



COMMITTEE FOR ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

22 SEPTEMBER 2015

ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, 10:00am

- Present:
- Mr Patsy McGlone (Chairperson)
 - Mr Steven Agnew
 - Mr Gordon Dunne
 - Ms Megan Fearon
 - Mr Paul Frew
 - Mr Paul Givan
 - Mr William Humphrey
 - Mr Fearghal McKinney
 - Mr Máirtín Ó Muilleoir
- In Attendance:
- Mr Jim McManus (Assembly Clerk)
 - Ms Angela McParland (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
 - Mr Michael Greer (Clerical Supervisor)
 - Ms Marion Johnson (Clerical Officer)
- Apologies:
- Mr Conor Murphy (Deputy Chairperson)

The meeting began at 10:13am

1. Apologies

Apologies were recorded for Mr Conor Murphy.

2. Draft Minutes of Meeting of 8th September 2015

Members discussed the draft Minutes of the meeting of 8th September 2015.

Agreed: to amend the Minutes to include the Committee's agreement to write to the Utility Regulator to ask for clarification of its position on wind energy and the impact in the long term on customers' bills. This was following the briefing by DETI on the SL1 Proposed Renewables Obligation Closure Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson welcomed the Committee's new Deputy Chairperson, Mr Conor Murphy. The Chairperson asked Members if they are content to write to Mr Phil Flanagan, thanking him for his input and commitment to the work of the Committee.

Agreed: to write to Mr Phil Flanagan.

The Chairperson reminded Members that before taking part in any proceedings of the Assembly or its Committees, a member must declare any interest, financial or otherwise. The Chairperson asked members if they have any interest to declare.

Mr Steven Agnew declared an interest as a member of the credit union and a shareholder in a community wind farm project

Mr William Humphrey declared an interest as a member of a credit union

Mr Patsy McGlone declared an interest as a member of a credit union

The Chairperson informed members that he had requested that the Permanent Secretary, subject to the Committee's agreement, provide an briefing at this week's Committee at the meeting. This was to inform members of the key DETI policy areas on which the absence of a Minister will impact, the effect on the Department's work and the wider implications for other stakeholders. The Department informed the Clerk that the Permanent Secretary was not available to attend but had agreed to brief the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson in the afternoon.

Agreed: the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson will meet with the Permanent Secretary and that the Chairperson invite the Permanent Secretary to attend a Committee meeting at the earliest opportunity, following the informal meeting today.

Mr Máirtín Ó Muilleoir joined the meeting at 10:19am

The Chairperson reminded members that he will be speaking and joining the panel at the Science and Stormont event on Monday 12th October 2015. The

Committee discussed the request by the Royal Society of Chemistry for two additional members to join the panel.

Agreed: that Paul Frew and Fearghal McKinney will participate in the event.

Members considered an invitation to the Chairperson to attend a conference, to be held on 13th October 2015, at the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels. The conference will focus on the implications of a UK exit from the European Union for Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Ms Megan Fearon joined the meeting at 10:21am

The Chairperson informed members that Officials from Queen's University Belfast (QUB) have asked to meet briefly with the Chairperson and the Clerk to consider the main areas to be covered for the briefing at the external meeting at QUB on 15th October 2015.

Agreed: the Clerk will meet with the Officials from QUB.

The Committee discussed that, given the changes to membership, it would be an appropriate time for a photograph of the Committee to be taken for the Committee web page.

Agreed: a photograph of members to be taken prior to the start of next week's meeting.

4. Oral Briefing from RaISe: Tourism Scoping Paper

The Official joined the meeting at 10:22am

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir declared an interest as a family member is employed by Tourism Ireland

Mr Aidan Stennett, Assembly Research Officer, briefed the committee on the Tourism Scoping Paper.

The Chairperson reminded members that DETI Tourism branch will provide a written briefing on 10th November 2015 but that the Committee may wish to receive an oral briefing.

Agreed: Tourism Northern Ireland to provide an oral briefing, as well as a written briefing, on 10th November 2015 and to include in the briefing: the roles and responsibilities of various bodies and how they are aligned to create the appropriate support for the tourism industry; the implementation of recommendations in the review of tourism; and what is being done for Year of Food 2016.

