

Update on progress towards implementation of recommendations in the Committee for Enterprise, Trade & Investment's Inquiry into Renewable Energy – November 2013

Recommendation	DETI Update (May 2013)	DETI Update (November 2013)
<p>1. The Barnett review stated that the Executive must provide clear focus and leadership to the range of energy policy issues as a separate and distinct Government priority. The Committee supports this recommendation and calls on the Executive to provide appropriate leadership in delivering the overall energy agenda by bringing all responsibility for energy policy and strategy under a single Government department</p>	<p>Response provided by: DETI</p> <p>Work suspended pending Budget Review group outcome – no further update can be provided by DETI. –</p> <p>The Committee sought further information following its meeting on 30 May 2013 in relation to when this is likely to take place. DETI & OFMDFM responded as follows;</p> <p>The update provided in November 2012 advised that the Executive agreed in May 2012 that there are no policy gaps of sufficient size to merit substantive change, but that the consolidation of energy functions should be revisited sometime in the future. The Executive also agreed that the small scale tactical reorganisation of energy efficiency functions should be kept under continuous review.</p> <p>OFMDFM has advised that suspension was due to the review undertaken by the Assembly and Executive Review Committee (AERC) on the size of the Assembly and number of Northern Ireland departments. The AERC also reported to OFMDFM in late 2012 and the report has been referred to the Party leaders Group for consideration. There is no indication as to when the process will be concluded.</p>	<p>Response provided by: OFMDFM</p> <p>No further information is available at this time.</p>
<p>2. The Executive must develop a long-term vision for renewable energy which includes both an energy perspective and an economic perspective and establishes long-term partnerships to the benefit of Northern Ireland with other devolved administrations in the UK and with the Republic of Ireland, and should, where appropriate, include an all-island dimension for renewable energy.</p>	<p>Response provided by: DETI</p> <p>The contract to carry out a study to establish a long term vision, to 2050, for energy in Northern Ireland was awarded in November 2012. Work commenced in December and is well advanced. The study will be published by September.</p>	<p>Response provided by: DETI</p> <p>The study is complete and the report 'Envisioning the Future – Considering Energy In Northern Ireland to 2050' was published on 16 September 2013. A copy of the report was forwarded to the Committee on 12 September.</p>

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<p>11. DETI should undertake an analysis to determine the costs and benefits to the Northern Ireland economy, business and renewable energy developers of introducing a FIT for small-scale generation along the lines of what has been introduced in GB.</p>	<p>Update provided by DETI</p> <p>Analysis on suitability of a small scale FIT, including how the GB FIT can be adapted for Northern Ireland, was commissioned on 1 March 2013 and is due for completion at end May. The study will assess the various options for introducing a FIT which replicates or is similar to the GB FIT. These options will include costs and benefits. A separate report will be provided to the Committee on the report's conclusions and next steps once it has been assessed by DETI.</p>	<p>Update provided by: DETI</p> <p>The study and its findings, which was undertaken by Cambridge Economic Policy Associates, was shared with the Minister and the ETI Committee in October. The study concluded that the GB small scale FIT can be adapted for use in Northern Ireland and that the same technologies should be supported under the same tariff levels as in GB. The necessary legislative powers for a FIT are currently being drafted as part of DETI's Energy Bill.</p> <p>The intention remains to have a small scale FIT in place before the NIRO's closure to new applications in 2017.</p>
<p>20. The Utility Regulator should review the process for grid connection to ensure that it is fully transparent and costs are fully explained. Connections for installations should be made in a timely fashion, with both parties aware of how long the process is going to take.</p>	<p>Response provided by: NIAUR</p> <p>The UR is planning to review the NIE Statement of Charges for connections. This is an annual process and any updates required will be in place for October 2013.</p> <p>In addition, the Utility Regulator has been working closely with NIE in developing the Statement of Charges for Wind farm cluster connections. It is expected that this will be approved and published in May 2013.</p>	<p>Response provided by: NIAUR</p> <p>The NIE Statement of Charges for connections was updated and is effective from 1 October 2013.</p> <p>The Statement of Charges includes the charging arrangements for Authorised Generators connecting to the network as part of a Generator Cluster and the methodology for connecting groups of generators to the NIE Distribution System using Cluster Substations. These were effective from 9 May 2013.</p> <p>The Utility Regulator has been working closely with NIE to ensure that the Statement of Charges will be updated to cover Annex XII of the Energy Efficiency Directive 2012/27/EU part (b)(iii) to ensure that "The overall process to become connected to the grid should be no longer than 24 months, bearing in mind what is reasonably practicable and non-discriminatory"</p>

