



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

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12 January 2017

Dear Nick

At its meeting on 11 January 2017, the Public Accounts Committee discussed a media article from the Sunday World (dated 18 December 2016) in which reference was made to the department being advised of the “loophole” in the RHI heating scheme as far back as 2012.

The article states that during the tendering process for the proposed police and prison service training college at Desertcreat, a renewable energy firm advised the department in its application that a profit could be made by installing a number of small biomass wood pellet boilers instead of one larger boiler.

The article states that the department rejected this proposal, claiming that this was not something it wished to pursue and that it failed to report the potential loophole within the scheme to the appropriate authority.

In seeking clarification, the Committee agreed that I should write to you to ascertain the following information:

- Please provide the committee with a copy of the correspondence referred to above where it is alleged the department was made aware of the “loophole” and its response to the applicant;
- Confirmation of who dealt with this in the department and at what staffing level within the department was this information shared;
- Which other departments made aware of this issue and if so, when.

Please respond by email please use the email addresses above no later than noon Tuesday 17 January 2017.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robin Swann', is written over a light yellow rectangular background.

Robin Swann
Chairperson
Public Accounts Committee