



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

17 OCTOBER 2013

ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS 10.00AM.

- Present: Mr Patsy McGlone (Chairperson)
Mr Steven Agnew
Mr Sydney Anderson
Mr Sammy Douglas
Mr Gordon Dunne
Mr Paul Frew
Mr Fearghal McKinney
Ms Maeve McLaughlin
Ms Sandra Overend
- In Attendance: Mr Jim McManus (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Stephanie Mallon (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Nathan McVeigh (Clerical Supervisor)
Ms Jacqueline Holt (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies: Mr Phil Flanagan (Deputy Chairperson)
Ms Sue Ramsey

The meeting began at 10.10am in closed session.

**1. Lowlands Health and Energy Ltd – Connaught Carbon Neutral CHP and
Balneotherapy – Closed session**

The Committee discussed information regarding the above topic and agreed on a way forward.

Agreed: To forward papers on the issue to the Department for comment. Specifically, to ask what extent the Department is aware of the issue, what action has been taken to date, what plans for addressing this issue for the future

Agreed: to Contact Assembly legal services to consider if legal advice is necessary

The meeting went into public session at 10.27am

2. Apologies

Apologies are detailed above.

3. Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 3 October 2013 and Thursday 10 October 2013.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of 3 October 2013 as amended.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft minutes of 10 October 2013.

4. Economic Forecast Report - Oral Briefing from Northern Ireland Centre for Economic Policy

Representatives joined the meeting at 10.29am

Members received an oral briefing from Professor Neil Gibson, Director, Northern Ireland Centre for Economic Policy.

Key issues discussed included: aims for the Northern Ireland Centre for Economic Policy and key economic issues in Northern Ireland.

Fearghal McKinney joined the meeting at 11.32am

Gordon Dunne left the meeting at 11.48am

Agreed: that the Northern Ireland Centre for Economic Policy provides the Committee with further information on several issues discussed including the sectors in which there is predicted job growth and what the organisation considers to be a viable economic option for Northern Ireland.

Agreed: that the Northern Ireland Centre for Economic Policy provides a sectoral model to give more detail on forecast increase in jobs

Agreed: to receive an update from RaISe on sources of economic advice to the Committee.

Representatives left the meeting at 11.54am

The Chairperson left the meeting at 11.58am

The Clerk took the Chair and asked for nominations for a member to chair the meeting.

Sammy Douglas left the meeting at 11.58

Steven Agnew proposed Maeve McLaughlin and Fearghal McKinney seconded this proposal.

Maeve McLaughlin took the Chair at 11.58am

5. Fuel Pricing - Oral Briefing from Asda, Tesco and Northern Ireland Retail Consortium

Representatives joined the meeting at 11.59am

Gordon Dunne returned to the meeting at 12.01pm

The Chairperson returned to the meeting at 12.05pm and took the Chair

Sammy Douglas returned to the meeting at 12.09pm

Fearghal McKinney left the meeting at 12.33pm

Members received an oral briefing from Mr Aodhan Connolly, Director, Northern Ireland Retail Consortium, Mr Andy Peake, Category Director – Petrol, Asda, Mr Joe McDonald, Corporate Affairs Manager Northern Ireland, Asda and Mr Gary Mills, Managing Director, Tesco.

Key issues discussed included: varying costs in fuel pricing across forecourts and quality of fuel.

Agreed: that the Northern Ireland Retail Consortium provides the Committee with further information on fuel quality.

Agreed: to receive an oral briefing from the Grocery Code Adjudicator.

Representatives left the meeting at 1.08pm

Sandra Overend left the meeting at 1.08pm

6. Review of Consumer Council

Members noted a letter for the Minister regarding consumer representation, a Ministerial Statement on the Consumer Council Review, the Review document and a consultation document.

7. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson informed members that he has received an invitation from the NI Chamber of Commerce to NI Chamber Rocks, a celebration of Northern Ireland Business, with a particular focus on the creative economy.

