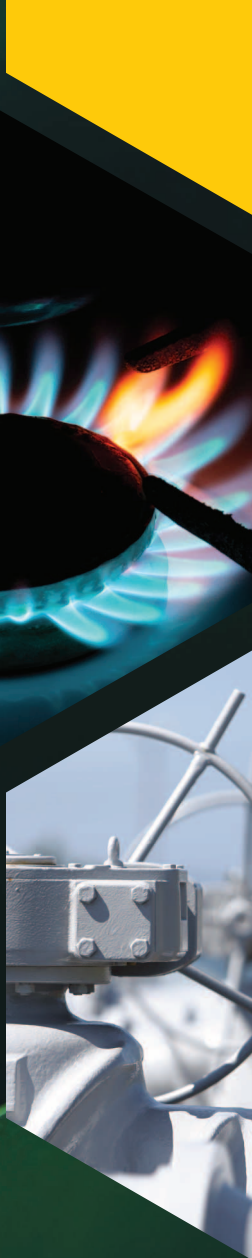


Northern Ireland Energy Forum 2025

Wednesday 12 November
Titanic Belfast

Northern Ireland's
major annual energy
conference...



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 Northern Ireland
**Electricity
Networks**



 **kinecx**
energy

 **SONI**

 **sse**

William Orbinson ^K_C

NORTHERN IRELAND **ENERGY FORUM 2025**

► KEY TOPICS COVERED

Energy policy & regulation

The Northern Ireland Energy Forum, now in its 24th year, has firmly established itself as the annual conference for Northern Ireland's energy sector and is a not-to-be-missed event for anyone with an interest in the local energy industry. The 2025 Forum will once again bring together all the key players, from Northern Ireland and further afield, to focus on the most important aspects of energy policy and the latest developments across the sector. It provides a unique opportunity for all those operating within the sector to come together for networking and discussion.

Decarbonising the Northern Ireland economy

The decarbonisation of the economy is one of the key priorities set out in the Programme for Government. Decarbonisation of energy use has become a priority for all governments amidst a worsening climate crisis. The energy market turmoil of recent years and the anxiety over energy security has only accelerated the drive towards developing indigenous renewable energy sources. There is an urgent need for delivery in electricity, heat and transport areas. In electricity, the first RESS auction is planned with 2 GW needed to achieve the 2030 target of 80% of electricity from renewable sources. The electricity sector will see significant investment in the coming years as the trend towards the electrification of the economy increases. The use of battery storage is also accelerating with utility scale storage projects now coming on stream. In heat, the focus for the sector is now on the development of biomethane, heat networks and geothermal sources. Transport will see an increase in electrification and the development of a green hydrogen sector offers scope to decarbonise the sector and also to deliver a long term storage solution for the energy system as a whole. The 2025 Forum comes at a time when developments are accelerating right across the energy sector and will bring together all these issues with a range of expert speakers.

2025 themes

This year's Forum will look at some of the major issues shaping the energy landscape including:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ✓ Decarbonising the Northern Ireland economy | ✓ The role of wind energy in achieving 80% by 2030 |
| ✓ Regulatory outlook for the energy sector | ✓ Meeting the need for long term energy storage |
| ✓ The future of the electricity grid | ✓ Case study: delivering a geothermal energy project |
| ✓ Flexibility in the energy sector | ✓ Developing a biomethane sector in Northern Ireland |
| ✓ Heat networks as part of a just transition to net zero | ✓ Developing a hydrogen economy |
| ✓ Planning and environmental aspects of energy projects | |

The event will bring together a mix of local industry leaders and visiting experts to look at these issues in detail.



