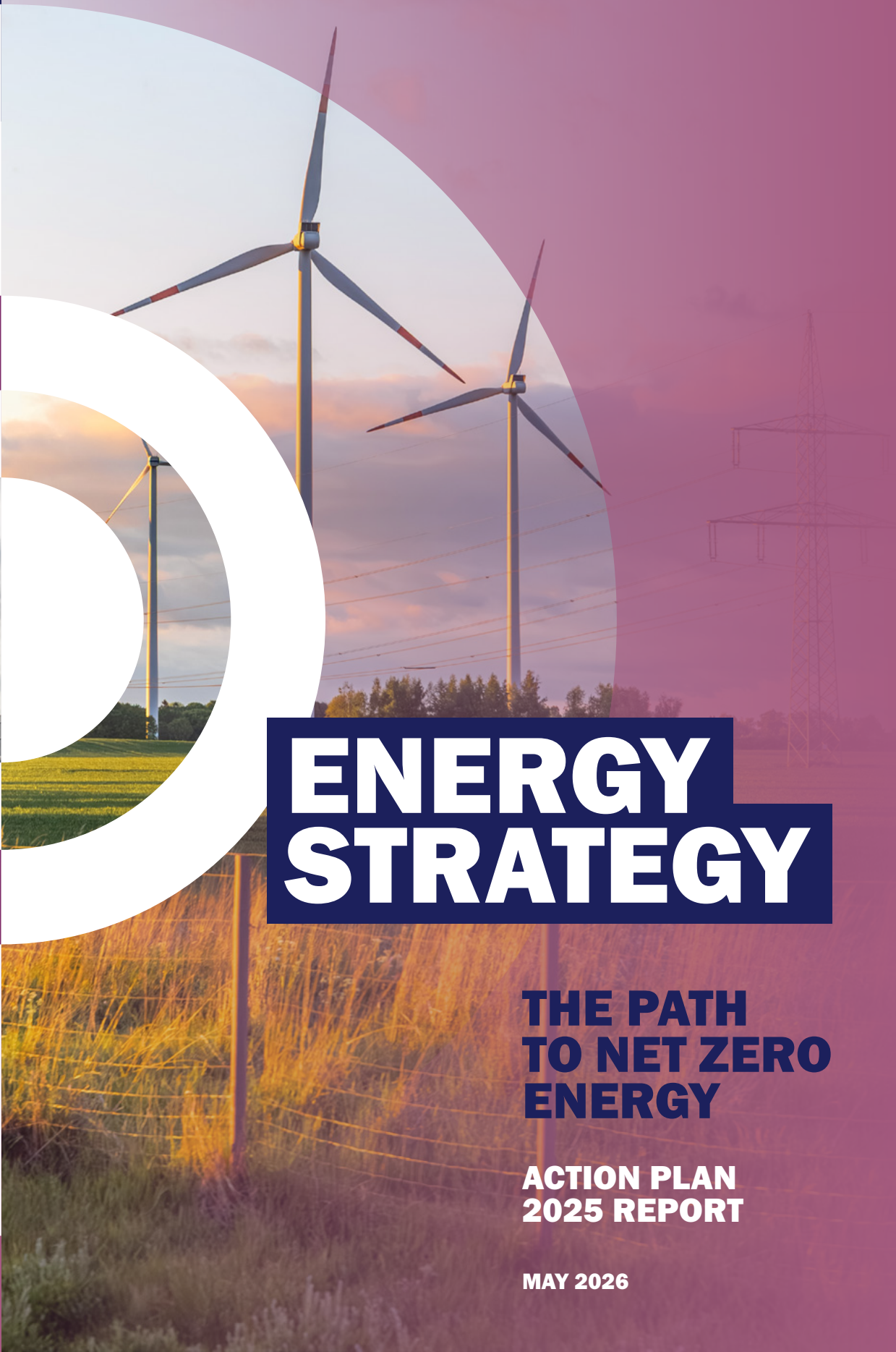




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# ENERGY STRATEGY

**THE PATH  
TO NET ZERO  
ENERGY**

**ACTION PLAN  
2025 REPORT**

**MAY 2026**



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# INTRODUCTION

**The Executive’s Energy Strategy<sup>1</sup> was published in December 2021 and sets out the roadmap to transform how energy is produced, supplied and used here. Recent global energy price volatility has underscored the risks of continued reliance on internationally priced fossil fuels, exposing households, businesses and public services to external price shocks.**

The Energy Strategy focuses on reducing this exposure by accelerating the transition to locally produced renewable energy, improving energy efficiency and building a more resilient and flexible energy system. Through increasing self-sufficiency in affordable renewable energy, the Energy Strategy aims to give us greater control over our energy costs, supporting long-term security, affordability and decarbonisation on the pathway to net zero energy by 2050.

