

# HYDROGEN FRINGE – CONSERVATIVE PARTY CONFERENCE



All Party Parliamentary Group on  
**Hydrogen**

Minutes

<b>Date</b>	Monday 3 October 2022
<b>Time</b>	18.00-19.30
<b>Venue</b>	Hall 11A, ICC
<b>Chair</b>	Alex Stafford MP, incoming Chair of the APPG on Hydrogen
<b>Speakers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Alice Offley</b>, External Affairs Manager, Cadent</li><li>• <b>Simon Virley</b>, Head of Energy and Natural Resources, KPMG</li><li>• <b>Melanie Taylor</b>, Head of Stakeholder Relations, Northern Gas Networks</li><li>• <b>Clare Jackson</b>, CEO of Hydrogen UK</li></ul>
<b>Theme</b>	<i>What do we need to do to make hydrogen a reality?</i>

Alex opened the session and introduced the panel, before handing over to **Alice Offley, External Affairs Manager, Cadent**.

Alice introduced herself and Cadent, explaining that Cadent recognised its own unsustainability in transporting fossil fuels and was therefore investing in hydrogen. She said that hydrogen was not the sole solution, but that the transition to net zero should be a whole system approach.

Alex thanked Alice and handed over to **Simon Virley, Head of Energy and Natural Resources, KPMG**.

Simon agreed with Cadent's priorities and explained KPMG's role in the hydrogen industry. He agreed with the Government's twin-track approach. He said that the Government had the right strategy but was not yet delivering. One thing that he said would help is private sector investment and a strong regulatory framework to give investors confidence. He said that further work should be done to understand the demand side, rather than just supply. He advocated for a second hydrogen village and further ambition when it came to the export of hydrogen.

Alex thanked Simon and handed over to **Melanie Taylor, Head of Stakeholder Relations, Northern Gas Networks**.

Melanie outlined Northern Gas Network's work with H21, stating that hydrogen has become a reality this year and is being rolled out. She also outlined the Gateshead hydrogen gas roll out, explaining that many did not even realise that they had been switched to hydrogen blended energy. Finally, she shared the response of Redcar residents to the transition to hydrogen, saying again that there was no obvious change for consumers. Noting descriptions of hydrogen as "boring", she said that this was in fact its strength.

Alex thanked Melanie and introduced **Clare Jackson, CEO of Hydrogen UK**.

Clare Jackson reflected on the last couple of years of hydrogen rollout. She said that the world had woken up to the benefits of hydrogen and that it was therefore not surprising that we had seen large investment from industry and government in the sector. The UK is amongst the leaders in the area. Government has also met this by preparing a thought-through regulatory system. She said the coming months and weeks will be key to launching UK's hydrogen future, both for regulation and for the potential loss of investment to elsewhere.

Alex asked how the panel challenge the thinking that it's hydrogen vs the rest.

Simon responded, saying that choice and diversity of supply were key to this.

Melanie said that the diversity of the UK's housing stock also meant that there needed to be a diversity of approach when it came to transforming the domestic energy mix.

Clare said that the two must work together to keep up with the pace of change needed to transform the UK's energy supply.

Further discussion centred on the export of hydrogen and size of the industry needed to meet domestic demand. Cost was also discussed, particularly the up-front cost of net zero and the transition. Melanie put particular emphasis on not leaving people behind in disadvantaged groups or hard to reach communities.

Alex asked what the biggest barriers were to hydrogen up take and communication.

Melanie answered, saying that customers don't necessarily believe that the hydrogen transition will even happen. There is a lot of cynicism in the general population, partially in terms of the reliability of the supply.

Alex asked how you avoid a postcode lottery of technology.

Melanie said that we are already in a situation where there is a mix of technology across the UK. The future that we are going to is still a mix of technology. What matters is that there is good education for the public on what energy technology and sources is right for them and their properties.

Simon said that local energy planning is key, socialising the cost and creating a system that works across and for all communities.

Alex asked how can we deliver the right sort of hydrogen that isn't green washed.

Simon said that we must change our language to something like "net-zero hydrogen" in order to better communicate green and blue hydrogen.

Alex thanked attendees and ended the session.