

Policy Forum for Northern Ireland Keynote Seminar

Priorities for energy policy in Northern Ireland: competition, investment and security of supply

Timing: Morning, Thursday, 17th September 2015

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**
Phil Flanagan MLA
- 9.05 - 9.35 **Priorities for energy policy in Northern Ireland**
Patsy McGlone MLA, Chair of the Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Northern Ireland Assembly
Questions and comments from the floor
- 9.35 - 10.05 **Competition in the energy market: electricity, gas and renewable energy**
Jenny Pyper, Chief Executive, Utility Regulator
Questions and comments from the floor
- 10.05 - 11.05 **The energy market: competition, consumer engagement and tackling fuel poverty**
To what extent will the expansion of the gas network to the West increase competition in that area? What steps can be taken to overcome the challenges preventing new suppliers from entering the Northern Ireland energy market such as the 'cost and complexity of the entry process' and 'lack of consumer engagement in the market', identified by the Utility Regulator in July 2014? Will the proposed reforms to the all-island Single Electricity Market result in increased competition and savings for the consumers? What measures can be taken to ensure price stability in the energy market? What are the costs and benefits of the DETI target to generate 40% of Northern Ireland's energy from renewable sources? How can it be ensured that any potential increase in energy costs following the Northern Ireland Executive's decision to continue to subsidise the building of wind farms under the Renewables Obligation for a longer period than the rest of the UK are not passed onto consumers? Should further relief be given to support manufacturing companies, which currently pay the second highest energy bills in Europe? What impact does the reliance on home heating oil (HHO), which is the primary heating source for 68 per cent of homes in Northern Ireland, have on competition in the wider energy market? How can consumer awareness of the potential benefits in switching energy supplier be improved? In what ways can the high level of fuel poverty in Northern Ireland be tackled in the short-term?
Stephen Kelly, Chief Executive, Manufacturing NI
David Manning, Executive Director for Stakeholder Relations, SGN
Duncan McCombie, Director of Operations Wales and Ireland, Energy Saving Trust
John French, Chief Executive, Consumer Council
Patrick McClughan, Head of Corporate Affairs, Gaelectric and Chair, Northern Ireland Renewables Industry Group
Questions and comments from the floor
- 11.05 - 11.10 **Chair's closing remarks**
Phil Flanagan MLA
- 11.10 - 11.40 Coffee
- 11.40 - 11.45 **Chair's opening remarks**
Steven Agnew MLA, Leader, Green Party in Northern Ireland and Member, Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Northern Ireland Assembly
- 11.45 - 11.55 **Developing the grid infrastructure in Northern Ireland**
Robin McCormick, Director of Operations, Planning and Innovation, Eirgrid and General Manager, SONI
- 11.55 - 12.55 **Securing supply: infrastructure, innovation and investment**
Following delays in the construction of the Tyrone to Cavan interconnector, what are the best options for securing Northern Ireland's electricity supply in the long term? What further steps need to be taken to ensure Northern Ireland has an adequate grid infrastructure to meet growing demand and support the growth in energy production? In what ways can Northern Ireland further exploit its significant potential for solar, wind, tidal and marine energy projects, as demonstrated through projects such as the SeaGen tidal energy convertor at Strangford Lough, particularly given the complex legal and environmental issues involved? What impact will the EMR's Contracts for Difference - designed to stabilise investment in renewables - have on securing investment in these technologies? To what extent will reforms to Northern Irish planning law encourage investment in new energy generation? What impact has planning reform had on the approval of planning applications for large-scale wind farms? What is the potential shale gas yield in Northern Ireland; should hydraulic fracturing be considered as a further energy option, and if so can the environmental and community concerns be suitably addressed? What further steps should policymakers take to increase investor confidence in the energy market?
Michael Doran, Director, Action Renewables
Con Feeney, Network Performance and Safety Director, Northern Ireland Electricity
James Orr, Northern Ireland Director, Friends of the Earth
Alan Bissett, Partner and Head of Corporate and Commercial, Belfast, Arthur Cox
Questions and comments from the floor with **Robin McCormick**, Director of Operations, Planning and Innovation, Eirgrid and General Manager, SONI
- 12.55 - 13.00 **Chair's and Policy Forum for Northern Ireland closing remarks**
Steven Agnew MLA, Leader, Green Party in Northern Ireland and Member, Committee for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Northern Ireland Assembly
Sean Cudmore, Deputy Editor, Policy Forum for Northern Ireland