

## Equality Screening Template – Section 75 of Northern Ireland Act 1998

### **Policy title: Energy Strategy – The Path to Net Zero Energy**

#### **Decision**

Policy screened out **without** mitigation or an alternative policy adopted

**Contact: Elaine McManus**

**Date of completion: 02 November 2021**

#### **Content**

**Part 1. Policy scoping** – asks public authorities to provide details about the policy, procedure, practice and/or decision being screened and what available evidence you have gathered to help make an assessment of the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations.

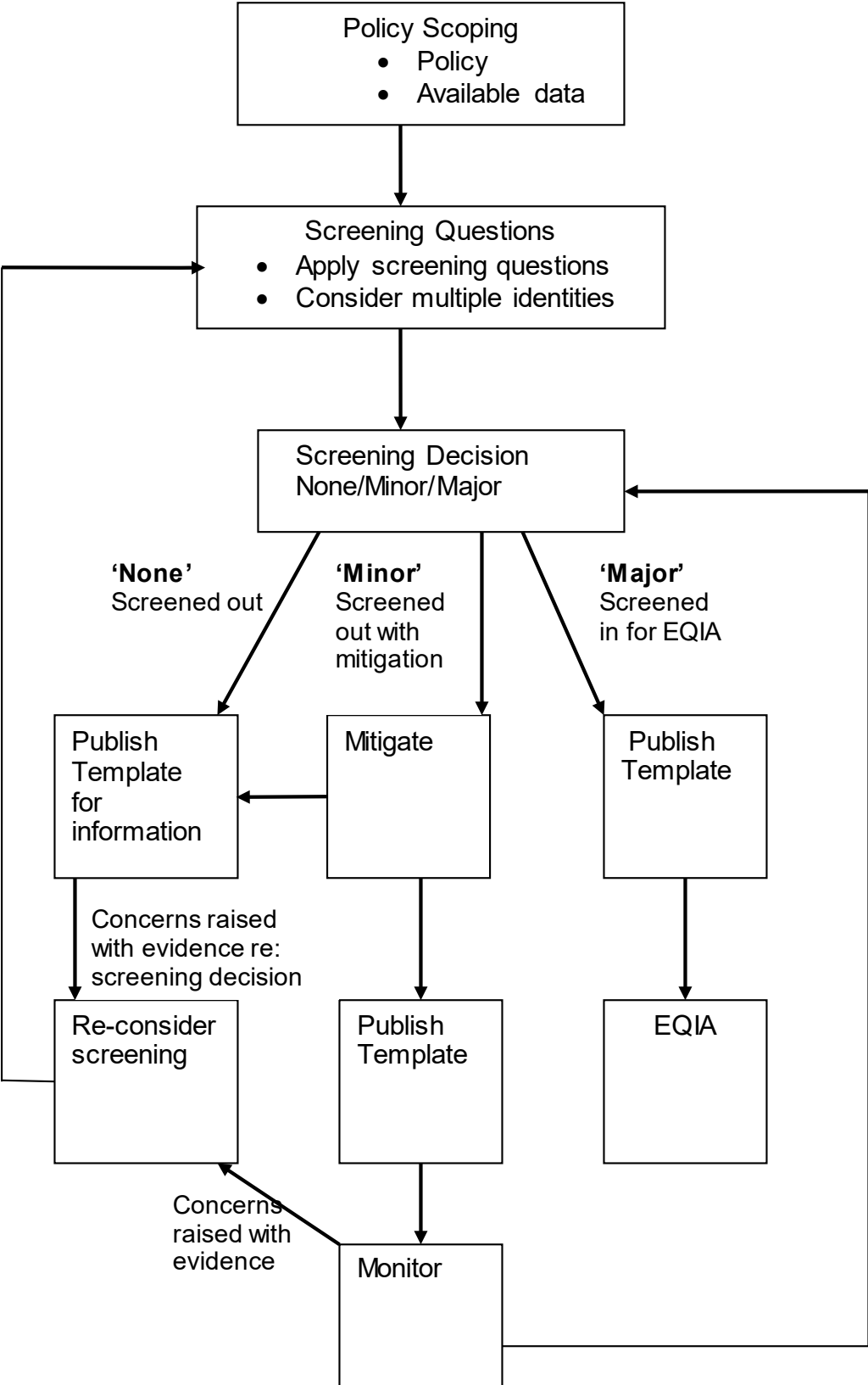
**Part 2. Screening questions** – asks about the extent of the likely impact of the policy on groups of people within each of the Section 75 categories. Details of the groups consulted and the level of assessment of the likely impact. This includes consideration of multiple identity and good relations issues.

