



COMMITTEE FOR THE ECONOMY

RECORD OF DECISIONS

7 APRIL 2020

This Record of Decisions was made under:

Assembly Standing Order 115. Temporary provision for statutory committees

(1) This Standing Order contains temporary provisions relating to committees established under Standing Order 48, and supersedes paragraphs (3)-(6) of Standing Order 46 and paragraphs (5) and (7) of Standing Order 49.

(8) A committee may agree to make decisions (including a decision not to meet) without meeting.

The Committee for the Economy has agreed that it will not meet again until Members agree otherwise, and has agreed that decisions will be made via correspondence.

(9) This paragraph applies where a committee has agreed, or proposes to make, a decision without meeting:

a) Before a decision is to be taken, the chairperson must:

(i) inform members of the subject matter of the decision;

(ii) provide members with such supporting information as the chairperson considers relevant;

(iii) allow a reasonable time for members to consider the subject matter and supporting information; and

seek consensus among members on the decision.

This Record of Decisions is made with reference to paragraphs (9) and (12) above and below.

(12) A general record of the proceedings of a committee shall be maintained by the Committee Clerk.

AGREEMENT WAS RECEIVED BY CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

Dr Caoímhe Archibald (Chairperson)
Ms Sinéad McLaughlin (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Gordon Dunne MBE
Mr Gary Middleton
Mr John O'Dowd
Mr Christopher Stalford
Mr John Stewart
Ms Claire Sugden

1. Draft Record of Decisions

Agreed: the Committee agreed the draft Record of Decisions of 31 March 2020.

2. Chairperson's Business

No items of business.

3. Matters Arising

Ministerial Written Statement on Small Business Grants

Agreed: the Department to clarify: the timeframe on the £25,000 grant being available; where multiple businesses pay rates through their rent to one landlord, is each business entitled to a grant; whether it is being looked at that businesses with multiple properties each registered as private limited companies are able to obtain support for each property, however other businesses with more than one property can only obtain support for one property; are childcare providers registered as charities and other social enterprises entitled to support or will other support be forthcoming; clarity for the Leisure sector from within the £25k Hospitality Grant i.e. the Grant to extend to golf clubs, sports clubs etc..

Agreed: the Department to clarify: businesses who should qualify for SBRR, but because their premises have not been rated or are rated incorrectly fall through the gap for this scheme. Given that Reval 2020 has recently concluded, should these businesses not be captured. Businesses have been advised by LPS to request a rating process, but this can take up to three months. Can this be expedited, given the circumstances, so that these businesses can avail of the grant they are entitled to in theory, if not on paper? Small manufacturing businesses fall out of this scheme. The Minister stated she was keen to find support for these businesses, the Committee to receive an update on this.

Written Briefing from NI Farms Group

Agreed: to forward the briefing to the Department to respond regarding minimum pricing legislation.

Agreed: to forward the briefing to the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs regarding emergency aid.

Correspondence from the Renewable Heat Association (RHANI) on the Annual Review of RHI Tariffs

Agreed: to forward to the Department for comment.

4. SR 2020/55 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020 - as brought forward by the Department of Health

Agreed: that the Committee has no objection to the Rule, in regards to those areas impacting upon the Department for the Economy.

Agreed: to ask the Department to confirm: if there has been progress regarding the essential business definition list; on equality impact, while we should adhere to good practice where possible, to also acknowledge the unprecedented and unique conditions we are in; whether guidance has been given where bookings have been made, for example for privately owned caravan parks, in advance that there should be refunds/no charge for those bookings.

5. Written Briefing Tourism Ireland

Agreed: the Committee to reschedule an oral briefing from Tourism Ireland upon return to normal business.

Agreed: to ask the Department what contact has been made with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in the Republic of Ireland (RoI) regarding a COVID19 response and planning for recovery.

6. Report on Investment Activity

Agreed: to note.

7. Fifth Report of Examiner of Statutory Rules

Agreed: to note.

8. Correspondence

Ministerial correspondence on holiday entitlement in regards to Covid-19

Agreed: to note.

Ministerial correspondence from the Economy and Education Ministers confirming the suspension of the Transition of Young People into Careers (14-19) project due to the current situation from Covid-19

Agreed: to ask the Department when it is estimated there will be a decision on the awarding of Further Education qualifications.

Correspondence from the Committee for Finance on a Department of Finance Ministerial response to correspondence from Bus and Coach NI Ltd in regards to the ongoing situation due to Covid-19, as considered and forwarded to the Department for comment by this Committee on 18 March

Agreed: to note.

Correspondence from Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE) in respect of essential activities and key workers during the ongoing situation due to Covid-19.

Agreed: to note.

A statement from the Northern Ireland Human Rights (NIHRC)

Agreed: to note.

Commissioned reports published by the joint committee of NIHRC and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission: ‘Legal analysis of incorporating into UK law the birthright commitment under the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement 1998’ and ‘Continuing EU Citizenship ‘Rights, Opportunities and Benefits’ in Northern Ireland after Brexit’.

Agreed: to note currently and include in information packs in future consideration of Protocol.

9. Any Other Business

No other business.

ENDS

Approved by the Chairperson via correspondence

**Dr Caoímhe Archibald
Chairperson
Committee for the Economy**

Date: 7th April 2020