



ENERGY STRATEGY E-BULLETIN

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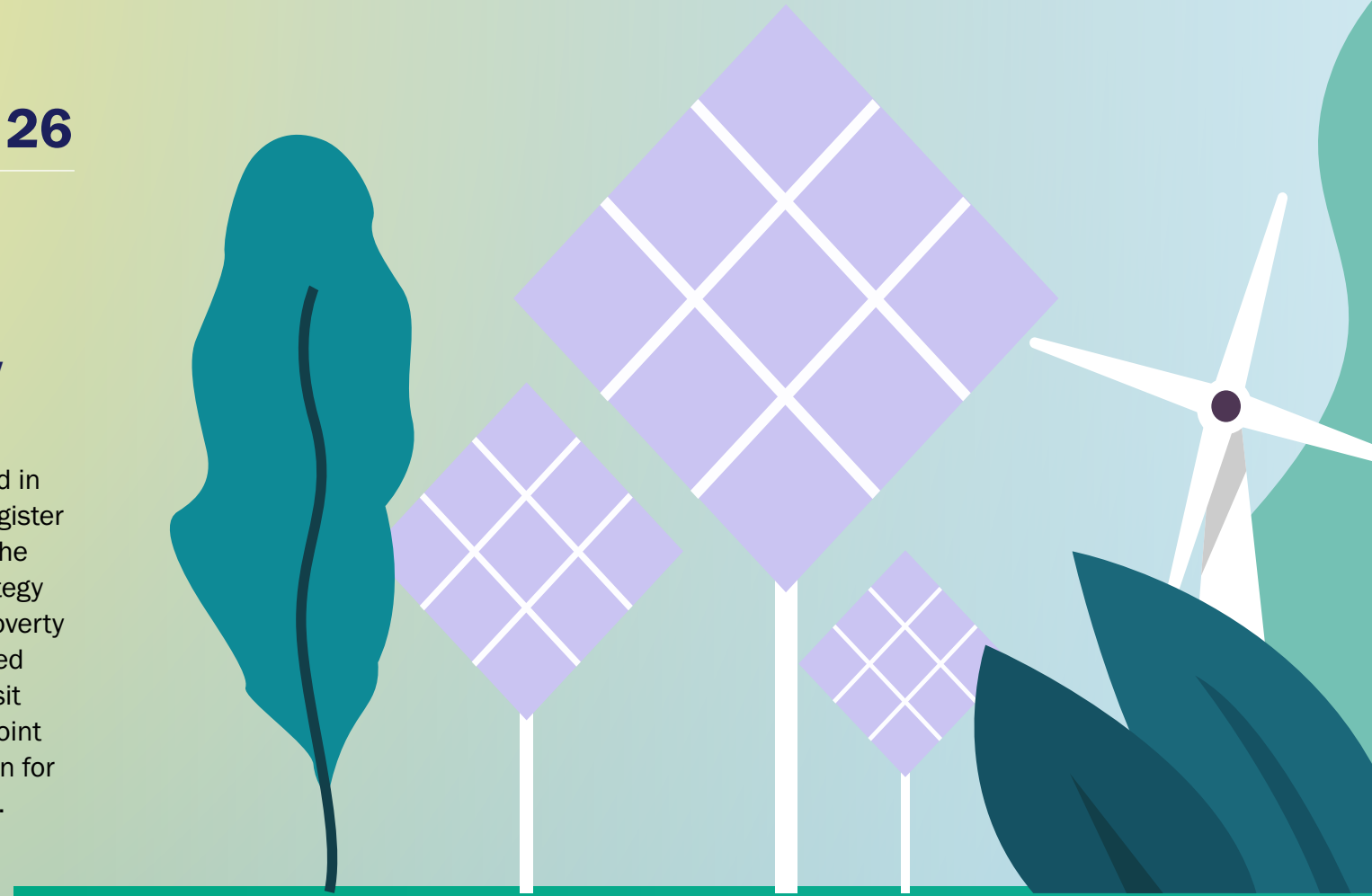




WELCOME TO THE ENERGY STRATEGY E-BULLETIN – ISSUE 26

In this edition, we highlight the Minister’s launch of the Energy Strategy Action Plan for 2024, outlining the priority areas across government to progress the Energy Strategy this year.

We also encourage stakeholders interested in the cross-cutting topic of fuel poverty to register for the workshops being held by DfC over the coming months to inform on both the Strategy and Scheme in developing the new Fuel Poverty Strategy. There is a report on the DfE hosted British Irish Council Energy Work Sector visit and the publication of feedback from the joint UR and CCNI call for evidence on protection for consumers during energy decarbonisation.



MINISTER FOR THE ECONOMY LAUNCHES ENERGY STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2024

DfE Minister Conor Murphy launched the Energy Strategy Action Plan 2024 on 28 March 2024. It outlines 21 actions from priority areas across government to continue the progression towards the objectives of the Energy Strategy.

Context

The Energy Strategy - The Path to Net Zero Energy is being delivered in the context of the 2022 Climate Change Act which requires government to urgently reduce emissions achieve net zero by 2050. The Strategy aims to end the use of fossil fuels and enable us to become self-sufficient in affordable, renewable energy. Economic initiatives such as regional City Deal investments, a proposed Investment Zone and the development of a Net Zero Accelerator fund will be leveraged to increase success.

Renewable energy sources, including wind, biomethane and geothermal, will end the import of fossil fuels. It will also ensure that consumers pay a fair price for the energy produced locally, breaking the link with global commodity prices which has not served our people well.

