



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR THE ECONOMY

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

19 JANUARY 2017

Room 29, Parliament Buildings, 3.00pm

Present:

Mr Steve Aiken OBE (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Sinéad Bradley
Mr Alan Chambers
Mr Gordon Dunne MBE
Mr Stephen Farry
Mr Gordon Lyons

In Attendance:

Mr Peter Hall (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Angela McParland (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Michael Greer (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Craig Mealey (Clerical Officer)
Mr Brendan Corr (Bursary Student)

Apologies:

Mr Conor Murphy (Chairperson)
Ms Caoímhe Archibald
Mr Tom Buchanan
Mr Alex Maskey
Mr Mervyn Storey

Deputy Chairperson, Steve Aiken, in the Chair

The meeting began in closed session at 3:05pm

1. Oral Briefing by Assembly Legal Services

The official joined the meeting at 3:05pm

Members were briefed by and undertook a question and answer session with Legal Services.

The official left the meeting at 3:32pm

The Committee moved to open session at 3:32pm

2. Apologies

As noted above.

3. Departmental Evidence session on SR 2017/000 Draft Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017

The officials joined the meeting at 3:35pm

Members received a briefing from Dr. Andrew McCormick, Permanent Secretary, Department for the Economy, Mr. Stephen McMurray, Renewable Heat Incentive Taskforce Leader, Department for the Economy, and Mr. Brendan McCann, Economist, Department for the Economy.

The key issues discussed included the SR 2017/000 Draft Renewables Heat Incentive Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017, management of the Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme, the processes involved to mitigate costs of the scheme.

Agreed: officials agreed to confirm whether the Department or Ofgem have been made aware of any non-renewable material being used in the RHI scheme; to clarify whether savings/money clawed back from remedial measures will stay within the AME in full or whether part may go to Treasury; and as the regulations expired in March 2015 but spending continued, to confirm how was the period from April to September was covered.

Agreed: officials agreed to forward to the Committee an independent assessment report on the SR.

The Permanent Secretary left the meeting at 4:27pm

The officials left the meeting at 4:52pm

4. Evidence Session with the Renewable Heat Association (RHA) on SR 2017/000 Draft Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017

The representatives joined the meeting at 4:52am

Members received a briefing from Mr. Michael Doran, Chairperson, RHA, Mr Tom Forgrave, RHA, Mr. John Martin, RHA and Ms. Elaine Shaw, RHA.

The key issues discussed included legal advice the RHA has received, the Northern Ireland Audit Office report, an economic assessment across a range of businesses, the environmental factor of the RHI scheme and data being collated on RHA members rates of return and proposals put forward by RHA.

Agreed: representatives agreed to forward to the Committee any data it has collated on the rate of return on the scheme for RHA members.

Agreed: Members agreed to seek the Department's view on an economic impact assessment of the SR at the evidence session with the Minister and Permanent Secretary on 23rd January 2017.

The representatives left the meeting at 6.06pm

5. Date, Time and Place of Next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Monday 23rd January 2017 at 9.30am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 6.06pm

Mr Steve Aiken OBE
Deputy Chairperson
Committee for the Economy

23rd January 2017