

## Received through ceoffice email

**Shared via email, 16 January 2026**

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Hi Matthew Allen here from Northern Ireland Community Energy

Thanks for involving us in the consultation on your forward work plan, I am sorry that we cannot field someone to join your meeting, our people are all engaged on that day and time. Issues that interest us, in relation to the promotion of Community Energy, and the Climate Emergency in the UREGNI forward work plan are:

### Local plans to upgrade parts of electricity grids

Localised promotion of takeup of Low Carbon Technologies in communities could ensure that electricity network assets upgraded on a “touch the network once” basis are fully used sooner, especially if targeted at high users of heat and electric vehicles to maximise carbon savings. This should reduce the final decarbonisation costs to be added to electricity bills. Offering direct heating of hot water with immersion heaters at times of wind energy oversupply could have a temporary role in ensuring that new grid capacity is fully used until more heat pumps are installed. Smart control of electric heating loads will be needed to make the most of new and existing grid capacity.

### ASHP/Oil Boiler Hybrids

Air Source Heat Pump/oil boiler hybrids have considerable capacity for flexible operation for existing and larger homes without stressing the low voltage grid and to help meet the 80% renewable electricity target. However these need Smart controls to achieve this and it would be useful for NIEN to facilitate the introduction of these. Eg First in areas where monitoring of the low voltage grid is introduced.

### Electricity Tariffs

Electricity tariffs do not yet provide sufficient incentives to shift heat demands to when more renewable electricity is available, have fixed additions than dull cost signals.

Reallocation within electricity tariffs of fixed electricity system costs away from times of renewable energy availability and surplus could help cut heating emissions by outcompeting gas and oil. When wind energy is being curtailed and there is network capacity to distribute it without significant extra cost, the price of this power should be very low to stimulate community investment in new types of demand, especially for heating. Ideally prices should be low enough at times to allow direct immersion heaters to beat oil heating prices.

Socialising the cost of new large capacity power connections when they support flexible power system operation with renewable generation.

The need for a more flexible power system can warrant a bigger capacity and earlier connection to community systems that can vary their demand to coincide with the availability of renewable electricity, helping reach our 80% renewable electricity target at lower cost, by avoiding curtailment of 100% clean energy. E.g. For large heat pumps connected to street heat networks with large scale long duration thermal storage, or for heat pumps added to large buildings with boilers operating in “Hybrid” mode before buildings are insulated to allow the heat pump to meet 100% of the winter load, or until the cost of electricity for heating falls relative to boiler fuel costs.

Large capacity power connections can also allow local hydro systems to be operated more flexibly to support the power system for limited periods. e.g. Using existing mill dams or lakes in communities for pumped hydro.

Thanks Matthew Allen C Eng

For Northern Ireland Community Energy