The Energy Strategy committed to the publication of annual progress reports on delivery and providing an overview of key strategic developments. This report sets out progress against the Energy Strategy Action Plan 2025, published in March 2025, and represents the fourth annual progress report since the Strategy’s launch. It summarises progress during 2025 by central government and other delivery partners in delivery of the Energy Strategy which, in turn, contributes to delivery of the Economy Minister’s Economic Vision across the four priority areas of good jobs, productivity, regional balance and decarbonisation.

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1 [Energy Strategy - Path to Net Zero Energy | Department for the Economy](#)

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

**Delivery of the Energy Strategy in 2025 focused on four strategic priorities:**

- Accelerating the delivery of affordable renewable energy.
- Developing an electricity grid capable of supporting the 80% renewable electricity target by 2030.
- Improving energy efficiency.
- Delivering for citizens and communities.

Together, these priorities support progress towards the Energy Strategy targets of meeting at least 80% of electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2030, delivering energy savings of 25% from buildings and industry by 2030, and doubling the size of the low-carbon and renewable energy economy to a turnover of more than £2 billion by 2030. As outlined in the Mid-Term Review of the Energy Strategy, future Action Plans will align directly with the three energy strategy targets.

This report outlines progress against 19 actions and 5 roll-over actions taken forward during 2025.

# **WIDER ENERGY STRATEGY DELIVERY**

**Energy Strategy Action Plans do not capture all activity in the delivery of the Strategy. Progress across the full programme is set out in more detail in the Turning Strategy into Action section of the Energy Strategy Mid-Term Review, alongside the Department's published Energy Evidence Programme Report and Energy Strategy Targets and Metrics Monitoring.**



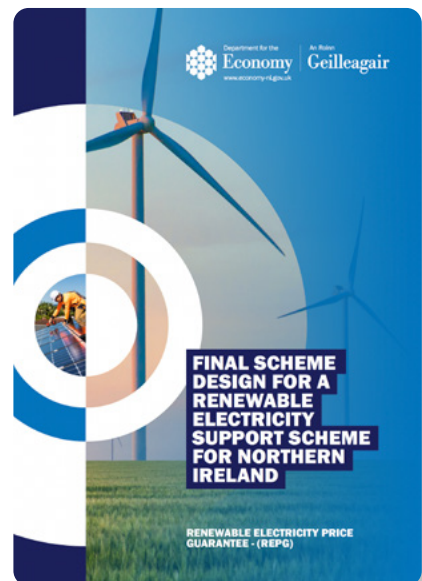
# ACCELERATING THE DELIVERY OF AFFORDABLE RENEWABLE ENERGY

	Action	Detail
1	<b>DfE will publish the Final Design (Q2 2025) and consult on Terms &amp; Conditions (Q3 2025) for the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme for NI to support the 80% by 2030 target.</b>	The Final Design and Terms & Conditions are on the pathway to launching the support scheme's first auction. The 'Contracts for Difference' support scheme is an important lever in supporting regional renewable electricity generation and stabilising prices for consumers.

## Partially achieved - Action included in 2026 Action Plan

Minister Archibald published the Final Scheme Design for a renewable electricity support scheme on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2025 entitled the Renewable Electricity Price Guarantee<sup>2</sup> (REPG).

The Final Scheme Design sets out the policy framework and key design features of the REPG. It describes how the scheme is intended to operate and the principles underpinning its development, providing clarity for stakeholders on the overall approach ahead of legislation and consultation on detailed arrangements.



<sup>2</sup> [Final Scheme Design for a Renewable Electricity Support Scheme for Northern Ireland - Renewable Electricity Price Guarantee | Department for the Economy](#)

The original commitment for 2025 included consultation on the Terms and Conditions for scheme participants. As work progressed, it became clear that the Terms and Conditions and the funding mechanism for the scheme are closely linked. To ensure a coherent and comprehensive consultation, the Department decided to bring these elements together into a single consultation exercise.

As a result, the Department now intends to consult on both the Terms and Conditions for participants and the funding mechanism together following the introduction in 2026 of the enabling primary legislation for the REPG.

