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Parliamentary
Assembly**



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Economics Committee (Committee C)

Report

Government Energy Strategy and Consumer Energy Policy

April 2024

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Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

1. Across the BIPA jurisdictions, Governments have set clear targets to decarbonise their energy supply in order to meet their Net Zero ambitions. As well as being vital to address the threat of climate change, these targets will help to secure the long-term future of energy supply and so provide households and economies with sustainable and affordable energy in the future. In all BIPA jurisdictions, an urgent priority for meeting Net Zero targets is to decarbonise electricity supply. A mixture of initiatives will be needed to achieve this, including: increasing the capacity for generating electricity from renewable sources; new solutions for storing electricity; and upgrades to the electricity grid. The BIPA jurisdictions' Net Zero targets present challenges but also opportunities.

(Chapter 2.3 – Net Zero objectives)

2. Electricity generation is only one part of meeting the energy needs of the future. The nature of renewable energy sources like wind and solar means that output will vary over time, and so the ability to store power for times of peak demand will be essential. Developing storage will also mean that less excess generating capacity needs to be built to ensure peak demand for electricity can be met.

(Chapter 2.4 – energy storage)

3. One of the most pressing challenges facing the UK and Ireland is ensuring that the electricity grid is ready to serve the market by accommodating new sources of renewable electricity generation. It is clear that grid capacity across BIPA jurisdictions needs to be significantly strengthened in order to make use of the planned expansion in renewable electricity generation. This will require careful long-term planning and major investment, and coordination to ensure that the grid is able to support new generation.

(Chapter 2.5 – grid capacity)

4. Interconnection between different parts of these islands helps make energy markets more flexible and responsive, and allows cooperation that may ease the pressure on individual countries' networks. The Committee welcomes the memoranda of understanding signed by the Irish and UK Governments last year.

(Chapter 2.6 – energy interconnection)

5. Electricity generation is becoming less centralised, and smaller, community-owned energy projects have an important role to play. However, there are obstacles to communities wishing to pursue such initiatives, such as limits on grid capacity. More widely, at the moment many communities who host energy infrastructure do not feel the benefits of lower bills themselves. This makes residents less likely to embrace energy projects in their area. Energy projects are more likely to be pursued if communities can see how they themselves will benefit, and if they are clear about the processes involved.

(Chapter 2.7 – Community energy projects and community benefit)

6. Government interventions during 2022 and 2023 helped to mitigate the difficulties households experienced as a result of surging energy prices. However, energy poverty still rose during this period. One reason for this was that energy bills were just one of many pressures facing households at the time. In some cases, however, the level of payment from the state did not fully offset the impact on household budgets. In others, households were not able to access the payments they were entitled to.

(Chapter 3.2 – Consumer supports)

7. The absence of an Assembly and Executive in Northern Ireland delayed the application of the UK’s Energy Bills Support Scheme. As a result, households in Northern Ireland could not access support for months after the scheme had been available in Great Britain.

(Chapter 3.2 – Consumer supports)

8. While Government support reached the vast majority of consumers, some households were not easily reached. This occurred in instances where people had to proactively apply for support, or did not have a typical relationship with their energy supplier (such as those who heat their homes with oil). Often those who could not access support were those most in need. This particularly impacted marginalised groups, including Traveller communities in Ireland and Scotland.

(Chapter 3.2 – Consumer supports)

9. The deliverability of consumer support schemes is as important as their design. It is important that support can be made quickly and easily available in the event of sudden energy price pressures, particularly to vulnerable households who are unable to meet the cost of higher bills using savings. Schemes which were able to deliver support quickest were those which used existing systems or data. Example of this included delivering

support through consumers' existing relationship with their energy supplier, or using knowledge of households' existing eligibility for benefits to determine their availability for support.

(Chapter 3.2 – Consumer supports)

10. Rising energy prices have affected not only households but businesses as well. This has been particularly challenging for energy intensive industries.

(Chapter 3.2 – Consumer supports)

11. Direct support is only part of the solution to helping consumers cope with rising energy prices; energy-saving measures must also play a role. Making homes more energy efficient is costly and challenging, but necessary to help reduce household bills and reach Net Zero targets.

(Chapter 3.3 – Energy efficiency and home retrofit schemes)

12. Current home retrofitting grant schemes can be complicated and not attractive to consumers. It is important that Governments address these barriers, and design schemes that make home retrofitting an attractive and affordable option for both homeowners and landlords.

(Chapter 3.3 – Energy efficiency and home retrofit schemes)

13. It is clear to the Committee that there are potential economic opportunities for all BIPA jurisdictions in supporting retrofitting. It is important that Governments invest in training schemes to ensure there is a sufficient number of skilled tradespeople qualified to install the necessary systems, particularly as technology evolves.

(Chapter 3.3 – Energy efficiency and home retrofit schemes)

Recommendations

1. The Governments of the BIPA jurisdictions should make it their mission to foster and grow the industries that will transform their economies into Net Zero economies. To do this they must set clear long-term strategies that encourage investment in renewables technology and infrastructure by identifying the energy needs of tomorrow.

(Chapter 2.3 – Net Zero objectives)

2. The BIPA jurisdictions must assess how much storage capacity will be needed to ensure the electricity network can continue to meet demand in the coming decades. In line with the objective above, Governments should consider carefully how to support the growth of industries that can develop those storage solutions, and how to develop the necessary infrastructure.

(Chapter 2.4 – energy storage)

3. Governments in the BIPA jurisdictions must ensure they have a clear plan for developing a power grid that is able to accommodate the growing proportion of energy that is generated from renewable sources. They must ensure that the planning system is fit to support the rapid development of the grid, so that it can meet the demands of the future.

(Chapter 2.5 – grid capacity)

4. The UK and Irish Governments should update this Committee on what actions have been taken to advance energy interconnection between the BIPA jurisdictions following the signing of their Memoranda of Understanding last year. They should take every opportunity possible to build on this arrangement and so deepen cooperation on interconnection and energy security across our islands.

(Chapter 2.6 – energy interconnection)

5. Governments in the BIPA jurisdictions should work with energy companies, local authorities, and other relevant stakeholders to improve the availability of public information about community energy projects, including where there is grid capacity available to support small-scale community energy generation. They should also develop programmes that deliver clear benefits to the places where energy projects and transmission lines are located.

(Chapter 2.7 – Community energy projects and community benefit)

6. The Committee recommends that all BIPA jurisdictions consider establishing and funding specific, time-bound targets for reducing fuel poverty, as are currently in place in Scotland and Wales.

(Chapter 3.2– Consumer supports)

7. In the event that future consumer energy bill support is necessary, the UK Government should work urgently with the Northern Ireland Executive to ensure that it can be introduced in Northern Ireland in parallel with Great Britain.

(Chapter 3.2– Consumer supports)

8. In anticipation of future price shocks, the Committee recommends that Governments, working with local authorities, identify households which do not have a direct relationship with an energy supplier and so might not be automatically reached by future energy bill support. If Governments roll out similar energy bill support in the future, these households should be the target of information campaigns making them aware of the supports available.

(Chapter 3.2– Consumer supports)

9. The Committee recommends that Governments across the BIPA jurisdictions utilise existing data they hold about households' eligibility for benefits and economic circumstances to identify a cohort of households who would require priority support in the event of a future energy price shock. This would enable future support packages can be targeted and delivered quickly.

(Chapter 3.2– Consumer supports)

10. Governments should work to address barriers to decarbonising industry, such as lack of infrastructure to support electrification and high capital costs.

(Chapter 3.2– Consumer supports)

11. Governments in the BIPA jurisdictions should accelerate their work to address barriers to making buildings more energy efficient, and communicate clearly in terms of policy and support that encourages the growth of the retrofit industry and skills base. Each jurisdiction should work to quantify the number of workers that will be required to meet its retrofitting needs, and proactively recruit and train skilled apprentices and reskill existing workers to that purpose. BIPA jurisdictions should also work collaboratively to ensure the security of supplies for retrofitting, such as solar panels.

(Chapter 3.3 – Energy efficiency and home retrofit schemes)

Chapter 1: Introduction

5 The Committee agreed to commence this inquiry in October 2022, in the context of rapidly increasing energy consumer costs and increased focus on the security and sustainability of energy generation.

The aim of the inquiry was to examine the policy responses of the BIPA jurisdictions to these challenges, and share conclusions and recommendations for best practice with the Assembly and the BIPA administrations.

10 Between January and November 2023, the Committee sought written submissions and held virtual and in-person meetings with stakeholders to discuss Government energy strategy and consumer energy policy. Meetings were held in England, Ireland, Jersey, Northern Ireland, and Scotland.

A full list of the meetings held and submissions received is included in Appendices I and II of this report.

15 **1.1. Terms of Reference**

The inquiry was based on the following terms of reference:

- What are the main challenges governments in the BIPA jurisdictions face in meeting demand for energy?
- Do the governments in the BIPA jurisdictions have effective strategies for meeting 20 demand for energy in the future?
- Do the governments' policies take sufficient account of their climate policy objectives?
- Which source(s) of power generation would the BIPA jurisdictions be well-placed to pursue?
- How can cooperation and interconnectedness between jurisdictions help to meet 25 demand for energy and keep prices low?
- What action have the governments taken to support consumers and businesses with rising energy prices, including for vulnerable households and isolated communities?

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- How helpful can governments be, and how successful have they been, in addressing rising energy prices and issues of energy supply?
- How helpful can energy companies be, and how successful have they been, in addressing rising energy prices and issues of energy supply?

These questions were provided to stakeholders to inform their submissions to the Committee.

2.1. Energy generation and usage in BIPA jurisdictions

Ireland and the United Kingdom both have high energy demands which they meet through a mix of different sources. Within electricity generation alone, the BIPA jurisdictions employ a mixture of fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas and renewable technologies like wind, solar and hydro power. Home heating and transport create further energy demands, which are primarily met by fossil fuels. The energy mix varies from country to country, for a variety of reasons including government policy decisions – in Ireland, for example, the Electricity Regulation Act 1999 prohibits the generation of electricity by nuclear power stations.¹

Table 1 below summarises the sources by which electricity is generated across the UK and Ireland. (Energy generation does not necessarily correspond to energy consumption because the UK and Ireland’s energy networks are interconnected, to one another as well as to mainland Europe.)

