



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for the Economy

Minutes of Proceedings

Tuesday 23 June 2026

Meeting Location: Room 30, Parliament Buildings

Present:

Mr Phillip Brett MLA (Chairperson)

Ms Diane Forsythe MLA (Deputy Chairperson)

Ms Diana Armstrong MLA

Mr Jonathan Buckley MLA

Mr Pádraig Delargy MLA

Mr David Honeyford MLA

Mr Declan Kearney MLA

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA

Ms Kate Nicholl MLA

In Attendance:

Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)

Michael Greig (Senior Assistant Assembly Clerk)

Katie McMaster (Assistant Assembly Clerk)

Karen O'Hare (Clerical Supervisor)

Sarah Dowd (Clerical Officer)

The meeting commenced in open session at 9:30am.

1. Budget, Policy and Legislation – Evidence from the Minister for the Economy

The Minister for the Economy, Dr Caoimhe Archibald MLA joined the meeting at 9:30am with the following officials:

- Ian Snowden, Permanent Secretary, DfE; and
- Johanna Park, Finance Director – Budgeting & Business Partnering, DfE.

Declan Kearney joined the meeting at 9:32am

Diana Armstrong joined the meeting at 9:42am

Kate Nicholl joined the meeting at 9:43am

Key issues discussed included: budget pressures and contingency plans, economic performance and dual market access; Brexit and the associated impact on skills funding; Higher Education and undergraduate places; the Magee expansion project; renewable energy and community benefits; renewables and business investment; Invest NI board appointments; the Employment Rights Bill and the neonatal leave provisions, trade union access and productivity; vacancies and staffing in DfE; and investments and reputation.

Jonathan Buckley left the meeting at 10:22am

David Honeyford left the meeting at 10:25am

Kate Nicholl left the meeting at 10:27am

Declan Kearney left the meeting at 10:30am

The Chairperson thanked the Minister and officials for their evidence.

The Minister left the meeting at 10:34am.

The Committee meeting was adjourned at 10:34am

Phillip Brett MLA

Chairperson, Committee for the Economy

1 July 2026