Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Infrastructure
Room 416
Parliament Buildings

Tel: +44 (0)28 9052 1787

To: **Peter McCallion, Clerk to the Committee for the Economy**

From: **Michael Potter, Clerk to the Committee for Infrastructure**

Date: **15 September 2026**

Subject: **The Renewable Electricity Generation Bill**

Dear Peter,

Thank you for your correspondence regarding a call for evidence regarding the Renewable Electricity Generation Bill.

At its meeting on the 9 September 2026, the Committee considered the Bill and agreed a nil response.

Best Regards,

Michael Potter
Clerk to the Committee for Infrastructure

Northern Ireland Assembly

Committee for Justice
Room 345
Parliament Buildings
Tel: +44 (028) 905 21033
Email: [redacted]

From: **Kathy O'Hanlon, Clerk to the Committee for Justice**
Date: **15 September 2026**
To: **Peter McCallion, Clerk to the Committee for the Economy**
Subject: **Renewable Electricity Generation Bill**

Dear Peter,

At its meeting on 10 September 2026, the Committee for Justice considered your correspondence of 2 July 2026 regarding the Renewable Electricity Generation Bill call for evidence.

The Committee agreed to forward a nil response.

Kind regards,

[redacted]

Kathy O'Hanlon
Clerk to the Committee for Justice

COMMITTEE FOR THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE
Room 254
Parliament Buildings
Tel: 028 9052 1928
Email: Committee.Executive@niassembly.gov.uk

FROM: Nick Mitford, Clerk to the Committee for the Executive Office

DATE: 17 September 2026

TO: Peter McCallion, Clerk to the Committee for the Economy

Renewable Electricity Generation Bill

Dear Peter,

At its meeting on 16 September 2026, the Committee for the Executive Office considered correspondence from The Executive Office in relation to your correspondence of 2 July 2026 regarding the Renewable Electricity Generation Bill.

The Committee agreed to forward a nil response and I would be grateful if you could bring this to the attention of your Committee.

Best regards

Nick Mitford
Clerk to the Committee for the Executive Office

Northern Ireland Assembly

Committee for Education
Room 428
Parliament Buildings

Tel: +44 (0)28 9052 1240

Email: committee.education@niassembly.gov.uk

To: Peter McCallion, Clerk, Committee for the Economy

From: Aoibhinn Treanor, Clerk to the Committee for Education

Date: 16 September 2026

Subject: Renewable Electricity Generation Bill

Peter,

At its meeting on 16 September 2026 the Committee for Education considered your memo regarding Renewable Electricity Generation Bill.

I should be most grateful if you would record a nil return from the Committee for Education.

Sincerely,

Aoibhinn Treanor
Clerk to the Committee for Education

Northern Ireland Assembly

Committee for Communities
Room 430
Parliament Buildings
Tel: +44 (0) 28 90521895
[redacted]

RESPONSE TO THE COMMITTEE FOR THE ECONOMY ON ITS CALL FOR EVIDENCE IN RELATION TO THE RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY GENERATION BILL

Agreed on 24 September 2026

Introduction

1. This paper sets out the formal response from the Committee for Communities to the Committee for the Economy in respect of its Call for Evidence on the Renewable Electricity Generation Bill ("the Bill"). This submission has been prepared following a request for views issued on 2 July 2026 (EC2026:938).
2. To inform its position, the Committee has considered the Bill as introduced, its accompanying Explanatory and Financial Memorandum (EFM) and the Official Report of the Second Stage debate on 8 September 2026.
3. The Committee notes that the Bill provides the framework for the Renewable Electricity Price Guarantee (REPG) scheme. In broad terms, the scheme would guarantee a renewable electricity generator a fixed price for the electricity it produces. Where the market price falls below that guaranteed price, the generator is paid the difference; where the market price rises above it, the generator pays the difference back. The money to fund the scheme is raised through a levy on electricity suppliers. The Committee for Communities offers no view on the design of the scheme, which is a matter of energy policy properly reserved to the Committee for the Economy and to the Department for the Economy (DfE). This submission is confined to three provisions of the Bill that engage the responsibilities of the Department for Communities (DfC), each arising from the fact that the Bill provides for payments to be made to, and for a levy to be recovered, in respect of individual households.

General Position

4. The Committee notes that the Bill is largely enabling in character. It creates the powers under which the scheme would operate, but leaves almost all of the detail, including who pays, who is paid, how much, and on what conditions, to be set out later in regulations. The Committee notes that the majority of those regulations are subject to the draft affirmative procedure. The Committee further notes the commitment given by the Minister for the Economy at Second Stage that the elements of the scheme dealing with terms and conditions and financial matters will be brought forward by that procedure, so that the Committee for the Economy is able to scrutinise them fully.

