



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ECONOMY

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

22 JUNE 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 John Stewart

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 Christopher Stalford
Ms Claire Sugden

The meeting began at 10:11am in open session.

1. Apologies

As noted above.

2. Oral Briefing from the Office of the Small Business Commissioner

The witness joined the meeting at 10.12am

Members received a briefing from:

Mr Phillip King, interim Small Business Commissioner, Office of the Small Business Commissioner

Key issues discussed included: the role and remit of the Small Business Commissioner, the Prompt Payment Code, an overview of the work on behalf of small businesses recently carried out by Commissioner, and the level of awareness in Northern Ireland of the work of the Commissioner in Northern.

The official left the meeting at 10.42am

Agreed: Members agreed to write to all stakeholders highlighting the role and work of the Small Business Commissioner and the support available to small businesses.

Agreed: to forward the information to the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs.

3. Any Other Business

Members considered a draft Committee Motion, by the Chair, for debate in Plenary, on membership of the Department for the Economy Economic Advisory Board:

“That this Assembly acknowledges the scale and depth of the economic damage as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; recognises the need to chart a strategy for economic recovery that addresses longstanding issues, such as poor productivity and growth, as well as the economic impact of COVID-19, the outworkings of Brexit and the challenges of climate change; welcomes the establishment of an Economic Advisory Group to support the development of this strategy, and recognises the expertise in their fields of its members; acknowledges the need for a broad, representative and balanced cross-section of experts from a range of fields to be involved in developing this strategy; and calls on the Economy Minister to widen out the expertise contained in the Economic Advisory Group to include experts from our trades unions, the green sector, the third sector, SMEs, agricultural and rural interests, and academia”.

Members considered an amended motion:

“That this Assembly acknowledges the scale and depth of the economic damage as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; recognises the need to chart a strategy for economic recovery that addresses longstanding issues, such as regional disparity,

poor productivity and growth, as well as the economic impact of COVID-19, the outworkings of Brexit and the challenges of climate change; welcomes the establishment of an Economic Advisory Group to support the development of this strategy, and recognises the expertise in their fields of its members; acknowledges the need for a broad, representative and balanced cross-section of experts from a range of fields to be involved in developing this strategy; and calls on the Economy Minister to widen out the expertise contained in the Economic Advisory Group to include experts from our trades unions, the green sector, the third sector, SMEs, agricultural and rural interests, and academia”.

The amended motion was put to Members. The Committee divided: Ayes 3; Noes 3.

AYES

Dr Archibald, Ms McLaughlin, Mr O’Dowd.

NOES

Mr Dunne, Mr Middleton, Mr Stewart.

The Motion as amended falls.

The original motion was put to Members. Members divided: Ayes 2; Noes 3; Abstained 1.

AYES

Dr Archibald, Mr O’Dowd.

NOES

Mr Dunne, Mr Middleton, Mr Stewart.

ABSTAINED

Ms McLaughlin.

The Motion falls.

Agreed: to table the Chair’s motion, for further consideration, at the meeting on 24th June 2020.

4. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 24th June 2020 in Room 30, Parliament Buildings at 10am.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11.02am

Dr Caoímhe Archibald
Chairperson
Committee for the Economy
1st July 2020