



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE ECONOMY**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**16 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 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

## **3. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson highlighted to Members an OCN NI Research Launch paper, Skills for Growth and Social Inclusion and reminded Members of the Committee's Skills Micro-Inquiry on 28<sup>th</sup> January.

The Chairperson informed Members of the informal meeting that happened last week with the Northern Ireland Airports.

The Chairperson highlighted to Members a Key Issues Summary paper that the Department has sent to the Committee.

## **4. Ministerial Briefing - Update on support for Business during the Covid-19 pandemic & other issues**

*The Minister joined the meeting at 10.06am*

Members received a briefing from:

<b>Diane Dodds MLA,</b>	Minister, Department for the Economy
<b>Mike Brennan,</b>	Permanent Secretary, Department for the Economy
<b>Paul Grocott,</b>	Economic Strategy Group, Department for the Economy

Key issues discussed included: the Covid financial support schemes including support for wet pubs & tourism and hospitality, the issues around the replacement for the European Social Fund through Shared Prosperity Fund and the considerable pressure on the Department's baseline budget, facing a potential £124m pressure which represents a potential 15% cut in budget

*The Minister left the meeting at 10.47am*

*Agreed:* to write to the Chancellor regarding EU Funding and the impact on the Executive Budget

## **5. Matters Arising**

*Noted:* Members noted a response from the Minister regarding the Newly Self Employed Support Scheme (NSESS).

*Noted:* Members noted a response from the Minister regarding the Covid-19 Restrictions Business Support Scheme (CRBSS).

*Noted:* Members noted a response from the Department regarding the unemployment figures.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to write to the Minister asking what plans there are for the end of the Furlough scheme and to copy in all Executive Ministers.

*Noted:* Members noted a response from the Department Regarding the pre-paid card support scheme.

*Noted:* Members noted a response from the Department regarding the Job Support Scheme.

*Noted:* Members noted a response from the Department regarding the Apprenticeship Recovery Scheme.

*Noted:* Members noted a Pivotal report entitled Education, skills and training for young people aged 14-19 years old.

*Noted:* Members noted a response from the Minister for Finance regarding VAT payable on PPE imported from the EU.

*Noted:* Members noted a statement from the Minister for Education regarding the Independent Review of Education.

## **6. SR 2020/305 The Gas (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020**

Members considered SR 2020/305 The Gas (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.

*Question put and agreed:*

*“That the Committee for the Economy has considered SR 2020/305 The Gas (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report.”*

**7. SR 2020/306 The Electricity (Priority Dispatch) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020**

Members considered SR 2020/306 The Electricity (Priority Dispatch) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.

*Question put and agreed:*

*“That the Committee for the Economy has considered the SR 2020/306 The Electricity (Priority Dispatch) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report.”*

**8. SR 2020/307 The Electricity (Internal Markets) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020**

Members considered SR 2020/307 The Electricity (Internal Markets) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.

*Question put and agreed:*

*“That the Committee for the Economy has considered the SR 2020/307 The Electricity (Internal Markets) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report.”*

**9. SR 2020/320 The Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Coronavirus) (Suspension of Liability for Wrongful Trading) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020**

Members considered SR 2020/320 The Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Coronavirus) (Suspension of Liability for Wrongful Trading) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.

*Question put and agreed:*

*“That the Committee for the Economy has considered the SR 2020/320 The Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Coronavirus) (Suspension of Liability for Wrongful Trading) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and recommends that it be confirmed by the Assembly, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report.”*

**10. SR 2020/321 The Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Amendment of Certain Relevant Periods) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020**

Members considered SR 2020/321 The Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Amendment of Certain Relevant Periods) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020.

*Question put and agreed:*

*“That the Committee for the Economy has considered the SR 2020/321 The Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Amendment of Certain Relevant Periods) (No.*

2) *Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 and recommends that it be confirmed by the Assembly, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report.*”

## **11. Correspondence**

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from the Committee for Infrastructure regarding the financial assistance for taxi operators.

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from the Committee for Infrastructure regarding EU Directive 2019/433.

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding the Public Procurement Common Framework.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to write to the Committee for Finance acknowledging and welcoming this information.

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from the Committee for Justice regarding the Health Protection Regulations.

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from Domino's Pizza regarding a concern around the 11pm curfew on the delivery of food in NI.

*Noted:* Members noted the sixteenth Report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules 2019-2020.

*Noted:* Members noted a statement from the Minister regarding the NSMC trade and business development sectoral meeting.

*Noted:* Members noted a statement from the Minister regarding the NSMC tourism sectoral meeting.

*Noted:* Members noted a statement from the Minister of Finance regarding the Dormant Accounts Fund.

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from a lecturer requesting to present results of their consultation on the future strategy of QUB to the Committee.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to arrange a briefing with the Lecturer.

*The Committee agreed to move to agenda item 14*

## **14. UK Common Framework Outline Agreement: Late payment in commercial transactions**

Members considered a number of papers regarding the UK Common Framework Outline Agreement: Late payment in commercial transactions.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to arrange a briefing from the Department on this issue.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to engage with stakeholders seeking their views on the outline Common Framework.

## **15. Common Framework Summary: Specified Quantities & Packaged Goods**

Members considered a number of papers regarding the Common Framework Summary: Specified Quantities & Packaged Goods.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to arrange a briefing from the Department on this issue.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to engage with stakeholders seeking their views on the proposal.

## **12. Any Other Business**

Members discussed an issue regarding self-employed European workers travelling to England post 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to write to the Department asking for a response.

Members discussed the current issue of local bank branch closures and the impact this has on the local community.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to arrange a briefing with local banks and Post Office Ltd to seek an update.

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

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021 in Room 30, Parliament Buildings at 10am.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.26pm*

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**Dr Caoimhe Archibald**  
**Chairperson**  
**Committee for the Economy**  
**13<sup>th</sup> January 2021**