



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR THE ECONOMY**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**11 JANUARY 2017**

**Room 29, Parliament Buildings, 10:00am**

**Present:**

Mr Steve Aiken OBE (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Tom Buchanan  
Ms Sinéad Bradley  
Mr Alan Chambers  
Mr Gordon Dunne MBE  
Mr Stephen Farry  
Mr Gordon Lyons  
Mr Mervyn Storey

**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 Conor Murphy (Chairperson)  
Ms Caoímhe Archibald  
Mr Alex Maskey

*Deputy Chairperson, Steve Aiken takes the Chair  
The meeting began at 10:05am in open session*

**1. Apologies**

As noted above.

**2. Draft Minutes of Meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2016**

*Agreed:* the Committee agreed the draft minutes of the meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

*Gordon Lyons joined the meeting at 10:06am*

**3. Declaration of Interests**

No Member declared an interest.

**4. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson informed Members that the Committee has received an invitation from Tourism NI to the Northern Ireland Year of Food and Drink 2016 closing Banquet on Wednesday 11th January 2017.

*Agreed:* the Deputy Chairperson will attend and any other Member available to attend should inform the Committee Office.

The Chairperson informed Members that the Chairperson received a request from Indaver Ireland Ltd for an informal meeting to detail how the arc21 project can benefit the economy of Northern Ireland.

*Agreed:* the Deputy Chairperson and another Member to meet informally with Indaver Ireland Ltd.

The Chairperson informed Members that Advice NI has requested that the Committee co-host, with the Chairperson of the Committee for Communities, the launch of their first ever report of its Business Debtline service. The Chairperson advised members that a copy of the Advice NI Training Brochure is also available to view in the Committee Office.

*Agreed:* that the Committee will co-sponsor the event.

The Chairperson informed Members the Chairperson received a request from Asthma UK to address a reception on Thursday 19th January 2017 in the Long Gallery.

*Agreed:* that the Deputy Chairperson will address the event.

## **5. Oral Briefing by Ofcom**

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

Members received a briefing from Mr Clive Carter, Director of Strategy, Ofcom, and Mr Jonathan Rose, Northern Ireland Director, Ofcom.

The key issues discussed included the Universal Services Obligation for Broadband, the development of fibre infrastructure, development with 4G and 5G broadband, access to broadband within Northern Ireland and proper communication between broadband providers and consumers.

*The representatives left the meeting at 10:53am*

*Tom Buchanan joined the meeting at 10:32am*

- 6.** The Committee considered a range of information regarding the UK leaving the EU including a paper by the Scottish Government setting out its position. The Committee considered its priorities for the upcoming negotiations.

The Chairperson made a proposal:

*That the Committee will write to the Department for the Economy, copying in the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, to highlight to the Department the key issues the Committee would like to see addressed in the upcoming negotiations concerning the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union.*

Sinéad Bradley proposed an amendment.

*Question put:*

*That the Committee will write to the Department for the Economy, copying in the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and also the Minister for International Affairs and Trade in the Government of the Republic of Ireland, to highlight to the Department the key issues the Committee would like to see addressed in the upcoming negotiations concerning the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union.*

**AYES**

*Sinéad Bradley*

NOES

*Thomas Buchanan, Alan Chambers, Gordon Dunne, Gordon Lyons, Mervyn Storey,*

ABSTAINED

*Steve Aiken, Stephen Farry*

*The Amendment therefore fell.*

*Question on the original proposal was put and agreed, with the exception of Sinéad Bradley who abstained from the vote:*

AYES

*Steve Aiken, Thomas Buchanan, Alan Chambers, Gordon Dunne, Stephen Farry, Gordon Lyons, Mervyn Storey*

*Agreed:* that the Clerk will also copy the letter to Members.

## **7. Matters Arising**

*Agreed:* Members considered a Ministerial response in regards to the budget 2017/18 and agreed to write to the Department highlighting the issues that the Committee has agreed are of priority within a default budget, should the Department be required to produce one.

