



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

COMMITTEE FOR ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

04 NOVEMBER 2014

ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, 10.00AM

Present:

Mr Phil Flanagan (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Steven Agnew
Mr Sydney Anderson
Mr Gordon Dunne
Ms Megan Fearon
Mr Paul Frew
Mr Chris Hazzard
Mr William Humphrey
Mr Danny Kinahan
Mr Fearghal McKinney

In Attendance:

Mr Jim McManus (Assembly Clerk)
Ms Angela McParland (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Mr Nathan McVeigh (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Christopher Jeffrey (Clerical Officer)
Mr Peadar Ó Lamhna (Bursary Student)

Apologies:

Mr Patsy McGlone (Chairperson)

The meeting began at 10.12am with the Deputy Chairperson presiding

1. Apologies

Apologies were noted, as listed above.

2. Chairperson's Business

Members noted a copy of a briefing on Horizon 2020 funding opportunities by Minister Damien English.

Members considered a draft press release for the joint meeting with the Oireachtas Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.

Agreed: members were content with the press release and agreed to allow the Chairs of both Committees to make any amendments if needed.

3. Draft minutes of meeting of 21st October 2014

Agreed: the Committee agreed the draft minutes of 21st October 2014.

4. Oral briefing from Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment on key issues and Finance

The representatives joined the meeting at 10:16am

Members received an oral briefing from Mrs Arlene Foster, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Mr Andrew McCormick, Permanent Secretary, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment and Mr Eugene Rooney, Deputy Secretary and Head of Management Services Group, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment.

Key issues discussed included: recent job announcements in Northern Ireland, the increase in tourism figures, regional disparity in relation to job creation, events tourism and the Tourism Events National Sponsorship Scheme, the economic inactivity strategy, multi-annual funding to events, the bio-sciences sector, broadband issues, InterTradeIreland and its budget, Horizon2020, the relationship between the IDA and Invest NI, Foreign Direct Investment within the UK, the airline industry and air links with the Americas and Middle East and corporation tax.

The representatives left the meeting at 11:40am

5. Oral Briefing: NI Solar Trade Association (NISTA) and Action Renewables – Impact of Changes to the Renewables Obligation on the Solar PV Industry

The representatives joined the meeting at 11:41am

Danny Kinahan joined the meeting at 11:50am

Members received an oral briefing from Mr Michael Doran, Executive Director, Action Renewables, Mr Neil O'Brien, Chairman, NISTA, Mr Andrew Baird, Director, Planet Solar and Mr Trevor Finlay, Managing Director, Galgorm Renewables.

Key issues discussed included: PV in Northern Ireland compared to the rest of the UK, job losses within the solar panel installation sector, the impact in decreasing ROCs from 4 to 1.6, the costs to consumers, techniques used by door to door salesmen in selling solar products and the free solar PV model.

William Humphrey left the meeting at 12:13pm

Megan Fearon left the meeting at 12:22pm

Sydney Anderson left the meeting at 12:37pm

The representatives left the meeting at 12:58pm

Danny Kinahan left the meeting at 1:00pm

6. Matters Arising

Members noted a response from the Department regarding the Committee's recent query on whether the Department has given any consideration to moving GSNI from Tourism Policy to Energy.

Members noted a response from Invest NI regarding the Committee's request to engage informally with Invest NI overseas representatives during the next Invest NI annual event and also receive an oral briefing from the overseas representatives when in Northern Ireland to attend the event.

Members noted a response from the Department to the Committee's queries from the USA Visit Report action list regarding the creation of jobs and the prevention of the cost of living from rising above what many can afford.

Agreed: the Committee agreed to publish all responses from the action list on the Committee's web page once received.

Members noted correspondence from Mr John Paul Coakley, Director of Operations, RTÉ Radio, regarding the closure of the RTÉ 1 Longwave Service.

Members noted a response from the Consumer Council regarding the Business, Innovation and Skills Select Committee Inquiry in relation to postal competition and the universal service obligation.

Members noted a copy of a letter from DETI to an individual regarding hydrocarbon licensing.

Members noted details from the Utility Regulator regarding a web link to sign up for the Utility Regulator's news alert service.

7. Legislation: SL1 Health Safety (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2014

Members considered SL1 Health and Safety (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2014.

Agreed: the Committee is content with the policy implications of the proposed legislation.

Danny Kinahan re-joined the meeting at 1:03pm

8. Legislation: SL1 The Gas and Electricity Licence Modification and Appeals Regulations (NI) 2014

Members considered SL1 The Gas and Electricity Licence Modification and Appeals Regulations (NI) 2014.

