



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

# Committee for the Economy

## Minutes of Proceedings

**Wednesday 26 November 2025**

**Meeting Location: Room 30, Parliament Buildings**

**Present:**

Mr Phillip Brett MLA (Chairperson)

Mr Gary Middleton MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Ms Diana Armstrong MLA

Mr Pádraig Delargy MLA

**Present by video-conferencing:**

Ms Jemma Dolan MLA

Mr David Honeyford MLA

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA

Ms Kate Nicholl MLA

**Apologies:**

Mr Jonathan Buckley MLA

**In Attendance:**

Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)

Katie McMaster (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

Karen O'Hare (Clerical Supervisor)

Kyle Lawlor (Clerical Officer)

Aoibheann Baker (Bill Office Clerk) – item 1 only

Aidan Stennett (Research Officer) - item 8 only

Karen Clarke (Research Officer) – item 8 only

Jonny Redpath (Bill Office Senior Assistant Clerk) – item 14 only

The meeting commenced in closed session at 10:04am.

## **1. Insolvency (Amendment) Bill – Bill Office Guidance**

Aoibheann Baker joined the meeting at 10:05am.

Aoibheann briefed the Committee on the Insolvency (Amendment) Bill.

The Chairperson thanked Aoibheann for her briefing.

Aoibheann Baker left the meeting at 10:28am.

Proceedings continued in public session at 10:28am.

## **2. Insolvency (Amendment) Bill – Formal Clause by Clause Scrutiny**

The following officials joined the meeting at 10:29am:

- Richard Monds, Director of Insolvency, DfE; and
- Jack Reid, Deputy Principal, Insolvency, DfE

The session was recorded by the Official Report.

### **Part 1: Introductory**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 1 as drafted.

### **Part 2: Office Holder Actions**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 2 to Clause 4 as drafted.

### **Part 3 Removing requirements to seek sanctions**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 5 to Clause 6 as drafted.

#### **Part 4 Position of Creditors**

The Committee noted Departmental assurances in respect of virtual meetings and protections for creditors with limited access to digital assets or limited understanding of their use.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 7 as drafted.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 8 as drafted.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 9 to Clause 10 as drafted.

#### **Moratoriums**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 11 to Clause 13 as drafted.

#### **Company voluntary arrangements**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 14 to Clause 20 as drafted.

#### **Administration**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 21 to Clause 22 as drafted.

#### **Receivers and managers**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 23 to Clause 24 as drafted.

#### **Winding Up**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 25 to Clause 58 as drafted.

#### **Other Provision**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 59 to Clause 62 as drafted.

#### **Individual Voluntary Arrangements**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 63 to Clause 73 as drafted.

#### **Bankruptcy**

The Committee noted Departmental assurances indicating that case law suggested that bankrupts were less likely to lose their homes in Northern Ireland than in England and Wales.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 74 to Clause 87 as drafted.

**Part 5 Administration**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 88 to Clause 89 as drafted.

**Part 6 Small Debts**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 90 to Clause 91 as drafted.

**Part 7 Trustees in bankruptcy**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 92 as drafted.

**Part 8 Voluntary arrangements**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 93 as drafted.

**Part 9 Protection of essential supplies**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 94 to Clause 100 as drafted.

**Part 10 Remote attendance**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 101 as drafted.

**Part 11 Other insolvency amendments**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 102 to Clause 106 as drafted.

**Part 12 Insolvent partnerships etc.**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 107 to Clause 117 as drafted.

**Part 13 General**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 118 as drafted.

The Committee noted a Departmental amendment altering the regulation-making power from negative to draft affirmative.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with the Departmental amendment to Clause 119.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with clause 119 as amended.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Clause 120 to Clause 121 as drafted.

**Schedules**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with Schedule 1 to Schedule 4 as drafted.

### **Other matters**

The Committee noted a Departmental explanation that practices relating to petitioning for insolvency without a court judgement are the court's discretion and should not be in the Bill.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forego a related amendment.

### **Long title**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that it was content with the Long Title of the Bill as drafted.

The Chairperson thanked the officials.

The officials left the meeting at 10:37am.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Shadow Civil Justice Council in respect of the reported practice direction in Northern Ireland which prevents petitioning for insolvency without a court judgement.

## **3. Apologies**

Apologies were as indicated above.

## **4. Declarations of Interest**

There was no declarations of interest.

## **5. Chairperson's Business**

### **5.1 Committee Membership**

The Chairperson welcomed Jemma Dolan, MLA, to the Committee for the Economy.

### **5.2 Jonathan Buckley**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed that the Chairperson should write to Jonathan Buckley MLA congratulating him on the birth of his baby daughter.