**Part 3. Screening decision** – guides the public authority to reach a screening decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment (EQIA), or to introduce measures to mitigate the likely impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

**Part 4. Monitoring** – provides guidance to public authorities on monitoring for adverse impact and broader monitoring.

**Part 5. Approval and authorisation** – verifies the public authority’s approval of a screening decision by a senior manager responsible for the policy.

Flowchart for the equality screening process and decision.



## **Part 1. Policy scoping**

### **Information about the policy**

Name of the Policy

#### **Energy Strategy – The Path to Net Zero Energy**

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?

This is a new Energy Strategy.

What is it trying to achieve? (intended aims/outcomes)

The Energy Strategy sets out the Executive’s vision of achieving net zero carbon and affordable energy in Northern Ireland by 2050. It aims to ensure that NI’s energy is secure, affordable and clean.

The 2015 Paris Agreement aims to limit global warming to below 2°C. The UK Climate Change Act 2008 underpins the UK’s approach for responding to climate change, requiring CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and other greenhouse gases (GHGs) to be reduced. The Act was subsequently amended in 2019 for 100% reduction of GHGs by 2050, known as “net zero.”

Achieving Northern Ireland’s contribution to UK net zero emissions will require energy to be fully decarbonised by 2050. This is in line with The Committee for Climate Change recommendations for Northern Ireland in the 6<sup>th</sup> Carbon Budget. To achieve this, the Energy Strategy sets the intention to reduce carbon emissions from all energy-related sectors by 56% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels. The Energy Strategy provides the direction of travel for energy policy up to 2030 – a decade of delivery.

The strategy sets out Northern Ireland’s roadmap to 2030 as part of a longer-term pathway to 2050. This will give clear signals to industry and consumers and provide them with the confidence to invest in infrastructure and the workforce.

The strategy:

- sets out the strategic framework we will work within;
- provides a high level overview of the roadmap to 2030;

- presents the overarching investment, costs and benefits;
- details our ambition and delivery framework for each of five principles;
- presents the longer-term journey out to 2050; and
- outlines the key issues for delivering on the new strategy.

Energy generation and use is a wide-ranging and cross-cutting issue. In developing this strategy, the Department for the Economy (DfE) has collaborated across government and undertaken substantial stakeholder engagement via five working groups – Heat, Consumers, Power, Energy Efficiency and Transport – comprising over 70 organisations, as well as a Call for Evidence and Options consultation. It has developed a significant body of research and academic think pieces considering best practice and lessons learned from elsewhere.

The strategy is now overseen by a cross-departmental Programme Board which will provide critical evaluation of, and strategic direction for, a range of further proposals and consultations on the detail of new policies.

**Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?**

It is expected that the Energy Strategy will benefit all of the population in Northern Ireland including all Section 75 categories.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has published a report on the impact of global warming at 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. They made it clear that by limiting warming to 1.5° we may be able to mitigate some of the effects on health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security and economic growth.

Through a move to cleaner sources of heat, carbon emissions will be reduced along with energy costs, helping to tackle fuel poverty as well as reducing associated health problems.

**Who initiated or wrote the policy?**

The Energy Strategy is led by the Department for the Economy and has been developed through extensive stakeholder engagement, workshops and collaboration across government.

## Who owns and who implements the policy?

The Energy Strategy is a Northern Ireland Executive strategy. Whilst DfE has led the development of the strategy, the policies put forward in this strategy draw on all the evidence gathered to date and represent the views of a range of government departments that are involved in this work programme. Other Departments involved in the work programme are DAERA, DfC, DoE, DoF, DoJ, DoH and TEO.

Development of the Energy Strategy began in December 2019 with a Call for Evidence. The Executive has worked collectively since then to gather and assess further evidence alongside extensive stakeholder engagement. In July 2021, DfE completed a consultation on policy options for a new Energy Strategy spanning the full breadth of energy policy responsibilities across the Executive.

## Implementation factors

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision?

**Financial** - The investment required to deliver on the strategy's 2030 objectives and beyond will be substantial but this will deliver significant savings that the Climate Change Committee (CCC) advises will lead to a cheaper energy system overall. Taking into account these savings, the net cost of meeting our 2050 objectives is small – estimated to be less than 1% of the costs that are associated with maintaining our current fossil-fuel based system.

