

From: [McCormick, Andrew \(DFE\)](#)
To: [Stewart, Chris \(DFE\)](#)
Cc: [TEO HOCS](#); [Gaughran, Aine](#); [McNabb, Chris](#); [McIlwrath, Linda](#)
Subject: Re: RHI Note for the Record
Date: 18 December 2016 14:27:35

This submission is not "normal business" but an explanation of something in the public domain so the exceptional nature of it is clear.

Many thanks

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: Stewart, Chris (DFE)
Sent: Sunday, 18 December 2016 14:24
To: McCormick, Andrew (DFE)
Cc: TEO HOCS; Gaughran, Aine; McNabb, Chris; McIlwrath, Linda
Subject: RE: RHI Note for the Record

Andrew

Seems fine to me.

The proposed course of action appears to be the making public of my advice to the Minister. This will prompt (amongst other things) a question that we will need to be ready to answer – if that can be released at this juncture, why can't all documentation be released.

C

From: McCormick, Andrew (DFE)
Sent: 18 December 2016 14:02
To: Stewart, Chris (DFE)
Cc: TEO HOCS; Gaughran, Aine; McNabb, Chris
Subject: Fw: RHI Note for the Record

This looks okay but glad of your views. Many thanks.

From: David [\mailto:dgordonbt@ Personal information redacted by the RHI Inquiry
Sent: 18 December, 2016 10:42 AM

Here's my first stab at a draft statement for Simon to accompany the release of documentation and note for the record.

It goes without saying this needs to be as watertight as all the other documentation being released

Statement by Economy Minister on allegations by former Minister

Former DETI Minister Jonathan Bell alleged in a BBC interview last week that an attempt had been made by OFMDFM officials to "cleanse" Government records in relation to First Minister Arlene Foster's involvement with RHI deliberations.

He cited a senior official from my Department, Mr Chris Stewart, as a 'whistleblower' who had alerted him to this matter.

This was a very serious allegation, and naturally received extensive media coverage. Given this level of seriousness, I requested full transparency from my Department as a matter of urgency, including the release of relevant paperwork

I am today publishing that documentation together with a note for the record prepared by Mr Stewart with input from Departmental Permanent Secretary Andrew McCormick

The actual facts of the matter are now in the public domain and I would urge everyone to study the material. I am satisfied that Mr Bell's account is seriously at variance from the facts.

There are many technical details here involving the machinery of Government. But I would make the following observations:

* As detailed, this documentation involves the drafting and redrafting of a DETI submission regarding RHI closure in 2016. There was no 'cleansing' of records, as both drafts are recorded and retained. Both are published today.

* The re-drafting was undertaken by Mr Bell's special adviser. It deleted a specific reference to OFMDFM being involved in discussions in early 2016 on the closure of RHI. This was not done on behalf of or to the benefit of First Minister Foster. As the documentation shows, this OFMDFM involvement helped secure the closure of RHI in February 2016 - earlier than the date originally signed off on by Minister Bell. To suggest this was a cover-up is to ignore the facts. The involvement of the First Minister and deputy First Minister to bring forward RHI closure was in the public interest and the original draft made this involvement explicit.

* These deliberations and submission preparations in early 2016 were on the closure date for RHI. They were not on the separate 2015 decision regarding the introduction of RHI cost controls.

From: Andrew McCormick <andrewgmccormick@Personal information redacted by the RHI Inquiry>

Sent: 18 December 2016 10:09

To: David
Cc: Richard Bullick; timothyjohnston@dup.org.uk; shamilton@dup.org.uk;
johnrobinson@dup.org.uk; simonhamiltonmla@ Personal information redacted by the RHI Inquiry
Subject: Re: RHI Note for the Record

Agree

Sent from my iPad

On 18 Dec 2016, at 09:56, David <dgordonbt@ Personal information redacted by the RHI Inquiry> wrote:

There is another later extract from the Bell transcript, which could usefully be included

"I believe my officials when they tell me there is a documented email trail which shows an attempt behind my back without the knowledge of the Minister of the Department to cleanse the record."

This is from the transcript provided by the BBC to the media:

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/politics/jonathan-bell-interview-in-full-transcript-from-bbc-nolan-show-on-rhi-scandal-35298142.html>

From: Andrew McCormick <andrewgmccormick@ Personal information redacted by the RHI Inquiry>
Sent: 17 December 2016 21:21
To: 'David'; 'Richard Bullick'
Cc: timothyjohnston@dup.org.uk; shamilton@dup.org.uk;
johnrobinson@dup.org.uk; simonhamiltonmla@ Personal information redacted by the RHI Inquiry
Subject: RE: RHI Note for the Record

See additional paragraph 15.

Does this address all the claims?

From: David [<mailto:dgordonbt@> Personal information redacted by the RHI Inquiry]
Sent: 17 December, 2016 8:36 PM
To: Andrew McCormick <andrewgmccormick@ Personal information redacted by the RHI Inquiry>; 'Richard Bullick' <richardbullick@ Personal information redacted by the RHI Inquiry>
Cc: timothyjohnston@dup.org.uk; shamilton@dup.org.uk;
johnrobinson@dup.org.uk; simonhamiltonmla@ Personal information redacted by the RHI Inquiry
Subject: Re: RHI Note for the Record

When is this material being made available to dFM side? I would suggest the earlier the better

It does go to the heart of Bell's credibility

He was claiming document doctoring by OFMDFM (and dFM's involvement was also removed by DETI spad)

This is the only exchange between the official and then Minister relating to document alteration and related to one document only? As is normal, change was logged in system and both versions retained?

It all will seem technical and obscure to average punter, so will need an explainer/briefing if issued

From: Andrew McCormick <andrewgmccormick@Personal information redacted by the RHI Inquiry>
Sent: 17 December 2016 18:56
To: 'Richard Bullick'
Cc: timothyjohnston@dup.org.uk; 'David'; shamilton@dup.org.uk; johnrobinson@dup.org.uk; simonhamiltonmla@Personal information redacted by the RHI Inquiry
Subject: RHI Note for the Record

Please see attached which Chris and I have agreed. In attaching the annexes (and if these are to be placed in the library), we need to remove the covering emails of 4 February.

Happy to discuss.

Many thanks.