



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Committee for the Economy

## Minutes of Proceedings

5<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**Meeting Location:** Room 30, Parliament Buildings

**Present:**

Dr Caoímhe Archibald (MLA (Chairperson))

**Present by Video or Teleconference:**

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Stewart Dickson MLA

Mr Gary Middleton MLA

Mr John O'Dowd MLA

Mr John Stewart MLA

Mr Mervyn Storey MLA

Mr Christopher Stalford MLA

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

**Apologies:**

Mr Mervyn Storey MLA

**In Attendance:** Mr Peter Hall (Assembly Clerk)



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Mr Thomas Manning (Clerical Officer)

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

Ms Sinead Kelly (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

Ms Jean Barkley (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

Mr Michael Greer (Clerical Supervisor)

The meeting commenced at 10.04am in open session

### **1. Apologies**

As noted above.

### **2. Draft Minutes**

**Agreed:** the Committee agreed the Minutes from 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

### **3. Chairpersons Business**

The Chairperson informed Members of a copy of a Department of Finance document on Public Expenditure Terminology which has been provided as a reference for Members.

The Chairperson highlighted to Members correspondence from the DALO regarding a Legislative Consent Motion being brought by the Minister in respect of amendments to the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 applying in Northern Ireland.



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**Agreed:** Members agreed to seek the views of stakeholders on the LCM.

The Chairperson informed Members of a response from the Department regarding Teaching English as a Foreign Language colleges which have not received support during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Agreed:** to arrange an informal meeting the colleges.

The Chairperson reminded Members that the Minister will brief the Committee next week on the Economic Recovery Action at the earlier time of 9.30 due to diary commitments of the Minister.

### 4. Departmental Briefing – High Street Voucher Scheme

The officials joined the meeting at 10.10am

Members received a briefing from:

**Mr Keith Foster,** Director of Strategic Policy, DfE

**Mr Tommy O'Reilly,** Economic Strategy Unit, DfE

**Mr Dave Vincent,** Strategic Digitisation Advisor, Strategic Investment Board.

**Ms Naomi Waite,** Director of Marketing, Tourism NI

Key issues discussed included: the rollout of the High Street Voucher Scheme, timing of the scheme, the economic kick-start the scheme will deliver, the multiplier effect of the scheme, the parameters of the scheme, the success of similar schemes delivered around the world and the issues to addressed before rollout.



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**Agreed:** to write to the Department seeking answers to several issues that came up during the briefing.

**Agreed:** to arrange a discussion forum with Stakeholders to seek their views on the rollout of the scheme.

The officials left the meeting at 11.15am

### 5. Briefing from the Department for Infrastructure – Regional Planning Issues

The officials joined the meeting at 11.17am

Members received a briefing from:

<b>Mr Angus Kerr,</b>	Chief Planner & Director of Regional Planning, DfI
<b>Mr Alistair Beggs,</b>	Director of Strategic Planning, DfI
<b>Mr Scott Symington,</b>	Senior Principal, Regional Planning Directorate, DfI

Key issues discussed included: how planning policies contribute to the low carbon future, the impact of local development plans on the Economy and issues that impact on planning decisions.

**Agreed:** to write to the Justice Committee regarding Judicial Reviews.

**Agreed:** to write to the Department for Infrastructure regarding the planning issues raised by the Officials and copy to the Infrastructure Committee.



The officials left the meeting at 12.12pm

## 6. Matters Arising

**Noted:** Members noted a response from the Minister regarding penalties for St John's Ambulance in submitting late accounts to Companies House.

**Agreed:** to forward this correspondence to the Department for Communities for a response and to copy in the Communities Committee.

**Noted:** Members noted a response from the Minister regarding funding support for Include Youth's Essential Skills provision.

**Noted:** Members noted correspondence from the Minister outlining the key findings of the evaluation of the extraordinary awarding arrangements for vocational qualifications during the Summer 2020 period.

**Noted:** Members noted a response from the Department regarding support for independent wedding venues and re-opening.

**Agreed:** to forward the response to the individual who raised the matter.

**Noted:** Members noted a response from the Department for the Economy to the Finance Committee who sought clarification regarding outstanding funds to members of the Presbyterian Mutual Society.

**Noted:** Members noted a response from the Consumer Council following the Committee's request for further information on the rights of students as consumers.

**Noted:** Members noted a written briefing from the Department providing an update on Project Stratum.



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**Noted:** Members noted a response from the Minister to the Committee's request for further information on the target dates for the pathway out of restrictions.

**Noted:** Members noted a response from the response from the Department regarding support for the English language teaching sector.

**Noted:** Members noted further correspondence from the pilot who recently contacted the Committee regarding changes to European Union Aviation Safety Agency professional Pilot licenses post-Brexit.

**Agreed:** to forward the additional correspondence from the pilot and the CAA response to the Department to ask whether it is aware of the issues being raised and what work is ongoing to ensure the mutual recognition of licences.

**Agreed:** to write to the relevant UK Minister seeking comment on the issues raised.

**7. SR 2021/112 The Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (Coronavirus, Calculation of a Week's Pay) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021** Members considered a number of papers regarding the Energy Strategy Consultation.

Members considered SR 2021/112 The Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (Coronavirus, Calculation of a Week's Pay) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.

Question put and agreed:

***"That the Committee for the Economy has SR 2021/112 The Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (Coronavirus, Calculation of a Week's Pay) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 and has no objection to the rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report."***



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### 8. Correspondence

**Noted:** Members noted a written briefing paper from the Department on the 2021-22 Main Estimates to facilitate the legislative stage in the budgetary process.

**Noted:** Members noted correspondence from the Public Accounts Committee and copies of written Assembly questions regarding concerns raised anonymously around DfE Energy Division.

**Noted:** Members noted correspondence from a manufacturing business regarding concerns around disadvantages manufacturers in Northern Ireland face when competing with businesses in Britain due to the rules of origin for goods travelling from Britain.

**Agreed:** to forward to the Minister and the Executive Office to ask whether they are aware of the issue and whether it has been raised with the UK Government and the Joint Committee.

**Noted:** Members noted a copy of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales Regulatory Board Annual Report.

**Noted:** Members noted a copy of the CBI Covid Working Group notes of 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021 including an outline of labour market and workplace safety issues.

**Noted:** Members noted a copy of the Thirty-Fifth Report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules.

**Noted:** Members noted a response from the Construction Employers Federation to the Strategic Investment Board's Call for Evidence on a new Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland.

**Agreed:** to request an updated detailed timeline on the Investment Strategy from the Department.



## **9. Any Other Business**

There were no items of business.

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

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2021 in Room 29, Parliament Buildings at 9.30am.

The Committee agreed to move into closes session at 12.43pm

## **11. Follow up from Informal meeting with UK Finance and representatives from NI Banks**

Members discussed the informal meeting that was held last week with UK Finance and representatives from NI Banks.

**Agreed:** to continue engagement with the bank industry and as a next step for a discussion to be arranged around once further information is provided by UK Finance.

**Agreed:** to meet informally with the Consumer Council and the Post Office to explore the issues from their perspective.

**The meeting was adjourned at 12.50pm**

**Dr Caoímhe Archibald MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for the Economy**  
**5<sup>th</sup> May 2021**