

Monday 17th October 2016

Davina McCay Interview Transcript

Attendees:

Name	Initial	Company
Davina McCay	DM	-
Leanne Coey	LC	PwC
Clare Kennedy	CK	PwC

Meeting notes:

CK	Ok for the purpose of the tape it is exactly 12:30 on the 17 th October 2016. It is the interview of Davina McCay and in the room from PwC we have Leanne Coey and Clare Kennedy. So just for the purposes of the record Davina can I just thank you for coming along and for agreeing to cooperate. You have done that very willingly and we very much do appreciate it. I know in the letter it says three hours, really Davina I don't expect it to take that long.
DM	Ok.
CK	However what we normally try and do although I fail at this miserably, is run the interview for about 45 to 50 minutes ...
DM	Ok.
CK	... and then offer people the opportunity for a break if they want it. So if Leanne maybe you could hold me to account for that because I am really bad at it. But likewise Davina if at any time you would like to take a break, please just let me know and we have the ability to pause the tape ...
DM	Ok. Thank you.
CK	... so we can do that. Obviously we are recording the interview and you are happy for that to be done?
DM	Yes.
CK	If you would like a copy of the transcript of the interview you are very welcome ...
DM	Ok.
CK	... to have that provided to you and if you just want to let either Leanne or I know at any stage we can make sure that ...
DM	Ok.
CK	... that is provided to you.

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DM	Ok, thank you.
CK	Ok?
DM	Yeah.
CK	And just for the purposes of the tape again Davina if you don't mind, we are obviously conducting a number of interviews, we'll have a number to go this week, so can I ask that you keep the content of the interview confidential?
DM	Yeah.
CK	Thank you very much. Davina what is most useful for us just really at the beginning and it is part of that context setting that we were talking about off tape, is to understand I guess your career ...
DM	Ok.
CK	... and what you were doing in the lead up to coming into the energy division and I guess what particularly ...
DM	Ok. Right.
CK	... led you to that role and to that position?
DM	Are you referring to working on the RHI for that period of time?
CK	Yes.
DM	Or in general? Well I had been in energy division for a number of years.
CK	Right ok.
DM	Since 2006.
CK	Right ok.
DM	Virtuals within sustainable energy ...
CK	Yes.
DM	... renewable energy and I had had previous experience within my working energy division of helping to administer a domestic grant scheme for ...
CK	Right.
DM	... renewable energy technologies called the Reconnect Scheme.
CK	Yes.
DM	And I had worked as well on, it's a large funding programme within an organisation which had required casework approval.
CK	Ok.
DM	So I had been involved in developing a business case with ...

CK	Ok.
DM	... an outside body assisting us and taking that through our casework committee.
CK	Ok.
DM	I am not sure if you are familiar with casework ...
CK	Yes.
DM	... if I am using terminology that ...
CK	No that's fine.
DM	So I had experience of taking a business case, a larger business case through casework and through Department of Finance and personnel for approval. I was working in the energy efficiency section up until the time I started working on renewable heat, working on transposition of the energy efficiency directive.
CK	Ok.
DM	I knew that Joanne had already moved on.
CK	Yes.
DM	And that Peter was due to move on and I think it was very short notice.
CK	Right.
DM	I am trying to recall back. I think it was the Monday ...
CK	Ok.
DM	... of the week that Peter was leaving.
CK	Ok.
DM	It may have been a few, it may have been the end of the week before ...
CK	Ok.
DM	... but I have a feeling it was the Monday. A note was put around the division to say that there was an opportunity to act up ...
CK	Ok.
DM	... for a short period of time ...
CK	Ok.
DM	... until the new team were in place.
CK	Ok.

DM	And they were due to arrive, I think they were already, possible had already been interviewed.
CK	Right.
DM	We knew who they were ...
CK	Right, ok.
DM	... but they were probably you know, working out notice and holidays and whatnot.
CK	So that was Seamus and Stuart?
DM	Seamus and Stuart.
CK	Ok.
DM	So I think it had to be in by Wednesday lunchtime, we just had to send through a few, a paragraph or two about relevant experience and ...
CK	Ok.
DM	... what we felt the priorities would be. I knew from just hearing talk amongst the office that getting the domestic RHI up through casework was the big thing.
CK	Yes.
DM	There was a lot of pressure from local, from, it was a ministerial policy she wanted brought forward and a lot of pressure from MLAs, a lot of correspondence cases and AQs and whatnot coming in about when is it starting? So my short application for the opportunity to act up centred around my experience of taking the project through casework.
CK	Ok.
DM	Because I knew that was, in the short period it was only going to be a six week period of time, that would be one of the main matters and it just highlighted that I had some experience of a grant scheme for domestic, for domestic renewable energy technologies. So I had a familiarity with some of the technologies ...
CK	Yes.
DM	... and a bit of the lingo jargon. So I was called out on the Wednesday afternoon and told that I would be acting up and to try and get as much, just information from Peter as I could in that ...
CK	Ok.
DM	... couple of days.
CK	Ok.
DM	So Peter had worked on the handover document.
CK	Yes.

