



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ECONOMY

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

25 NOVEMBER 2020

ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

10:00am

Present: Dr Caoímhe Archibald (Chairperson)
Ms Sinéad McLaughlin (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Stewart Dickson
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)
Mr David McClure (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Ms Maeve Holly (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Michael Greer (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Thomas Manning (Clerical Officer)

Apologies:

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

1. Apologies

As noted above.

2. Minutes

Agreed: the Committee agreed the Minutes from 18th November.

The Committee agreed to move to agenda item 4.

4. Oral Briefing from the Department for the Economy: EU Exit Preparation and Transition Group: Business Readiness for the end of the Transition period

The officials joined the meeting at 10.09am

Members received a briefing from:

Shane Murphy, Head of EU Exit Preparation and Transition Group, Department for the Economy

Victor Dukelow, Head of EU Exit Trade and Migration, Department for the Economy

Giulia Ni Dhulchaointigh, Head of EU Exit Trade Negotiations, Department for the Economy

Dr Mary McIvor, Head of EU Exit Contingency Planning, Department for the Economy

Key issues discussed included: the impact Covid-19 has had on business preparation for the end of the transition period, the Trader Support Scheme and assessment of at risk goods, the expected difficulties facing local business in January and the uncertainty around what post-transition arrangements will look like.

The officials left the meeting at 11.41am

Agreed: to write to the Executive Office encouraging them to step up the advertising campaign highlighting the need for business readiness post-transition period.

Agreed: to forward the briefing papers onto the Executive Office Committee.

The Committee agreed to return to agenda item 3.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson updated Members on the informal meeting that took place on the 20th November with the Commission on a Gender-Equal Economy and the Chief Executive of WOMEN'STEC.

Noted: Members noted the Clerk's memo on the meeting.

Agreed: to include a representative from the Commission on a Gender-Equal Economy in the upcoming Committee Skills event.

The Chairperson reflected on this week's successful debate in plenary on the Committee's Energy Strategy Special Report.

Gary Middleton left the meeting at 11.52am

5. Matters Arising

Noted: Members noted a response from the Minister for Infrastructure regarding airport connectivity.

Agreed: to arrange an informal meeting with the local airports to discuss the routes not yet taken up following the collapse of Flybe.

Noted: Members noted a response from the FE Principal's Group regarding the awarding of qualifications and next steps.

Agreed: to arrange an informal meeting with the FE Principal's Group and training providers.

Noted: Members noted a joint letter from NICVA, WCVA and SCVO to the Chancellor in the relation to the Shared Prosperity Fund.

Agreed: to write to NICVA seeking an update once they receive a response from the Chancellor.

Noted: Members noted a letter of thanks from the President of the NUS-USI regarding the work the Committee has done in raising issues relevant to students.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from NILGA regarding the EU Successor funding in NI.

Agreed: Members agreed to consider the future of EU funding and the Shared Prosperity Fund as an agenda item at next week's meeting.

The Committee agreed to move to agenda item 10.

10. SL1 – The Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (Coronavirus, Calculation of a week’s pay) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

Members considered SL1 – The Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (Coronavirus, Calculation of a week’s pay) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

Agreed: Members indicated that they are content with the policy implications of the proposed legislation

The Committee agreed to return to agenda item 6.

6. Correspondence

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Minister regarding the Postal Administration Rules (Northern Ireland) 2020.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Ulster University regarding an update on the number of positive Covid-19 cases and information gathering.

Noted: Members noted the twenty-ninth report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules 2019-2020.

Noted: Members noted the thirtieth report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules 2019-2020.

Noted: Members noted the statement from the Minister of Finance regarding November Covid-19 funding exercise.

Agreed: to receive a briefing from an Economist at next week’s meeting on the recently announced voucher scheme.

Agreed: to receive a briefing from Departmental officials at next week’s meeting on the recently announced voucher scheme.

Agreed: to write to the Executive Office seeking clarity on why golf clubs must close under the new restrictions whilst other sports such as organised fishing can continue.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from an individual regarding the controlling of the price of LPG in NI.

Agreed: to write to the Competitions & Marketing Authority highlighting the issues raised.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from an individual regarding the spread of Covid-19 in universities.

Agreed: to respond to the individual indicating the Committee has not remit to call for a public inquiry.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from an individual regarding the exclusion of directors from government support.

Agreed: to write to the individual seeking an update on the new scheme announced will help.

7. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: Members noted the draft committee forward work programme and agreed the changes as discussed.

Christopher Stalford left the meeting at 12.31pm

8. Any Other Business

Members discussed the Apprentice Recovery Programme.

Agreed: to ask the Department for an update on the Apprentice Recovery Programme.

Members discussed the recently announced support packages from the Executive and the impact it will have on taxi operators.

Agreed: to write to the Minister asking if taxi operators will be eligible for support under Part B of the CRBSS.

9. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 2nd December 2020 in Room 29, Parliament Buildings at 10am.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.51pm

Dr Caoímhe Archibald
Chairperson
Committee for the Economy
2nd December 2020