

# Former DUP aide 'ripped off RHI'

**Cash for ash scandal:** Ex-Spad Brimstone accused of exploiting scheme to heat own home as unionist parties reveal involvement of MLAs' families

BY STAFF REPORTER

THE Assembly has heard sensational claims that a former DUP special adviser "ripped off" the

Renewable Heat Incentive.

Jim Allister claimed that Stephen Brimstone "is heating his own house on the non-domestic (RHI) boiler scheme".

Speaking under Assembly privilege, the TUV leader accused Mr Brimstone of replacing a biomass boiler he already owned for a new one just to take advantage of RHI grants.

"That is the sort of rip-off that brings disrepute to all of the scheme," he said.

The DUP indicated Mr Brimstone did not wish to comment.

Meanwhile, the DUP and UUP revealed further links to the RHI. Former UUP MLA Neil Somerville admitted the scheme had meant his wife could install a horse solarium.

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# Ex-DUP Spad switched boilers to exploit botched energy scheme, claims Allister

BY STAFF REPORTER

A FORMER DUP special adviser has been accused of “ripping off” the Renewable Heat Incentive in the Assembly.

TUV leader Jim Allister made the explosive claim that former ‘Spad’ Stephen Brimstone, “is heating his own house on the non-domestic (RHI) boiler scheme”

Speaking under parliamentary privilege at Stormont, Mr Allister said Mr Brimstone had a new biomass boiler in his house

— but took it out and installed a new non-domestic one to “rip off” the RHI.

Branding the botched energy scheme “ridiculous”, Mr Allister said: “That is the scheme that our ministers approved and signed off, and that is the scheme that Mr Stephen Brimstone is benefiting under — heating his house on the non-domestic boiler scheme.

“Did he claim that he had a few sheep and was a sheep farmer? Does he have sheep?”

“One thing is for sure: he is heating his own house. Is that right? Is that how things should be under this scheme?”

“Was this scheme so lax and so perforated that that was an okay thing to do? Even if the individual thought it morally the right thing to do, does this scheme permit that? If it does, is that not one of the loopholes that the minister should have addressed in these regulations?”

“It is scandalous that someone can purport to qualify for the non-domestic renewable heat scheme and devote the greater bulk of the heat that they produce to heating their own house,

and to do it with considerable forethought.”

Mr Allister said Mr Brimstone had built a new house some years ago.

“He had a biomass boiler in it, but he took it out to qualify for this scheme, because you had to have a new boiler,” he continued.

“He put in a new non-domestic scheme boiler under the scheme in order to qualify.

“That is the sort of rip-off that brings disrepute to all of the scheme and, sadly, causes great injury to the bona fide users.”

The DUP indicated that Mr Brimstone did not want to comment on Mr Allister’s claims.

This is not the first major controversy Mr Brimstone has become embroiled in.

He was the Spad accused in a BBC Panorama investigation of telling the DUP’s then representative on the Housing Executive board, Jenny Palmer, to change her vote in relation to a contract involving maintenance firm Red Sky, which later went bankrupt.

In November, Mr Brimstone left his £92,000-a-year post to pursue a career in the private sector.



Former Spad Stephen Brimstone left his post in November last year

