



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**17 NOVEMBER 2015**

**ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, 10:00am**

**Present:**

Mr Patsy McGlone (Chairperson)  
Mr Conor Murphy (Deputy 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:**

None

*The meeting began at 10:30am*

### **1. Apologies**

No apologies were recorded.

### **2. Draft Minutes of Meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

*Agreed:* the Committee agreed the draft minutes of 10<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

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

The Chairperson welcomed Lord Morrow MLA to the Committee and asked members if they are content to write to Paul Girvan MLA thanking him for his input and commitment to the work of the Committee.

Members noted the Declaration of Interests for Lord Morrow MLA.

*Agreed:* to write a thank you letter to Paul Girvan MLA.

The Chairperson raised an issue regarding the statement made by the Minister in plenary in reference to the Committee's position on the proposed closure of the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation (NIRO) to onshore wind.

*Agreed:* to write to the Speaker asking that the record is corrected to state the actual Committee position on the matter.

The Chairperson informed members of a request from Alex Attwood MLA that the Committee invite the management of Dunnes Stores to brief the committee regarding recent food outlet closures and lack of engagement by managers of the company with staff or elected representatives.

*Agreed:* to invite Dunnes Stores to provide a written briefing to the Committee, in the first instance, on their future plans for Northern Ireland and their plans to ensure appropriate engagement with staff, the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers (USDAW) and elected representatives.

*Máirtín Ó Muilleoir left the meeting at 10:34am*

The Chairperson informed members of correspondence from Enterprise Northern Ireland highlighting the suspension of the Super Connected Cities Voucher Scheme by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

*Agreed:* to forward to DETI, BT and Ofcom and consider again at the oral briefing on the 24<sup>th</sup> November.

*Agreed:* to invite Enterprise NI to brief the Committee on their economic development activities.

The Chairperson informed members that PriceWaterhouse Coopers has completed a global study on Cities of Opportunity and looked at Belfast among other cities.

*Agreed:* that Paul Terrington, the Northern Ireland Regional Chairperson, brief the Committee.

The Chairperson discussed with members the Committee's agreement to forward a submission to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee inquiry into promoting the tourism industry in Northern Ireland through the tax system.

*Agreed:* to ask Assembly Research to provide a paper on the hospitality and tourism sector on how the reduction of VAT in the Republic of Ireland has helped to support the tourism industry and stimulate growth in the tourism sector.

The Committee considered a draft Christmas card list.

*Agreed:* to add Minister for Finance and Personnel, Arlene Foster MLA, to the list.

*Agreed:* to send a traditional card rather than an electronic version.

#### **4. Legislation: SR 2015 000: The Renewable Heat Incentive Schemes (Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015**

*The officials joined the meeting at 10:44am*

Members received a briefing from Mr Stuart Wightman, Principal, Energy Efficiency Branch, DETI, and Ms Adele Willis, Staff Officer, Energy Efficiency Branch, DETI.

Members considered the SR The Renewable Heat Incentive Schemes (Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

*Agreed:* that the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment has considered SR The Renewable Heat Incentive Schemes (Amendments) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and recommends that it be affirmed in the Assembly.

*The officials left the meeting at 10:47am*

#### **5. Credit Unions and Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Bill – Preliminary View**

*The officials joined the meeting at 10:48am*

Members received a briefing from Mr Keith Brown, Principal, Business Regulation, DETI, Mr John Gamble, Staff Officer, Company Law Branch, DETI, and Mr Richard Scott, Staff Officer, Company Law Branch, DETI.

*Lord Morrow joined the meeting at 10:49am*

The key issues discussed were on Clause 13A and Clause 15.

*Agreed:* that the Committee is content with the Departmental response to Clause 1.

*Agreed:* that the Committee is content that the addition of Clause 13A will address the Committee's concerns regarding Clause 1.

*Agreed:* that the Committee is content with Clause 1 as drafted.

