

Policy Forum for Northern Ireland Keynote Seminar: Energy in Northern Ireland - the energy market, renewables and security of supply

Timing: Morning, Tuesday, 6th December 2016

Venue: Stormont Hotel, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4 3LP



**POLICY FORUM
FOR NORTHERN
IRELAND**

Agenda subject to change

- 8.30 - 9.00 Registration and coffee
- 9.00 - 9.05 **Chair's opening remarks**
Steve Aiken MLA, Deputy Chair, Committee for the Economy, Northern Ireland Assembly
- 9.05 - 9.20 **Energy in Northern Ireland in the context of UK and European markets**
Dr Patrick Keatley, Research Fellow, Centre for Sustainable Technologies, Ulster University
- 9.20 - 10.00 **Next steps for the energy market - competition, costs and improving consumer confidence**
With high energy costs remaining a significant challenge for Large Energy Users (LEUs) - particularly energy intensive manufacturers - how far would the recommendations from the Ministerial Energy & Manufacturing Advisory Group help to ensure energy costs for businesses in Northern Ireland are competitive in an EU context? Will mechanisms such as the Consumer Council's price comparison tools make consumers more aware of the benefits of switching energy tariffs and providers, and can they encourage greater competition in the domestic energy market, and help drive down prices? To what extent can the extension of the gas network to the west of Northern Ireland reduce consumer reliance on energy sources such as oil heating, increase competition, and reduce energy prices? With 42% of the population in Northern Ireland suffering from fuel poverty, what has been the impact of the Fuel Poverty Strategy - along with measures such as the Warm Homes Scheme - in encouraging greater energy efficiency and reducing fuel poverty for the most vulnerable consumers?
John French, Chief Executive, Consumer Council Northern Ireland
Stephen McCully, Managing Director, Power NI
Questions and comments from the floor with **Dr Patrick Keatley**, Research Fellow, Centre for Sustainable Technologies, Ulster University
- 10.00 - 11.00 **The future for renewable energy in Northern Ireland - the 2020 target following the EU referendum**
What are the implications of the withdrawal of the Renewable Obligations and Renewable Heat Incentives for the renewables market in Northern Ireland, including for developers and consumers, and in terms of the potential impact on the environment? Should the renewable targets set by the Northern Ireland Executive for 2020 remain in place following the EU referendum? What options and opportunities are available to the Northern Ireland Executive to ensure those targets are met? To what extent can alternative renewable energy sources - such as solar, offshore wind, tidal and marine energy - contribute to the energy market in Northern Ireland? What impact have barriers to the development of renewables - such as costs, the removal of Executive subsidy, concerns from communities, and delays in planning processes - had on investment in renewable technologies, and what can be done to address those barriers?
Maf Smith, Deputy Chief Executive, RenewableUK
Michael Doran, Managing Director, Action Renewables
Ursula Walsh, Senior Lecturer, School of the Built Environment, Ulster University
Carla Tully, President, AES UK & Ireland
Marian Troy, Head of Corporate Affairs, SSE Ireland
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.00 - 11.05 **Chair's closing remarks**
Steve Aiken MLA, Deputy Chair, Committee for the Economy, Northern Ireland Assembly
- 11.05 - 11.35 Coffee
- 11.35 - 11.40 **Chair's opening remarks**
Conor Murphy MLA, Chair, Committee for the Economy, Northern Ireland Assembly
- 11.40 - 12.05 **Evolving energy markets**
Jenny Pyper, Chief Executive, Utility Regulator
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.05 - 12.55 **Security of supply and infrastructure - planning reform, the energy grid and investment post-Brexit**
What impact are delays in the development of the North-South Interconnector, due to planning appeals in Northern Ireland, and the uncertainty over the Integrated Single Energy Market due to the EU referendum, having on the security of Northern Ireland's energy supply? To what extent will the completion of the North-South Interconnector and I-SEM help create a secure supply of energy, and how far can measures such as increased energy storage and a greater reliance on renewable contribute to further security of supply? How might the needs both for investment in energy grid infrastructure and to keep costs for consumers low be balanced in the pursuit of greater grid stability? What effect has planning reform in Northern Ireland had on the development of the energy grid and infrastructure investment, and what can the Executive do to promote further investment in energy infrastructure while retaining effective community engagement?
Robin McCormick, General Manager, System Operator Northern Ireland (SONI)
Richard Murphy, Energy Partner, Pinsent Masons
Michael Scott, Managing Director, firmus energy
Bob Hanna, Chief Technical Advisor, Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Republic of Ireland
Questions and comments from the floor
- 12.55 - 13.00 **Chair's and Policy Forum for Northern Ireland closing remarks**
Conor Murphy MLA, Chair, Committee for the Economy, Northern Ireland Assembly
Sean Cudmore, Deputy Editor, Policy Forum for Northern Ireland