	Action	Detail
2	<b>DfE will bring forward the initial stages of a draft bill on Offshore Renewable Energy Installations (OREI) and confirm arrangements for connection of Offshore Renewable Energy to the grid.</b>	<p>OREI policy is an essential part of the overall strategic framework for the development of offshore renewable energy projects in NI.</p> <p>This draft bill will outline legislative changes and policy options which are being considered to establish provisions for OREI decommissioning, safety zones and rights of navigation in NI territorial waters. DfE will also confirm arrangements for connection of Offshore Renewable Energy to the electricity grid.</p>

### Action deferred

The legislation has been deferred as it has not been possible to include it in the Executive's legislative programme for the current session. It is planned to be introduced in the 2026/27 session. DfE continue to work closely with key stakeholders to support both the development of the necessary frameworks, and the arrangements for grid connections for Offshore Renewable Energy projects.

	Action	Detail
3	<b>DAERA will consult on changes to the environmental assessment process for offshore wind projects to include strategic compensation measures and the use of a Marine Recovery Fund.</b>	DAERA will explore policy proposals to implement the Energy Act 2023 provisions for the environmental assessment of offshore wind projects and the use of a Marine Recovery Fund.

### Partially achieved - Action included in 2026 Action Plan

DAERA held stakeholder engagement workshops in February and March 2025, attended by representatives from the renewable energy sector, environmental NGOs, the fishing industry and other government departments, to gather stakeholder views on the potential need for, Environmental Compensatory Measures (ECMR) in Northern Ireland, including the possible role of a Marine Recovery Fund. This included discussion on potential approaches to implementation. The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) launched a public consultation on a Marine Recovery Fund on 31 March 2025, including an option to extend the Fund to Northern Ireland, and the Fund was subsequently launched in December 2025.

DAERA has contributed to the development of DEFRA policy on environmental assessment as it relates to offshore wind projects in the NI offshore region and is developing its own policy proposals on ECMR. DAERA will bring forward a public consultation on ECMR in 2026 for the NI inshore region.

	Action	Detail
4	<b>DAERA will commence market engagement into the potential of forests to contribute to renewable energy generation by the end of Q1 2025.</b>	DAERA will commence market engagement with onshore wind energy suppliers to assess the potential for forestry land use to contribute to renewable energy generation.

### Action complete

DAERA completed a Forest Service Wind Energy Engagement exercise on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025. This exercise received responses from market players across the industry spectrum including developers, operators, consultancy firms and funding bodies, allowing a broad analysis of key information.

	Action	Detail
5	<b>DfE will publish a scheme design in Q3 2025 for future low carbon heat and energy efficiency support in residential buildings.</b>	This strategic plan will set out the principles for future domestic support for energy efficiency and low carbon heating.

### Amalgamated with roll-over Action 2 and included in 2026 Action Plan

DfE Heat and Energy Efficiency Policy Teams have worked with consultants from the Energy Saving Trust in 2025 to develop the scheme design for a new Domestic Energy Efficiency and Low Carbon Heat Programme (DEEHP).

Following an extension period for consultation, the scheme design will publish alongside the departmental consultation on the future of low carbon heat and domestic energy efficiency support and delivery (see roll-over Action 2 later), expected in 2026.

	Action	Detail
6	<b>DfE will support the sustainability of biomethane being utilised in the gas network.</b>	This will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progressing Support Mechanisms.</li> <li>• Consulting on options for Gas Network Connection Costs; and</li> <li>• Investigating Standards/Certifications.</li> </ul>

### Action complete

The DfE Gas Team has been analysing a range of support mechanisms to see what may or may not be suitable for NI in the future. This has been accompanied by analysis of the legal vires open to DfE, the state aid implications of any support mechanisms and updating a cost model for biomethane.

The Gas Network Operators (GNOs) commissioned work to analyse the potential investment needed in the gas network to help accommodate an increased volume of biomethane. This analysed potential engineering and regulatory measures and the consumer impacts. These reports are vital pieces of evidence for making decisions on connection costs for biomethane producers. The Department and the Utility Regulator (UR) are analysing this information, and it will inform part of the wider biomethane policy in 2026.

There was a call for evidence conducted by the Transmission System Operators (TSOs) on behalf of DfE about the oxygen content permissible in the NI gas networks. The results of this are being analysed by the Department in close collaboration with the UR and Health and Safety Executive NI. A DfE “minded to” position will be part of the wider biomethane policy consultation in 2026.

	Action	Detail
7	<b>DfE will publish a hydrogen policy consultation in Q2 2025.</b>	This consultation will provide the policy direction for hydrogen production, storage, transport and use in NI.

