



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for the Economy

Minutes of Proceedings

28th April 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 Stewart Dickson MLA

Mr John O'Dowd MLA

Mr John Stewart MLA

Mr Mervyn Storey MLA

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

Apologies:

Mr Gary Middleton MLA

Mr Christopher Stalford MLA

In Attendance: Mr Peter Hall (Assembly Clerk)



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Mr Thomas Manning (Clerical Officer)

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 21st April 2021.

Agreed: the Committee agreed the Record of Decisions from 21st April 2021.

3. Chairpersons Business

The Chairperson informed Members that several papers are in their packs regarding the informal meeting on Thursday 29th April with UK Finance.

The Chairperson informed Members that that the NI Affairs Committee has invited specific Assembly Committee Chair's to meet on a regular basis to discuss respective scrutiny of the Protocol.



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Agreed: to write to the NI Affairs Committee to indicate that the Committee's input will be in the form of correspondence going forward.

The Chairperson reminded Members that today is International Workers Memorial Day and the Committee will observe a one-minute silence at 11am.

4. Departmental Briefing - Budget position update

The officials joined the meeting at 10.10am

Members received a briefing from:

Ms Sharon Hetherington,

Director of Finance, DfE

Ms Johanna Park,

Accountant Grade 6, DfE

Key issues discussed included: the draft Departmental Budget, pressures put on the budget from dealing with Covid-19 and the need for budget allocations to deal with recovery.

Agreed: that Officials will provide further information on a number of issues covered during the briefing.

The officials left the meeting at 10.38am

The Committee agreed to move to agenda item 6.



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6. Matters Arising

Noted: Members noted a response from the Minister following the Committee's request for her to meet with the NUS-USI regarding the extension of the covid-19 disruption payment.

Agreed: to write to the Minister encouraging her to meet with the NUS-USI.

Agreed: to schedule a briefing from the NUS-USI and other Student Union Bodies.

Noted: Members noted a letter from the Financial Services Union thanking the Committee for the opportunity to provide an oral briefing and for the Committee's endorsement of the proposal for a banking forum.

Noted: Members noted a response from the Department regarding the Committee's request for information on how the government's Guaranteed Loan Recovery Scheme will apply in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: to forward the response to the Finance Committee who initially raised the matter.

Noted: Members noted a response from the Department to correspondence from a caravan owner regarding the payment of site fees during Covid-19 and financial support provided to caravan site owners.

Agreed: to forward the response to the individual who raised the matter.

Noted: Members noted a response from the Finance Minister following the Committee's request for information on the Community Renewal Fund.

Agreed: to write to the UK Minister of Housing Communities and Local Government to raise the concerns in relation to this issue and to seek assurances that there will be a mechanism for devolved priorities to be taken into account in the allocation of funding.



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7. Energy Strategy Consultation

Members considered a number of papers regarding the Energy Strategy Consultation.

Agreed: to highlight to Stakeholders the Energy Strategy Consultation and seek their views.

8. Research and Information Service (RaISe) Paper - University Funding

Members discussed the Research and Information Service (RaISe) paper on University Funding.

Agreed: to arrange a briefing from RaISe at a later date.

9. SL1 - Employment Rights (NI) Order 1996 (Coronavirus, Calculation of a Week's Pay) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations (NI) 2021

Members considered SL1 - Employment Rights (NI) Order 1996 (Coronavirus, Calculation of a Week's Pay) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations (NI) 2021.

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



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10. SR 2021/000 The Renewables Obligation (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021

Members considered SR 2021/000 The Renewables Obligation (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021.

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for the Economy has considered SR 2021/000 The Renewables Obligation (Amendment) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021 and recommends that it be confirmed by the Assembly, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report.”

11. SR 2021/106 The Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Coronavirus) (Suspension of Liability for Wrongful Trading) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

Members considered SR 2021/106 The Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Coronavirus) (Suspension of Liability for Wrongful Trading) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for the Economy has SR 2021/106 The Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Coronavirus) (Suspension of Liability for Wrongful Trading) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021 and recommends that it be confirmed by the Assembly, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report.”

The Committee observed a one minute’s silence at 11.00am for International Workers Memorial Day.



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The Committee went into closed session at 11.02am and returned to agenda item 5.

5. Research and Information Service (RaISe) Briefing - Economic Impact

The official joined the meeting at 11.02am in closed session.

Members received a briefing from:

Mr Christopher Rothwell

Research Officer, NIA

Key issues discussed included: The key impacts of individual economic events and how these impacts subsequently affect the wider economy

The official left the meeting at 11.23am

The Committee returned to open session at 11.24am

The Committee agreed to return to agenda item 12.

12. Correspondence

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Committee for Education to the Economy Minister regarding measures and support provided by the Department for young people and adults with autism in further education and employment.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Finance Committee providing a copy of a list of issues it raised with the Executive Office, Finance Minister and Economy Minister following a RaISe briefing on the UK Internal Market Act 2020 and the Protocol.

Agreed: to consider the response from the Ministers once received.



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Noted: Members noted correspondence from the Chairperson which she sent to the Committee in her party capacity regarding a Private Members Bill on Universities (Public Mission Agreement) Bill.

Noted: Members noted correspondence from Martina Anderson MLA regarding her Private Members Bill on Work-Life Balance.

Noted: Members noted a copy of the thirty-fourth Report of the Examiner of Statutory Rules.

Noted: Members noted a copy of the consultation on the Review of the NI Postgraduate Tuition Fee Loan.

Agreed: to consider the results of the consultation and receive a briefing once the analysis is available.

Noted: Members noted a copy of the latest ISNI report.

13. Any Other Business

Members discussed the issue of Further Education course taking place for post-primary school children who taking an FE course as part of their studies.

Agreed: to write to the Department seeking clarification on the issue.

14. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 5th May 2021 in Room 30, Parliament Buildings at 10am.

The meeting was adjourned at 11.30am



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Dr Caoímhe Archibald MLA
Chairperson, Committee for the Economy
5th May 2021