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cc: Peter Grant MP

5 July 2023

Hydrogen Heating Town Pilot

At the Public Accounts Committee Oral Evidence session on “Support for innovation to deliver net zero” I was asked about the progress of the Department’s work on a Hydrogen Heating Town Pilot.

The Government set out a number of key commitments to build an evidence base on hydrogen for heating in the UK Hydrogen Strategy and British Energy Security Strategy. The commitments will deliver a range of research, development and testing projects. This includes pioneering hydrogen heating consumer trials, designed to determine the feasibility, costs and convenience of using hydrogen as an alternative to natural gas for heating. We are supporting industry to deliver a 100% hydrogen heating neighbourhood trial in Fife by 2024 and a village trial by 2025. The Department will decide on the location of the village trial later this year.

The knowledge and experience gained in delivering trials in communities, together with the results of our wider R&D and testing programme, will enable the Government to take strategic decisions in 2026 on the role of hydrogen in decarbonising heat.

One of the key aims is to develop plans by 2025 for a potential town pilot by the end of the decade. The Government has committed to provide up to £6m of funding to the four Gas Distribution Networks (GDNs) to develop initial outline plans to show how conversion from natural gas to hydrogen for heating might start in each of their network areas.

Earlier this year we received applications from each of the four network operators which cover a total of 11 different areas. The Government is currently reviewing these applications and will announce which it will fund in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Jeremy Pocklington