### Action complete

DfE committed to publishing a hydrogen policy consultation as part of the progression towards the auction process. This consultation was formally launched by Minister Archibald on 25th September 2025<sup>3</sup> and closed on 18th December, with a response report to publish in 2026. As part of the consultation process, on 13th November 2025 a dedicated meeting was held with the DfE led Hydrogen Industry Working Group to gather valuable insight from local industry regarding the consultation material. On 26th November 2025 the Department hosted a wider stakeholder engagement workshop at Adelaide House, attended by 45 stakeholders. This structured event reviewed each chapter of the consultation, and feedback will help inform the response report alongside formal consultation responses.

The consultation enables work to continue developing a finalised hydrogen policy, which will enable support and growth opportunities for the sector. The development of hydrogen policy will:

- Strengthen the hydrogen sector in NI
- Contribute to the future energy mix and energy security; and
- Support progress toward Net Zero targets.

<sup>3</sup> [Consultation on a Sustainable, Regional Approach for the production, storage, transport and use of Hydrogen as a fuel | Department for the Economy](#)

	Action	Detail
8	<b>DfE will introduce a draft Bill to the Assembly to ban Onshore Petroleum Licensing in Q4 2025.</b>	DfE will consult on legislation to ban onshore exploration and extraction of oil and gas and introduce a draft Bill to the Assembly.

### Action complete

In December 2024, the Executive agreed the preferred policy to introduce a moratorium and eventual legislative ban on all forms of onshore petroleum exploration and production in NI. Since then, DfE have consulted with the Departmental Solicitor's Office and the Office of the Legislative Counsel, developing a Bill which received the Secretary of State's consent and approval regarding its legislative competence. On 26<sup>th</sup> February 2026, Minister Archibald welcomed the Executive's agreement<sup>4</sup> to introduce legislation which will permanently end petroleum exploration and licensing here.

The Petroleum Exploration and Licensing (Repeal) Bill was introduced to the Assembly on 13<sup>th</sup> April 2026, with the intention of passing it into law during the current Assembly mandate. This will play an important role in supporting the decarbonisation journey.

	Action	Detail
9	<b>DfE will implement the delivery of the Green Skills Action Plan.</b>	Working across the public sector and with industry partners DfE will support the delivery of the Action Plan through its existing programmes as well as the new Skills Fund established as part of the DfE Business Plan 2024-25. Green skills are critical to the delivery of the DfE Minister's Economic Vision as well as the Energy Strategy.

### Action complete

The implementation stage for the Green Skills Action Plan officially commenced on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025 with a meeting of the Green Skills Steering Group. The Group agreed on the membership of each of the lead groups to oversee the delivery of the actions against the four priority areas:

1. The Skills Eco System.
2. A partnership approach to ensure a skills system that is responsive to changing needs.
3. Promoting awareness of careers and opportunities in green jobs and green skills.
4. Developing a skilled workforce.



4 [Executive approval to end Petroleum Exploration and Licensing is welcome: Archibald | Department for the Economy](#)

The lead groups have all met a number of times and commenced work on the delivery of the following actions:

- Establish a Green Cluster of green sector experts.
- Explore the possibility of developing a standalone geoscience degree with NI universities and colleges.
- Review the NI skills ecosystem.
- Establish a central green skills information hub.
- Establish a Net Zero Communication Group and develop a green skills communication strategy.
- Develop green sector career bulletins.
- Promote zero carbon career opportunities and training pathways to schools.
- Provide additional work experience opportunities to the green sector.
- Identify current and future skills needs and training gaps for the three priority industries:
  - Large Scale Energy Production
  - Infrastructure; and
  - Domestic Low Carbon Technologies and Energy Efficiency.

Implementation of the above actions will continue into 2026. The outcome will lead to a more cohesive skills eco-system for the green sector and deliver a suitably trained, resilient workforce to help meet both the 2030 decarbonisation targets and the 2050 net zero target.



## ELECTRICITY GRID READY TO SUPPORT DELIVERY OF THE 80% RENEWABLE ELECTRICITY TARGET BY 2030

	Action	Detail
10	<b>DfE will publish decision paper and next steps on socialisation of connection policy in Q2 2025.</b>	This will increase socialisation of connection reinforcement costs on the electricity distribution network reducing the connection cost barrier to adoption of Low Carbon Technologies and installation of renewable generation. This will help facilitate NI achieving the 80% by 2030 target.

