

Northern Ireland Assembly News - December 2014

Executive Committee Business

- [Pollution Prevention and Control \(Industrial Emissions\) \(Amendment\) Regulations \(NI\) 2014](#)
- [Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme Regulations \(NI\) 2014](#)

Ministerial Statements

- [North/South Ministerial Council: Environment](#)

Committee Business

- [Electricity Policy: Part III — Grid Connections: Review Report](#)

Adjournment Debate

- [Arc21 Incinerator: Mallusk](#)

Oral Answers to Questions

- [Minister of the Environment](#)
 - [Council Grants: Budget 2015-16](#)

*Please Note: The Northern Ireland Assembly is now
in Recess from 13 December. The next Plenary
Sitting will take place on Monday 12 January 2015*

Executive Committee Business

Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) (Amendment) Regs (NI) 2014 (9 December)

<http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/report.aspx?&eveDate=2014/12/09&docID=216851#690848>

The Environment Minister of the Environment) sought and gained approval that the draft Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014 be approved. These draft regulations transpose paragraphs 5 to 9 of article 14 of the energy efficiency directive. The energy efficiency directive was adopted on 25 October 2012 and updates the EU's legal framework for energy efficiency, pursuing the target of saving 20% of the EU's primary energy consumption by 2020 and making further energy efficiency improvements after 2020. Although DETI is transposing most of the directive, DOE are taking forward the transposition of article 14 paragraphs 5 to 9, as they already regulates most of the affected installations. The directive requirements are as follows: new or substantially refurbished thermal electricity generation installations with a total thermal input exceeding 20 megawatts will be required to undertake a cost-benefit analysis in order to assess the feasibility of operating a high-efficiency cogeneration installation; new or refurbished industrial installations with a total thermal input exceeding 20 megawatts generating waste heat at a useful temperature level must undertake a cost-benefit analysis in order to assess the feasibility of utilising the waste heat to satisfy economically justified demand, including through cogeneration, and of the connection of that installation to a district heating and cooling network; and new or substantially refurbished energy production installations with a total thermal input exceeding 20 megawatts in district heating and cooling networks must also carry out a cost-benefit analysis in order to assess the cost and benefits of utilising the waste heat from nearby industrial installations. Regulators are required to put conditions in permits ensuring that, in cases where the cost benefit is positive, the installations are operated in the manner shown to be cost beneficial. DOE has worked closely with the DEFRA and the other devolved Administrations to ensure that the requirements are implemented in a consistent manner across the UK. It is estimated that it will affect only 22 installations over the next 10 years in Northern Ireland. Installations that have only small amounts of waste heat or where the heat links are not economical because of the distances involved are exempted from having to undertake a cost-benefit analysis.



Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme Regulations (NI) 2014 (8 December)

<http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/report.aspx?&eveDate=2014/12/08&docID=216850#678148>

The ETI Minister moved and gained approval for the draft Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014. The draft regulations provide the statutory basis for the introduction of the Northern Ireland domestic renewable heat incentive (RHI). The policy proposals for the development of the RHI were subject to public consultation last year. The consultation highlighted the need for further work to finalise the policy position and to draft these regulations. This legislation will provide the necessary powers for DETI to implement the domestic RHI scheme which will support generators of renewable heat in the domestic sector through upfront and long-term incentive payments that are designed to cover the additional costs involved in renewable technologies, as well as to provide a favourable rate of return for investors. Although the focus is often on renewable electricity generation, heating and transport are our two largest energy needs. Ensuring a more competitive and diverse heating market in Northern Ireland is therefore a key priority. To incentivise a switch to renewable heating technologies, the domestic RHI will provide households with upfront payments followed by seven years of tariff payments. The domestic RHI will replace the grant support for householders currently available through DETI's renewable heat premium payment scheme launched in May 2012.



Ministerial Statements

North/South Ministerial Council: Environment (8 December)

<http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/report.aspx?&eveDate=2014/12/08&docID=216850#678018>

The Environment Minister updated members on the outcome of the nineteenth meeting of the North/South Ministerial Council (NSMC) in environment sectoral format, held on Thursday 13 November 2014. Ministers: received a presentation from Co-Operation Ireland in relation to its

recent scoping study outlining the opportunities for greater North/South cooperation in the area of waste management; welcomed the publication of the Northern Ireland waste prevention programme 'The Road to Zero Waste' on 30 September 2014, which focused on using materials more efficiently and not sending waste to landfill or other disposal; noted the intention to make legislation in NI before the end of the year to ban separately collected food waste being dumped in landfill and on the regulations that the Irish Government recently introduced on the traceability of waste to counter the trade in stolen metal; noted that NIEA has in place a programme of work for 2014-15 that was agreed with the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government and Dublin City Council. The first of those repatriation sites was commenced in August and completed in November; noted that Dublin City Council has established a framework agreement for the disposal of repatriated waste and has completed a public procurement process for the haulage of excavated waste to authorised facilities; noted the ongoing opportunities for cooperation on EU funding, including Horizon 2020, the LIFE Programme and INTERREG V; welcomed the recent announcement confirming the success of a Horizon 2020 cross-border project worth €3.5 million which aims to establish a training network for specialists dealing with the remediation of contaminated land; Ministers noted that the contract for the all-island air quality research study into airborne pollution from the combustion of residential solid fuels, in particular smoky coal, was awarded in February 2014; noted the continuing collaboration on the second-cycle river basin management plans (RBMPs) under the WFD and welcomed the collaborative work on development of the river trusts, including the cross-border River Blackwater trust and the Erne Rivers Trust, as well as the revised WFD governance arrangements put in place in Ireland; noted that the contract for the all-island research project into the environmental impacts of unconventional gas exploration and extraction — fracking — has been awarded; and welcomed the fact that the NIEA and DECLG are exploring the possibility of a joint Life programme workshop in 2015.



