

From: [Hepper, Fiona](#)
To: [Sterling, David](#); [Thomson, David](#); [Cooper, Trevor](#)
Subject: FW: Policy Champions Network : DETI Completed Questionnaire
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[Picture \(Metafile\) 1.jpg](#)
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TMT
for information
Fiona

Fiona Hepper

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From: Hepper, Fiona [<mailto:Fiona.Hepper@detini.gsi.gov.uk>]
Sent: 30 March 2012 10:37
To: Clarke, Angela
Cc: Hepper, Fiona
Subject: Policy Champions Network : DETI Completed Questionnaire

Angela
Please see completed questionnaire on behalf of DETI, as requested.
Regards
Fiona

Fiona Hepper

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DETI RETURN

POLICY CHAMPIONS NETWORK

Policy Development within NICS Departments

The purpose of this short questionnaire is to gather, through the respective Policy Champions, relevant details from each government department about its approach to policy work across the full spectrum, from development through implementation to encompass monitoring and evaluation.

Some specific aspects of policy development have been identified to assist your response but these should not restrict the scope of responses as we are anxious to gather as much relevant comment as possible.

Organisational arrangements about the make up of policy teams is also requested together with details about any specific or distinct policy issues and / or responses which have been implemented. This information will be shared with the Policy Champions Network to assist in the ongoing support of policy capability in Departments and across the Executive.

Completed questionnaires should be sent to Angela Clarke (angela.clarke@dndi.gov.uk) for receipt by 30 March 2012.

8 March 2012

Describe your Department's arrangements for policy work (please outline how priority policy areas are identified generally, if specific alerts are used to signal emerging policy areas, what arrangements apply to ensure integration across these areas, how progress in policy work is monitored).

There is no one single approach taken, as the Department covers a diverse range of policy areas, some of which are fully devolved matters, others remain as reserved matters and others are a mixture. For example at a high level telecoms policy is a reserved matter – yet DETI has achieved a significant amount in terms of delivering a tailored policy approach to Northern Ireland; unlike other devolved administrations, energy policy is fully devolved – with one notable exception which is nuclear policy; tourism and other aspects of economic policy, such as innovation, enterprise etc are fully devolved.

As a result, DETI maintains close links with a number of relevant Whitehall Departments in relation to UK and European policy plus the Devolved Administrations in Wales and Scotland; and, in areas such as energy policy, DETI works in collaboration with RoI, to the extent that a pro-active All-Island Joint Steering Group is co-chaired by DETI and DCENR to drive forward matters of mutual benefit related to both policy and legislation as well as energy market operation.

In the main policy arenas, research plays a part in highlighting potential priorities – through identifying areas where NI could improve outcomes and signalling policy approaches used elsewhere to address similar policy problems. For a number of years DETI has developed and delivered a rolling Research Programme; the programme for 2012-15 is in train and this follows on from, and builds upon, previous research programmes. On the innovation policy side, DETI has also established a unit which works closely with business leaders, academia and other departments to identify emerging market and technology opportunities. It seeks to identify the likely challenges and opportunities which lie ahead for our economy over the next decade and more, and develop a strategic approach to exploiting these.

In addition, in specific policy areas, particularly those areas with a regulatory and/or enforcement focus, the policy agenda is, by its very nature, largely reactive. In such cases, the agenda can be UK driven, with DETI responding to UK or GB policy and legislative initiatives, e.g. in relation to consumer affairs, financial capability, insolvency and credit unions.

EU Directives also drive policy – and this is the case in relation to, for example, a number of energy policy areas (eg EU renewables targets have required a certain policy direction is adopted). Plus, it is inevitable that other external factors will come in to play – these can either be at national or local level eg the Presbyterian Mutual Society crisis.

DETI, across its policy Divisions, is pro-active in relation to stakeholder engagement and uses this contact to both identify and assess emerging policy issues, as well as help set the priorities. These stakeholders include the Departments NDPBs (eg NITB, Invest NI) who play a key role in helping identify, prioritise and delivery policy; and at both Board and executive level act as advisors to the Department.