### Action complete

DfE ran a consultation on increased socialisation of connection costs from January to April 2025, and consideration of the responses was undertaken in collaboration with the UR. Further engagement between the Department, the UR and NIE Networks on policy direction resulted in the publication of the decision paper on Fairer Grid Connection Costs<sup>5</sup> on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2025, where Minister Archibald announced her decision to change how reinforcement costs associated with new connections to the electricity grid are recovered.



5 [Decision on Fairer Grid Connection Costs | Department for the Economy](#)

The policy will be implemented in 2026 and make the costs of new connections to the grid fairer for many homes and businesses by removing a historic ‘first mover’ disadvantage, which is a recognised barrier to the connection of homes, businesses and renewable technologies.

	Action	Detail
11	<b>DfE will establish a Grid Development Monitoring Group to ensure the electricity grid development is in line with the 80% by 2030 target.</b>	The group will Track and Monitor the key grid developments and upgrades planned for 2030 and beyond. Assess the timing and progress of key grid developments. Ensure that grid developments planned are sufficient in the context of 80 by 30.

### Action complete

DfE established the Grid Development Monitoring Group which met on 7<sup>th</sup> July and 25<sup>th</sup> November 2025 and intends to continue meeting on a quarterly basis. The concept and purpose of this group have been agreed with the members including the UR, NIE Networks and System Operator for Northern Ireland (SONI), and actions on major projects will be delivered in progress reports going forward. The key areas identified by the group to help achieve decarbonisation targets include:

- I. Delivering the North South Interconnector.
- II. Delivering the Mid-Antrim transmission upgrade.
- III. Consider a Moyle Interconnector capacity increase.
- IV. Commence delivery of plan for Northwest transmission reinforcement.
- V. Deliver Mid-Tyrone upgrade.
- VI. Consider the provision of optimal Low Carbon Inertia Services.

The group intends to monitor all key grid projects planned to 2030 and beyond, recommending actions, identifying risks, and engaging with relevant stakeholders to maintain momentum and secure delivery.

	Action	Detail
12	<b>DfE will publish smart meter design plan in Q2 2025 and establish smart meter oversight group with UR to ensure that smart meters are implemented in NI in a timely fashion.</b>	DfE recently consulted on the roll out of Smart Meters. The new oversight group will ensure Smart Meters are implemented in NI in a timely fashion, to achieve maximum benefit for consumers here.

### Action complete

Following a public consultation on a draft design plan for the roll-out of smart meters which ended in Q1 2025, the Department worked with stakeholders from across the industry to analyse the feedback, refine the policy paper and, at the request of the Minister, develop information and guides for consumers on what smart meters will mean for them.

The refined design plan was discussed with the main stakeholders and delivery bodies (NIE Networks, UR and Consumer Council NI) and the Information Commissioner's Office. All have agreed to lead or be involved in Expert Groups in the delivery of the Smart Meters Implementation Programme.

The Minister published the decision paper on the design plan for the roll-out of smart meters on 29th April 2026<sup>6</sup>.

The design plan outlines the approach for progressing smart meter rollout here in Northern Ireland, with a strong focus on consumer needs. It also establishes an Oversight Group comprising DfE and UR representatives to take forward delivery. The Group has begun its work and will move quickly to put in place the arrangements required to run a procurement process in 2026 and begin installation in 2028.

# IMPROVING ENERGY EFFICIENCY

	Action	Detail
13	<b>DfE will complete a mid-term review of the Energy Management Strategy and Action Plan to 2030 for central Government.</b>	The Energy Management Strategy is decarbonising central government estates. This five-year review will be undertaken to establish progress against objectives and present recommendations for a new Action Plan for 2025-2030.

## Action complete

The DfE Energy Management Team worked with Innovation and Consultancy Services to complete the mid-term review of the Energy Management Strategy and Action Plan for NI Central Government.



## DELIVERING FOR CITIZENS AND COMMUNITIES

	Action	Detail
14	<b>The NI Utility Regulator will consult on amendments to the Electricity Guaranteed Standards of Service, including in relation to incidents of adverse weather.</b>	The Utility Regulator will consult on a range of issues and bring their conclusions to DfE who will work to update the existing legislation where required.

### Action complete

During 2025, the Utility Regulator conducted a review of Electricity Guaranteed Standards of Service (GSS) and Overall Standards of Performance (OSP) for the electricity distributor and electricity suppliers, with particular attention given to GSS in relation to incidents of severe weather. This review has involved carrying out research with domestic and non-domestic consumers, stakeholder engagement, a benchmarking exercise with the NI Gas GSS Regulations, and consideration of similar electricity GSS and OSP provisions in GB.