DM	Which was in this and we did get a bit of time just going through ...
CK	Ok.
DM	... what was in it. I do remember sitting with Peter and can I, oh ...
CK	Yes do of course, yes ...
DM	... just find out... and ...
CK	... and please refer to whatever you want to.
DM	... to my handwritten notes that are in this.
CK	Right. We wondered who the writing was.
DM	Yeah, mine and I think possibly Seamus's.
CK	Yeah because we were talking about the fact that we think there was two different ...
LC	Yeah two different.
DM	Yeah that's Seamus's handwriting, I think that Seamus's handwriting, it's not mine anyway. I can't remember how I got the handover document.
CK	Ok.
DM	Peter handed it to me as a hard copy or if was emailed?
CK	Ok.
DM	Can't remember. I've been racking my brains and I can't recall.
CK	Ok.
DM	But if it was sent as email I had printed it off and kept it on my desk because queries were coming in on a variety of things and it was nice to have something to flick through and find an answer.
CK	Yeah.
DM	So Peter had sat down with me and said really in the six weeks that you're going to be here you will probably get the first couple of things started.
CK	Ok.
DM	So you'll see, I think yes I got down to the Ofgem administration.
CK	Ok.
DM	None of it actually got, in the six weeks I was doing it, nothing really got finished. It was busy.
CK	Ok.

DM	So we'd got down as far, there was an issue with the carbon trust loans which took up a significant amount of time.
CK	Ok.
DM	Plus getting the domestic RHI through in that time. So for the six weeks I was team.
CK	Just you?
DM	Just me. There was a domestic team, think the names are in this handover document, but they had been involved in the renewable heat premium payment ...
CK	Yes.
DM	... Which was the precursor to the Domestic RHI where they were giving out sort of capital upfront payments. It was very similar to the reconnect scheme that we had tendered before. So that team, the team that remained were really just focused on that.
CK	Right.
DM	A colleague, Dan Sinton, Dan did try, did help as much as he could but he hadn't been privy to a lot, you know the meetings and the information so it was more, when we were looking at the domestic RHI and how... Dan had seen that working, he had developed a lot of the drafting, the guidance documents and what not.
CK	Ok.
DM	So I had some support on that element but for the rest of it, it was me.
CK	Ok.
DM	So it was busy.
CK	And just to confirm then Davina so you were obviously acting up in to the grade 7 position?
DM	Yes.
CK	So, and correct me if I'm wrong, so you were a DP at the time and that was an opportunity to act up into the grade 7?
DM	Yeah.
CK	So you, the note came out on the Monday, they sort expressed an interest roughly?
DM	Yes, I think it was the Monday, possibly the Friday before.
CK	Ok so you put your note in on the Wednesday?
DM	Yes I think I submitted, I might have submitted it on the Tuesday.
CK	Ok.
DM	So it didn't very long ...

CK	No.
DM	... He only wanted, just wanted a few lines just to show sort of any relevant experience.
CK	Ok so you heard very quickly?
DM	I think it had to be in on Wednesday lunchtime. I'm trying to remember back a couple of years but yes on Wednesday morning, I was told on Wednesday afternoon.
CK	Ok and that was by John Mills was it?
DM	Yes, yes.
CK	Ok and if you, I know it wasn't very much time, but from the Wednesday to the Friday I mean how much time do you think you had with Peter?
DM	I was still doing my original job as well and Peter was trying to get everything sorted. I'd say, he probably sat down for a good couple of hours ...
CK	Ok.
DM	... one on one and he was sitting across the room from me at that point so a bit of backwards and forwarding but he was really concentrating I think on getting this handover document because it was really useful to have all of this, details and references in it.
CK	Ok.
DM	So we probably got, because was it Wednesday... I think it was around 3 o'clock, I go at 4 to do the school pick up, probably had the Thursday and then the Friday, I think Peter on his last day I mean there was a lunch out to wish him well so we would have been more limited for time on the Friday but we would have got a few hours, couple of hours anyway sitting going through but it was more around the domestic RHI and because we had to take it through case work. The business case had been drafted and had been internally, had been approved I think by John but we had to then get it ready to take to case work and there's a massive briefing pack involved, massive briefing pack but you have to basically cover all the possible questions a case work may come up with and while I was familiar with the process, it took a bit of time to work out the answers to the possible questions when it was something that I wasn't ...
CK	Yes.
DM	... you know I hadn't been involved in the decisions on the tariffs and one part of the domestic RHI was who was going to deliver it, would it be delivered in house or be delivered by Ofgem? So that, that was quite significant. So we probably spent more time talking about that and he had mentioned about the Ofgem administration, that there were some changes happening and more about the data sharing protocols I think.
CK	Yes.
DM	Although I'm confusing myself now as to whether there's things that I picked up from going through it and from emails but I think he did cover off that but certainly our time spent together was more around the domestic RHI because it really was the key priority.

CK	And if I can ask just to think back Davina again to the, if I can call it, an expression of interest that was sent out because obviously there was a particular branch, had been created specifically around renewables at that stage. In the note that went out can you remember was it someone who would act up to cover that branch or do you know which to me obviously has the non-domestic and the domestic? Was there anything in that note that maybe set out, do you know for that period of 6 to 8 weeks, what the priorities were going to be?
DM	No as far as I can remember because John had a sort of standard any time there was an opportunity so having more recently to... as far as I can remember it was more... there will be an opportunity to act up to head of renewable heat branch I think it was called at the time.
CK	Ok.
DM	I can't remember, certainly in more recent expressions of interest you've been asked to say what you think the immediate priorities are.
CK	Ok.
DM	I can't remember to be honest if that was in that that because it was one of the first that John had ever sent out.
CK	Ok.
DM	I think I possibly asked Peter and Dan what they, the short term because they knew it was only going be, we knew it was only to be for a very short period of time.
CK	Yes.
DM	I think they extended it for another couple of weeks just for the handover with myself and Stuart just so it wasn't a complete cliff edge.
CK	Yes.
DM	But I don't think it did set out, I think it was, it was head of renewable heat branch.
CK	Ok.
DM	And it was, I mean we did have issues around the non-domestic RHI to take forward. The domestic RHI was a key thing, numerous correspondence cases every week and phone calls when is this happening, what domestic RHI. The thing on the non-domestic side that took up most of the time was probably get around the Ofgem administration. There was an issue, the carbon trust loan issue as it was called. It had been, they'd been working on for quite a while and it sort reached crisis point when I was there, we were getting several correspondence cases and phone calls from organisations, from installers and from companies because applications were being, were put on hold.
CK	Ok.
DM	Because there was an issue around state aid and if someone got a carbon trust loan for the biomass boiler it was the interest free element of that loan constituted state aid and then the RHI.
CK	Right.

