



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Committee for the Economy

## Minutes of Proceedings

10<sup>th</sup> March 2021

**Meeting Location:** Room 29, Parliament Buildings

**Present:**

Dr Caoímhe Archibald (MLA (Chairperson))

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

**Present by Video or Teleconference:**

Mr Stewart Dickson MLA

Mr Paul Givan MLA

Mr John O'Dowd MLA

Mr John Stewart MLA

Mr Christopher Stalford MLA

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

**Apologies:**

Mr Gordon Dunne MBE MLA

**In Attendance:**

Mr Peter Hall (Assembly Clerk)

Mr Thomas Manning (Clerical Officer)



## Northern Ireland Assembly

### **In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:**

Ms Sinead Kelly (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

Ms Jean Barkley (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

The meeting commenced at 9.30am in open session

### **1. Apologies**

As noted above.

### **2. Draft Minutes**

**Agreed:** the Committee agreed the Minutes from 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021.

### **3. Chairpersons Business**

The Chairperson informed Members of correspondence from the Assembly Business Engagement Manager regarding the dissolution of the NI Assembly Business Trust and an online survey on the new structures for engagement with business.

**Agreed:** to forward the survey to the Committee's stakeholders to seek their views.

### **4. Briefing from the Northern Ireland Tourism Alliance (NITA) Covid-19 Tourism Recovery**

The Officials joined the meeting at 9.34am



## Northern Ireland Assembly

Members received a briefing from:

**Dr Joanne Stuart,**

Chief Executive Officer, NITA

**Heather McLachlan**

NI Director, National trust

Key issues discussed included: the impact of Covid-19 on the tourism sector, financial support for the sector, the role of the tourism sector in economic recovery; and the importance of sustainable, value-led tourism.

**The Officials left the meeting at 10.30am**

**Agreed:** to write to the Minister and the Executive Office regarding the importance of engagement with the tourism sector on the NI Executive Pathway to Recovery plan.

### **5. Departmental Briefing – Economic Recovery Action Plan**

The Officials joined the meeting at 10.30am

Members received a briefing from:

**Paul Grocott,**

Deputy Secretary, Economic Strategy  
Group, DfE

**Michelle Scott**

Economic Strategy Group, DfE

**Louise Long**

Economic Strategy Group, DfE

Key issues discussed included: the economic impact of Covid-19, the priorities of the Department in rebuilding the economy, the funding required for delivery of the plan, the merits of the high street voucher scheme, the importance of other strategies such as skills and energy to the recovery; and the importance of cross-departmental working.

The Officials left the meeting at 11.33am



## Northern Ireland Assembly

**Agreed:** for the Clerk to scope the links between the New Decade New Approach document and the Economic Recovery Action Plan.

**Agreed:** to arrange a Committee discussion event to canvas stakeholder views on the Economic Recovery Action Plan.

**Agreed:** to write to the Minister and the Executive Office on the importance of cross-departmental working in relation to the Economic Recovery Action Plan.

**Agreed:** to write to the Department to follow up on a number of additional issues raised.

**The Committee agreed to move to agenda item 7.**

### **7. Departmental Briefing: SL1 – The Education (Student Fees and Support) (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021**

The Officials joined the meeting at 11.35am

Members received a briefing from:

**Heather Cousins,** Head of Skills and Education Group, DfE

**Linda Meldrum** Skills and Education Group, DfE

Key issues discussed included: eligibility for home tuition fee charges and student financial support and the status of EU students and students from the Republic of Ireland.

**Agreed:** to write to the Department to seek a revised version of the SL1 with a clearer statement that there will be no change for students from the Republic of Ireland as home fee payers.

**Agreed:** that the Committee will consider a revised version of the SL1 at its meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> March.



## Northern Ireland Assembly

**Agreed:** to write to the EU Commission and the UK Government regarding the status of ROI students in the EU in terms of tuition fees and financial support.

**The Committee agreed to move to agenda item 8.**

### **8. SL1 – Higher Education Student Support Interventions – Covid-19 Study Disruption Payments**

Members considered the SL1 – Higher Education Student Support Interventions – Covid-19 Study Disruption Payments.

**Agreed:** to write to the Department seeking a detailed written explanation regarding the legal barriers to extending the payment to a wider group of students.

**Agreed:** that the Committee will consider a revised version of the SL1 at its meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> March.

### **6. Matters Arising**

Members agreed to deal with Agenda Item 6 via correspondence, due to time constraints.

### **9. SI – The Renewable Energy, Energy Efficiency and Motor Fuel Emissions (Miscellaneous Amendments) (EU Exit) Regulations 2021**

Members agreed to deal with Agenda Item 9 via correspondence, due to time constraints



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

## **10. Moving Forward – The Executive’s Pathway out of Restrictions**

Members noted that this item was discussed as part of Item 8 on the Economic Recovery Action Plan.

## **11. Correspondence**

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

## **12. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021 in Room 30, Parliament Buildings at 10am.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.02pm

**Dr Caoímhe Archibald MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for the Economy**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021.**