The Department's Corporate Planning process is the key mechanism for identifying and prioritising emerging policy areas. This process feeds into the Executive's programme for

Government and ensures that policy issues emerging from other Departments with potential impact for DETI are addressed effectively. In relation to monitoring and evaluation, monitoring against Corporate and PfG Targets and effective Policy Evaluation complete the Policy Cycle by identifying where interventions are delivering the outputs and outcomes envisaged and can help identify areas where the current policy response needs to be revisited.

2. Please provide at least one example of:

A situation where a piece of policy work went well, please say why this was the case and provide details of particular actions/ steps taken to ensure this outcome.

An example of a piece of policy work that went well was the development of the NI Economic Strategy. This particular strategy represents the economic pillar of the Executive's Programme for Government and sets out a wider vision for the economy to 2030. In taking the lead role in its development, DETI has been successful in bring the strategy through the inception, consultation and finalisation processes, securing commitment from all departments and other stakeholders and completing the Executive processes. This was based on a number of key elements, not least :

(a) A comprehensive evidence base. This represents the output from the DETI research programmes and research from Departments with a key influence on the economy. It also draws on the recommendations of Independent Review of Economic Policy (IREP).

(b) Ministerial Commitment : One of the key IREP recommendations was to establish an Executive Sub-Committee on the economy. Chaired by the DETI Minister, the Sub-Committee was responsible for the development of the strategy and ensured Ministerial commitment to the Strategy's framework for economic growth.

(c) Effective structures : A Steering Group at Perm Sec level and a Working Group drawn from across all Departments ensured that issues were progressed and addressed effectively.

(d) Stakeholder consultation : There were 2 phases of consultation. The first, on the strategic framework for growth, was primarily targeted at key stakeholders. The second was a full public consultation on the draft Economic Strategy.

(e) Focus on Implementation : The Strategy was launched in tandem with the PfG and Investment Strategy with a strong emphasis on implementation. It is supported by a Comprehensive Action plan which mainly covers the PfG period and a commitment to develop more detailed supporting strategies in the areas of innovation and enterprise.

Synopsis of other recent examples :

- DETI, in consultation with NITB, has implemented major changes to the regime whereby tourist accommodation in NI is regulated. This involved the entire policy development process from initial informal consultation with the tourism industry, through public consultation and the various Assembly stages. The changes (made by amending the Tourism Order and associated subordinate legislation) represent positive deregulation, as far as was possible, and have been welcomed by the tourist industry. The impact of the changes will be evaluated in 2013/14 to determine whether any additional changes might be useful/required
- Development of the Renewable Heat Incentive – which has been based on a strong evidence base, high quality research and a comprehensive feasibility study. It drew in elements of GB practice which were seen to work without slavishly following it; conducted a comprehensive consultation and there is clear evidence that the policy

responded to issues raised. The policy was also developed with a clear focus on the steps needed to be taken to be able to implement the policy.

- The development and delivery of the 2006-2010 Telecoms Action Plan (effectively a NI tailored policy) also proceeded in an exemplary manner. The Action Plan and its policy priority areas had been developed in line with UK Government Policy whilst taking into account DETI's powers in relation to telecoms, the department's economic development remit and the evidence of need provided by a SWOT analysis. Resources were allocated to address the priority needs identified and included in the PfG 2008-2011 and the approach developed addressed four PSA targets. Flowing from the policy, a number of significant projects were devised and followed through via the process of outline business cases and feasibility studies followed by full economic appraisals. All relevant approvals were sought and secured and procurement was scoped accordingly with the assistance of DFP's Centre of Procurement Excellence. All PSA targets were achieved on time and on budget.

A situation where a policy issue went less well, outline the challenges faced and discuss the reasons for the less successful outcomes.

Two examples provided below, and affiliated to the section above :

Following on from the successful delivery of the 2006-10 telecoms policy approach, the Department started to shape the direction of travel for the period 2011-15. This started well. However, the consultation exercise was undertaken too early and well ahead of any signals associated with securing the necessary resources that would have to underpin not only the policy but the projects that would be needed to deliver the policy. In time it became clear that Telecoms policy areas had not attracted the level of funding necessary - from either DCMS/BDUK or as part of the Budget 2011-15 – to address the key priorities established. The consultation process on the policy priorities had, by this stage, significantly raised stakeholders' expectations in terms of deliverables and timescales to a level well beyond the current resources allocated to Telecoms. Stakeholders, not unexpectedly, sought answers in relation to when investments would be made, where they would go and how much would be allocated to their respective areas, with information of this nature not fully developed at that point. This brought unprecedented levels of pressure to bear on the Department which has been sustained and is not yet fully resolved.