Agreed: Tourism Ireland to brief the Committee on 10th November 2015 on how it currently engages with the various organisations i.e. Visit Belfast,

district councils, the Executive etc. and also on any future strategies it has for engaging with the various groups.

Agreed: to invite Visit Belfast to provide an oral briefing to the Committee on 3rd November 2015, to brief the Committee on the economic impact of tourism in Belfast.

Mr Paul Givan joined the meeting at 10:29am

Ms Megan Fearon left the meeting at 10:30am

Mr Steven Agnew left the meeting at 10:43am

5. Matters Arising

Members considered a paper detailing two issues for which the Committee is still awaiting responses from the Department.

Agreed: to receive written briefings from the Department on both issues.

Members noted correspondence from the Consumer Council, following its briefing to the Committee on online parcel deliveries, and an excerpt from a report by Citizens Advice Scotland.

Mr Paul Givan left the meeting at 10:52am

6. Legislation: SR 2015 The Renewables Obligation Closure Order (Northern Ireland) 2015

Members considered the SR 2015 The Renewables Obligation Closure Order (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Agreed: the Committee recommends that the Statutory Rule be affirmed by the Assembly.

Agreed: to write to the Utility Regulator and NIE regarding the implications of a recent decision by NIE to now allow a parallel approach in regards to grid connection applications and planning applications. To also ask why the decision has been taken at this time.

7. Legislation: The Credit Unions and Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Bill

Members considered responses from HM Treasury and the Irish League of Credit Unions (ILCU) regarding The Credit Unions and Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Bill.

Agreed: to include the papers in evidence for the Committee Stage of the Bill.

8. Reform of the Legacy Credit Unions Source Book

Members considered correspondence from the ILCU regarding the reform of the legacy credit unions source book.

Agreed: to forward the correspondence to the Department for its assessment of the impact of the proposals on the credit union movement in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: to commission research to compare the proposals of the Prudential Regulation Authority and the Financial Conduct Authority with current provision for credit unions.

9. Written Briefing from DETI: Response to the Committee's Report on the Committee's Inquiry into Growing the Economy and Creating Jobs with Lower Corporation Tax

Members discussed the Departmental response to the Committee's Inquiry Report.

Agreed: to receive an oral briefing from the Department on its response to the Inquiry.

10. Consultation: Proposal to raise the threshold level of debt at which a creditor can petition for bankruptcy

Members discussed the consultation paper.

Agreed: to receive a summary of responses following consultation.

11. Consultation: Debt Relief Scheme – Proposals to Amend the Limits for Eligibility

Members discussed the consultation paper.

Agreed: to receive a summary of responses following consultation.

12. Office of the Northern Ireland Executive Office in Brussels (ONIEB) Director's Report (January – June 2015)

Members noted the Report.

13. End of Session Report 2014-2015

Members considered the End of Session Report.

Agreed: members agreed the Report

Agreed: to publish the Report on the Committee pages of the Assembly website.

14. Correspondence

Members noted the following items of correspondence;

- i. An invite from the Utility Regulator to attend a price control approach workshop on Thursday 8th October 2015.

Agreed: to ask Assembly Research to attend on behalf of the Committee.

- ii. An invitation to an EU referendum/Brexit debate.

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

- iii. An email from Chris Lyttle MLA requesting the number of times the Minister has appeared before the Committee, which had been responded to by the Committee Office.

- iv. Correspondence from the Committee for the Office of the First and deputy First Minister regarding a report by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission.

- v. An invitation from Colleges Northern Ireland to a conference “Further Education – Key driver of the NI Economy on Thursday 15th October 2015.

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

15. Forward Work Programme

Members noted the Forward Work Programme and a request from Firmus Energy to brief the Committee.

Agreed: Firmus Energy to brief the Committee in November.

Agreed: due to difficulty in finding a venue for a stakeholder event for the Inquiry on 6th October 2015, that the event is postponed but that the

Committee's Specialist Advisor still brief the Committee at the meeting that morning.

16. Any Other Business

There were no additional items of business.

17. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on **Tuesday 29 September 2015** at **10.00am** in **Room 29, Parliament Buildings**.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11:08am

Mr Patsy McGlone
Chairperson
Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment

29 September 2015