



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for the Economy

Minutes of Proceedings

23rd March 2021

Meeting Location: Room 30, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Dr Caoímhe Archibald (MLA (Chairperson))

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Gary Middleton MLA

Mr John O'Dowd MLA

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

Apologies:

Mr Gordon Dunne MBE MLA

Mr Stewart Dickson MLA

Mr John Stewart MLA

Mr Christopher Stalford MLA

In Attendance:

Mr Peter Hall (Assembly Clerk)

Mr Thomas Manning (Clerical Officer)



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In Attendance by Video or Teleconference:

Ms Sinead Kelly (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

Ms Jean Barkley (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

Mr Michael Greer (Clerical Supervisor)

The meeting commenced at 10.03am in open session

1. Apologies

As noted above.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: the Committee agreed the Minutes from 10th March 2021.

Agreed: the Committee agreed the Record of Decisions from 10th March 2021.

3. Chairpersons Business

The Chairperson welcomed Gary Middleton MLA back to the Committee and thanked Paul Givan MLA for his contribution to the Committee over the last couple of weeks. The Chair also extended best wishes to Gordon Dunne in his recovery.

The Chairperson updated Members on the establishment of a Fiscal Council and Commission in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: to write to the Finance DALO seeking a timeframe for the establishment of the council.



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The Chairperson informed Members of an update from the NIA EU Affairs Manager regarding the Common Framework.

The Chairperson informed Members of correspondence from the Chair of the Justice Committee to the Chairpersons' Liaison Group regarding the accelerated passage of legislation and the impact on Committee scrutiny.

The Chairperson updated Members regarding the informal meeting with the VC of QUB on the 18th March 2021.

Agreed: to engage further with the FE/HE Stakeholder Group to seek interfaces with the Committee's work and to provide support for the work of the Group.

Agreed: to seek research on the University of California model that brings together FE and HE.

Agreed: to write to the Education Committee around this Committee's work across skills, FE/HE, etc. to seek its views on how to ensure alignment between the work of the two committees.

Agreed: to engage further with QUB regarding its applications for City/Region Deal-supporting projects, and the VC's suggestions around research centres of excellence and Science Foundation Ireland work.

Agreed: to engage with the FE and HE sectors regarding relevant NDNA commitments.

4. Matters Arising

Noted: Members noted a response from the Department regarding the DfE draft budget.

Noted: Members noted a response from the Department regarding internet and technology poverty.

Agreed: to explore further the UK replacement scheme for rural connectivity.



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Noted: Members noted a response from the Department regarding Covid-19 financial support schemes.

Noted: Members noted a response from the Department regarding Speed Up Britain's campaign for the UK Government to make changes to the Electronic Communications Code (ECC).

Noted: Members noted a response from the Department regarding the CBI's proposals on a roadmap for re-opening the economy.

Agreed: to forward this response onto the CBI.

Noted: Members noted a response from the Department regarding a Commons Library Briefing Paper on the Turing Scheme.

Agreed: to seek further information from the Department regarding Erasmus.

Noted: Members noted a response from the Department regarding correspondence from a UU Student's Union representative regarding the differences in University life compared to the previous academic year.

Agreed: to write to the Consumer Council to inquire about the consumer rights of students and if paying for education falls within its remit.

Agreed: to forward this correspondence to the representative.

Noted: Members noted a response from the Department regarding student support.

Noted: Members noted a response from the Department to the Committee for Infrastructure regarding Taxi Operators and CRBSS Part B.

Noted: Members noted a correspondence from the Executive Office regarding EU Exit preparedness and a media campaign.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the AERA Committee regarding RHI.

Agreed: to share the analysis with the AERA Committee when it is ready.



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Noted: Members noted correspondence from the EU Affairs Manager regarding the SPF and Community Renewal Fund.

Agreed: to seek further information from the Department in relation to Community Renewal.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the EU Affairs Manager regarding the NI Protocol.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the EU Affairs Manager regarding the Common Frameworks and scrutiny process.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Utility Regulator regarding regulation of the LPG Market.

Agreed: to respond to the Regulator, supporting further engagement with the Department on this issue, and to forward the Regulator's response to the original correspondent.

Noted: Members noted a copy of the Hansard of the meeting of 3rd March 2021 on the High Street Task Force.