Future electricity
grid

Planning and
environment

Heat networks

Gas infrastructure

Hydrogen
economy

Energy storage
systems

Energy system
flexibility

Not-to-be-missed conference

The Northern Ireland Energy Forum is Northern Ireland's longest established energy conference. The conference is the major annual event in the local energy calendar and one not to be missed. Key features of the event include:

- ✓ Update from energy regulator
- ✓ In-depth examination of key policy issues
- ✓ Overview of Northern Ireland's major energy projects
- ✓ Attended by all the key players in the Northern Ireland energy sector
- ✓ Major networking opportunities

www.nienergyforum.com

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME MORNING

0830 Morning coffee and registration

0900 ENERGY POLICY AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

Chair: **Sam McCloskey** Country Director
Simply Blue Group

MINISTERIAL
ADDRESS

The path to net zero: secure, affordable, clean
Caoimhe Archibald MLA
Minister for the Economy Northern Ireland

REGULATORY
OUTLOOK

Regulatory outlook for energy in Northern Ireland
John French, Chief Executive, **Utility Regulator**

PANEL
DISCUSSION

PANEL DISCUSSION: ENERGY LEADERS' FORUM

Alan Campbell, Chief Executive, **SONI**
Stephen Gallagher, Managing Director, **SSE Airtricity**
Roger Henderson, Network Assets & Investment Director, **NIE Networks**
Niall Martindale, CEO, **Kinecx Energy**

Questions & answers / Panel discussion

1100 Coffee and networking break

1130 BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE ENERGY TRANSITION I

PLANNING AND
ENVIRONMENT

Planning, environment and delivering energy projects: The pressure is on
Andrew Ryan, Partner, **TLT Solicitors**

STORAGE

Batteries in wind-dominated areas of network: solution or problem? A Scottish case study
Keith Bell, **University of Strathclyde** and co-Director
UK Energy Research Centre

CLEAN
HYDROGEN

Clean hydrogen's role in the energy transition
Eugene McKenna, Senior VP Hydrogen and Sustainable Technologies,
Johnson Matthey

FLEXIBILITY

Flexibility in the energy sector
Anna Rita Bennato, **Loughborough Business School** and Report
Author, **CERRE**

GREEN
HYDROGEN

Green hydrogen and the energy transition
Paddy Larkin, Chief Executive Officer, **Mutual Energy**

1315 Networking lunch



CONFERENCE AFTERNOON

1400 BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE ENERGY TRANSITION II

GRID

Future electricity grid: Shaping our electricity future

Senior Representative, **EirGrid**

GEO THERMAL

Delivering a geothermal energy project

Sara Lynch, Head of Sustainability, **Queen's University Belfast**

HEAT NETWORKS

The role of heat networks in decarbonising the heat sector

Declan Billington, Consultant, **DGB Consultancy Limited**

ELECTRICITY GRID

Deploying of a highly decarbonised energy grid on the island of Ireland by 2030

Mark McGranaghan, Chair, **Smart Grid Ireland**

Questions & answers / Panel discussion

1515 Comfort break

1530 PANEL DISCUSSION: SHAPING NORTHERN IRELAND'S FUTURE ENERGY LANDSCAPE

PANEL
DISCUSSION



Tamasin Fraser, Founder and Managing Director
Omnipower Renewables



Richard Rodgers, Deputy Secretary
Head of Energy, **Department for the Economy**



William Orbinson KC

1615 Conference close



CONFERENCE **SPEAKERS**



Dr Caoimhe Archibald MLA was appointed **Economy Minister** on 3 February 2025. Previous to this, Caoimhe served as Finance Minister from February 2024. Caoimhe grew up in Coleraine. She attended Loreto College, Coleraine and graduated from Queen's University, Belfast with a BSc in Molecular Biology and a PhD by research with a Department of Agriculture and Rural Development studentship. She also completed a Postgraduate diploma in Management & Corporate Governance at Ulster University. Caoimhe was elected as an MLA for East Derry in May 2016 and re-elected in March 2017 and again in May 2022. She is formerly Chair of the Assembly's Economy and Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs committees. Prior to being elected in May 2016, Caoimhe had worked for almost a decade in applied horticulture and plant pathology research including on collaborative EU funded projects.