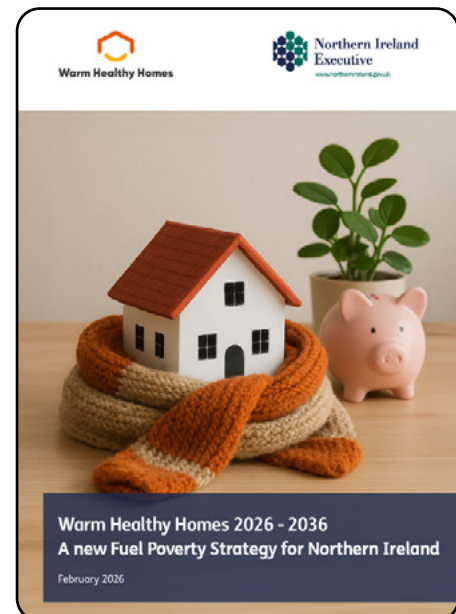
The Review of Electricity GSS and OSP consultation<sup>7</sup> opened for responses on 28<sup>th</sup> October and ran until the 23<sup>rd</sup> December. The UR will publish its final decision paper and present the new set of GSS Regulations to DfE for its consent. If consented, DfE will be responsible for laying the Regulations before the Assembly. The UR will specify the OSP for both electricity suppliers and the electricity distributor in Determinations made under Article 43 and 43A of the Electricity (NI) Order 1992. If following consultation any licence modifications are required, these will be consulted upon in parallel with the implementation of the Regulations.

	Action	Detail
15	<b>DfC will bring the final Fuel Poverty Strategy for NI to the Executive for approval in Q4 2025.</b>	The consultation on a draft Fuel Poverty Strategy will close in early 2025 and a new Strategy will be brought to the Executive for approval. This will provide a long-term framework for reducing fuel poverty. The Fuel Poverty Strategy will have positive impacts on both mental and physical health, especially for the most vulnerable in society. It will contribute to improving energy efficiency in homes and provide support and protection for those living in or at risk of fuel poverty.

### Action complete

DfC launched the consultation on the draft Fuel Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024. Over the 12-week consultation period, 84 written responses<sup>8</sup> were received. Engagement events included in-person workshops, online workshops focusing on specific topics within each objective, as well as revisiting the focus groups who met previously. Meeting with the focus groups again was a valuable part of the process for all involved.

The PfG includes a commitment to bring a Fuel Poverty Strategy to the Executive by the end of the year, and the Department published the Warm Healthy Homes Strategy<sup>9</sup> on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2026, setting out a clear framework for tackling fuel poverty and improving energy affordability for households across NI.



<sup>7</sup> [Review of Electricity Guaranteed Standards of Service and Overall Standards of Performance | Utility Regulator](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Fuel Poverty Strategy consultation summary of responses | Department for Communities](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Warm Healthy Homes Strategy 2026 - 2036 documentation | Department for Communities](#)

	Action	Detail
16	<b>DfC will publish a consultation on a new Fuel Poverty Energy Efficiency Scheme by Q4 2025.</b>	Consultation on a new Fuel Poverty Energy Efficiency scheme and new Domestic Energy Efficiency Grants Regulations. The new fuel poverty energy efficiency scheme will replace the Affordable Warmth Scheme and continue to act as the Department for Communities primary mechanism to tackle fuel poverty. The new scheme will continue to provide advice and support with energy efficiency measures to those low-income households in fuel poverty, while also reducing emissions by the introduction of clean heating and renewable energy technologies.

### Not achieved - Action included in 2026 Action Plan

The draft Fuel Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland consultation<sup>10</sup> launched on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2024, introduced elements of a new Fuel Poverty Energy Efficiency scheme including income thresholds and the introduction of low carbon heat and other renewable technologies. Analysis of the consultation responses and the outworkings of a series of in-person workshops and events including engagement with industry will help inform the new scheme design. Further consultation on the scheme design is anticipated to be launched later in 2026.

	Action	Detail
17	<b>DfE will lead an all of Government approach to deliver a plan to produce community benefit through a community energy pathfinder project.</b>	Working with academic and industry partners, DfE will drive the urgent planning, development and delivery of a community energy pathfinder project. This pathfinder project aims to use industrial decarbonisation to support the decarbonisation of local communities.

