

From: Edgar, Leona
Sent: 06 July 2016 13:19
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Cc: Gardner, Jeremy; Wallwin, Judith; Parkhill, Laura
Subject: FW: UTV Live - Renewable Energy Scheme
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Date & Time	05.07.16 (18.08)
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PAUL CLARK

It's been claimed that a farmer is in line to receive £1million in payments from a green energy project because Stormont failed to control it property. The Audit Office says the Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme has overspent by tens of millions of pounds and experts are investigating possible fraud.

VICKI HAWTHORNE

A biomass boiler, one of the greener, cleaner heating systems Stormont has been encouraging businesses to install. The former Enterprise Department launched the Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme four years ago, offering generous subsidies to firms which chose to go green, but a Northern Ireland Audit Office report says the scheme had serious systemic weaknesses from the start and that a lack of spending controls have led to a very serious ongoing impact on the Northern Ireland budget. Stormont introduced the Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme following a similar one in Great Britain. Westminster was to give Stormont the money to help pay for it, but the Audit Office says that businesses here which installed green heating systems have been receiving much more in subsidies compared to those in other parts of the UK. There's been a significant overspent and it means Stormont must now pick up the bill. The report says the scheme will cost Stormont £140million over the next five years, but it's a 20 year project, so the total cost could spiral to over a billion pounds. The flaws in the system mean the more some businesses use their heating, the more they get paid by Stormont. A whistle blower has claimed that a farmer is in line to receive £1million over 20 years, after installing a biomass boiler to heat an empty shed, and that large factories are also allegedly on course to pocket £1.5million over two decades for running biomass boilers 24 hours a day in premises that were previously not heated. The new Economy Minister admits the failures in the scheme are embarrassing for Stormont.

SIMON HAMILTON

There were a catalogue of errors which the report makes very, very clear and these are unforgiveable in terms of the impact that they're going to have on the public purse and we are going to investigate the allegations of fraud and make sure that on one hand investigate those accusations; we're going to try to control the cost of this, the options that we are considering and at the same time learn lessons and ensure that this doesn't happen again.

VICKI HAWTHORNE

When Stormont realised the mistakes in the RHI scheme it closed it to new applications earlier this year. Ministers now need to work out how to solve the multi-million pound problem it leaves behind.

[Leona Edgar](#)

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