



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

24 FEBRUARY 2015

ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, 10.00AM

Present:

Mr Patsy McGlone (Chairperson)
Mr Phil Flanagan (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Gordon Dunne
Mr Paul Frew
Mr William Humphrey
Mr Danny Kinahan
Mr Fearghal McKinney
Mr Máirtín Ó Muilleoir

In Attendance:

Mr Jim McManus (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Angela McParland (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Nathan McVeigh (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Christopher Jeffrey (Clerical Officer)
Mr Peadar Ó Lamhna (Bursary Student)

Apologies:

Mr Steven Agnew

The meeting began at 10:09am

1. Apologies

Apologies were noted as above.

2. Declaration of Interests

Members were provided with a copy of the Register of Interests of Paul Givan and Máirtín Ó Muilleoir.

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir also declared that a family member works for Tourism Ireland and that he also has a business interest with the organisation.

3. Draft Minutes of Meeting of 17 February 2015

Agreed: the Committee agreed the draft minutes of 17 February 2015.

4. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson advised members that he had received an invitation from the Northern Ireland Hotels Federation to attend the Tourism Summit on Friday 20th March in the Hilton Hotel, Belfast. The Chairperson advised the Committee that due to a prior engagement he is unable to attend.

Agreed: members to contact the Committee Office if they can attend.

5. Oral Briefing from Tourism Ireland: Update on Activity

The representatives joined the meeting at 10:10am

Members received a briefing from Mr. Niall Gibbons, Chief Executive, and Mr. Shane Clarke, Director of Corporate Services.

Key issues discussed included: visitor numbers from Great Britain, USA and Europe, the Island of Ireland as a holiday venue, the Causeway Coast and Wild Atlantic Way, Commonwealth Games 2014, decline in airline seats to airports in Northern Ireland, Air Passenger Duty, global greening for St Patrick's Day, golf tourism, long haul markets and the British-Irish Visa Scheme.

Fearghal McKinney joined the meeting at 10:12am

Danny Kinahan joined the meeting at 10:13am

Paul Frew joined the meeting at 10:21am

Danny Kinahan left the meeting at 10:40am

William Humphrey left the meeting at 10:57am

The representatives left the meeting at 11:30am
Fearghal McKinney left the meeting at 11:30am

Agreed: to raise the issue with the Permanent Secretary of the timeliness of Departmental papers being passed to the Committee.

Agreed: Tourism Ireland to forward to the Committee: a copy of the revenue figures quoted by Tourism Ireland at the briefing; a copy of the Tourism Ireland presentation in which Northern Ireland is promoted; and a copy of the research paper on visitors from China.

Agreed: the Committee to discuss at next week's meeting the possibility of holding a joint meeting with the Oireachtas Select Sub-Committee on Transport, Tourism and Sport.

6. Oral Briefing from Consumer Council for Northern Ireland: Consumer Outlook Index January 2015

The representatives joined the meeting at 11:31

Members received a briefing Ms Kathy Graham, Interim Director of Policy and Philippa Mc Keown Brown, Head of Consumer.

Key issues discussed included: energy costs, work with Manufacturing NI and other partners, the property market and food prices.

The meeting was suspended at 11:36am to allow for a vote in the Assembly Chamber

The meeting resumed at 11:51am with the following members present:

Patsy McGlone (Chairperson)
Phil Flanagan (Deputy Chairperson)
Gordon Dunne
Paul Frew
Máirtín Ó Muilleoir

The representatives left the meeting at 12:04pm

7. Insolvency (Amendment) Bill: Preliminary View

Members noted that the Committee had previously considered the clauses in the Bill in detail and had raised a number of queries on the Bill which had been responded to by the Department. The Committee noted that the Department had agreed to bring amendments to Clause 11 and Clause 13 of the Bill.

Members noted the Department's response to the Committee's query on Clause 11 following the comments made by the Examiner of Statutory Rules.

Agreed: members were content with the proposed amendment to Clause 11.

Agreed: members agreed to move immediately to formal clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

8. Insolvency (Amendment) Bill : Formal Clause-by-Clause Consideration

Paul Frew left the meeting at 12:06pm

The Committee formally scrutinised, clause-by-clause, the Insolvency (Amendment) Bill and agreed the following:

Provisions relating to communication

Clause 1: Attendance at meetings and use of websites

Clause 2: References to things in writing

Question put and agreed: that the Committee is content with Clauses 1-2, as drafted.

Requirements relating to meetings

Clause 3: Removal of requirement for annual meetings in a members' voluntary and a creditors' voluntary winding up

Clause 4: Requirements in relation to meetings under Articles 81 and 84 of the Insolvency Order

Question put and agreed: that the Committee is content with Clauses 3-4, as drafted.

Reports in individual voluntary arrangements

Clause 5: Individual voluntary arrangements: removal of requirement to submit a nominee's report to the High Court

Clause 6: Fast-track voluntary arrangements: notification of the Department

Question put and agreed: that the Committee is content with Clauses 5-6, as drafted.

