

**From the Office of the Minister
DR CAOIMHE ARCHIBALD MLA**



Department for the

Economy

An Roinn

Geilleagair

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Ciara, a chara

Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee

As you know, my predecessor, Conor Murphy, met with the previous Chair, Philip McGuigan, Deputy Chair, David Brooks, and the Permanent Secretary, Ian Snowden, on 7 January 2025, where they discussed his and the Department's commitment to fulfilling statutory obligations to provide support to the Democratic Scrutiny Committee.

Minister Murphy stated that Departmental Officials were fully committed to supporting the committee and was content for officials to attend the committee meetings to provide whatever evidence they can. I assure you this remains my position.

However, as Minister Murphy and the Permanent Secretary noted in the 7 January meeting, there are limitations on the extent of the advice my officials can give. Many issues that the Committee considers are reserved or excepted matters that remain the responsibility of Westminster rather than devolved matters under our control. This will mean that a full and detailed analysis cannot be undertaken in my department because we will not possess specific expertise or knowledge of the issues and may not have easy access to relevant data. The department will not always have the resources to devote to policy issues that will allow analysis on an equivalent level to those which can be produced by Whitehall departments. This will mean that in some cases we may be able to offer an initial opinion, but will also suggest that the Committee may wish to engage the British Government for information / analysis that goes beyond Explanatory Memorandums. I hope you understand that any inability on our part to provide the Committee with answers is due to these structural constraints and does not reflect any reluctance in the department to assist the Committee.

That said, I have tasked my officials with reviewing our internal procedures and working relationships with the British Government to maximise the support we can give you. I expect this to be complete in June, at which point I would be happy to meet you and the Deputy Chair to provide an update.

Is mise le meas

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'C Archibald'. The 'C' is large and stylized, with a loop that extends upwards and to the left. The 'Archibald' is written in a cursive, flowing script.

Dr Caoimhe Archibald MLA
Minister for the Economy



Mrs Ciara Ferguson MLA, Chairperson
Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny
Committee (DSC)

REF: DSC 75/25

15 April 2025

Ms Caoimhe Archibald
Minister for the Economy

Department for the Economy
Issued via email to: Private.Office@economy-ni.gov.uk

Caoimhe a chara,

Provision of departmental evidence to the Democratic Scrutiny Committee

At its meeting on 10 April 2025, the Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee (DSC) considered the following proposed EU act:

[COM/2024/561 - as regards electric vehicle supply equipment, compressed gas dispensers, and electricity, gas and thermal energy meters.](#)

Officials from your Department attended the meeting to provide oral evidence on the proposed act. Prior to the meeting, the DSC submitted a series of questions with the expectation that officials would be prepared to answer them during the evidence session. However, a significant number of the questions went unanswered, with officials advising that the British Government's Department for Business and Trade would be better placed to respond. Officials also indicated that, beyond a request for an Explanatory Memorandum, there had been no substantive engagement with the British Government in relation to the proposal.

Following the evidence session, the DSC agreed that I should write to you and reflect upon the arrangements agreed during a meeting between my predecessor, Philip McGuigan MLA, the Deputy Chairperson, David Brooks MLA, the previous Minister for the Economy, Conor Murphy, and the Permanent Secretary on 7 January 2025.

At that meeting, Mr Murphy acknowledged the critical role of his Department in supporting the DSC in the exercise of its statutory functions - particularly

in assessing the impact a proposed or published replacement EU act may have here, irrespective of whether it involves a devolved or reserved/excepted matter.

Mr Murphy committed to ensuring that his Department would press the British Government for early notice of EU acts, as well as timely and comprehensive briefings on those acts which deal, in whole or in part, with reserved/excepted policy areas. This would enable officials to provide informed commentary on all aspects of a given piece of legislation, regardless of the Department's area of responsibility.

Accordingly, the DSC agreed that I seek confirmation on whether you remain committed to the arrangements agreed by the previous Minister in relation to assisting the DSC in carrying out its scrutiny functions.

Le meas,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Ciara Ferguson', is centered below the text 'Le meas,'.

Ciara Ferguson, MLA

Chairperson, Windsor Framework Democratic Scrutiny Committee