



COMMITTEE FOR ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

28 APRIL 2015

ROOM 29, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS, 10.00AM

Present:

Mr Patsy McGlone (Chairperson)
Mr Phil Flanagan (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Steven Agnew
Mr Gordon Dunne
Mr Paul Frew
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 Nathan McVeigh (Clerical Supervisor)
Mr Christopher Jeffrey (Clerical Officer)
Mr Peadar Ó Lamhna (Bursary Student)

Apologies:

Ms Megan Fearon
Mr Danny Kinahan

The meeting began in closed session at 10:14am

1. Oral Briefing from DETI and the Utility Regulator: Electricity Security of Supply. (Closed Session)

Agreed: that the Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer and the Committee Research Officer could be present for the Closed Session.

The Officials joined the meeting at 10:15am

Agreed: Agenda Item 1, Electricity Security of Supply, would not be heard in closed session and would instead be included in Agenda Item 2 in Public Session.

The Meeting was declared Public at 10:19am

2. Oral Briefing from DETI and the Utility Regulator: Energy Issues Update and Inquiry into Economic Growth and Job Creation in a Reduced Tax Environment

Members received a briefing from Ms Tanya Hedley, Director of Compliance and Network Operations, Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation, Ms Jo Aston, Director of Wholesale Markets, Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation and Mr John Mills, Head of Energy Division, DETI.

Key issues discussed included: security of supply, the additional 250MW of capacity, Moyle Interconnector, North-South Interconnector, value for consumers, renewable targets, infrastructure, NIE funding, connections issues, total costs to consumers of repairs, Utility Regulator-SONI-DETI Cooperation, I-SEM, state aid compliance, earnings of Mutual Energy Senior Executives and Solar PV in Domestic Housing.

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir joined the meeting at 11:53am

William Humphrey left the meeting at 11:55am

Agreed: to send a copy of the Hansard of the briefing to SONI for comment.

Agreed: to ask the Utility Regulator for: details of the review that the Utility Regulator carried out into Mutual Energy; to clarify the period of notice needed to be given by AES Corporation to close down Ballylumford power station; and to forward to the Committee their written contribution to the research carried out by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment for its paper on the optimum cost-benefit targets for renewable energy in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: the Utility Regulator to forward to the Committee a written briefing on its engagement with key stakeholders in Northern Ireland on the issue of a reduced tax environment.

Agreed: to forward to the Utility Regulator further questions that the Committee was unable to ask at the briefing due to time constraints.

Agreed: to ask the Department for a written briefing on the expected impact on electricity consumption of devolved corporation tax powers including scenarios considering how demand would be met.

The representatives left the meeting at 12:14pm

The meeting was suspended at 12:14pm due to a Plenary Vote

The meeting resumed at 12:30pm with the following members present:-

Mr Patsy McGlone, Chairperson

Mr Phil Flanagan, Deputy Chairperson

Mr Steven Agnew

Mr Gordon Dunne

Mr Fearghal McKinney

3. Oral Briefing from Grow NI: Inquiry into Economic Growth and Job Creation in a Reduced Tax Environment

Members received a briefing from Mr Eamonn Donaghy, Spokesperson for Grow NI and Head of Tax at KPMG and Mr Carl Whyte, Member of Grow NI and Partner with MW Advocate.

Key issues discussed included: Corporation Tax (Northern Ireland) Act 2015, corporation tax and employment, short-term key proposals, FDI, skills, connectivity of schools and businesses, EU membership.

Paul Frew joined the meeting at 12:35pm

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir joined the meeting at 12:36pm

Steven Agnew left the meeting at 12:45pm

Paul Givan left the meeting at 12:54pm

Paul Frew left the meeting at 12:58pm

The representatives left the meeting at 1:20pm

4. Apologies

Apologies were noted as above.

5. Draft Minutes of Meeting of 21 April 2015

Agreed: the Committee agreed the draft minutes of 21 April 2015.

6. Chairperson's Business

Members discussed an invitation to the Balmoral Show lunch on Thursday 14 May 2015.

Agreed: members are content that the Chairperson attend the event.

The Chairperson informed members that an invitation has been received for the Chairperson or Deputy Chairperson to make the Opening Remarks at the Knowledge Exchange Seminar to be held on Wednesday 24 June 2015 in the Long Gallery.

Agreed: that the Deputy Chairperson make the opening remarks at the seminar, as the Chairperson is unable to attend due to Committee business.

7. Matters Arising

Members noted a Departmental response to the Committee's queries in respect of St Patrick's Barracks in Ballymena.

Members considered a Quarterly Economic Survey from the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Agreed: to include the survey in the evidence for the Committee's Inquiry into economic growth and job creation in a reduced tax environment.

Members noted a written submission from Invest NI for the Committee's Inquiry which had been referred to in last week's oral briefing by Invest NI. The paragraph referred to had been omitted from the papers provided to the Committee for the briefing.