### Action complete

DfE continues to lead the all of government approach in delivering the Community Energy Pathfinder project. Constructive engagement between government, academia, and industry has been instrumental in identifying decarbonisation pathways for communities. Regular stakeholder meetings have achieved tangible progress in defining critical infrastructure needs, regulatory requirements, environmental considerations, and the potential social benefits of these projects.

10 [Consultation on a new Fuel Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland | Department for Communities](#)

Recent discussions have included an in-depth review of technology options and their implications for current and future energy policy. Upcoming studies will focus on cost-benefit analyses of innovative solutions designed to complement local renewable resources while supporting industrial decarbonisation. Attention will inevitably shift to financing emerging proposals and establishing a business model that can be replicated across the region, so additional work will examine alternative funding mechanisms which recognise consumers at the centre of the energy transition.

The project recognises the critical role of stakeholder engagement with community groups, cooperatives, and local councils to secure buy-in. The Community Energy Pathfinder initiative will continue to foster collaboration and uphold the principle of social licensing for renewable energy projects within local communities.

	Action	Detail
18	<b>DfE will establish a communications group led by the Consumer Council, to bring together key consumer stakeholders and partners to inform and protect consumers during the energy transition.</b>	DfE will establish a communications group led by the Consumer Council to bring together key consumer stakeholders and partners to protect consumers and deliver information and advice to overcome the barriers and challenges that consumers face in actively participating and benefitting from the energy transition.

### Action complete

On 16<sup>th</sup> December 2025, the Consumer Council NI, established the Consumer Engagement Working Group (CEWG) to deliver a connected and coordinated engagement programme to improve energy consumer awareness, understanding and education. The CEWG will focus on sharing information and activity being taken forward by each member, acting as a central group to inform energy consumers through development of a more coordinated approach to education and consumer awareness. Membership of the CEWG is comprised of consumer representation, community representation, regulation and the energy industry, supported (from January 2027) by an Energy Transition Expert Panel and the Consumer Council's Community Advisory Panel.

The CEWG encourages members to share information on relevant activities, leading to a more coordinated approach to consumer engagement and awareness in the energy sector. The group's remit includes identifying current and emerging issues affecting domestic and small business energy consumers and providing advice on addressing these issues. This proactive approach allows for timely interventions and support.

The CEWG aims to deliver a connected and coordinated engagement framework and work programme, which will improve consumer awareness, understanding, and education regarding energy transition. Over time, this will empower consumers to make informed decisions and actively participate in the energy transition. The CEWG will publish an annual 'Voice of Consumer' report from 2027, informed by the group and the Consumer Council's consumer engagement programme, providing a structured mechanism for capturing and amplifying consumer voices. The group's approach, which includes sharing research activities, supports the development of engagement and policy that is grounded in real consumer needs and experiences.



# ENERGY STRATEGY MID-TERM REVIEW

	Action	Detail
19	<b>DfE will conduct the Energy Strategy Mid-Term Review in consultation with delivery partners and stakeholders and publish the milestones to deliver by 2030.</b>	The Energy Strategy Mid Term Review will commence in January 2025 to ensure the remaining 5 years to 2030 use up-to-date data and insights, bringing a renewed focus on affordable renewable energy. The Review will report on progress from 2021 to date and will establish clear milestones in the period to 2030.

## Action complete

The Mid-Term Review of the Energy Strategy was published on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2025 by Minister Archibald, describing the progress that is being made in the delivery of the Energy Strategy, and fulfilling the objectives to:

1. Highlight Achievements and Constraints: Identify both the successes and the challenges encountered in delivering the Strategy, offering an assessment of what has been achieved and the barriers that remain.
2. Report on Progress: Provide a clear account of progress made towards the Strategy's 2030 targets.
3. Address the NI Audit Office (NIAO) report: Set out the Department's plans for implementation of the NIAO recommendations in their report on the delivery of the Energy Strategy.

It is DfE's intention to set out, in 2026, an energy policy position statement with milestones to 2030.



# ROLL-OVER ACTIONS (FROM ENERGY STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2024)

Action	Detail
<b>R1 DfE will publish the results and analysis from the first stage of the Geothermal Demonstrator feasibility studies in Q2 2025.</b>	The published results, analysis and recommendations from the geothermal studies will be used to identify potential geothermal solutions and inform the next steps for delivering geothermal heat at the selected locations if feasible.

