



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for the Economy

Minutes of Proceedings

21st April 2021

Meeting Location: Room 29, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Dr Caoímhe Archibald (MLA (Chairperson))

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Mr Stewart Dickson MLA

Mr Gary Middleton MLA

Mr John O'Dowd MLA

Mr John Stewart MLA

Mr Christopher Stalford MLA

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

Apologies:

Mr Mervyn Storey 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 10.04am in open session

1. Apologies

As noted above.

2. Draft Minutes

Agreed: the Committee agreed the Minutes from 14th April 2021.

Agreed: the Committee agreed the Record of Decisions from 14th April 2021.

3. Chairpersons Business

The Chairperson updated Members on last week's informal meeting with Hospitality Ulster.



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4. Briefing from the Financial Services Union - Bank branch closures

The witnesses joined the meeting at 10.05am

Members received a briefing from:

Ms Sharon McAuley,	President, FSU
Mr John O'Connell,	General Secretary, FSU
Mr Brian McDowell,	Head of Communications, FSU

Key issues discussed included: the impact on local communities, business and staff with the closure of bank branches; and the need to create a forum to exam the future of banking and the impact on staff concerned about their jobs.

Agreed: to write to the Minister highlighting Committee support for the introduction of a forum to look at the future of Banking.

The witnesses left the meeting at 10.50am

5. Briefing from the Utility Regulator - Update on current issues

The witnesses joined the meeting at 10.50am

Members received a briefing from:

Mr John French,	Chief Executive, Utility Regulator NI
Mr Kevin Shiels,	Director of Retail and Consumer Protection, Utility Regulator NI



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Ms Roisin McLaughlin,

Head of Network Operations, Utility
Regulator NI

Key issues discussed included: The Utility Regulator's remit and powers, the recently published review into the governance arrangement of the System Operator for Northern Ireland (SONI) and its role in protecting local consumer's interests.

The witnesses left the meeting at 11.43am

6. Matters Arising

Noted: Members noted a copy of a letter from the Committee for Infrastructure to the Minister for the Economy regarding the number of applications her Department has received from taxi operators to Part B of the CRBSS.

Noted: an update from the EU Affairs Manager on Common Frameworks.

Noted: Members noted several papers from QUB following the informal meeting on 18th March 2021.

Agreed: to forward these papers to the Education Committee requesting it engages with the Education Minister on the issues raised.

Noted: Members noted a response from Belfast City Airport in relation to EASA Professional Pilots Licences and Air Traffic Controller Licences post EU Exit.

Noted: Members noted a response from the Minister regarding the Committees request for the Covid-19 Student Support Payment to be extended through an amendment to the Budget Bill.

Noted: Members noted an update from the Department regarding the RHI Scheme.



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Agreed: to schedule a briefing once the RHI Consultation closes.

Noted: Members noted an update on the Apprenticeship Recovery package.

Noted: Members noted a response from the Civil Aviation Authority regarding the status of UK and non-UK issued EASA pilot and Air Traffic Control licences pre- and post-EU exit.

Agreed: to forward the response onto the original correspondent.

Noted: Members noted a response from the Financial Conduct Authority regarding bank closures by the Bank of Ireland.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from an independent wedding venue owner seeking clarification on matters raised in the response from the Minister regarding re-opening.

Agreed: to forward to the Department for clarification on the issues raised.

7. Correspondence

Members agreed to deal with agenda item 7 via correspondence due to time constraints.

8. Forward Work Programme

Noted: Members noted the latest Committee Forward Work Programme.

The Committee agreed to move to agenda Item 11.



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**11. SR 2021/103 The Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996
(Protection from Suffering Detriment in Health and Safety Cases)
(Amendment) Order (NI) 2021**

Members considered SR 2021/103 The Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (Protection from Suffering Detriment in Health and Safety Cases) (Amendment) Order (NI) 2021.

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for the Economy has considered SR 2021/103 The Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 (Protection from Suffering Detriment in Health and Safety Cases) (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021 and recommends that it be confirmed by the Assembly, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report.”

The Committee agreed to return to agenda item 9.

9. Any Other Business

There were no items of business.

10. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 28th April 2021 in Room 30, Parliament Buildings at 10am.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.05pm



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Dr Caoímhe Archibald MLA
Chairperson, Committee for the Economy
28th April 2021