Powers of liquidator and trustee

Clause 7: Powers of liquidator exercisable with or without sanction in a winding up

Clause 8: Powers of trustee exercisable with or without sanction in a bankruptcy

Question put and agreed: that the Committee is content with Clauses 7-8, as drafted.

Miscellaneous

Clause 9: Definition of debt

Clause 10: Treatment of liabilities relating to contracts of employment

Question put and agreed: that the Committee is content with Clauses 9-10, as drafted.

Clause 11: Deeds of arrangement

Question put and agreed: that the Committee is content with Clause 11, as amended and is content with the wording of the proposed amendment.

Clause 12: Bankruptcy: early discharge procedure

Question put and agreed: that the Committee is content with Clause 12, as drafted.

Paul Frew re-joined the meeting at 12:08pm

Clause 13: After-acquired property of bankrupt

Question put and agreed: that the Committee is content with Clause 13, as amended and is content with the wording of the proposed amendment.

Clause 14: Authorisation of insolvency practitioners

Clause 15: Power to make regulations

Clause 16: Company arrangement or administration provision to apply to a credit union

Clause 17: Disqualification from office: duty to consult the Lord Chief Justice

Question put and agreed: that the Committee is content with Clauses 14-17, as drafted.

Supplementary

Clause 18: Interpretation

Clause 19: Transitional provisions, minor and consequential amendments and repeals

Clause 20: Commencement

Clause 21: Short title

Question put and agreed: that the Committee is content with Clauses 18-21, as drafted.

Schedules 1-3

Schedule 1: Transitional provisions

Schedule 2: Minor and consequential amendments

Schedule 3: Repeals

Question put and agreed: that the Committee is content with Schedules 1-3 as drafted.

Long Title

Question put and agreed: that the Committee is content with the Long Title, as drafted.

Agreed: to consider the draft report and final report of the Bill at next week's meeting.

9. Inquiry into Economic Growth and Job Creation in a Reduced Tax Environment

Members considered a response from the Committee for the Environment and an email from a member of the public in response to the Committee's Inquiry. Members also considered correspondence from the Department for Regional Development to the Committee for Regional Development regarding the NI Strategic Drainage Infrastructure Plan.

Agreed: to include the above as evidence for the Inquiry.

Agreed: to ask the Road Haulier's Association to provide a written submission to the Inquiry.

Agreed: to ask NIE for a response to the Committee's previous request for information regarding substations and for a written briefing on the shortcomings of the grid, specifically in relation to where it may prove an inhibiting factor to business growth to be followed by an oral briefing to the Committee.

Agreed: to consider the answer to a written question by Paul Frew on NI Water treatment works.

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir left the meeting at 12:10pm

10. Matters Arising

Members noted correspondence from the Department regarding the Committee's queries to the Department and Invest NI that arose from its consideration of a previous EU Matters Newsletter.

Members discussed correspondence from the Department concerning the Committee's queries that had arisen from correspondence received by the Committee regarding First Flight Wind.

Agreed: to hold an informal meeting between the Minister and Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and other interested Committee Members to discuss the issues arising.

Members noted correspondence from Ofcom in response to the Committee's queries about the RTÉ and TG4 Player. Ofcom also sought further clarification with regards the Committee's request.

Agreed: to write to Ofcom Northern Ireland thanking it for its interest in this matter and to provide Ofcom with the information requested.

Members noted a paper from Steven Agnew MLA providing an overview of the Children's Services Co-operation Bill for members' information.

Agreed: to agree a response to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy Minister at next week's meeting.

Members considered the implications of the Corporation Tax (NI) Bill on mutual societies and credit unions with regards to the importance of community development.

Agreed: members agreed to write to the Northern Ireland Office outlining the Committee's concerns on the matter and copy in to the correspondence OFMDFM, DETI, DFP, all 18 MPs representing Northern Ireland constituencies and the Shadow Secretary of State.

11. EU Matters Newsletter

Members considered the EU Matters newsletter.

Agreed: to write to the Department for Employment and Learning to seek further information on the Youth Employment Initiative outlined in the Newsletter.

Agreed: the Committee Office to email members the web address link to the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels.

12. Correspondence

Members noted the following items of correspondence:

- i. Correspondence from Advice NI requesting to brief the Committee on the work of its Debt Action service.

Agreed: to arrange an informal meeting between representatives of Advice NI and the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and other interested members.
- ii. Correspondence from an individual with regards to the Presbyterian Mutual Society.
- iii. Correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First and deputy First Minister regarding the European Commission Work Programme 2015.
- iv. Correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel regarding a briefing made to that Committee on banking issues by The Consumer Council for Northern Ireland.
- v. Correspondence from the Minister concerning the reappointment of the Agri-Food Strategy Board.

13. Any Other Business

Members discussed the BT broadband rollout project.

Agreed: to ask BT to provide a point of contact for members who is responsible for the strategic decision making on the locations of the broadband green junction boxes.

14. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on **Tuesday 3 March 2015 at 10.00am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.**

The meeting concluded at 12.28pm.

Mr Patsy McGlone
Chairperson
Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment

3 March 2015