



Invisible Energy Policy, one day conference at BEIS, 20 September 2017

Date and time: 20 September 2017, 9.30-4.15

Venue: Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 1 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0ET

Convenors: Professor Jan Selby, University of Sussex; Professor Elizabeth Shove, Director, Demand Centre, Lancaster University.

Sponsorship: The conference is organised as part of The Dynamics of Energy, Mobility and Demand (DEMAND) Centre's '[Invisible Energy Policy](#)' project. DEMAND is one of six [End Use Energy Demand Centres](#) supported by Research Councils UK.

What are 'invisible energy policies' and why are they important?

It is widely accepted that, to meet their climate change obligations, the UK and other states will need to both decarbonise their energy supplies, and reduce their *energy demand*. More efficient energy use is no doubt a crucial part of this. But energy efficiency alone does not reduce demand, and may even be counter-productive: marked improvements in vehicle energy efficiency, for example, have not been associated with reduced road transport demand, but the opposite. To tackle the problem of energy demand, we therefore need to think beyond technological efficiency – and look also to questions of how demand is made by our economies, politics and society.

One aspect of this is how demand is shaped by *policy*. But what policies most affect energy demand? While policies and regulations relating to energy efficiency clearly have impacts, beyond this the policies which matter most for energy demand are *non-energy policies*. For example:

- Policy preferences for green field development may increase transport energy demand.
- Tuition fee increases and the liberalisation of higher education are resulting in universities providing ever more high-energy consuming buildings and services.
- The devolution of powers may increase potential for integrated planning and policy-making relating to demand.
- Cuts to housing association budgets can reduce their investment in energy efficiency measures.
- Broadband investment policies are having significant upward impacts on electricity demand.

Such non-energy policies have significant, though undeniably complex, impacts on energy demand. For the most part, though, these impacts are unseen or ignored. That is why we call them *invisible energy policies*.

The importance of this issue is increasingly recognised within the UK research community. Last year the UK Energy Research Centre commissioned an extended [scoping report](#) on evidence relating to the impacts of non-energy policies on the energy system; this report concluded that further research was needed. Building on this, UKERC has recently commissioned research on [the impact of non-energy policies on the energy system](#). And research is also being undertaken out of Exeter on the implications of [welfare and employment policy](#) for energy demand.

The conference

The aim of this one day conference is to bring together policymakers, practitioners and researchers working on energy demand and/or carbon reduction issues across a diverse range of policy sites and sectors, in order to share insights and experiences to help push forward research and policy engagement around this issue. It will include:

- presentations on recent invisible (and non-) energy policy research;
- presentations from leading policymakers/practitioners working on energy and carbon emissions reduction issues in various non-energy sectors;
- discussion of how energy demand and carbon reduction might be integrated into and made more visible within non-energy policy, and of the practical and political obstacles to doing so;
- discussion of opportunities for using non-energy policy to steer and promote energy demand reduction.

The conference is invitation only. Those interested in attending should contact Professor Jan Selby at j.selby@sussex.ac.uk.

Lunch, tea and coffee will be provided.

The Invisible Energy Policy project

The aim of the Invisible Energy Policy project is to investigate the under-recognised links between non-energy policies and energy demand across a wide range of policy sites and sectors. It involves case studies within health and higher education, but also a broad mapping of non-energy policy-energy demand linkages right across the UK public sector. It also considers these links at multiple scales – from national government, to local and devolved authorities, right down to individual universities and hospitals.

The project explores the impacts of both non-energy policy *objectives*, and the policy *structures and processes* through which energy demand issues are being addressed (or not). It is interested in the actual and potential synergies, tensions and trade-offs between non-energy and demand reduction objectives. And it also interested in how energy demand concerns are integrated or ‘mainstreamed’ into non-energy policymaking and planning – and whether more ‘joined up’ thinking and governance in this area might be possible.

The project focuses just on the UK, though recognises that much could be learned from comparative analysis of other national experiences. The project is intended as an exploratory one, which will hopefully stimulate further research and thinking in this area.

Further information on, and draft publications from, the project are available through the [project webpage](#).

Programme

9.30-10.00: Tea and coffee

10.00-11.15: Session 1: Introducing Invisible (and Non-) Energy Policy

What are invisible (and non-) energy policies? How do they affect energy demand and carbon emissions? Could and should energy demand considerations be integrated into non-energy planning and policy-making? And how important is this issue? Brief presentations, followed by Q&A.

Chair: Professor Jim Watson, Director, UK Energy Research Centre
Speakers: Professor Jan Selby, University of Sussex
Professor Elizabeth Shove, Lancaster University

11.30-1.00: Session 2: Insights and Experiences from Non-Energy Sectors

Brief presentations on energy demand and carbon emissions reduction issues in illustrative non-energy sectors, followed by Q&A.

Chair: Professor Elizabeth Shove, Lancaster University
Speakers: Dr David Pencheon, Director, NHS Sustainable Development Unit – on health
Rod Fawcett, Transport Policy Manager, Transport for Greater Manchester – on transport and devolution
Dr Sarah Royston, University of Sussex – on higher education

1.00-1.45: Lunch

1.45-2.45: Session 3: Workshop

Participants will be divided into 4 groups to brainstorm and discuss key questions relating to invisible energy policy:

- How are the objectives of energy and carbon reduction positioned alongside other policy goals?
- How do policy processes and administrative structures shape or limit energy demand and carbon reduction strategies?
- Which sectors (e.g. health, transport, the military) are proving adept at addressing the challenges of energy demand and carbon emissions reduction, and which not – and how and why?
- Questions of equality and diversity, and of health and safety have been ‘mainstreamed’: they have been widely integrated into other organisational policies and objectives. Can objectives relating to energy demand and carbon emissions reduction be ‘mainstreamed’ in the same way?

3.00-4.15: Session 4: Feedback and Implications

Topics and questions arising from the four workshop groups will be put to invited panellists.

Chair: Professor John Barrett, University of Leeds
Panellists: Lynda Addison, Chair, Transport Planning Society
Adrian Gault, Chief Economist, Committee on Climate Change
Professor Jan Selby, University of Sussex
Dr Joanne Wade, CEO, Association for the Conservation of Energy

4.15: End