Focusing on energy-related sectors, by 2050, it is estimated that 94% of the total investment in clean energy will have been recouped. Taking into account these operational savings, the net annual cost of meeting net zero energy emissions from 2021 to 2050 is £62m, which is equivalent to around 0.7% of baseline estimated annual energy spending.

Although we will always aim to focus on the most cost effective actions and policies there are important decisions to be made around where costs do fall. When developing policies to deliver this strategy, we will evaluate the impact on different categories of people in Northern Ireland and aim to strike the right balance between users.

**Legislative** - Net zero carbon energy is consistent with UK legislation and reports from the Climate Change Committee who are statutory advisors to the UK government and devolved administrations. DfE will make necessary changes to legislation and develop a strong regulatory framework to deliver a new strategy and policies alongside supporting the relevant departments to take forward legislative changes which fall within their remit.

**Other, please specify** - Public attitudes and behaviour change are key to the success of the energy transition and will make an important contribution to meeting net zero. In line with the Climate Change Committee's 6<sup>th</sup> carbon budget pathway to net zero<sup>1</sup>, the Energy Strategy seeks to encourage both behavioural change and innovation to decarbonise our energy systems. Latest statistics published by DAERA<sup>2</sup> on public attitudes show a slight increase in concern for the environment from 75% of households in NI in 2019 to 78% in 2020.

As the success of the energy strategy will depend on population attitudes, DfE commissioned research to benchmark domestic and non-domestic consumer attitude and behaviours and intends to repeat this at agreed intervals to inform changes that will help shape policy development. This research will be published alongside the Energy Strategy<sup>3</sup>.

Main stakeholders affected

*Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon?*

- Staff
- Service users
- Other public sector organisations
- Voluntary/community/trade unions
- Business groups, local government, churches, universities and colleges and statutory bodies

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<sup>1</sup> [The-Sixth-Carbon-Budget-The-UKs-path-to-Net-Zero.pdf \(theccc.org.uk\)](#)

<sup>2</sup> [ni-environmental-statistics-report-2020\\_0.pdf \(daera-ni.gov.uk\)](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Energy Strategy business and consumer virtual insight and awareness consultation | Consumer Council](#)

- Members of the public

Over the past two years, while developing this strategy, the Department for the Economy (DfE) has collaborated across government and undertaken substantial stakeholder engagement with industry, consumer groups and members of the public. We acknowledge that the challenge we face requires solutions and approaches based on inclusivity and that continued engagement is vital.

## **Other policies with a bearing on this policy**

The UK Government recently published the Net Zero Strategy<sup>4</sup> and Energy White Paper.<sup>5</sup> Whilst energy policy is largely devolved in NI, some relevant areas remain reserved matters. There are also additional UK strategies and policies in specific areas, such as transport or offshore wind, which impact on Northern Ireland.

A new draft Programme for Government (PfG) outcomes framework was published in January 2021. The Energy Strategy will deliver against a number of the outcomes in this, particularly “We live and work sustainably – protecting the environment” and “Our economy is globally competitive, regionally balanced and carbon-neutral.” The new energy strategy must be directly aligned with the PfG by improving wellbeing for all by supporting efforts to tackle inequalities.

The Energy Strategy interfaces with a broad range of important strategies and frameworks, some still under development, that will support and reflect the ambitions of the new Energy Strategy including:

- Programme for Government, TEO
- Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland, SIB
- Energy Management Strategy, DfE/SIB
- Vision for a 10X Economy, DfE
- Skills Strategy, DfE
- Circular Economy Strategic Framework, DfE
- Green Growth Strategy, DAERA
- Environment Strategy, DAERA

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1026655/net-zero-strategy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1026655/net-zero-strategy.pdf)

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/945899/2012\\_16\\_BEIS\\_EWP\\_Command\\_Paper\\_Accessible.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/945899/2012_16_BEIS_EWP_Command_Paper_Accessible.pdf)



- Fuel Poverty Strategy, DfC

## Available evidence

Throughout the development of this strategy, DfE has worked closely with a broad cross-section of consumers, business, government and the energy industry.

The first stage of the strategy development was a Call for Evidence published in December 2019, which closed on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2020. This process also involved thematic workshops, stakeholder engagement and collaboration across government. A report on the Call for Evidence along with all the individual responses was published on 30 June 2020.<sup>6</sup> Throughout the policy process the Department has worked collaboratively with over 70 organisations represented on five working groups, established specific industry consultation groups, issued a monthly e-bulletin to over 600 stakeholders and established a cross governmental stakeholder group to align cross cutting policies. Alongside this consultation and engagement, the Department commissioned nine pieces of research to obtain quantitative and qualitative data, grant funded seven academic think pieces and funded seven more research projects that are currently underway but not yet completed. In addition, DfE's Transport Policy and Climate Change Branch has commissioned four research projects that are part-funded by DfE.

