



THE
NORTHERN ENERGY
TASKFORCE
A CALL FOR EVIDENCE

ABOUT IPPR NORTH

IPPR North is IPPR's dedicated thinktank for the North of England. With its head office in Manchester and representatives in Newcastle, IPPR North's research, together with our stimulating and varied events programme, seeks to produce innovative policy ideas for fair, democratic and sustainable communities across the North of England.

IPPR's purpose is to conduct and promote research into, and the education of the public in, the economic, social and political sciences, science and technology, the voluntary sector and social enterprise, public services, and industry and commerce.

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NEW IDEAS
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ABOUT THE NORTHERN ENERGY TASKFORCE

The Northern Energy Taskforce has been established to oversee an ambitious programme of work over the next 18 months that will develop an energy strategy for the northern powerhouse. The Taskforce will be chaired by Sir John Harman, who will be supported by a number of high-profile figures with expertise across infrastructure, engineering, finance, academia and local government. It is supported by IPPR staff in a research and secretariat capacity.

The taskforce has three central objectives.

- 1. Develop a plan for the northern energy system to 2030**, addressing the key needs and challenges facing energy consumers and businesses in the North.
- 2. Create a vision of the northern energy sector in 2030** and a practical roadmap to get there, addressing the economic opportunities for businesses, higher education institutions and the public sector in the energy sector.
- 3. Set out a plan for 'energy devolution'** that will consider whether and how various powers and responsibilities for energy issues should be devolved to different pan-northern, sub-regional and local levels.

This call for evidence is an opportunity to feed into the work of the Taskforce, and is aimed at all businesses, organisations and individuals who wish to contribute their research, analysis and policy ideas relating to the future of the northern energy sector.

BACKGROUND

The energy sector is a key industry in the North, with major centres of power generation in coal, gas, nuclear, onshore and offshore wind, and associated clusters of manufacturing and service industries. Many of the North's higher education institutions have industry-linked expertise in energy, and the sector provides a wide range of jobs at all skill levels. Following the Paris agreement on climate change, the energy sector faces a deep challenge: to decarbonise more or less completely by mid-century. Addressing this challenge will not just deliver the benefits associated with reducing carbon emissions – it also presents an enormous opportunity for the North to optimise its existing strength in the energy sector, and secure the maximum economic benefit for the region.

A large number of old power stations are closing and being replaced by new technologies with different characteristics. Offshore wind, onshore wind, solar, new nuclear, small-scale gas and diesel engines,

tidal and wave, combined-cycle gas turbines and biomass are all in development or planned across the North. The integration of these technologies presents new challenges for balancing the network; this, in turn, is leading to rapid developments in demand-management and battery storage.

It is not just the power sector that is changing. Heat accounts for half of the UK's total energy supply, and will need to decarbonise rapidly over the next 25 years if the UK is to stay within its legally binding carbon budgets. Due to the structure of the UK economy, a large proportion of this heat demand is in the North, and the process of decarbonising the supply will affect important sectors of the economy as well as every home and place of work. It will involve a major programme of energy efficiency delivery to reduce total demand, and the rollout of low-carbon heat technologies such as heat pumps, hydrogen networks and boilers, district heating schemes, combined heat and power stations, biomass boilers and green gas solutions.

To ensure that secure and affordable energy supplies are maintained, it is vital that this transformation in the energy system is co-ordinated at the appropriate levels. The Northern Energy Taskforce and IPPR are keen to explore whether a unique and discrete set of circumstances prevail in the north of England, and to what extent it will be necessary for many elements of energy policy, regulation and delivery to be devolved from the national level. The Taskforce will consider the advantages and disadvantages of locating responsibility at the regional, sub-regional and local levels.

This call for evidence seeks to bring together existing research, and the valuable experiences of those working in the northern energy sector, to feed into the development of an energy strategy that maximises the opportunities for the North arising from the transformation occurring within the energy system.

QUESTIONS

Interested parties are invited to share their thoughts, insight and ideas as they relate to energy in the North. The call for evidence is seeking to answer three key questions.

1. What are the existing strengths and weaknesses in the northern energy system? These will include:
 - 'hard' elements such as power stations, electricity networks, manufacturing facilities, housing stock, and port facilities
 - 'soft' elements such as training capacity, community schemes, organisations and networks, and research centres.
2. Where are the areas of potential in the North's energy system, in terms of:
 - the opportunity for new energy generation in, for example (but not limited to), hydrogen, shale gas, industrial carbon capture and storage, offshore wind, nuclear, and marine

- the opportunities in managing energy demand through, for example (but again, not limited to), energy efficiency, demand-side response, storage, and smart grids?
3. What are the opportunities for the wider economy – particularly key northern industrial sectors – that arise from the need to decarbonise, and what are the key challenges that are likely to arise? What role can an industrial strategy play in supporting northern industry to meet those challenges?
 4. Where are the areas of potential for joint working across the northern regions to develop the energy sector, in respect to – for example – training and skills, research and education, infrastructure and finance.

HOW TO SUBMIT

This call for evidence is open until 28 February 2017. Submissions, of no more than 2,000 words, can be made in writing, and preferably sent as an attachment to northernenergytaskforce@ippr.org. If you do not wish your submission to be made public, please state this clearly at the start of your submission. Respondents may publicise their written evidence themselves, but in doing so should indicate that it was prepared for the Taskforce.

When responding, please ensure that you include your relevant contact details. Evidence should be attributed and dated, with a note of your name and, if applicable, your position. Please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing an organisation. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please make it clear whom the organisation represents and, where applicable, how the views of members were assembled.