Committee Business

Electricity Policy: Part III — Grid Connections: Review Report (1 December)

<http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/report.aspx?&eveDate=2014/12/01&docID=215896#654003>

Members debated and passed a motion: *That this Assembly approves the report of the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment on its Review into Electricity Policy: Part III - Grid Connections (NIA 196/11-15); and calls on the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, in conjunction with Executive colleagues, the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation, the System Operator for Northern Ireland and Northern Ireland Electricity, to implement, as applicable, the recommendations contained therein.* The motion was about part III of the ETI Committee's review into electricity policy. Part I was on the security of electricity supply and part II was on electricity prices. The Chair of the ETI Committee stated that *'During the review, it became apparent that there is little, if any, evidence of a clear, agreed, long-term vision and strategy for electricity. A number of key stakeholders informed the Committee that they could see little evidence of a vision. The Committee itself was able to find little evidence, too. DETI officials told the Committee that they disagreed with this view that there is no long-term vision or strategy for electricity, but the Department provided no evidence to back this up.'* He added that while DETI established the sustainable energy interdepartmental working group to ensure a coordinated approach to sustainable energy across government, and despite the increasing importance of renewable electricity and the need for a more coordinated approach to renewables to ensure our long-term electricity security, this group had not met for some time. The two key themes that continuously arose in relation to grid connections were problems associated with the cost of connections and problems associated with delays for developers in getting connected. Members also expressed concern that although renewables were incentivised there was a failure to provide the basic infrastructure. In short the review revealed five main themes: the need for a clear vision and a strategy; the need for contestability arrangements to be put in place; the need for smart-grid solutions, including microgrids; the need for NIE to be more transparent and communicate better with developers; and the need for NIE to improve its policies and processes to better meet the needs of developers.



Adjournment Debate

Arc21 Incinerator: Mallusk (2 December)

<http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/report.aspx?&eveDate=2014/12/02&docID=215897#659659>

Pam Cameron secured an adjournment debate on the proposed Arc21 Incinerator plant at Mallusk. Ms Cameron raised several concerns around the proposal stating that she found it difficult to comprehend that the focus is on developing a plant to incinerate waste, rather than on encouraging further recycling, reusing and repurposing initiatives. She added that although no one can argue with the need to reduce the amount of domestic and commercial waste that we send to landfill, particularly given the European directives and the penalties for non-compliance, 'the proposed Hightown development, quite simply, is not safe, not sustainable and not wanted'. The environmental impact of such a development was also raised with pollution of the watercourse by fuel, oil and concrete having all been identified as potential hazards during both construction and operation, the impact that development of the area would have on various protected species and well as the potential risk to the already much polluted Sixmilewater. Members also expressed concerns over the potential health hazards caused by small particles that are formed as part of the incineration process and released into the surrounding atmosphere. DOE has put aside £50.5 million of financial transactions capital for the project. Finally, the need for an incinerator at all was questioned as in January, the Minister of the Environment awarded planning permission to Full Circle Power to begin development of an energy for waste gasification plant at the Bombardier site at Belfast harbour estate.



Oral Answers to Questions

Minister of the Environment

Council Grants: Budget 2015-16 (2 December)

<http://aims.niassembly.gov.uk/officialreport/report.aspx?&eveDate=2014/12/02&docID=215897#659337>

Question 7

The Minister outlined the implications of the draft Budget 2015-16 for grants to councils. If the current draft budget proposals were to be confirmed in the final Budget, there would be immediate and substantial reductions in key statutory grant payments to all councils, particularly to the less well-off councils dependent on additional rate support payments to guarantee basic levels of service at local level. Also, a wide number of grant programmes will face significant cuts and potential termination. They include emergency planning, which provides support to councils to undertake emergency planning preparatory work; construction products, which provide support to councils to carry out statutorily required inspection work; local air quality, which is aimed at assisting district councils in carrying out the statutory air quality duties prescribed under the Environment Order 2002 and corresponding air quality regulations; the Rethink Waste revenue fund, which provides grants for councils to improve resource efficiency and boost waste prevention, recycling and re-use activity; the listed buildings programme, which provides support for repair works to listed buildings in council ownership; and the natural heritage programme, which provides support to encourage the conservation and enhancement of key elements of the environment. In respect of the transferred functions grant, uncertainty remains about whether these sums will be protected from the basis of calculation or, indeed, any actual cuts in the future.