5. The observations below are made in that context. They are directed not at the principles of the Bill, but at matters which the Committee considers may be settled in the design of the regulations, and on which the Department for Communities holds relevant operational responsibility.

Key Scrutiny Points from a Communities Perspective

Community benefit payments and means-tested social security (clause 13)

6. Clause 13 is the Bill's community benefit provision. It would enable the Department to require a generator holding a contract under the scheme to pay specified sums to specified people living near the generating station concerned. The clause allows the regulations to determine who is eligible by reference to whether a person owns, or lives at, a property within the locality of the station; to require an eligible person to make an application before payment can be made; and to provide for how applications are decided, for reasons to be given, and for a right of review or appeal. The Committee notes the Minister's statement at Second Stage that it is her intention that households will receive the financial benefit of hosting the infrastructure, and that she wishes the arrangement to be mandatory rather than voluntary.

7. The Department for Communities administers Universal Credit, Pension Credit, Housing Benefit and the other income-related benefits in Northern Ireland. Entitlement to those benefits is assessed against a claimant's income and savings. Where a recurring payment is made to a householder under a statutory scheme, a question therefore arises as to whether that payment would be counted as income, or as capital, when entitlement is calculated. If it were, a proportion of recipients on low incomes could see the value of the community benefit payment reduced by a corresponding reduction in the benefits they receive. That outcome would be at odds with the purpose of the

provision as described by the Minister at Second Stage, and would fall disproportionately on the households least able to absorb it.

8. The Committee makes no assumption as to the answer, which will depend on the design of the clause 13 regulations, on how often and in what form the payments are made, and on how comparable payments are treated under existing social security rules. The Committee observes only that the question is foreseeable, and that it is more readily resolved in the design of the regulations than after the first payments have been made.

9. **Recommendation:** The Committee for Communities recommends that the Committee for the Economy seek from the Department for the Economy an assessment of how community benefit payments under clause 13 would be treated when entitlement to income-related social security benefits is calculated, and that the Department for Communities be engaged at official level in the development of the clause 13 regulations, so that the interaction is settled before those regulations are made.

Eligibility, tenure and accessibility of community benefit (clause 13)

10. The Committee welcomes the fact that clause 13(2)(c) extends eligibility to persons who live at a property within the locality of a generating station as well as to those who own it, so that tenants as well as owner-occupiers may qualify. The Committee notes the exchanges at Second Stage on what the qualifying locality will be, including how close to a generating station a household would need to be in order to benefit, and the Minister's confirmation that this has not yet been determined and will be the subject of further regulations and consultation.

11. A proportion of the households within the locality of any given generating station will almost certainly be social tenancies of the NI Housing Executive or of registered housing associations, and a number may be placements in supported or temporary accommodation.

12. The Committee suggests that the Committee for the Economy may wish to satisfy itself that the eligibility criteria will operate equitably in respect of those households; that it is clear who is entitled to apply, and to be paid, where the occupier of a property is not its owner; and that the steps a generator would be required to take under clause 13(2)(f) to bring the arrangements to the attention of those who may be eligible are sufficient to secure take-up. The Committee notes in this regard that clause 13(2)(e) would allow the regulations to make an application a condition of eligibility, so that a household which does not apply would not be paid. The Committee's experience of the take-up of grants and entitlements within its own remit is

that schemes which require an application can under-reach the households they are most intended to assist.

Supplier levy, exempt supplies and household affordability (clauses 10 and 12)

13. Clause 10 requires the Department to make regulations imposing a levy on electricity suppliers. That levy is the means by which the scheme is funded: suppliers pay into it, and the sums collected are used to meet the guaranteed-price payments due to generators. The Committee notes the observations of a number of Members at Second Stage that, while the levy is placed on suppliers, its cost may be reflected in the amounts those suppliers charge to households and businesses — that is, passed on through electricity bills. The Committee also notes that clause 10(4) and (5) would allow supplies of a specified description to be treated as exempt supplies, with the effect that the cost of the levy is left out of account when calculating what the customer receiving such a supply is charged. The Bill does not specify on its face which descriptions of supply that mechanism might apply to.