*Agreed:* that the Committee has no issues to raise on Clauses 2 to 7.

*Agreed:* that the Committee is content with the Departmental response in relation to Clause 8.

*Agreed:* that the Committee has no issues to raise on Clauses 9 to 14.

*Agreed:* that the Committee is content with the Departmental response to Clause 15.

*Agreed:* that the Committee is content with the proposed amendment to Clause 15 and with the Departmental proposal to bring a further minor technical amendment at Consideration Stage.

*Agreed:* that the Committee has no issues to raise on Clauses 16 and 17.

*Agreed:* that the Committee has no issues to raise on Schedules 1 and 2.

*The officials left the meeting at 10:52am*

## **6. Credit Unions and Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Bill – Formal Clause by Clause**

The Committee formally scrutinised, Clause-by-Clause, the Credit Unions and Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Bill and agreed the following:

### **Credit Unions**

*Clause 1:* Corporate members of credit unions.

*Question put and agreed:* that the Committee is content with Clause 1 as drafted, subject to the addition of a new Clause 13A.

**Clause 2:** Removal of restriction on non-qualifying members of a credit union.

**Clause 3:** Interest-bearing shares.

**Clause 4:** Attachment of shares.

**Clause 5:** Supply by credit union of copies of its rules.

**Clause 6:** Application of surplus funds towards social, cultural or charitable purposes.

**Clause 7:** Application of directors disqualification provisions to credit unions.

*Question put and agreed:* that the Committee is content with Clauses 2 to 7, as drafted.

### **Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies**

**Clause 8:** Registration of societies as co-operative or community benefit societies etc.

**Clause 9:** Members under 18 years old.

**Clause 10:** Removal of limit on holding of non-withdrawable shares.

**Clause 11:** Year of account.

**Clause 12:** Publication of unaudited interim accounts.

**Clause 13:** Dissolution of a registered society by an instrument of dissolution.

**Clause 14:** Interpretation.

*Question put and agreed:* that the Committee is content with Clauses 8 to 14, as drafted.

### **General**

**Clause 15:** Minor and consequential amendments.

*Question put and agreed:* that the Committee is content with Clause 15 subject to the proposed amendment and is content with the wording of the proposed amendment, subject to a further minor technical amendment to be brought at Consideration Stage.

**Clause 16:** Commencement.

**Clause 17:** Short Title

*Question put and agreed:* that the Committee is content with Clauses 16 and 17 as drafted.

### **Schedules and Long Title**

**Schedule 1:** Minor and consequential amendments.

**Part 1:** Amendments consequential on section 1.

**Part 2:** Amendments consequential on section 8.

**Part 3:** Removal of obsolete material etc.

**Schedule 2:** Transitional provision.

*Question put and agreed:* that the Committee is content with Schedules 1 and 2, as drafted.

***Long Title***

*Question put and agreed:* that the Committee is content with the Long Title, as drafted.

*Agreed:* to consider the draft report and final report of the Bill at next week's meeting.

**7. Oral Briefing from Firmus Energy: Update on Business Plan**

*The representatives joined the meeting at 10:55am*

*Fearghal McKinney left the meeting at 10:55am*

*William Humphrey joined the meeting at 10:56am*

*Gordon Dunne joined the meeting at 10:56am*

*Paul Givan joined the meeting at 11:22am*

*The Chairperson left the meeting at 11:26am*

*The Deputy Chairperson took the Chair at 11:26am*

Members received a briefing from Mr Michael Scott, Managing Director, Firmus Energy, Mr Eric Congrove, Director of Engineering, Firmus Energy and Mr Paul Stanfield, Director of Sales, Firmus Energy.

The key issue discussed was the Firmus Energy Business Plan and the ongoing developments in the Energy sector.

Firmus Energy agreed to forward maps and charts of development plans to the Committee.

