



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Finance

Minutes of Proceedings

15 September 2021

Meeting Location: Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Dr Steve Aiken MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Keith Buchanan MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Jim Allister MLA
Mr Pat Catney MLA
Mr Maolíosá McHugh MLA
Mr Matthew O'Toole MLA
Mr Jim Wells MLA

Present by Video or Teleconference:

Ms Jemma Dolan MLA
Mr Philip McGuigan MLA

Apologies: None

In Attendance: Mr Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Angela McParland (Assistant Assembly Clerk)



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Mr Stephen Magee (Clerical Supervisor)

Ms Heather Graham (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced at 2.00pm in open session.

1. Apologies

There were no apologies.

No Member delegated authority to vote under Temporary Standing Order 115(6).

2. Declaration of Interests

The Chairperson declared an interest that witnesses briefing the Committee from the Road Haulage Association and the Ulster Farmers' Union were previous associates of his.

There were no other declarations of interest.

3. Chairperson's Business

There was no Chairperson's Business.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 8 September 2021.

Mr Keith Buchanan joined the meeting at 2:01pm



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5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Mr Philip McGuigan joined the meeting at 2:02pm

6. Subordinate Legislation: The Business Tenancies (Coronavirus) (Restriction on Forfeiture: Relevant Period) (Northern Ireland) (No.3) Regulations 2021.

The Committee noted Ministerial correspondence on a moratorium on business forfeiture.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that it is content with the proposed policy relating to the extension of the moratorium until March 2022 on business forfeiture and that it was also content for the Department to make the related Statutory Rule.

7. Subordinate Legislation: SR 245: The New NAV List (Time of Valuation) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021

The Committee noted Departmental papers on SR 245: The New NAV List (Time of Valuation) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Committee for Finance has considered the statutory rule: SR 245: The New NAV List (Time of Valuation) Order (Northern Ireland) 2021 and, subject to the Examiner of Statutory Rules Report, has no objection to the rule.

8. Oral Evidence Session: Road Haulage Association (RHA) – EU Exit and the Northern Ireland Protocol

Mr Matthew O'Toole joined the meeting at 2:04pm

The witnesses joined the meeting at 2.04pm.



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- John Martin, Policy Manager (Northern Ireland), RHA;
- Mark Tait, Director, Target Transport;
- Geoff Potter, Managing Director, Gray & Adams; and
- Peter Summerton, Managing Director, McCulla Ireland Ltd.

The Committee noted papers from RHA, Target Transport and Gray & Adams.

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their evidence.

9. Oral Evidence Session: Ulster Farmers' Union (UFU) – EU Exit and the Northern Ireland Protocol

The witnesses joined the meeting at 3.39pm.

- David Brown, Deputy President, UFU; and
- James McCluggage, Policy Director, UFU.

The Committee noted papers from UFU.

The evidence session was reported by Hansard.

Ms Jemma Dolan and Mr Philip McGuigan declared interests in respect of having relatives in the farming sector

Mr Matthew O'Toole left the meeting at 4:08pm

Mr Jim Allister left the meeting at 4:40pm

The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for their evidence.



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10. Correspondence

10.1 The Committee noted an index of incoming correspondence.

10.2 The Committee noted a tracker report provided by Pivotal that reviews the Executive's performance in 2021 so far and suggests priorities for the future.

10.3 The Committee considered a Departmental response including UK Government guidance on fire safety remediation which was published on 21 July 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service and ask if the Executive is planning to bring forward legislation to match the provisions of both the Fire Safety Act (ensuring external walls are assessed for fire risk as part of routine assessments etc.); and the Building Safety Bill (introducing a safety regime for higher risk multi-residence buildings and the creation of a Building Safety Regulator etc.).

10.4 The Committee noted a copy of a letter to the Business Committee from the Minister regarding the scheduling of the 2nd Stage of the Defamation Bill on Tuesday 14 September 2021. Members also noted the tabled response from the Speaker.

10.5 The Committee noted a copy of correspondence from the Minister to the Defamation Bill Sponsor, Mike Nesbitt MLA on the principles of the Bill.

10.6 The Committee noted a response from the Minister regarding the timings of the Spending Review. As Members were already aware, the outcome is expected to be published by HM Treasury around 27 October 2021 and is expected to include a 3 year budget envelope.

10.7 The Committee considered the composite information request.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the composite request was an accurate and complete record of the Committee's outstanding information requests.



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11. Forward Work Programme

11.1 The Committee noted that it is to receive three oral briefings on the Legislative Consent Motion (LCM) on the Public Sector Pensions and Judicial Offices Bill on 22 September 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to relevant statutory committees seeking their views, if any, on the LCM.

11.2 The Committee noted that the Defamation Bill passed its 2nd Stage on 14 September 2021 and that the Committee Stage had consequently commenced.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk should place an advertisement in the newspapers and on social media, and write to a tabled list of stakeholders regarding the call for evidence which will close on 1 November 2021.

11.3 The Committee considered pressures within the Forward Work Programme in relation to its consideration of the Spending Review and primary legislation.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to bring forward its consideration of the Financial Reporting (Department and Public Bodies) Bill to October 2021.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek to include briefings from the Fiscal Commission on tax-varying powers and from RalSe on the Spending Review prior to Halloween Recess.

Agreed: The Committee agreed its Forward Work Programme, as amended.

12. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

13. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting



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The next meeting of the Committee for Finance will be at 2pm on Wednesday 22 September 2021 in the Senate and on Starleaf.

The meeting was adjourned at 4.57pm.

Dr Steve Aiken MLA
Chairperson, Committee for Finance
22 September 2021