



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

10 NOVEMBER 2015

ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, 10:00am

Present:

Mr Patsy McGlone (Chairperson)
Mr Steven Agnew
Mr Adrian Cochrane-Watson
Mr Gordon Dunne
Ms Megan Fearon
Mr Paul Girvan
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 10:15am

1. Apologies

Apologies as noted above.

2. Draft Minutes of Meeting of 3rd November 2015

Agreed: the Committee agreed the draft minutes of 3rd November 2015.

3. Chairperson's Business

The Chairperson informed members that he is unable to attend the lunch to meet with the Ambassador for the Republic of Mauritania and asked if any member is able to attend in his place.

Agreed: that William Humphrey will attend.

The Chairperson informed members of an inquiry the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee will be launching into promoting the tourism industry in Northern Ireland through the tax system.

Agreed: the Committee will consider a submission to the inquiry.

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

Members noted papers in relation to the Credit Unions and Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Bill.

5. Oral Briefing from DETI: Consultation on the Closure of the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation (NIRO) to New Onshore Wind

The officials joined the meeting at 10:18am

Members received a briefing from Mr Chris Stewart, Head of Policy Group, DETI, Mr John Mills, Head of Energy Division, DETI, Ms Alison Clydesdale, Principal Officer, Renewable Electricity Branch, DETI and Mr Michael Harris, Deputy Principal, DETI.

The key issues discussed were an update from the Minister on the consultation, correspondence between the Minister and the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, the effect of uncertainty for businesses and the effect on small scale developers.

The officials agreed to explore with the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) amended legislation to accommodate those projects which are currently awaiting consent and which will be affected by the ‘cut off’ date. As provision has been made for those projects which are currently in planning appeal, the officials also agreed to clarify the position for those projects which once planning has been approved may still be awaiting consent for connection.

The officials also agreed to forward to the Committee an estimation of the potential amount of investment that is at risk due to uncertainty for businesses around this matter.

Agreed: to write to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change to request a joint meeting with the Energy Secretary and the Minister.

Agreed: to ask that the Department to forward to the Committee copies of all of the correspondence between the Energy Secretary and the Minister on the matter.

Agreed: to ask the Department for the dates and details of all of the meetings and conversations between the Minister and the Energy Secretary on the matter.

Adrian Cochrane-Watson joined the meeting at 10:18am

Paul Givan left the meeting at 11:05am

Megan Fearon joined the meeting at 11:11am

Gordon Dunne left the meeting at 11:35am

The officials left the meeting at 11:37am

6. Oral Briefing from Northern Ireland Renewables Energy Group (NIRIG): Report – Onshore Wind: Economic Benefits in Northern Ireland

The representatives joined the meeting at 11:43am

Members received a briefing from Ms Meabh Cormacain, Policy and Communications Coordinator, NIRIG, Ms Lucy Whitford, Head of Development for Ireland, Renewable Energy Systems Ltd, Mr Peter Baillie, Managing Director, Energia Renewables and Mr James Smyth, Contracts Director, Alexanders (Civil Engineering).

The key issues discussed were the NIRIG Report – Onshore Wind: Economic Benefits in Northern Ireland and the key factors affecting both large scale and small scale developments regarding the consultation on the closure of the NIRO to new onshore wind.

Gordon Dunne returned to the meeting at 11.45am

Megan Fearon left the meeting at 11:55am

Adrian Cochrane-Watson left the meeting at 12:00pm

William Humphrey left the meeting at 12:20pm

The representatives left the meeting at 12:37pm

7. Matters Arising

Members noted correspondence from the Department on the termination of Petroleum Licence PL3/10 by Rathlin Energy Limited.

8. SL1 – The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016

Members considered the SL1 the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2016.

Agreed: the Committee is content with the policy proposals at this stage.

Stephen Agnew left the meeting at 12:38pm

9. Written Briefing from DETI: Update on Sustainable use of Poultry Litter (SUPL) Project

Members noted a written briefing from the Department on the Sustainable use of Poultry Litter (SUPL) Project.

Agreed: to send the paper to the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development for information.

10. Written Briefing from Invest NI: 2015/16 Operating Plan

Members noted a written briefing from Invest NI on its 2015/16 Operating Plan.

Agreed: the Committee is content with the operating plan at this stage.

11. Announcement to Close Michelin, Ballymena

Members discussed the recent meetings with Unite and the Minister on the closure of the Michelin plant in Ballymena.

The Chairperson reminded members that the Committee asked Unite for any information it may have on whether or not Michelin was provided with assistance or incentives to create additional jobs in its Dundee and Stoke facilities.

The Chairperson also reminded members that the Minister had agreed to check if the investment in Stoke and Dundee was in car or truck tyre production, provide any suggestions or proposals on how logistics can be improved, and reflect on the capacity to use the EU Globalisation Fund to support employees.

Agreed: to await the response from the Minister to the issues raised.

12. Written Briefing from the Irish Economic & Social Research Institute: Scoping the Possible Economic Implications of Brexit on Ireland

Members discussed a report by the Irish Economic & Social Research Institute entitled Scoping the Possible Economic Implications of Brexit on Ireland.

Agreed: to forward the report to the Department and the Systems Operator for Northern Ireland (SONI) and ask for their assessment of the energy aspects of the report, especially in relation to the suggestion that Northern Ireland relies on electricity imports from the Republic of Ireland to make up for insufficient local electricity generation capacity.

13. Forward Work Programme

Members discussed the Committee's Forward Work Programme.

Agreed: to invite Dr Leslie Budd to brief the Committee following the Economic Advisory Group briefing next week.

Members discussed correspondence from SONI requesting to brief the Committee on the North-South Interconnector.

Agreed: to invite SONI to brief the Committee on the North-South Interconnector in January 2016.

Agreed: the Committee agreed the Forward Work Programme.

14. Correspondence

Members noted the following items of correspondence;

- i. Correspondence from an individual on proposals by the Department to grant prospecting licences in County Tyrone.

Agreed: to forward to DETI and to the Department of the Environment for comment.

- ii. An invitation from Collaboration NI to their event on Whole of Government Approaches.

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

- iii. Correspondence from an individual in relation to a business opportunity.

Agreed: to write to the individual advising them to contact Invest NI or their local Enterprise Agency.

- iv. An invitation from Fold Housing Association to an event they are hosting.

- v. Correspondance from Ofcom detailing their Annual Plan 2016-2017.

- vi. Update from DETI on prompt payment for 6 months September 2015.

- vii. Correspondance from the Committee for Finance and Personnel regarding a Legislative Consent Motion (LCM) to place a cap on exit payments.

15. Any other Business

There were no additional items of business.

16. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Tuesday 17th November 2015 at 10.00am in Room 29, Parliament Buildings

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12:45pm

Mr Patsy McGlone
Chairperson
Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment

17th November 2015