



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Committee for the Economy

## Minutes of Proceedings

13<sup>th</sup> October 2021

**Meeting Location:** Room 30, Parliament Buildings

**Present:**

Dr Caoímhe Archibald (MLA (Chairperson))

Mr Stewart Dickson MLA

Mr Stephen Dunne MLA

Mr John O'Dowd MLA

**Present by Video or Teleconference:**

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

**Apologies:**

Mr Keith Buchanan MLA

Mr Mike Nesbitt MLA

Mr Peter Weir MLA



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**In Attendance:** Mr Peter Hall (Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Thomas Manning (Clerical Officer)

**In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:**

Ms Sinead Kelly (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Michael Greer (Clerical Supervisor)

The meeting commenced at 10:05am in open session.

**1. Apologies**

As noted above.

**2. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson provided an update following the informal meeting with the Chief Executives of the three local airports on 7<sup>th</sup> October.

**Agreed:** to write to the Secretary of State to highlight the issues raised by the airports and seek his intervention in the British Cabinet.

**Agreed:** to write to the Economy and Finance Ministers regarding the issues raised by the airports around the NIDAKS, APD and duty-free, travel restrictions and messaging.



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**Agreed:** to ask the Department to look again at the Oxford Economics paper on connectivity and to apply pressure on the British Government.

**Agreed:** to write to the British Government around levelling up and connectivity.

The Chairperson informed Members of a presentation from the Utility Regulator about the energy price rises following the informal meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> October.,

The Chairperson updated Members following the informal meeting with Ballantine Building Solution on 30<sup>th</sup> September, and a subsequent site visit by the Clerk.

**Agreed:** to highlight the Integra Spec ICF system to the Economy, Communities and Finance Ministers, as well as Invest NI.

### 3. Draft Minutes

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the Minutes from 6<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

### 4. Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Bill

Members discussed the Parental Bereavement (Leave and Pay) Bill and the Clerks Memo detailing Options to Amend.

**Agreed:** for the Clerk to bring an evidence based options paper for next week's meeting.



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## 5. Departmental Briefing – Skills Strategy

The officials joined the meeting at 11:10am

Members received a briefing from:

<b>Ms Heather Cousins,</b>	Deputy Secretary of Skills and Education Group, DfE
<b>Mr Graeme Wilkinson,</b>	Director of Skills Division, DfE
<b>Mr Roger Arneill,</b>	Skills Strategy Branch, DfE

Key issues discussed included: the development of the Skills Strategy, the key outcomes of the public consultation, post European Social Funding and the need to invest in skills.

The officials left the meeting at 11:48am

## 6. Small-Scale Green Energy Bill

The witness joined the meeting at 11:29am

Members received a briefing from:

<b>Mr John O'Dowd MLA</b>	Bill Sponsor, MLA for Upper Bann
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Key issues discussed included: the introduction of the Small-Scale Green Energy Bill.



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The witness left the meeting at 11:56am

**Agreed:** that the survey is launched via citizen space.

**Agreed:** Members agreed the call for evidence notice.

**Agreed:** to write to the Examiner of Statutory Rules requesting a report on the delated powers within the Small-Scale Green Energy Bill.

### 7. Matters Arising

**Noted:** Members noted a copy of a Departmental response regarding the recovery of wrongly issued or claimed Covid-19 grants.

**Noted:** Members noted a Departmental response regarding cancelled meetings between DfE and the Business and Culture Committee of Derry City and Strabane District Council over the last 18 months.

**Agreed:** to forward the response onto DCSDC.

**Noted:** Members noted a copy of correspondence from the Minister to Include Youth regarding the closure of Include Youth's Essential Skills programme.

**Agreed:** to ask for details of the meeting.

**Noted:** Members noted a correspondence from an individual regarding the progress of Community Renewal funding and SPF funding.

**Agreed:** to forward to the Department for a response.

### 8. Correspondence



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**Noted:** Members noted a copy of correspondence from the Committee for Infrastructure regarding HGV Driver Issues.

**Noted:** Members noted a copy of correspondence from the Chairpersons' Liaison Group regarding information on proposals for new or amended EU Laws

**Noted:** Members noted a copy of a Written Ministerial Statement from the Finance Minister regarding the RHI Inquiry Report and how the findings of the report are being taken forward.

**Noted:** Members noted correspondence from the Open University inviting the Chair and Committee members to a lunch in the Member's Dining Room with the University Secretary who will be attending.

**Agreed:** to let the Committee Office know if they wish to attend.

**Noted:** Members noted correspondence from the Head of Facilities at Wiggle regarding Covid-19 restrictions seeking clarification on when there will be further guidance on a return to office working.

**Agreed:** to forward to the Executive Office for a response.

**Noted:** Members noted correspondence from an individual regarding flags and their impact on his business and on tourism generally.

**Agreed:** to forward to the Department to ask if it is aware of any work ongoing to assess the impact of flags on the tourism industry.

**Noted:** Members noted correspondence from PPE solutions regarding rapid Covid-19 testing.

**Noted:** Members noted correspondence from ICBAN, the local authority-led cross-border development organisation for the Central Border Region, requesting a meeting regarding its new strategy.

**Agreed:** to schedule an informal meeting.



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**Noted:** Members noted a copy of the Third Report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules 2021 - 2022

**Noted:** Members noted a copy of the Chartered Institute of Building response to the Department's consultation on the Skills Strategy.

**Noted:** Members noted correspondence from an individual regarding grants available in Scotland to improve ventilation in high risk settings including bars, restaurants and gyms.

**Agreed:** to forward to the Department for a response.

## 9. Any Other Business

Members discussed the 100 jobs lost at JMC Mechanical and Construction in Waringstown.

## 10. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021 in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings at 10am.

**The meeting was adjourned at 12.07pm.**

**Dr Caoímhe Archibald MLA**  
**Chairperson, Committee for the Economy**  
**20<sup>th</sup> October 2021**