The Chairperson updated members on the planned concurrent meeting with the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development. The meeting will take place on Tuesday 9 June 2015 and the Agri-Food Strategy Board will brief the Committee on its "Going for Growth" Strategy. The Committee will hold its meeting before joining the ARD Committee for the concurrent meeting.

Agreed: members are content with the approach.

Members noted correspondence from the Department regarding the Alternative Dispute Resolution Directive.

Agreed: to consider the correspondence again when The Consumer Council briefs the Committee on this matter.

Members noted a Departmental response regarding fracking on the North Coast.

Agreed: to forward the response to the individual concerned at Protect Our North Coast.

Members considered an invitation from the Centre for Cell Research and Cell Biology (CRCB), Queen's University Belfast, to visit the Centre.

Agreed: that the Committee visit the Centre in September 2015.

Members noted a Departmental response to the Committee's queries regarding the Credit Union Bill.

8. Subordinate Legislation: SL1 Biocidal Products (Fees and Charges) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015

Members considered SL1 Biocidal Products (Fees and Charges) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015.

Agreed: that the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment has considered the SL1 and has no objections to the policy proposals at this stage.

9. Written Briefing from Assembly Research: Tourism Statistics Methodology: A Comparison across the UK and Republic of Ireland

Members noted a briefing paper from Assembly Research entitled 'Tourism Statistics Methodology: A Comparison across the UK and Republic of Ireland'.

10. Written Briefing from Assembly Research: ETI Committee – Stuttgart Visit

Members noted a research paper from Assembly Research providing a summary and learning points on the Committee's recent visit to Stuttgart.

Agreed: to include the research paper in the evidence for the Committee's Inquiry into economic growth and job Creation in a reduced tax environment.

Agreed: to share a copy of the research paper with the Committee for Employment and Learning, the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure, the Committee for the Office of the First and deputy First Minister, the Committee for Regional Development and the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels.

11. Written Briefing from DETI: Draft DETI Corporate/Business Plan 2015/16

Members noted the draft DETI Business Plan 2015/16.

12. Written Briefing from DETI: Tourism Accommodation Policy 2015-2020

Members noted a Departmental Review on Tourist Accommodation policy 2015-2020.

Agreed: Tourism NI to provide an oral briefing to the Committee when the final draft becomes available.

13. Written Briefing from Irish Congress of Trade Unions: Inquiry into Economic Growth and Job Creation in a Reduced Tax Environment

Members discussed a response from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and the Nevin Economic Research Institute declining an invitation to give oral evidence to the Committee.

Agreed: to re-issue the invitation and include ‘living wage’ as a discussion point in the briefing.

14. Written Briefing from Advice NI: Debt NI Annual Report 2013/14

Members discussed the meeting notes from the informal meeting held with Advice NI and a paper by Advice NI on Money Advice Service and Business Debtline.

Agreed: to ask the Department, as responsibility has moved from DETI to DSD to provide clarification on which responsibilities have transferred to DSD and which have not, along with details of funding transferred. To also ask DETI, as the Business Debtline scheme cannot be covered by DSD, whether it will continue to support the project.

15. EU Matters

Members discussed the latest EU Matters Newsletter.

Agreed: to commission research from RaISe comparing the information made available through Scotland’s EU Funding portal in contrast to the information made available in Northern Ireland.

Agreed: to forward the ‘Beginner’s Guide to EU Funding’ to members.

16. Correspondence

Members noted the following pieces of correspondence;

- i. Correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel regarding a report on sickness absence in the Northern Ireland Public Sector.
- ii. Correspondence from the Minister regarding the proposed revised Health and Safety Approved Codes of Practice (ACOPs).
- iii. Correspondence from the Minister regarding the Invest NI Annual International Conference.

Agreed: the Committee Office will contact members in relation to their attendance.

- iv. Correspondence from the Minister regarding Food Information for Consumers (the FIC).

Agreed: the Committee to consider again when the Consultation is completed.

- v. Correspondence from the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure regarding the DETI/Invest NI funding for NI Screen.

Agreed: to ask the Department to copy the Committee into its response.

- vi. An invitation from Colleges NI to the BEST Awards.

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

- vii. Correspondence from the Department regarding the Weights and Measures Report 1 April 2011- 31 March 2014.

- viii. Correspondence from the Office of the Northern Ireland Executive in Brussels regarding a suggested visit to Northern Ireland.

- ix. Correspondence from the Utility Regulator regarding its Workshop on a Consumer Protection Strategy.

- x. Correspondence from the Department regarding a response to the Committee for Regional Development's Inquiry into the Benefits of Cycling to the Economy.
- xi. Correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel regarding an update on a briefing that Committee received from local airports and tourism representatives.

17. Any Other Business

There were no items of additional business.

18. Date, time and place of next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on **Tuesday 12 May 2015** at **10.00am** in **Room 29, Parliament Buildings.**

The meeting concluded at 1:34pm

Mr Patsy McGlone
Chairperson
Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment

12 May 2015