The innovative technology solutions needed to achieve net zero are also needed by our neighbours and indeed the rest of the world. Being at the forefront of these technologies therefore provides significant opportunity to grow good jobs in our local economy.

Strategic Priorities

The Action Plan focuses on five key areas of strategic priority to progress the Energy Strategy:

- Replacing Fossil Fuels;
- Improving Energy Efficiency;
- Growing Renewable Electricity;
- Supporting the Electricity Grid; and
- Growing the Green Economy.

The Action Plan, including actions with detail on how we hope to progress in 2024, can be [read here](#). You can also view the launch video by clicking on the link [here](#).



Department for the Economy | An Roinn Geilleagair
www.economy-ni.gov.uk

Action Plan 2024

THE PATH TO NET ZERO ENERGY

**SECURE.
AFFORDABLE.
CLEAN.**

MARCH 2024

The graphic features a stylized illustration of a sustainable city with solar panels, wind turbines, and a sailboat on the water, set against a backdrop of mountains and a blue sky.



FUEL POVERTY: ENGAGEMENT ON A NEW STRATEGY AND SCHEME

Department for Communities (DfC) are developing a new Fuel Poverty Strategy and are seeking engagement with stakeholders on the new Strategy and Scheme.

A new Fuel Poverty Strategy is being developed to provide an all-of-government framework for addressing fuel poverty and its impacts in Northern Ireland. The new Strategy will recognise their responsibilities under the [Climate Change Act \(NI\) 2022](#) and focus on a Just Transition for the residential sector, ensuring that they place consumers at the heart of our energy future. Simultaneously DfC are developing a successor to the Affordable Warmth Scheme to ensure that home energy support is available for low-income households for the future.

DfC are now beginning a period of stakeholder engagement to inform both Strategy and Scheme given the cross-over between the two. This will take the form of workshops and focus groups across Northern Ireland between March - June 2024. The events will be roundtable discussions offering everyone a chance to have their say. Each series of workshops will have at least one online event for those unable to attend in person.

How to register

- Details of all events and registration links can be found here: [Fuel Poverty and the Just Transition | Department for Communities \(communities-ni.gov.uk\)](#)
- For further information on any of the events please contact: fuelpovertystrategy@communities-ni.gov.uk

Topic	Date	Location
Eligibility: How to determine who should receive support	Tuesday 9th April	Belfast – NICVA
	Monday 15th April	Derry/Londonderry – Shantallow Community Centre
	Thursday 18th April	Online – Teams
Collaboration: Identifying partners and their roles	Tuesday 30th April	Belfast – NICVA
	Thursday 7th May	Dungannon – The Junction
	Thursday 9th May	Online -Teams
Understanding and framing: Improving our definition and developing a vision and principles	Thursday 23rd May	Newry – NMEA
	Wednesday 29th May	Belfast – NICVA
	Monday 3rd June	Online – Teams
Feedback session	Thursday 20th June	Online – Teams

Where an event is repeated it is not necessary to attend more than one. DfC may also schedule some additional online events over the summer, if necessary.



BRITISH IRISH COUNCIL ENERGY WORK SECTOR VISIT

The Department for the Economy (DfE) hosted member officials from the British Irish Council, facilitating visits to local companies embracing net zero technologies, and holding the Energy Work Sector meeting in Adelaide House.

On Thursday afternoon their journey began at Great Victoria Street Bus Station where William McCullagh from Translink gave an outline of their plans for upscaling their hydrogen bus fleet and plan for going beyond Net Zero by 2050.

Translink also kindly provided a hydrogen bus for transport both to and from the site visits.

Firstly, the group visited Artemis Technologies where they met with key team members, had a tour of their manufacturing facility including the showing of Pioneer – the electric foiling workboat technology demonstrator, and a simulator demonstration.

Next the group visited Catagen where after introductions from Dr Andrew Woods (CEO and Co-Founder) and Professor Roy Douglas (CTO and Co-Founder), they were given a tour of the Green Emissions Testing Facilities followed by a tour of the Net Zero Technology Centre including the biohydrogen generator, e-fuel generator, (which can produce e-diesel, e-gasoline and e-kerosene SAF) and hydrogen compression technologies.

All in all it was a highly successful visit, with great feedback both from the visiting officials and the companies involved.



PUBLICATION OF FEEDBACK FROM CALL FOR EVIDENCE ON PROTECTION FOR CONSUMERS DURING ENERGY DECARBONISATION

The Utility Regulator and Consumer Council for Northern Ireland have published feedback following their joint Call for Evidence on protection for consumers during energy decarbonisation on 27th March 2024

The joint **Call for Evidence** was issued on 7 December 2022 in response to the request in Action 3 of the Department for the Economy's Energy Strategy – The Path to Net Zero Action Plan 2022. The purpose was to assess the future need for the protection of consumers during the energy transition.

A total of eight responses were received from the wider energy sector to the Call for Evidence. A summary of stakeholder feedback and resulting areas for further consideration are contained in the published document. The feedback is grouped under 14 areas of focus, which includes:

1. All consumers need protected regardless of their heat or energy source and vulnerable consumers may need specific targeted protections.

- 2.** There is a need for appropriate redress, which, as an example, might be an Energy Ombudsman.
- 3.** There is a need for independent, accurate and consistent information, and advice across energy products and services which is easily accessible. There was support for delivery of this through the 'One Stop Shop'.

4. There is support for the use of a standard 'quality mark,' which would cover accreditations for installers and providers, and post-installation service standards.

5. Appropriate tariffs and tariff structures are essential.

This published feedback should be a useful contribution to emerging thinking on how Just Transition can be delivered.

