



Committee on Fuel Poverty

Minutes of Committee on Fuel Poverty (CFP) virtual meeting: September 21/09/2021

1. The Chair and all members of the Committee were present: David Blakemore (Chair), Paul Massara, Jenny Saunders and Anu Singh. Invited guests in attendance were the BEIS sponsor and BEIS officials.

Members Interests

2. No new interests were declared.

Minutes of Last Meeting and actions

3. Minutes from July meeting were agreed.

Action Log

4. Most actions from the last meeting had been completed and the rest were being progressed.

Stakeholder Engagement

5. The Committee discussed recent engagement with stakeholders, including a discussion with BEIS fuel poverty statistics team on the reporting of fuel poor households in receipt of benefits.
6. The Committee also discussed recent workshops on the Home Upgrade Grant and Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery.

Warm Home Discount and ECO4 Consultation Discussion

7. The Committee discussed the approach taken in their response to the Warm Home Discount consultation. Members discussed the challenges in finding consensus but that they were content with the finalised response.
8. The Committee also discussed the Energy Company Obligation consultation and expressed that the consultation is a positive step forward in improving the programme if changes are made.



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Local Energy Hubs – Presentation

9. The Local Energy Hubs team in BEIS gave a presentation on their role and the function of Energy Hubs. Their team's mission statement is to support and enhance the delivery of national net zero ambitions through local action. It was outlined how local delivery is essential to achieve net zero, which requires a systematic and integrated transformation across all sectors.
10. BEIS officials explained the role of the Energy Hubs as a delivery partner for Local Authority Delivery 2 which is a £300 million home retrofit programme aimed at the least energy efficient homes of low income households.
11. The Committee asked about the potential for a 'postcode lottery' in local area delivery. The Committee suggested that some local authorities are better than others at local area energy planning and the Committee wanted to know the extent to which Energy Hubs can help the least engaged local authorities. The Energy Hub team works with all local authorities to help achieve the best outcomes for local area energy and put in place fuel poverty and procurement officers to sit in Energy Hubs when required.
12. The Committee asked to what level of local authority do the Energy Hubs work. The Energy Hub team engage with the 38 local enterprise partnerships.
13. The Committee asked whether the Energy Hubs know if funding goes into energy efficiency measures or renewable heat measures. The team have a tracker of which local authority receives funds and the type of projects supported but the Hubs are responsible for deciding which projects receive support and funding.

Local Energy Hubs – CFP views

14. The Committee discussed that capacity, resource and a lack of skills in the workforce are some of the biggest challenges to improving the delivery of schemes.



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15. The Committee felt that Energy Hubs can help with effectively delivering energy efficiency schemes at a local level and have experience of this through delivering Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery. However, the Committee felt that the ongoing issues surrounding the supply chain and a lack of skilled workforce would continue to prove challenging to local area energy schemes.
16. Members discussed the potential for a national training programme for decarbonisation skills which could aid current resource issues for delivering schemes.

CFP Annual Report

17. The Committee discussed the final format and wording of their annual report. Members also discussed the timeline for publication.

Energy Price Rises

18. The Committee discussed the ongoing issues surrounding wholesale energy price rises and the anticipated impact on energy bills. The Committee discussed the need for an urgent response to the potential crisis for low income and fuel poor households. In the immediate term, members discussed the need for short-term financial assistance to households and which policy levers should be used to reach them.
19. Members also discussed the need to secure long long-term funding commitments through the Spending Review and Autumn Budget required to meet the 2025 fuel poverty milestone (EPC Band D) and make significant progress towards the 2030 target (EPC Band C).

BEIS Policy Update

20. BEIS officials gave an update on the status of recruitment for the member and chair roles within the Committee.



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21. BEIS officials gave an update on the proposed metric for the amended Private Rented Sector Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards. Officials outlined the need to find a balance between the impact of the regulations and ease of deliverability when choosing an approach.

22. The Committee discussed the need to balance net zero and fuel poverty goals when designing the Private Rented Sector Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards scheme.

23. BEIS officials informed the Committee that the Heat and Buildings Strategy will be published in due course.

Forward Look

24. The Committee discussed the potential to bring forward the November meeting to ensure it is before the end of the current Chair's term.

AOB

25. Forthcoming CFP meetings scheduled are:

- Tuesday 9 November 2021
- Tuesday 14 December 2021