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<p>24. The Department of the Environment should commence a consultation exercise on permitted development for business and agricultural installations with a view to bringing forward proposals for permitted development in these sectors.</p>	<p>Response provided by: DoE</p> <p>Further to its consultation on small scale renewable technology permitted development the Department has introduced permitted development rights for a range of micro-generation renewable technologies which will apply to all non-domestic buildings including business and agriculture. The permitted development rights came in to operation on 30 April 2013 (S.R. 2013 No. 96) and include solar panels, ground and water source heat pumps, biomass fuel stores and boiler housing. In addition the Department consulted on the provision of permitted development rights for anaerobic digesters on agricultural units as part of its consultation on agricultural buildings permitted development. The consultation closed on 18 January 2013. The Environment Committee considered the Department's initial synopsis of responses to the consultation on 14 March 2013 and the Department is presently working on finalising proposals on the way forward.</p>	<p>Response provided by: DoE</p> <p>Further to its consultation on small scale renewable technology permitted development the Department has introduced permitted development rights for a range of micro-generation renewable technologies which will apply to all non-domestic buildings including business and agriculture. The permitted development rights came in to operation on 30 April 2013 (S.R. 2013 No. 96) and include solar panels, ground and water source heat pumps, biomass fuel stores and boiler housing. In addition the Department, following a public consultation on permitted development rights for anaerobic digesters on agricultural units, introduced those permitted development rights on 30 August 2013 through Statutory Rule 2013 No. 210.</p>

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<p>25. The Executive must bring forward a programme to develop the renewable energy potential of public buildings. This should include targets and time-scales for substantially increasing the deployment of renewable energy right across the public sector.</p>	<p>Response provided by: OFMDFM</p> <p>OFMDFM supports the deployment of renewable energy on the public sector estate, where appropriate economic appraisal, taking full account of sustainable development considerations, supports the proposed investment.</p> <p>DFP reports that, following a pilot project assessing the applicability of renewable technologies to the office estate, it has concluded that “investment in energy efficiency rather than renewables remains the most cost effective means of deploying its constrained capital budget”.</p> <p>These findings support the general view of OFMDFM that, investment in energy efficiency measures is capable of delivering cost and carbon savings in a similar way to renewable energy investment, and that individual investment decisions should be made on the basis of the merits of the individual case.</p> <p>Action complete</p>	<p>Response provided by: OFMDFM</p> <p>Nothing to add to update provided in May 2013.</p>

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<p>25. (CONT'D)</p>	<p>The Committee sought further information following its meeting on 30 May 2013 – an update was requested on the progress on public buildings. DFP responded as follows;</p> <p>DFP manages the office estate which represents approximately 7% of the public sector estate (measured by running costs). DFP can therefore comment in respect of DFP’s management of these buildings but not in relation to the other 93% of the government estate. Following the assessment of a number of renewable technologies, our view is that investment in energy efficiency projects remains the most cost-effective means of reducing both costs and emissions in the office estate. The applicability of renewable technologies is assessed on a case by case basis as capital projects are approved. At this time, DFP has no plans for a substantial roll-out of renewable technologies though recently investments have been made in low-energy lighting conversions and building energy management hardware/software. Significant investment is planned in the incoming years in further low-energy lighting systems and high efficiency heating systems.</p>	

Energy



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18 November 2013

Dear Jim

UPDATES ON THE REPORT ON THE INQUIRY INTO RENEWABLE ENERGY & THE STRATEGIC ENERGY FRAMEWORK (SEF) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Inquiry into Renewable Energy

The Department responded to the Committee on the “Report on the Committee’s Inquiry into Barriers to the Development of Renewable Energy Production and its Associated Contribution to the Northern Ireland Economy” on 27 June 2011, and supplied additional information following Committee consideration on 11 August 2011. Updates on progress towards implementation of the recommendations were provided on 21 November 2011, 23 May 2012, 21 November 2012 and 15 May 2013. I am now writing to advise you of progress since the last update; and, as agreed by the Committee, following the May 2013 update, this covers only those recommendations against which there are actions still to be completed.

The current position includes input from other departments with responsibility for a number of the recommendations. The information provided should be considered in conjunction with the update provided in May. You will note that a significant number of the actions are now complete.

Strategic Energy Framework

It was also agreed that updates on the SEF Implementation Plan would be provided every six months and the attached version reflects progress up to the end of September 2013.

Yours sincerely

FIONA HEPPEL
Head of Energy Division