Agreed: the Committee is content with the policy implications of the proposed legislation.

9. Legislation: SL1 The Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Repeals, Revocations and Amendments) Regulations (NI) 2014

Members considered SL1 The Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Repeals, Revocations and Amendments) Regulations (NI) 2014.

Agreed: the Committee is content with the policy implications of the proposed legislation.

10. Written briefing: DETI: Prompt Payment of Invoices – 6 month report to 30 September 2014

Members considered a written briefing from the Department covering the performance of DETI and its Non Departmental Public Bodies on the payment of invoices during the 6 months ending 30 September 2014.

Agreed: the Committee agreed to ask the Consumer Council for the reasons in the dip in performance during May and June and what steps have been taken to prevent this happening again.

11. Written Briefing from DETI: Renewable Heat Incentive Update

Members considered a written briefing from the Department providing an update on the Renewable Heat Incentive scheme.

Agreed: the Committee to ask the Department for the date of the launch of the domestic Renewable Heat Incentive.

12. Assembly EU Matters Newsletter

Members considered the October edition of the EU Matters newsletter and noted the sections on ‘Cutting Red Tape for SMEs’, ‘Energy Costs and Subsidies in the EU’ and the European Entrepreneurial Region (NI winner).

13. Correspondence

Members noted the following items of correspondence:

- i. Correspondence from the Chairperson of the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure to the Minister regarding the North West 200.
- ii. Correspondence from the Chairperson of the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure to the Minister regarding the Ulster Orchestra.
- iii. Correspondence from the John Smith Memorial Trust regarding the visit to Parliament Buildings by Dr Ali Al Sudany, Professor of Strategic Management at the University of Baghdad and also Special Advisor to the Iraqi Minister for Defence. The Committee also noted a request for a representative of the Committee to join Dr Sudany for lunch on Tuesday 18th November at 12:30pm in the Members’ Dining Room.

Agreed: members to confirm attendance with the Committee Office.

- iv. Correspondence from the Chairs’ Forum of an on-line questionnaire regarding the effectiveness of corporate governance of public bodies in the Northern Ireland public sector.
- v. Correspondence from the Northern Ireland Body Shop Alliance regarding a campaign to inform customers that they have a choice of

which vehicle repairer will carry out repairs to their vehicle following an insured accident.

Agreed: the Committee to forward the correspondence to the Trading Standards Service and Consumer Council for comment in a joint response.

- vi. Two items of correspondence from the Cathedral Quarter Trust calling for the reinstatement of the Tourism Events National Sponsorship Scheme.

Agreed: the Committee to seek a written briefing from the Cathedral Quarter Trust.

- vii. Correspondence from the Committee for Employment and Learning regarding a stakeholder event re: Inquiry into Post Special Educational Need Provision in Education, Employment and Training for those with learning difficulties.

- viii. Correspondence from DETI notifying the Committee of the amendment of the title for the Credit Unions & Industrial and Provident Societies Bill to Credit Unions & Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Bill.

- ix. An invitation to attend an Open University event sponsored by the Committee for Employment and Learning on 25 November 2014 in the Long Gallery, Parliament Buildings.

Agreed: members to contact the Committee Office regarding their attendance by Thursday 6 November.

- x. Correspondence from Farmgas Community Partners Ltd regarding the DETI consultation of phase 2 of the RHI scheme and in particular the proposal to provide an incentive for large biomass renewable energy.

Agreed: the Committee to forward this item of correspondence to DETI for comment.

- xi. Correspondence from the Chairperson of the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure to the Minister regarding the visit by the BBC Director General.

- xii. Correspondence from the Chairperson of Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure to the Minister regarding a creative arts ‘virtual’ school.

- xiii. Correspondence from Ulster Bank Ltd regarding a copy of the RBS statement on the review of Ulster Bank’s business north and south and a copy of a press release.

14. Any Other Business

The Committee discussed one item of additional business – the proposed Legislative Consent Motion for the Deregulation Bill.

Agreed: to write to the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development and the Committee for Employment and Learning, as there are provisions in the Bill relating to both DARD and DEL, seeking any information they have received in relation to these matters.

15. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on **Tuesday 11 November at 10.00am** in Room 29, **Parliament Buildings.**

The meeting went into closed session at 1:05pm

Danny Kinahan left the meeting at 1:15pm

16. Electricity Policy Review

Members considered the draft Electricity Policy Review Part III Grid Connection.

The meeting concluded at 1:22pm

Mr Phil Flanagan
Deputy Chairperson
Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment

11 November 2014