

Energy Policy Review

The Energy Policy Review is positive and encouraging. However as an agency concerned with fuel poverty it seems that we are becoming-increasing dependent on other countries for gas. At a time when gas heating installations are on the increase and being encouraged through government grants (Warm Front and the Scottish Executive's Pensioners' Central Heating Program) as the most cost effective and efficient domestic heating may actually end up paying more for their gas. Potential increased fuel costs could well be out with the government's control. As a result the number of households in fuel poverty will increase – undermining the government's policy to eradicate fuel poverty. Fuel poverty will increase as a consequence of increased fuel prices.

By encouraging reduction in CO2 emissions through the promotion of energy efficiency is an essential element of any long term Energy Policy. It is essential that these links be strengthened at all levels particularly in education.

Much work has been undertaken in recent years to reduce CO2 emissions, alleviate fuel poverty, encourage efficient use of energy at home, and in the production of both oil and gas. It is therefore essential that cognizance is taken of such works and it is incorporated into any future Energy policy.

It is essential to link housing standards to any energy policy through revisions to the building regulations, both for new build and refurbishments, availability of an energy rating or SAP for properties when changing ownership. Fuel companies have a role to play through the Energy Efficiency commitment (formerly Standard of Performance) by encouraging householders to install energy efficiency measures.

There has to be some real incentive for customers who have oil or LPG to take action. The EST Warmth initiative was not effective because the level of grant was insignificant there was very little take up.

A number of social housing providers in the UK are either actively considering or installing CHP schemes on new developments or existing estates. To encourage such installations across all sectors of the community then the government must consider grant aid to the fuel poor, and an interest free loan to the fuel rich.

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