



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Joint Concurrent Committee meeting of the Committee for the Economy and the Committee for Education

Minutes of Proceedings

Wednesday 29 May 2024

Meeting Location: Assembly Plenary Chamber, Parliament Buildings Belfast

Present: Mr Nick Mathison MLA (Chairperson)

Mr Phillip Brett MLA

Mr Gary Middleton MLA

Mr David Brooks MLA

Mr Robbie Butler MLA

Mr Pádraig Delargy MLA

Ms Sorchá Eastwood MLA

Mr David Honeyford MLA

Ms Cara Hunter MLA

Mrs Cathy Mason MLA

Mr Philip McGuigan MLA

Ms Sinéad McLaughlin MLA

Apologies: Mr Pat Sheehan MLA
Mr Danny Baker MLA
Ms Cheryl Brownlee MLA
Mr Jonathan Buckley MLA
Ms Kate Nicholl MLA

In Attendance: Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)
Aoibhinn Treanor (Assembly Clerk)
Anthea Matthews (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Craig Mealey (Clerical Supervisor)
Michael Doran (Clerical Officer)
Peter McCallion (Assembly Clerk)

The meeting commenced in public session at 10.31am without a decision-making quorum for the Committee for Education.

1. Apologies

Apologies were as indicated above.

2. Declarations of Interests

Mr Pádraig Delargy made a declaration of interest as his previous employment was as a teacher and he anticipated being in receipt of an associated pension.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson formally welcomed Members to the joint concurrent meeting and indicated that he hoped that this would be the first of many joint engagements on areas of mutual interest.

The Chairperson recorded his thanks to the Speaker for permitting the use of the plenary chamber for the meeting.

Robbie Butler joined the meeting at 10:32am – the Committee for Education achieved its decision-making quorum.

4. Independent Review of Careers Guidance - Oral Evidence from Dr Deirdre Hughes OBE

The witness joined the meeting at 10:32am.

Phillip McGuigan joined the meeting at 10:35am.

The Committee received oral evidence from Dr Deirdre Hughes OBE

Key issues discussed included: the importance of investment in careers support; the need to embed careers in the curriculum and to commence career-related learning in primary schools; the need for careers services for young people and adults; the importance of developing a digital conduit for careers services; the importance of parental support; the role of work experience; the need for a careers portal supported by good labour market intelligence; practice in other jurisdictions; and the need for an action plan in respect of careers provision.

Sorcha Eastwood left the meeting at 11:54am.

The Chairperson thanked the witness.

The witness left the meeting at 12:02pm.

Pádraig Delargy left the meeting at 12:03pm

5. Cross-Departmental Delivery of Careers Support - Department for the Economy and the Department of Education

Officials joined the meeting at 12.04pm.

The Committee received oral and written evidence from:

Clement Athanasiou – Director, Apprenticeships, Careers and Vocational Education Division, Department for the Economy;

Christina Kelly – Deputy Head of Careers Strategy, Delivery and Performance, Department for the Economy;

Karen McCullough – Director of Qualifications, 14-19 Strategy and Youth Work, Department of Education; and

Gareth Edge – Head of 14-19 Strategy Team, Department of Education.

Cara Hunter left the meeting at 12:05pm – the Committee for Education lost its decision-making quorum.

Key issues discussed included: the importance of transferable skills; the joint programme of work involving both departments; the development of the careers portal; the importance of careers support in respect of looked after children and children and young people with Special Educational Needs; the perceptions of vocational and academic career paths; the role of parents; the need for an action plan with targets and timescales in respect of enhancing careers support and other aspects of the 14-19 Framework.

Phillip Brett left the meeting at 12:11pm - the Committee for the Economy lost its decision-making quorum.

Cara Hunter rejoined the meeting at 12:17pm – the Committee for Education regained its decision-making quorum.

Robbie Butler left the meeting at 12:18pm – the Committee for Education lost its decision-making quorum.

Robbie Butler rejoined the meeting at 12:23pm – the Committee for Education regained its decision-making quorum.

Cathy Mason left the meeting at 12:36pm – the Committee for Education lost its decision-making quorum.

Cathy Mason rejoined the meeting at 12:47pm – the Committee for Education regained its decision-making quorum.

The Chairperson thanked the officials.

Officials left the meeting at 1:02pm.

In the absence of a decision-making quorum for the Economy Committee, the Chairperson suggested that each Committee should consider appropriate follow-up actions.

6. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

7. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

No further joint concurrent meetings have been arranged.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:03pm.

Mr Phillip Brett

Chairperson,

Committee for the Economy

5 June 2024

Mr Nick Mathison MLA

Chairperson,

Committee for Education

5 June 2024