

ENERGY STRATEGY E-BULLETIN

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WELCOME TO THE ENERGY STRATEGY E-BULLETIN

Welcome to the sixth Energy Strategy update, which this month focuses on consumers. Consumers are central to how we develop proposals for the new strategy.

We must not only seek to protect consumers as we develop new policies, but also enable them to embark on a different energy journey. In this edition we outline how we intend to do this. We also welcome our second contribution from another Department, in this case DAERA, who are developing a Green Growth Strategy and Delivery Framework, which will also help transform our society toward net-zero carbon by 2050.



Thomas Byrne

Thomas Byrne
Director, Energy Strategy

THE ROLE OF CONSUMERS IN THE ENERGY TRANSITION

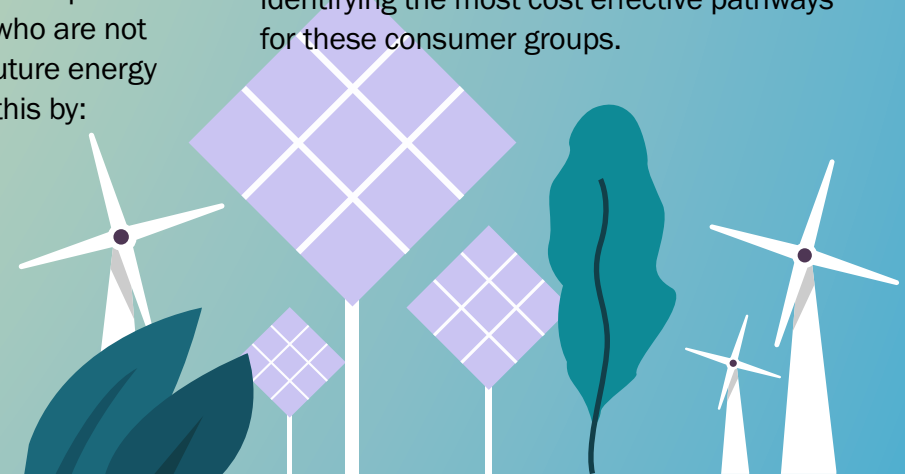
Achieving net zero carbon energy by 2050 will mean a dramatic change from how our current energy system operates. Our energy future will involve a relationship change in consumers' awareness of their energy options and interactions with energy services to enable us to meet our 2050 target. More broadly, this will also require consideration of measures that can help balance energy supply and demand, including demand side flexibility and the tools that can enable this, such as smart meters. This is also driven by European policy – the Clean Energy Package - which emphasises both digitalisation and decentralisation alongside decarbonisation.



Enabling and Protecting Energy Consumers

For the new energy strategy to succeed, we must help consumers embark on a different energy journey, and we are involving consumer representatives in the development of the strategy.

This new approach may mean benefiting from new and smarter ways of generating and using renewable energy and technologies. Concurrently, we must protect consumers - particularly those who are not able or willing to embrace the future energy system changes. We are doing this by:



1. Defining Consumer Populations

Developing policy proposals through the lens of different consumer populations ensures that the attitudes, behaviour, needs and interests of these groups are central. Our population groups focus on both domestic and non-domestic consumers. We are paying particular regard to more vulnerable domestic cohorts and those living outside urban areas, as well as the energy-intensive business. All our policy work is focused on identifying the most cost effective pathways for these consumer groups.

2. Identifying key consumer issues and remedies

We will be screening policy options to assess if they will ‘enable and/or protect’ consumers – which is the central theme to our consumer work. This will consider key issues for consumers such as:

- Energy costs and affordability
- Data management
- Information, advice and support
- Consumer Protection Framework
- Heat outside urban areas
- Behavioural and societal changes needed

