

Departmental Solicitor's Office  
Oifig Atur na Ranna



Department of

# Finance

An Roinn

## Airgeadais

[www.finance-ni.gov.uk](http://www.finance-ni.gov.uk)

Victoria Hall/Halla Victoria  
12 May Street/12 Sráid May  
Belfast/Béal Feirste  
BT1 4NL  
Tel:/Teil: 028 9025 1251

Mr Patrick Butler  
RHI Inquiry  
Headline Building  
10-14 Victoria Street  
BELFAST  
BT1 3GG

21<sup>st</sup> May 2019

Dear Paddy

The purpose of this note is to correct any possible misunderstanding of the evidence concerning Jonathan Bell's behaviour in New York City in January 2016.

As you will be aware, in his course of his evidence our client, Dr McCormick referred to a meeting involving Minister Jonathan Bell on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2016 in New York (paragraph 85 of his third Witness Statement WIT-26249). In that statement Dr McCormick speculated about what might have happened after he left Niall Gibbons and Jonathan Bell (around 11pm on the evening of 27<sup>th</sup> January), and further speculated that Timothy Cairns might have been referring to that evening in his text message at [IND-31973].

However, Dr McCormick only subsequently saw Timothy Cairns' Witness Statement where at [WIT-20187] he confirmed that he was describing events which, in his account, had taken place on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2016, not 27<sup>th</sup>. As is clear from Timothy Cairns' Witness Statement, Dr McCormick was not with Minister Bell and Timothy Cairns that evening, and nor was Mr Gibbons of Tourism Ireland.

Dr McCormick acknowledges that his speculative comments in relation to this matter were clearly incorrect and unhelpful, and had the unintended consequence of associating Mr Gibbons with the events that Timothy Cairns described, leading to unfair adverse publicity for him. Dr McCormick has apologised to Mr Gibbons for this inadvertent impact on him: however Mr Gibbons remains concerned that in the preparation of its report, the Inquiry may remain unclear on this point, and believes that any confusion in this matter could cause further damage to his reputation. It is for this reason that we seek to bring clarity to this issue, and we would be grateful if you could bring this to the attention of the Chairman.

Yours sincerely

*P. Martin*

*PP*

**LAURA McPOLIN**  
Director  
DSO Advisory 2