Table 1: Electricity generation by fuel type in the UK and Ireland, 2022

	All fossil fuels	Coal	Oil and other fuels	Gas	Nuclear	All Renewables	Hydro	Wind	Solar	Bioenergy	Other
Ireland ²	60%	8%	4%	48%	0%	39%	2%	35%	<1%	2%	<1%
Whole UK ³	41%	2%	1%	38%	15%	42%	2%	25%	4%	11%	3%
England	43%	2%	3%	41%	17%	37%	<1%	19%	5%	13%	3%
Northern Ireland	56%	11%	<1%	45%	0%	44%	<1%	33%	3%	9%	0%
Scotland	11%	0%	1%	10%	16%	71%	10%	55%	1%	5%	2%
Wales	65%	0%	8%	65%	0%	27%	1%	18%	4%	5%	8%

¹ Legislation.ie, Electricity Regulation Act 1999, Section 18(6)

² Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, [Monthly Electricity Data, Generation and Availability](#), Accessed 3 January 2024

³ GOV.UK, Energy Trends: December 2023, [special feature article – Electricity generation and supply in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England, 2018 to 2022](#), 21 December 2023

(Note: Figures are rounded to the nearest whole percentage point, and as such figures may not add up to 100%)

The Isle of Man currently generates 84 per cent of its electricity from imported fossil fuels.⁴ Jersey and Guernsey source around 95 per cent of their electricity from France, and this is primarily generated by nuclear and hydro.⁵

The proportion of electricity generated from renewable sources has risen considerably in recent years, as the capacity for renewable generation has developed over time as a result of governments’ energy strategies (see ‘Energy strategy and climate policy’ below). This trend can be seen across the BIPA jurisdictions. The table below show the proportion of electricity generated from renewable sources in each of the BIPA jurisdictions over time.

Table 2: Proportion of electricity generated from renewable sources

	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018	2020	2022
Ireland⁶	11%	15%	20%	23%	27%	34%	39%	39%
UK⁷	6%	7%	11%	19%	25%	33%	43%	42%
England	4%	5%	9%	17%	23%	30%	39%	37%
Northern Ireland	6%	10%	16%	22%	25%	42%	25%	44%
Scotland	18%	19%	29%	38%	42%	54%	62%	71%
Wales	5%	5%	7%	10%	12%	23%	36%	27%

Much of the increase in renewable energy generation has been driven by growth in wind energy, which has grown rapidly in recent years. Table 3 shows how wind electricity generation increased between 2012 and 2022 across the islands.

Table 3: Electricity generated by wind over time (GWh)

⁴ Isle of Man Government, [Isle of Man Future Energy Scenarios](#), 2022

⁵ Jersey Electricity, [Nuclear Power](#), accessed 5 January 2024; States of Guernsey, [Electricity strategy](#), accessed 5 January 2024

⁶ Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, [Data and Insights: Renewables](#), Accessed 3 January 2024

⁷ GOV.UK, Energy Trends: December 2023, [special feature article – Electricity generation and supply in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England, 2018 to 2022](#), 21 December 2023

	2012	2022	Percentage increase
Ireland⁸	4,010	11,210	280%
UK⁹	19,848	80,257	404%
England	9,067	43,915	484%
Northern Ireland	1,042	3,353	322%
Scotland	8,292	27,762	334%
Wales	1,447	5,227	361%

65 Although electricity is increasingly generated from renewable sources across the BIPA jurisdictions, this is just one part of a country’s energy mix, and other energy demands (such as domestic heating and transport fuel) continue to be met predominantly by fossil fuels. Table 2 summarises the **overall** energy mix of Ireland and the UK (i.e. when other demands for fuel such as transport and home heating are taken into account as well as electricity generation.)

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Table 4: Energy consumption by fuel type in Ireland and the UK

	Coal	Oil	Gas	Nuclear	Hydro	Wind, etc.	Solar,	Biofuels and waste
Ireland¹⁰	8%	45%	33%	0%	<1%	7%		6%
UK¹¹	3%	35%	39%	8%	<1%	5%		9%

(Note: Figures are rounded to the nearest whole percentage point, and as such figures may not add up to 100%)

2.2. Energy strategies in BIPA jurisdictions

75 Each of the BIPA governments has produced energy policies aimed at achieving long-term energy security and addressing the threat of climate change.

⁸ Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, [Energy in Ireland: 2023 report](#), December 2023

⁹ GOV.UK, Energy Trends: December 2023, [special feature article – Electricity generation and supply in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England, 2018 to 2022](#), 21 December 2023

¹⁰ IEA, [Country Profile: Ireland](#), Accessed 3 January 2024

¹¹ IEA, [Country Profile: United Kingdom](#), Accessed 3 January 2024

2.2.1. UK

In 2019 the UK Government committed to a legally binding target of a 100 per cent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, i.e. Net Zero, by 2050,¹² following a recommendation by the independent Climate Change Committee.¹³ In October 2021 the UK Government published its *Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener*, explaining what it would do to meet this target.¹⁴ The UK Government has also produced a number of documents setting out its wider energy policy aims, such as the *Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution*,¹⁵ the *Industrial decarbonisation strategy*,¹⁶ the *Transport decarbonisation plan*,¹⁷ the *Hydrogen strategy*,¹⁸ the *Heat and buildings strategy*,¹⁹ and the *British energy security strategy*.²⁰ These support the UK's Net Zero aims, and also contribute to other policy objectives such as improving the UK's energy resilience.

In March 2023 the UK Government published a series of energy policy updates, including *Powering Up Britain: the Net Zero Growth Plan*,²¹ *Powering Up Britain: Energy Security Plan*,²² its *Carbon Budget Delivery Plan*,²³ and its *Green finance strategy*.²⁴ In September 2023, the UK Prime Minister announced a “new approach to Net Zero”, which maintained the existing target but altered parts of the UK Government's approach.²⁵

Key aspects of the UK strategy include:

- A target to full decarbonise the UK power system by 2035, including 40GW of offshore wind by 2030;
- A target of 5GW of hydrogen production capacity by 2030;
- Delivering new nuclear projects, including at least one new large-scale project and developing new nuclear technologies such as Small Modular Reactors;

¹² Legislation.gov.uk, [The Climate Change Act 2008 \(2050 Target Amendment\) Order 2019](#)

¹³ Climate Change Committee, [Net Zero – The UK's contribution to stopping global warming](#), 2 May 2019

¹⁴ HM Government, [Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener](#), 19 October 2021

¹⁵ HM Government, [The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution](#), 18 November 2020

¹⁶ HM Government, [Industrial decarbonisation strategy](#), 17 March 2021

¹⁷ HM Government, [Decarbonising transport: a better, greener Britain](#), 14 July 2021

¹⁸ HM Government, [UK hydrogen strategy](#), 17 August 2021

¹⁹ HM Government, [Heat and buildings strategy](#), 19 October 2021

²⁰ HM Government, [British energy security strategy](#), 7 April 2022

²¹ HM Government, [Powering Up Britain: Net Zero Growth Plan](#), 4 April 2023

²² HM Government, [Powering Up Britain – Energy Security Plan](#), March 2023

²³ HM Government, [Carbon Budget Delivery Plan](#), 30 March 2023

²⁴ HM Government, [Green Finance Strategy](#), 11 April 2023

²⁵ HM Government, [PM speech on Net Zero](#), 20 September 2023

- Delivering Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage (CCUS) clusters, including through a £1 billion CCS Infrastructure Fund;
- Schemes to decarbonise housing, including phasing out the sale of new gas boilers, supported by a Boiler Upgrade Scheme for households, and an ambition to install 600,000 heat pumps per year by 2028;
- Decarbonising transport, including through phasing out the sale of petrol and diesel vehicles, investing in electrification of vehicles and vehicle-charging infrastructure.

The UK Government's Net Zero commitment applies to all parts of the UK, and many of its policies apply UK-wide. The devolved administrations are also able to set policies that support Net Zero in areas of devolved competence, and the Scottish Government,²⁶ Welsh Government²⁷ and Northern Ireland Executive²⁸ all have Net Zero strategies of their own, and in some cases have set their own targets in addition to the UK's. For example, Scotland's strategy includes an ambition to achieve Net Zero by 2045, including a commitment to reduce emissions by 75 per cent by 2030.²⁹ Wales has set itself a target of meeting 100 per cent of its electricity needs from renewable sources by 2035.³⁰ Northern Ireland aims to have at least 70 per cent of electricity consumption come from renewable sources by 2030.³¹ The crown dependencies have their own energy strategies, and are all committed to a target of reaching Net Zero by 2050.

2.2.2. Ireland

In Ireland, the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 commits Ireland to a legally binding target of achieving Net Zero by 2050, and reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by at least 51 per cent by 2030.³² In 2019 the Irish Government set out a target of generating 70 per cent of electricity from renewable sources by 2030, and since then the Irish Government has published annual Climate Action Plans and progress

²⁶ Scottish Government, [Update to the Climate Change Plan 2018-2032: Securing a Green Recovery on a Path to Net Zero](#), 16 December 2020

²⁷ Welsh Government, [All Wales Plan 2021-25: Working Together to Reach Net Zero](#), 5 April 2022

²⁸ Northern Ireland Executive, [Energy Strategy for Northern Ireland – The Path to Net Zero Energy](#), 16 December 2021

²⁹ Scottish Government, [Update to the Climate Change Plan 2018-2032: Securing a Green Recovery on a Path to Net Zero](#), 16 December 2020

³⁰ Welsh Government, [Press release: Wales aims to meet 100% of its electricity needs from renewable sources by 2035](#), 24 January 2023

³¹ Northern Ireland Executive, [The Path to Net Zero Energy](#), 16 December 2021

³² Legislation.ie, [Climate Action and Low Carbon Development \(Amendment\) Act 2021](#)

reports to guide progress towards its goals.³³ The Irish Government has also published an energy security strategy document, *Energy Security in Ireland to 2030*.³⁴

125 *2.2.3. Sources of energy generation*

Different governments have emphasised different sources of electricity generation to reflect their countries' natural resources. For example, while all parts of the islands have made significant investments in wind power, this has been most pronounced on the island of Ireland and in Scotland where weather conditions favour wind power. Governments' own
130 policy priorities and legal regimes have also influenced their energy strategies. For example, the UK Government's energy strategy includes investment in new civil nuclear power, with a target of tripling nuclear capacity by 2050. In Ireland, nuclear power generation is prohibited by law and nuclear power does not form part of the Government's strategy.

