

DRAFT

Robin Swann MLA
Chairperson
Public Accounts Committee
Room 371
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
BELFAST, BT4 3XX

19 December 2016

Dear Robin

Inquiry into Non-domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) Scheme

Thank you for your letter of 1 December 2016, requesting additional information in relation to the Non-domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) Scheme. I am sorry not to have met the deadline. The responses below have been provided in relation to each of your specific information requests.

1. The contact details for the suppliers/installers to the RHI scheme, broken down by industry;

Ofgem has confirmed to the Department that it does not hold data on suppliers / installers for individual applications and is therefore unable to provide a breakdown by industry.

2. A copy of the first day brief you would have been given by David Sterling when you replaced him on 1 July 2014;

The first day brief provided on my appointment extended to over 150 pages and comprised a 17 page overview of the Department and its functions along with 139 pages of briefing summarising significant issues being handled by Divisions and Non Departmental Public Bodies. The Departmental overview is attached at **Annex A**. The summary of significant issues being handled by Energy Division extended to 17 pages and a one page extract, covering renewable heat, is attached at **Annex**

B. For consideration: If the Committee would like to see the full set of papers relating to my first day brief, the Department would be happy to oblige.

3. How many hours did CEPA charge for the work they did for the Department;

CEPA charged the following hours for the work they undertook for the Department:

2011 report – 78.5 days (588.75 hours)

2012 addendum – 25 days (187.5 hours)

2013 report - 103 days (772.5 hours)

4. An up to date timeline of the current fact finding investigation which the Department has commissioned.

We received the report from PwC from the initial fact-finding on 31 October. A further stage was commissioned on [] and a final report is due from PwC by 20 January 2017. In the interests of transparency, PwC will interview David Sterling and myself as well as the other staff involved.

On the advice of DfE, and with the agreement of the Permanent Secretaries of the Department of Education (DE) and Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA), which now employ former DETI staff who were involved in the RHI scheme, the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service has decided to commission an independent external HR advisor to assist with this process and ensure it is completed in a timescale which meets the needs of the Department, and the wider public interest.

As explained previously, the commissioning of the substantive advice remains contingent on the conclusions reached when the final fact-finding report from PwC has been received. Subject to that caveat, the adviser will be asked to provide advice to the Accounting Officer(s) of the Department(s) employing these individuals on the HR implications of the evidence, ie whether or not there is evidence that needs to be addressed in a formal HR process. The Terms of reference include

provision for the adviser to comment directly to the Head of the NI Civil Service on any potential issue that may require further investigation or review in relation to the Permanent Secretaries involved in the scheme. If the commissioning of this work is confirmed, HOCS will ask for it to be completed by 14 February.

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I confirm that I will make myself available to attend further evidence sessions that may be convened by the Committee. I hope the above information is helpful.

Yours sincerely

DR ANDREW McCORMICK

cc TOA