

From: John Mills

Tel No: 29215

Date: 10 February 2016

To: 1. Timothy Cairns
2. Jonathan Bell MLA

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NI RENEWABLE HEAT INCENTIVE CLOSURE – PRESS RELEASE RE CLOSURE DATE

Issue: Timing of RHI closure.

Timing: **DESK IMMEDIATE:** Clearance immediately to enable press release to be issued prior to debate.

Executive Committee Referral: Urgent Procedures are necessary to secure Executive approval for Tuesday 2 February 2016.

PFG Implications: The PfG targets for renewable heat are 4% by 2015 and 10% by 2020.

Presentational Issues: Internal.

FOI Implications: FOIA exempt under sections 35 (formulation or development of government policy)

Financial Implications: Potential impact on DEL of £95 over 5 years.

Legislation Implications: Legislative changes to the RHI require draft affirmative resolution Regulations.

Statutory Equality Obligations: Screened out.

Recommendation: That you approve the attached Press release (**Annex A**)

Background

1. My earlier submission of 29 January invited you to agree the way forward on consulting on RHI closure. You have agreed to a 2 week public consultation commencing on 2 February 2016.
2. This timetable is predicated on securing Executive approval under urgent procedure. In accordance with paragraph 2.14 of the Ministerial Code you are required to seek, "the views of any other Ministers with a relevant interest." Given the financial implications you should seek the views of the Finance

Minister. A letter to the Finance Minister covering the draft urgent procedure letter to OFM/DFM is attached. In substance the OFM/DFM letter is very similar to the draft Executive paper attached to my submission of 19 January – with which you were content.

Recommendation

3. That you approve the draft press release at Annex A.

JOHN MILLS
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cc: Andrew McCormick
Chris Stewart
Eugene Rooney
Stuart Wightman
Trevor Cooper
Helen Vaughan
Rob Robson (DALO)
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Press Office

ANNEX A

CLOSURE OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND RENEWABLE HEAT INCENTIVE (RHI)

Enterprise, Trade and Investment Minister, Jonathan Bell has announced further detail on proposed legislation to close the domestic and non domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) schemes, and on the timing of the closure of the schemes.

The Minister announced last week his intention bring forward legislation to the Assembly to close both schemes to new applications.

The Minister said: ‘Further to my announcement last week, I have laid draft legislation before the Assembly which would enable the suspension, by notice, of the schemes. The legislation is due to be debated in the Assembly on Monday.

“It is important to note that the legislation itself will not close the schemes – it will simply provide a legal mechanism for issuing a notice to suspend them.

“The notice must specify the date on which the schemes will be suspended. In order to allow time for people who have begun the process of installing renewable heating technologies to submit their applications, I intend to include a closure date of **[29 February]** in the notice.

“Under the present financial circumstances, I have had no option but to mitigate the financial pressures by taking these measures. However, in the longer term, I hope to be in a position to review this decision and [consider wider proposals on the scheme’s long term future](#).~~consult on options for the future of the schemes.~~”