



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ECONOMY

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

26 AUGUST 2020

SENATE CHAMBER, 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
 - Ms Claire Sugden
- In Attendance:
- Mr Peter Hall (Assembly Clerk)
 - Ms Sinead Kelly (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
 - Ms Angela McParland (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
 - Mr Thomas Manning (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies:
- Mr Stewart Dickson
 - Mr Christopher Stalford

The meeting began at 10:05am in open session.

1. Apologies

As noted above.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: the Committee agreed the draft Minutes of the meeting on 19th August 2020.

3. Oral Briefing from Further Education Colleges - The impact of results 2020 & the safe reopening of campuses

The representatives joined the meeting at 10.05am

Members received a briefing from:

Mr Ken Webb Chief Executive, South Eastern Regional College

Mr Brian Doran Chief Executive, Southern Regional College

Key issues discussed included: recognition of work of FE staff to successfully facilitate remote learning for students, status of apprenticeships by sector, current challenges in FE enrolment, Departmental led incentives available to employers for training and apprenticeships, effects of furloughing by businesses on apprenticeship schemes and awarding of qualifications, health and safety guidance for staff and students on return to campus post lockdown, the high number of qualification bodies within Northern Ireland and measures to ensure high quality qualifications, and BTEC service.

The representatives left the meeting at 11.02am

Agreed: to write to Mr Webb, in his capacity as Chair of Principals' Group, seeking that he collate feedback on BTEC from colleges.

4. Ministerial Briefing - The impact of results 2020 & the safe reopening of Higher & Further Education campuses

The Officials joined the meeting at 11.03am

Members received a briefing from:

Mrs Diane Dodds Minister, Department for the Economy

Mr Mike Brennan Permanent Secretary, Department for the Economy

Mr Jim Wilkinson Apprenticeships, Careers & Vocational Education, Department for the Economy

Key issues discussed included: a forthcoming announcement clarifying incentives for employers for apprenticeship schemes, sustainable funding for apprenticeships, job retention, support measures for furloughed staff to complete qualifications, upskilling, skills academies, regional balance, Executive commitment for further HE funding, and further funding bids by the Department.

The Minister left the meeting at 12.17pm

John Stewart left the meeting at 12.35pm

The Officials left the meeting at 12.49pm

Agreed: the Department to brief the Committee on funding bids.

5.Any Other Business

There were no items of business.

6. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 9th September 2020 in Room 30, Parliament Buildings at 10am.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.50pm

Dr Caoímhe Archibald
Chairperson
Committee for the Economy
9th September 2020