

RPI Westminster Conference draft programme

Wednesday, 2 May 2018

1 Great George Street, London SW1P 3AA

The conference will focus on (a) the identification of recurring features of regulatory processes that tend to reduce policies effectiveness and (b) the types of remedial measures that might be available.

This thought process is familiar when assessing market process. Market features that give rise to adverse effects on competition (AECs), harm consumer welfare or lead to avoidable inefficiency are routinely identified, then remedies are sought. There is, however, nothing equivalent when assessing regulatory processes. The aim of the conference is to contribute to the rectification of this imbalance in the cognitive framing of policy decisions.

The unwanted features of regulatory processes are referred to as pathologies rather than 'failures', since they are always with us to a greater or lesser degree. The conference title also speaks of remediation rather than 'remedies', to serve as a reminder that comprehensive, permanent elimination of the unwanted effects is rarely feasible.

The day will have the standard format: Each of the sessions will be led by two principal speakers, and leave around 30 minutes for questions and general discussion.

The provisional programme is as follows:

09.15 – 10.50

Session 1: Views of the issues from two vantage points – a general perspective and a close-up look at a particular challenge

Luke Woodward, Gilbert and Tobin, Sydney, on systemic limitations to regulatory performance.

John Constable, GWPF, on renewable energy.

11.10 – 12.45

Session 2: Responding to the regulatory challenges: views from Government

Tony Curzon Price, BEIS

Ed Humpherson, UK Statistics Authority, ex NAO

13.45 – 15.20

Session 3: Achieving greater precision in diagnosis: case studies from the energy sector

Stephen Littlechild on problems in the regulation of retail energy markets.

A case study of smart metering policy, speaker tba.

15.40 – 17.15

Session 4: Regulation on life-support: when whole systems of regulation are under challenge

A panel discussion led by:

John Temple-Lang, drawing on Brexit issues, and

George Yarrow, on the pathologies of financial crises.