DM	I think RHI wasn't, I think state aid or the carbon trust loan was what they called diminimus so you could create a certain amount of aid before it had to be notified. I think the RHI was under a different notification which allowed, I think they could notify that there would be a higher level, I can't remember the ins and out but basically because the carbon trust loan was on a diminimus level that set the level at which someone could, like get state aid, never mind what the other projects were. So if someone, particularly a farmer, the non-agriculture state aid limit was €200,000 over three years. For agriculture it was €15,000 over three years so for someone who maybe got carbon trust loan to install a boiler, if it was for an agriculture purpose their limit was very low so any payments under RHI then would take them over the limit. So until that issue was sorted, Ofgem could basically put a hold on accreditations for anyone who had had a carbon trust loan.
CK	Ok.
DM	So that took a significant amount of time. It ended needing legislation to allow pay back of carbon trust loan.
CK	Right, ok.
DM	But that and the domestic RHI really did take up the majority of the time. Still doing a little bit of my old job, not much because we'd reached a point where it was transposition of a directive and we were close the deadline and a lot of it had been done which is one of the reasons I was able to step across as well but I did end up having to do regulations for it at the same time as well with staff holidays and what not, legislation had to be put through for that deadline. So really yes, in the six months just the general running of the branch as well, returns, staff, well they didn't have any staff, well they did have staff because there had been, the domestic RHI team who were doing the RHPP although they were well-established but you had your usual financial returns, updates, lines to take, that kind of thing and then the correspondence cases and Aqs so I really got down to around here and then Stuart and Seamus came along.
CK	Ok. So I'm interested in I guess, you know that approach to the handover note and we'll come onto that. So I know you said you can't remember if Peter handed you the handover note in hard copy or it was emailed, but in the time that you had with him, probably on that Thursday do you remember seeing him going down through the handover note?
DM	I can't remember.
CK	Ok.
DM	I do remember us talking about the domestic RHI and about the business case and just where they'd got to with trying to set up the case work committee meeting and things like that.
CK	Ok.
DM	It was probably more the nuts and bolts of what you'll need to do.
CK	Right, rather than it specifically being ...
DM	I can't remember, I can't remember to be honest. I just remember the discussion about domestic RHI but I can't remember beyond that.

CK	No and that's absolutely fine. I mentioned it again because you said you know from just from being around do you know the office that you were aware that the priority was the domestic RHI. Was there anything more concrete than that Davina that you could remember back to say look this actually is the priority?
DM	Well the reason I knew from the discussions around the office was just about the number of correspondence cases coming in from local MLAs, calls from the special advisor, messages from him, just you know you hear your colleagues talking about Oh, we've got another three or four correspondence cases in asking for the domestic RHI, when's it happening?
CK	Ok.
DM	So and I knew that they were in the process of trying to get case work set up, so.
CK	Yes. Ok. In addition to that, like was there a specific direction I guess, was from Peter I guess first of all just to say look Davina you should prioritise this or indeed from you know John Mills himself to say look in the time that you're here Davina can you please prioritise X, Y and Z?
DM	Well Peter had said when you work down this you'll probably get to around here in the six weeks, you probably won't get much more than that done. So I took that, maybe rightly or wrongly I took this as this is the order of preference.
CK	Right. So you had a discussion with him, because I know it says immediate actions by end of August 2014 that it was almost prioritised for you?
DM	Yeah.
CK	Ok.
DM	That was my, because he said you'll probably only get to around here.
CK	Ok.
DM	I took that as the order of priority. It was also, you are led by what comes in, what hits your desk and there was significant, as I said, significant correspondence and questions and queries around the domestic RHI and around the carbon trust loan issue and when people are shouting very loudly in your ear, you do react and try and get it done.
CK	No absolutely.
DM	Yeah, it had reached the carbon trust loan issue had, it was just a crisis point where something had to be done do you know, Ofgem wanted it sorted, we needed it sorted, the industry wanted it sorted so.
CK	And actually I mean that makes sense Leanne because we've seen correspondence from Ofgem to Peter in his last week Davina before he moved on and it was, Ofgem had actually provided a case study around those state aid limits and stuff so I mean that does sense to us. In terms I guess of just confirming your understanding of what you were to prioritise, do you know upwards would you have had a conversation? I mean it would only have been John Mills at that time?
DM	Yeah it would have been.