2.2.4. Infrastructure investment

135 Energy strategies across the islands involve significant public investment, and a leading role for government in enabling green transition. Public assets themselves also play a role in governments' energy strategies. In the UK, for example, the UK Government is investing £6.6 billion in new nuclear projects and in the decarbonisation of public buildings.³⁵ The Scottish Government's Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan includes commitments
140 to invest in Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure and to decarbonise public buildings, including through the installation of solar panels.³⁶ Ireland's Climate Action Plan sets out ways in which the public sector can 'lead by example', including a target of reducing public sector emissions by 51 per cent by 2030 and prohibiting new fossil fuel heating systems in public buildings.³⁷

145 Government policies also note the role private investment can play in developing green industries and energy infrastructure, and governments' role in incentivising investment. For example, the UK Government uses Contracts for Difference to guarantee a set price for electricity generated and so incentivise investment in renewables; on its visit to Immingham the Committee heard that this model had been successful in mitigating the up-front costs of

³³ Gov.ie, [Climate Action Plan 2023](#), 21 December 2022

³⁴ Government of Ireland, [Energy Security in Ireland to 2030](#), 14 November 2023

³⁵ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, [British Energy Security Strategy](#), April 2022, p. 12

³⁶ Scottish Government, [Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan](#), January 2023

³⁷ Government of Ireland, [Climate Action Plan 2023](#), 21 December 2022

150 investment until the necessary economies of scale were achieved. However, the Welsh
Government's submission to this inquiry argued that market-based approaches were not
delivering decarbonisation at the scale or pace necessary, and that the Welsh Government
was therefore taking a leading role in shaping Wales's energy system to help meet its Net
Zero targets.

155 In other cases, governments and the private sector have co-invested in projects: for example,
in Immingham Phillips 66 told the Committee how money they had invested in the Humber
Zero project had been matched by the national innovation agency Innovate UK through the
Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund. The UK Energy Intensive Users Group told Members
that decarbonising heavy industry was a task that would require state support, because doing
160 so was capital intensive and sectors could not afford this investment without support.

2.3. Net Zero objectives

Each of the BIPA governments' energy strategies includes a commitment to achieving net
zero carbon emissions by 2050 in order to address the threat of climate change in light of
global climate science demonstrating the very real impact of global warming, where we are
165 witnessing more frequent and intense drought, storms, heat waves, rising sea levels, melting
glaciers and warming oceans as examples of climate instability. These Net Zero
commitments sit alongside other aspects of the governments' energy strategies, such as
ensuring national energy security. These objectives are not independent of each other
however. During its inquiry, the Committee heard that transitioning to renewable sources of
170 energy can provide a sustainable supply of energy for the future and so reduce dependence on
imported fuels.

As set out in the previous section, the BIPA governments have each set out actions they will
take to move towards their Net Zero targets. These include measures to decarbonise fuel
supply, but also measures to manage demand for energy such as making buildings more fuel
175 efficient or introducing infrastructure like smart meters that helps households manage how
they use their energy. In general, the BIPA governments have chosen to set targets for the
decarbonisation of electricity generation as an early priority.

Analysts from Oxera Consulting told the Committee that the BIPA governments had made
progress on defining their Net Zero policy priorities in recent years, but there remained some
180 uncertainty around the timescales and action plans for achieving those priorities.

Over the course of its inquiry the Committee heard a consensus view from across the islands that meeting Net Zero objectives, both the 2050 target and the intermediate aims governments had set, was achievable but challenging. Representatives from Ireland’s Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications acknowledged that Ireland’s targets for growing
185 renewable energy capacity were ambitious, and that this was a direct function of the ambitious carbon targets that had been agreed internationally. In Glasgow, the Committee heard that while the Scottish Government was not quite on track to hit its target of achieving Net Zero emissions by 2045, the target was nevertheless achievable. In Immingham,
190 representatives of energy companies said that it was ‘debatable’ whether the UK Government would meet its target of 10GW of low carbon hydrogen production by 2030, although this suggests that the target is achievable in principle. Renewables NI told the Committee that, in Northern Ireland, no new onshore renewable capacity had been connected in 2019-21, and that while a number of projects were in development more urgency was needed to connect them to the grid.

195 The Committee heard that meeting future demand for electricity would require generation from a range of different sources, including wind (both onshore and offshore), solar, and biomass. As a consequence, electricity generation would be less centralised and more diffuse than in the past. Investments in grid infrastructure will be needed to accommodate this (see below).

200 Analysts from Cornwall Insight and Oxera Consulting told the Committee that governments needed to support the creation and growth of the industries that would drive the Net Zero transition. They gave the example of hydrogen, which is still a maturing technology that requires further research and development to be deployed at scale. Storage was cited as another area characterised by innovation and smaller start-up companies that may take time
205 to mature.

Natural Power, a green energy service provider and consultant, suggested specific steps that the UK Government could take to create a more favourable investment environment, such as revisiting the powers given to the Secretary of State by Section 16 of the Energy Prices Act to raise money from electricity generators, or applying capital allowances to the Electricity
210 Generation Levy in response to the rising cost of raw materials faced by investors in renewables projects. Both of these had, according to Natural Power, discouraged potential investors from investing in renewable energy in the UK. Natural Power said that, in general,

215 there was a degree of regulatory uncertainty in the UK which was discouraging investment,
and that while the UK Government had a good vision there was a lack of a credible plan to
help investors.

The planning system was also seen as a potential obstacle to meeting Net Zero targets.
RenewableNI told the Committee that in Northern Ireland a wind or solar project can take
three to five years to complete planning and permitting processes, a timeline which they said
was significantly longer than in Ireland and Great Britain. They said that planning delays had
220 also delayed the completion of the North-South interconnector. RenewableNI concluded that
the planning system was a blocker to Northern Ireland's target of achieving its target of 80
per cent of electricity being generated by renewable sources by 2030. The Welsh
Government's submission also acknowledged that the planning system is cited by developers
as a barrier to renewables deployment, and the Welsh Government has introduced an
225 Infrastructure (Wales) Bill in the Senedd that it says will simplify the consenting process for
major infrastructure projects in Wales.

**Across the BIPA jurisdictions, Governments have set clear targets to decarbonise their
energy supply in order to meet their Net Zero ambitions. As well as being vital to
address the threat of climate change, these targets will help to secure the long-term
230 future of energy supply and so provide households and economies with sustainable and
affordable energy in the future. In all BIPA jurisdictions, an urgent priority for meeting
Net Zero targets is to decarbonise electricity supply. A mixture of initiatives will be
needed to achieve this, including: increasing the capacity for generating electricity from
renewable sources; new solutions for storing electricity; and upgrades to the electricity
235 grid. The BIPA jurisdictions' Net Zero targets present challenges but also
opportunities.**

The Governments of the BIPA jurisdictions should make it their mission to foster and grow
the industries that will transform their economies into Net Zero economies. To do this they
must set clear long-term strategies that encourage investment in renewable technologies
and infrastructure by identifying the energy needs of tomorrow.

2.4. Energy Storage

During its inquiry, the Committee heard that storage technology would be an important
aspect of maintaining stability of supply in the energy network of the future. For example,

240 representatives from Ireland’s Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications
said it would not be possible to meet Net Zero targets without improved storage systems, as
Ireland’s network would be dependent on wind and solar power which produce variable
outputs depending on weather conditions. The Committee heard that storage technology
would be needed not only to manage short term fluctuations over the course of a day, but also
245 to store up energy for longer periods. There are no targets for energy storage in Ireland,
unlike the clear targets for the development of solar and wind generation. However, Eirgrid
told the Committee that there was work in progress to develop both short and long term
storage solutions for the grid. Renewable Energy Ireland outlined in their submission that in
order to build storage capacity, an appropriate storage policy framework was needed to
250 provide the right market incentives.

On its visit to County Wicklow, the Committee visited the pumped hydro storage power
station at Turlough Hill, a power station which is able to store up to 300MW of power for
times of peak demand. The facility uses water held in a reservoir to drive hydro generators at
times of high demand, and during periods of lower demand uses spare power to pump water
255 back uphill into the reservoir. Members heard that pump hydro stations like Turlough Hill are
a good complement to renewable sources of electricity which generate intermittently, such as
wind, and are an effective way of meeting short-term surges in demand. Such stations can
only be built in specific geographies and so are not suitable for all parts of the UK and
Ireland. Wales has two pumped hydro stations – Ffestiniog and Dinorwig – and a further
260 scheme is planned at Glyn Rhonwy. Several schemes are in development in Scotland, while
in Ireland a further pumped hydro storage facility is planned in Silvermines in County
Tipperary.

Pumped hydro is not a complete solution to storage challenges, however, as it is only capable
of meeting short-term increases in demand. Illustrating this point, representatives from ESB
265 Networks explained that it would take sixty facilities like Turlough Hill to store a single
day’s worth of Ireland’s energy needs. The energy network of the future will need storage
capacity to be able to meet demand over a sustained period of multiple weeks. Gas Networks
Ireland and Ibec both noted the role that gas currently plays in meeting peak demand, and that
Ireland currently has no domestic gas storage facilities, making it dependent on importing gas
270 from elsewhere at times of need.

Another technology that can contribute to managing fluctuations in demand is battery storage. On its visit to Immingham, the Committee visited myenergi, a company which produces products which help households manage their energy, including a home battery storage system. As battery technology develops, it is likely to play an increasing role in
275 maintaining stable electricity supply. myenergi told Members that, whereas in the past it had often been profitable for households with solar panels to sell excess energy back to the grid, now it often made more sense to store that energy for use within the home. In the future, it is likely that domestic electricity storage, including in household electric vehicles, will become more commonplace.

