



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for the Economy

Minutes of Proceedings

16th June 2021

Meeting Location: Room 30, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Dr Caoímhe Archibald (MLA (Chairperson)

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Stewart Dickson MLA

Mr Mike Nesbitt MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Mr Gary Middleton MLA

Mr John O'Dowd MLA

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

Apologies:

Mr Christopher Stalford MLA

Mr Mervyn Storey MLA



Northern Ireland Assembly

In Attendance: Mr Peter Hall (Assembly Clerk)
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 9th June 2021.

3. Chairpersons Business

The Chairperson informed Members of correspondence from the Dairy Council NI regarding an invitation for a virtual visit to an EU sustainable dairy site.

Agreed: for the Committee Clerks to liaise with AERA Committee Clerk for a suitable date.



Northern Ireland Assembly

The Chairperson informed Members of a copy of a presentation from the 14th June meeting of the NI Human Rights Commission Business Forum on 'Employee Monitoring and Privacy' which the Clerk attends on behalf of the Committee.

The Chairperson updated Members on the recent announcement by Stobart Air to end flights operated on behalf of Aer Lingus from Belfast City Airport.

Agreed: to arrange informal meeting with the local Airports.

The Chairperson advised Members that there will be an informal meeting with the Aviation Sector on the 8th July 2021 to discuss recent job losses and issues facing the sector.

The Chairperson updated Members on her phone with Lord Jay, Chair of the Lords' Protocol sub-committee earlier in the week.

4. Departmental Briefing - June Monitoring

The officials joined the meeting at 10.10am

Members received a briefing from:

Ms Sharon Hetherington,

Director of Finance, DfE

Ms Johanna Park,

Accountant Grade 6, DfE

Key issues discussed included: the Department's response to June Monitoring, the extension of flexibility in allocation of funding by the Department of Finance, the allocations from the 2021/22 Budget, Covid-19 support funding and the challenges ahead.



Northern Ireland Assembly

Agreed: to arrange a briefing in September with the officials responsible for the ERAP spend.

Agreed: to write to DoF DALO regarding the NICS recruitment process and current gaps within Departments.

The officials left the meeting at 10.42am

5. Matters Arising

Noted: Members noted a response from the Department regarding a number of Committee queries in relation to the reform of youth training.

Noted: Members noted a response from TEO regarding the Committees request for information on the rigid ring-fencing of Covid19 support funding.

Noted: Members noted a Clerk's Memo providing a summary of the responses from Manufacturing NI and Logistics NI on the issue of freight shipping costs.

Agreed: to write to the Competition and Markets Authority regarding the increased costs of shipping goods to NI.

Noted: Members noted a response from the Finance Minister regarding the Committee's request to consider funding the feasibility study for the EnerChem process.

Agreed: to forward the response to EnerChem.

Noted: Members noted a matrix provided by Colleges NI on the Hospitality Qualification Pathways following last week's briefing from the Colleges Tourism and Hospitality Hub.

Noted: Members noted correspondence provided by Colleges NI on the IFEX event following last week's briefing.

Noted: Members discussed the NI Protocol.



Northern Ireland Assembly

Agreed: to arrange an informal meeting on 7th July to discuss the Protocol

6. Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Bill

Members considered the Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Bill including the draft public survey and the draft public notice.

Agreed: the draft public survey on the Bill.

Agreed: the draft public notice on the Bill to be published.

7. SL1 - Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Coronavirus) (Amendment of Certain Relevant Periods) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

Members considered SL1 – Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Coronavirus) (Amendment of Certain Relevant Periods) (No. 2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.

Agreed: Members indicated that they are content with the policy implications of the proposed legislation.

8. Correspondence

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the TEO Committee regarding this Committee's work on the Ireland/Ni Protocol in relation to issues that businesses here are having.

Agreed: to respond to the TEO Committee indicating that this Committee will continue to forward any papers that it considers relevant and wishes to share.



Northern Ireland Assembly

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Committee for Infrastructure to the Economy Minister regarding further support for the Taxi Industry.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Chair of the Lords' Protocol Sub-Committee to Paul Scully MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Department for BEIS.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Chair of the Lords' Protocol Sub-Committee to Paul Scully MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Department for BEIS.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Rural Community Network regarding digital connectivity in rural Ireland.

Agreed: to respond indicating that this is a key issue which the Committee is aware of in its scrutiny of all departmental strategies and that the Committee would be grateful for an update on the outcome of this work.

Noted: Members noted a briefing paper from QUB's Institute for Global Food Security outlining industrial hemp opportunities for the North.

Agreed: to arrange an informal meeting with QUB Global Food Security.

Noted: Members noted a copy of correspondence from the Cabinet Office to the Chair of the Lords Common Frameworks Scrutiny Committee.

Noted: Members noted a copy of the Forty-first Report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules 2020 – 2021.

9. Forward Work Programme

Members discussed the latest Committee Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: Members agreed the latest Committee Forward Work Programme.



Northern Ireland
Assembly

10. Any Other Business

Members discussed the recent NI Audit Office report on Broadband Procurement in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: the Clerk will write to the PAC Clerk seeking clarification on whether PAC will be conducting an inquiry into the issue.

11. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 23rd June 2021 in Room 29, Parliament Buildings at 10.00am

The meeting was adjourned at 11.18am

Dr Caoímhe Archibald MLA
Chairperson, Committee for the Economy
23rd June 2021