MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND AUTHORITY FOR UTILITY REGULATION (THE 'BOARD') HELD ON THURSDAY, 18 JUNE 2026 IN MILLENNIUM HOUSE, BELFAST AND ONLINE, AT 09.00 A.M.

Present:
Rosamund Blomfield-Smith (Chair), John French (Chief Executive), Isolde Goggin, Anthony Pygram, Paul McGowan.

In attendance:
Kevin Shiels, Peter Russell, Barbara Cantley, Elaine Cassidy, Colin Broomfield, Brian Mulhern, Jillian Ferris, Marie-Therese Campbell, Jean-Pierre Miura, Shauna McAuley, Barbara Stevenson, Paula McCann, Sinead Dynan, Ciaran Mac Cann, Tony Doherty, Rebekah Nevin, Greg Irwin.

Dwayne Boyle (agenda item 3), Ciaran McSherry, Daniel Barnes, Ciaran Kerr, Dwayne Boyle, David Moore, John Cooper, Nicholas Francis (agenda item 4), Roy Colville (agenda item 5), Lena Cendales (agenda item 6), Mabel Stevenson (agenda item 7), Rachel Allister (agenda items 8, 10 and 11), Claire O'Kane (agenda item 9).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 None.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 None.

3. SSE AIRTRICITY GAS SP27 PRICE CONTROL DRAFT DETERMINATION

3.1 Elaine Cassidy introduced this item which sought the Board's endorsement of the proposed draft determination for the SSE Airtricity Gas (SSE) Supply Price Control (SPC27). Dwayne Boyle provided commentary on the key aspects of the proposed draft determination.

3.2 Board members sought further information in relation to items of operational expenditure and the proposed allowances.

3.3 There was a discussion on the analysis and assumptions informing the proposed margin. This included a consideration of the risks faced by SSE and comparison with other similar companies in other jurisdictions. The impact of the proposed margin on other financial metrics was also touched on.

3.4 Finally, the Board considered the overall price control design and, specifically, the coverage of the price control.

3.5 The Board endorsed the proposals in relation to the operational expenditure, the margin and the price control design.

4. GD29 APPROACH CONSULTATION

4.1 Elaine Cassidy introduced this paper which sought the Board's endorsement for the proposed approach to Gas Distribution (GD29) price control. Ciaran McSherry provided a detailed overview of the context and background and the key issues associated with the proposed GD29 approach.

4.2 The Board considered the wider context for the price control and the Department for Economy's (DfE) Energy Strategy action plan and government policy in respect of the future of natural gas.

4.3 There was a discussion on the proposed duration and the optimal length for the price control period.

4.4 Board members discussed the level of uncertainty and risk, and the possible scenarios, affecting price control decisions. Potential mechanisms for addressing uncertainty were also considered.

4.5 The approach to connections and network development was also touched on.

4.6 The Board clarified the timeline for the progress of the price control review and endorsed the proposed GD29 approach consultation.

4.7 The Board was also briefed on the issue of the treatment of corporation tax and the work being undertaken in this area. The Board endorsed the approach to support decision-making on the treatment of corporation tax

5. SONI CEP LICENCE MODIFICATIONS

5.1 Elaine Cassidy introduced this item which sought the Board's approval for licence modifications for SONI.

5.2 The Board approved the SONI licence modifications as proposed.

6. MMoU BETWEEN ACER AND THE UR FOLLOWING REMIT II

6.1 Jean-Pierre Miura introduced this item which sought the Board's approval for a revised Multilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MMoU) with the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) governing cooperation and information exchange.

6.2 Board member queries in respect of approval by the different signatories and access to the case management tool were addressed.

6.3 The Board provided approval to sign the revised MMoU between ACER and the UR, (including Annex C to the paper).

7. UPDATE ON METERING LEGISLATION AND REVIEW OF GSS AND OSP

7.1 Brian Mulhern introduced this update for the Board on metering legislation and Guaranteed Standards of Service (GSS) and Overall Standards of Performance (OSP). Mabel Stevenson provided a commentary on the review of GSS and OSP.

7.2 The focus of the Board discussion was around engagement with DfE, and correspondence in relation to metering responsibilities, in the context of decisions on metering GSS and OSP.