CK	Ok. Would you have had a conversation with, look John, you know Peter's provided me with the handover, can I just confirm I'm on the right lines here?
DM	No.
CK	Ok.
DM	<p>What would, what did happen was John would shout down the corridor 'Have you got that case work committee meeting set up yet?'. 'Yes John I'm trying to get it sorted, we're looking at dates'. He did spend quite a bit of time with me because we had to, both as a team, John and I took the project to case work so John, when he was focused on a topic was extremely thorough. Very thorough and would interrogate it to the nth degree much to our pain at times but he got his head around it, but he did deal with a topic at a time and he had a very large remit with a lot of priorities and it, you didn't have an opportunity really to just, you know maybe you're meeting about something else and throw in something. He preferred to talk about something when he was focused on it and could give it his full attention. So we really only discussed the carbon trust loan issue and getting the domestic RHI through case work and he did spend time with me on that and the carbon trust loan issue was more of a case that I had to bring it to his attention because it was starting to take up a significant amount of time and it needed to be dealt with and he did sit down and go through that then. Trying to remember in my time, did we talk about the... Ofgem were going to do a change control. We were based on the 3% of the budget Barnet formula. I think there might have been some discussion around that but it wasn't one of, it's not that it wasn't a priority but in the time it got... trying to remember sitting in his office and you know, flashback to where you're sitting and what you talk about, but no it would have been more the carbon trust loan because it was possibly going to require legislation and Ofgem's legal team were getting involved in the phone calls and what not ...</p>
CK	Ok.
DM	... That John came on board for that but he was under pressure from above to get the domestic RHI put through.
CK	Ok I can understand that. In terms of I guess regular meetings that you would have had, I guess it's just around the governance of the team. Like how often would you have met with John, I guess on a more formal basis Davina during that time?
DM	We had a head of branch meeting every other week.
CK	Ok, ok.
DM	Where all the heads of branches sat around the table. It was useful because you picked up on things that other people were doing and how it could interact with your own work. So it was every other week for a couple of hours and I probably had two or three formal meetings with him in the six weeks.
CK	In that forum?
DM	No, well no as well as head of branch where we were sitting down working out the business case and what we were happy with and did something need a bit more attention and it was a lot of question over who's going to administer the domestic RHI and the way the business case had been drafted, the preference was that it would be delivered in house for the first year or so with a view to outsourcing it at a later point and it was just John and I had done quite a bit more work around how many

	people we would need to staff that, what it would cost you know what exactly would be involved to make sure that it was going to be staffed appropriately so I spent quite a bit of time with him on that and just what we were going, what case work were likely to ask.
CK	Ok. You'd said there Davina in terms of you know John himself was coming under pressure from above to get the domestic RHI scheme up and running, specifically where would that pressure...
DM	...politically...
	Oh politically, ok, ok, that's fine.
DM	From wider, not just the Minister within the department from wider MLAs.
CK	Ok, ok, ok. That's very useful Davina so thank you. So if I can take you back to the handover note again Davina and I mean I know, I understand and we've heard from numerous other people about how the domestic RHI scheme really was the priority of the day and I mean if we were just to look you know the immediate actions by the end of August 2014, and if you look at the review of the current domestic scheme here, so you're looking at review of biomass tariffs under 100 kilowatt and then consideration of tier tariffs to prevent excessive payments. Can you remember discussions with Peter around that or was it simply that he was trying to distil everything that was on his head onto a page?
DM	I think he is trying to distil everything that he had in his head onto a page so that at least there's some record of it. Peter had been running that non-domestic side on his own for, I can't remember, the time difference but it was at least a couple of weeks I think and it was a busy post.
CK	Yeah.
DM	Very busy post, I think he was just trying to get as much information down and I found it useful having the paper record because he had trim references, he had different documents. If someone phoned and threw something at me at least I could lift it and find some kind of reference or if we had to do some kind of return, it gave me a steer so no I don't remember a specific conversation with him around the review of the non-domestic scheme. It's what was in this.
CK	Ok, ok and just in your time you hadn't got down as far as ...
DM	No, Janette O'Hagan had obviously emailed, that took me back, you do remember... I think it was my response to her. I think she'd emailed Peter ...
CK	She had.
DM	... and I can't remember if Peter had already left when she emailed or if it was in his last few days, I'm not sure, I can't remember the timeframe.
CK	It was certainly in that, it was certainly in that last week.
DM	Fiona had already left because Fiona was already away a good few months
CK	Yes.

DM	So I think it was, yes it was June wasn't it by the time it came, her email came through to me? And I have to be honest it was probably a holding response.
CK	Ok.
DM	I knew that the review was going to have to take place. Me, myself and I was not going to be able to do it because we were still trying to get the domestic RHI up and out and it had been really... Peter had raised it in the handover note, that Ofgem, actually looking at it today, Ofgem had raised it I think the week, I think that Peter was leaving so Peter had mentioned it which is why I said to her, you know it's on our radar and we're planning a review.
CK	Ok.
DM	The review was not going to be in my time.
CK	Ok, ok.
DM	But that was the, basically what was in the handover note that led to that ...
CK	Ok.
DM	... to that conversation with her.
CK	Ok. And I mean were you aware of the issue that she was raising, Davina around the usage?
DM	Only when I had seen her you know the email trail when it, when it reached me.
CK	Ok.
DM	And then when I compared it against the handover, I'd seen it mentioned in the handover note.
CK	Ok.
DM	I think possibly when I saw her name and saw the name on the email I triggered over something, I remember her name on the note. So no I wasn't aware of the issues although it was very explanatory you know from the handover note and from her email where the issue was lying
CK	So what, and again you know Davina I can understand that I guess do you know you're only in for a very finite period so what did you do then to ensure that, so for example the issue that Janette was raising was passed on so that it wasn't dropped?
DM	I can't remember to be honest.
CK	Ok.
DM	I do remember giving this handover pack to Seamus and Stuart and I had trimmed my email response to Janette in the same trim folder that Peter had mentioned in this because he had given the trim folder I think that her...
CK	There's a reference in there, yep

