

REG1 – Paper 1.

Regional Energy Group - Draft terms of reference and ways of working

Summary:

The group is asked to:

- **Agree the draft Terms of Reference at A.**
- **Select a chairperson for future meetings of the group.**
- **Select someone to attend the next meeting of the Sustainable Energy Policy Network on 27th January.**
- **Consider whether there is anyone else they would like to see represented at future meetings of the group.**

Purpose of the Group.

A draft terms of reference for the group is attached for agreement at A. This describes the remit of the group in broad terms.

Overall, the purpose of the group is two-fold:

- to *advise* government on the local and regional follow-up to the Energy White Paper, and more generally on local and regional perspectives on the White Paper.
- it is particularly vital that the group also acts as a forum for *information sharing* on energy issues, between national, regional and local levels; and between different local and regional actors. A need to improve such information sharing emerged clearly from the Energy White Paper consultation.

General Ways of Working

We are keen that the group should be as independent as possible.

We will bring forward issues for the group to consider and advise on, and will aim to keep the group generally informed on progress towards the Energy White Paper's objectives. This will form the basic core of the agenda for future meetings.

However, we are keen that the group takes the lead in proposing its own areas for examination. Where necessary, group members should agree to call in government representatives or others to present items; and presenting their own papers. Group members will also be expected to update the group on key areas of activity being taken forward by their region or organisation.

DTI will chair the first meeting of the group, but beyond this it is suggested that the group selects its own chairperson – either on a permanent or cyclical basis.

The group will continue to be provided with basic secretariat support by Peter Brunt from the DTI. DTI will also continue to host meetings of the group in London as required.

The secretariat should also be regarded as a first point of contact for members for further sources of information and assistance that the group may seek.

For future meetings the secretariat will seek to:

- Agree an agenda with the chair 2 weeks in advance of meetings.
- Circulate papers to attendees a week in advance of meetings.

Representation on the Sustainable Energy Policy Network

Achieving the goals and individual commitments set out in the white paper requires close integration across departments and much wider. To make this a reality the white paper announced the creation of a Sustainable Energy Policy Network (SEPN), a network of policy units from across government departments, the devolved administrations, regulators and key delivery organisations that are jointly responsible for delivering the White Paper.

The SEPN as a whole meets once a quarter, to coincide with meetings of the Ministerial group overseeing the implementation of the Energy White Paper, in a forum for information sharing and high-level policy discussion. It is to this forum that the Regional Energy Group would send a representative.

The next meeting of this forum is at 10.00-12.00 on Tuesday 27 January at the DTI Conference Centre, 1 Victoria Street, London.

Attendance

It is proposed that, to keep the group sharp and focused, 'permanent' membership be restricted to the 13 local and regional reps, plus a single permanent attendee each from DTI, DEFRA and ODPM/RCU.

However, a number of organisations working on energy issues at local and regional level have expressed interest in the group. Do members wish to seek regular attendance from such organisations – for example, Environment Agency, Energy Savings Trust, Carbon Trust, Sustainable Development Commission?

Energy Strategy Unit, DTI, October 2003.

Annex A

Regional Energy Group - Draft Terms of Reference

The 2003 Energy White Paper – *Our Energy Future, Creating a Low Carbon Economy* made clear that local & regional bodies (Local Authorities, Regional Development Agencies, Regional Assemblies and Government Offices in the Regions) have a key role to play in the success of national energy policy, both because of the impact of the decisions they make and by offering new opportunities.

It commits Government to take steps to improve the way in which we work with local and regional bodies in England on the development and delivery of energy policy.

The Regional Energy Group will provide a local and regional perspective on UK energy policy, via senior representatives of the 9 English regions, plus members representing the perspectives of RDAs, Regional Assemblies, GOs and Local Authorities.

This group will meet quarterly and will advise on:

- the local and regional implications of all aspects of national energy policy - the shift to a low carbon economy, reliability of supply, competitiveness and action to tackle fuel poverty;
- what regions and localities can do to help shape and deliver national energy policy objectives;
- how government can help to improve engagement in energy issues at local and regional level.

The group will also be an important forum for information sharing. The 9 members for the individual English Regions will not be expected to fully represent all interests in their region as such, but should establish links with key regional players to reflect their views and to feed back the output from meetings of the group to them.

The group will be represented at full meetings of the interdepartmental Sustainable Energy Policy Network (SEPN) of officials from departments and key organisations taking forward the Energy White Paper.