In relation to the tourism example above, the changes referred to took longer to introduce than either DETI or NITB, would have liked. A key factor in the delay was the need for NITB and DETI to allocate appropriate staff resources to take forward the policy. While the outcomes were successful, they could have been introduced a couple of years earlier had the project been properly resourced. Once resources were allocated the development of the policy progressed quickly.

3. How does the Department ensure specialist skills and knowledge in addition to general policy experience (particularly economic and analytical) in its policy work? (Please outline how policy teams are established, identify when and how specialist advice is secured and how it is integrated into policy work)

This happens in a number of ways in DETI, including:

1) Through Research and Evidence gathering. DETI produces a 3 year research programme taking forward projects that policy divisions have indicated are areas where additional knowledge and learning are required. The G3 head of policy decides on overall research priorities taking account of the research needs of individual policy divisions. This is all subject to Ministerial agreement.

2) DETI has established an Analytical Services Unit – comprising the economists and statisticians – which delivers a service to the policy divisions. On an annual basis, an ASU work programme is developed by identifying the upcoming analytical demands and needs of all DETI policy divisions. This sets the ‘baseline’ for the main work areas of the unit and there has to be flexibility in this to allow for unexpected new demands on the unit and reprioritisation.

3) Through Policy Evaluation – the DETI Evaluation Protocol sets out an expectation that DETI Economists will automatically be part of any Steering Group overseeing an evaluation.

4) Due to the complexity of energy policy, the Energy Division maintains good links with industry experts, the Regulatory experts in the Utility regulators office and also has a rolling contract for advice from a private sector (energy focused) legal company. Energy Division also has access to energy legal experts in the DSO; and has commissioned a range of work across the policy agenda from experts via consultancy contracts. Good links have also been forged with Whitehall (DECC), the Devolved Administration and also with our RoI counterpart (DECNR). Within the Energy Division team itself, staff have to quickly develop a level of expertise and knowledge in order to keep the work on track. It is helpful that, at present, there are staff members who are qualified engineers and also one with a legal background.

5) Like energy, telecoms is a complex and technical policy area. Expert knowledge and skills has built up through previous experience, academic background, professional training, formal training courses (for example, through the Policy Skills Learning and Development Programme which 2 members of the team have/are undertaking) and on-the-job training. Telecoms also benefits from some in-house expertise – with one team member being an electrical engineer. Overall, the team maintains good links with the relevant Whitehall Department, the DA’s and also with the telecoms regulator. As with energy, expert consultancy advice in relation to policy work is also “bought in” when the business objectives and business case exists to do so.

6) Economic Advisory Group (EAG) : The Minister established the Economic Advisory Group on the 28 May 2010 in response to an IREP recommendation which called on the department to appoint an independent economic advisor to strengthen capacity in economic policy making. Chaired by Kate Barker CBE, the EAG is a focused group of experts including independent economists, business leaders from indigenous and foreign-owned companies in

Northern Ireland, the Invest NI Chairman and the Northern Ireland Adviser on Employment and Skills. Since establishment, the EAG has met with NI Executive Ministers, economic stakeholders, and provided responses to a number of consultations including the NI Executive's draft Budget, the Revision of the Industrial Development Act (1982), draft Programme for Government, draft Economic Strategy and draft Investment Strategy.

7) MATRIX : The NI Science Industry Panel, is a business led expert panel, formed to advise Government on the commercial exploitation of R&D and science and technology in Northern Ireland.

4.What arrangements are in place to identify, secure and support policy staff on an ongoing basis? (Please say how staff who are new to or are recently trained in policy work are supported and mentored, does the Department have specific arrangements to encourage / promote staff to undertake recognised policy training, what arrangements are in place to identify weaknesses in skills and knowledge, including political awareness of policy staff?)