DM	Yep, email to Janette yep. So I'd saved it in there so there was that record. I can't remember, I honestly can't. When Stuart and Seamus arrived the carbon trust loan issue was still ...
CK	Ok.
DM	... very much going on. We had got, I had got it to the point where we had an agreement of a way forward, with legal sides, but they then had to take through legislation for it, which took up a bit of time and they were into then, the domestic RHI took a lot longer than anticipated to get through case work because they wanted more information on how we were going to resource it so that quite a bit of... toing and froing went on to look at costs and staffing costs and things like that so for the immediate period, probably over the summer, we were still quite entrenched in that.
CK	Ok.
DM	Now they will be able to tell you, they will be able to tell you more about what they did. I kind of moved to the energy efficiency stuff and was sort of there if they needed to ask something.
CK	Ok.
DM	I was there.
CK	Ok.
DM	But I mean I do remember sitting with Stuart for a while after he joined, working out the staffing costs, we were using a ready reckoner to try and work out how many staff you would need in hours and ...
CK	Was it on the domestic?
DM	... on the domestic yeah.
CK	Ok. And so sorry just to get it out of the way before we come onto the handover with Stuart and Seamus. So after the end of that, I think it was the 8 week period is what we've been told Davina?
DM	Yeah I think there was a crossover to Stuart joining the 2 nd July and they extended, they kept the acting up going for the week or two, just to allow ...
CK	Yes so you, your finished date we have down as the 7 th July and I think both Stuart and Seamus started on 30 th June so it looks like there was about a week?
DM	Yeah, a week, yeah.
CK	Ok and had you just moved back to your old role did you at that time?
DM	Yeah, yeah.
CK	Ok.
DM	Yeah well Stuart, we put... there was a significant staff change when the RHI, the RHI team left and Stuart was coming in for RHI. There had been a number, a number of staff moves and some... energy efficiency was managed separately. I think if I remember rightly the grade seven who managed energy efficiency was part time, the

	grade 7 who managed RHI was part time and when Stuart joined as the full time grade 7 he... both were rolled into one ...
CK	Right Ok
DM	... and he took on the Renewable Heat and Energy Efficiency so I didn't go back to my old reporting structure, I remained reporting to Stuart but as his energy efficiency branch ...
CK	Yeah ok, ok.
DM	... so that the branch is split in two and we started work then on a new programme ...
CK	Ok, ok.
DM	... which we were trying to develop.
CK	Ok.
DM	And just as a, we'd a wee bit more work to do on the energy efficiency directive, some residual work and reports and studies and stuff that were required by it so I was working with DECC in GB and Scotland on a sort of joint transposition of a few matters and then we needed to have an energy efficiency programme in place. There is an existing one, it's basically a requirement of the directive which requires energy savings and Northern Ireland has to contribute in trying to get a scheme so I moved into the energy efficiency side.
CK	Ok. No that's useful
DM	But I was doing energy efficiency but I... the directive was more or less transposed the main... sitting with the legal advisors and getting regulations done, had been done at that point and it was into the more residual things. So yeah to Stuart.
CK	Ok so in terms of that, that week then you had with Seamus and Stuart, and in terms of handover, I mean did you provide both of them with this document?
DM	I think so.
CK	Ok.
DM	I can't remember if I emailed it. I'd definitely given them the paper copy because I remember I wanted to give them the notes so they could see where I'd got to. I can't remember if it was email, I'm assuming it was.
CK	Ok.
DM	Because I would have wanted that to reach him but I definitely gave him a paper copy.
CK	Ok and I mean again the same question I suppose when Peter was handing over to you, did you go, did you talk them through the document? Did you use it as a basis for your handover discussion?
DM	I talked through what I was familiar with.
CK	Ok, ok.

DM	Yeah.
CK	Ok.
DM	And I was familiar with the... getting the domestic RHI up and running and the state aid issue and some issues around the data sharing protocols with Ofgem, that kind of thing because we were having difficulty with the data sharing as it was, it was difficult to get information for AQs and things from Ofgem because they had quite strict controls around what information they could give out, so that had to be, they had to get secured systems set up for that transfer of information which I think I started and then Seamus finished it.
CK	Finished it. Ok, so is it fair to say then just based on what you're saying, Davina that you wouldn't necessarily have covered off the non-domestic scheme and what needed to be done in relation to it?
DM	I can't remember. I'm guessing because I didn't do an awful lot of it. I've probably said... these are the things that I didn't get to, and they're on the handover sheet. Maybe there might have been the odd, the odd mention... biomass sustainability, no not biomass... air quality issues were raised I think in my time, by someone in the former DoE.
CK	Ok.
DM	What tended to happen to be honest through the handover period as something... and beyond the handover period because we were all part of the same team, if something came up they could say do you remember anything about this and if... I told them what I could.
CK	Because it, I mean it's interesting because Janette O'Hagan to be fair to her, is quite persistent and there is another email that we can see, Seamus sending to her
DM	I think that had come into me because in the couple of months that I was looking after, the six weeks or so, people get your name.
CK	Yes.
DM	And I would have had a number of queries, people emailing in, just things like the carbon trust issue or whatever and I had a lot of queries actually about how we could... for CHP... because there was a new CHP tariff coming in and I did cover that actually, slightly, the interaction with the Northern Ireland renewables obligation because they could get heat and their power, so that was one of the issues that came up as well but we didn't, it was part of the, what we're going to look at. Yes, no, if emails came through from anyone to do RHI or if a phone call came through, I just said I was no longer working in that area, my colleague Seamus is so I will forward your details on. So I think the likes of Janette O'Hagan I had forwarded it onto Seamus and had just emailed her back to say, I think I emailed her back to say I no longer work in the area. Seamus will take it forward, his number is... you know it happened several times, different people, not just her.
CK	Ok, yeah I mean the sort of Janette O'Hagan email coming in, it doesn't ring any bells as being a particularly pertinent one that you would have had a conversation with Seamus about rather, was it just one of... a person?
DM	No, can't remember. I can't remember having any specific conversation about it.

