

## **NIRIG response to Consultation on the Outcomes and Indicators for Ards and North Down's Community Plan**

**1 March 2017**

The Northern Ireland Renewables Industry Group (NIRIG) represents the views of the renewable electricity industry in Northern Ireland, providing a conduit for knowledge exchange, policy development, support and consensus on best practice between all stakeholders. Committed to making a positive difference, we promote responsible development, support good community engagement and deliver low-cost electricity generation from sources such as onshore wind, tidal, solar and storage using our greatest natural resources.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation. Please find our comments below.

- In general, we are concerned that there is no reference to energy generation, distribution or storage in the plan. Renewable electricity generation and storage are growth industries, bringing jobs and investment to Northern Ireland, and delivering an increasingly low-carbon economy. With an urgent need to decarbonise our electricity system, we believe that each Council should plan to facilitate this in their Local Development Plans
- We agree with the importance of outcomes dealing with a sustainable environment and a prosperous economy
- We note the reference to 'Stabilising environmental systems and increasing our understanding of the environment as a resource through increased knowledge of local environmental processes and improving people's interaction with it' - without consideration of clean energy that these outcomes will be more difficult to deliver
- We are encouraged by the fact that 79 of 100 people are concerned about the environment, but that this is not reflected in any reference to sustainable energy sources being developed in the area
- Northern Ireland will enter an electricity generation deficit within 4 years unless action is taken and we believe that each Council area should have regard to the opportunities for renewable electricity generation, storage and connection that will allow for continued economic development in a sustainable manner
- We also note that there is an expectation that heat and transport will be increasingly electrified in the near future and more generation will be required to deliver these
- We recommend an indicator that encourages increasing levels of renewable electricity generation, connection and storage

- We welcome the momentum that will be created by the formation of Action Planning Groups
- However, we again recommend that work initiatives and programmes should incorporate provisions for increased renewable electricity generation, storage and connection
- Such developments often take much longer to develop and build, and therefore we recommend that where energy policies and indicators are formulated there should be at least a 10-year timeline

---

Meabh Cormacain

**NIRIG**