280 The Committee heard that hydrogen storage is another technology that can help to maintain a stable supply of energy. Hydrogen can be produced as a by-product of other kinds of electricity generation, and can then be stored until it is needed to power generators during times of peak demand. Hydrogen can be generated by renewable sources, for example by using wind power to power electrolyzers that split water into hydrogen and oxygen: this is
285 known as ‘green hydrogen’. However, new infrastructure would be required to allow the use of green hydrogen in the existing gas network. Hydrogen technology is still a developing area. Analysts from Oxera Consulting were of the view that it would likely be at least a decade until it becomes a mature technology. Some projects are already planned: on the Committee’s visit to Immingham, Associated British Ports outlined that they are in the
290 process of getting consent for a new Green Energy Terminal, which among other things will produce green hydrogen from ammonia.

Electricity generation is only one part of meeting the energy needs of the future. The nature of renewable energy sources like wind and solar means that output will vary over time, and so the ability to store power for times of peak demand will be essential.
295 **Developing storage will also mean that less excess generating capacity needs to be built to ensure peak demand for electricity can be met.**

The BIPA jurisdictions must assess how much storage capacity will be needed to ensure the electricity network can continue to meet demand in the coming decades. In line with the objective above, Governments should consider carefully how to support the growth of industries that can develop of those storage solutions, and how to develop the necessary infrastructure.

2.5. Grid Capacity

Increasing capacity for generating renewable energy is an important part of meeting governments' energy goals, but it not a solution by itself. The Committee heard over the
300 course of its inquiry that increasing grid capacity was another important part of ensuring the energy needs of BIPA jurisdictions are met.

Stakeholders noted that, because electrification was an important part of decarbonising energy supply, total demand for electricity would increase over time and so the grid capacity would need to increase accordingly. On its visit to Immingham, Drax told the Committee that
305 demand for electricity was expected to triple because of the transition to electric vehicles and wider electrification. The Committee was told that this was a challenge for countries across the world, and that in the EU alone it was estimated that €600 billion of investment in grid infrastructure would be needed to meet the EU's climate targets.

The Committee heard from a number of stakeholders that the electricity grid would need to
310 expand in order to allow new renewables projects to be connected to the network. Several contributors to the inquiry told the Committee that challenges in connecting to the grid had been a delaying factor in delivering renewables projects, and that this was an obstacle not only to meeting renewables targets but for meeting future demand for energy. In Ireland, for example, it was discussed that while there was potential to significantly increase wind
315 capacity in County Mayo there was insufficient grid capacity to support this. For this reason, the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications outlined that increasing grid capacity was a key pillar of its strategy. Eirgrid stated that at present Ireland's grid was able to support up to 75 per cent of wind capacity, and that there was an ambition to increase this to 95 per cent by 2030.

320 Businesses also reported that a lack of grid capacity was an obstacle to decarbonising industry. In Manchester the Energy Intensive Users Group told the Committee that electrification was key to decarbonising manufacturing, but there was not always the necessary infrastructure available to connect manufacturers at the right voltage.

The Committee heard that the development of renewable energy projects and the
325 development of the grid needed to be planned in a systematic way. Natural Power informed Members that Great Britain's electricity grid had been designed in an era when power generation was highly centralised, and was not well suited to the more distributed model of generation required by renewables. They said a failure to develop a modern grid was one of

the biggest risks to the green energy transition. Natural Power said that in Great Britain there
330 was a lack of a coherent vision for what the future grid should look like, and that the planning
system needed to allow planning consents for generation and grid planning consents to be
more closely aligned. It was raised in several meetings that local opposition to transmission
projects had delayed projects in the past; many communities prefer ‘undergrounding’
transmission projects, which could make them more challenging and costly to install. The
335 Director of Natural Power praised Scotland’s National Planning Framework as a model, and
said other countries would benefit from adopting their approach.

In discussions with representatives of community energy projects, the Committee heard that a
lack of grid access could prevent the establishment or expansion of projects. Community
Energy Scotland reported that grid capacity was often bought up by larger companies,
340 effectively blocking out smaller projects.

**One of the most pressing challenges facing the UK and Ireland is ensuring that the
electricity grid is ready to serve the market by accommodating new sources of
renewable electricity generation. It is clear that grid capacity across BIPA jurisdictions
needs to be significantly strengthened in order to make use of the planned expansion in
345 renewable electricity generation. This will require careful long-term planning and
major investment, and coordination to ensure that the grid is able to support new
generation.**

Governments in the BIPA jurisdictions must ensure they have a clear plan for developing a
power grid that is able to accommodate the growing proportion of energy that is generated
from renewable sources. They must ensure that the planning system is fit to support the
rapid development of the grid, so that it can meet the demands of the future.

2.6. Energy Interconnection

The Committee heard how interconnection between different nations’ energy networks can
350 make energy systems more flexible and secure, as well as providing new export opportunities
for the energy sector. This was seen as an area in which cooperation between the
governments of the different BIPA jurisdictions was particularly important. Oxera Consulting
told the Committee that interconnectors enable the import and export of power between
different energy markets. As island nations, the benefits of undersea interconnectors that
355 allow trade with other islands or mainland Europe are significant. For example, Jersey and

Guernsey's connections with one another and with France help to provide them with cheaper and more secure energy. In comparison, on nearby Sark, which does not have an interconnector and is therefore reliant on diesel fuel for electricity generation, energy costs are more than triple those of Jersey.

360 The energy networks in the UK and Ireland already have highly developed connections across land borders, and there are high levels of integration in Great Britain and on the island of Ireland. In the latter case this is facilitated by the Single Electricity Market (SEM), which is a wholesale market for the whole of the island. There are also interconnectors between the two islands: a gas interconnector Moffat in Scotland to Northern Ireland and Ireland (as well
365 as the Isle of Man) and two electricity interconnectors connecting Scotland to Northern Ireland and Wales to Ireland. These two electricity interconnectors add up to 1GW of capacity. A further electricity interconnector, the Greenlink interconnector, is planned between County Wexford and Pembrokeshire and is expected to be completed in 2024. It is expected that this will provide a further 500MW of capacity.

370 Interconnectors also exist between BIPA countries and other parts of Europe. The United Kingdom has gas and electricity interconnectors from Great Britain to Belgium and the Netherlands, and electricity interconnectors with France. Further interconnectors are planned between Great Britain and mainland Europe. Ireland currently does not have any
375 interconnectors connecting it to mainland Europe, but the Celtic Interconnector currently under construction between Cork and Finistère is expected to be operational in 2027³⁸. The Irish Government's National Policy Statement on Electricity Interconnection says it will also explore interconnection opportunities with Spain, Belgium, and the Netherlands.³⁹

In September 2023, the UK and Ireland agreed two memoranda of understanding (MOUs) to increase cooperation for developing offshore renewable energy, explore further electricity
380 interconnection opportunities and enhance security of gas supplies.⁴⁰

Linking together different countries' grids through interconnection requires cooperation between the countries concerned, but they are still able to maintain independent energy policies, for example over pricing systems. The cost of importing energy from another market

³⁸ [gov.ie - Ireland and France mark beginning of construction work on 'Celtic Interconnector' and sign joint energy declaration \(www.gov.ie\)](https://www.gov.ie/en/news/2023-11-01-ireland-and-france-mark-beginning-of-construction-work-on-celtic-interconnector-and-sign-joint-energy-declaration/), November 2023

³⁹ Government of Ireland, National Policy Statement, [Electricity Interconnection](#), July 2023

⁴⁰ [gov.ie - Minister Ryan announces new energy cooperation agreements with United Kingdom \(www.gov.ie\)](https://www.gov.ie/en/news/2023-09-01-minister-ryan-announces-new-energy-cooperation-agreements-with-united-kingdom/)

will therefore vary depending on how that market operates and the type of fuel used. This
385 could have implications for consumer energy prices. In general, by ensuring greater
consistency of supply interconnectors should help to keep prices lower.

**Interconnection between different parts of these islands helps make energy markets
more flexible and responsive, and allows cooperation that may ease the pressure on
individual countries' networks. The Committee welcomes the memoranda of
390 understanding signed by the Irish and UK Governments last year.**

The UK and Irish Governments should update this Committee on what actions have been
taken to advance energy interconnection between the BIPA jurisdictions following the
signing of their Memoranda of Understanding last year. They should take every
opportunity possible to build on this arrangement and so deepen cooperation on
interconnection and energy security across our islands.

2.7. Community energy projects and community benefit

Smaller-scale community energy projects are becoming increasingly prevalent in BIPA
jurisdictions. These are designed to provide benefits for the community in which they are
based. Community energy schemes take several forms, including small-scale generation and
395 demand management measures. The Committee met with community energy representatives
based in Scotland, and visited the KPT (Keir, Penpont and Tynron) Development Trust's
community micro-hydro site in Penpont, Dumfriesshire. The generator at Penpoint provides
enough electricity to power thirty homes, and excess power is sold back to the grid for profit.
The profits of the scheme are reinvested into community schemes.

400 As noted in the section above on the energy grid, community energy projects often face
challenges accessing the grid, and this can be an obstacle to projects getting off the ground or
expanding. Barra and Vatersay Community Ltd outlined that constraints on grid capacity had
prevented them from installing new turbines. Glasgow Community Energy reported that their
turbines sometimes had to be switched off because they generated more energy than the grid
405 could accommodate. Community Energy Scotland told the Committee that even when grid
capacity existed to support small-scale projects it was not always easy to identify where it
was. Community energy projects may also be an option for remote areas that are not
connected to the grid. Eigg Electric, based on the Isle of Eigg in the Inner Hebrides, stated

410 that in their case it was cheaper to set up a local renewable energy scheme than to install the undersea cable that would be needed to connect them to the national grid.

Representatives of community energy projects also discussed the UK Government's Feed-In Tariff (FIT) scheme, which ran from 2010 to 2021 and which ensured a rate of return on electricity that community energy projects sold back to the grid over a period of 10-25 years. Community Energy Scotland were of the view that the policy had been helpful to project
415 applicants as it helped them to model long term projected income. On its visit to Penpont, the Committee heard from KPT Development Trust that qualification for the FIT scheme had enabled them to double their anticipated annual income. However, since the FIT scheme was closed to new applicants, there had been a decrease in the number of new community energy projects being established.

