



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ECONOMY

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

20 JANUARY 2021

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

In Attendance: Mr Peter Hall (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Sinead Kelly (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Ms Maeve Holly (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Michael Greer (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Thomas Manning (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Ms Claire Sugden

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

1. Apologies

As noted above.

2. Minutes

Agreed: the Committee agreed the Minutes from 13th January 2021.

3. Chairperson's Business

Noted: The Chairperson highlighted to Members the NI Chambers Quarterly Economic Survey Report infographic.

The Chairperson updated Members on the informal meeting with UU lecturers around the level of fees for diplomas and part-time degrees across a range of subjects.

Agreed: the Committee agreed to write to the UU to raise this issue.

4. Briefing from Katy Hayward & David Phinnemore - Implementation of Trade & Co-operation Agreement and NI Protocol

The Witnesses joined the meeting at 10.15am

Members received a briefing from:

Professor Katy Hayward, Professor of Political Sociology, Queen's University Belfast

Professor David Phinnemore, Professor of European Politics, Queen's University Belfast

Key issues discussed included: The Trade and Co-operation agreement reached between the EU and UK Government, the challenges and future opportunities offered under the NI Protocol and the current issues being faced on goods being moved between GB and NI.

The Witnesses left the meeting at 11.44am

Agreed: the Committee agreed to write to the Department for more information on how the UK replacement for the EHIC card will compare in terms of providing reciprocal healthcare and what, if any, impact this might have on tourism.

5. Matters Arising

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Minister regarding the plans to introduce Parental Bereavement Leave and Pay legislation and provision in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: the Committee agreed to arrange a briefing with the Departmental officials as soon as possible.

Noted: Members noted a response from the Minister regarding BTEC's.

Agreed: the Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking further information on a range of issues regarding the current situation around BTEC's.

Noted: Members noted a response from the Minister regarding the SL1 Postal Administration.

Agreed: the Committee agreed to forward the Department's view onto the Justice Committee.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office regarding a response from Michael Gove MP on the governance of the Withdrawal Agreement.

Noted: Members noted a letter from the Lords EU Committee to HMT seeking clarifications regarding processes for the movement of goods between Northern Ireland and GB.

Noted: Members noted a letter from the Lords EU Committee to HMT regarding a Single Window Environment for Customs.

Noted: Members noted a letter from the Lords EU Committee to Michael Gove MP regarding the operation of the Protocol.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Welsh Parliament's LJC Committee regarding the Shared Prosperity Fund.

Agreed: to write to Michael Gove MP expressing the Committees concerns on the Shared Prosperity Fund and requesting that he briefs the Committee.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the National Engineering Policy Centre regarding their response to Covid-19.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from an individual regarding the development of the Energy Strategy in Northern Ireland.

Noted: Members noted a response from Student Roost regarding the waiving of rents for Students in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: the Committee agreed to collect specific examples from Members and from student representatives on the experience of Students regarding the waiving of rents by Student Roost.

Noted: Members noted a response from the Minister of State for Northern Ireland regarding the end of the transition period.

Agreed: the Committee agreed to write to the Minister of State raising the issues discussed at Committee in his letter and request that he briefs the Committee.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from Jemma Dolan MLA regarding the end of the consultation period on her Private Members Bill on Zero Hours Contracts.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the NI Business and Human Rights Forum regarding the agenda for the Forum's latest meeting on Monday 18th January.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the NUS-USI regarding an update on key issues facing its membership.

Agreed: the Committee agreed to write to the First Minister and deputy First Minister highlighting the issues raised by NUS-USI around student hardship and to copy to the Economy and Finance Ministers.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the University and College Union regarding an update on the key issues facing its membership.

Agreed: the Committee agreed to write to the Minister highlighting the issues raised.

Noted: Members noted the Departments Key issues table.

Agreed: the Committee agreed to write to the Executive regarding the outcome of the recent meeting with retailers regarding click and collect and seek its views on the balance between large and small scale retail and their ability to trade.

Noted: Members discussed the issue of the Supreme Court finding in favour of claimants in a test case regarding the payment of business interruption insurance.

Agreed: the Committee agreed to write to the ABI inquiring around timescales of payment from insurance companies for business interruption claims

6. Correspondence

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the AERA Committee regarding EU Tariffs on goods at risk.

Agreed: the Committee agreed to write to the Treasury seeking clarification on the issues raised.

Noted: Members noted a request from Healthy Place to Work to brief the Committee.

Agreed: the Committee agreed to arrange an informal meeting with Healthy Place to Work.

Noted: Members noted the Eighteenth Report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules 2020-2021.

Noted: Members noted the Nineteenth Report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules 2020-2021.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding the transfer of Ulster Bank business to Natwest.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding Covid-19 support scheme for Travel Agents.

Agreed: the Committee agreed to write to the First Minister & deputy First Minister highlighting the issues raised.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance regarding committee scrutiny of January Monitoring.

Noted: Members noted a BBC news article highlighted by the NUS-USI regarding Welsh Government funding to Students struggling during the pandemic.

Noted: Members noted a letter from the NI Hotels Federation to the Minister for the Economy seeking support for its Members.

Agreed: the Committee agreed to ask the Department for an update on the Tourism Recovery Group and support for and communication with the tourism sector generally.

Members agreed to move to agenda item 10.

10. Draft Budget 2021-22

Members considered the Minister for Finances Assembly Statement and the Department for the Economy's allocation in the Draft Budget for 2021-22.

Agreed: the Committee agreed to arrange a briefing with Departmental officials before the consultation period closes in February.

Members agreed to return to agenda item 7.

7. Any Other Business

There were no items of business.

8. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 27th January 2021 in Room 29, Parliament Buildings at 10am.

The Committee agreed to move into closed session

9. Research and Information Service (RaISe) Briefing - Economic Scrutiny Workshop

The Official joined the meeting at 12.45pm

Members received a briefing from:

Christopher Rothwell,

Research Officer, NIA Research Office

Key issues discussed included: Economic Performance, The Labour Market, Sectors & Productivity and Economic Impact.

The Official left the meeting at 13.24pm

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 13.25pm

Dr Caoímhe Archibald
Chairperson
Committee for the Economy
27th January 2021