



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE ECONOMY**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**09 NOVEMBER 2016**

**ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, 10:00am**

**Present:**

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

**In Attendance:**

Mr Peter Hall (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:**

Mr Alex Maskey  
Mr Mervyn Storey

*The meeting began at 10:04am in open session*

**1. Apologies**

As noted above.

**2. Chairpersons Business**

The Chairperson advised Members that the Committee received a 'Save the Date' from Belfast City Council and Entrepreneurial Spark for the event 'Opportunity Knocks' which is to take place at St George's Market on the 16<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

**3. Draft Minutes**

*Agreed:* the Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2016.

*Alan Chambers joined the meeting at 10:06am*

*Sinead Bradley joined the meeting at 10:09am*

*Members agreed to move to Agenda Item 5*

**5. Oral Briefing from Assembly Research and Information Services**

*The representatives joined the meeting at 10:09am*

Members received a briefing from Mr Eoin Murphy, Research officer, RaISe; Mr Martin Scholes, Research Officer, RaISe; and Mr Aidan Stennett, Research Officer, RaISe,

The key issues considered were background to the 2012 Economic Strategy, the Programme for Government, efforts to balance Northern Ireland's trade deficit, the public and private sector and creating sustainable development.

*Agreed:* that the Committee will bring back the 'Issues for Consideration' in the research paper when the Committee considers the refreshed Economic Strategy.

*Agreed:* the representatives agreed to provide the Committee with information on gender breakdown for the public and private sector employment.

*The representatives left the meeting at 10:50am*

**4. Evidence Session with the Northern Ireland Independent Retail Trade Association (NIIRTA) on the Programme for Government**

*The representative joined the meeting at 10:51am*

Members received a briefing from Mr. Glynn Roberts, Chief Executive, NIIRTA.

The key issues discussed included NIIRTA's submission to the Programme for Government draft framework, the development of competitive tax rates, rates relief and town centre renewal.

*Stephen Farry joined the meeting at 10:57am*

*Sinead Bradley left the meeting at 11:43am*

*The representative left the meeting at 11:44am*

## **6. Matters Arising**

The Chairperson referred Members to correspondence received from the Minister for Communities in response to the Committee's request that he support credit unions in providing loan finances to housing associations.

*Agreed:* to forward the Minister's response to the Irish League of Credit Unions (ILCU) for comment and ask for its views on how regulatory barriers might be removed and a way forward found.

The Chairperson referred Members to a Ministerial response on issues raised in the previous evidence session with the ILCU and the Ulster Federation of Credit Unions (UFCU).

*Agreed:* to forward the correspondence to the two credit union bodies for comment.

The Chairperson referred Members to an Invest NI response to the House of Lords EU sub-committees' inquiry into UK/EU trade.

*Agreed:* to note the response and forward it to the Lords' Inquiry.

The Chairperson referred members to an Invest NI response in regards to the governance structure of Bedford Street Developments Limited.

*Agreed:* to write to Invest NI to ask for clarification on whether Directors of the BSDC Group receive remuneration for their role.

The Chairperson referred Members to correspondence from Invest NI regarding the evidence session scheduled for the 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016.

*Agreed:* to advise Invest NI that the Committee agrees to it receiving a written brief on some of the issues highlighted by Members in correspondence, prior to the evidence session, as suggested; however, Members will reserve the right to ask questions on these issues, as well as those dealt with in the evidence session, during the Q&A.

## **7. Programme for Government**

Members received a briefing from Brendan Corr, Committee Masters student.

The key issues discussed included analysis of submissions received by the Committee on the first draft of the Programme for Government.

*Agreed:* that the Committee will put out a call for evidence seeking feedback on the second draft of the Programme for Government.

*Agreed:* that the Clerk will respond to the Executive office Committee's request for views on the second draft of the PfG by 9<sup>th</sup> December 2016, highlighting the difficulties in making this deadline but making a commitment to try.

*Agreed:* that the Committee will hold an evidence session on the budget on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

*Agreed:* that the Committee will request an evidence session with Deputy Secretaries Derek Baker and Chris Stewart regarding the PfG Indicator Delivery Plans for which they are responsible.

*Caoimhe Archibald left the meeting at 12:11pm*

*Stephen Farry left the meeting at 12.15pm*

## **8. Labour Relations Agency Annual Report 2015-16**

The Chairperson referred Members to the Labour Relations Agency Annual Report 2015-16.

*Agreed:* that the Committee write to the Labour Relations Agency requesting clarification around remuneration and clearance rate issues.

## **9. Correspondence**

*Noted:* in considering correspondence received from the online bike store, Wiggle CRC, Members expressed their concern at the business's decision to move three hundred jobs out of Northern Ireland.

*Agreed:* in considering correspondence from Enterprise NI and Omagh Enterprise Agency, to schedule a visit to Omagh Enterprise Agency.

*Noted:* correspondence from the Minister regarding drafted Rules for introducing Postal Administration procedures which the Department of Justice has responsibility for, and that the Committee for Justice may consult with this Committee on the matter.

*Agreed:* in considering correspondence from the Committee for Finance, which

provided the Committee with a research paper on the Budget 2017-2018, the Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking a response to those questions relevant to it within the research paper.

*Noted:* correspondence from the Northern Ireland Health and Safety Executive to the Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs on farm safety.

*Noted:* that the Committee will hold an evidence session with the Northern Ireland Health and Safety Executive on workplace safety on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

*Noted:* an invitation to the Skills Northern Ireland event at the Titanic Exhibition Centre that day.

*Meeting moved into closed session at 12:26pm*

## **10. Strategic Planning**

The Chairperson referred Members to a Strategic Planning paper.

*Agreed:* to discuss at the meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016.

*Meetings moved into open session at 12:28pm*

## **11. Any Other Business**

There were no additional items of business.

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

The next meeting of the Committee will be at 10:00am on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2016 in SONI, Manse road, Belfast.

The Chairperson informed Members that the Committee will sponsor a showcase event by the Ulster University which will take place in the Long Gallery on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12:28pm

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**Mr Conor Murphy**  
**Chairperson**  
**Committee for the Economy**  
**16<sup>th</sup> November 2016**