

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND AUTHORITY FOR UTILITY REGULATION (THE 'AUTHORITY') HELD ON THURSDAY, 20 APRIL 2023 BY VIDEO CONFERENCE AT 9.00 A.M.**

**Present:**

Bill Emery (Chairman), John French (Chief Executive), Alex Wiseman, Jon Carlton, Teresa Perchard, David de Casseres, Claire Williams

**In attendance:**

SLT – Tanya Hedley, Kevin Shiels, Donald Henry, Colin Broomfield, Roisin McLaughlin, Elaine Cassidy, Barbara Cantley, Greg Irwin

Sarah Brady and Fiona Gallen (agenda item 3), Ciara Brennan, Rosanna McSorley.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

1.1 The Board convened in advance of the Board Advisory Forum to consider two items.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

2.1 None.

**3. ENERGY EFFICIENCY UPDATE AND NISEP HEAT PUMP PILOT**

3.1 Donald Henry introduced this paper, which included an update on the Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEP) low carbon heating pilot project and provided a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department for Communities (DfC) for the Board's consideration.

3.2 There was a brief discussion around the specification of the heat pump technology and how they are manufactured (and operate).

3.3 The rate of adoption of heat pumps by consumers was also explored. This led to a discussion around the costs of heat pumps and the return on investment by consumers (in terms of savings on energy bills). Heat pump installation costs were specifically discussed. Forecasting of future installation of heat pumps by Northern Ireland consumers, and the types of properties that they were installed in, was also touched on.

3.4 Demonstrating the benefits of heat pumps was also considered. Board members supported having access to data about the effectiveness of heat pumps, and this being monitored post-installation. Encouraging consumers to respond to the evaluation of heat pumps was also endorsed.

3.5 The Board approved the MoU between NISEP and DfC and noted the ongoing progress on NISEP's heat pump project.

#### **4 UR VIRES UPDATE**

- 4.1 John French introduced this item, which was a verbal agenda item to update board members in relation to the vires matter which had been covered in previous meetings. (vires). Elaine Cassidy provided an overview of the ongoing engagement with the Department for the Economy (DfE).
- 4.2 Noting the delay to the vires work, board members discussed the options for engaging with senior government officials and other stakeholders to make further progress.
- 4.3 Elaine Cassidy informed board members that she had been working with DfE to develop a table to outline key areas of work which the Department will require UR to work on for the next 12-18 months. A red/amber/green assessment of whether these were within vires (or not) had been applied to this table. Board members agreed it would be helpful if this table and associated draft direction be circulated to them. This would provide a basis for further Board consideration on the UR vires issue.

#### **5 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 5.1 None.

There being no other business, the Board meeting concluded at 10.10 a.m. to allow the Board Advisory Forum meeting to proceed.