



Blackwater House
14 Silverwood Industrial Estate
Lurgan, BT66 6LN

Supplementary Submission to the Northern Ireland Assembly Public Accounts Committee Inquiry on the Northern Ireland Energy Strategy

This submission should be read as supplementary, to accompany the joint written response submitted by Northern Ireland's Gas Distribution Network Operators.

Whilst the joint submission reflects the collective position of the gas distribution sector, Evolve wishes to provide additional regional context relating to its licensed network area in the west of Northern Ireland and to highlight several strategic considerations that we believe merit particular attention as the Committee considers the implementation of the Northern Ireland Energy Strategy.

The west of Northern Ireland is uniquely positioned to support the development of a renewable biomethane economy. The region has a strong agricultural base, significant organic feedstock resources and an established gas distribution network capable of transporting renewable gas to homes and businesses. This combination provides a strong foundation for developing indigenous renewable gas production and ensuring that locally produced energy can be utilised for the benefit of Northern Ireland consumers.

From Evolve's perspective, the development of a biomethane sector presents an opportunity to strengthen Northern Ireland's long-term energy security. Increasing the proportion of energy produced within the region would reduce reliance on imported fuels, diversify energy supplies and make greater use of existing gas infrastructure.

Energy resilience remains a strategic priority, therefore the ability to utilise indigenous renewable resources should be viewed as an important component of Northern Ireland's future energy mix.

The Committee may also wish to consider the importance of biomethane to the west of Northern Ireland. The region has the feedstock, the skills and an established gas network, making it well placed to support a growing biomethane industry.

Investment in production would support local businesses, strengthen the agricultural supply chain and create skilled employment, while ensuring that more of the economic value from Northern Ireland's indigenous energy resources is retained within the region. This would also support the Executive's commitment to achieving more balanced economic growth across Northern Ireland.



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Whilst decarbonisation remains a central objective of the Energy Strategy, the delivery of a biomethane economy should also be considered through the wider lenses of economic opportunity, energy security and regional development. The west of Northern Ireland is particularly well placed to contribute to each of these objectives, provided that the necessary policy, regulatory and market frameworks continue to evolve in a timely and coordinated manner.

Evolve welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Committee's Inquiry and trusts that these additional observations provide useful regional context alongside the joint Gas Distribution Network Operators' submission.

Kind Regards,

David Butler
Director, Evolve