*Agreed:* Members considered a Ministerial response in relation to the forthcoming Apprenticeship Levy and agreed that the Committee schedule an urgent evidence session with Department officials on the findings of the consultation and the Department's intentions regarding the Levy moving forward.

*Noted:* Members noted a Ministerial response regarding the Committee's request pertaining to ethics and standards on investment matters when dealing with certain sectors and countries globally, following its consideration of correspondence from Reprieve on NI-CO.

*Agreed:* Members considered a response from Invest NI which addressed a set of questions posed by Reprieve regarding its report 'Belfast to Bahrain' and agreed to forward the response to Reprieve for information.

*Agreed:* Members noted a Ministerial response regarding the Life & Health Sciences sector and agreed to forward the response to Randox for information.

*Noted:* Members noted a response from the Secretary of State with regard to further detail on the membership of the Business Advisory Group, and the sectors the Secretary of State has met to date.

*Agreed:* Members considered correspondence from Renewables NI requesting that the Committee facilitates a meeting with the Minister to discuss Small Scale Generation and agreed to forward the correspondence to the Minister.

*Agreed:* Members noted the Department for the Economy Whistleblowing Guidance for Stakeholders External to the Department that was requested by this Committee and agreed to follow up with the Department the Committee's request for a copy of its Risk Register.

*Noted:* Members noted the committee's report on its visit to Dublin in December 2016.

*Noted:* Members noted a RaISe paper on the Executive Budget 2017-18: Funding Envelope.

#### **8. SL1 The Health and Safety (First-Aid) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017**

Member considered SL1 The Health and Safety (First-Aid) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017.

*Agreed:* that the Committee is content with the policy implications of the proposed legislation.

#### **9. SR 2016/427 The Mines Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016**

Member considered SR 2016/427 The Mines Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016.

*Question put and agreed:*

*That the Committee for the Economy has considered SR 2016 No. 427 The Mines Regulations (Northern Ireland) and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report, has no objection to the Rule.*

#### **10. Correspondence**

*Agreed:* Members considered correspondence from the Department for the Economy informing this Committee of proposals to make a Statutory Rule The Insolvency Practitioners (Recognised Professional Bodies) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 and agreed to note at this stage, pending receipt of an SL1 in due course.

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from the Committee for the Executive Office highlighting the Committee Report on the Draft Programme for Government 2016-21.

*Agreed:* Members considered correspondence from the Policy Forum for Northern Ireland requesting that another Member join Mervyn Storey in addressing the seminar on Tuesday 25th April 2017 on key challenges and future opportunities post the UK leaving the EU. Members agreed to advise the Forum that a Member will be confirmed nearer the time of the seminar.

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from the Policy Forum informing the Committee of the full transcript of its energy seminar held on the 6th December 2016.

*Agreed:* Members noted correspondence from The Law Society NI inviting the Committee to a Dispute Resolution Service (DRS) event on Tuesday 17th January 2017 regarding Mediation for Consumer Disputes and agreed that Members will inform the Committee Office of their availability to attend.

*Agreed:* Members noted an invitation from The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Bar of Northern Ireland to attend the Annual Lecture 2017 on Tuesday 17th January 2017 in the The Inn of Court, Royal Courts of Justice, and agreed that Members inform the Committee Office of their availability to attend.

*Noted:* Members noted correspondence from the Consumer Council informing the Committee that their Draft Forward Work Programme is now open for public consultation.

*Agreed:* Members considered correspondence from an individual highlighting the closure of tourist attractions during the holiday period and agreed to forward the correspondence to Tourism NI and the Department to respond to the individual and copy the Committee into their response.

*Agreed:* Members considered an information sheet in regards to the Union Learning Fund and agreed to write to the Minister regarding the Fund.

*Noted:* Members noted a press release on support amongst third sector leaders for charity shop rating proposals.

## **11. Any Other Business**

*Agreed:* that the Committee hold a special meeting as soon as possible once Department's plans to mitigate future costs of the Renewable Heat Incentive scheme are received.

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

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2017 at 10.00am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11:59am*

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**Mr Steve Aiken MLA OBE**  
**Deputy Chairperson**  
**Committee for the Economy**

**16<sup>th</sup> January 2017**