### **5.3 North West Regional College**

The Chairperson advised Members that North West Regional College had recently been awarded the 2025 Queen Elizabeth prize for Education.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the North West Regional College offering its congratulations.

#### **5.4 Growth Fund**

The Chairperson advised Members that the Executive was seeking to secure a £3m NI Growth Fund capital bid of £3m for the expansion of North City Business Centre in Belfast.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government and to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland endorsing the North City Business Centre Growth Fund bid.

### **6. Draft Minutes**

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed the minutes of the Economy Committee meeting of 19 November 2025.

### **7. Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

### **8. Assembly Briefing – RHI (Closure of Non-domestic Scheme) Bill**

Aidan Stennett and Karen Clarke joined the meeting at 10:41am.

The Committee noted the Assembly Research paper on the RHI (Closure of Non-Domestic Scheme) Bill.

The Chairperson thanked Aidan and Karen for their briefing.

Aidan and Karen left the meeting at 10:56am.

### **9. RHI (Closure of Non-Domestic Scheme) Bill – Professor Rooney's Tariff Model – oral and written evidence**

The following witness joined the meeting at 10:57am

- Professor David Rooney, Centre for Advanced Sustainable Energy, QUB

The evidence session was recorded by the Official Report.

Kate Nicholl left the meeting at 11:15am.

Key issues discussed included: the model for RHI tariffs; banding; load factors; counterfactual fuel and mitigation for differential fuel costs; governance procedures, audit, inspection and related costs; and measures to ensure the review of the scheme.

The Chairperson thanked the witness for his evidence.

The witness left the meeting at 11:24am.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to the Department seeking answers to queries raised within the Assembly Research paper on the RHI (Closure of Domestic Scheme) Bill.

## **10. Correspondence**

### **10.1 Index**

**Noted:** The Committee noted an index of incoming correspondence.

### **10.2 MaSN and RoI Students**

The Committee considered a Ministerial response in respect of student enrolment and engagement with counterparts in RoI. The Minister appeared to indicate that the universities can elect to not allocate their MaSN places to RoI students.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to write to Ulster University and Queen's University Belfast seeking clarity as to whether they can indeed elect to not allocate MaSN places to RoI students.

### **10.3 GCC NI ARA**

**Noted:** The Committee noted the Annual Report and Accounts of the General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland 2024-25.

### **10.4 DfE 2024/25 Final Outturn**

**Noted:** The Committee noted a Departmental briefing paper, providing an overview of DfE's 2024/25 Final Outturn position.

### **10.5 Administrative and Financial Provisions Bill.**

**Noted:** The Committee noted a memo from the Committee for Finance in respect of the Administrative and Financial Provisions Bill.

### **10.6 Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)**

**Noted:** The Committee noted a copy of correspondence to the Secretary of State for NI from the HoL NI Scrutiny Committee, in respect of the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM).

### **10.7 Eco-Design**

**Noted:** The Committee noted a copy of the Department for Energy Scrutiny and Net Zero's holding response to the HoL NI Scrutiny Committee, in respect of eco-design and energy labelling regulations for household tumble dryers.

### **10.8 Belfast Harbour**

**Noted:** The Committee noted correspondence from Belfast Harbour, in respect of the launch of the Belfast Harbour Draft Masterplan 2025-50 consultation.

### **10.9 NI Skills Council**

**Noted:** The Committee noted a response from the NI Skills Council providing: an Artificial Intelligence study in another jurisdiction; commentary on Essential Skills; and information on the review of the NI Skills Council.

### **10.10 Student Food Poverty**

The Committee considered further information from Queen's University Belfast in response to the CCNI Report on students and food poverty.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed to forward the response to the Consumer Council Northern Ireland.

## **11. Forward Work Programme**

The Committee considered its forward work programme.

**Agreed:** The Committee agreed its forward work programme, as drafted.

## **12. Any Other Business**

There was no other business.



### **13. Date, Time and Place of the next meeting**

The next Economy Committee meeting is scheduled to begin on Wednesday 3 December 2025 at 10:00am in Room 30, Parliament Buildings, Stormont.

Proceedings were suspended at 11:29am.

Proceedings resumed in closed session from 11:33am.

### **14. RHI (Closure of Non-Domestic Scheme) Bill – Bill Office Guidance**

Jonny Redpath joined the meeting at 11:33am

Jonny briefed the Committee on the next phases of the Committee Stage of the RHI (Closure of Non-Domestic Scheme) Bill.

The Chairperson thanked Jonny for his briefing.

Jonny Redpath left the meeting at 11:47am.

The Committee meeting was adjourned at 11:48am.

**Phillip Brett MLA**

**Chairperson, Committee for the Economy**

**3 December 2025**