*The representatives left the meeting at 11:30am*

**8. Oral Briefing from Economic Advisory Group (EAG): Economic Update**

*The representatives joined the meeting at 11:31am*

*Adrian Cochrane-Watson left the meeting at 11:39am*

*Paul Givan left the meeting at 11:44am*

*The Chairperson resumed the Chair at 11:54am*

*Conor Murphy left the meeting at 12:02pm*

Members received a briefing from Ms Ellvena Graham, Chairperson, Economic Advisory Group and Mr Shane Murphy, Senior principal, DETI Analytical Services Unit, DETI.

The key issues discussed were the possible Reduction in Co-operation Tax, Job Creation and the role of EAG.

*Agreed:* to request an annual briefing from the EAG.

*The representatives left the meeting at 12:03pm*

## **9. Matters Arising**

*William Humphrey left the meeting at 12:04pm*

Members considered correspondence from Simple Power and the Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) in regards to the proposed closure of NIRO to onshore wind.

*Agreed:* to invite a delegation of small scale wind developers to brief the Committee.

Members considered correspondence from the Minister for Employment and Learning in response to the Committee's request for a meeting to discuss the impact of closure of the Michelin plant in Ballymena.

*Agreed:* to contact the Committee for Employment and Learning to arrange an informal meeting with that Committee and the Minister.

Members considered a Departmental response regarding the economic impact on Northern Ireland of a UK exit from the EU.

*Agreed:* the Committee will await the Oxford Economics report.

Members considered a Departmental response in regards to Horizon 2020.

*Agreed:* to forward the response to Professor Waugh, Queen's University centre for cancer Research and Cell Biology, for information.

Members discussed correspondence from mobile network operator, Three.

*Agreed:* to forward to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport as a follow up to the briefing on the Mobile Infrastructure Project.

Members considered correspondence from the Mobile Network Operators.

*Agreed:* to forward to the Committee for the Environment for information.

## **10. Written Briefing from DETI: Corporation Tax Research Update**

Members considered a written briefing from the Department providing an update on corporation tax research as well as a summary report and technical report from the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre.

*Agreed:* to forward to the Committee Specialist Advisor.

*Agreed:* to invite a representative from the Ulster University Economic Policy Centre to brief the Committee on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015.

## **11. Written Briefing from Assembly Research: Northern Ireland Tourism Structure and Sectors**

Members considered the two research papers.

*Agreed:* to ask the Department to provide an update on the Hunter Review and its recommendations.

*Agreed:* to ask the Department to comment on how Council tourism strategies are developing and how Tourism NI is collaborating with the Councils in their development, implementation and monitoring.

*Agreed:* as there seems to be a lot going on across Departments in areas that impact tourism development but there is an absence of a central strategy and monitoring of a strategy, to ask the department for its assessment of how these linkages have impacted on tourism development and growth in tourism numbers.

## **12. Written Briefing from Assembly Research: Comparison between GB Small-Scale Feed-in Tariff (FITs) and NIRO**

Members noted the research paper.

*Agreed:* to consider again when considering issues relating to the Renewables Obligation Closure Order.

*Agreed:* to forward the paper to Simple Power, Wind NI and Renewables NI for information.

*Agreed:* to ask Assembly research to add to the paper on NIRO and FITs how small-scale wind generation is incentivised in the Republic of Ireland.

## **13. EU Matters – Issue 08/2015**

Members noted the EU Matters newsletter.



## **14. Correspondence**

Members noted the following items of correspondence:

- i. Correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel in relation to Monitoring of Savings Delivery Plans 2014-15.

*Agreed:* to forward to the Department for comment.

*Agreed:* to consider again at the briefing by InterTradeIreland on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2015.

- ii. Correspondence from the Energy Savings Trust requesting a briefing to the Committee.

*Agreed:* to receive an oral briefing.

- iii. Correspondence from the Committee for the Environment in relation to West Tyrone against Wind Turbines.

*Agreed:* to forward to the Department for comment.

## **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 24<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at 10.00am in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

*The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 12:20pm*

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

**24<sup>th</sup> November 2015**