CK	Ok, ok.
DM	Possibly when she emailed the second time I said oh I think she contacted us before and it's in the trim folder, possibly.
CK	Yeah. Ok, ok.
DM	I kind of probably did leave them to it you know here's your handover, adios I don't want to deal with this anymore, I've got my own work to do and I'm here if you've any questions, but I did, hand this over as here's where I've got to, the rest is over to you.
CK	And did they come back often Davina?
DM	Yeah, I don't actually remember Janette O'Hagan coming back.
CK	Oh sorry, I meant Seamus and Stuart.
DM	Oh Seamus... There may have been the odd thing, I can't remember specifics but they were very, Seamus was doing a lot of the communication. Seamus was very thorough, he's very on the ball and he was, he was good at coping, you know he went into the system himself and found answers and he would have asked the odd time if he had a query but I wasn't tortured but I can't remember specifics.
CK	No that's ok. I'm interested as well in that you mention review, and when you'd gone back to Janette O'Hagan, you know said you were moving on, the issues were on the radar, the issues that she was raising because it's in the handover note that you will be reviewing the scheme. Do you mean a review of the entire scheme or do you, can you recall what exactly you remember?
DM	There was possibly a bit of confusion about what would be involved in the review because I knew, well no, in the handover I don't think I had any detailed, I can't remember having any detailed conversations with Peter about it. I knew from the handover note that it was on it and it was, they were going to review the biomass target, biomass tariffs because it was under 99 kilowatts was a certain tariff, and they were looking at introducing a higher one and it was grouped in with that so I took it that the review would cover all of that, that you when you review it, I knew there was going to be a review of the non-domestic scheme coming up and it was going to look at different technologies and things like that and the tariffs were mentioned so I had assumed that... and because it was grouped in with reviewing the biomass tariffs, in the handover note that the review of the non-domestic scheme would look at all those elements and if Ofgem had raised it as you may want to introduce tier tariffs then that would be part of that process.
CK	Yeah, and how did you know that review was coming up Davina?
DM	It was on the handover note, about the review of the non-domestic scheme, it would have to take place, Peter had given us a bit of information. I think he had probably mentioned it as well that the non-domestic scheme needs to be reviewed as well. I thought I read something earlier. It was certainly on the immediate actions about the review but there was...It's making a liar of me now... yeah it was around the consultation, the consultation of completed proposals.
CK	Yes.

DM	And there was an uplift tariff and then who's the need for technical issues to be considered, the biomass sustainability cost control, air control and that kind of thing. I linked it all together.
CK	Ok.
DM	But if you're going to look at elements of the non-domestic, as it was operating that you would cover any issues in that review.
CK	Yeah, ok. I mean certainly, that review is something that was mentioned right back in the business case, and in the regulatory impact assessment paper that was compiled, and I don't know if you had time during your 6 to 8 weeks, to look at it?
DM	Probably had a flick through it.
CK	Ok and again in the risk register Davina I'm interested to know if you had seen or were directed to the risk registers that related to the renewable heat scheme?
DM	I can't remember. I probably looked at it from the point of view of getting the domestic through the, through case work and... it possibly came round for the risk registers come out every now and again to be updated. I can't remember, there were numerous returns in that time, I can't remember if the risk register would have been one of them.
CK	Ok, ok.
DM	But the focus really was domestic RHI and getting up and running and that did continue for quite a while. I'm trying to remember back do you know a while as well, what we specifically talked about but I just, I knew from the handover document Peter had mentioned you know there needs to be a review and when he had mentioned specifically in the immediate actions you know the review of the current non-domestic scheme, and that was the biomass tariffs and tier tariffs... my logic was that would all be part of the planned review.
CK	Yeah because again you know it's a demand led scheme do you know it's inherently risky you know you just don't know where that demand's going to take you to be honest. So you know one of the key controls that has been brought out time and time again to us is that the scheme is going to be reviewed. The first review was supposed to happen in, well it was supposed to start in January 2014 and indeed people have said it should have been reviewed every year and if we look at the risk registers you know it identifies the risk of over or under spend and you know the key control that is mentioned time and time again is review of the scheme and yet you know throughout 2014 we just don't see that happening, there's no evidence of that happening. There's no evidence that it necessarily was on do you know anyone's radar and I think where we're struggling is trying to understand why didn't that happen, when mentioned in so many documents?
DM	In my time there just wasn't the time to get to it because they had to try and get the domestic RHI up and running, the domestic RHI didn't end up being launched until I think November.
CK	Yes.
DM	Was it November '14? And in that time we were just constantly plagued with when's it happening, when's it happening? Let's get it out so that was, and it, probably like everything you have an idea of how long something's going to take or what's going to

	be involved but when you get into it, when you get into sitting with a panel of economists and people, your senior finance manager looking at you going 'I'm not sure about this' you know it's a two way... you go back then and review and you go back to them with them further information and there's a bit of toing and froing to get it right. So that really in my time the review just wasn't, I just couldn't get to it.
CK	Yeah. No that's fine and I understand there's a short period of time Davina as well. I mean in terms of referencing the review, for it to be picked up subsequently, do you remember having a conversation about a review of the non-domestic scheme with Seamus or Stuart?
DM	Only probably in mentioning you know here's the handover list. I've got to here. The next thing do you know you're into now review and the non-domestic policy.
CK	Ok.
DM	And as far as I can remember it was always, when it was talked through with me, it was always that you know this is going to be, get focused on domestic and then review the non-domestic.
CK	Ok because obviously that public consultation, had been done now before your time, running from July to October 2013 and it covered the domestic and the non-domestic scheme as well.
DM	Yes, yes.
CK	So obviously the responses were sitting there, you know back in relation from the non-renewable scheme but we get the impression that because of the priority on the domestic scheme those responses on the non-renewable, or the non-domestic weren't looked at.
DM	Yeah, yeah, I don't think the, trying to remember back, I vaguely, I do have a recollection of working through the domestic RHI government response. It had largely been drafted but there were a few issues just to tease out following case work.
CK	Ok.
DM	I remember working through that, I remember working through it with Dan Sinton because he had worked on some of the guidance documents. We had IT systems and things to get set up for domestic RHI so we had to start exploring, can we, can we do this? Can we deliver it in-house? I do remember there being you know a focus on domestic, the non-domestic will happen after that.
CK	Ok, So during your time which I know was short, you didn't review the responses to the non-domestic?
DM	No.
CK	Ok.
DM	I didn't.
CK	Would you have been aware of some of the things that were being proposed in it Davina so for example they were proposing a form of cost control, a simpler version to depression... it was triggers.