5. SL1 - The Education (Student Fees and Support) (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

Members considered SL1 – The Education (Student Fees and Support) (Amendment) (No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.

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



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6. SR 2021/50 - The Education (Student Support, etc.) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

Members considered SR 2021/50 The Education (Student Support, etc.) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for the Economy has considered the SR 2021/50 The Education (Student Support, etc.) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report.”

Agreed: Members agreed to ask the Department for an update on the review of maintenance grants.

7. SL1 – Higher Education Student Support Interventions – Covid-19 Study Disruption Payments

Members considered SL1 – Higher Education Student Support Interventions – Covid-19 Study Disruption Payments.

Noted: the Committee noted the SL1 and reserved its position.

8. SR 2021/52 - The Covid-19 Study Disruption Payment Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

Members considered SR 2021/52 - The Covid-19 Study Disruption Payment Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.

Noted: the Committee noted the SR and reserved its position.



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Agreed: to write to the Executive and the Economy Minister requesting that the payments are expanded to give effect to the Motion passed by the Assembly on 16th March.

9. SL1 - The Employment Rights (Increase of Limits) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021

Members considered SL1 – The Employment Rights (Increase of Limits) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021

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

10. SR 2021/53 - The Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (Coronavirus, Calculation of a Week's Pay) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

Members considered SR 2021/53 - The Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (Coronavirus, Calculation of a Week's Pay) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for the Economy has considered the SR 2021/53 Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (Coronavirus, Calculation of a Week's Pay) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules' report.”



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11. SL1 - Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Coronavirus) (Change of Expiry Date) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

Members considered SL1 – Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Coronavirus) (Change of Expiry Date) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

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

12. SR 2021/61 - The Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Coronavirus) (Amendment of Relevant Period in Schedule 8) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

Members considered SR 2021/61 - The Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Coronavirus) (Amendment of Relevant Period in Schedule 8) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.

Question put and agreed.

“That the Committee for the Economy has considered the SR 2021/61 Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Coronavirus) (Amendment of Relevant Period in Schedule 8) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 and recommends that it be confirmed by the Assembly, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report.”



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13.SL1 - Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Amendment of Certain Relevant Periods) (No.3) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

Members considered SL1 – Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Amendment of Certain Relevant Periods) (No.3) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

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

14.SL1 – Combined Heat and Power Quality Assurance

Members considered SL1 – Combined Heat and Power Quality Assurance.

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

15. Correspondence

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Minister regarding an update on the Limited Company Director Scheme.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Minister regarding OFCOM devolution measures for Northern Ireland.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the TEO Committee regarding a potential COVID Recovery Plan joint meeting.

Agreed: that the Clerk responds highlighting this Committee's work thus far, welcomes TEO Committee's plan to exercise its over-arching scrutiny role, and indicates that this Committee will share its stakeholders' views on relevant aspects of Pathways with TEO.



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Noted: Members noted correspondence from a Further Education lecturer regarding the issue of fair pay.

Agreed: to reply to the correspondent pointing out the Committee's actions and position.

Noted: Members noted an open letter to elected representatives from Hillmount Garden Centre regarding the current restrictions.

Agreed: to forward to the department for comment.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Electricity Association of Ireland regarding their report entitled 'Our zero e-mission future.'

Noted: Members noted correspondence from Include Youth with a request to brief the Committee on the threat of closure of the Essential Skills course.

Agreed: that the Clerk meet with Include Youth as soon as possible to ascertain the issues.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from correspondence from a Pilot regarding changes to European Union Aviation Safety Agency professional Pilot licenses post EU Exit.

Agreed: to forward this correspondence to the Department for consideration.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from an individual regarding freedom of information requests to UU and QUB.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from an individual regarding the Fiscal Council for Northern Ireland.

Noted: Members noted the CBI Covid19 Working group notes from its meeting on 18th March 2021.

Noted: Members noted the Twenty-Ninth Report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules 2020 - 2021.



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Noted: Members noted the Thirtieth Report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules 2020 - 2021.

16. Any Other Business

There were no items of business.

17. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 24th March 2021 in Room 30, Parliament Buildings at 12pm.

The meeting was adjourned at 11.27am

Dr Caoímhe Archibald MLA
Chairperson, Committee for the Economy
14th April 2021