Energy Strategy Call for Evidence

Response Template

How to Respond

This template replicates the questions asked in the Call for Evidence found at: https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/energy-strategy-call-for-evidence

It is recommended that you should read the full consultation document before completing your response. Please note that the text boxes used throughout this template can be expanded to accommodate your response – there is no character limit.

For further information on how we handle your personal data please read our Privacy Notice

Early responses are encouraged but all responses should arrive no later than **5pm on 20 March 2020.**

Please send your response to:

energystrategy@economy-ni.gov.uk

Or alternatively by post to:

Energy Strategy
Department for the Economy
Netherleigh
Massey Avenue
Belfast
BT4 2JP

Quote the reference "**Energy Strategy Call for Evidence 2019**"

1. General Information

1. **Name (required)**

[redacted]

2. **Are you responding:**

   ☐ **as an individual (please complete 3 to 5 below)**

   X☐ **on behalf of an organisation / company (please complete 6 to 8 below)**

If you are responding as an individual:

3. **E-mail address**

4. **Address**

5. **If you are responding as an individual, please read the Privacy Notice and tick the statement below as applicable.**

   ☐ **All responses will be published on the Department for the Economy website following completion of the Call for Evidence process. Please tick if you are content for your name to be published alongside your response.**

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation / company:

6. **Organisation / Company**

BHC Distributors Ltd T/A Solar Power NI

7. **Position within Company / Organisation**

[redacted]

8. **Contact details**

   a. **E-mail address**

[redacted]

   b. **Address**

[redacted]

2. Energy in Northern Ireland

Q1. What lessons can we learn from elsewhere in addressing energy within an overarching climate action framework?

Q2. What are the key considerations for decarbonising Northern Ireland's energy sector given existing linkages to other jurisdictions?

Q3. To what extent should Northern Ireland implement the key energy-related recommendations from the CCC 'Reducing Emissions in Northern Ireland' report?

Q4. Do you agree with the 30-year timeframe? If not, please state your preferred approach and reasons.

Q1. We do not have to look too far to see the south of Ireland now being a lot more proactive than Northern Ireland with regards to addressing climate change.

Q2. Considering we are on an island and share a border with south of Ireland and we have the iSEM we must ensure our goals and targets align with south of Ireland .the fact that we are an island means we currently rely on other countries for energy and in light of recent events I believe it's even more important for us to become energy independent, we abundant resources with wind, water and solar and The benefit of a small population, there is no reason why we can't become a carbon neutral country.

Q3. To the full extent

Q4. I believe we should give ourselves ambitious targets and aim to exceed these, not slow down and be content like we have done in the past. Stagnation in carbon production will see us moving backwards with the electrification of heat and transport on the horizon. 70% renewables target by 2030 is a minimum must

3. The Energy Transition in Northern Ireland

Q5. What are the unique characteristics of Northern Ireland that need to be considered in a net zero carbon energy transition?

Q6. Is your organisation undertaking or planning to undertake projects to support the energy transition? If so, please provide further details.

Q5. Let's look at the advantages we have – small population, abundant solar, water and wind resources- small country so electric cars can navigate Northern Ireland no problem on a single charge with the advancements in battery range. We are in a great position to be able to become a carbon neutral and better than carbon neutral country. This will need a mix of renewable technologies and a mix of electricity and hydrogen but we are in a much better position than other countries to be able to do this and we should aim to be leaders in this.

Q6. We have been involved in the renewables industry for the past 10 years and have worked on many innovative projects within this time. Unfortunately many of these have been in the south of Ireland the past few years as the renewables industry in Northern Ireland has been decimated. We have fallen way behind where we should be by inaction and no incentives in recent years

Our latest project in Northern Ireland has been the development of the Salthouse Hotel in ballycastle. The Salthouse is a 24 bedroom hotel with 120 seat restaurant and bar and a spa. The Salthouse is better than carbon neutral with an epc of -18 owing to the 225kw wind turbine, 150kw solar pv, air source heat pumps and state of the art smart controls. Our company undertook the whole design of this project and delivered the products required.

