

**NI Renewable Heat Study – Study Oversight Group  
Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2010  
Conference Room A, Netherleigh**

**Attendees**

Jenny Pyper, DETI (Chair)  
Alison Clydesdale, DETI  
Peter Hutchinson, DETI  
Alan Maitland, OFMDFM  
Peter Scott, DARD  
Joyce Rutherford, DARD  
Derek Reay, GSNI  
Olive Hill, Invest NI

Geoff Smyth, Carbon Trust  
Michael Doran, Action Renewables  
Graham Furey, Ulster Farmers Union  
John Martin, Biomass Energy NI  
Damien McDonnell, Matrix  
Dr Elaine Groom, QUB  
Prof Neil Hewitt, University of Ulster

Andrew Turton, AECOM  
Andy McCrea, AECOM  
Andrew Cripps, AECOM

Ruairi Dempsey, AECOM  
Gareth Davies, Poyry

**Apologies**

Dan Sinton, DETI  
Bernard McKeown, DETI  
Garth Earls, GSNI  
Liam McKibben, DARD  
Iain Osbourne, NIAUR

**1. Introduction**

Jenny Pyper welcomed all those in attendance and thanked them for agreeing to be part of this Oversight Group focusing on study into the potential for renewable heat in Northern Ireland, being taken forward by AECOM. She also welcomed the AECOM representatives present.

Jenny highlighted the importance of this project with the key aim being the establishment of up to date, reliable data on heat and renewable heat in NI. This will allow a firm evidence base for the establishment of targets for renewable heat and a policy for supporting the market. The work being carried out by AECOM is the first stage in a much longer process in terms of renewable heat with the possibility of primary legislation and the need for cross-departmental collaboration. It may therefore be necessary, once this project completes, to consider the need for a standing working group on heat, however those discussions would be for another meeting.

Geoff Smyth agreed that this work is vitally important and it is essential that it done right, with that in mind he asked whether the timescales were appropriate (project to complete end March 2010) and suggested more time should be given to AECOM. Jenny explained that the challenging timescales highlighted the urgency of the work for the Department and for Ministers. If more time was needed that could be considered.

## 2. AECOM Presentation

Andrew Turton gave an overview of the AECOM and Poyry team and outlined the key elements to the project.

Stage 1 involved data collection and heat mapping. This would illustrate what heat use is in NI and identify the major users. Data collection will be from both a bottom up and top down approach with the outcome a detailed GIS heat map with comprehensive datasets. This will also include some assumptions concerning the various technologies, an assumptions paper will be issued to group members for their consideration in due course.

Stage 2 of the project focuses on the assessment of the potential development of the renewable heat market and consideration of when renewable heat installations could be used in a cost effective manner. This will involve various economic modeling.

Stage 3 will involve the establishment of evidence based targets for heat and an assessment of the impact of these targets on consumers, carbon emissions and existing heat markets (oil, gas, coal).

## 3. Q&A / Discussion

Dr Elaine Groom commented that there was significant potential for renewable heat use in the large food processor industry because of the nature of the industry and its heat requirements. Jenny agreed that there were certain areas of NI where renewable heat could have significant potential and added that the unique characteristics of NI such as population density, presence of certain industries (such as food processing) and the absence of a full gas network meant that renewable heat could be an option. Elaine added that NI could be at the forefront of this work because of the recent technological advances.

Michael Doran offered assistance on behalf of Action Renewables. They have recently begun work for the Energy Savings Trust which will examine the potential of both gas network extension and microgeneration (<50kW) to provide heat to areas in Northern Ireland that are off the gas network. Michael offered to share this work with AECOM.

John Martin asked if any consideration would be given to the impact that an increased renewable heat market would have on Northern Ireland PLC, and would there be an assessment of the potential for NI to become a net exporter of biomass. Jenny answered that this would not be specifically addressed in this study but could be considered in future pieces of work that will flow from this one.

Alan Maitland suggested that it may be useful to gather information from the Republic of Ireland and border areas in regards to the hinterlands. Geoff Smyth believed that a major constraint on development of local biomass for a renewable heat market would be the lack of suitable land. Elaine Groom suggested that there was potential in NI to use the 730,000 hectares of grassland to make silage and, in turn, electricity and heat. This would require a change in working practice of farmers and support of planners. Graham

Furey explained that farmers would be able to change working practices if they had the confidence that it would be beneficial.

Geoff Smyth described how he believed there could be “easy-wins” in terms of rolling out renewable heat, specifically the role of the public sector and the government estate could be vital. The public sector could take the lead in installing renewable heat technologies, creating confidence in the market place and being a test case for best practice.

Damien McDonnell queried the role that Matrix will have this study and how the findings would benefit the proposed energy sub-group of the Matrix panel. Alison explained that they key aim for this study was to develop up to date statistics on heat and renewable heat, to identify the major heat users and to develop a GIS heat map for NI. It is unlikely that the findings will differ from our assumptions on heat use but it is essential in order to inform future policy decisions. Andrew Turton added that the study should assist in identifying the existing barriers in the development of renewable heat.

#### **4. Next Steps**

Andrew Turton outlined the key next steps. They were;

- data collection
- bilaterals
- draft assumptions paper
- initial findings
- a second group meeting

#### **5. Action Points**

Peter Hutchinson to arrange a second meeting of the oversight group for early March 2010.

AECOM to finalise draft assumptions paper, Peter Hutchinson to circulate for comments by w/c 1 February 2010.