



COMMITTEE FOR ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

19 JANUARY 2016

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 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 Briega Mullan (Clerical Officer)

Apologies:

None

The meeting began at 10:11am

1. Apologies

Apologies as noted above.

2. Draft Minutes of Meeting 12th January 2016

Agreed: the Committee agreed the draft minutes of 12th January 2016.

3. Chairperson's Business

Steven Agnew joined the meeting at 10:13am

Paul Givan joined the meeting at 10:13am

The Chairperson thanked Lord Morrow for his time on the Committee.

Agreed: to write to Lord Morrow.

The Chairperson informed Members of a Knowledge Exchange Seminar on 'Improving Northern Ireland's Competitiveness: Innovation, Skills and Marketing'. The Chairperson informed members that neither he nor the Deputy Chair can attend.

Agreed: that another Member will attend if possible.

The Chairperson informed Members of correspondence from the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation regarding the proposed arrangements for the Committee's visit.

Agreed: that Members are happy with the arrangements.

The Chairperson updated Members on the visit by the Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson to the BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition 2016. The Chairperson congratulated the participants and the organisers.

Agreed: to write to the organisers and the two winning schools from Northern Ireland to congratulate them.

The Chairperson informed Members of correspondence from Bulrush Horticulture Limited.

Agreed: to forward to the Utility Regulator seeking clarification.

The Chairperson informed Members that PricewaterhouseCoopers were to brief the Committee on the 2nd February but have had to cancel. They will provide a written briefing to the Committee.

Agreed: to receive a written briefing from PricewaterhouseCoopers and suggest they write to the incoming Committee to request an oral briefing.

4. Oral Briefing from Simple Power, Wind NI, Renewables NI and Ulster Farmers' Union: Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation (NIRO) Closure to Onshore Wind

The representatives joined the meeting at 10:19am

Members received a briefing from Mr Philip Rainey, Chief Executive, Simple Power, Mr Stuart Hall, Director, Wind NI, Mr Rob McMillan, General Manager, Renewable NI and Mr Chris Osborne, Senior Policy Officer, Ulster Farmers' Union.

Key issues discussed included challenges that the small scale developers are facing through the proposed closure of NIRO to onshore wind and engagement with the Minister.

Adrian Cochrane-Watson joined the meeting at 10:33am

Megan Fearon joined the meeting at 11:27am

Agreed: to write to the Minister requesting that he meet with the representatives of the small scale sector as a matter of urgency.

The representatives left the meeting at 11:39am

5. Oral Briefing from Action Renewables: NIRO Closure to Onshore Wind

The representatives joined the meeting at 11:41am

Paul Givan left the meeting at 11:42am

Members received a briefing from Mr Michael Doran, Executive Director, Action Renewables and Mr Jonathan Buick, Head of Projects, Action Renewables.

Key issues discussed included the alleged change to policy regarding the NIRO Closure and Renewable Obligation Certificates.

The representatives agreed to send a further briefing to the Committee.

The representatives left the meeting at 12.11pm

Agreed: the Committee to be briefed by Officials on 26th January 2016 and to request that the Officials have engaged with the small scale representatives before the briefing.

Adrian Cochrane Watson left the meeting at 12.13pm

6. Oral Briefing from DETI: Budget 2016/17, January Monitoring, InterTradeIreland

The officials joined the meeting at 12:16pm

Steven Agnew left the meeting at 12:17am

Fearghal McKinney left the meeting at 12:28am

Members received a briefing from Mr Eugene Rooney, Head of Management Services Group, DETI, Mr Trevor Cooper, Head of Finance Division, DETI, and Mrs Bernie Brankin, Principal Officer, Finance Branch, DETI.

Key issues discussed included 2016-17 Budget, January Monitoring Round and funding for IntertradeIreland.

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir declared an interest as having a relative employed with Tourism Ireland and as having done business with Tourism Ireland.

The Officials agreed to provide further information on Invest NI's budget.

Patsy McGlone left the meeting at 12:49pm

Conor Murphy took the Chair at 12:49pm

William Humphrey left the meeting at 12:49pm

In the absence of a decision-making quorum, proceedings commenced in line with Standing Order 49(5)

The officials left the meeting at 12:59pm

The Deputy Chairperson suspended the meeting at 1:00pm

The Meeting resumed at 1:16pm with following Members present:

Patsy McGlone (Chairperson)

Conor Murphy (Deputy Chairperson)

Máirtín Ó Muilleoir

Meagan Fearon

Gordon Dunne

7. Matters Arising

Members discussed an email from Fearghal McKinney regarding a further briefing from Invest NI.

Members discussed a request from a business journalist for a copy of the papers provided by Bell & Company.

Agreed: to forward a copy of the papers.

Members noted correspondence from the Department of the Environment on Mineral Development Licences.

Members discussed Tourism Northern Ireland's management of Northern Ireland Year of Food and Drink.

Agreed: to highlight to Tourism NI that the Committee has an interest in this initiative and should have a role to play but has not as yet been invited to any of the events of NI Year of Food and Drink.

Fearghal McKinney returned to the meeting at 1.18pm
Meagan Fearon left the meeting at 1:18pm

Members considered the email from Fearghal McKinney again.

Agreed: to invite Alastair Hamilton, CEO, Invest NI, to brief the Committee.

8. European Commission Work Programme 2016

Members considered a draft response to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister regarding the Committee's priorities in the work programme.

Agreed: to forward the response to the Committee for the Office of the First Minister and deputy First Minister.

9. Correspondence

Members noted correspondence from the Department regarding an update on the I-SEM Project and associated legislation.

Members noted correspondence from the Committee for Finance and Personnel on 2014-20 EU Peace IV and the INTERREG VA Programme.

Agreed: to suggest in the Committee's Legacy report that the incoming Committee receive an update from the Department on INTERREG VA at an early stage.

10. Any Other Business

There were no additional items of business.

11. Date, Time and Place of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Tuesday 26th January 2016 at 10.00am, Room 29.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 1:22pm

Mr Patsy McGlone
Chairperson
Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment

26th January 2016