## Action complete

The Geothermal Demonstrator feasibility study reports<sup>11</sup>, including an overall GeoEnergy Project Summary Report, published in October 2025. The Project will deliver both immediate and far-reaching benefits in support of the Energy Strategy targets. In the short-term it will provide critical evidence on the feasibility and effectiveness of both shallow and deep geothermal systems for decarbonising heat in buildings, agriculture and industry. Also, by generating robust data and through practical experience, it will directly inform policy development, de-risk future private sector investment, and accelerate the transition away from fossil fuels. For example, in 2026 information from the feasibility studies will be used to develop a consultation on geothermal policy to inform regulation and licensing.



**First Core from Stormont Feasibility Study**

11 [Geothermal Demonstrator Project | Department for the Economy](#)

Wider benefits will include the stimulation of a new green energy sector, supporting high-quality job creation and skills development, and enhancing energy security through the use of indigenous, renewable resources. The project also plays a pivotal role in public engagement and education, building social acceptance for geothermal technologies and laying the groundwork for future heat networks.

Ultimately, the demonstrator is a key enabler for achieving net zero carbon energy, improving air quality, and ensuring affordable, sustainable energy for all, in line with the ambitions of the Energy Strategy and Programme for Government.

	Action	Detail
R2	<b>DfE will publish a consultation on the future of domestic energy efficiency support and delivery in Q2 2025.</b>	The consultation will provide the foundational policy direction for cross-departmental delivery relating to energy efficiency.

### **Amalgamated with Action 5 and included in 2026 Action Plan**

This roll-over action is directly aligned with Action 5 (above). The Energy Efficiency and Heat Policy teams have collaborated with consultants from the Energy Saving Trust to develop a future scheme design for the new DEEHP. Following an extension period, a departmental consultation on the future of low carbon heat and domestic energy efficiency support and delivery will publish along with the scheme design in 2026.

	Action	Detail
R3	<b>DoF will publish feedback on its Phase 2 discussion document on energy efficiency and related areas of the Building Regulations in Q2 2025 and will continue to progress the development of a Phase 3 Uplift.</b>	The publication of the feedback on the Phase 2 discussion document will inform development of Phase 3 and subsequent work leading to 'net zero ready' standards for new buildings with low carbon heating in 2027.

### **Action progressed but incomplete**

The Department of Finance is seeking agreement to publish a Response Document to its public consultation reviewing energy efficiency requirements and related areas of Building Regulations which ran from 26th July to 15th December 2023. Due to the cross-cutting nature of this work, the DoF Minister provided a draft response document to the Executive for agreement in June 2025. This paper was discussed at the Executive's meeting of 15th January 2026 and will be considered further. Given the uncertainty around timings, this action will not be carried forward to the 2026 Energy Strategy Action Plan but will be progressed once the direction becomes clear.

	Action	Detail
R4	<b>DfE will identify areas for potential development of offshore renewable energy for Northern Ireland. This work is continuing into 2025.</b>	As part of OREAP 2024 delivery DfE will complete a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment (SEA/HRA) for offshore renewable energy in the NI Marine Area. This will enable plans for potential leasing areas to be developed, through ongoing Steering Group collaboration, and an updated OREAP published confirming actions moving forward towards delivery of the target for at least 1GW of offshore renewable energy from 2030.

The Department consulted on the OREAP: Strategic Environmental Assessment and the Report to Inform the Appropriate Assessment (RIAA)<sup>12</sup> which launched on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February 2025 and closed on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 2025. This represented a crucial step towards identification of potential areas for development of offshore renewable energy within the NI Marine Area. Following extensive review by DfE, DAERA and the Crown Estate, the environmental reports have now been finalised and will be subject to approval by the Executive prior to publication.

	Action	Detail
R5	<b>DfI will publish a new Regional Strategic Planning Policy. This is now expected in Q1 2025.</b>	Publish new regional strategic planning policy on renewable and low carbon energy.

### Action complete

The Department for Infrastructure first circulated a draft Executive Paper to Committee colleagues seeking their agreement to publish the final policy in September 2024. The Executive Committee agreed to the publication of the revised policy at its meeting on 2 October 2025, and the Strategic Planning Policy Statement, Edition 2<sup>13</sup>, incorporating revised regional strategic planning policy on renewable and low carbon energy published on 11<sup>th</sup> December.

<sup>12</sup> [Offshore Renewable Energy Action Plan \(OREAP\): Consultation on the Strategic Environmental Assessment \(SEA\) Environmental Report and Report to Inform Appropriate Assessment \(RIAA\) | Department for the Economy](#)

<sup>13</sup> [The Strategic Planning Policy Statement, Edition 2 | Department for Infrastructure](#)