



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**24 OCTOBER 2013**

**ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS 10.00AM.**

- Present:
- Mr Patsy McGlone (Chairperson)
  - Mr Phil Flanagan (Deputy Chairperson)
  - Mr Steven Agnew
  - 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 Sydney Anderson
  - Mr Mitchel McLaughlin

*The meeting began at 10.09am in public session.*

Members considered a revised agenda for the meeting.

*Agreed:* the Committee is content with the revised agenda.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies are detailed above.

The Chairperson informed members that following confirmation in plenary on Monday 21 October, Mitchel McLaughlin is joining the Committee with immediate effect.

*Agreed:* to write to the outgoing member, Sue Ramsey, thanking her for her input and commitment to the work of the Committee.

**2. Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 17 October 2013.**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft minutes of 17 October 2013 subject to an amendment.

**3. Electricity Policy Review - Oral Briefing from Northern Ireland Electricity**

*Representatives joined the meeting at 10.12am*

*Paul Frew left the meeting at 11.15am*

Members received an oral briefing from Peter Ewing, Deputy Managing Director and Director of Regulatory Affairs, Mr Robert Wasson, Asset Management Director with responsibility for the overall asset base of Northern Ireland Electricity, Mr David de Casseres, Transmission Project Director and Mr Michael Atkinson, Head of Generation Connections.

Key issues discussed included: security of supply and the cost to consumers.

*Representatives left the meeting at 11.55am*

*Fearghal McKinney left the meeting at 11.57am*

*Sandra Overend left the meeting at 11.57am*

*Phil Flanagan left the meeting at 11.57am*

**4. Fuel Pricing - Oral Briefing from Sainsbury's**

*Representatives joined the meeting at 11.57am*

*Fearghal McKinney returned to the meeting at 12.00pm*

*Sandra Overend returned to the meeting at 12.01pm*

*Phil Flanagan returned to the meeting at 12.14pm*

*Sammy Douglas left the meeting at 12.18pm*

*Maeve McLaughlin left the meeting at 12.43pm*

Members received an oral briefing from Richard Crampton, Head of Petrol and Kiosk, Chris Biggs, Petrol Buyer, Kate Botting, Competition Lawyer and Damien Drumm, Public Affairs Policy Advisor.

Key issues discussed included: the cost of fuel, supermarket pricing policies and the difficulties facing independent petrol retailers.

*Agreed:* to send information on how fuel smuggling affects the fuel market.

*Representatives left the meeting at 12.43pm*

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

Members considered a written synopsis of the Ards Borough Council presentation to the Committee at the meeting on 23 October 2013.

*Agreed:* to forward the presentation to the Committees who were represented at the meeting.

*Agreed:* to forward the presentation to the Department for information.

The Chairperson provided the Committee with a brief overview of the Committee meeting at Exploris on 23 October 2013.

*Agreed:* that a meeting is arranged with the Minister to discuss the proposed closure of Exploris.

*Agreed:* to write to the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure, the Department of Education, the Department of the Environment, the Department for Employment and Learning, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment and the Department of Finance and Personnel regarding the Committee meeting at Exploris and the proposed closure of Exploris.

*Agreed:* to write to Ards Borough Council, Friends of Exploris, NIPSA and Portaferry Regeneration Ltd informing them of the Committee actions as a result to the meeting at Exploris.

*Fearghal McKinney left the meeting at 12.56pm*

Members considered the Electricity Policy Review.

*Agreed:* to schedule an item in closed session at the end of the meeting on 7 November to discuss emerging issues and findings of the Electricity Policy Review.

The Chairperson reminded members that a session has been arranged on support and advice on effective questioning and team working within a Committee has been scheduled for 21 November instead of a Committee meeting.

## **6. Matters Arising**

Members noted that Invest NI have clarified that the contact number for Committee queries is staffed during office hours and when the person is out of the office the phone is picked up by colleagues or transfers to voicemail and if the person is away from the desk or otherwise engaged the phone may not be answered but this is very much the exception.

Members noted a response from the Department regarding further details on the Programme for Government Progress report as well as an explanation on the terms 'jobs promoted' and 'jobs created'.

Members noted a response from the Department on the work being done as part of the Alleviating Hardship report.

Members noted a response from the Department giving further information on the capital spend for the Invest NI Head Quarters.

Members considered a response from the Department regarding the Agri-food industry.

*Agreed:* to forward to the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development and the Chair of the Agri-food Strategy Board.

Members noted correspondence from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister on the Barroso report.

Members noted draft questions to be used in the interviews with businesses regarding the access to finance case study.

**7. Government response to the supplementary consultation on proposals to enhance the sustainability criteria for the use of biomass feedstocks under the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation - Consultation**

Members noted a consultation from the Department regarding Government response to the supplementary consultation on proposals to enhance the sustainability criteria for the use of biomass feedstocks under the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation.

**8. Proposals to revise and amend the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences (Northern Ireland) 1997 (RIDDOR) - Consultation**

Members considered a consultation from the Department regarding proposals to revise and amend the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences (Northern Ireland) 1997 (RIDDOR).

*Agreed:* to write to ICTU and RoSPA informing them that the proposals have been re-introduced along with additional proposals and ask if their views on the original proposal have changed.

*Agreed:* to write to the Department asking what, if anything, has changed in the original proposals since they were previously considered by the Committee and why these changes were made and what engagement there has been with ICTU and RoSPA.

*Agreed:* to receive a summary of the consultation responses.

**9. Correspondence**

*Members noted the following items of correspondence for action*

i. Members noted correspondence from the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development regarding a Committee visit to a farm on the afternoon of Thursday 7 November and inviting Committee members to the visit.

ii. From the Department detailing advertisements of intent to award mineral licences.

*Agreed:* to receive more details from the Department on what each of the licenses are for and if they have considered publishing this information online instead of requiring interested parties to attend a town hall.

iii. Members noted correspondence from the Department regarding the publication of screening exercises under Section 75.

**10. Consultation paper on the draft Gas (individual Standards of Performance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 – Consultation**

Members noted a consultation from the Department regarding the draft Gas (individual Standards of Performance) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014

**11. Any other business**

Members considered a press article regarding US funds which have not been drawn down.

*Agreed:* to write to OFMDFM requesting information on what has been done to date to draw down these and similar funds.

**12. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on **5 November** at **12.30pm** in **Room 29, Parliament Buildings.**

*The Chair adjourned the meeting at 1.08pm*

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**Mr Patsy McGlone**  
**Chairperson**  
**Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment**

**7 November 2013**