



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**19 JUNE 2014**

**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  
Mr Mitchel McLaughlin  
Ms Sandra Overend

In Attendance: Mr Jim McManus (Assembly Clerk)  
Ms Angela McParland (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Mr Nathan McVeigh (Clerical Supervisor)  
Ms Jacqueline Holt (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Sydney Anderson  
Ms Megan Fearon

*The meeting began at 10.07am.*

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were noted, as listed above.

## **2. Minutes of meetings held on Thursday 12 June 2014.**

*Agreed:* The Committee agreed the draft minutes of 12 June 2014.

## **3. Chairperson's Business**

The Chairperson informed members he is visiting Energia on Tuesday 5 August at 11.00am.

*Agreed:* to make this a Committee visit to Energia and the Committee Office to contact members, before recess, regarding their attendance.

The Chairperson informed members that Dr Leslie Budd has accepted the position of Specialist Advisor on Economic Policy to the Committee.

*Agreed:* the Committee is content that the Clerk liaises with Dr Budd in the first instance.

## **4. Oral briefing from the Print Industry in Northern Ireland**

*The representatives joined the meeting at 10.10am.*

Members received an oral briefing from Mr Dominic Fitzpatrick, Managing Director, The Irish News, Ms Sarah Little, Commercial Director, Independent News and Media (NI) Ltd, Ms Jean Long, Managing Director, Johnston Press and Ms Jackie Ventom, Director of Training, Byrne Partnership.

Key issues discussed included: readership of print and digital news, number of employees in the print industry in Northern Ireland, audience profiles, population reach, revenue forecasts, print and digital advertising, competitiveness of Northern Ireland print industry, local employee skillsets, demographic changes, new technology, local newspapers role in community partnership.

*Steven Agnew left the meeting at 11.24am*

*Agreed:* the print industry representatives to provide the Committee with information on the total number of people employed by the industry in Northern Ireland and to also on readership aged 15 – 24 years old with regards to newspaper and online.

*Agreed:* to write to the Department asking why a printing company is not treated as part of the manufacturing industry by Invest NI.

*The representatives left the meeting at 11.35am.*

## **5. Implementing the Alternative Dispute Resolution Directive and Online Dispute Resolution Regulation - Oral briefing from the Consumer Council NI**

*The representatives joined the meeting at 11.36am.*

Members received an oral briefing from Mr Don Leeson, Director of Operations, Consumer Council and Mr Aidan O'Donnell, Interim Chief Executive, Consumer Council.

Key issues discussed included: the implementation of the Alternative Dispute Resolution Directive, Online Dispute Resolution Regulation, scrutiny of the proposals, future (BIS) discussions, issues excluded in the Directive.

*Agreed:* to write to the Department asking for a written briefing which details the level of consultation being carried out on the Directive and that the matter be treated with high priority.

*Agreed:* Officials from the Department provide an oral briefing to the Committee on this issue.

*The representatives left the meeting at 12.07pm.*

## **6. Matters Arising**

Members considered a response from the Department on how information received by the Department from the European Liaison Officers can best be passed to the Committee.

*Agreed:* to forward the response to other statutory committees for information.

Members considered a response from the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to the Committee's request for an update on the communication strategy they have in place that ensures the dissemination of information from Brussels to the Committee as well as businesses and the wider public.

*Agreed:* to write to the Department asking for details on how exactly they plan to ensure the Committee is regularly informed on EU matters and for a written update on EU matters.

Members considered a copy of the R&D/Horizon 2020 presentation which was delivered by Invest NI at last week's meeting.

*Mitchel McLaughlin left the meeting at 12.13pm*

*Agreed:* To write to Invest NI asking what emphasis is being placed on building cross border initiatives with the aim of enhancing the local economy and how they work with their counterparts in the South to maximise the drawdown by businesses of European funds to R&D programmes, for a breakdown on the level of uptake by businesses from each of the different areas and whether there is a greater level of uptake along the border because of greater access to partners in another member state;

*Agreed:* to write to the Department asking for a written update from the cross-border working group which was set up to address the drawdown of EU funds in relation to Horizon 2020 and other R&D programmes and for an update from the Officers set up in institutions such as Queens University and the University of Ulster for liaising on EU R&D funding.

Members noted a response from Invest NI to Committee queries regarding timeliness of papers and Letters of Offer.

Members considered a response from the Department to Committee's pre-legislative scrutiny of the Credit Unions and Industrial and Provident Societies Bill.

*Agreed:* to forward the response to the Irish League of Credit Unions and the Ulster Federation of Credit Unions for information.

*Agreed:* to consider the response again during the Committee stage of the Bill.

Members noted that the Chairperson received further correspondence from the member of the public who had experienced a delay in the Department responding to his Freedom of Information regarding the Presbyterian Mutual Society which stated that he had now received a response from the Department.

## **7. Written Briefing from DETI: Economic Impact – Review of Business Red Tape**

Members considered a written briefing from the Department regarding Economic Impact – Review of Business Red Tape.

*Agreed:* to receive an oral briefing on the review outcomes once the report has been published.

## **8. Consultation: Proposals for UK-Wide Reach Enforcement (Amendment) Regulations 2014**

Members noted a consultation regarding Proposals for UK-Wide Reach Enforcement (Amendment) Regulations 2014.

## **9. Consultation: Strategic Framework to Tackle Economic Inactivity**

Members noted a copy of the Official Report of the oral briefing that the Committee for Employment and Learning received on the Strategic Framework to Tackle Economic Inactivity Consultation held on 28 May 2014.

## **10. Correspondence**

*Members noted the following items of correspondence:*

- i. Members noted correspondence from the Minister informing the Committee of the transfer of UK National Competent Authority tasks for energy projects from the Department of Energy and Climate Change to the Department within the terms of EU TEN-E Regulations 347/2013.
- ii. Members considered correspondence from New Century regarding the restriction of coal sales to households.

*Agreed:* to forward the correspondence to the Committee for the Environment and inquire as to whether they would be content to deal with this issue.

- iii. Members noted correspondence from the Committee for Regional Development to the Department thanking the officials who presented to that Committee on 11 June 2014 for the inquiry into the Benefits of Cycling to the Economy.

## **11. Forward Work Programme**

Members considered a draft Committee work programme for 2014-15 and a list of matters which are outstanding with the Department.

*Agreed:* the Agri-Food Strategy Board to provide an oral briefing to update the Committee.

*Agreed:* to arrange for the Committee to visit the Titanic Studios on 11 September 2014.

*Agreed:* to ask the Department to provide responses to all due and outstanding queries by Friday 27 June 2014 in time for consideration at the Committee meeting on 3 July 2014.

*Agreed:* to ask Manufacturing NI and the Consumer Council NI for written briefings on the possible cancellation of the two Generating Unit Agreements relating to generator units located at Ballylumford Power Station, to include the impact they think this will have on domestic or large scale users.

## **12. Any other business**

Members discussed the cost of residential areas connecting to the gas network.

*Agreed:* to write to Phoenix Gas and seek clarification on issues domestic users in new housing developments in the Greater Belfast area have had with regards to extensions to their doorstep.

## **13. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on **3 July 2014** at **10.00am** in **Room 30, Parliament Buildings.**

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12.38pm.*

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

**3 July 2014**