420 Stakeholders also discussed wider concerns felt in some of the communities which host energy infrastructure. Historically it has been common for proposed energy infrastructure projects to be met with local opposition if the project is seen as disruptive or detrimental to the local landscape or community. In some cases where projects have gone ahead, local residents have expressed frustration that the community itself does not directly benefit in the
425 form of lower energy costs. While some schemes are designed with guarantees to ensure that local communities benefit, this is not universally the case. For example, the Irish Government's Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications stated that under its community energy scheme developers were required to set up a community benefit fund for the duration of the project. However, for projects delivered outside of the DECC
430 scheme, there was no such requirement.

Oxera Consulting suggested that governments should encourage developers to make sure they deliver benefits to the communities they invest in. It was discussed how the community benefits of energy projects could be better measured and publicised, so that communities can see for themselves the advantages of hosting energy projects. The Committee heard
435 encouraging evidence to suggest that attitudes to renewable energy, and wind farms in particular, were changing, and that communities were becoming more open to hosting energy infrastructure. In Glasgow, representatives of community energy groups emphasised the importance of community engagement in the planning and decision-making process, and ensuring that local people benefit from having infrastructure in their area and so feel
440 ownership of the project.

445 **Electricity generation is becoming less centralised, and smaller, community-owned energy projects have an important role to play. However, there are obstacles to communities wishing to pursue such initiatives, such as limits on grid capacity. More widely, at the moment many communities who host energy infrastructure do not feel the benefits of lower bills themselves. This makes residents less likely to embrace energy projects in their area. Energy projects are more likely to be pursued if communities can see how they themselves will benefit, and if they are clear about the processes involved.**

Governments in the BIPA jurisdictions should work with energy companies, local authorities, and other relevant stakeholders to improve the availability of public information about community energy projects, including where there is grid capacity available to support small-scale community energy generation. They should also develop programmes that deliver clear benefits to the places where energy projects and transmission lines are located.

Chapter 3: Consumer Energy Policy

450 The Committee met with stakeholder groups in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and
Ireland to discuss consumer energy policy. A detailed list of meetings held and submissions
received can be found in Appendices I and II of this report.

As part of its consideration of consumer energy policy, the Committee examined the rise in
energy poverty, the provision of energy bill supports, and the effectiveness of energy
455 efficiency and home retrofit schemes.

3.1. Context

From Autumn 2021, there were significant and rapid increases in wholesale energy prices.
Several global factors contributed to this, including the growing demand for gas as economies
emerged from Covid-19 lockdowns⁴¹. This trend was exacerbated by the Russian invasion of
460 Ukraine in February 2022. Wholesale gas prices fluctuated in 2022, reaching record levels in
Autumn 2022. This led to a parallel increase in electricity prices⁴². This rise was reflected in
the cost of both gas and electricity for households and businesses.

Households using alternative heating fuels such as oil also saw prices increase. Prices for
alternative fuels are not regulated in the same way as gas and electricity prices. This means
465 they can therefore vary day-to-day and between different local areas to a much greater
extent⁴³. The UK's Office for National Statistics calculates that the price of home heating oil
rose by 53.3 % during the year to November 2022.

In response, Governments in the BIPA jurisdictions implemented a number of interventions
to address rising energy costs.

470 3.1.1. Ireland

In Ireland, energy prices rose rapidly between the winters of 2021 and 2022⁴⁴. According to
the Government Energy Poverty Action Plan, domestic electricity and gas bills increased by
an average of over 80% in the 12 months between November 2021 and November 2022.

⁴¹ [Gas Market Report, Q1-2022 – Analysis - IEA](#) International Energy Agency

⁴² [Decoupling electricity and fossil fuel prices: bright idea or lights out? - Oxera](#)

⁴³ [Households off the gas-grid and prices for alternative fuels - House of Commons Library \(parliament.uk\)](#)

⁴⁴ [gov.ie - Energy Poverty Action Plan \(www.gov.ie\)](#)

From April 2022, the Government provided direct support to households through the energy costs emergency benefits (ECEB) scheme. Through two phases of this scheme, payments of €200 were automatically made to all domestic electricity accounts, without the need to apply. The first two phases of the scheme covered the billing periods of Q1 2022, November/December 2022, January/February 2023, and March/April 2023.⁴⁵ The ECEB scheme has been continued into a third phase of €150 payments covering the December 2023, January/February, and March/April 2024 billing cycles.⁴⁶

The Government also increased social welfare payments and once-off supplementary payments in response to the increased cost of energy. Recipients of the Fuel Allowance payment received a lump-sum payment of €400 in November 2022. In addition, the eligibility criteria for the allowance were broadened from January 2023, with the Government estimating that it would become available to an additional 81,000 households⁴⁷.

To support businesses, the Government established the Temporary Business Energy Support Scheme (TBESS) and Ukraine Enterprise Crisis Scheme for 2023⁴⁸.

EU-wide measures

As an EU Member State, Ireland is party to EU-wide measures to address and limit excessively high gas and electricity prices⁴⁹. The market mechanism to limit gas prices applied for one year from 15 February 2023. This mechanism applies to virtual gas trading platforms in the EU. It allows for a price ceiling on gas transactions, and will be automatically activated if prices exceed certain thresholds for three working days⁵⁰.

The Regulation to reduce energy prices contains measures to reduce electricity demand, and to collect and redistribute the energy sector's surplus revenues to households and small and medium-sized enterprises. This has been implemented in Ireland by the passing of the Energy (Windfall Gains in the Energy Sector) (Cap on Market Revenues) Act 2023⁵¹.

⁴⁵ MABS submission to BIPA Committee C, 3 February 2023

⁴⁶ [gov.ie](https://www.gov.ie) - Electricity Costs Emergency Benefit Scheme III (www.gov.ie)

⁴⁷ [gov.ie](https://www.gov.ie) - Over 2.2 million households to start receiving the next €200 electricity credit from 1 January 2023

⁴⁸ [Minister Coveney announces extension of the €200 million Ukraine Enterprise Crisis Scheme - DETE](#)

⁴⁹ [Council formally adopts emergency measures to reduce energy prices - Consilium \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁵⁰ [Council agrees on temporary mechanism to limit excessive gas prices - Consilium \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁵¹ [Energy \(Windfall Gains in the Energy Sector\) \(Cap on Market Revenues\) Bill 2023 \(oireachtas.ie\)](#), Oireachtas Library and Research Service (L&RS) Bills Digest 19 September 2023

3.1.2. UK

In February 2022 the UK Government introduced an Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSS),
500 which offered a payment of £200 applied automatically to household electricity bills over six
months. In May of that year, it was announced this payment would be doubled to £400. In
September the UK Government introduced an Energy Price Guarantee, a cap on the unit price
consumers pay for energy and gas.

It is estimated that 4.4 million households across Great Britain, 15.1% of domestic properties,
505 were not connected to the gas grid in 2021.⁵² For these households, the UK Government
provided Energy Bill Support Scheme Alternative Funding worth £400 to customers without
domestic electricity connection or with no direct contact with a supplier to get an automatic
payment⁵³. A £200 Domestic Alternative Fuel Payment (AFP) was made available to
customers who use fuel other than gas for home heating. EBSS Alternative funding became
510 available from January to May 2023, while the AFP support became available in Great
Britain from February.

For businesses, the UK Government introduced an Energy Bill Relief Scheme. This fixed a
Supported Wholesale Price (approximately half the market price) which resulted in
discounted bills for non-domestic customers between October 2022 and April 2023. The
515 Energy Bill Relief Scheme was also implemented in Northern Ireland.

3.1.3. Northern Ireland

The Energy Bills Support Scheme Northern Ireland (EBSS NI) was introduced from January
2023. The suspension of the devolved institutions in Northern Ireland meant that no specific
schemes were introduced by the Northern Ireland Executive.

520 In Northern Ireland, the EBSS and AFP were combined into a universal once off £600
payment made to all households with a domestic electricity supply⁵⁴. The AFP was paid to all
households in Northern Ireland regardless of how they heat their home. It was noted by the
UK Government in January 2023 that as 68% of NI households use alternative fuels, “trying

⁵² [Households off the gas-grid and prices for alternative fuels - House of Commons Library \(parliament.uk\)](#)

⁵³ [What is the Energy Bills Support Scheme Alternative Funding? - Energy Saving Trust](#)

⁵⁴ [Energy Bills Support | Advice NI](#)

525 to target only those households using alternative fuels would delay payment until after winter.”⁵⁵

The situation in Northern Ireland is different to that of Great Britain, where the Energy Bills Support Scheme and Alternative Fuel Payment were administered separately and not all households received the AFP element. Another difference between the administration of the scheme in Northern Ireland and in Great Britain was that in Northern Ireland the payment
530 was received as a lump sum. In Great Britain it was delivered in instalments by means of a discount on energy bills over a six-month period.

In Winter 2021-22, prior to the suspension of the Northern Ireland institutions, the Northern Ireland Executive had provided some support to households. The Department for Communities ran a £2m Emergency Fuel Payments Scheme, together with the Bryson
535 Charitable Group and the Consumer Council that aimed to support 20,000 households with one-off support of £100 worth of electricity, gas, or oil. This scheme was reportedly oversubscribed.⁵⁶ An Energy Payment Support Scheme was introduced in March 2022 with a targeted one-off payment of £200. This was also targeted at vulnerable households (defined as those in receipt of certain benefits).