The Salthouse is proof that carbon neutral (and indeed better than) development can be achieved in our country. Our tag line is sustainable luxury. This development can be done and can be rolled out very quickly.

4. Consumers

Q7. How should we ensure that energy remains affordable for domestic consumers? What approach should be taken to eradicate fuel poverty?

Q8. What steps could be taken to improve the relative cost competitiveness of larger non-domestic consumers?

Q9. Is a strategic position of "enable and protect" the correct policy stance?

a) What policies or schemes are needed to enable active consumers?
b) What policies or schemes are needed to protect vulnerable consumers?

Q10. What types of advice and information are required by all consumers and what are the best mechanisms for facilitating this?

Q11. Are there examples of successful citizen energy projects in Northern Ireland and elsewhere that have delivered improved energy efficiency and/or clean energy to local communities?

Q12. What opportunities are there in both urban and rural areas for citizen energy communities in Northern Ireland? What role could government have in facilitating these?

Q13. What evidence can you provide that identifies the challenges and opportunities for NI energy consumers in decarbonising energy?

Q7. There was a report commissioned recently and carried out by Baringa that showed that the rocs scheme for wind and solar delivered overall cheaper electricity for the people of NI compared to not installing renewables over that period of time. There should be grant aid for those in fuel poverty to avail of free upgrades to their homes of solar and heat pumps for example. Proper smart metering should be available for people to use power at the very cheapest times

Q8. Large non-domestic consumers should be producing their own energy with wind/solar and heat with heat pumps/hydrogen. Grants need to be out in place for this to happen but also stricter building control regulations would ensure that new builds have to put these measures in place- see south of Ireland

Q9. It's crucial to have grant aid in place – upfront capital grants of 40% will kickstart all forms of installations from wind/solar , heat pumps etc . Vulnerable customers should have their own renewables and heat pumps and choice of flexible tariffs through smart metering. This should be grant aided fully. Any new builds should have stringent building regulations to have these forms already installed.

Q10. We need an SEAI type authority like the south of Ireland. Advice and information needs to come from a central source where everyone knows where and how to access.

Q11. South of Ireland has a better energy community grant scheme administered by the seai. Something similar needs to be set up here

Q12. Seai body setup and private businesses competing for work with available grant aid to consumers will give the best end result for consumers.

Q13. Lack of good information about renewables available in the media' is a concern and the ill feeling towards the rhi scheme is a major barrier at present. However we have been successful before with the rocs scheme which worked very well to meeting a target. We have done it before and we can do it again. We must also ensure we have the right labour force and skills to hit the ground running WHEN incentives are back in place.

5. Energy Efficiency

Q14. What, if any, energy efficiency target or targets should be set for Northern Ireland?

Q15. How should we define, measure and monitor energy efficiency to optimise its potential in our homes, business, economy and environment?

Q16. What are the most important policy levers for government to ensure zero carbon in:

a) New domestic and commercial buildings by 2050?;

b) Existing domestic and commercial buildings by 2050?

Q17. What should the future of energy efficiency support look like and who should be the key delivery bodies?

Q14 – 70% renewables by 2030 is an absolute minimum.
This in itself will help with efficiency but controls are key in this aspect also .

Q15 – energy efficiency comes with reducing energy used. This must be monitored by proper smart metering. An amendment to the existing epc process could be looked at to try and get a benchmark so we can see progress in efficiencies . Smart controls can reduce energy consumption in homes and business by at least 30%. We have seen this in our own delivered projects at knightsbrook hotel in trim, Starbucks and also in homes. Proper control of lighting and heating in particular is key. Sub metering is key to see different aspects of a business and home to ensure we get the best results.
There are M&V companies in Southern Ireland who specialise in reporting efficiencies after measures have been out in place.

Q16- we need strict building regs changes to ensure solar / wind / heat pumps MUST be installed from the outset- also electric vehicle charging points must be installed for all new builds . Higher rates should be in place for epcs less than an A. A should be the new standard.