14. Energy costs are a structural driver of poverty and are addressed within the Northern Ireland Executive's Anti-Poverty Strategy 2025–2035, for which the Department for Communities is the lead Department, and through the Affordable Warmth and Warm Healthy Homes schemes delivered by that Department. The Committee accordingly has a continuing interest in how the cost of the levy would fall across households of different means, and would welcome consideration during Committee Stage of how that effect is to be assessed and, if appropriate, mitigated, including whether the exempt supply mechanism at clause 10(4) and (5) is intended to have any application in that regard.

15. Clause 12 provides for money to flow back to electricity suppliers where market prices rise above the guaranteed price. Clause 12(3) would allow, but would not require, the Department to make regulations obliging a supplier which receives such a payment to secure that its customers receive a benefit from it within a specified time. The Committee notes that the question of whether that provision should require rather than merely permit such regulations was raised at Second Stage, and that the Minister indicated that no specified time is presently in mind and invited the Committee for the Economy to examine the matter. The Committee for Communities offers no view on that question, which is one of scheme design, but records that the outcome will bear directly on the affordability considerations set out above.

Conclusion

16. The Committee for Communities' observations are confined to the operation of the community benefit provisions at clause 13 and to the effect of the supplier levy at clause 10 on household energy costs, both of which engage the responsibilities of the Department for Communities in respect of social security, social and supported housing, and the (final) Anti-Poverty Strategy 2025–2035. The Committee considers that these are matters best resolved in the design of the regulations, and encourages the engagement of the Department for Communities to that end.

17. The Committee for Communities trusts that these observations will be given due consideration in the Committee for the Economy's scrutiny of the Bill.

Northern Ireland Assembly

Committee for Finance
Room 346
Parliament Buildings

Tel: +44 (0)28 9052 1799

To: **Peter McCallion, Clerk to the Communities Committee**

From: **Peter Hall, Clerk to the Finance committee**

Date: **8th October 2026**

Subject: **Call For Evidence on the Renewable Electricity Generation Bill**

Dear Peter,

Following the Call For Evidence on the Renewable Electricity Generation Bill, the Committee for Finance agreed to ask the Department of Finance if there is a policy locus for it in the provisions of the Renewable Electricity Generation Bill and if it is engaged in respect of the financial cost for the Bill.

At its meeting on 7th October, the Committee considered a response from the Department in which it states that the Renewable Electricity Generation Bill provides the legislative framework to enable the Department for the Economy to establish a Renewable Electricity Premium Generation (REPG) scheme, based on the Contracts for Difference (CfD) model. The policy intent is to support delivery of renewable electricity targets, contribute to decarbonisation and energy security objectives, and assist in meeting climate change commitments. DoF does not have a policy locus in relation to this Bill.

In relation to financial implications, the Bill provides for the costs associated with the operation of the CfD scheme to be met through a supplier levy paid by electricity suppliers, rather than being funded directly from public expenditure.

The Committee agreed to share this information with the Committee for the Economy.

You will wish to share this with your committee.

Regards,

Peter Hall

Clerk to the Finance Committee

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Point 15 – Members would ask the Department if there is a policy locus for it in the provisions of the Renewable Electricity Bill.
In addition Members would ask the Department if it is engaged in respect of the financial cost for each Bill.

Response –

The Renewable Electricity Generation Bill provides the legislative framework to enable the Department for the Economy to establish a Renewable Electricity Premium Generation (REPG) scheme, based on the Contracts for Difference (CfD) model. The policy intent is to support delivery of renewable electricity targets, contribute to decarbonisation and energy security objectives, and assist in meeting climate change commitments. DoF does not have a policy locus in relation to this Bill.

In relation to financial implications, the Bill provides for the costs associated with the operation of the CfD scheme to be met through a supplier levy paid by electricity suppliers, rather than being funded directly from public expenditure.

Northern Ireland Assembly

Committee for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Room 285
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont

From: **Dr Janice Thompson**
Clerk to the Committee

Date: **27 August 2026**

To: **Peter McCallion, Clerk to the Committee for the Economy**

Subject: **Renewable Electricity Generation Bill - Call for Evidence**

Dear Peter

The Committee for the Economy wrote to the AERA Committee on 2 July 2026 seeking its views on the objectives, proposals and potential consequences of the Bill.

The AERA Committee considered the Bill at its meeting on 10 August 2026 and agreed to respond highlighting some aspects it wished the Committee of the Economy to consider during its Committee Stage.

The AERA Committee proposed that the Committee for the Economy gives consideration to ensuring the scheme delivers renewable energy targets in a way that protects agricultural land, enhances biodiversity, benefits rural communities, and avoids unintended environmental consequences.

Regards,

Dr Janice Thompson, Committee Clerk