540 **3.2. Consumer Supports**

3.2.1. Energy poverty

Energy poverty (also referred to as fuel poverty) is defined as an inability to adequately heat or power a home.⁵⁷ In Ireland, energy poverty is measured using an expenditure-based method, where a household is considered to be in energy poverty if it is spending more than
545 10% of its income on energy.⁵⁸ In the UK, energy poverty is a devolved policy area,⁵⁹ with the same definition being used across the jurisdictions. However, the Scottish government expands upon this definition, stating in legislation that a fuel-poor household is one where:

- more than 10% (20% for extreme fuel poverty) of net income is required to pay for their reasonable fuel needs after housing costs have been deducted

⁵⁵ [Getting household energy bill support in Northern Ireland - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

⁵⁶ [Fuel Poverty in Northern Ireland - National Energy Action \(NEA\) gov.ie](https://www.gov.ie)

⁵⁷ [Energy Poverty Action Plan \(www.gov.ie\)](https://www.gov.ie), p9

⁵⁸ [Energy Poverty Action Plan \(www.gov.ie\)](https://www.gov.ie), p9

⁵⁹ [Fuel poverty in the UK - House of Commons Library \(parliament.uk\)](https://parliament.uk)

- 550
- the remaining household income is not enough to maintain an acceptable standard of living, defined as at least 90% of the UK Minimum Income Standard (MIS) once childcare costs and disability or care benefits are deducted.⁶⁰

The 2019 Fuel Poverty (Targets, Definition and Strategy) (Scotland) Act outlines reduction targets for 2040, with interim targets for 2030 and 2035.⁶¹ The 2040 targets are that no more than 5% of households in Scotland will be in fuel poverty, and no more than 1% will be in extreme fuel poverty. In 2020, the Scottish Government introduced a Fuel Insecurity Fund, which was increased from £10 million to £30 million in 2023. The fund is delivered through third sector organisations, which support households at risk of fuel poverty.⁶²

555

The Welsh Government published its Tackling Fuel Poverty plan in 2021, which runs to 2035. It includes the target that by 2035 “not more than 5% of households are estimated to be living in fuel poverty at any one time as far as reasonably practicable.”⁶³ Saint Vincent de Paul advocate for official energy poverty reduction targets to be established in Ireland.

560

As part of this inquiry, the Committee met with consumer support charity groups in Ireland, Northern Ireland, and Scotland. All of the representatives reported that demand for their services had increased significantly due to the rise in energy costs in 2022. The Consumer Council (NI) reported a 176% increase in enquires about energy-related matters between 2021/22 and 2022/23.

565

In its submission to the Committee, MABS (Money Advice and Budgeting Service Ireland) highlighted that customers at an increased risk of energy poverty include those on lower incomes and members of marginalised groups such as the Irish Traveller community, older persons, single parents, young people, and disabled persons.⁶⁴ In Ireland Age Action and Saint Vincent de Paul highlighted the particular impact of rising energy costs on older people and lone parents.

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In its submission to the Committee, the energy regulator for Great Britain, Ofgem, outlined that it was working closely with suppliers and consumer groups to encourage industry to

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⁶⁰ [Fuel poverty - Home energy and fuel poverty - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/fuel-poverty-home-energy-and-fuel-poverty/pages/1-10-introduction-and-definitions/pages/1-10-introduction-and-definitions.pdf)

⁶¹ [Fuel poverty - Home energy and fuel poverty - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/fuel-poverty-home-energy-and-fuel-poverty/pages/1-10-introduction-and-definitions/pages/1-10-introduction-and-definitions.pdf)

⁶² [Boosting Fuel Insecurity Fund - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/boosting-fuel-insecurity-fund/pages/1-10-introduction-and-definitions/pages/1-10-introduction-and-definitions.pdf)

⁶³ [New Warm Homes Programme: policy statement \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales/new-warm-homes-programme-policy-statement)

⁶⁴ “MABS Submission to British-Irish Parliamentary Assembly’s inquiry on consumer energy policies in Ireland and the United Kingdom”, 3 February 2023, p6

support those struggling with their bills. This included working with Citizens Advice and Energy UK to develop the Winter 2023 Voluntary Debt Commitment for domestic energy suppliers.⁶⁵

580 The Committee heard from the Consumer Council (NI) that 34% of customers in Northern Ireland met the criteria for fuel poverty. A 2022 report from the ESRI estimated that energy poverty in Ireland was at 29%.⁶⁶ The Scottish Government estimated that following the rapid rise in energy costs in 2022 one third of households would be in fuel poverty, with one quarter in extreme fuel poverty.⁶⁷ This estimate included regional figures, which indicated higher fuel poverty levels in remote and rural Scotland.

585 Bryson Energy (NI) described users of its services as facing the choice to “heat or eat”. The Director of Bryson Energy reported that an increasing number of customers were “self-disconnecting” as they could not afford to pay their energy bills. The Consumer Energy Council (NI) noted that almost a quarter of customers in Northern Ireland had reduced their energy usage below healthy levels. This trend was also observed by Energy Action Scotland.
590 In discussion with the Committee, the CEO of Energy Action Scotland said that there was a need to reduce overall energy consumption in order to meeting decarbonisation goals, but that this must be done in a safe manner. He expressed the view that government supports, not just in Scotland or the UK, but also across Europe, had come ‘late in the day’, after the coldest part of the year during which time people had reduced their energy consumption. As a result,
595 energy consumption had fallen, ‘but not in a safe way’. It is estimated that energy consumption in Scotland fell between 20-30%. The CEO of Energy Action Scotland outlined that as a consequence of this reduction in energy usage, there was an observable increase in the number of people being hospitalised with hypothermia over the winter.

600 Representatives also highlighted the rural disparity in fuel affordability. The Consumer Council (NI) highlighted the particular ways in which rural consumers were disproportionately affected by the increase in the cost of energy. Firstly, rural housing stock is more likely to be older and to run on home heating oil. Higher fuel costs also mean that transport is less affordable. Therefore, it costs more for rural consumers to travel to supermarkets in large towns, and shopping locally outside of big supermarkets is more

⁶⁵ [The Winter 2023 Voluntary Debt Commitment - Energy UK \(energy-uk.org.uk\)](https://energy-uk.org.uk)

⁶⁶ [gov.ie - Energy Poverty Action Plan \(www.gov.ie\)](https://www.gov.ie), p9

⁶⁷ Energy Action Scotland Submission to BIPA Committee C, April 2023

605 expensive. Also, as rural consumers are likely to be older, they are more likely to find shopping online challenging. The Poverty Alliance (Scotland) argued that rural poverty is often not properly understood, as the measures used to record urban poverty are not always applicable in a rural context. In Scotland, nearly two thirds of rural households are not on the gas grid. The Poverty Alliance therefore argued that supports should have been more targeted to rural areas. Representatives of the Scottish Government stated to the Committee that there were specific uplifts available for people in rural areas, and that there was increasing collaboration between energy suppliers and Government to try and identify people at risk of fuel rationing.

610 **Government interventions during 2022 and 2023 helped to mitigate the difficulties households experienced as a result of surging energy prices. However, energy poverty still rose during this period. One reason for this was that energy bills were just one of many pressures facing households at the time. In some cases, however, the level of payment from the state did not fully offset the impact on household budgets. In others, households were not able to access the payments they were entitled to.**

The Committee recommends that all BIPA jurisdictions consider establishing and funding specific, time-bound targets for reducing fuel poverty, as are currently in place in Scotland and Wales.

620 *3.2.2. Effectiveness of support schemes*

The Committee discussed the UK energy price support schemes with the Director of Energy Affordability in the UK Government’s Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. The Director of Energy Affordability was of the view that the most effective interventions were those that used existing systems to deliver support. The Energy Price Guarantee was straightforward in Great Britain as discounts were applied directly to consumers’ bills. Automatic payments ensured that customers received support quickly, but one drawback was that this support did not automatically reach everyone. The Director of Energy Affordability observed that those who do not have a direct relationship with their energy supplier were much more difficult to reach. Schemes established for this cohort, such as the Energy Bill Support Scheme Alternative Fund and the Alternative Fuel Payment, depended on customers actively applying for supports, and therefore take up was lower.

The Committee was informed by stakeholders that the delay in rolling out the Energy Bills Support Scheme in Northern Ireland led to consumers taking on additional debt to cover short term costs. National Energy Action NI informed the Committee that Northern Ireland had a particularly high prevalence of pre-payment electricity meters (50%) compared to other BIPA jurisdictions. In comparison, Ofgem estimates that there are 4 million customers in Great Britain using prepayment electricity meters⁶⁸. It was noted to the Committee that in Northern Ireland, prepay meters are not used as a debt management product, as they are often used in Ireland and in Great Britain. However, National Energy Action NI outlined that there was high level of “self-disconnection” by customers who could not afford to keep their meters topped up.

The absence of an Assembly and Executive in Northern Ireland delayed the application of the UK’s Energy Bills Support Scheme. As a result, households in Northern Ireland could not access support for months after the scheme had been available in Great Britain.

In the event that future consumer energy bill support is necessary, the UK Government should work urgently with the Northern Ireland Executive to ensure that it can be introduced in Northern Ireland in parallel with Great Britain.

In its submission to the Committee, MABS outlined its view that the Irish Energy Costs Emergency Benefits Scheme had a direct and positive impact on consumers. However, it noted that the choice to distribute credits of electricity payments automatically via MPRN numbers (a unique code on each electricity meter) excluded those who share a connection point with others. This cohort includes customers renting in apartment complexes, and many Irish Travellers living in local authority housing.

In discussion with the Committee, the UK Government Director of Energy Affordability outlined that UK legislated to require landlords and other intermediaries with a direct relationship with their energy supplier to pass on energy bill savings to their tenants. However, he noted that there was not yet data to show how well this has worked. He acknowledged the Government has limited levers in this situation. If a landlord did not comply, the only way for a tenant to get redress would be to take them to court, and that is

⁶⁸ [Ofgem launches national evidence-call on prepayment meters | Ofgem](#)

very difficult. He suggested that a point to consider was how to make the system less onerous on tenants. In the Irish context, the Government encourages any tenants in this situation to
660 utilise the existing dispute resolution mechanism provided by the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB).⁶⁹

Alternative Fuels

Energy Action Scotland highlighted that while there was an Alternative Fuel Payment of £200 for households using biomass, oil, and other alternative fuels, it was difficult to deliver
665 this payment as users do not have the same highly regulated relationship with their energy supplier as users of gas and electricity.

It was discussed that a large proportion of homes in Ireland, Northern Ireland, and Scotland use home heating oil. National Energy Action NI informed the Committee that Northern Ireland had a particularly high prevalence of home heating oil use (68%) compared to other
670 BIPA jurisdictions. A 2021 survey of household central heating types in England and Wales found that only 3.5% of households used oil only for heating⁷⁰. Peat is also an important fuel source for many households in remote rural areas of Scotland.