The second stage was the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation Paper<sup>7</sup> launched on 31 March and closed on 02 July 2021. The Department carried out virtual, public stakeholder events as well as consumer focus groups and an online business survey.<sup>8</sup> This commitment to collaboration is reflected in the high level of responses (283) to the policy options consultation resulting in stakeholders' feedback and views on policy proposals being reflected in Northern Ireland's new Energy Strategy.<sup>9</sup>

## Religious belief evidence / information:

The 2011 Census found that 48% of the population in Northern Ireland came from a Protestant background and 45% from a Catholic background. The

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<sup>6</sup> [Energy Strategy - Call for Evidence | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/energy-strategy-call-for-evidence)

<sup>7</sup> [Consultation on policy options for the new Energy Strategy for Northern Ireland | Department for the Economy \(economy-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/consultation-policy-options-new-energy-strategy-northern-ireland)

<sup>8</sup> [Energy Strategy business and consumer virtual insight and awareness consultation | Consumer Council](https://www.consumer-council-ni.gov.uk/energy-strategy-business-and-consumer-virtual-insight-and-awareness-consultation)

<sup>9</sup> [Energy Strategy for NI](https://www.economy-ni.gov.uk/energy-strategy-northern-ireland)

Equality Commission's Fair Employment Monitoring Report No. 30<sup>10</sup> indicates that 50.6% of the (monitored) private sector workforce are from a Protestant background and 49.4% from a Roman Catholic background.

**Political Opinion evidence / information:**

In 2020, 35% of respondees to a NI Life & Times Survey<sup>11</sup> considered themselves to be unionist, 19% nationalist and 42% neither.

A large number of stakeholders participated in the evidence gathering aspect of the strategy and, although information on individuals was not collected based on political opinion, no responses identified political opinion as a factor in differing impacts of this strategy.

**Racial Group evidence / information:**

The 2011 Census reported that 98% of the total NI population was white.

A large number of stakeholders participated in the evidence gathering aspect of the strategy and, although information on individuals was not collected based on racial group, no responses identified racial grouping as a factor in differing impacts of this strategy.

**Age evidence / information:**

NISRA population statistics for 2020 shows how the population has changed from 1995 – 2020. The proportion of the population aged 65 and over has increased by 29.5 per cent from mid-1995 to mid-2020. Conversely, the proportion of children (i.e. people aged 0 to 15 years) in Northern Ireland has decreased since mid-1994 by 17.3 per cent to mid-2020

The Northern Ireland population continues to age. NISRA population statistics for 2020<sup>12</sup> show:

- 0-15 years            20.9%
- 16-64                62.2%
- 65+                    16.9%

It is projected that from mid- 2028 onwards the older population will be larger than the number of children aged 0-15 years.

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<sup>10</sup> [Fair Employment Monitoring Report No.30 \(equalityni.org\)](https://www.equalityni.org/Fair-Employment-Monitoring-Report-No.30)

<sup>11</sup> [NI Life and Times Survey - 2020 : UNINATID \(ark.ac.uk\)](https://www.ark.ac.uk/NI-Life-and-Times-Survey-2020-UNINATID)

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.nisra.gov.uk/publications/registrars-general-annual-report-2020-population-and-migration>

DfE requested age of respondees as part of the policy options consultation for statistical analysis purposes. No differential impact has been identified in respect of the proposed policies within the Energy Strategy from the responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation.

### **Marital Status evidence / information:**

The 2011 Census contains information in relation to the marital and civil partnership status of the population within Northern Ireland:



A large number of stakeholders participated in the evidence gathering aspect of the strategy but information on individuals was not collected based on marital status and no responses identified marital as a factor in differing impacts of this strategy.

### **Sexual Orientation evidence / information:**

A large number of stakeholders participated in the evidence gathering aspect of the strategy but information on individuals was not collected based on sexual orientation and no responses identified sexual orientation as a factor in differing impacts of this strategy.

## **Men & Women generally** evidence / information:

NISRA population statistics for 2020 show that 50.7% are female with 49.3% male<sup>13</sup>. By 2031, projections are that the male/female balance will be 50/50 with that balance persisting to 2051.

