

**From:** [Hepper, Fiona](#)  
**To:** [Private Office DETI](#)  
**Cc:** [Sterling, David](#); [Thomson, David](#); [McCutcheon, Joanne](#); [Martin, Olivia](#); [McBriar, Trevor](#); [Baxter, Clare](#); [McCune, David](#); [Stewart, Susan](#); [Aiken, Glynis](#); [Neth Energy](#); [Press Office](#); [Ross, Alastair](#)  
**Subject:** LMU 11/16 ETI COMMITTEE QUERY ON THE RENEWABLE HEAT INCENTIVE  
**Date:** 06 October 2011 17:12:11  
**Attachments:** [ETI Committee RHI and Planning Service.DOC](#)

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Private Office

Please see attached

Fiona

**Fiona Hepper**

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**From:** Fiona Hepper

**Date:** 6 October 2011

1. Andrew Crawford
2. Arlene Foster MLA

**LMU 11/16 ETI COMMITTEE QUERY ON THE RENEWABLE HEAT INCENTIVE**

**Issue:** The ETI Committee has asked how DETI is working with DOE to ensure the smooth processing of planning applications for renewable heat installations, particularly to ensure that NI can fully take advantage of the renewable heat incentive, once it is in place.

**Timing:** Reply is due with the Committee Clerk by Friday 14 October 2011.

**PfG implications:** Not applicable

**Need for referral to the Executive:** No

**Presentational Issues:** Not applicable.

**Freedom of Information:** Fully disclosable

**Financial Implications:** None

**Legislation Implications:** None

**PSA/PFG Implications:** None.

**Statutory Equality Obligations:** Not applicable

**Recommendation:** That you note this submission and agree to the attached response (Annex A) being issued to the ETI Committee.

**Background**

At its meeting on 29 September 2011, ETI Committee members considered correspondence from the Department of Environment in relation to the Renewable Energy Inquiry. Members have asked to receive details of how DETI is working with DOE to ensure the smooth processing of planning applications for renewable heat installations, particularly to ensure that NI can fully take advantage of the renewable heat incentive (RHI), once it is in place.

**Planning issues relating to the RHI**

2. The Consultation on the proposed NI RHI closed on Monday 3 October and the way forward, including the final tariff levels and final list of eligible technologies, is currently being considered by Energy Division. At this stage the proposed eligible technologies include solid and gaseous biomass, bioliquids, solar thermal, ground and air source heat pumps, on site biogas, geothermal, energy from waste and injection of biomethane into the grid.
3. Initial discussions with colleagues in DOE Planning Service indicate that not all installations will require planning permission - for example, a small domestic biomass boiler installation is unlikely to need planning approval. However in other cases, depending on the technology and the size and location of the scheme, permission might be required.
4. The Department of the Environment has already brought forward changes to permitted development rights for domestic microgeneration installations and is currently exploring options for extending these permitted development rights to non-domestic land uses.
5. For installations requiring planning permission, the Department of the Environment's planning policy, PPS18 'Renewable Energy' and accompanying Best Practice Guidance, promotes the use of renewable energy (and heat) generating facilities in order to achieve Northern Ireland's renewable energy targets and to realise the benefits of renewable energy generally.

**Interdepartmental Working Groups**

6. As Chair of the Sustainable Energy Interdepartmental Working Group (SE IDWG), you are aware of the steps being taken to ensure a co-ordinated approach across Government to the promotion of sustainable energy. In particular, the Planning and Renewable Energy sub group of SEIDWG is focusing on ensuring that renewable energy projects and installations are delivered, within the planning system, in time to meet Executive targets.

**Recommendation**

7. That you note this submission and agree to the attached response (Annex A) being issued to the ETI Committee.

**FIONA HEPPER**  
**ENERGY DIVISION (Ext 29215)**

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**DRAFT RESPONSE**

Dear Jim

At its meeting on 29 September 2011, ETI Committee members considered correspondence from the Department of Environment in relation to the Renewable Energy Inquiry. Members have asked to receive information on how DETI is working with DOE to ensure the smooth processing of planning applications for renewable heat installations, particularly to ensure that NI can fully take advantage of the renewable heat incentive (RHI), once it is in place.

As members may recall, the proposed Renewable Heat Incentive will incentivise a number of different technologies. Proposed eligible technologies include solid and gaseous biomass, bioliquids, solar thermal, ground and air source heat pumps, on site biogas, geothermal, energy from waste and injection of biomethane into the grid. The deployment of these technologies may have planning implications.

The Department of the Environment has brought forward changes to permitted development rights for domestic microgeneration installations and is currently exploring options for extending these permitted development rights to non-domestic land uses. For installations requiring planning permission, the Department of the Environment's planning policy PPS18 'Renewable Energy' and accompanying Best Practice Guidance promotes the use of renewable energy [and heat] generating facilities in order to achieve Northern Ireland's renewable energy targets and to realise the benefits of renewable energy generally.

DETI and DOE are already collaborating as members of the Sustainable Energy Interdepartmental Working Group (SE IDWG) which exists to ensure a co-ordinated approach across Government to the promotion of sustainable energy. SEIDWG has a number of sub-groups, one of which is the recently constituted Planning and Renewable Energy group. This group is made up of representatives from DETI, DOE, DOE Planning Service and the NIEA. Other stakeholders are invited to participate as required. The remit of the group is to ensure that renewable energy

projects and installations are delivered, within the planning system, in time to meet Executive targets. The group is currently considering a number of issues including: the implications of the Planning Act 2011; the implementation of the Renewable Energy Directive and development of a Memorandum of Understanding between DETI and DOE.

**Fiona Hepper**

**Director, Energy Division**

**6<sup>th</sup> October 2011**