



IGov Primer

Local energy and the changing role of people

Context

This Primer combines two interlinked areas of IGov research. One on our work on the growing importance of local energy, bringing in the changing role of city networks and local authorities, as well as the potential of more local energy systems to enable people to become more involved within the energy system. This links to our wider thinking on the changing role of people, as consumers, customers and citizens within energy systems and the case for putting them at the heart of the system. Below are some of the key insights we have produced on these research areas.

For an introduction on local energy read the [changing role of cities and local energy](#) which gives an overview on the growing importance of more locally based approaches and some context on the policy environment. For more detailed information it is worth looking at the resources from our roundtable event on [Local governance & energy system change](#), which considered how the role of local actors and institutions is changing and discussed what a framework for local energy might look like. The [IGov presentation](#) given at the event gives insights to some of the issues and opportunities around local energy. Following the event we developed our thinking for need for Local Transformation Plans and you can find out more in [Governance for local energy transformations](#).

For a short introduction to our thinking on the changing role of people within the energy system we recommend our submission to the BEIS/Ofgem consultation on a [smart, flexible energy system](#). For a detailed overview on the importance of people and their changing role within the energy systems, read the IGov working paper [People, Demand and Governance in Future Energy Systems](#). We also recommend the resources associated with our 2018 roundtable on [People at the heart of the energy system](#), which includes an [IGov presentation](#) setting out the why people need to be put at the centre and how this might happen.

2019

- July (blog) [Governance for local energy transformations](#) – looks at the importance of local energy governance for widening the debate on climate action, developing societal buy in and ensuring that the regional equity implications of decarbonisation are understood and managed. It puts forward the idea of Local Transformation Plans
- Jun (blog) [The significance of Parliament's Citizens Assembly on net zero](#) – considers the importance of the development of Citizen Assemblies on pathways to net zero, in the context of the political system within the UK
- Jun (presentation) [Decentralising Energy & Communities](#) considers what the shift in UK climate policy towards net zero might mean for distributed energy and communities
- Jan (presentation) [Local Energy Governance](#) provides a detailed overview of the growing importance of local energy, what is driving it, what is already happening, and what it means for governance

- Jan (publication) [Building a zero carbon economy – Call for Evidence](#) in our submission to this CCC consultation we set out some key recommendations for ensuring people are at the centre of the transition to zero-carbon
- Jan (roundtable) [Local Governance & energy system change](#) Event looking at how governance, policy and regulation can support action by the most appropriate actors at the right scale, and how action between local, regional and national governments can be coordinated

2018

- Nov (blog) [The changing role of cities and local energy – does energy system governance need to catch up?](#) Discusses the need for a more comprehensive and long-term governance framework for local energy as part of the efforts to decarbonise the energy system
- Nov (presentation) [Consumer participation and market design issues](#) provides a high level overview of the relationship between consumers and market design to consider what might need to change to enable people to better engage, including local energy markets
- Sept (blog) [The people's energy networks?](#) Looks at the relationship between people and energy networks, in light of national discussions to bring them back into public ownership
- July (presentation) [Putting people at the heart of the energy system](#) provides a detailed overview of drivers of energy system change, why many of these are closer to people and asks what this means.
- July (roundtable) [People at the heart of the energy system](#) Event examining how the direction of energy system change is leading to a wide-spread recognition that people will have a key role in the energy system transformations
- Jun (blog) [Multi-level Coordination and Governance in the Energy Revolution](#) looks at many of the initiatives and changes taking place in energy system to suggest there is a need for coordination from the bottom-up, top-down and middle out.
- Jun (blog) [Local energy, multi-level change, and governance](#) sets out the need for more effort to engage and work with people around energy system change; considers the growing importance of place; and makes the case for looking and driving system change from multiple levels

2017

- Feb (publication) [People, Demand and Governance in Future Energy Systems](#) This working paper provides a detailed overview of technological, social and economic drivers of energy system change and how these are leading to a more decentralized, demand side, people focused system. It provides insights for putting people at the center of the system, looking at engagement, meaningful public consent, legitimacy and trust.
- Jan (publication) [BEIS/Ofgem - Smart, Flexible Energy System - A call for evidence](#) This submission to includes an overview of our thinking on the role of people within a smart and flexible energy system

2016

- Dec (presentation) [Creating a People Centred Energy System](#) a short workshop presentation looking at how people can be considered as empowered-engaged-essential energy users
- Sept (Blog) [Optimising the energy system from the bottom up](#) sets out the rationale for looking at energy system change from a local level, starting with the household and working up to the national level. Highlighting the benefits this can bring for system change and for people
- Jul (blog) [The changing role of consumers in the energy system](#) argues that we should move away from the narrow definition of people as consumers to take a much more nuanced approach that reflects the multiple roles they can play. It draws on insights from the US and Australia

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