



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ECONOMY

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

18 MARCH 2020

ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

10:00am

Present: Dr Caoímhe Archibald (Chairperson)
Ms Sinéad McLaughlin (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Gordon Dunne MBE
Mr John O'Dowd
Mr Christopher Stalford
Mr John Stewart
Ms Claire Sugden

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

Apologies: Mr Stewart Dickson
Mr Gary Middleton

The meeting began at 10:15am in open session

1. Apologies

As noted above.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: the Committee agreed the draft Minutes of the meeting on 11th March 2020.

3. Chairpersons Business

The Chairperson brought to Members' attention correspondence from the Chief Executive (CEO) of Bus and Coach NI Ltd, detailing the impact on the coach industry of COVID-19.

Agreed: to forward the correspondence to the Minister, on receipt of permission to do so by the CEO.

Agreed: Members agreed to an amended Agenda.

Agreed: Members agreed to an amended Forward Work Programme.

4. Oral Briefing by the Department (DfE): Economic Impact of COVID-19

The Officials joined the meeting at 10.21am

Members received a briefing from:

Mr Shane Murphy, Director of Analytical Services Division, DfE
Mr Keith Forster, Director of Strategic Policy Division, DfE
Mr John McGrillen, Chief Executive, Tourism NI
Mr Donal Durkin, Executive Director, Strategy, Invest NI

The key issues discussed included Departmental planning for business survival, continuity and rebuilding in regards to COVID-19, role of banks in current crisis and emergency payments for employees.

The Officials left the meeting at 11.39am

5. Oral Briefing by the Northern Ireland Tourism Alliance (NITA), Northern Ireland Hotels Federation and Hospitality Ulster: Economic Impact of COVID-19 on the Tourism Industry

The representatives joined the meeting at 11.39am

Members received a briefing from:

Ms Joanne Stuart, Chief Executive, NITA
Ms Janice Gault, NI Hotels Federation
Mr Colin Neill, Chief Executive, Hospitality Ulster
Mr Donal Durkin, Executive Director, Strategy, Invest NI

Key issues discussed included mitigation measures for an industry in crisis, emergency payments for employees, the need for a co-ordinated communication plan by the Executive including clarity given to Northern Ireland businesses following each Treasury announcement.

Christopher Stalford left the meeting at 11.52am

Christopher Stalford returned to the meeting at 11.52am

Christopher Stalford left the meeting at 12noon

The representatives left the meeting at 12.39pm

The Committee meeting moved to closed session at 12:39pm.

6. Oral Briefing by the Department: Renewable Heat Incentive Inquiry Report Update

The representatives joined the meeting at 12.39pm

Members received a briefing from:

Mr Richard Rodgers, Head of Energy Group, DfE

Mr Jamie Warnock, Head of Heat Policy and Legislation, DfE

Mr Graham Miller, Head of RHI Operations, DfE

Key issues discussed included an update on the status of activities within different Departmental branches with regard to the Incentive.

John Stewart left the meeting at 12.40pm

John Stewart returned to the meeting at 12.44pm

John Stewart left the meeting at 12.45pm

John O'Dowd left the meeting at 1pm, leaving the meeting with a 'listening quorum' of four Members

The representatives left the meeting at 1.34pm

The Committee meeting moved to open session at 1.34pm

Without a decision-making quorum of five Members the remainder of the meeting agenda fell and the Chairperson moved to adjourn the meeting.

7. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 25th March 2020 in Room 29, Parliament Buildings at 10am.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.34pm

Dr Caoímhe Archibald
Chairperson
Committee for the Economy

25th March 2020