Agreed: the Committee is content for the Chairperson to attend.

The Chairperson informed members that the new Utility Regulator has requested an introductory meeting with the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson.

Agreed: the Committee is content for the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson to meet the new Regulator.

Agreed: the Committee is content for the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson to receive an advance briefing on the forthcoming Utility Regulator paper.

The Chairperson reminded members that the Committee agreed to hold a Committee meeting at lunchtime on a Tuesday in order to take oral evidence from the Utility Regulator on the forthcoming report increasing transparency on NI electricity prices and that this meeting is proposed for on Tuesday 5 November at 12.30pm.

Agreed: To hold a single issue Committee meeting on Tuesday 5 November at 12.30pm.

The Chairperson reminded members that Invest NI has provided a single point of contact for any queries that individual MLAs may have and this information was sent to MLAs by email earlier this week.

Agreed: To ask the Department if the contact number for Invest NI is staffed during office hours.

8. Matters Arising

Members considered a response from the Department regarding the request for the legal advice in relation to Titanic Replacement Activity.

Agreed: that the Department consider other options for sharing this information with the Committee

Members noted a response from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister on Cross Border Co-operation.

Members considered a response from the Confederation of Business Industry on the Electricity Policy Review.

Agreed: to include the response in the Electricity Policy Review papers.

Members considered a response from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the Third Sector Mapping Exercise.

Agreed: To ask the Department if it intends to put further investment into the third sector as a result of the outcomes of the Report on Third Sector Mapping.

Members noted a response from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding improving EU communication and information.

Members noted the agenda for the OFCOM event on 24 October 2013.

9. Revised draft Regulatory Impact Assessment guidance - Consultation

Members considered a consultation from the Department regarding revised draft Regulatory Impact Assessment guidance.

Agreed: to receive a summary of consultation responses.

10. The Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project – summary of responses - Consultation

Members noted a consultation from the Department regarding the Northern Ireland Broadband Improvement Project – summary of responses.

11. Offshore Renewable Energy Strategic Action Plan (ORESAP) 2012-2020 – First Annual Report - Written Briefing from DETI

Members noted a written briefing from the Department regarding the Offshore Renewable Energy Strategic Action Plan (ORESAP) 2012-2020 – First Annual Report.

12. Tourism Statistics – Report on figures for Quarter 1 2013 – Written Briefing from DETI

Members noted a written briefing from the Department regarding Tourism Statistics – Report on figures for Quarter 1 2013.

13. Correspondence

Members noted the following items of correspondence for action

- i. From the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the Barroso Task Force Desk Officer Progress Reports.

Agreed: that members will notify the Committee Office with any issues they want discussed at the next meeting in relation to the reports.

- ii. Members noted correspondence from the Minister regarding the proposed legislative amendments to safeguard banks from a consequence of allowing bankrupts to have accounts and to correct an error in the Insolvency order.

- iii. From the Building Change Trust inviting members to a seminar and workshop to consider the future development of social finance in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: that members contact the Committee Office if they wish to attend.

- iv. From Friends of Exploris requesting the opportunity to make a short presentation to the Committee during its visit to Exploris.

Agreed: that the Committee is content for this group to give oral evidence with NIPSA.

- v. Members noted correspondence from the Central Committee Office on the publication of members' attendance at Committee meetings.

Members noted the following items of correspondence

- vi. From the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure regarding big ticketed sporting events.

12. Forward Work Programme

Members noted the Committee Forward Work Programme.

13. Any other business

The Committee commended the work of Invest NI regarding the Investment Conference that took place last week.

Agreed: to write to Invest NI congratulating it on a successful Investment Conference.

The Committee considered a press release on fuel pricing

Agreed: to issue the press release.

14. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on **23 October** at **10.30am** in **Exploris Aquarium, Portaferry**.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 1.25pm

Mr Patsy McGlone
Chairperson
Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment

7 November 2013