

Meeting with Fiona Hepper and Renewable Heat Team 8.10.13

(details as documented in emails to:

Stephen Agnew's PA on 21/10/13

Peter Hutchinson

Fiona Hepper (via her PA) on 9/6/14

At the meeting I'd queried if there would be a time when NI's RHI payments would align with the rest of UK's (i.e. to offer a tiered approach to funding whereby the first 1314 peak load hours is funded at the higher amount (7.6p/kWh) and the remainder at a lower amount (1.9p/kWh) to encourage the buildings' owners/operators to be more efficient in their usage). As you know in Northern Ireland, a building owner can get a flat rate of 6.1p/kWh no matter what their usage (if boiler is between 20 & 100 kWth).

I'd advised what we were seeing on the ground in Northern Ireland is that buildings are using more energy than before because it pays them to do so. The flat rate means that there was no incentive at all to be efficient and it was more likely that the heating would be kept on in buildings in all year round, with the windows open everywhere.

Fiona, Joanne and Peter told me that they did not believe that this was the case and people would not do this. They advised that they assumed that renewables would've been undertaken in businesses as the last step after all energy efficiencies were maximised. I advised that it was in fact happening and that it was making it impossible for us to sell energy efficiency equipment to these buildings, even when that's exactly what should be happening as the first step and indeed what is happening in GB. I added that it is now in business' interests to be wasteful with what's strictly not a renewable energy source.

I advised that whilst I understand that the RHI Team have a very difficult job to undertake to get the renewables adoption rates up, the current tariffs were making things difficult for companies like ours who main aim is genuine energy efficiency.

By way of conclusion they told me that I should feed my thoughts in to the current RHI consultation that proposes the extension of the scheme to the domestic sector and new tariffs/technologies for the non-domestic sector. I read the consultation document but domestic RHI is not relevant to us as we don't target this market and unfortunately none of the consultation document mentioned amending the tiered repayments in line with GB. So I didn't feel that it gave me the opportunity to add anything more than what I'd discussed that day with the RH Team.

In addition, they discussed that it might be useful for me to contact DFP as they have responsibility for energy efficiency and energy usage in the public estate, an appropriate starting point might be Martyn.scott@dfpni.gov.uk. They told me to explain that I'd met with DETI and were advised that DFP might be interested to learn of a new energy efficiency product that could significantly reduce heating costs.

I came out of the meeting feeling frustrated and that it had been a waste of my time as they didn't seem to acknowledge the issue.