

## Northern Ireland (Regional Rates and Energy) (No 2) Bill 12 March 2019

This briefing identifies relevant reports and useful documents, including recent parliamentary materials and press articles, which may be of assistance to Members in preparing for the following debate on:

Northern Ireland (Regional Rates and Energy) (No 2) Bill.

In the absence of an Executive or an Assembly in Northern Ireland, the bill seeks to set regional domestic and non-domestic rates for Northern Ireland for the financial year 2019/20. It also implements certain arrangements in respect of the Northern Ireland non-domestic renewable heat incentive scheme. All the bill's stages in the House of Commons were completed on 6 March 2019, and the bill is due to be considered in the House of Lords on 12 March 2019.

Copies of the materials are available for collection from the Library.

### Key Information

- [Explanatory Notes](#)

*The Government's explanation of the bill. It describes how, in the absence of a Northern Ireland Assembly, it falls to Parliament to legislate to set regional rates for properties in Northern Ireland. It states that the proposed rates are, compared to 2018/19, an increase of zero percent plus inflation for non-domestic rates and an increase of 3 percent plus inflation for domestic rates. The bill also provides for a tariff structure for approximately 1,800 installations accredited under the non-domestic renewable heat incentive (RHI) scheme in Northern Ireland. The tariff is intended to control costs for the remainder of the scheme's life, replacing interim measures introduced on 1 April 2017. As it may reduce returns for some installations, an alternative voluntary "buy-out" procedure is also proposed. The notes also state that the bill is being processed as 'fast-tracked legislation', and provide the Government's justification for that step.*

- House of Commons Library, [Northern Ireland \(Regional Rates and Energy\) \(No 2\) Bill 2017–19](#), 1 March 2019

*Briefing on the bill prior to its main House of Commons stages. The bill passed through the Commons unamended. The briefing describes how the 'buy-out' procedure would only operate in the absence of a Northern Ireland Executive; were the devolved institutions to be restored, the Assembly and Executive would need to pass new legislation for future years.*

- Debates on 'Northern Ireland (Regional Rates and Energy) (No 2) Bill, HC Hansard, 6 March 2019, cols [1009–50](#) (second reading) and [1051–9](#) (remaining stages)

*Records of House of Commons consideration of the bill. At second reading, discussions included on the levels of the proposed rate increases, on the use of fast-tracked legislation and on the wider political situation in Northern Ireland. There was also substantial debate on the implications of the proposals for the RHI scheme, including a suggestion, welcomed by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Karen Bradley, that they should be further scrutinised by the House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee. No amendments were moved to division at any stage.*

## Parliamentary Debate, Statements and Questions

- House of Commons, '[Written Statement: Northern Ireland Finances](#)', 28 February 2019, HCWS1370

## Press Articles and Comment

- John Simpson, '[Northern Ireland Budget Brings Modest or even Negligible Increases](#)', *Belfast Telegraph*, 5 March 2019
- Ben Kelly, '[Why is There No Government in Northern Ireland and How Did Power-sharing Collapse?](#)', *Independent*, 14 February 2019
- Rajeev Syal, '[Arlene Foster: Martin McGuinness Knew of "Cash for Ash" Warnings](#)', *Guardian*, 25 September 2018

## Further Information

- Renewable Heat Incentive Inquiry, '[Home](#)', accessed 7 March 2019
- House of Commons Library, '[Expedited Legislation: Government Bills Receiving Their Second and Third Reading on the Same Day in the House of Commons](#)', 14 December 2018
- House of Commons Library, '[Northern Ireland Since May 2016: Developments](#)', 19 March 2018
- House of Commons Library, '[Fast-track Legislation](#)', 12 November 2012
- House of Lords Constitution Committee, '[Fast-track Legislation: Constitutional Implications and Safeguards](#)', 7 July 2009, HL Paper 116-I of session 2008–09

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