



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE ECONOMY**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**3 FEBRUARY 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 John O'Dowd  
Mr John Stewart  
Mr Christopher Stalford  
Ms Claire Sugden

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: Mr Gary Middleton

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

## **1. Apologies**

As noted above.

## **2. Minutes**

*Agreed:* the Committee agreed the Minutes from 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

*Agreed:* the Committee agreed the Record of Decisions from 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

*Agreed:* the Committee agreed the Minutes from 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021.

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

The Chairperson informed Members of the FSB NI - Summary paper on the Furlough Cost Support Scheme.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to write to the Finance & Economy Ministers highlighting the FSB NI Summary paper on the Furlough Cost Support Scheme.

## **4. Departmental Briefing - Covid-19 financial support schemes**

*The Officials joined the meeting at 10.10am*

Members received a briefing from:

**Paul Grocott,** Economic Strategy Group, Department for the Economy

**Keith Forster,** Director of Strategic Policy Division, Department for the Economy

Key issues discussed included: the financial support that the Department has provided to date to support the economy, the support schemes that are currently being deployed and those businesses still needing support and the need to focus on planning for economic recovery.

*The Officials left the meeting at 11.33am*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking further information on several areas that had been discussed.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking an update on the Economic Advisory Group.

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking a further update for support for students.

*Agreed:* The Officials agreed to provide to Members a weekly update on the financial support schemes as part of the weekly ‘SitRep’.

## **5. Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland Briefing - Covid-19 update**

*The witnesses joined the meeting at 11.34am*

Members received a briefing from:

<b>Robert Kidd,</b>	Chief Executive, Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland
<b>Bryan Monson,</b>	Deputy Chief Executive, Health and Safety Executive Northern
<b>Nikki Monson,</b>	Grade 6 HSENI, Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland
<b>Louis Burns,</b>	Grade 6 HSENI, Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland
<b>Kevin Neeson,</b>	Principal Health & Safety Inspector, Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland

Key issues discussed included: the role of HSENI during the Covid-19 pandemic, the increase in complaints made against employers in the last 6 months and the requirement for extra staff to carry out inspections.

*The Witnesses left the meeting at 12.28pm*

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking clarification as to whether there will be any additional staffing required as a result of Covid-19.

## **6. Matters Arising**

*Noted:* Members noted a response from the Minister regarding applying for Covid-19 Restrictions Business Support Schemes.

*Noted:* Members noted a response from the Department regarding a query from the Finance Committee on Covid-19 business support schemes operated by the Department for the Economy.

*Noted:* Members noted a response from the Department regarding Covid-19 Support Schemes.

*Noted:* Members noted a Hansard extract from a briefing to the Committee for Infrastructure from NI Retail Consortium, Logistics UK and the Road Haulage

Association on issues affecting the freight and haulage sector due to the end of the EU Transition Period.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to arrange a briefing from NI Retail Consortium, Logistics UK and the Road Haulage Association at a date in the future.

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from the AERA Committee regarding the College of Agriculture Food and Rural Enterprise students.

*Noted:* Members noted a response from Stranmillis University College's Students Union regarding an update on the impact of Covid-19 on student mental health, welfare and well-being at the College.

*Agreed:* Members agreed to forward the correspondence onto the Department for comment.

*Noted:* Members noted a response from the Association of British Insurers (ABI) regarding Covid-19 claims.

*Noted:* Members noted a response from the Department regarding issues raised by the University and College Union.

*Agreed:* to forward the response onto the UCU.

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from John D'Arcy, Director of the Open University outlining area to be considered in the Committee Skills Micro Inquiry.

## **7. Departmental Written Briefing - Review of Level 4 and 5 Provision and HE in FE (Review of existing policy)**

Members considered a number of papers regarding the Review of Level 4 and 5 Provision and HE in FE (Review of existing policy)

*Agreed:* to receive a briefing on the review at a future date.

## **8. Correspondence**

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office regarding the Terms of Reference for the Committee overseeing EU Exit Matters.

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from the Committee for Infrastructure regarding the impact of Brexit on the haulage and retail sector.

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from Lord Kinnoull, Chair of the Lords EU Affairs Committee regarding the proposal for regulation on batteries and waste batteries.

*Agreed:* that the Chair will attend a meeting with the Lords EU Committee on the 22<sup>nd</sup> February along with the Chairs of the AERA, Finance and Executive Office Committees.

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from an individual regarding support for small tourism and accommodation.

*Agreed:* the Committee agreed to forward to the Department seeking an update on what support would be available.

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from Arc21 to Executive Minister regarding Green Growth.

*Noted:* Members noted the Twenty-First Report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules 2020-2021.

*Noted:* Members noted a statement from the Minister of Education regarding alternative awarding arrangements for CCEA qualification in Summer 2021.

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from CBI regarding its emergency working group.

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from RHANI regarding an addendum to the 2020 Consultation.

*Agreed;* the Committee agreed to arrange a written update from the Department on RHI.

*Noted:* Members noted the latest ISNI Assembly Committee report.

## **9. Any Other Business**

Members discussed the announcement by the Ulster University of the relocation of its Life Sciences courses from the Coleraine Campus to its Magee Campus.

*Agreed:* the Committee agreed to write to the UU on how the allocation of Life Science courses to Magee will impact on the Coleraine Campus.

*Agreed:* the Committee agreed to arrange an informal meeting with the UU to discuss the issue.

Members discussed the current issues around the operation of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

*Agreed:* the Committee agreed to write to FM/dFM regarding the current issues of movement of goods between GB and NI, what has been resolved and what remains to be.

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

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

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.56pm*

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**Dr Caoímhe Archibald**  
**Chairperson**  
**Committee for the Economy**  
**10<sup>th</sup> February 2021**