Dr Anna Rita Bennato is Senior Lecturer (Associate Professor) in Economics at **Loughborough Business School** and Co-Investigator of the EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Offshore Wind Energy Sustainability and Resilience. Her research lies at the intersection of applied microeconomics, industrial organization, and behavioural economics, with a growing focus on renewable energy. She examines how fiscal instruments, regulatory frameworks, and behavioural drivers shape firm conduct and consumer decision-making, with particular recent interest in the sustainability and resilience of offshore wind energy systems.



Alan Campbell is Chief Executive at **SONI**. With more than 20 years' experience, Alan is one of Northern Ireland's most established energy leaders and a trusted adviser to both government and industry. Alan joined SONI in July 2017 as Head of Grid Infrastructure Projects and Connections. He was appointed Managing Director in June 2021, having undertaken the role on an interim basis from July 2020. Alan was appointed to the SONI Board in December 2020. Alan graduated from Queen's University Belfast with a first-class honours degree in Mechanical Engineering. He commenced his career with AstraZeneca in England. He later joined ESB where he progressed to manage the 400MW Coolkeeragh Power Station.



John French became Chief Executive of the Utility Regulator in November 2020. Prior to joining the **Utility Regulator**, John was Chief Executive of The Consumer Council from July 2015. Before this, John was Director of Regulation and Pricing at firmus energy, Investment Planning and Regulatory Reporting Manager at NIE Networks, Head of Policy at the UK Business Council for Sustainable Energy, Network Director at the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership in Vienna, and a diplomatic policy advisor on climate change and energy issues within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. John is a chartered director, chartered manager, and a fellow of the Institute of Directors. He has a master's degree in accountancy, and an honours degree in accountancy and business finance, both from the University of Dundee.



Stephen Gallagher is an energy market executive with over 25 years' experience across the energy, manufacturing and retail sectors. As MD of **SSE Airtricity**, Stephen's responsibilities include leading the SSE Airtricity supply business and Low Carbon Solutions for SSE across the UK and Ireland, helping its customers on their path to Net Zero. He is a fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountant of Ireland, has a degree in Business Law (University College Dublin) and a Masters in Strategy & Leadership (University College Cork). SSE has a broad renewable generation portfolio and is investing around £20bn in critical electrical infrastructure across five years to 2027. Creating a real opportunity to drive change in the energy industry and society. SSE Airtricity brings our renewable assets and low carbon solutions to over 700,000 homes and businesses across the Island of Ireland.



Roger Henderson currently holds the position of Network Assets and Investment Director at **NIE Networks** with responsibility for network development and asset investment strategy. He joined NIE Networks as a graduate engineer and has developed extensive management experience in networks operations, major project delivery and connections of renewable technologies to the electricity network. He previously held the position of Network Connections Director and led the change within the business to facilitate competition to the connections market in Northern Ireland. Roger is a Chartered Engineer and a member of the Institution of Engineering and Technology.



Sara Lynch is the Head of Sustainability at **Queen's University Belfast**. She has over 20 years' experience as a sustainability practitioner in the Corporate, NGO and Further Higher Education sectors. Sara currently leads the Queen's Sustainability team, overseeing the delivery of a wide range of programs to embed sustainability across the University and deliver on the University's Net Zero commitments. Sara graduated from Queen's University Belfast with a BSc Hons in Geography and an MSc in Applied Environmental Science in 2002. She is Board member and Ireland convenor for the Environmental Association of University's and Colleges (EAUC).



Niall Martindale is the CEO at **Kinecx Energy**. He has over 15 years' experience working in Northern Ireland's regulated energy industries. Niall joined firmus energy in 2015 as Director of Regulation and Pricing and became CEO in early 2022. He is a graduate of University of Ulster, Coleraine, studying BSc (Hons) Science with Business and holds a number of APICS qualifications. Niall is responsible for the strategic direction and governance of firmus energy networks as well as spearheading the pivotal role firmus energy networks will play in Northern Ireland's transition to lower carbon future.