**While Government support reached the vast majority of consumers, some households were not easily reached. This occurred in instances where people had to proactively
675 apply for support, or did not have a typical relationship with their energy supplier (such as those who heat their homes with oil). Often those who could not access support were those most in need. This particularly impacted marginalised groups, including Traveller communities in Ireland and Scotland.**

In anticipation of future price shocks, the Committee recommends that Governments, working with local authorities, identify households which do not have a direct relationship with an energy supplier and so might not be automatically reached by future energy bill support. If Governments roll out similar energy bill support in the future, these households should be the target of information campaigns making them aware of the supports available.

⁶⁹ [gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie) - Electricity Costs Emergency Benefit Scheme III (www.gov.ie)

⁷⁰ [CBP-9838.pdf \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk), “Households off the gas-grid and prices for alternative fuels”, House of Commons Library Research Briefing 10 January 2024

Universal vs targeted supports

680 A number of stakeholders shared their views on whether supports would be more effective if they were universally applied, or if they were targeted. The Director of Energy Affordability at the UK Department for Energy Security and Net Zero noted that universal supports can be mobilised quickly, but that there was an associated cost to the taxpayer. However, it can be difficult to obtain the necessary data to effectively target supports at particular households.

685 The Poverty Alliance in Scotland highlighted that the Scottish Government had reduced the administrative costs of targeting supports by tying them to existing schemes, using existing data. Energy Action Scotland argued that Governments should treat health and energy issues as interlinked, and enable the sharing of information between health, benefits agencies, and energy suppliers.

690 Energy Action Scotland shared the view that universal supports do not sufficiently support those in greatest need. Advice NI welcomed the £600 government supports, but suggested that more long-term policies, such as the development of sustainable energy communities, would reduce the need for such interventions in the future. The Chief Executive of Ibec suggested that the majority of Irish households were in a financial position to absorb the increased energy costs, and therefore supports should be means-tested, including for older people. Age Action argued that current means-testing in Ireland is too narrow, and suggested that there should be more tiered systems of welfare. Saint Vincent de Paul (Ireland) were of the opinion that energy poverty cannot be resolved by upgrading homes and increasing fuel allowances alone; other cost of living supports were also necessary to assist low income households. The Poverty Alliance (Scotland) welcomed the supports, but expressed the view that they were not sufficiently tailored.

In its submission to the Committee, Ofgem expressed the view that there “is a case for examining, with urgency, a social tariff that limits the impact of extremely high prices and reduces volatility for a defined set of vulnerable groups”⁷¹. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation (Scotland), SVP Ireland, and Consumer Council NI discussed their support for a social tariff policy. In this context, social tariffs refer to a levy or subsidy-funded reduction in the cost of basic utilities for targeted groups of customers, typically those who are least able to pay⁷². Ofgem noted that defining who has access to a social tariff would be challenging, with

⁷¹ Ofgem submission to BIPA Committee C, 20 December 2023

⁷² [Debate on energy social tariffs - House of Commons Library \(parliament.uk\)](#) p3

“inevitable cliff edges” between different groups of people. However, it stated that in its role as regulator it was working closely with Government to explore the full range of options. In the Committee’s meetings, it was discussed that a system differentiated social tariffs could become complicated, but alternatives such as an energy guarantee or a free allowance of energy could be explored.

The deliverability of consumer support schemes is as important as their design. It is important that support can be made quickly and easily available in the event of sudden energy price pressures, particularly to vulnerable households who are unable to meet the cost of higher bills using savings. Schemes which were able to deliver support quickest were those which used existing systems or data. Example of this included delivering support through consumers’ existing relationship with their energy supplier, or using knowledge of households’ existing eligibility for benefits to determine their availability for support.

The Committee recommends that Governments across the BIPA jurisdictions utilise existing data they hold about households’ eligibility for benefits and economic circumstances to identify a cohort of households who would require priority support in the event of a future energy price shock. This would enable future support packages can be targeted and delivered quickly.

Business supports

The Committee met with representatives of Energy Intensive Users Group and British Glass in England to discuss the issues facing energy-intensive industries. It also received a written submission from Ibec (the Irish Business and Employers Confederation).

Representatives of the Energy Intensive Users Group and British Glass discussed the manufacturing industry’s goal to transition away from heavy fossil fuel usage. However, at this stage the necessary infrastructure is not in place for the industries to viably decarbonise. The representative of British Glass outlined that electrification would be costly and not viable without Government support. It was discussed that biofuel is considered a transitional fuel, and therefore not a long-term solution. In the short term, biofuels are being increasingly used for sustainable aviation fuel, resulting in less being available on the market for use by the manufacturing industry. Hydrogen is a future alternative fuel for manufacturing, but it was

735 noted that it was it was challenging for those outside the UK Government’s chosen ‘clusters’
to benefit from hydrogen infrastructure.

In its submission to the Committee in January 2023, Ibec noted that a “large majority” of its members had been struggling with the impact of energy cost inflation. Following a December 2022 survey of its members, Ibec found that average Irish businesses’ expenditure on gas had increased by 90% and electricity by 60% compared to 2021 levels⁷³. The survey found that
740 the Temporary Business Energy Support Scheme (TBESS) and Ukraine Enterprise Crisis Scheme (UECS) announced in Budget 2023 provided welcome support to many businesses, but that the eligibility criteria and support levels were too restrictive⁷⁴. It recommended extending the TBESS scheme to the end of 2023 and re-designing the UECS so that it provided broader support.

745 **Rising energy prices have affected not only households but businesses as well. This has been particularly challenging for energy intensive industries.**

Governments should work to address barriers to decarbonising industry, such as lack of infrastructure to support electrification and high capital costs.

3.3. Energy efficiency and home retrofit schemes

3.3.1. Home retrofitting

750 Retrofitting involves adding new technology or features to older systems in a home to improve airtightness and make it more energy efficient⁷⁵. Home upgrades may comprise the following:

- Wall, attic, and/or floor insulation
- Window and door upgrades
- Ventilation systems
- 755 ● Woodburning stoves
- Renewable energy systems (including heat pumps, solar panels, biomass boilers)⁷⁶

⁷³ “Energy Costs Survey: Expenditure and the impact of rising costs on Irish business” Ibec December 2022

⁷⁴ “Energy Costs Survey: Expenditure and the impact of rising costs on Irish business” Ibec December 2022 p1

⁷⁵ [Retrofitting homes for net-zero – SPICe Spotlight | Solas air SPICe \(spice-spotlight.scot\)](#)

⁷⁶ “Upgrading To An A-Rated Home Homeowner Guide” Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) [Booklet 1 v21.indd \(seai.ie\)](#)

In Ireland, the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) administers home energy efficiency grants.⁷⁷ Grants are available to homeowners and landlords. Under the Warmer Homes Scheme, free energy upgrades are available to homeowners who receive certain social welfare payments.⁷⁸ It is noted on the SEAI information page that the Warmer Homes Scheme operates on a first-come-first-served basis, and that it “may take more than a 2-year waiting time before your home is completed.”

In England, home upgrade grants are provided through local authority funding.⁷⁹ Households in England and Wales are also eligible for the UK Government’s Boiler Upgrade Scheme, which provides grants for households to replace their existing boilers with low carbon alternatives such as heat pumps.⁸⁰ In Scotland, retrofitting grants and loans are managed by Home Energy Scotland.⁸¹ In Northern Ireland, grants are managed by the Northern Ireland Executive (Affordable Warmth Scheme) and administered by the Energy Saving Trust (various schemes under the Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme).⁸²

770 *3.3.2. Effectiveness of support schemes*

There was consensus among stakeholders regarding the benefits of home retrofitting. Making homes more energy efficient would reduce household energy costs and contribute significantly to national Net Zero targets. However, it was broadly agreed that existing retrofitting support schemes were often complicated and not always accessible to those who are most in need.

In its submission to the Committee, MABS outlined the findings of its research into the “obstacles and enablers to greater energy efficiency in the home” in the Irish context. It concluded that there was a “two-tier” system. Those who do not qualify for free upgrades must pay significant upfront payments to access grants, which may not be reimbursed until several months after the work has been completed⁸³. Those who qualify for free upgrades may be unaware that they qualify. They may not engage with the process due to a lack of information or understanding of the benefits of a home upgrade. National Energy Action NI

⁷⁷ [Individual home energy upgrade grants \(Better Energy Homes\) \(citizensinformation.ie\)](https://citizensinformation.ie/en/energy/individual-home-energy-upgrade-grants-better-energy-homes)

⁷⁸ [Fully Funded Energy Upgrades | Home Energy Grants | SEAI](https://www.seai.ie/energy-efficiency/fully-funded-energy-upgrades-home-energy-grants)

⁷⁹ [Home Upgrade Grant: successful local authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-upgrade-grant-successful-local-authorities)

⁸⁰ GOV.UK, [Boiler Upgrade Schemes](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/boiler-upgrade-schemes), accessed 24 January 2024

⁸¹ [Home Energy Scotland Grant and Loan: overview · Home Energy Scotland](https://www.homeenergyscotland.org.uk/energy-efficiency/home-energy-scotland-grant-and-loan-overview)

⁸² [The Housing Executive - Northern Ireland Energy Advice \(nihe.gov.uk\)](https://www.nihe.gov.uk/energy-efficiency/the-housing-executive-northern-ireland-energy-advice)

⁸³ MABS submission to BIPA Committee C, 3 February 2023, p13

noted that in Northern Ireland the amount available for retrofitting grants was small, and that there was no “one-stop-shop” for households to access information.

785 Energy Action Scotland informed the Committee that more than half of homes in Scotland are categorised as “fuel inefficient”. It was discussed that retrofitting was particularly challenging in Scotland as housing stock tends to be older. There are many different types of buildings and many of them are protected in some way, which limits the work that can be done on them. It was discussed that home retrofitting was a “huge economic opportunity”,
790 but that currently there were regulatory barriers in place. One barrier cited was that higher levels of qualifications are required for builders to retrofit an old building than to insulate a new one.

