

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND, AUTHORITY FOR UTILITY
REGULATION (THE 'BOARD') HELD ON THURSDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2024, VIA VIDEO
CONFERENCE, AT 9.00 A.M.**

Present:

Rosamund Blomfield-Smith (Chair), John French (Chief Executive), Alex Wiseman, Jon Carlton, Isolde Goggin, David de Casseres, Claire Williams

In attendance:

SLT - Peter Russell, Kevin Shiels, Colin Broomfield, Roisin McLaughlin, Elaine Cassidy, Brian Mulhern, John Mills, Ciaran Mac Cann, Marie-Therese Campbell, Leigh Greer, Sinead Dynan, Barbara Stevenson, Jillian Ferris, Jonny Patterson, Greg Irwin

Andrew Mawhinney (agenda item 5), Nadine Mercer (agenda item 6).

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2.1 None

2.2 The Board convened in advance of the Board Advisory Forum to consider four items.

2.3 Rosamund Blomfield-Smith welcomed Jonny Patterson as part of an ongoing initiative to provide staff members with an opportunity to attend Board meetings.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 None.

4. SONI GOVERNANCE IMPLEMENTATION OF CONDITION 42

4.1 Brian Mulhern introduced this item about the implementation of the SONI Governance review, specifically around Condition 42 and the provision for derogations from SONI's licence. Roisin McLaughlin provided an overview on the SONI Governance work and recent developments.

4.2 The Board explored engagement with key stakeholders and the various perspectives on the implementation of the SONI Governance review.

4.3 There was a discussion on progress with advancing the derogations and how to move the process forward in an expeditious way. An update was also provided on progress on the publication of the SONI derogation guidance.

4.4 Board member queries on the timing of implementing a system operator agreement, the implications of Irish companies' law and the potential costs of compliance with the new governance arrangements, were addressed.

4.5 The Board approved the approach to discussions with the Department for Energy and Climate Change and endorsed consulting on amended implementation timescales for Condition 42 as

set out in the paper. The recommendation to proceed with the next SONI price control and a consultation on extending the current price control, was also endorsed. Other updates in the paper were noted.

5. MODIFICATION OF THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION LICENCE CONDITION

- 5.1 Andrew Mawhinney briefed the Board on this item which proposed licence modifications to allow for improved transparency. The proposed modifications will remove the restriction around publishing data that are contained in the provision of information conditions.
- 5.2 Board members sought further information regarding the purpose and rationale for the current restriction. A query around the impact of the restriction on UR's work was also addressed.
- 5.3 The Board approved the proposed licence modifications to all relevant transmission, distribution, interconnector, system operator and market operator licences.

6. ENERGY SUPPLIER CUSTOMER SERVICE LEVELS

- 6.1 Barbara Cantley introduced this paper which summarised the outcome and decisions following our consultation on proposed mandatory requirements to improve energy supplier customer service levels for domestic customers. Barbara Stevenson provided further detailed information.
- 6.2 The Board asked about the engagement with, and feedback from, suppliers on the new mandatory requirements.
- 6.3 The impact of the new mandatory requirements on non-domestic customers was also discussed.
- 6.4 A brief discussion also took place on the broader issue of protecting consumers, supplier performance data and the possibility of an energy consumer duty.
- 6.5 Board member queries on the following: written postal correspondence timing, excessive credit, the costs of the freephone telephone number, the interaction between the new mandatory requirements and the code of practice on complaints handling, and the return of consumer credit were all addressed. The potential to amend drafting to reflect Board member comments was also noted.
- 6.6 The Board approved the Code of Practice on Customer Service decision paper, the Code of Practice on Customer Service and the proposed licence modification consultation and statutory notices for electricity and gas supply licences.

7. ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATIONS FOR GAS DISTRIBUTION LICENCES

- 7.1 Brian Mulhern introduced this item which sought the Board's approval for administrative modifications to gas distribution licences.

- 7.2 The Board sought further information on the rationale for the proposed changes and the resources applied in progressing the modifications.
- 7.3 In approving the proposed modifications as presented (and the associated decision paper), the Board requested that consideration be given as to whether a different approach could be taken to progressing similar modifications in the future.
- 8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
- 8.1 The Board received an update on two issues.
- 8.2 Colin Broomfield and Marie-Therese Campbell briefed the Board on developments in respect of the LiRIC interconnector. The Board discussed the progress that had been made and policy considerations associated with the LiRIC interconnector. It was noted that a paper on the LiRIC interconnector would be presented at the December Board meeting. The Board noted the briefing.
- 8.3 Colin Broomfield and Elaine Cassidy provided a comprehensive overview of litigation relating to the Single Electricity Market's T-4 capacity auction. Board member queries around the basis for the legal challenges and the impact on UR resources were addressed. The Board noted the briefing.

There being no other business, the meeting concluded at 11.20 a.m.