Sam McCloskey is Country Director at Simply Blue Group. She joined **Simply Blue Group** in January 2023 to lead Northern Ireland operations, overseeing projects including the Olympic and Aird Mhór Na Mara offshore wind farms in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. With a 30-year career in sustainability and energy, she has held senior consultancy roles at WYG and Tetra Tech and served 10 years as Director of the Invest NI funded Centre for Advanced Sustainable Energy. With over a decade of hands-on offshore renewable project management, Sam is a Fellow of the Energy Institute, Chair of its Northern Ireland branch, and has recently become Chair of the Northern Ireland Maritime and Offshore Network (NIMO).



William Orbinson KC specialises in planning, energy, and related environmental law issues. A Northern Ireland Associate of PEBA: The Specialist Bar Association for Planning, the Environment and Local Government, Mr Orbinson KC has qualified as a Legal Associate of the Royal Town Planning Institute, and is an Affiliate of the Irish Planning Institute. Chair of the Northern Ireland Planning Bar Association, founding member, past Chair and Committee Member of the Environmental and Planning Law Association for Northern Ireland, and Chair of the Planning Appeals Commission Users Group, Mr Orbinson KC taught planning at Queen's University Belfast, and is a regular speaker at planning and environmental conferences throughout these islands. With more than a quarter of a century's experience, he combines keen commercial instinct, close analysis, sound judgement, persuasion, and a deep understanding of planning and environmental law and policy to deliver success.



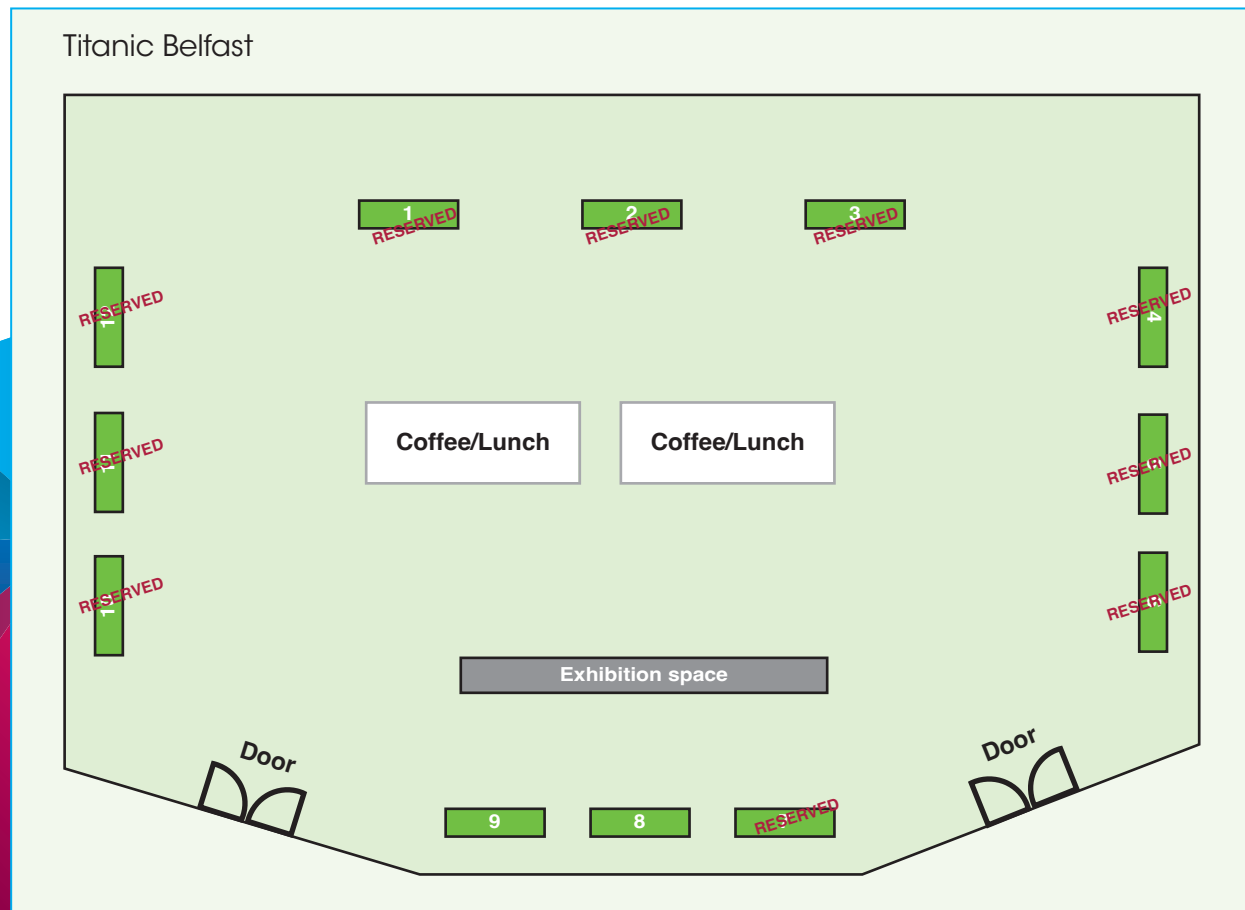
Richard Rodgers is Head of Energy at the **Department for the Economy** where he led the development of the recently published Northern Ireland Executive's Energy Strategy – The Path to Net Zero Energy. He has almost 35 years' experience in the energy industry, including British Gas for eight years, Phoenix Natural Gas for 12, as MD (International) at Eaga for five years (responsible for the delivery of fuel poverty programmes for Governments across the world), five years as Strategic Advisor (Energy) at the Strategic Investment Board and for the past three years as Head of Energy in the Department for the Economy in Northern Ireland. Richard was also a non-executive director on the Board of the Utility Regulator for nine years (ending in March 2019).