The DETI corporate training priorities, which include Policy and Legislation, are circulated to staff at the start of the performance management cycle. Divisional training needs, including those in policy areas, are identified and forwarded to Departmental HR Training Unit for inclusion in the corporate DETI Training Plan. Delivery of training against the plan is monitored throughout the year and as relevant courses are scheduled on HRConnect staff are reminded to apply on-line. The NICS Policy Skills L&D Programme is advertised separately each year and applications sought from staff working in policy areas. The impact of learning and development activities on business performance is addressed in annual Divisional Impact Assessment reports.

From a Divisional perspective:

- Formal training in the form of CAL courses on issues such as policy, legislation, Assembly business, project management, etc;
- Staff development, through job rotation, use of flexible team structures, mentoring;
- Effective project management using mixed skill teams;
- Practical experience.
- In addition, staff are encouraged to undertake specific policy training courses/ programmes (for example, the Policy Skills Learning and Development Programme).

Training is important and DETI provides that but a greater focus on providing thinking time, networking, and general cross cutting communication opportunities for policy staff should be considered.

5. How does the Department ensure good practice in policy work is identified and shared across the Department and externally? (Please detail any particular systems / arrangements which the Department relies).

There are a number of routes used by DET to disseminate good practice, as follows :

DETI Evaluation Protocol

DETI establishes the Department's evaluation priorities, over a rolling 3 year period, through an Evaluation programme. That Protocol includes provision for the dissemination of lessons learned.

- Since 2004 DETI's has had a Policy Evaluation Protocol in place. The Protocol and evaluation programme is central to the Department's approach to policy making. At its core is the view that established policies should be regularly reviewed to ensure they are still delivering their intended outcomes and the wider policy priorities of DETI and its NDPBs.
- The protocol ensures that all new policies or programmes are clearly identified with appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms at the outset.
- As a result of the Departments Organisational review this process is currently being re-examined and updated.
- It also includes a range of activities to ensure the results of the Department's evaluations are shared as widely as possible.
- This includes consideration of evaluation priorities and outcomes by a Research and Evaluation Steering Group and by Departmental Board.
- All evaluation reports are published on the Department's web site and copied to the ETI Committee.

Staff Brief

- Monthly electronic brief which provides details of key departmental issues including policy matters and delivery news.

NICS Live

- DETI will take the opportunity presented by NICS live to disseminate lessons learned from the development of the NI Economic Strategy to a wider audience.

6. What arrangements are in place to ensure Departmental policies are evaluated and outcomes reported and reflected? (Please say if there is a Departmental evaluation framework, if not how is policy evaluation handled, reported to DMB and shared throughout the Department ?)

DETI has had an Evaluation Protocol in place for a number of years. It was last formally reviewed in 2008 and it lays out the Department's approach to developing and delivering its evaluation programme. In particular, it details how individual evaluations will be taken forward and managed and also includes a range of activities to ensure the results of the Department's evaluations are shared as widely as possible. This includes consideration of evaluation priorities and outcomes by a Research and Evaluation Steering Group and by the Departmental Board.

All evaluation reports are published on the Department's web site and copied to the ETI Committee. As a result of DETI's 2011-12 Organisational Review the departmental approach to evaluation is currently under review.

7. Outline your Department's arrangements to secure political buy – in from Minister, Special Adviser and Committee as part of the policy development process. (It would be helpful if details of specific examples of good practice were provided).

Across the Department, Divisions ensure that they have regular and early engagement with SPAD on policy issues. In addition, Ministerial approval is sought for all policy proposals and, where necessary, if the particular policy has a cross cutting element, there is engagement at Executive level via the usual approaches of – either a full Executive paper (and associated processes) or via a Ministerial Colleagues letter.

The Department also has regular and timely engagement with the ETI Committee on policy and legislative proposals at all key stages.

In addition, the establishment of the Executive Sub-Committee on the Economy has been a critical factor in securing political buy-in from Ministers on a number of strategic and cross-cutting issues. The DETI Minister is chair of the Sub-Committee which was established by the Executive in April 2010 to prioritise action on the economy.

The primary role of the Sub-Committee has been to drive the development of the Executive's Economic Strategy. The committee will continue to play a key role in overseeing implementation. Performance will be tracked, and regularly updated against the Key Indicators set out in the Strategy. This will include annual reports on progress against the actions outlined in the Comprehensive Action Plan and an annual assessment of the wider health of the NI economy.