

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

**WEDNESDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 2016, THE SENATE CHAMBER,
PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS**

- Present: Mr Robin Swann MLA (Chairperson)
Mr Daniel McCrossan (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Trevor Clarke MLA
Mr Gordon Dunne MLA
Mr Alex Easton MLA
Mrs Michelle Gildernew MLA
Mr Declan Kearney MLA
Ms Carla Lockhart MLA
- Apologies: Mr Robbie Butler MLA
Mr Trevor Lunn MLA
Mr Oliver McMullan MLA
- In Attendance: Ms Lucia Wilson, Assembly Clerk
Ms Elaine Farrell, Assistant Assembly Clerk
Ms Karen Barry, Clerical Supervisor
Mr Darren Weir, Clerical Officer
Mr Jonathan McMillan, Head of Legal Services (for agenda item 1)

2.09 pm The meeting began in Closed Session.

1. Inquiry into Non-domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) Scheme: Legal Advice

The Head of Legal Services briefed the Committee on advice it requested in relation to Freedom of Information issues.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department to request details of the Suppliers/Installers to the RHI Scheme broken down by industry.

2. Preparation Session on NIAO Report on Non-domestic Renewable Heat Incentive

Noted: The Committee noted the guidance on Public Comment during PAC Inquiries and Parliamentary Privilege.

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft correspondence to issue to a media query in respect of an interview request.

Noted: The Committee noted the correspondence from Dr McCormick dated 23 November 2016 on a range of issues in respect of the RHI Inquiry.

2.42 p.m. Mr Clarke and Mr Easton left the meeting.

Noted: The Committee noted the final PWC report on Project Heat.

2.43 p.m. Mrs Gildnernew joined the meeting.

2.44 p.m. Mr Clarke and Mr Easton re-joined the meeting.

2.45 p.m. Mr McCrossan left the meeting.

The Committee discussed its approach to the evidence session with the Department of Finance.

2.51 p.m. The meeting moved into Open Session.

3. Apologies

Noted above.

4. Chairperson's business

None

5. Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2016

Agreed: The draft minutes of the meeting on 23 November 2016 were agreed.

6. Matters arising

None

7. Correspondence

None

8. Evidence Session on NIAO Report on Non-domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) Scheme

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 2.53 p.m.

Mr David Sterling, Accounting Officer, DoF

Ms Emer Morelli, Head of Supply Division, DoF

The officials briefed the Committee and this was followed by a question and answer session.

2.54 p.m. Mr Dunne joined the meeting.
3.10 p.m. Ms Lockhart left the meeting.
3.28 p.m. Ms Lockhart rejoined the meeting.
3.36 p.m. Mr Clarke left the meeting.
3.39 p.m. Mr Clarke re-joined the meeting.
4.36 p.m. Mr McCrossan left the meeting.
4.36 p.m. Mr Clarke left the meeting.
4.38 p.m. Mr Dunne left the meeting.
4.41 p.m. Mr McCrossan re-joined the meeting.
4.42 p.m. Mr Dunne re-joined the meeting.
4.44 p.m. Ms Lockhart left the meeting.
4.59 p.m. Ms Lockhart re-joined the meeting.
5.04 p.m. Mr Easton left the meeting.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department for the Economy on a range of issues which arose from the evidence session with the Department of Finance.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to move into Closed Session.

5.05 p.m. *The meeting moved into Closed Session.*

9. Inquiry into the Non-domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) Scheme: Discussion with NIAO officials.

The following NIAO officials joined the meeting:

Kieran Donnelly, Comptroller and Auditor General
Kerry Harkin, Assembly Liaison Officer
Tomás Wilkinson, Director
Brian O'Neill, Audit Manager

The Committee discussed the evidence it had taken from the Department with the NIAO.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to write to the Department for the Economy to request an update on the fact finding exercise on RHI.

10. Forward Work Programme

Agreed: The Committee agreed the draft Forward Work Programme.

11. Any Other Business

None.

12. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting of the Public Accounts Committee will take place on Wednesday 7 December 2016 at 2.00 p.m. in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings.

The meeting adjourned at 5.20 p.m.

Mr Robin Swann (Chairperson)
Public Accounts Committee