B) there has to be grant aid of at least 40% for homes and businesses to install measures such as solar/ heat pumps/ car chargers and smart controls . Enhanced capital allowances need to be kept. Higher rates on different bands of epcs – rate relief for A rated homes and businesses.

Q17. 40% grants for microgeneration (upto 5 MW)
Auction scheme for large scale Renewbles

6. Heat

Q18. What is the appropriate pathway and timeline for the decarbonisation of heat between now and 2030, and subsequently to 2050?

Q19. What are the appropriate ways to measure the progress of decarbonising heat?

Q20. What are the most cost-effective and sustainable steps that government might take to accelerate the reduction of the carbon intensity of heating fuels?

Q21. Is decarbonisation of the gas grid a viable option and what evidence can be provided on both the speed and affordability of decarbonising the gas grid?

Q22. What evidence can you provide on the opportunities for district heating schemes in Northern Ireland and where should responsibility lie for facilitating these?

Q23. Can you provide any evidence or information on the opportunities for geothermal heat supply?

Q18 – heat pumps should be made standard in homes and businesses ASAP.

Q22- the Salthouse Hotel works extremely well with a large heat pump installation. This is the same principle as district heating.

7. Power

Q24. What is the appropriate pathway for the decarbonisation of power from now to 2030, and subsequently to 2050?

Q25. What target for electricity consumption generated from renewable sources by 2030 is ambitious, achievable and affordable?

Q26. How can the new infrastructure necessary to meet a new renewable electricity target be delivered in a timely, affordable and acceptable way for consumers and society?

Q27. What innovations and solutions could contribute to meeting a new renewable electricity target?

Q28. What market incentives and support are necessary for investors to deliver the investment in renewable generation assets at a scale that will achieve a new renewable electricity target?

Q29. What steps need to be taken by Government to facilitate investment in offshore and marine renewables for NI?

Q24- minimum 70% renewables by 2030. We should be decarbonised by 2035. 2050 is too far away as a target.

Q25- 70%

Q26- upfront capital grants will be a much cheaper way of meeting targets this time around than a rocs scheme – for example a 5kw solar pv system with battery storage (using top quality products) costs around £10k. A £4,000 grant would ensure 120,000kwh would be produced for a home over 30 years (panels warranties for 30 years) under the rocs scheme this would've cost around £14,000 so it's much better value to everyone. An seai like authority should administer and monitor installations .

Q27- proper smart metering is key- battery storage is evolving daily, self consumption of renewables should be a major driver for prosumers- get the people involved and benefitting from renewables- not to be seen as pension companies making money from large solar and wind installations

Q28- businesses will not install renewables unless payback is sun 4 years. 5 years is a stretch. Capital grants required. Domestic will go at around 6 years payback so capital grants are a must. Auction scheme like south Ireland needed for large scale .

8. Transport

Q30. What would be an appropriate pathway to decarbonised energy for transport to 2050?

Q31. What role should active travel have in the decarbonisation of the transport sector and what should government do to support this?

Q32. What energy infrastructure is needed to facilitate the uptake of electric vehicles in line with UK Government's 'Road to Zero' targets?

Q33. How will transport integrate with other energy uses (e.g. homes with solar generation, battery storage, EV charging) and what can government do to optimise the opportunities represented by this integration?

Q34. To what extent can alternative low carbon transport fuels contribute to decarbonisation of the transport sector?

Q35. Do you have any data/research to help inform and reduce the carbon intensity of our transport energy in order to achieve net zero carbon by 2050?

Q30- no diesel and Petrol cars should be on the road after 2030

Q31- ensure new builds have showering facilities for staff so that cycling to work is practical/ have good schemes for employees and employers to encourage cycling/ walking to work.