The NISRA Labour Force Survey states that in 2020, of those aged 16-64 who were employed, 52% (432,000) were male<sup>14</sup> compared to 48% of women (392,000). There are differences between the public and private sector. The public sector has a large majority of females within its composition (65%) whereas just under half (45%) of the private sector workforce is female. NISRA states that the 2020 population of Northern Ireland is made up of 961,400 females and 934,200<sup>15</sup> males, however our future workforce balance is estimated to be slightly male dominated as the current population split for ages 0-15 is 192,844 female with 203,081 male, a difference of 2.6%.

DAERA will be leading on the Just Transition within the Green Growth Strategy. QUB has published an independent think piece on “Mapping a Just Transition”<sup>16</sup> for Northern Ireland. This was grant funded by DfE.

Research carried out by DfE Skills Division into jobs advertised by the energy sector has identified that communications and customer service are the most sought after jobs although we do not know how many women or men are in these jobs.

A large number of stakeholders participated in the evidence gathering aspect of the Energy Strategy policy options consultation. Information on whether participants were women or men was not collected as part of this exercise.

## **Disability** evidence / information:

The latest data from NISRA in 2018 report that 21.7% of the adult NI population are disabled.<sup>17</sup>

One of eight consumer focus groups conducted during the options consultation phase comprised people with disabilities. There were no discernible differences reported between the views expressed by people with disabilities or long-term illness and other focus group participants.

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<sup>13</sup> [Registrar General Northern Ireland Annual Report 2020 \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/annual-report-2020)

<sup>14</sup> [Labour Force Survey Annual Summary 2020 \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/labour-force-survey-annual-summary-2020)

<sup>15</sup> [NI Population 2020.jpg \(2481x1749\) \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/population-2020)

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/SECA/News/MappingaJustEnergyTransitioninNorthernIreland.html>

<sup>17</sup> [August 2018 NI Wellbeing Report.pdf \(nisra.gov.uk\)](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/annual-report-2018)

In addition, a large number of stakeholders participated in the other evidence gathering aspects of the policy options consultation document, covering a wide range of interests from many backgrounds. Information on individuals with or without disabilities was not collected as part of this exercise.

### **Dependants evidence / information:**

A large number of stakeholders participated in the evidence gathering aspect of the Energy Strategy policy options consultation. No respondents were under the age of 18 yrs old so therefore no information on whether participants were dependents was collected as part of this exercise.

### **Needs, experiences and priorities**

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular policy/decision?

Vulnerable consumers are a section of the population that have been identified as requiring specific help in the energy transition. That could include any one of the section 75 categories so although no specific risks have been identified at this early stage future policies under development will address any impact on vulnerable consumers with the appropriate protection frameworks. These future policies will be subject to individual Section 75 screenings and impact assessments.

### **Religious belief**

No differential impact has been identified in respect of the proposed policies within the Energy Strategy, responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any difference in needs, experience or priorities. The strategy and its policy interventions and incentive schemes will apply to everyone regardless of their religious belief.

### **Political Opinion**

No differential impact has been identified in respect of the proposed policies within the Energy Strategy, responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any

difference in needs, experience or priorities. The strategy and its policy interventions and incentive schemes will apply to everyone regardless of their political opinion.

### **Racial Group**

No differential impact has been identified in respect of the proposed policies within the Energy Strategy, responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any difference in needs, experience or priorities. The strategy and its policy interventions and incentive schemes will apply to everyone regardless of their racial group.

### **Age**

DfE will continue to consider all age groups through an awareness campaign as we aim to prepare people for the changes that will happen due to the need for the energy transition and that will affect their lives. There will be targeted support for adults to assist them in taking the best decisions for their needs, for example, the establishment of a One Stop Shop for advice.

Over time, we will aim to link in with educators for primary age children and with other young people through social media.

We will establish new frameworks that will provide appropriate protections for all consumers, and to support our vision of affordable energy we will consider specific financial assistance to support our vulnerable consumers, particularly those on low incomes, which may include our older population, those with disabilities, dependants or other section 75 groups.

### **Marital status**

No differential impact has been identified in respect of the proposed policies within the Energy Strategy, responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any difference in needs, experience or priorities. The strategy and its policy interventions and incentive schemes will apply to everyone regardless of their marital status.

