

Sustainability Committee

SC(3)-07-08 (p1): 10 April 2008

Fuel poverty in Wales

Purpose

This paper provides background to the Sustainability Committee's decision to invite energywatch and the six largest energy supply companies currently operating in Wales to attend an evidence session on fuel poverty in Wales at its meeting on Thursday 10 April.

Background

During informal discussions on 28 February, the Committee agreed to invite Centrica plc, Energy Retail Association and energywatch to give oral evidence on the energy pricing structure in Wales on Thursday 13 March.

In their responses, Centrica plc declined the invitation, and the Energy Retail Association stated that the Energy Networks Association "rightly takes the lead on this issue". The Chair's subsequent invitation to the Energy Networks Association was also declined. energywatch agreed to attend, with the caveat that its latest research findings on energy pricing in Wales would not be published until the end of March. The Chair took a decision that energywatch should be invited to present their latest findings at a later date.

At its meeting on 13 March, the Committee considered these responses and agreed to hold an evidence session on fuel poverty in Wales at its next meeting on Thursday 10 April. The Committee agreed to invite the six largest energy supply companies currently operating in Wales to give oral evidence on the nature and effectiveness of their policies and projects aimed at combating fuel poverty in Wales. The Committee also agreed to invite energywatch to present its recently published findings on energy pricing in Wales. Five of the organisations have accepted the Committee's invitation to attend the evidence session on 10 April. EDF energy is unable to attend. Written submissions from those attending can be found at the following annexes.

SC(3)-07-08 (p1) Annex A energywatch

SC(3)-07-08 (p1) Annex B Centrica plc (British Gas)

SC(3)-07-08 (p1) Annex C e-on (Powergen)

SC(3)-07-08 (p1) Annex D Scottish and Southern Energy (SWALEC)

SC(3)-07-08 (p1) Annex E Scottish Power

SC(3)-07-08 (p1) Annex F RWE n-power

On 13 March, the also Committee agreed to write to Ofgem to request further details on the scope and timescale of its investigation into markets in electricity and gas for households and small businesses. A response from Ofgem has yet to be received.

Recommendation

Members of the Sustainability Committee are invited to consider the written evidence attached, together with the oral evidence provided at the meeting on 10 April and to agree whether to take any further action on this issue.

Committee Service

April 2008