Q32- renewables need to be on every roof in the country- every home and business is a potential generator of electricity. Wind needs to make a comeback also- this is key. The lack of ev charging points is discouraging the whole country form purchasing Ev. We are waiting for proper incentives to roll out fast chargers all over the country but there will be a few years of loss making for companies to undertake this infrastructure roll out. Massive grants are required here to encourage the roll out. This needs to be done ASAP. 75% grants for fast DC charging is required. Workplace charging is key as an employee is 6 times more likely to purchase electric if chargers are at their works place. Better grants are required for this . Stricter building regs to ensure ev chargers are installed in every new home and businesss from the outset.

Q33 – the zappi car chargers can already work with wind and solar etc to ensure homes and businesses are using the excess power generated to power transport- this gets rid of the argument of powering evs with fossil fuels. The technology is here – we need to get the message out to the public and set up an seai like authority. Demand side response is also built in with this technology so cheap electricity can be used to charge up whenever it is aVailable.

9. Other Issues:

a. Security of Supply

Q36. What specific risks to security of energy supply are likely to emerge as a result of our changing energy mix, and what actions can be taken to mitigate these?

Q37. What measures or indicators could be adopted or developed to monitor energy security of supply?

Q36 – battery storage is key with intermittent Renewbles on the supply chain. Massive improvement are coming – also vehicle to grid technology with cars beefing up the grid will help.

b. The Role of Data

Q38. What is the most cost-effective method of capturing consumer energy usage data in electricity and natural gas (where meters are in place)? In heating oil (where there is no metering obligation)?

Q39. What concerns need to be addressed regarding data privacy, security and/or ownership?

Q40. What are your views on applying the key recommendations of the Energy Data Taskforce for NI?

Q41. What organisations or businesses do you see as having a key role in optimising the value of data? How will they do this?

Q38- smart metering is key and not that expensive. Couple this with a data manager for an app or login this is all the info rewuiredA we have done this at the Salthouse hotel with 18-20 sub meters.

Q39- for the smart controls we use Honeywell based software which has the highest data privacy- also for cloud based applications we use Microsoft azure.

Q40

c. Carbon Capture and Storage

Q42. What steps, if any, should NI policy-makers consider with regard to the development or implementation of CCUS in NI?

d. Energy and the Economy

Q43. What specific economic opportunities will arise from the decarbonisation of energy?

Q44. What skills are needed to realise the potential economic benefits of energy in the future?

Q45. What are your views on the future of overall energy demand in NI and how can we ensure that any potential demand growth aligns with our net zero carbon target?

Q43- when rocs were in place we had a booming renewables industry with great skills and knowledge- many companies making good money, paying corporation tax, PAYE , NI- and this was in a time of recession so having a decarbonised energy mix will benefit the whole economy and the citizens. Why pay other countries for energy when we can do it ourselves and benefit from it by building a prosperous economy?

Q44- they need proper training course on ev charging, wind turbines maintenance and construction, solar pv and battery storage deployment. Become leaders in these fields and there are jobs for life even through recessions.

Q45- energy demand on electricity in particular will go through the roof with electrifying transport and heat- this is an opportunity- not a problem. We can produce our own electricity – we don't have oil or gas- we should feel very fortunate that as an island we can be self sufficient- time for action is now though as if we wait another couple of years even then this increase in demand for electricity will actually see our 45% renewables mix go backwards.

e. Delivery Framework for an Energy Strategy

Q46. Do the existing division of responsibilities and powers across government enable the most effective approach to the overall aim of decarbonising energy? If not, what are your suggestions for improvement?

Q47. What are the opportunities for local government to contribute to the delivery of the net zero carbon target?

Q48. What are your views on how statutory duties and accompanying legislation and regulatory frameworks would need to change to facilitate the transition to net zero carbon by 2050?

Q49. Is there a need for a dedicated organisation to champion, lead and deliver sustainable energy interventions? If so, what should this look like?

Q46- there needs to be a central body looking after energy- need one department making decisions and an seai like body needs to be set up

Q47 – local government should be showing the way with all buildings being made more efficient and with renewables and change their fleets to electric

Q48 – stricter building regs ASAP higher business and domestic rates for poor epc ratings

10. Additional information

Q50. Is there anything else you would like to add in response to this Call for Evidence?