DM	I was aware of the issues but didn't, didn't have the opportunity or a demand to do anything with that, do you know I must have read through the documentation because I do remember the triggers and I do remember the, I do remember having to look at it, they were going to introduce a CHP tariff I think?
CK	Yes.
DM	And we were getting a lot a queries about how that would work with the NIRO, the renewables obligation, I remember having some discussion, colleagues in renewable electricity about that because I received three or four queries about what can we get so I think it was always the intention that the, I have something in my head about November but I don't know what, that the tariff was coming in in November but it might have been that the NIRO tariff was changing in November or March. The two had to tie up, the NIRO tariff was reducing for CHP so that they weren't getting over-incentivised. So that they could get the, isn't that right so they could get the RHI for the heat element and the NIRO for the power element? I don't know, I have something in my head about tariffs coming in in November but I may be wrong.
CK	Ok.
DM	But it was always you know that will happen, get the domestic up and running.
CK	So there was no real sense of urgency that do you know cost control measures needed to be implemented?
DM	From a budgetary point of view?
CK	Yeah.
DM	The scheme actually... the uptake was very poor, very poor and it was, it's not that it wasn't seen as a sense of urgency, it was very much, as far as I know it was always on the list, but when you're trying to get through the priority, trying to get through everything, it's not that it's who shouts the loudest but if you're getting a lot of correspondence about something then you are forced down a route...
CK	Yeah, no, no, no, I understand.
DM	But, yeah from a budgetary point of view the scheme they actually wanted more uptake at that point.
CK	In terms of Ofgem did you ever meet with them yourself Davina or have calls with them?
DM	I had telephone calls with them but it would have been more around the carbon trust loan issue and the data sharing.
CK	Ok.
DM	Yeah, we also would have phoned them if we needed, if we had an AQ asking for how many people in this post code or something like that, they could give us some information on, it's normally more, they didn't give us specific applicant details because of the data sharing but they would have been able to tell us about accreditations and we were able to get you know... amount of budget committed for an AQ or something that, but, the most formal teleconference was about the carbon trust, the state aid issue ...

CK	Ok.
DM	... with their legal team.
CK	So during your time do you recall any conversations around you know the usage of the non-renewable heat scheme and the fact people were using it, actually more than the assumptions underlying the tariffs?
DM	No... really my only dealings with them were on getting information for AQs, the carbon trust loan issue and a little bit of data sharing and you were talking to different people for different things. I spoke to Edmund a couple of times but it was more, there was a lady there called Nadia who I don't think is there any more, but it was around the carbon trust loan issue because they had halted the payments, halted the accreditations, not payments.
CK	Ok. That's fine. And again during your time we're aware that Ofgem were providing monthly reports, so like it would have been around applicant numbers, amount of accreditations and it would have, our understanding is that it would have included detail around the usage of the scheme.
DM	Yes.
CK	Would they have crossed your desk?
DM	We got weekly reports ...
CK	Ok.
DM	... and I tried to use them for, to answer an AQ and then had to just phone them up and ask for information around accreditations because I wasn't, they're quite detailed spreadsheets and I hadn't had the opportunity to sit down with Peter before he left and go through what exactly is in them. It think one of our finance team was more familiar with it, she got them as well but as far as usage is concerned, I wasn't au fait with what expected usage would be.
CK	Ok.
DM	So it wouldn't necessarily have meant anything to me.
CK	Ok so nothing, it wouldn't have flagged?
DM	It wouldn't have flagged anything to me. It's not to say someone with greater knowledge of the area wouldn't have known it. It didn't flag anything to me.
CK	Ok. And would you have been aware, and if you weren't Davina that's fine, but of the assumptions around usage that were built into the original economic appraisal?
DM	I wasn't aware of it.
CK	Ok.
DM	Again because in the time I was going to be looking at it I was told it's really the domestic RHI.
CK	Ok.

