



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ECONOMY

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

19 OCTOBER 2016

ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

10:00am

Present:

Mr Conor Murphy (Chairperson)
Mr Steve Aiken OBE (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Caoimhe Archibald
Mr Tom Buchanan
Mr Alan Chambers
Mr Gordon Dunne MBE
Dr Stephen Farry
Mr Gordon Lyons
Mr Alex Maskey
Mr Mervyn Storey

In Attendance:

Mr Trevor Allen (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Angela McParland (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Ms Sinead Kelly (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Michael Greer (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Craig Mealey (Clerical Officer)
Mr Brendan Corr (Bursary Student)

Apologies:

Ms Sinead Bradley

The meeting began at 10:03 in open session

1. Apologies

As noted above.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: the Committee agreed the draft Minutes of the meeting on 12th October 2016.

3. Chairpersons Business

The Chairperson informed Members that the Department has postponed the evidence session on the budget.

Agreed: that the Clerk liaise with the Department to arrange for the evidence session to take place at the next meeting.

The Chairperson reminded Members that the National House Building Council roundtable event will be held in the afternoon.

The Chairperson informed Members that the Committee had received correspondence from the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs regarding oral briefings it received from Assembly Research and Information Service on potential impacts of the EU referendum vote.

The Chairperson referred Members to an invitation to the Prince's Trust Celebrate Success awards ceremony to be held on 1st November 2016 at Titanic Belfast.

Agreed: that Members contact the Committee Office regarding their attendance.

The Chairperson informed Members of correspondence from an individual in regards to Employers for Childcare Solutions (EFCS). The Chairperson advised Members that the correspondence had been referred to the Committee for Education as the Department of Education has responsibility over the matter raised in the correspondence.

The Chairperson referred Members to correspondence received from Invest NI in response to the Committee's condolences to Invest NI following the untimely passing of Mr McArdle.

Caoimhe Archibald joined the meeting at 10:06am

Mervyn Storey joined the meeting at 10:07am

Alex Maskey joined the meeting at 10:09am

4. Evidence Session with Construction Employers Federation and Construction Industry Training Board Northern Ireland

The representatives joined the meeting at 10:13am

Members heard from Mr Maurice Johnston, Chairman, CITB NI, Mr Barry Nielson, Chief Executive, CITB NI, Mr John Armstrong, Managing Director, CEF & Mr Ray Hutchinson, Vice President, and Chief Executive, Gilbert-Ash.

The key issues considered included the Apprenticeship Levy, the expansion of Northern Ireland construction firms into the mainland UK market, apprenticeship and training support by CITB NI to the construction industry in Northern Ireland, comparison of definitions of apprenticeships in GB and Northern Ireland and public sector procurement.

The representatives left the meeting at 11:18am

5. Evidence Session with the Ulster Farmers' Union and Renewable NI

The representatives joined the meeting at 11:19am

Members heard from Mr Chris Osbourne, Senior Policy Officer, Ulster Farmers' Union and Mr Rob McMillan, General Manager, Renewable NI.

The key issues considered included the early closure of the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation (NIRO), the small scale renewables sector in Northern Ireland, the Strategic Energy Framework, the lack of an Energy Bill for Northern Ireland, grid infrastructure and energy storage.

6. Departmental Evidence Session- 2016/2017 Budget and October Monitoring Round

This evidence session did not take place, Members moved to Agenda Item 7.

7. Matters Arising

Noted: Members noted a Departmental response to the Committee's request for comment regarding correspondence received from an individual on the closure of NIRO.

Noted: Members noted follow up information from Invest NI to the briefing held on 29th June 2016, a response from Invest NI to the Committee's request regarding the Innovation Factory in Belfast and a copy of correspondence sent from the Chairperson to Invest NI CEO, Alastair Hamilton, in respect of the forthcoming evidence session on 23rd November 2016.

Agreed: Members agreed to amend, as agreed, and issue the correspondence from the

Committee in respect of the evidence sessions by Now Group and Springvale Learning Solutions.

Agreed: Members noted a copy of the submission by the Irish League of Credit Unions (ILCU) to the draft programme for Government Framework and agreed that the Committee write to the Department seeking its views on the proposed increase in fees to the registration of credit union rule amendments.

8. SR 2016/354 The student Fees (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

Members considered the SR 2016/354 The Student Fees (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Question put and agreed:

That the Committee for the Economy has considered SR 2016/354 The Student Fees (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016 and, subject to the report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules, has no objection to the Rule.

9. Credit Unions and Co-operatives and Community Benefit Society Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 - Commencement of Section 4 (Attachment of Shares)

Members considered correspondence from the Department regarding the Credit Unions and Co-operatives and Community Benefit Society Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 and provision concerning Section 4 which requires further legislation.

Agreed: that the Committee will receive a summary of responses following the consultation which the Department advises it will hold regarding its proposal to commence the provision on 1st April 2017.

10. Departmental Written Briefing on Higher Education and Research Bill

Members considered correspondence from the Department regarding the Higher Education and Research Bill. The Department is seeking Executive approval to introduce a Legislative Consent Motion in order to allow the relevant clauses of the Bill regarding the Teaching Excellence Framework and joint working to apply to Northern Ireland.

Agreed: that the Committee will undertake a targeted call for evidence directed at key stakeholders to seek their views, to include the College of Agriculture Food and Rural Enterprise.

11. Correspondence

Noted: the Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for the Executive

Office regarding the Draft Programme for Government and briefings on an outcomes-based accountability approach.

Noted: the Committee noted correspondence from the Committee on Procedures regarding E petitions.

Noted: the Committee noted correspondence from the Committee for Justice providing a copy of the Reprieve Report “Belfast to Bahrain: The Torture Trail.” The Committee noted it has written to the Department and Invest NI on the matter.

12. Any Other Business

Agreed: the Committee agreed that the Clerk will liaise with the Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer on the difficulties members have had in receiving responses to Written Questions to the Department.

Agreed: the Committee agreed to schedule an evidence session with the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland.

13. Date, Time and Place of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 26th October 2016 at 10.00am at Randox Laboratories Ltd.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12:16pm

Mr Steve Aiken OBE
Deputy Chairperson
Committee for the Economy

26th October 2016