

Going Dutch? Case study selection rationale

February 2022

The Going Dutch? project involves a detailed examination of the effects of different governance arrangements on local heat transition planning and pilots in local authorities and municipalities in the UK and the Netherlands. Examples from Scotland, Wales and England will be included to reflect differences in governance arrangements within the UK (the project does not include Northern Ireland). With limited time and resources, we had to make choices about where to focus. This document sets out the rationale for these choices.

The overall selection was based on the following elements:

- local authorities (LAs) that represent front-runners in heat decarbonisation planning and implementation;
- diversity in terms of heat technology focus;
- the size of LAs (and likely resources available for heat decarbonisation planning and piloting);
- locations representing different geographic regions within the Netherlands and the UK, as well as the different devolved nations and different local government structures within the UK.

Below, we provide a discussion of each criterion in more detail.

Front-runners

From early discussions within the project team, it was decided that the most suitable cases for analysis would be those that had demonstrated a higher level of activity and progress on the decarbonisation planning and implementation. By focusing on these LAs rather than those that are less active and have yet to push the boundaries of what is possible to achieve, the analysis is better able to assess the resources that LAs have to address heat decarbonisation and the barriers that they currently face to their efforts.

The project would thus analyse heat decarbonisation front-

For the Netherlands, we relied on the list of municipalities that received grants from the national government through the Natural Gas-Free Neighbourhoods Program (PAW). PAW has provided grants to municipalities to establish testbeds to pilot low-carbon heating solutions and insulation technology, as well as to identify approaches for effective resident involvement and measures for potential cost reductions. In the first two rounds (2018 and 2020), 50 municipalities received PAW grants (out of all 352 municipalities in the Netherlands). Successful submissions had to demonstrate the ability to immediately launch the pilot, prove the potential for carbon dioxide reductions, and show capacity for upscaling (PAW, n.d.). As a result, the municipalities that have received PAW grants may be considered front-runners in their heat transition efforts.

Diversity in terms of low carbon heating technologies

The project team decided that it was important that the selected case studies had a degree of diversity in the heat decarbonisation technologies under consideration in order to assess the possible implications for heat decarbonisation going

one another. Despite the majority of the country speaking Dutch, there are numerous dialects spoken throughout the country. The majority of the population (54.1% in 2019) in the Netherlands are irreligious (CBS, 2021). Those who identify themselves with any religion are mostly split between Catholicism and Protestantism, with the southeastern part of the country being predominantly Catholic. The central-western part of the country (the Randstad) encompasses the four largest cities in the Netherlands (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht). The rest of the country consists of relatively smaller cities, towns, and villages. In addition, the province of Groningen has a unique history with natural gas. Natural gas extraction in the area caused earthquakes that damaged houses, and residents there have struggled to receive appropriate compensation from the national government.

The case studies should also involve representation of the three constituent parts of Great Britain: England, Scotland, and Wales². Overall, eleven case studies were thought to be a manageable number for the project, and it was decided to split these as five cases in the Netherlands, three in England, two in Scotland and one in Wales. The greater number of the Dutch cases relates to the fact that the Netherlands is ahead in its heat transition efforts, and one of the project's goals is to identify any policy lessons for the UK. Due to the greater levels of devolution, Scottish policy on heat decarbonisation is more distinctive from that of England than Welsh policy, and thus it was thought important to represent Scotland with two cases in order to provide a meaningful comparison. In England, there are also various types of local government that have varying responsibilities for local services. The different types of local government include:

2-tier local authorities: where a county council has responsibility for some services and a lower tier of district councils have responsibility for others. There are 24 county councils in England with 181 district councils within them³.

Metropolitan districts: 36 metro districts cover 6 urban areas – Greater Manchester, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, West Midlands, and West Yorkshire. These districts provide almost all local services apart from some (e

complexities of public engagement in a large-scale energy transition.