



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ECONOMY

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

7 OCTOBER 2020

ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

10:00am

- Present:
- Dr Caoímhe Archibald (Chairperson)
 - Ms Sinéad McLaughlin (Deputy Chairperson)
 - Mr Stewart Dickson
 - Mr Gordon Dunne MBE
 - Mr Gary Middleton
 - Mr Christopher Stalford
 - Mr John Stewart
 - Ms Claire Sugden
- In Attendance:
- Mr Peter Hall (Assembly Clerk)
 - Ms Sinead Kelly (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
 - Mr David McClure (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
 - Mr Michael Greer (Clerical Supervisor)
 - Mr Thomas Manning (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies:
- Mr John O'Dowd

The meeting began at 10:03am in open session.

1. Apologies

As noted above.

2. Minutes

Agreed: the Committee agreed the Minutes from 30th September 2020.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson reminded Members of an informal meeting on Thursday 8th October in order to discuss the current issues faced by students and higher education providers as a result of Covid-19 with student and lecturer representatives.

The Chairperson informed Members of an informal meeting on Thursday 8th October with the VC of Queens University Belfast to discuss the current situation.

The Chairperson informed Members that CLG met yesterday to discuss external Committee visits. She highlighted that legal advice and other clarity has been sought around risk assessments and liabilities.

Agreed: the Committee agreed to postpone the external visit programme while further advice is sought.

4. Oral Briefing from Invest NI: Covid-19 Response plan

The Witnesses joined the meeting at 10.09am

Members received a briefing from:

Kevin Holland,

Chief Executive, Invest NI

Donal Durkan,

Executive Director of Outcomes, Value and Impact, Invest NI

Key issues discussed included: the impact Covid-19 has had on the local economy, how innovation is a key driver for recovery but will require new funding streams & replacement of EU funding, support being offered to local business through Brexit, the value in supporting entrepreneurs & City Deals.

The Witnesses left the meeting at 11.57am

Agreed: the witnesses agreed to provide further information to the Committee in relation to a number of the issues discussed.

5. Oral Briefing from NIE Networks - Covid-19 Response and Recovery

The witnesses joined the meeting at 11.58am

Members received a briefing from:

Mr Paul Stapleton, Managing Director, NIE Networks;

Mr Randal Gilbert, Head of Network Strategy, NIE Networks

Key issues discussed included: the aim to have 70% electricity from a renewable source, the need for investment in the grid, a reform of planning regulation in Northern Ireland and the role of NIE Networks in building the North-South Interconnector.

Christopher Stalford left the meeting at 12.30pm

The witnesses left the meeting at 12.42pm

6. Matters Arising

Noted: Members noted a response from the Department regarding correspondence from a student from Derry attending Oxford University regarding maintenance loans.

Agreed: Members agreed to forward the response onto the local student.

Noted: Members noted a response from Stranmillis University College in regards to the correspondence sent by the Committee to a number of local universities for an update on issues arising from results 2020 and COVID-19.

Noted: Members correspondence from the Northern Ireland Business Brexit Working Group in regards to the Northern Ireland/Ireland Protocol and unanswered questions for NI businesses.

Noted: Members considered a Clerks Memo outlining how the Committees' Micro Inquiry's will work and the outcome they are hoping to achieve.

Agreed: Members agreed the Clerks paper on the way forward.

Stewart Dickson left the meeting at 12.45pm

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Minister for Infrastructure in regards to the Minister's Department granted planning permissions for the North-South Interconnector on 14th September 2020

7. SL1 - Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Schedule 8) (Early Termination of Certain Temporary Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

Members considered SL1 – Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Schedule 8) (Early Termination of Certain Temporary Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2020

Agreed: Members indicated that they are content with the policy implications of the proposed legislation.

8. SR 2020/211 The Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Coronavirus) (Amendment of Relevant Period for Meetings of Registered Societies and Credit Unions) Regulations (NI) 2020

Members considered SR 2020/211 The Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Coronavirus) (Amendment of Relevant Period for Meetings of Registered Societies and Credit Unions) Regulations (NI) 2020.

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for the Economy has considered SR 2020/211 The Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Coronavirus) (Amendment of Relevant Period for Meetings of Registered Societies and Credit Unions) Regulations (NI) 2020 and recommends that it be confirmed by the Assembly, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report.”

9. UK Internal Market Bill

The Committee considered a number of papers in relation to the UK Internal Market Bill.

Agreed: to write to the Minister highlighting the Welsh and Scottish LC Memoranda and to ascertain her intentions.

Agreed: to write to the Speaker to update him on where the Trade and UKIM Bills stand.

10. Correspondence

Noted: Members noted a response from the Minister regarding Petroleum Licenses Applications.

Noted: Members noted a departmental response regarding Public Sector Transformation Fund.

Noted: Members noted a Departmental response regarding Priority 10 HE Grant.

Noted: Members noted a Departmental response regarding Scoring Methods for Funding Bids.

Noted: Members noted the NIAO Financial Audit of Invest NI.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from Ruth Corry Harpist on the impact of new restrictions.

Agreed: Members agreed to write to the Executive Office highlighting the issues raised.

Noted: Members the twenty third report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules 2019-2020.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the DALO to the Committee for Health in relation to concerns about the financial support for carers.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Department regarding lack of apprenticeship places.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Department regarding the Covid-19 Additional Funding Exercise.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Department regarding Invest NI funding provided to Wrightbus.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Department regarding surplus funds from Business Support Grants.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Causeway Chamber regarding the Job Support Scheme.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Commission on a Gender Equal Society highlighting the creation of a gender equal economy in the care sector.

Agreed: Members agreed to arrange an informal meeting with the Commission.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from Renewable NI regarding their name change from Northern Ireland Renewables Industry Group.

11. Forward Work Programme

Noted: Members noted the Committee forward work programme.

12. Any Other Business

Members discussed the correspondence from the Minister for Finance in regards to support for the local newspaper sector.

Agreed: the Committee agreed to forward the letter to the Minister for the Economy highlighting the issues raised.

13. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 14th October 2020 in Room 30, Parliament Buildings at 10am.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.18pm

Dr Caoímhe Archibald
Chairperson
Committee for the Economy
14th October 2020