

No Regret Actions Today

Renewable Gas Conference 2023



Northern Ireland's Gas Network Operators are committed to the full decarbonisation of the regional gas network.

Today we are announcing 5 near-term commitments to support the sustainable introduction of renewable gases in Northern Ireland. We believe successfully delivering these least-regret commitments will lead to a step-change in the decarbonisation of Northern Ireland's homes, businesses and wider energy system.

But we can't do it alone. We need support from industry, policy and public sector stakeholders to unlock the economic, decarbonisation and environmental benefits associated with producing and utilising renewable gases in Northern Ireland.



Research & Development

Continue to invest in research and demonstration projects to inform the lowest cost transition of NI's Gas Networks to support NI's Integrated Energy System

Our Commitments

- From 2024, we stand ready to significantly increase our investment in research projects which help accelerate the energy transition, using best in class learning and NI's world-class research institutions.
- Champion and support the green investment opportunities that exist in NI, attracting new market participants and supply chain investment opportunities that align to the NI 10X Delivery Plan.

Support Required

- The effective and timely provision of regulatory Energy Strategy Funding, for the NI gas network operators to collectively advance technical, market and regulatory readiness of decarbonisation solutions.
- Strategic leadership from NI Executive and government departments to embed a culture of green innovation within the local economy, to include centres of excellence, flagship projects, ring fenced green growth funding and acceleration of enabling skill sets.



Advance No Regret Outcomes

In parallel to growing gas customer base, become a leader in the championing and facilitation of energy efficiency and energy volume reduction initiatives

Our Commitments

- Between 2023 and 2028 Distribution Network Operators will invest a further £150m in developing gas network connections – representing a further c.72,000 properties connecting to the gas network – reducing carbon emissions by up to an additional c.165,000 tonnes of CO₂ per year by 2030.
- Distribution Network Operators will champion energy efficiency advice at the time of all new domestic gas connections, educating and advocating that connecting householders also undertake thermal efficiency enhancement, with a target of 50% uptake by 2026.

Support Required

- Continued regulatory support for the ongoing growth of gas network connections and implementation of renewable gas market solutions.
- Urgent implementation of a suitably funded NI Executive led Energy Efficiency Programme to provide awareness, support and guidance to energy users. To include effective support schemes that target both low income and able to pay householders to enhance the thermal efficiency of their properties.



3

Acceleration of Biomethane Injection Volumes

Support the development of a sustainable biomethane industry that provides competitive renewable energy solutions to NI Energy users

Our Commitments

- By 2030 1.5TWh of Biomethane will be injected into the NI Gas Network annually.

Support Required

- Urgent development of a NI Biomethane Action Plan, that sets out a clear regional ambition and pathway to achieving interim milestones, and which helps to stimulate wider enabling supply chains.
- A targeted market mechanism that aids the transition of large energy user volumes to biomethane solutions.

4

Network ready for a Hydrogen Economy

Facilitate the growth of an indigenous hydrogen economy in NI that can support the decarbonisation of multiple sectors

Our Commitments

- By 2028 the gas network in NI will meet all relevant technical and regulatory standards to accept both hydrogen blend imports and locally produced hydrogen injection.
- By 2028, working with sectoral partners, complete a full technical and commercial assessment, evaluating a strategically sited regional 'Hydrogen Valley' that will connect strategic hydrogen production sites with large-scale storage and demand.

Support Required

- NI Executive and Regulatory support to develop a forward-looking, ambitious Northern Ireland Hydrogen Action Plan in conjunction with NI stakeholders.
- Relevant NI Executive Departments support engagement with the UK Government to access the necessary funding to support the development of a regional Hydrogen Valley/Cluster asset.

5

Develop Integrated Energy System Solutions

Advance our pathway in conjunction with other energy system stakeholders to achieve the most optimal decarbonisation pathway for NI consumers

Our Commitments

- Establish a long-term strategic gas system planning framework, which would interact on a cross sector basis, including with NI's electricity operators to promote an integrated whole energy system approach.
- By 2026, Distribution Network Operators will have commenced extensive Hybrid Heating early adopter activity across owner occupier/social and small commercial properties.

Support Required

- NI Executive and the Utility Regulator to develop an increasingly integrated / whole energy system approach across their forward work plans and energy system planning.
- Policy support that recognises the value of Hybrid Heating systems and the establishment of a regional target and supporting market frameworks that encourages early adoption.

1

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2

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