



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE ECONOMY**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**13 MAY 2020**

**ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

**10:00am**

Present: Dr Caoímhe Archibald (Chairperson)  
Ms Sinéad McLaughlin (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Gordon Dunne MBE  
Mr Gary Middleton  
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

*The meeting began at 10:03am in open session.*

**1. Apologies**

As noted above.

## **2. Minutes**

*Agreed:* the Committee agreed the Minutes from the 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

## **3. Chairpersons Business**

The Chair brought to Members attention an Executive Recovery Plan and Summary.

The Chair brought to Members attention a Departmental update on the forthcoming Legislative Consent Motion (LCM) for the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Bill, highlighting that the LCM will now include mutual societies and that the Minister is intending to include credit unions and co-operatives.

*Agreed:* the Committee will, despite the extremely tight turnaround, seek the views of stakeholders for its report.

## **4. Enterprise NI & InterTradeIreland Oral Briefing by Teleconference - Impact of COVID-19**

*The representatives joined the meeting at 10.07am*

Members received a briefing from:

<b>Mr Michael McQuillan</b>	Chief Executive, Enterprise NI; and
<b>Mr Aidan Gough,</b>	Designated Accounting Officer, and Director of Strategy and Policy, InterTradeIreland.

Key issues discussed included: detail of the type of support both bodies have provided to businesses within their portfolios throughout the COVID-19 situation, recovery planning and support for businesses, EU exit planning support for businesses.

*Agreed:* the Committee to compile, into a single paper, the range of solutions formulated by the bodies and detailed in the evidence session, to bring to the attention of the Minister and the different Forums set up for COVID-19 related matters.

*Agreed:* the Committee to invite briefings from an insurance representation body, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLAS) and Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA).

*The representatives left the meeting at 11.30am*

## **5. Retail NI & NI Retail Consortium Oral Briefing by Teleconference - Impact of COVID-19**

*The representatives joined the meeting at 11.34am*

Members received a briefing from:

**Mr Glyn Roberts** Chief Executive, Retail NI; and  
**Mr Aodhán Connolly** Director, Northern Ireland Retail Consortium.

Key issues discussed included: commending those business and their employees that have continued to provide a service throughout the COVID-19 situation, detail of the type of support both bodies have provided to businesses within their portfolios throughout the COVID-19 situation, recovery planning and support for businesses.

*Agreed:* the Committee to include in its paper, detailed above, the range of solutions formulated by the bodies and detailed in the evidence session, to bring to the attention of the Minister and the different Forums set up for COVID-19 related matters.

*Agreed:* the Committee to highlight to relevant authorities on the ID issues self-employed individuals are experiencing in accessing the HMRC portal for financial support packages during the COVID-19 situation.

*The representatives left the meeting at 12.54am*

## **6. Northern Ireland Leisure & Entertainment Forum and Lafayette Photography/Irish Legal & Academic Oral Briefing by Teleconference – Impact of COVID-19 on the Leisure, Entertainment and Small Scale Events Sectors**

*The officials joined the meeting at 12.56am*

Members received a briefing from:

**Mr Thomas Fegan** Chief Executive, NI Leisure & Entertainment Forum;  
and  
**Mr Stephen Holland** Managing Director, Lafayette Photography and Irish Legal & Academic.

Key issues discussed included: businesses from the leisure and entertainment sectors that are ‘falling through the gaps’ for eligibility for financial assistance packages during the COVID-19 situation, solutions for recovery planning for small scale events and leisure and entertainment businesses and the support needed for businesses throughout a phased recovery.

*Agreed:* the Committee to include in its paper, detailed above, the range of solutions formulated by the witnesses and detailed in the evidence session, to bring to the attention of the Minister and the different Forums set up for COVID-19 related matters.

*The officials left the meeting at 1.26pm*

## **7. Matters Arising**

*Noted:* Members noted a response from the Permanent Secretary to the Committee’s request for a status report on the overall functioning of the Department during the current COVID-19 restrictions.

*Noted:* Members noted a Departmental response on security of supply chain and annual review of RHI Tariffs.

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from the Finance Minister to the Committee's request for an update on the approval of the business case for Graduate Entry Medical School at Magee.

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from Ulster University regarding an update on COVID-19 and its impact on the University.

*Noted:* Members noted a Departmental response, in the form of a table, replying to a range of queries brought forward by Members in relation to COVID-19 matters.

## **8. Correspondence**

*Agreed:* Members agreed to consider Correspondence items through electronic correspondence.

## **9. Forward Work Programme**

*Agreed:* Members agreed the draft Committee Forward Work Programme.

## **10. Any Other Business**

*Agreed:* the Committee to write to the Minister as well as the Minister for Communities in regards to the cancellation of the NW200 and what support measures can be provided to the event organiser to ensure the continued success of the event.

*Agreed:* to explore Starleaf technology to allow the Committee to receive a further oral briefing on a Monday on a weekly basis, in the short term, to cover COVID-19 related issues with stakeholders, with a view to returning to two oral briefings for normal meetings.

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

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020 in Room 30, Parliament Buildings at 10am.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 13.42pm*

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**Dr Caoímhe Archibald**  
**Chairperson**  
**Committee for the Economy**

**20<sup>th</sup> May 2020**