DM	You know that was my focus.
CK	Yeah, no, no absolutely
DM	So I dipped into the non-domestic really as I needed to.
CK	Yeah as and when, ok. The only other thing that we've been asked to look at by the Department is how the funding was understood, you know whether it was annually managed expenditure or whether indeed there was a greater risk to the Department of overspend. Do you recall any conversations around that?
DM	Not really. My understanding of AME was that it was outside the NI block... it was Treasury money and we were entitled to a percentage of it. That was my understanding of it and at the time when I was looking after it, we were under budget, you know the accreditation levels weren't there so it wasn't really an issue. I don't know about the nitty gritty of you know, how much, I do remember we were trying to get clarification over how much we were going to get for the following year but that was a conversation, there'd been some emails back and forward with Treasury and I think it took quite a while to get that answer but someone else would probably be able to tell you more about that but I do know we were in the 3% and I think they were looking at some point as to whether that was an appropriate way if, we were getting more or less than we needed and that was something that was going to be looked at but I don't know what happened with it.
CK	Ok. And in terms of the fact you know that you're saying you knew that you know budgets weren't being breached because the scheme uptake was so low, what information were you getting and were you looking at Davina to support that view?
DM	Right. To be honest Peter had I think had mentioned that you know uptakes low, it was just one of those things, it was sort of understood because we had very few accreditations.
CK	Yes, and then nothing that you saw during your time around accreditation numbers would have caused you there to change that view?
DM	No... because when I was looking after it we had the carbon trust loan issue so a lot of the accreditations were halted ...
CK	Ok, ok.
DM	... and it was no guarantee that those organisations we would be able to get accredited because there were steps to go through to be able to, when I was looking after it we had got to the point I think that we had to look if there was some way of amending the legislation to allow payback of carbon trust loan because I think the DEC legislation was slightly different and ours was quite prescriptive I think about, about state aid and about other, basically the GB legislation I think allowed payback of other funding to allow you to avail of RHI.
CK	Yeah.
DM	I think ours was a bit more prescriptive in that if you had received it that was it and it was felt that, I think we had got to the point where we were exploring well why don't we change, can we not amend the legislation. If we amend the legislation, will that allow carbon trust loans to be paid back, which then wipes the slate clean and they can apply under RHI, get accredited and work under the RHI state aid issues. So for that we didn't have a huge number of accreditations because there were a lot sitting

	on hold and you couldn't make the assumption that they were going to become accredited because we hadn't, in my time, or we thought we had a solution, it hadn't been put in place.
CK	Yeah, enacted. And how many of the actual applications would have been impacted by the carbon trust loan issue?
DM	I can't remember specific numbers but there were quite a few.
CK	Ok.
DM	Certainly going by the number of correspondence cases there were, I remember mentioning maybe five or six individual installers, or not installers... five or six companies and organisations but that's not to say that that was, were there eight? There may have been more, I can't remember.
CK	Ok.
DM	It's probably in the system somewhere because there was a bit of toing and froing but from the cor... names that I had in my head of organisations who had some political backing and got MLAs to write in, they obviously came to the forefront, who knew who they were. I think there were about four or five but there were more, sort of smaller organisations, or organisations who didn't have someone who could write in on their behalf.
CK	Ok. I don't actually have any other questions. Leanne do you?
LC	No, no I don't think...
CK	I think we've covered everything haven't we?
LC	I think we have yes.
DM	I'm sorry I couldn't be of more help.
CK	No, no it has, honestly it has been useful and I think it's as much the context Davina as anything else. No that's me. Is there anything else Davina you would want to add or think that it would be useful for us to know?
DM	I've probably covered everything other than to say that it was a very, very, very busy subject area for whoever was working on it because of the breadth and what was involved in it and if something was missed it wouldn't have been from any malicious intent, it would purely have been prioritisation of resources. It was very busy and has continued to be very busy.
CK	Yeah, absolutely. Probably increasingly so. I mean if... and if you don't have a view that is fine Davina, I am interested do you know as someone who was involved in the scheme, having watched what has transpired. I mean what, what do you think caused it? I mean... obviously not just one thing.
DM	Yeah I probably it's probably a combination of things. I think decisions were made at various points of the process from the design of it through to recent times. Decisions were made based on what evidence or what information was available at the time and what was felt was going to work. Hindsight is a wonderful thing ...
CK	I know.

DM	... and I do think that had I been a head of the division and I don't, I don't like, I don't like coming across as if I'm pointing any kind of finger, decisions were taken for a reason. Had I been a head of a division I wouldn't have let an entire team go without a handover of a full time team but there again you do what you do and if staff want to move on and have an opportunity to move on or issues that they need to take a career break for, whatever, then as a good manager you try to keep your staff happy as well. I was in the position of bridging the gap. I didn't have an awful lot of notice to do it, it wasn't an easy six weeks but I do think, I don't think there's been any malice or deliberate omission of anything from anyone involved. I think it was decisions taken at the time with what was available and I don't know whether circumstances changed or you know ...
CK	When did you know that Peter was going?
DM	I think we found out a couple of weeks before he was moving on but the first mention of you know... there had been talk he's going to... we knew that Stuart and Seamus were coming in.
CK	Right.
DM	Can't remember when we knew that Stuart and Seamus were coming in, certainly by the time I was going to be acting up, we knew they were coming in because it was a finite date. They possibly, possibly knew before Peter had, well I think Peter had, his transfer was in the process for quite a while but we as a gen... as the main branch, as the rest of the team, not even the rest of the team, just the division weren't privy to that until I think a couple of weeks before.
CK	Ok
DM	And the question over who was going to cover it for the interim, I think came out that week.
CK	Ok.
LC	And I suppose Davina just on that was it just you know the one post, the act up, the grade 7 that was, you know asked for? Was there any DPs?
DM	No, no. John did mention at one point that he thought that he'd been told that it was just a case of ticking along and getting the case work done. I don't know the basis for that, I don't who said it. I don't know but I think he, possibly if issues weren't being brought to him as... if something's ticking along, not ticking along nicely but if staff are just working through their day to day work and there isn't a massive crisis that needs higher up attention, there can be an assumption that well they're just... it just looks after itself, I don't know but he did realise that actually you know I think we need someone to look after it, if not just to get the case work done. Been quite open there but I do think it's one of the weaknesses.
CK	Leanne?
LC	No nothing more from me.
CK	Ok. Davina thank you very much. Just for the purposes of the tape, the interview finishes at half past one. Davina just to say thank you very much again and just one final plea to keep the contents of the interview confidential.
DM	Yeah.

LC	Thank you very much.
DM	I will also if I remember anything else or anything comes back to me I'll give you a shout.