

Meeting Minutes – 9th Energy Security Emergency Group

14:00 22 June 2022

Attendees

- Mark Griffin (Secretary General - DECC – Chair)
- Barry Quinlan (Assistant Secretary - DECC), Grainne Ui Thuama (PO- DECC), Sheena Denny (PO - DECC), Philip Newsome (PO - DECC), John Burke (PO- DECC), Niall Power (AP – DECC - Secretariat).
- Aoife MacEvilly (Chair - CRU)
- William Walsh (CEO - SEAI)
- Frank Bergin (CEO - NORA)
- Edwina Nyhan (Director - Gas Networks Ireland)
- Rodney Doyle (COO - EIRGRID)
- Ronnie Downes (Assistant Secretary - D/ETE)
- Barra Roantree (ESRI) and Alan Barrett (Director – ESRI).

Apologies: Paul Bolger (Assistant Secretary - DECC), Matt Collins (Assistant Secretary - DECC), Denis O’Sullivan (COO- Gas Networks Ireland) and Kevin Brady (PO - DECC).

The Chair opened the meeting by referring to:

- The National Economic Dialogue which was held on 20 June and the statements by the Taoiseach, Tánaiste, Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform and Minister for Finance on the drivers of cost-of-living increases, including energy, and the commitment to further tackle these no later than the upcoming budget;
- The recent developments at EU level and the increasing concern about Russia restricting gas supplies in the run up to the coming winter to prevent EU Member States from refilling gas storage. Given the increasing international volatility and possible spill over to supplies of gas and oil to Ireland, the Group must ensure that all measures set out under the NESF (and potentially further measures) are delivered on time.

1. Minutes and Outstanding Actions of meeting on 1 June

Meeting minutes of 8th ESEG meeting were agreed. Due to time constraints the Chair decided the outstanding actions from the 8th meeting will carry over to the next meeting.

2. Update on Policy Response Implementation

Niall Power presented the RAG Report of the NESF Policy Response Implementation (see paper circulated in advance of the meeting). The Chair noted that the final Q2 Quarterly Report (and future reports) will require more detail, clearly setting out the progress made across the various policy responses, the rationale for delays and the mitigations being out in place to address delayed responses, and updated delivery timelines. It was essential that NESF responses are implemented in a timely fashion and any potential barriers to delivery are identified and addressed early. On specific points raised:

- Rodney Doyle stated that scheduling of the testing for Policy Response #11 was more appropriate to September and that lessons learned would be “fresh” if there was an incident that needed to be addressed in Winter. He will look at bringing the testing forward to the first week of September.
- William Walsh noted that Solar PV scheme has progressed; SEAI are meeting suppliers and the process for delivery of the policy response has been developed. The bulk of the 3,000 homes will be delivered over a 12-month period from 1 July 2022- 30 June 2023. They will communicate this progress via the Policy Response subgroup.

3. Data & Modelling Presentation

Barra Roantree presented on the recently published ESRI research on the impact of energy prices on households and the effect of recent Government policy measures. The research was welcomed by the Group and will be considered further by the Policy Sub-group in supporting the development of potential further Government interventions as part of the budget process.

4. Potential Policy measures for Budget 2023

- **Vulnerable Households:** William Walsh discussed potential measures that could be considered as additional Policy Responses under the NESF (see presentation circulated in advance of the meeting).
- **Regulatory Pricing:** Aoife MacEvilly discussed the Iberdrola exit, the outcome of CRU’s price drivers review, peak demand incentive options and the outcome of the PSO Levy rebate (see presentation circulated in advance of the meeting). She noted the difficulty of estimating precise retail price increases but the expectation is of further significant price rises for consumers in Q3/Q4.
- **Business Sector:** Ronnie Downes presented on possible energy supports and policy options for businesses (see presentation circulated in advance of the meeting).
- The issue of communications, including the potential of a national mailshot, was discussed by the Group in the context of the various presentations and significant developments at EU level. There was general agreement on the need for coherent, timely, targeted and impactful messaging. The current campaigns are to be reviewed by the Comms Sub-Group and the matter will be discussed at the next meeting. Alan Barrett offered support from the ESRI’s Behavioural Economics team to the Comms Subgroup.
- The presentation on REPowerEU was deferred to a future meeting.

5. AOB/ Focus for next meeting and time

The Policy Subgroup is to meet with the Business and the Vulnerable Household Subgroups to further examine and refine potential measures for a cost-of-living support package for the next ESEG. The next meeting will also feature a presentation on the updated Quarter 2 Report on NESF Policy Responses and an update on the Communications campaigns and possible revisions to it.

The meeting will take place on 6 July.

Actions

Details	Timeline	Owner
<p>Gas & Electricity subgroup to consider and update on:</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of secondary fuels in electricity generation • Order of rationing in gas and electricity sectors • Security of supply review • Concerns raised by GNI in relation to future gas capacity 	06.07 and ongoing	Matt Collins
<p>Oil subgroup to consider and update on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication of oil response plans • Impact of oil supply reduction on price • Complete the work on the Oil Emergency Allocation Scheme including consideration of whether legislation is required 	06.07	Barry Quinlan
<p>Q2 Quarterly Report to include detail on actions taken to date on Policy Responses. Where measures are delayed, include clear rationale why, the mitigation measures in place to address the delay and also updated timelines for delivery.</p>	06.07	Niall Power
<p>Presentation of the Quarter 2 Report</p>	06.07	Paul Bolger
<p>Policy subgroup to meet with the Business and the Vulnerable Household Subgroups to further examine and refine potential measures for a cost-of-living support package for the next ESEG</p>	06.07	Paul Bolger
<p>The current Communications campaigns are to be reviewed by the Comms Sub-Group. This will form the basis of an update to the ESEG</p>	06.07	Grainne Ui Thuama
<p>Update on DECC's considerations of RePowerEU proposals</p>	06.07	Matt Collins
<p>Updated estimates on Winter Retail Prices</p>	July	Aoife MacEvilly