Throughout the Committee’s discussions on this issue, it was highlighted that there is a shortage of skilled labour in the retrofitting sector, and increased global demand for parts.

795 This has resulted in increased costs and significant waiting times for the installation of renewable energy systems, such as solar panels. It was also noted that under existing schemes, homes are upgraded “one at a time” on an individual basis. As a result, these works are more expensive as they do not benefit from economies of scale. It was suggested in the Irish context that there could be more joined up thinking between local authorities and
800 Government regarding home improvement grants.

The Head of Social Justice and Policy at Saint Vincent de Paul (SVP Ireland) suggested that prioritising the retrofitting of social housing would be one way of escalating the process. Another would be to prioritise “shallow” retrofit measures, such as attic insulation, which can be completed quicker and cheaper than a full “deep” retrofit. SVP also raised concerns
805 about heat pumps, arguing that they are not well adapted to the way that people on lower incomes use energy. Heat pumps use electricity⁸⁴ and need to run all the time, which is not easily compatible with pre-payment meters.

**Direct support is only part of the solution to helping consumers cope with rising energy prices; energy-saving measures must also play a role. Making homes more energy
810 efficient is costly and challenging, but necessary to help reduce household bills and reach Net Zero targets.**

⁸⁴ [Your Guide to Heat Pumps in Ireland | Bord Gáis Energy \(bordgaisenergy.ie\)](https://www.bordgaisenergy.ie/your-guide-to-heat-pumps-in-ireland)

815 **Current home retrofitting grant schemes can be complicated and not attractive to consumers. It is important that Governments address these barriers, and design schemes that make home retrofitting an attractive and affordable option for both homeowners and landlords.**

It is clear to the Committee that there are potential economic opportunities for all BIPA jurisdictions in supporting retrofitting. It is important that Governments invest in training schemes to ensure there is a sufficient number of skilled tradespeople qualified to install the necessary systems, particularly as technology evolves.

Governments in the BIPA jurisdictions should accelerate their work to address barriers to making buildings more energy efficient, and communicate clearly in terms of policy and support that encourages the growth of the retrofit industry and skills base. Each jurisdiction should work to quantify the number of workers that will be required to meet its retrofitting needs, and proactively recruit and train skilled apprentices and reskill existing workers to that purpose. BIPA jurisdictions should also work collaboratively to ensure the security of supplies for retrofitting, such as solar panels.

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Appendix I: List of meetings and visits held for this inquiry

Date	Location	Topic(s)	Stakeholders attended
8 December 2022	MS Teams Virtual	Agreement of work programme and stakeholder list	
27 January 2023	MS Teams Virtual	Meeting with energy market analysts	Cornwall Insight: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Robert Buckley, Head of Relationship Development ● Ruth Young, Senior Consultant, Oxera Consulting ● Jostein Kristensen, Partner ● Sahar Shamsi, Partner
6 March 2023	Parliament Buildings, Belfast, Northern Ireland	Roundtable discussion on consumer energy bills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Noyona Chundur, Chief Executive, Consumer Council ● Peter McClenaghan, Director of Infrastructure and Sustainability, Consumer Council ● Pat Austin, Northern Ireland Director, National Energy Action ● Nigel Brady, Director, Bryson Energy ● Kevin Higgins, Head of Policy, Advice NI
20 April 2023	Glasgow, Scotland	Roundtable discussion on consumer energy bills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ruth Boyle, Policy and Campaigns Manager, The Poverty Alliance ● Jack Evans, Senior Policy Advisor, Joseph Rowntree Foundation ● Frazer Scott, CEO, Energy Action Scotland

Date	Location	Topic(s)	Stakeholders attended
		Roundtable meeting with community energy organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoe Holliday, CEO, Community Energy Scotland • Calum Watkins and Ellie Harrison, Glasgow Community Energy • Rory Bryce, New Lanark Cotton Mill • Sue Hollands, Eigg Electric (off-grid) [appeared virtually] • Euan Scott, Barra & Vatersay Community Ltd (Outer Hebrides) [appeared virtually]
		Roundtable meeting with Scottish government representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karen Dickson, Head of Wholesale Energy Markets, Scottish Government • Neal Rafferty, Head of Heat Strategy, Community Energy and Consumer Policy, Scottish Government
21 April 2023	Dumfriesshire, Scotland	Visit to KPT (Keir, Penpont and Tynron) Development Trust and KPT community micro-hydro site, Penpont, Dumfriesshire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maureen Halkett, Chair of KPT Development Trust • Robert Gladstone, Treasurer & Board member KPT Development Trust • Chris Shirley, Secretary & Board member, KPT Development Trust • Senga Greenwood, Development Officer, KPT Development Trust • Sue King-Smith, Project leader hydro project • Rosie Brown, Transport Officer, Community Energy Scotland • Anna Fergusson, Estate Manager, Buccleuch Estates

Date	Location	Topic(s)	Stakeholders attended
		Visit to Natural Power, Forest Estate, Dalry, Castle Douglas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jeremy Sainsbury, Director, Natural Power • Kevin Armstrong, Head of Control Centre, Natural Power
14 May 2023	Saint Helier, Jersey	Roundtable discussion with representatives of the Jersey Electric Company	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chris Ambler, CEO, Jersey Electricity Company • Mark Preece, Operations Director, Jersey Electricity Company
29 June 2023	Manchester, England	Roundtable discussion with representatives of energy intensive industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arjan Geveke, Director, Energy Intensive Users Group • Paul Percy, Lead EHS Adviser, British Glass
		Discussion on UK Government Energy Policy	Ben Golding, Director, Energy Affordability, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
30 June 2023	Immingham, England	Visit to Associated British Ports, Immingham Dock Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dafydd Williams, Head of Policy, Communications & Economic Development, Associated British Ports Humber • Richard Gwilliam, BECCS Programme Director, Drax and Chair of the Humber Energy Board • Richard Royall, Head of Public Affairs and Communications, Equinor • Jade Fernandez, Stakeholder Manager, SSE Thermal • Graeme Davies, Project Director - Viking CCS, Harbour Energy
		Visit to Phillips 66 Refinery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paul Fursey, Refinery Manager and Lead UK Executive

Date	Location	Topic(s)	Stakeholders attended
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chris Gilbert, Decarbonisation Manager, Humber Refinery • Jenny Sutcliffe, Public Affairs Lead, Humber Refinery • Callan Tree, Government Affairs Lead, Emerging Energy (Europe)
		Visit to and tour of myenergi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nicole Swaby, Marketing Campaign Manager • Ben Harris, Partnership Development Manager
22 October 2023	Co Kildare, Ireland	Discussion of itinerary for Wicklow visit	
9 November 2023	Co Wicklow, Ireland	Roundtable discussion with Irish stakeholders	<p>Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conor McCabe, Principal Officer for International and Offshore Energy Division • Phillip Newsome, Principal Officer for Renewable Electricity <p>Energy networks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seán Kinsella, Policy Manager, Gas Networks Ireland • Peter O’Shea, ESB Head of Corporate and Regulatory Affairs • Gráinne O’Shea, Strategy and Engagement Manager, ESB Networks • Doireann Barry, Head of Strategy and Sustainability, Eirgrid <p>Consumer and business organisations</p>

Date	Location	Topic(s)	Stakeholders attended
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nat O'Connor, Senior Public Affairs & Policy Specialist, Age Action • Dr Tricia Keilthy, Head of Social Justice and Policy, SVP • Danny McCoy, CEO, Ibec
10 November 2023	Co Wicklow, Ireland	Visit to Turlough Hill hydroelectric power station, Co Wicklow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • William Farrington, ESB Hydro Operations Manager • Johnny Reilly, ESB Engineer • Jonathan Simpson, ESB Hydro Control Centre Operator • Peter O'Shea, ESB Head of Corporate and Regulatory Affairs • Clare Duffy, ESB NetZero Transition Manager • Genevieve Whitfield, ESB Creative Experiences and Events Manager • Mairin Shea, ESB Public Affairs Assistant
8 December 2023	MS Teams Virtual	Discussion of draft heads of report	
2 February 2024	MS Teams Virtual	Discussion of draft report	
14 April 2024	BIPA Plenary, Co Wicklow Ireland	Agreement of draft report	

Appendix II: List of submissions received

- Age Action
- Community Energy Scotland
- Consumer Council (Northern Ireland)
- Cornwall Insight
- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy/Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (UK Government)⁸⁵
- Department for the Economy (Northern Ireland)
- Department of the Environment, Energy and Communications (Ireland)
- Energy Action Scotland
- Energy Intensive Users Group
- ESB
- Gas Networks Ireland
- Harbour Energy
- Ibec
- Jersey Electricity
- Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- KPT Development Trust
- MABS (Money Advice of Budgeting Service) Ireland
- Myenergi
- Natural Power
- Ofgem
- Oxera Consulting
- Phillips 66
- Poverty Alliance Scotland
- Renewable Energy Ireland
- RenewableNI

⁸⁵ In February 2023, subsequent to BEIS's submission, the UK Government undertook a reorganisation of its departments, giving the energy portfolio to the newly-created Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ).

- Scottish Government
- St Vincent de Paul
- The Centre for Advanced Sustainable Energy (CASE), Northern Ireland
- Welsh Government
- Zero Carbon Humber

Appendix III: Members of BIPA Committee C (Economics)

- Sir Peter Bottomley MP
- Senator Lorraine Clifford Lee
- Senator Martin Conway
- Lord Donoughue
- **Stephen Doughty MP** (Vice-Chair)
- Gary Gannon TD
- Emma Harper MSP
- Stephen Hammond MP (Associate)
- **Brendan Howlin TD** (Chair)
- Connétable David Johnson
- Mark Logan MP
- Jerome Mayhew MP
- Mattie McGrath TD
- Pauline McNeill MSP
- Sarah Murphy MS
- Kate Nicholl MLA
- Baroness Margaret Ritchie (Associate)
- Martin Vickers MP
- Senator Fintan Warfield

Previous Committee C Members:

- Rose Conway-Walsh TD
- Mairead Farrell TD
- Colin McGrath MLA
- Andrew Muir MLA