7.3 The Board endorsed the decisions taken on non-metering aspects of GSS and OSP and the exploration of the team of options about metering decisions. It was agreed that a further update on GSS/OSP would be provided at the August Board meeting.

8. ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS (ARA) FOR THE 2025-26 FINANCIAL YEAR

8.1 Rachel Allister introduced this update on the Utility Regulator's (UR's) Annual Report and Accounts (ARA) for the 2025-26 financial year, following presentation to the Board on 21 May and the Northern Ireland Audit Office audit.

8.2 Anthony Pygram reported on the Audit and Risk Committee's scrutiny of the ARA.

8.3 The Board, commending the progress on the ARA, noted the update provided.

9. FLEXIBILITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT UPDATE

9.1 Marie-Therese Campbell introduced this information item about the Flexibility Needs Assessment (FNA) of clean and flexible energy requirements. Claire O'Kane provided an overview of the detail.

9.2 In discussion the Board covered assumptions around the proportion of renewable generation and policy targets, the Single Electricity Market (SEM) context, regulatory requirements around the publication of the FNA. The Board also clarified FNA communications and publications requirements.

9.3 In noting the update the Board delegated to the Chief Executive arrangements for finalising and communicating the FNA (taking account of Board member comments).

10. FINANCE REPORT

10.1 Rachel Allister provided an overview of the latest financial position, noting the early reporting stage of the financial year. The Board briefly discussed budget assumptions in respect of staffing and recruitment and budget variances.

10.2 The Board approved the financial outturn position as of 31 May 2026.

11. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

11.1 Rachel Allister introduced this item which presented the corporate risk register to the end of May 2026.

11.2 Board comments in respect of the wording of some risks were noted.

11.3 The Board approved the corporate risk register to the end of May 2026.

12. MINUTES

12.1 The minutes of the Board meeting on 21 May 2026 were approved for publication subject to one minor amendment.

13. ACTION POINTS

13.1 The action points were reviewed by the Board.

14. OFFICE REPORT

14.1 John French introduced the Office report. He highlighted UR's appearance at the Assembly Economy Committee, recent media coverage, energy tariff changes and the SEM Committee's recent meeting with Ministers in Dublin. He also noted the recent staff charity walk with the Collaboration Network.

14.2 Queries about the non-domestic insight tracker and the LiRIC interconnector were addressed.

14.3 Greg Irwin provided an overview of the Review of Board Effectiveness. The Board held a brief discussion and endorsed the proposed actions**.** It was agreed that the Board would set aside some time to discuss the review at a future Board meeting.

14.4 The Board also noted, and endorsed, the proposed Board and Board Sub-Committee dates for 2027.

15. UPDATES

15.1 Updates were provided on the following:

a) SEM
Colin Broomfield briefed the Board on a range of SEM Committee items including: the meeting with energy Ministers, tariffs processes, the T-1 capacity auction, the bidding code of practice and the SEMC Strategy. A query about a DfE research report was addressed. The Board noted the update.

b) Security of Supply
Colin Broomfield provided a short update and highlighted that there were presently no significant issues. The Board noted the update.

c) Legal

Shauna McAuley provided an update on litigation issues and ongoing developments, including freedom of information. Board member queries around the timing of ongoing litigation were addressed. The Board noted the update.

d) Compliance and Enforcement

Barbara Stevenson provided a Compliance and Enforcement update and briefed the Board on latest position on the annual statement of licence compliance (SoLC) and other enforcement activity. The Board noted the update.

e) NI Water issues group

Elaine Cassidy provided an overview of the work of the NI Water issues group which included an update on engagement with the Office for Environmental Protection and the NI Water price control. The Board noted the update.

f) Smart meters group

Brian Mulhern updated the Board on developments in this area. The Board noted the update.

16. CORRESPONDENCE

16.1 None

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

17.1 The Chair provided feedback on a recent meeting with a regulatory stakeholder.

17.2 On the invitation of the Chair, Rebekah Nevin provided her feedback as an attendee for the full Board meeting. The Board welcomed the overall quality of the papers.

17.3 The meeting concluded at 12.50 to allow the Board to convene in closed session.