

# COMMITTEE FOR AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL AFFAIRS SUBMISSION



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural  
Affairs**

Room 244

Parliament Buildings

Tel: +44 (0) 28 905 21475

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**From: Nick Henry, Clerk Committee for Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs**

**To: Peter McCallion, Clerk to Committee for Finance**

**Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2021**

**Subject: Independent Fiscal Council for Northern Ireland**

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1. The Finance Committee's correspondence regarding the establishment of an independent Fiscal Council for Northern Ireland of 21 May 2021 has been shared with the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (AERA).
2. AERA Committee Members were asked to consider the proposals for the Fiscal Council in terms of the parameters as set out in the Finance Committee's correspondence and to provide their views to the Clerk.
3. The key considerations provided by AERA Committee Members in relation to the proposed role and function of the Fiscal Council are as follows:
  - Independence/Engagement with Executive Departments – important that the Council has sufficient degree of autonomy to hold Departments to account for planning and spend, but also that there is appropriate balance for Departments to retain ostensible authority to plan and allocate resources as they see fit
  - A role for the Fiscal Council in supporting the Executive to develop future economic strategies alongside multi-year budgets would be welcome
  - The Fiscal Council should ideally have the latitude to support future economic planning across different sectors and to identify pathways for sustainable funding in specific sectors
  - There should be sufficient flexibility within the system for Executive Departments to respond to emergent issues financially as required

Regards