



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for the Economy

Minutes of Proceedings

25th August 2021

Meeting Location: Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Dr Caoimhe Archibald (MLA (Chairperson))

Mr Stewart Dickson MLA

Mr Stephen Dunne MLA

Mr Mike Nesbitt MLA

Mr John O'Dowd MLA

Mr Peter Weir MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Ms Claire Sugden MLA

Apologies:

Mr Keith Buchanan MLA



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In Attendance: Mr Peter Hall (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Jean Barkley (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Thomas Manning (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 10:02am in open session.

1. Apologies

As noted above.

2. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson referred Members to a Clerk's memo on the Informal meeting held with the Aerospace industry on 8th July 2021, on the outlook for the sector due to the impact of Covid-19.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to note at this time and to return to this at a later date.

The Chairperson informed Members of an invitation from the Anaerobic Digestion and Bioresources Association (ADBA) to its Northern Ireland Conference, on Tuesday 7th September 2021 (9am to 1.30pm).

Agreed: That the Committee writes indicating that Members may be approached as party representatives.

The Chairperson drew Members' attention to the size of the meeting pack and proposed to deal with Agenda item 10, (Correspondence) also some items under Agenda item 5, (Matters Arising) via e-mail.

Agreed: Members agreed.



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The Chairperson drew Members' attention to the recent announcement by the Department for the Economy of an additional £25m allocation to Fibrus, under Project Stratum.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek an update on Project Stratum and on wider broadband roll-out.

3. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Minutes from 7th July 2021.

4. Departmental Briefing – Update on High Street Voucher Scheme

The officials joined the meeting at 10:14am

Members received a briefing from:

Ms Brenda Burke,	EU Exit & Transition Group, DfE
Mr Tommy O'Reilly,	Economic Strategy Unit, DfE
Mr Keith Brown,	Economic Strategy Unit, DfE
Mr Kyle Law,	Economic Strategy Unit, DfE

The Committee was briefed on progress on preparations for the launch of the Scheme. Issues discussed included the pre-paid card mechanism, application process, risk management mitigation, and alignment of the Scheme with policy intent and objectives of the Economic Recovery Action Plan (ERAP).

The Briefing Session was reported by Hansard.



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Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Minister regarding a range of issues discussed.

The officials left the meeting at 11:47pm

5. Matters Arising

Agreed: Members agreed to deal with these items via correspondence, due to time constraints.

6. SR 2021/202– The Further Education (Student Support) (Amendment etc) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

Members considered the SR 2021/202 The Further Education (Student Support) (Amendment etc) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021.

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for the Economy has considered the SR2021/202 The Further Education (Student Support) (Amendment etc) (EU Exit) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021, and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules report.”



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7. SR 2021/210 – The Industrial Training Levy (Construction Industry) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021

Members considered the SR 2021/210 - The Industrial Training Levy (Construction Industry) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021

Question put and agreed:

“That the Committee for the Economy has considered the SR 2021/210 The Industrial Training Levy (Construction Industry) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021, and has no objection to the Rule, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules’ report.”

8. SL1 – The Education (Student Fees (Amounts), Loan Repayment and Support etc.) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2021

Members considered the SL1 - The Education (Student Fees (Amounts), Loan Repayment and Support etc.) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2021

Agreed: The Committee noted the SL1, and agreed to seek further clarification around the basis for unregulated part-time course fees.



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9. SL1 - The Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Coronavirus) (Amendment of Relevant Period in Schedule 8) (No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

Members considered the SL1 – The Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020 (Coronavirus) (Amendment of Relevant Period in Schedule 8) (No.2) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

Agreed: The Committee agreed it was content with the policy intent of the SL1, and agreed to write to the Minister for further clarification around timescales.

10. Correspondence

Members agreed to deal with these items via correspondence.

11. Any Other Business

Members discussed the recent statement issued by the Utility Regulator that energy prices are set to rise.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek a briefing from the Utility Regulator on this matter as soon as possible.

Members expressed concerns that Ryanair is to cease services here.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek engagement with local airports on this decision.

Members sought an update on meeting with the recently appointed Minister, Gordon Lyons, MLA.



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Agreed: That the Committee would write to the Minister to agree a meeting date.

12. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting

The next full meeting of the Committee will take place on Wednesday 15th September 2021 in Room 30, Parliament Buildings at 10.00am.

Prior to this a strategy session is planned to take place on Wednesday 8th September at Queen's University, Belfast, and details will be confirmed with Members.

13. The High Street (Coronavirus, Financial Assistance) Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

Members considered the SL1 – The High Street (Coronavirus, Financial Assistance) Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2021

Agreed: The Committee noted the SL1, and agreed to raise a range of issues with the Minister.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.14pm.

Dr Caoímhe Archibald MLA
Chairperson, Committee for the Economy
25th August 2021