### **Sexual orientation**

No differential impact has been identified in respect of the proposed policies within the Energy Strategy, responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any

difference in needs, experience or priorities. The strategy and its policy interventions and incentive schemes will apply to everyone regardless of their sexual orientation.

### **Men and Women Generally**

No differential impact has been identified in respect of the proposed policies within the Energy Strategy, responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any difference in needs, experience or priorities. The strategy and its policy interventions and incentive schemes will apply to everyone regardless of whether they are men or women.

The Paris Agreement takes into account “the imperatives of a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs.” A just transition therefore can play a strong role in promoting equality between men and women.

### **Disability**

No differential impact has been identified in respect of the proposed policies within the Energy Strategy, responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any difference in needs, experience or priorities. The strategy and its policy interventions and incentive schemes will apply to everyone regardless of disability.

### **Dependants**

No differential impact has been identified in respect of the proposed policies within the Energy Strategy, responses to the Call for Evidence or the Energy Strategy Policy Options Consultation. The department does not anticipate any difference in needs, experience or priorities. The strategy and its policy interventions and incentive schemes will apply to everyone regardless of whether they are a person with a dependant or a person without a dependant.



## **Part 2. Screening questions**

### **Screening questions**

- 1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?**

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Religious belief**:

The Energy Strategy is likely to have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion**:

The Energy Strategy is likely to have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group**:

The Energy Strategy is likely to have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Age**:

The Energy Strategy is likely to have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Marital Status**:

The Energy Strategy is likely to have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Sexual Orientation**:

The Energy Strategy is likely to have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None



Details of the likely policy impacts on **Men and Women**:  
The Energy Strategy is likely to have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Disability**:  
The Energy Strategy is likely to have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Dependants**:  
The Energy Strategy is likely to have no specific impact on this category.

What is the level of impact? None

**2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories? Yes/No**

**Religious Belief –**

No. The Energy Strategy has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

**Political Opinion –**

No. The Energy Strategy has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

**Racial Group –**

No. The Energy Strategy has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

**Age –**

No. The Energy Strategy has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

**Marital Status –**

No. The Energy Strategy has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

**Sexual Orientation –**

No. The Energy Strategy has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

**Men and Women generally –**

No. The Energy Strategy has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

**Disability –**

No. The Energy Strategy has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

**Dependants –**

No. The Energy Strategy has no direct impact on the equality of opportunity of their background or circumstances.

**3. To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?**

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Religious belief:**

The Energy Strategy has no direct good relations impact.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Political Opinion:**

The Energy Strategy has no direct good relations impact.

What is the level of impact? None

Details of the likely policy impacts on **Racial Group:**

The Energy Strategy has no direct good relations impact.

What is the level of impact? None

**4. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?**

**Religious Belief –**

No. The Energy Strategy has no direct good relations impact.

**Political Opinion –**

No. The Energy Strategy has no direct good relations impact.

**Racial Group –**

No. The Energy Strategy has no direct good relations impact.

## Additional considerations

### ***Multiple identity***

Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities?

*(For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).*

No.

### Part 3. Screening decision

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

The Energy Strategy –The Path to Net Zero Energy is screened out without mitigation or alternative policy adopted. The energy transition to renewables will impact all the population, irrespective of their religion, political opinion, race, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, disability or if they have dependants. The Energy Strategy includes a wide range of policy options, which are at an early stage of development. Several of these policies will be subject to individual Section 75 screenings and impact assessments in the future.

While no specific risks have been identified at this stage future policies will consider and address any impact on vulnerable consumers by establishing the appropriate protection frameworks, e.g. for people with disabilities or our elderly population.

We will

- review existing energy consumer protection and redress frameworks and identify gaps to ensure they remain effective;
- introduce additional frameworks for new services where relevant; and
- involve key consumer representatives in reviewing new energy policies developed across government to address any consumer impact identified.

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment the public authority should consider if the policy should be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced - please provide details.

No adverse impact on equality of opportunity has been identified for any of the Section 75 categories.

If the decision is to subject the policy to an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

Not applicable

## **Mitigation**

Can the policy/decision be amended or changed or an alternative policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?

Not applicable.

## **Part 4. Monitoring**

Public authorities should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

## **Part 5 - Approval and authorisation**

Screened by: Elaine McManus  
Position/Job Title: Deputy Principal  
Business Area/ Branch: Energy Strategy Branch  
Date: 05 September 2021

Approved by: Anne-Maire McConn  
Position/Job Title: Principal  
Business Area/Branch: Energy Strategy Branch  
Date: 02 November 2021