Northern Ireland Assembly

Committee for the Economy

Draft Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 4 November 2026

Meeting Location: Room 30

Present: Ms Diane Forsythe MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Pádraig Delargy MLA
Mr David Honeyford MLA
Mr Declan Kearney MLA
Mr Peter Martin MLA
Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA
Mr Mike Nesbitt MLA
Ms Kate Nicholl MLA

Apologies: Mr Phillip Brett MLA (Chairperson)

In Attendance: Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)
Michael Greig (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Katie McMaster (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Karen O'Hare (Clerical Supervisor)

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

Sinead McLaughlin declared an interest in respect of being the Bill Sponsor of the Regional Balance Bill.

1. Apologies

Apologies were as indicated above.

Declan Kearney joined the meeting at 10:03am.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Chairperson's Business

3.1 Domestic Abuse Safe Leave

The Chairperson reminded Members that the Minister has advised that the regulations to support domestic abuse safe leave are expected to be published for scrutiny shortly.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department, welcoming the anticipated regulations and seeking an estimated timeframe for their introduction.

3.2 Electricity Security of Supply

The Chairperson advised Members of recent media coverage in respect of a reported fault associated with the Moyle interconnector.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department and the System Operator for Northern Ireland (SONI) seeking further information in respect of the fault to the interconnector and the associated implications for the security of electricity supply.

4. Draft Minutes

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the Economy Committee meetings of 20 October 2026.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the minutes of the Economy Committee meetings of 21 October 2026.

5. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

6. Utility Regulator (Support for Decarbonisation Preparation) Bill – Agreement of Report

Agreed: The Committee formally agreed it was content with Clause 1 of the Utility Regulator (Support for Decarbonisation Preparation) Bill as amended.

Padraig Delargy joined the meeting at 10:06am.
Padraig Delargy recorded his concerns in respect of how the Utility Regulator will be able to pay for the enhancement to its role in the Committee's amendment in respect of the provision of decarbonisation advice to departments other than the Department for the Economy.

The Committee considered a draft of the Utility Regulator (Support for Decarbonisation Preparation) Bill Committee Stage report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Background section, as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Committee Approach section, as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Consideration of the Bill section, as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Clause-by-Clause Scrutiny section, as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Appendices, as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the Executive Summary section, as drafted.

Agreed: The Committee also agreed to include an extract from the minutes of 4 November 2026 in the report.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the report should be published as its 11th report of the mandate.