3. Enabling Citizen Energy Communities

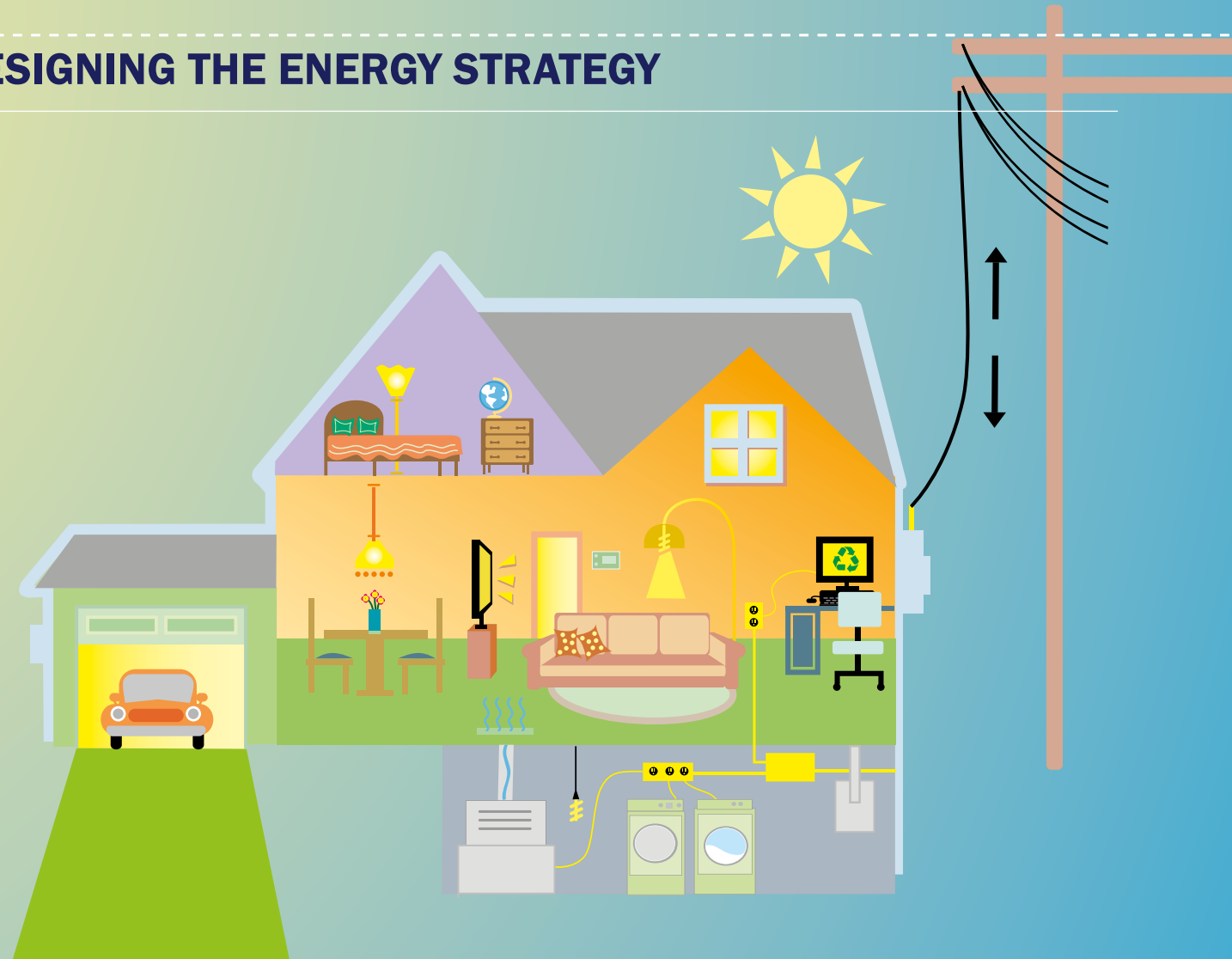
Citizen Energy Communities have already proved successful in Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland and across Europe, empowering local communities and citizens to generate and manage their energy. The new Energy Strategy will consider how enabling such communities in Northern Ireland can support and improve our energy future.



CO-PRODUCING AND CO-DESIGNING THE ENERGY STRATEGY

We are committed to ensuring consumers are central to the new Energy Strategy, regardless of where they live in Northern Ireland. Adopting coproduction principles has informed how we work alongside our stakeholders during the Strategy development process. In the New Year, we will host virtual consumer reference groups with regional representation from our different domestic and business consumer populations. This will enable us to co-design policy options with the citizens they are intended to support.

We also aim to commission a survey of domestic and non-domestic energy consumers so we have a measurement of current attitudes and behaviours about issues relevant to the energy transition at the beginning of the new Strategy. We plan to repeat this survey in the coming years to monitor the Strategy's success for consumers and achieving our net zero target.



GREEN GROWTH

Everyone in Northern Ireland is impacted by climate and environmental challenges. The Northern Ireland Green Growth Strategy and Delivery Framework, led by DAERA, will be a joined-up, long-term plan to help Departments and our delivery partners develop and implement programmes which are focused on encouraging and growing our economy in a way that also protects our environment. Green Growth will recognise and reward initiatives that reduce our carbon emissions, benefitting all of us who live and work in Northern Ireland and helping transform our society toward net-zero Carbon by 2050.

The Strategy and Delivery Framework will be designed in partnership with a range of stakeholders and delivery partners across the private, community and voluntary sectors, and Local Government. Once this is drafted, there will be a full consultation to give everyone an opportunity to express their views before the Strategy is finalised.

For further information on Green Growth, please contact: **GreenGrowthCo-ordination@daera-ni.gov.uk**

