



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

Public Accounts Committee

# OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Inquiry into Non-domestic Renewable Heat  
Incentive Scheme:  
Department for the Economy

12 October 2016

## NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

## Public Accounts Committee

Inquiry into Non-domestic Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme:  
Department for the Economy

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**Members present for all or part of the proceedings:**

Mr Robin Swann (Chairperson)  
Mr Robbie Butler  
Mr Trevor Clarke  
Mr Gordon Dunne  
Mr Alex Easton  
Ms Michelle Gildernew  
Mr Declan Kearney  
Ms Carla Lockhart  
Mr Oliver McMullan

**Witnesses:**

Ms Heather Cousins	Department for the Economy
Dr Andrew McCormick	Department for the Economy
Mr Chris Stewart	Department for the Economy
Ms Alison Caldwell	Department of Finance
Mr Kieran Donnelly	Northern Ireland Audit Office

**The Chairperson (Mr Swann):** We call back in Dr Andrew McCormick, the accounting officer for the Department for the Economy; Ms Heather Cousins, the deputy secretary for higher education and investment; and Mr Chris Stewart, deputy secretary.

Folks, we have already had a closed evidence session. I just want to make you aware of where we are as a Committee. The Public Accounts Committee has decided to adjourn today's public session into the next phase of the renewable heat incentive inquiry in order for all ongoing departmental investigations to conclude. The Committee considers this inquiry to be of the most acute public interest. Achieving maximum transparency and accountability on the issue is paramount, and the Committee will not be deflected in its determination to carry out fully its political and scrutiny responsibilities. I want to make it very clear to you today, Andrew, that that is what we have decided as a Committee. Would you like to comment?

**Dr Andrew McCormick (Department for the Economy):** No, I accept that entirely. We are accountable. That is the nature of the relationship, and we will cooperate fully with exactly your process as you determine it. I thank you for that opportunity, and we will be available as you require us.

**The Chairperson (Mr Swann):** There are a few things that we want from the Department on which we will write to you in due course to get clarity before our next session. At this minute in time, that is scheduled for 26 October.

**Dr McCormick:** OK.