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PRESS RELEASE:

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‘Jaw-dropping’ variations in public sector spending on energy: costs including the Royal Household, Bank of England and Houses of Parliament all revealed in landmark investigation by Box Power CIC

Public sector bodies such as local authorities, Government departments and national institutions are spending vastly different amounts on their energy, with some paying significantly more than others, an investigation by not-for-profit energy consultancy, [Box Power CIC](#) using freedom of information laws and accounts analysis has found.

Box Power CIC believes for there to be accountability and scrutiny of the public purse there must be transparency and disclosure, so following a lengthy and in-depth deep dive they are now lifting the lid on this closed shop and taking transparency of the **£4.5 billion** of energy costs within the public sector to a whole new level and in a way that has not been seen before.

It reveals the energy costs of major institutions such as the **Royal Household, Houses of Parliament, Bank of England, Ofgem, the BBC, Channel 4, Tate Modern, British Library**, the embattled **HS2** rail project and local authorities across the UK.

These results are put in the public domain for the first time as Bolton-based social enterprise Box Power CIC believes the public have the right to know how their money is being spent. The figures provided cover the period April 2022 to March 2023.

The figures compiled within the **Box Power CIC Performance Table**, which detail how much public bodies have been spending on their gas and electricity are staggering, with the results are from north to south and east to west, jaw-dropping.

The results show:

- Manchester City Council was the local authority who purchased electricity at the highest price in the period - at 62p/p/kwh.
- Local authorities in Greater Manchester paid some of the highest rates in the period – Manchester City Council spent more than £34.8 million on energy which would have been £17.6 million cheaper if it had bought at the UK council average. Stockport paid 53p/p/kwh for electricity, while also in Greater Manchester, Bolton paid 21p/p/kwh for its gas.

- London Borough of Islington bought 106,576,000 kwh's of gas at £16.2million compared to the London Borough of Hackney who bought 104,282,851kwh of gas for £6.3million.
- Local authorities in Scotland bought at cheaper rates than their counterparts in England.
- Birmingham City Council, which declared bankruptcy earlier this year, bought at a lower rate than many other local authorities in England, buying electricity at 32p/p/kwh and gas for 9p. Even so, Birmingham City Council saw a big increase on its energy costs: from £14 million in 2021/22 to £32 million in 2022/23; despite its usage being similar.
- Merseyside Fire paid 160% more (62p/p/kwh versus 23.9p/p/kwh) than London Fire for its electricity.
- West Yorkshire Police paid 90% more (34.9p/p/kwh versus 18.3p/p/kwh than the London Met Police for its electricity.

Many local authorities received large amounts of national Energy Bill Relief Scheme (EBRS) support – but this still came from public funds and ultimately the taxpayer.

Box Power points out that this report shows that factors such as the war in Ukraine made it inevitable that some authorities would have purchased at such high rates than others. The Box Power CIC Performance Table outlines £676 million in council cost differences. These could have been avoided as Box Power CIC made clear from its own public warnings and predictions issued at the start of March 2022.

Corin Dalby, CEO of Box Power CIC, says: “It seems crazy to me that taxpayers are unable to easily see what their local authority is paying for energy. As each council's energy costs have been undisclosed until we released the Box Power CIC Performance Table, that means purchasing teams must also have been oblivious to each other's performance and so in our view no council was able to honestly demonstrate that they are achieving value for money without this level of transparency.”

The Box Power CIC Performance Table is the first deep dive we have of what Government departments, public bodies and local authorities have been spending on their energy. We will continue to call for greater transparency by calling for a similar national report to be published by the councils themselves. But if they won't do it then we will. Transparency on what is being paid for energy should be an obligation and not an option!”

Some local authorities did not wish to reveal their results which Box Power finds particularly disappointing as it prevents any scrutiny or accountability.

Box Power CIC has donated more than £800,000 to charities in the North West as part of its philanthropic efforts. That followed an award for Corin as the Manchester Evening News Businessperson of the Year earlier in 2023.

Please check out [the Box Power CIC website](#) for full results, including each UK local authority and a number of other public bodies.

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Editor's notes:**About Box Power:**

Founded in 2014, Box Power CIC is the UK's first philanthropic not-for-profit energy consultancy for business. In 2021, Box Power donated £800,000 to north-west charities. Box Power have won the following current awards:

- TELCA "Do the Right Thing" Award.
- Federation Small Businesses Community Award
- Box Power Chief Executive Corin Dalby was named Businessperson of the Year in the 2023 Manchester Evening News Business Awards.