



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

25 SEPTEMBER 2014

ROOM 30, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, 10.00AM

Present: Mr Patsy McGlone (Chairperson)
Mr Phil Flanagan (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Steven Agnew
Mr Sydney Anderson
Mr Sammy Douglas
Mr Gordon Dunne
Ms Megan Fearon
Mr Paul Frew
Mr Danny Kinahan
Mr Fearghal McKinney

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

Apologies: None

The meeting began at 10.14am.

1. Apologies

The Chairperson informed members that Mr Mitchel McLaughlin has withdrawn from his roles on Committees for the time being due to his Principal Deputy Speaker engagements.

2. Chairperson's Business

Members considered correspondence regarding the Policy Forum for Northern Ireland seminar on Energy Policy in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: the Chairperson to attend and speak at the forum.

Members considered correspondence from the NI Chamber of Commerce and an invitation to the Chairperson to participate in the event 'Corporation Tax – Seizing the Opportunity'.

Agreed: the Chairperson to attend on behalf of the Committee.

The Chairperson reminded members the Committee will be visiting SDC Trailers on Thursday 2 October.

The Chairperson informed members that following today's meeting, Assembly Web Manager, Chris Taylor, and Information Officer, Debra Savage, from the Assembly's Communications Office will briefly outline for the Committee details of the proposed new ETI Committee Twitter account.

Sydney Anderson left the meeting at 10.21am

The Chairperson informed members of the current position in relation to the October Monitoring Round.

Agreed: to ask the Department to provide the papers as soon as possible and to keep officials on standby pending a possible meeting on Tuesday 30th September 2014.

3. Minutes of meetings held on Thursday 18 September 2014.

Agreed: the Committee agreed the draft minutes of 18 September 2014.

4. Oral briefing from the Northern Ireland Hotels Federation – Tourism 2020

The representatives joined the meeting at 10.24am.

Sydney Anderson returned to the meeting at 10.35am

Fearghal McKinney joined the meeting at 11.24am

Members received an oral briefing from Ms Janice Gault, Chief Executive, and Ms Mandy Patrick, President, Northern Ireland Hotels Federation.

Key issues discussed included: the standard of service in the hospitality industry, room occupancy percentages, the future of the hospitality industry, capital infrastructure, taxation, VAT reduction and corporation tax.

The representatives left the meeting at 11.31am.

5. Oral briefing from the Ulster Farmers' Union – Electricity Policy Review

The representatives joined the meeting at 11.32am.

Danny Kinahan joined the meeting at 11.41am.

Megan Fearon left the meeting at 11.57am

Members received an oral briefing from Mr Barclay Bell, Deputy President, Mr Gary Hawkes, Chairman and Mr Chris Osborne, Senior Policy Officer.

Key issues discussed included: microgrids, grid connection difficulties in the agriculture sector, improper advice farmers have received on grid connection, role of SONI, Project 40, B9 Energy, storage solutions, compressed air system, reduction of carbon emissions and renewable energy.

The representatives left the meeting at 12.35am.

Gordon Dunne left the meeting at 12.36pm

Sydney Anderson left the meeting at 12.36pm

6. Matters Arising

Members considered correspondence from Stephen Welch, Director of Facilities, regarding the extent of renewable energy in the Assembly roof project.

Agreed: to arrange a visit to see the work of the roof project when it is completed.

Agreed: to forward the response from the Director of Facilities to the Department for information

Members noted an invitation to the 6th European Innovation Summit on 17th to 20th November 2014.

The Chairperson informed members that a visit to the Belfast Telegraph has been arranged for 23rd October 2014.

The Chairperson informed members that Action Renewables will provide an oral briefing to the Committee on 4th November 2014 on the reduction in ROCs support for PV in Northern Ireland and on the issue of roof rentals for solar PV.

Agreed: to schedule an oral briefing from NISTA on 4th November.

Members considered an invitation from NIABT offering members the opportunity to participate in an educational visit to Brussels from Monday 17th to Wednesday 19th November 2014.

7. Written Briefing from DETI: DETI Website and Online Presence Update

Members noted a written briefing from DETI regarding its website and online presence update.

8. Written Briefing from DETI: Programme for Government Year 3 Quarter 1 Progress Report

Members considered a written briefing from DETI regarding the Programme for Government Year 3 Quarter 1 Progress Report.

Agreed: to ask the Department to clarify the definition of the terms ‘rebalancing’ and ‘rebuilding’ as used in the PfG progress Report and Economic Strategy.

9. Written Briefing from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board: NITB Operating Plan 2014 - 2015

Members considered a written briefing from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board regarding its Operating Plan 2014 – 2015.

Agreed: to ask the Department for a written briefing on the rationale for the Tourism Innovation Fund 2014 - 2015 being closed and when the SIB evaluation of the G8 summit, which was due in June, will be available.

10. Written Briefing from Assembly Research: Insolvency (Amendment) Bill 2014

Members considered a written briefing from Assembly Research regarding the Insolvency (Amendment) Bill 2014.

Agreed: to write to the stakeholders listed to request written evidence when the Bill comes to Committee stage.

11. Consultation: I-SEM High Level Design Decision Documents

Members considered I-SEM High level Design Decision Documents.

Agreed: to proceed as suggested by the Utility Regulator.

12. Correspondence

Members noted the following items of correspondence:

- i. Members noted correspondence from DETI regarding the UK wide consultation on changes to the certification process for electricity and gas Transmission System Operators.
- ii. Members noted correspondence from the OFMDFM Committee regarding the Investment Strategy Implementation Report to June 2014.
- iii. Members noted correspondence from the OFMDFM Committee regarding the Programme for Government Progress Reports.
- iv. Members noted an invitation from the Committee for Education to a STEM Sentinus Event.

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

- v. From the All Party Group on Construction regarding the Executive's Infrastructure Investment Strategy Portal.

Agreed: to write to the All Party Group on Construction forwarding a copy of the correspondence from the Department on this issue.

- vi. Members noted an invitation from Action Renewables regarding the All Party Group on Renewable Energy on Thursday 2 October 2014.
- vii. Members noted correspondence from the Northern Ireland Assembly EU Affairs Manager regarding the InterTradeIreland Horizon 2020 newsletter.
- viii. Members noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel regarding Post Project Evaluations.

13. Any other business

Members considered the closing of the RTÉ long wave transmitter in Clarkstown and the impact this will have on Northern Ireland's RTÉ Radio 1 listeners.

Agreed: to write to RTÉ and copy to Ofcom; Mr Alex White TD, Minister for the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources; and Mr John O'Mahony TD, Chairperson of the Joint Committee on Transport and Communications in the Oireachtas.

14. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on **07 October 2014** at **10.00am** in **Room 29, Parliament Buildings.**

The meeting was suspended at 12.50pm

The meeting went into closed session at 12.55pm.

Gordon Dunne returned to the meeting at 12.56pm

15. Electricity Policy Review

Members considered the draft Electricity Policy Review Part III, an Assembly Research paper regarding measures to prevent capacity hoarding and a paper from the Department on Intelligent Energy Systems.

Agreed: to schedule a briefing from B9 Energy.

Agreed: to write to SONI, the Utility Regulator and NIE for their views on microgrids as discussed by the Ulster Farmers' Union.

16. Report on the Committee visit to USA

Members considered a draft report on the Committee visit to USA.

Agreed: that the report is published on the Committee pages of the Assembly website.

Agreed: to carry out all the actions detailed in the report.

Steven Agnew left the meeting at 1.13pm

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1.14pm.

Mr Patsy McGlone
Chairperson
Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment

7 October 2014