



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ECONOMY

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

02 DECEMBER 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
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: Mr John Stewart

The meeting began at 10:07am in open session.

1. Apologies

As noted above.

2. Minutes

Agreed: the Committee agreed the Minutes from 25th November.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson informed the Members of a response from FSB on their views on the Trade Bill.

Noted: Members noted the response from the FSB.

The Chairperson advised Members that a draft joint letter has been circulated to them following discussions the Chair had with the Health, Communities & TEO Committee Chairs on the issue of student mental health, hardship and wellbeing.

Agreed: Members agreed to forward the joint letter from the four Chairs to the other Committees seeking their approval before issuing to the First and deputy First Minister and copying all other Executive Ministers.

4. Oral Briefing from Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission - Business & Human Rights Forum

The witnesses joined the meeting at 10.13am

Members received a briefing from:

Les Allamby Chief Commissioner, Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

Glenn Bradley Chair, NI Human Rights Forum

Key issues discussed included: the importance of an ethical economy considering human rights, labour standards, anti –corruption, the environment, sustainability, supply chain standards and human slavery.

The witnesses left the meeting at 11.16am.

Agreed: to arrange an informal meeting with the NIHRC to engage further.

5. Briefing from Richard Ramsey, Economist - Stimulating the Economy using a voucher based scheme

The witness joined the meeting at 11.16am

Members received a briefing from:

Richard Ramsey, Economist (Ulster Bank), Expert Witness

Key issues discussed included: the impact the recently announced high street voucher-based scheme will have in helping to stimulate the local economy, comparisons to other jurisdictions that have implemented a similar scheme and whether this scheme has potential to be more targeted.

The witness left the meeting at 12.15pm

6. Departmental Briefing - Newly announced support schemes

The official joined the meeting at 12.16pm

Members received a briefing from:

Paul Grocott, Economic Strategy Group, Department for the Economy

Key issues discussed included: the concerns about the time taken to develop schemes making it difficult for the funding to be used before the end of the financial year, the level of success of the previous scheme for large tourism, hospitality, retail and leisure and the merits of topping up the scheme and other financial support schemes that have been announced by the Minister.

The official left the meeting at 12.54am

Agreed: The Official agreed to update the Committee on the specific costs of the pre-paid card and the potential charges to business for accepting it.

7. Matters Arising

Members agreed to deal with Agenda Item 7 via correspondence, due to time constraints.

8. Update on the Shared Prosperity Fund

Members agreed to defer Agenda Item 8 until next week, due to time constraints.

9. SR 2020/279 The Gas (Internal Markets) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

Members considered SR 2020/279 The Gas (Internal Markets) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for the Economy has considered SR 2020/279 The Gas (Internal Markets) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report.”

10. SR 2020/281 The Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (Coronavirus, Calculation of a Week’s Pay) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

Members considered SR 2020/281 The Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (Coronavirus, Calculation of a Week’s Pay) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for the Economy has considered SR 2020/281 The Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (Coronavirus, Calculation of a Week’s Pay) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report.”

The Committee agreed to move to agenda item 14.

14. SL1 - Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Coronavirus) (Suspension of Liability for Wrongful Trading and Extension of the Relevant Period) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

Members agreed to deal with Agenda Item 14 via correspondence, due to time constraints.

The Committee agreed to return to agenda item 11.

11. Correspondence

Members agreed to deal with Agenda Item 11 via correspondence, due to time constraints.

12. Any Other Business

There were no items of business.

13. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 9th December 2020 in Room 29, Parliament Buildings at 10am.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.57pm

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