



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE FOR ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND INVESTMENT**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

**THURSDAY, 16 FEBRUARY 2012  
ALMAC GROUP, 20 SEAGOE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE,  
CRAIGAVON**

Present: Mr Alban Maginness (Chairperson)  
Mr Daithí McKay (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Gordon Dunne  
Mr Phil Flanagan  
Mr Stephen Moutray  
Ms Sandra Overend

In Attendance: Mr Jim McManus (Assembly Clerk)  
Ms Kate McCullough (Assistant Assembly Clerk)  
Ms Paula Best (Clerical Supervisor)  
Ms Michelle McDowell (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Mr Steven Agnew  
Mr Paul Frew  
Ms Jennifer McCann  
Dr Alasdair McDonnell  
Mr Robin Newton

*The meeting began at 10.45am in public session.*

**1. Apologies**

Apologies are detailed above.

**2. Minutes of meeting held on 9 February 2012**

*Agreed:* The draft minutes of the meeting on 9 February were agreed.

**3. Chairperson's Business**

There was no chairperson's business.

#### 4. Matters Arising

Members discussed the questions raised on the 9<sup>th</sup> February by economist John Simpson in his oral evidence on the Electricity Market Reform.

*Agreed:* To write to Department, Utility Regulator and NIE to seek their views.

Members considered the draft response on the EU Priorities 2012-13.

*Agreed:* The final response was agreed.

Members considered a way forward in relation to the Bord Bia's Quality Assurance scheme.

*Agreed:* Suggest to Chair or A&RD Committee to contact Oireachtas Joint Committee.

Members considered proposals regarding hydraulic fracturing.

*Agreed:* To consider this issue in the future Forward Work Programme.

#### 5. Inquiry into Research and Development: Almac

*Officials joined the meeting at 10.46am.*

Members received an oral briefing from Colin Hayburn, Executive Director, Professor Richard Kennedy, VP Experimental Medicine and Professor Tim Harrison, VP Discovery Chemistry, Aine Rafferty, Alan Armstrong CEO, John Irvine, Executive Director, Almac

Key issues discussed included an overview of the structures and work of Almac, the impact of the current European R&D funding and the new Horizon 2020, the need for partnerships between business and academia and the role of government and the legislature.

*Officials left the meeting at 12.17pm.*

#### 6. Economic Strategy

Members considered the Committee's draft response to the Economic Strategy.

*Agreed:* To submit to the response to the Department.

#### 7. SR 2012/11 The Petroleum (Consolidation) Act (Amendment of Licensing Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012

The Committee considered the following subordinate legislation:

SR 2012/11 The Petroleum (Consolidation) Act (Amendment of Licensing Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012

Stephen Moutray declared an interest as the owner of a small retail business.

*Agreed:* That the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment has considered SR 2012/11 The Petroleum (Consolidation) Act (Amendment of Licensing Provisions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2012 and has no objection to the Rule.

## **8. Correspondence**

Members noted the following items of correspondence:

- i. A response from the Department to a letter from GT Energy.

*Agreed:* To forward the response to Ballymena Borough Council and GT Energy

*Agreed:* To commission NIA Research.

- ii. A letter from the Minister regarding the reconstitution of NESTA as a charitable organisation.

- iii. A letter from Mrs Diane Dodds MEP regarding Horizon 2020.

- iv. Update from the Committee for Finance and Personnel regarding quarterly monitoring of post project evaluations (PPEs).

*Agreed:* To write to the Department to ascertain the reasons for delays in completion of PPEs.

- v. A letter and briefing paper from the Colleges Northern Ireland on the views of the sector regarding proposed dissolution of the Department for Employment and Learning.

- vi. A request from the Oil Firing Technical Association (OFTEC) to meet with the Committee.

*Agreed:* Chair and Deputy Chair to meet OFTEC.

- vii. Request from SEE Ireland to meet with Chair.

*Agreed:* Chair and Deputy Chair to meet with SEE Ireland

- viii. Correspondence received from the Minister to the Chair of Agriculture and Rural Development Committee regarding the Economic Strategy.

- ix. A letter from the Mount Conference Centre with regards to the use of non-governmental sector premises by the civil service. To ask what they understand the rationale for the policy to be.

*Agreed:* To ask the Department for its understanding of the rationale for the policy.

- x. An invitation to the Committee from Success through STEM.

*Agreed:* Members to contact Committee office if they wished to attend.

- xi. An invitation to an Agenda NI Seminar on Developing Electricity Market.

*Agreed:* Members to contact Committee office if they wished to attend.

- xii. A request from Employers for Childcare to give a presentation on Social Enterprise Qualifications.

*Agreed:* To consider this issue in the future Forward Work Programme.

- xiii. A holding reply from the Secretary of State to the Committee's letter regarding regulation of Northern Ireland Credit Union by the FSA.

- xiv. The response from Phoenix Gas regarding infraction proceedings on gas regulation.

*Agreed:* To write to Mutual Energy for their views and comments.

## **9. Any other business**

Members considered differences in tourist Visa entitlements for non-EU visitors between UK and RoI.

*Agreed:* To write to the Department regarding the non EU Tourist Market and visas.

## **10. Date, time and place of next meeting**

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on **Thursday 23 February at 10.30am, South Eastern Regional College, Newtownards.**

## **11. Closed Session: Presbyterian Mutual Society (PMS)**

Members considered issues relating to the PMS.

*Agreed:* To receive a copy of the Administrator's Report from the Department.

*The Chair adjourned the meeting at 12.45pm.*

**Mr Alban Maginness  
Chair  
Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment**

**23 February 2012**