

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

ASSEMBLY QUESTIONS WRITTEN (AQW)

Due for answer on: Wednesday 1 July 2015

AQW No: 47326/11-15

Put Down By: O McMullan
Political Party: Sinn Fein
Constituency: East Antrim

Question:

To ask the Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment whether he will put in place incentives and support for rural households and businesses which are unable to avail of natural gas.

Answer:

My Department, Invest NI, the Utility Regulator and the Department of Social Development provide a range of incentives and support to businesses and households on energy. This includes the Renewable Heat Incentive to give financial support to domestic and business consumers who wish to install renewable heat technologies, the Utility Regulator's Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEP) for energy efficiency and heating measures, and the Department of Social Development's Boiler Replacement Scheme and Affordable Warmth programme. Invest NI can offer interest free loans to businesses to support capital expenditure on equipment which reduces carbon emissions by improving energy efficiency.

Jonathan Bell MLA
Minister of Enterprise, Trade and Investment

Date: _____

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Background

1. Natural gas networks are largely provided in urban areas where the density of housing and business gas loads makes it economic to provide new gas infrastructure. Where gas is available there is a range of regulated incentives provided for those wishing to connect to gas.
2. The DETI administered Northern Ireland Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) provides financial support to domestic and non-domestic renewable heat generators. Non – domestic consumers receive technology based tariff support for 20 years, while domestic consumers receive a technology based upfront payment and further tariff support for 7 years.
3. Domestic energy efficiency rests with the Department of Social Development who currently deliver the Boiler Replacement Scheme and Affordable Warmth programme. These schemes have been largely designed as fuel poverty measures.
4. The Utility Regulator delivers the Northern Ireland Sustainable Energy Programme (NISEP) which is due to run until March 2017. DETI is working with the Utility Regulator, OFMDFM and DSD to ensure that energy efficiency support will continue post March 2017.
5. InvestNI can offer interest free loans to businesses, up to a maximum of £400k, to support capital expenditure on equipment which reduces carbon emissions by improving energy efficiency.

Reply prepared by: John Mills, Head of Energy Division, Ext 29215**Further information available from: Fred Frazer, Energy Division, Ext 29272****SPECIAL ADVISER CLEARANCE:****Signed:** _____**Date:** _____