

Belfast City Council
Draft Energy One Stop Shop Consultation Response

QUESTION 1 – Do you agree with the Energy One Stop Shop underpinning principles?

Belfast City Council response: Yes, we agree with the identified principles as set out in the consultation document. In addition, we would encourage the Energy One Stop Shop to align with and support regional and local targets where feasible, for example the Belfast target of a 66% reduction in carbon emissions by 2025 based on 2020 baselines, 80% reduction by 2030, and 100% by 2050 which have been adopted by the city and were recommended in the Belfast Net Zero Carbon Roadmap.

QUESTION 2 – Do you agree with the definitions for each of the proposed principles?

Belfast City Council response: Yes.

QUESTION 3 – Do you agree with the proposed strategic objectives for the Energy One Stop Shop?

Belfast City Council response: Yes, we welcome the strategic objectives and the focus on people, businesses and communities, decarbonisation, and the regard to those who may be least able to afford to make changes in relation to energy efficiency, power, heat and transport. As set out above we would encourage the Energy One Stop Shop to align with and support regional and local targets and initiatives, for example in Belfast a Retrofit Hub has been established which is working to develop a retrofit programme for the city and we would welcome advice, guidance, and input from the Energy One Stop Shop in that and other initiatives such as the development of a Belfast Local Energy Plan and development of a Belfast EV Strategy which are both underway and due to complete during 2023.

QUESTION 4 – Do you agree that the Energy One Stop Shop should provide advice, information and support to domestic consumers, micro, small and medium businesses and community energy groups?

Belfast City Council response: Yes. We would also encourage the reach and uptake of information to be analysed to identify areas or groups which are not availing of the support and information provided.

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QUESTION 5 – Do you agree that the Energy One Stop Shop should take account of the needs of vulnerable domestic consumers, in particular those with low incomes, of pensionable age, digitally excluded, living with chronic ailment or disability or in rural areas?

Belfast City Council response: Yes, we welcome this focus on vulnerable domestic consumers and would encourage this to be a key part of the communications and service delivery plans of the Energy One Stop Shop. Belfast City Council would be keen to work with the new One Stop Shop to explore opportunities for alignment with existing programmes in Belfast.

We would welcome a referral pathway from the Council into the One Stop Shop for vulnerable domestic consumers and vice versa. The most vulnerable in our community will require financial support, however the current grant schemes available have limited funding and are oversubscribed due to the demand, especially within Belfast. We would like to see additional information around the resources to support both the Energy One Stop Shop and local provision by the likes of Belfast City Council.

QUESTION 6 – Do you agree with the types of services and support that the Energy One Stop Shop should deliver?

Belfast City Council response: Yes.

QUESTION 7 – Should the Energy One Stop Shop deliver any other services or activities? If so, list your priorities.

Belfast City Council response: In addition to the suggestion “to undertake a programme of energy and behavioural research” we would welcome research and stakeholder engagement on the needs of the most vulnerable in society, the needs of communities, and the needs of partners such as Council in relation to making the energy transition and achieving a just transition. The Belfast Community Planning Partnership may be of assistance in looking at the above in a Belfast context. We would also welcome a role on identifying and disseminating best practice from other locations to key stakeholders.

With regards to the most vulnerable in society, home visits to these customers could be advantageous. Face-to-face interaction and additional hand holding may be required for some and visiting vulnerable customers in their own home can assist with building up a relationship and highlight the need for signposting and onward referrals.

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QUESTION 8 – Do you agree with the proposed initial list of consumer engagement channels for the Energy One Stop Shop?

Belfast City Council response: Yes, we agree with the suggested communication channels however given the focus on vulnerable communities and individuals it may be helpful to develop a tailored communication and engagement plan to support this work.

QUESTION 9 – Do you agree with the proposed approach to refine and improve consumer engagement?

Belfast City Council response: Yes, however as noted above it may be helpful to develop and tailored communication and engagement plan to support this work.

QUESTION 10 – Do you agree with the proposal to commence the operation of the Energy One Stop Shop with a Pilot and that it should launch as soon as possible?

Belfast City Council response: Yes, in addition should any support be required during the project plan development, or 3-year pilot phase please contact the Climate Unit, Belfast City Council.

QUESTION 11 – Do you agree with the proposed Energy One Stop Shop Implementation Roadmap?

Belfast City Council response: Yes, as above should any support be required during the project plan development, or 3-year pilot phase please contact the Climate Unit, Belfast City Council.

QUESTION 12 – Do you agree with the proposed services that would be available in Year 1 of the Pilot?

Belfast City Council response: Yes, we agree with the proposed phasing of services, however, should it be possible to accelerate the inclusion of services (due to funding or operational need) this should be considered.

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QUESTION 13 – Do you agree with the proposed additional services that the Energy One Stop Shop Pilot would introduce in Years 2 and 3?

Belfast City Council response: Yes, we agree with the proposed phasing of services, however, should it be possible to accelerate the inclusion of services (due to funding or operational need) this should be considered.

QUESTION 14 – Do you agree with the proposed services that the Energy One Stop Shop may consider introducing from Year 4 onwards?

Belfast City Council response: Yes, we agree with the proposed phasing of services, however, should it be possible to accelerate the inclusion of services (due to funding or operational need) this should be considered.

QUESTION 15 – Do you agree with the proposal to create a new brand for the Energy One Stop Shop?

Belfast City Council response: Yes, we feel that this would support consumer and partner awareness.