Andrew Ryan is a planning and environment partner in **TLT LLP's** UK-wide team, heading up the Belfast practice. He has worked in Northern Ireland since 2006 and has been involved in many of the most significant development projects in NI over the last decade including wind farms, regionally significant waste facilities, major residential and commercial developments, fuel storage facilities, electricity transmission infrastructure projects and road schemes.

CONFERENCE EXHIBITION

There are a limited number of opportunities for interested organisations to become involved with this conference as an exhibitor. This is an excellent way for organisations to showcase their expertise and raise their profile with a key audience of senior policy and decision makers from across Northern Ireland's energy sector. The 2025 Northern Ireland Energy Forum provides a great opportunity to make contacts and network. For further information on how your organisation can benefit, contact [Olivia Ross](mailto:olivia.ross@agendaNi.com) on **028 9261 9933** or email olivia.ross@agendaNi.com.



I WISH TO:

☐ Reserve _____ places at the Northern Ireland Energy Forum 2025

Delegate fee £345 + VAT

Fee includes documentation, lunch and other refreshments served during the conference and is payable in advance. Fee does not include accommodation or travel.

☐ Receive details of future agendaNi events and publications

☐ Receive details of sponsorship and exhibition opportunities at the Forum

Delegate details

Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr): _____

Job title: _____

Organisation: _____

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_____ Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

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☐ I enclose a cheque for £_____

Payable to 'bmf Business Services'.

☐ Please invoice me PO Number: _____

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Card number

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Name of card holder _____

Signature _____

Expiry date _____ Security code _____

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Acknowledgement of registration

Confirmation of registration will be emailed to all delegates following receipt of registration details.

If you have not received your acknowledgement within 48 hours of registering, please contact us at registration@agendaNi.com to confirm your booking.

Terms and conditions

Once booked places may not be cancelled.

If you are unable to attend, you can send a substitute participant instead, at no additional charge.

Failure to attend requires full payment.

Conference fees includes entry for one person per ticket.

We intend to photograph this event. Any photographs will be used only for our own publications.

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