

Metapolicy Options for Energy in England

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V Maugis and WJ Nuttall

This paper considers policy for policy-making – “metapolicy”. It specifically considers the current structures for energy policy making in the United Kingdom. It focuses on the situation applying in England and it notes the impact of devolution on energy policy for the UK as a whole. Weaknesses in current policy making structures are identified and three options for an alternative governmental structure for energy policy making are analysed. The three options are a new Department for Energy with a Secretary of State in the Cabinet; an Energy Agency perhaps with a strategic remit and thirdly more cooperative policy structures between numerous institutional actors. The analysis relies upon a series of interviews with a diverse community of expert stakeholders with substantial experience of UK energy policy. The authors conclude that metapolicy questions of this type are essentially political questions not best suited to “scientific” assessment. Change should be driven by the electorate and their elected representatives and anyone proposing a rational optimisation of governance should be careful not to reduce democratic inputs to the process. The authors’ make a modest recommendation that the current Minister of State for Energy should be given a position within the Cabinet as an interim measure until more effective structures can be developed, perhaps following the next General Election

Contact
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wjn21@cam.ac.uk
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