

EUA response to the BEIS Select Committee Inquiry into the Findings of the Report of Climate Assembly UK

About us

The Energy and Utilities Alliance (EUA) provides a leading industry voice helping shape the future policy direction within the sector. Using its wealth of expertise and over 100 years of experience, it acts to further the best interests of its members and the wider community in working towards a sustainable, energy secure and efficient future. EUA has seven organisational divisions - Utility Networks (UN), the Heating and Hotwater Industry Council (HHIC), the Industrial & Commercial Energy Association (ICOM), the Hot Water Association (HWA), the Manufacturers' Association of Radiators and Convectors (MARC), the Gas Vehicle Network (GV Network) the Manufacturers of Equipment for Heat Networks Association (MEHNA) and Energy Services and Technology Association (ESTA)

EUA represents all the main heating manufacturers in the UK along with the majority of major installation companies, training providers and component manufacturers. Approximately 98% of heating measures installed in UK homes comes from an EUA member.

The Energy and Utilities Alliance (EUA) is a company limited by guarantee and registered in England. Company number: 10461234, VAT number: 254 3805 07, registered address: Camden House, 201 Warwick Road, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 1TH.

Response

1. Has Climate Assembly UK (both its process and recommendations) been helpful to your work (or the work of your organisation), and if so, how?

The Climate Assembly UK work and final report have not been helpful for our work. We represent the heating industry in the UK and the wider energy supply sector, from boilers and heat pumps to pipes installed in UK streets.

The Climate Assembly work and especially the findings were widely predictable and matched numerous other studies that have taken into account consumer and homeowner views on how to decarbonise the UK.

The findings for heating homes in the final Climate Assembly report stated that the assembly were broadly favourable of all heating options for decarbonisation. But, and probably more importantly, did not want to incur additional costs, face disruption, or change their behaviour.

This is widely accepted as impossible to achieve. All decarbonisation routes will involve some of the above, some possibly more than others.

It is concerning to us that this was a finding that was possible. It would probably indicate that those that were chosen to present to the assembly provided false choices that enabled the assembly to believe a utopian energy future was possible.

For this reason, the report and work have no use to us as an organisation and for our wider work. We are now engaged with our members and wider stakeholders across the energy spectrum in trying to find practical and realistic routes to enable us to decarbonise.

2. What impact has Climate Assembly UK had across your sector, and more widely?

As our answer above indicates the Climate Assembly UK has had no impact across our sector and I am not aware of any changes that have happened because of it.

3. How do you perceive Climate Assembly UK to have affected the work of Government since the Assembly's report was published (10 September 2020)? To what extent do the Government's actions since then reflect Climate Assembly UK's recommendations?

To date I have not seen any changes to the Government's output due to the Climate Assembly. We are still waiting for the publication of the plan on how we are to decarbonise UK homes. The Energy White paper came out and the recommendations were widely in line with expectations, which did not appear to be altered because of the Climate Assembly. I have seen some passing mentions to the Assembly's work, either saying it was important or should be taken seriously. But given none of their findings are being used I suspect these are just political platitudes rather than sincere messages.

4. What would a good response to Climate Assembly UK from the Government look like? What would a good response from Parliament look like?

We believe that this report should be acknowledged by BEIS and other relevant departments, it is a collection of views from the public and does reflect the challenge on engaging consumers on how we are to decarbonise, especially as the finding clearly cannot be implemented.

We do not believe that a formal response from Government or Parliament is needed. We would not expect it of a report published by ourselves or by another NGO or think tank. There is no reason to treat this report any differently.

We support the work that BEIS, MHCLG, the DfT and other departments are doing to prepare policy and regulations for decarbonisation. We work with them on a regular basis, as do other expert groups representing the whole range of stakeholders. We would much rather that organisations like Citizens Advice were engaged for work on consumer and homeowner acceptance and impact of decarbonisation policies. Much like we would like to be engaged around changes and updates to regulations on heating appliances and energy supply.

Ultimately, we all have the work together if we are going to meet our climate targets. This means ensuring existing institutions and industry work collectively to do so. What we don't need are new layers of political oversight added to complicate both the decision-making process and accountability. The Climate Assembly risks being a tool to allow politicians not

to make decisions, it allows institutions an unfair lobbying position and allows unworkable views to gain unfair legitimacy. We have a functioning political system which is working hard to achieve incredibly ambitious climate targets, let's not make them even harder.