorised to report her technical findings on each statutory rule to the Assembly, and to the relevant Department, as well as the Committee itself and to publish her report.”

15. Clerk's Briefing paper on work of Committee for the Economy during the 2016/17 mandate

Members discussed the Clerk’s briefing paper on the work of the Committee for the Economy during the 2016/17 mandate.

Agreed: Members agreed to write to the Department seeking an update on the issues identified by the Employment and Learning and Enterprise, Trade and Investment Committees in their 2016 End of Mandate reports.

16. Departmental Briefing: Overview of Department

The officials joined the meeting at 11.15am

Members received a briefing from:

Mr Colin Lewis, Management Services & Regulation Group, DfE;

Mr Paul Grocott, EU Exit Preparation and Transition, DfE; and

Mr Colin Lewis, Management Services & Regulation Group, DfE.

The key issues discussed included Departmental restructuring post RHI, Brexit preparation and the status of the Northern Ireland Electrify market.

John O’Dowd left the meeting at 11.45am

John O’Down returned to the meeting at 11.58am

Christopher Stalford left the meeting at 12.30pm

Christopher Stalford returned to the meeting at 12.35pm

The officials left the meeting at 12.37pm

17. Overview of Secondary Legislation

Members discussed the number of Statutory Rules that had been laid during the period of suspension which are still within the statutory period for consideration by Committee.

Noted: members noted a Departmental table providing a brief narrative on each Statutory Rule.

18. SR - The Industrial Training Levy

18.1 - SR 2019/155 The Industrial Training Levy (Construction Industry) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019

Members considered SR 2019/155 The Industrial Training Levy (Construction Industry) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for the Economy has considered SR 2019/155 The Industrial Training Levy (Construction Industry) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019 and has no objection to the rule.”

18.2 - SR 2018/131 The Industrial Training Levy (Construction Industry) Order (Northern Ireland) 2018

Members considered SR 2018/131 The Industrial Training Levy (Construction Industry) Order (Northern Ireland) 2018

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for the Economy has considered The Industrial Training Levy (Construction Industry) Order (Northern Ireland) 2018 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report.”

18.3 - SR 2017/105 The Industrial Training Levy (Construction Industry) Order (Northern Ireland) 2017

Members considered SR 2017/105 The Industrial Training Levy (Construction Industry) Order (Northern Ireland) 2017

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for the Economy has considered SR 2017/105 The Industrial Training Levy (Construction Industry) Order (Northern Ireland) 2017 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report.”

19. SR - Student Fees

19.1 - SR 2019/102 The Student Fees (Amounts) and Education (Student Support (No.2)) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019

Members considered SR 2019/102 The Student Fees (Amounts) and Education (Student Support (No.2)) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for the Economy has considered SR 2019/102 The Student Fees (Amounts) and Education (Student Support (No.2)) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report.”

19.2 - SR 2018/105 The Student Fees (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018

Members considered SR 2018/105 The Student Fees (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for the Economy has considered SR 2018/105 The Student Fees (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report.”

19.3 - SR 2017/104 The Student Fees (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017

Members considered SR 2017/104 The Student Fees (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for the Economy has considered SR 2017/104 The Student Fees (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report.”

20. SR - Education Student Support

Noted: members noted three SRs in relation to Education Student support and agreed to bring them back next week for a briefing with officials.

21. SR - Trade Union and Labour Relations

Noted: members noted two SRs in relation to Trade Unions and Labour Relations and agreed to bring them back next week for a briefing with officials.

22. SR - Health & Safety

22.1 - SR 2019/205 The Employer's Liability (Compulsory Insurance) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019

Members considered SR 2019/205 The Employer's Liability (Compulsory Insurance) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for the Economy has considered SR 2019/205 The Employer's Liability (Compulsory Insurance) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report.”

22.2 - SR 2019/185 The Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019

Members considered SR 2019/185 The Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for the Economy has considered SR 2019/185 The Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report.”

22.3 - SR 2019/111 The Carriage of Dangerous Goods (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019

Members considered SR 2019/111 The Carriage of Dangerous Goods (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for the Economy has considered SR 2019/111 The Carriage of Dangerous Goods (Amendment)

Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report."

22.4 - SR 2017/90 The Equipment and Protective Systems Intended for Use in Potentially Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017

Members considered SR 2017/90 The Equipment and Protective Systems Intended for Use in Potentially Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017

Question put and agreed:

"That the Committee for the Economy has considered SR 2017/90 The Equipment and Protective Systems Intended for Use in Potentially Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report."

22.5 - SR 2017/156 The Health and Safety (First-Aid) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017

Members considered SR 2017/156 The Health and Safety (First-Aid) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017

Question put and agreed:

"That the Committee for the Economy has considered SR 2017/156 The Health and Safety (First-Aid) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report."

22.6 - SR 2017/229 The Ionising Radiations Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017

Members considered SR 2017/229 The Ionising Radiations Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017

Question put and agreed:

"That the Committee for the Economy has considered SR 2017/229 The Ionising Radiations Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report."

23. SR – Energy

23.1 - SR 2019/1 The Gas (Designation of Pipelines) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019

Members considered SR 2019/1 The Gas (Designation of Pipelines) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for the Economy has considered SR 2019/1 The Gas (Designation of Pipelines) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report.”

23.2 - SR 2018/5 The Offshore Electricity Development (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Revocation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018

Members considered SR 2018/5 The Offshore Electricity Development (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Revocation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for the Economy has considered SR 2018/5 The Offshore Electricity Development (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Revocation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2018 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report.”

24. SR - The Industrial Tribunals

Noted: members noted three SRs in relation to The Industrial Tribunals and agreed to bring them back next week for a briefing with officials.

25. Statutory Rules subject to no procedure

Noted: members noted seven SRs that are subject to no procedure and agreed to bring them back next week for a briefing with officials.

26. Forward Work Programme

Noted: members noted the Departmental proposed draft programme and schedule.

27. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson reflected on their meeting with the Minister for the Economy and highlighted that it had been useful and wide-ranging.

Agreed: Members agreed that a request for the Minister to brief the Committee on her priorities in the next few weeks should be sent.

Noted: members note an update prepared by the Department regarding the issues around Flybe.

Agreed: members agreed to keep a watching brief on the Flybe issue.

28. Correspondence

Noted: Members noted correspondence alleging inequitable treatment at the hands of the local universities.

Noted: Members noted that the Clerk indicated to the correspondent that the Committee could not offer protections under whistleblowing legislation and that the Clerk had received permissions from the author of the correspondence to send this to the NI Audit Office, the Public Accounts Committee, and the Department for the Economy.

Agreed: Members agreed to forward the allegations to the bodies above, as per protocol.

29. Any Other Business

No other business was raised.

30. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 29th January at 10am, Room 29.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.55pm

**Ms Caoimhe Archibald
Deputy Chairperson
Committee for the Economy**

22nd January 2020