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**

Royal Society of Ulster Architects (RSUA)

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 – Reduce the consumption of energy by ensuring all new buildings are designed and constructed to a standard (Passive House Standard preferably) that ensures they require minimum energy to heat. European cities, such as Brussels have transformed their built environment since the early 2000`s, through heavy Government funding, to now boast a high percentage of all existing building stock to be zero energy buildings, of self-sufficient buildings.
Q2 – Reduction in need first. Second heavy funding for small scale renewables. Thirdly upgrading of the grid system to accept small scale supply. Heavy funding for large scale renewable energy production. Northern Ireland must agree a cross-island strategy. Cross Department agreement must be enforced from the top down. Implementation of zero-carbon public transport system and roll out of network of electric charging points and incentives to encourage public to swap to electric cars.
Q3 – CCC`s Reducing Emissions in Northern Ireland document concludes that NI can meet their target to reduce emissions by 35% by 2030 in a cost-effective way, if its recommendations are implemented. However, it also states that NI will fall way short of this target without new policies and joined up implementation throughout all departments. It is vital that Stormont view this document's conclusions as a minimum standard, but aim higher.
Q4 – 30 years gives enough room for adaption. However, there are a number of policies that could be implemented immediately. New buildings, for example, could be built to meet a zero-carbon standard today. This is not new thinking or technology. The market will adapt and balance within a number of years.

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. Northern Ireland's cultural reluctance for change may be a major factor to consider. However, Northern Ireland is in a privileged position geographically, with miles of coastline for offshore wind and wave energy production. Any capital investment into renewable energy production must be considered in the cross-island context. Northern Ireland is too small to cushion the burden of this capital expenditure. The Whole Energy Systems approach considers the supply and demand. The dispersed rural population in Northern Ireland puts extra strain on the capital required for a fully integrated network solution.

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 – all new social housing should be built to a zero-energy standard. This can be achieved as a envelop first approach, without the reliance on domestic renewables. Energy will be affordable and fuel poverty will be eradicated if you reduce the need.
Q8 – no comment
Q9 – open the market up to include the whole island. Funding for on-site renewable energy generation for non-domestic users.
Q10 – Clear information on government schemes that individuals and non-domestic users can avail from. Clear information on routes to funding.
Q11 – there are number of individuals that have implemented personal energy projects and are living "off-Grid". However currently they cannot feed into the main system. The locally owned Templederry wind farm in Tipperary and the Drumlin Energy Co-operative with four sites in Northern Ireland are both examples of the potential within our communities to generate renewable energy with collective local ownership and shared local benefits. The Northern Ireland Community Energy (NICE) project has implemented a number of successful schemes for Northern Ireland 3rd sector organisations.
Q12 – government funding and reduction on planning legislation for community based renewable energy schemes.
Q13 – restricted grid capacity within rural areas.

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 – Targets are dependent on existing requirements and future demand. To improve the built environment's energy efficiency, you would need to consider retrofitting existing buildings. This is very costly and difficult to do. If the government asks the open market to deliver this requirement, funding commercial enterprises to implement a retrofit program, it will be a disaster, and will cause considerable long-term damage to existing buildings.

Q15 –New buildings can be designed and built to an agreed standard. The Passive House is a globally accepted standard for envelop first low energy design. It has become the standard for a lot of major European cites, and is now accepted as the norm.

Q16 – New building must meet a much higher standard – raise building regulations, i.e. Use a stick. Existing buildings can be retrofitted. As this is costly and difficult the government must fund and control this; ie. Use a carrot.

Q17 – cross departmental government funding for whole energy system implementation. Everyone pays and therefore everyone benefits

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 – Q21 – no comment

Q22 – small scale district heating schemes can work for new buildings or developments. However, they must be supplied by renewable energy sources for them to make sense. This does become financially viable at a medium to large scale

Q23 – geothermal heat supply is a waste of time and money

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 – Q29 – no comment

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 – better electric vehicle infrastructure.
Q31 – getting people out of their cars and onto public transport (electric vehicles) and constructing a secure, protected cycle network.
Q32 – funding for personal energy production through renewables, storage, and electric vehicle charging; NI wide network of charging points.
Q33 – see Q32

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 – the increase of micro supply from individuals makes the network stronger
Q37 – no comment

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 – Q41 – no comment

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?

Q42 – Government policy must be to reduce carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions

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 – new jobs and businesses will be generated if the government injects funds into the sustainable building sector.
Q44 – training throughout the building industry is key to delivering low carbon buildings.
Q45 – simply reduce the demand by legislating that all new buildings must be as close to zero emission as possible; prioritise environmentally friendly materials, water efficiency and biodiversity; demonstrate a high standard of architecture and design; and use simple and replicable technologies that were cost-effective and offered good payback times, rather than being too hi-tech.

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 – Q48 – no comment
Q49 – Yes.

10. Additional information

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

Q50 – this is a vast subject with multiple sectors that overlay to form a grid solution. Aiming for the highest standards within the individual sectors may allow NI to meet its obligations.