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**Subject:** ETI COMMITTEE QUERIES - SEIDWG & RENEWABLE GENERATION INSTALLATIONS  
**Date:** 07 November 2013 09:58:58  
**Attachments:** [ETI Comm query on Renewable generation.docx](#)  
[ETI Query on SEIDWG.docx](#)

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Jim

Please see attached responses to the Committee's queries iro the above.

These have been cleared by the Minister.

FOI Status: Both fully disclosable.

Thanks

John

**John Murray**

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**Please consider the environment - do you really need to print this e-mail?**

## **REQUEST TO DETI FROM THE ETI COMMITTEE**

At its meeting on 26 September the ETI Committee considered briefing from the Committee for Agriculture and Rural Development in respect of renewable generation installations.

Members asked for the Department's views on the issues raised by the ARD Committee on renewable generation installations.

## **DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSE**

The Department notes the difficulties raised by the Ulster Farmer's Union (UFU) in relation to dual connections and conditional offers for the connection of renewable generating installations to the electricity grid. However, DETI has no statutory role in relation to grid connection or charging issues. This responsibility lies with the Utility Regulator who has also been asked to respond.

The Department is aware that the increase in small scale generation connections is putting pressure on the existing electricity grid network. This is particularly the case in the west and northwest areas of Northern Ireland where upgrading of both the distribution and transmission networks is needed to accommodate future small scale generation. Under current arrangements, any upgrade to the 11kV distribution network required to connect small scale is met by the generator. However, as the problem is now spilling on to the larger 33kV transmission network, any upgrade costs are not met by individual generators and NIE must seek approval from the Regulator to invest at this level. The Department understands that NIE has written to the Utility Regulator detailing the work and associated cost needed to upgrade substations and lines. Despite these being matters for both NIE and the Utility Regulator to consider and resolve, DETI is committed to working with both parties and the renewables industry to find solutions which are within NIE's licence requirements and that minimise the cost to the consumer.

With regards to the issue of obtaining dual connections from NIE in order to facilitate the 100% export requirement of electricity from renewable installations, DETI is supportive of the generation of renewable electricity, whether it is used on site or exported. This is a matter that only DARD and NIE can resolve but DETI is willing to contribute to the discussion as required.

However, DETI would question the use of rural development funding to grant support renewable electricity generation as incentives are already in place through the Northern Ireland Renewables Obligation (NIRO) to subsidise the higher cost of this type of generation. It should be noted that DETI is proposing to future incentivise small scale renewable electricity generation through a Feed-In Tariff mechanism similar to that already in operation in GB. The GB FIT is ineligible to projects that have received other forms of grant support.

**Energy Division**

**7 November 2013**

## **REQUEST TO DETI FROM THE ETI COMMITTEE**

At its meeting on 26 September the ETI Committee considered written briefing from the Department in respect of SEIDWG.

Members asked to receive the planned work programme for the SEIDWG for the next 3 years.

## **DEPARTMENTAL RESPONSE**

The information detailed below reflects the areas being considered by SEIDWG, based on current priorities.

The main body of work will continue to be developed through the sub-groups, as detailed below. The main group will meet as necessary to consider issues deemed appropriate for consideration and/or approval at that level.

The main output of the group, as agreed by the Executive, was to develop a list of recommendations in respect of co-ordinated sustainable energy activity. This has been achieved. It is envisaged that a review of the terms of reference will take place next year.

### **Sub-Groups**

#### **Energy Efficiency**

2013/14

- work to co-ordinate and address issues of common concern arising from the transposition and implementation of the Energy Efficiency Directive;
- co-ordinate NI contribution to National Energy Efficiency Action Plan for March 2014;
- exchange information of interest on issues of energy efficiency.

2014/15

- continue to work to co-ordinate and address issues of common concern arising from the transposition and implementation of the Energy Efficiency Directive, including any requirements with a transposition date later than 5 June 2014;
- ensure implementation of transposed requirements of the Energy Efficiency Directive.
- exchange information of interest on issues of energy efficiency.

2015/16

- work programme to be assessed closer to time of implementation.

Planning & Renewable Energy

2013/14

- monitor effectiveness of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between DETI and DOE, dealing with administrative arrangements regarding energy consents, marine licensing and planning processes. Review as necessary;
- consider the Communities & Renewable Energy Study, along with emerging work from DECC on community energy and engagement, and formulate a draft action plan in response to the recommendations;
- work to address issues of common concern arising from the Review of Public Administration (RPA), including implications of the Planning Act 2011;
- liaise with DOE Planning on an annual monitoring update, throughout the life of the Onshore Renewable Energy Action Plan, on renewable energy deployment to assess progress towards the 2020 target of 40% renewable energy consumption.

2014/15 &amp; 2015/16

- monitor MoU between DETI and DOE - an ongoing process culminating in an annual review;
- management of the Communities & Renewable Energy action plan; monitoring effectiveness of the measures therein;
- ongoing work in relation to RPA;
- ongoing work in relation to the annual monitoring update on renewable energy deployment.

Communications

2013/14

Oversee and manage the delivery of sustainable energy messages under the Executive endorsed “EnergyWise” branding. This will include:

- management of the existing contract with Navigator Blue, as the various Departments and Agencies involved in the group seek to deliver a joined up approach to sustainable energy communications and build on the experience of earlier campaigns; and,
- management of information held on [www.nidirect.gov.uk/energywise](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/energywise), ensuring that this information is up to date, accurate and fit for purpose. The group is responsible for identifying gaps in the information provided and considering new methods of communicating to stakeholders regarding sustainable energy.

2014/15

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2015/16

Oversee and manage the delivery of sustainable energy messages under the Executive endorsed “EnergyWise” branding.

- the existing contract with Navigator Blue will lapse in 2015/16 and therefore this group will be required to consider how sustainable energy messages should be delivered in the future, building on lessons learned and research from the various campaigns led by Navigator Blue;
- the group will continue to be responsible for [www.nidirect.gov.uk/energywise](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/energywise), ensuring the information held on these pages was accurate and appropriate and considering alternative methods of promoting sustainable energy messages.

### Renewable Heat

2013/14

- consider cross-cutting issues relating to the renewable heat sector (such as financial incentives, supply chain, opportunities for business, air quality etc) and work to produce a cross-departmental Renewable Heat Strategy outlining how the 10% target for renewable heat might be supported and the potential benefits of renewable heat exploited through the actions of the various Departments / Agencies involved;
- report progress against the targets set out on the BioEnergy Action Plan 2011-15.

2014/15

- finalise and publish a Renewable Heat Strategy and begin work on the achieving the various actions included;
- monitor progress of financial incentives under the NI Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) and consider how the benefits of renewable heating and RHI could be utilised in the various sectors they represent (business sector, agri sector, social housing, public estate etc.).
- continue to report progress against the targets set out on the BioEnergy Action Plan 2011-15.

2015/16

- continue to monitor and report progress against the targets/actions within the Renewable Heat Strategy and identify policy linkages relating to renewable heating policy;
- the group will be kept informed of the performance of the RHI and work collaboratively to identify where the RHI and renewable heating could be used within their own areas of responsibility (business sector, agri sector, social housing, public estate etc).

**Energy Division**  
**7 November 2013**