



On the same map?

A snapshot of the relationships between UK Energy Policy and the English Regions

Report to the Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform

Simon Roberts

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Centre for Sustainable Energy
3 St Peter's Court
Bedminster Parade
Bristol BS3 4AQ

t. 0117 934 1441 (direct)
t. 0117 934 1400 (switchboard)
f. 0117 934 1410
simon.roberts@cse.org.uk
www.cse.org.uk

Registered company no. 2219673

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Executive Summary

National policy statements acknowledge the potential value of strong regional activities to support the delivery of national energy policy objectives – low carbon emissions, energy security, affordable warmth, and competitive prices.

However there are concerns that this potential is not being fully realised because of limited understanding and a lack of systematic consideration within Whitehall of the roles which regional bodies can play and how best to align their practices with these national priorities.

This brief study was commissioned by BERR from the Centre for Sustainable Energy to examine: (a) how different government departments and national agencies currently consider energy policy and climate change objectives within their relationships with regional bodies, and; (b) the opportunities and potential value of improving practice.

The study first undertook an exercise (described in Section 2) to detail the potential roles of regional bodies across the different elements of energy policy and to map these to policy teams within different government departments (see Table below). This highlights the wide range of relationships between national and regional roles on energy policy.

The study team then interviewed 13 officials in four Whitehall departments covering different aspects of energy policy and representatives of Government Offices and Regional Development Agencies and the Carbon Trust. The report also reflects the author's experience of working with senior Energy Savings Trust staff over the last two years as EST's regional programme has developed.

Relationships between energy policy, regional roles and government departments

Energy policy 'requirement'	Regional role	Relevant government departments/agencies
Low carbon economic development	Regional Economic Strategy and RDA activities in infrastructure and regeneration	BERR RDA tasking team, CLG climate change team, Defra RDA team
Planning system promoting low carbon developments and secure, indigenous energy supply	Regional Spatial Strategy plus 'enabling' support for LPAs at regional and sub-regional level	CLG planning team, BERR renewables team
Effective innovation system	RDA-sponsored activities and university 'hubs'	BERR RDA and renewables teams, Carbon Trust, ETI, Defra/BERR ETF teams, DIUS
Leadership and collective ownership/public engagement	All regional bodies plus support for LAs within regions	Defra LA/public sector team, CLG LA team, EST, Carbon Trust, BERR energy strategy & RDA tasking teams
Appropriately skilled workforce	Learning & skills via SSCs, universities, RDAs	BERR RDA tasking team DIUS
Co-ordinated supply chain development	RDA funded activities	BERR RDA and renewables teams, Defra biomass and rural diversification teams, Carbon Trust
Access to high quality energy services for all	RDA (BREW), ESTAC integration, regional approaches to energy services	EST, Carbon Trust, Defra (EST, public engagement, BREW and CERT teams)
Improvement of lowest SAP homes & support for fuel poor	Regional Housing Board, co-ordinated approaches to Warmfront & CERT, ESTAC integration	CLG Housing team DWP benefits take-up team EST, Defra (fuel poverty team, EST and CERT teams), BERR (fuel poverty team)

In spite of the small sample, which was biased towards officials known to have worked with regional bodies, the interviews suggest:

- A lack of a coherent, shared picture across Whitehall of regional action on energy (Section 3.1)
- Pockets of reasonable knowledge and practice amid a generally limited understanding amongst government officials of the potential and value of regional action in supporting national energy policy and programme delivery (Section 3.2)
- A general reticence to provide tightly defined input from the centre to the regions, resulting in often ineffective strategic guidance which has given rise to levels of regional variation that are not justified by regional differences (Section 3.3)
- A sense that regional action is a 'nice-to-have' matched with concern about the extent of regional variation in approach and engagement (which may itself have emerged from limited national guidance to the regions) (Sections 3.1 and 3.3)
- A need to consider an approach of 'asymmetrical engagement' from national initiatives to address the situation which now exists of different approaches across the regions (Section 3.3)
- A belief that improvements could be made with relatively modest effort and potentially significant value, particularly with the emergence of the Integrated Regional Strategy (Section 3.4 and Section 4).

The opportunities for improvement are explored in Section 4. These particularly highlight the need to improve understanding more generally across BERR Energy Group and elsewhere in Whitehall of the potential role of regional bodies, rather than rely on specialised knowledge within one or two officials. From this analysis emerge five recommendations to BERR (and the Government more generally):

1. Establish a clear picture of the specific aspects of national energy policy where the involvement of regional bodies is (a) necessary and/or (b) value-adding
2. Disseminate knowledge by developing and delivering a series of seminars to improve understanding across relevant parts of government of the role and potential of regional bodies on the energy policy agenda and how best to engage with them
3. Develop common standards for engagement, guidance, resources and communications between national and regional bodies
4. Ensure an effective, cross-departmental input on relevant energy policy objectives to the development of the new Integrated Regional Strategies
5. Re-introduce the high level leadership initiative to engage senior officials from regional bodies with senior energy policy officials.

These are described in more detail in Section 5. Programme costs (beyond staff time) to deliver these recommendations is estimated at £110,000 (see Section 4.7).

The potential benefits of following through these recommendations are difficult to calculate with any precision (and beyond the scope of this study). However, the experiences of officials who have made efforts to align regional and national priorities and activities suggest the benefits in terms of improved efficiency and effectiveness are meaningful:

“My recent engagement with the regions has given me huge benefits in terms of understanding the detail of what is and isn't working and where coherent initiatives have been developed. Most particularly, it helped me think about how we need to adjust or improve national policy and programmes so that they make the most of what the regions can do – while also understanding their limitations”

1 Introduction: background and approach

The value of aligning national and regional activities to deliver national energy policy goals – low carbon emissions, energy security, affordable warmth and competitive prices – is acknowledged in the Energy White Paper May 2007¹, especially Chapter 9. Clearly, there are aspects of national energy and climate policy which are considered to benefit from – and in some cases require – strong activity at regional and sub-regional level.

However, analysis undertaken for the Energy Saving Trust shortly before the publication of the Energy White Paper suggested that such alignment was by no means fully realised for a significant proportion of these energy policy goals.²

In addition, there has been no assessment of the current nature and quality of the relationships between those developing and delivering policy in central government and the relevant energy-related activities of regional bodies.³

From discussions at the Regional Energy Group of the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR), which includes a representative from each of the English Regions, there emerged a clear concern about the extent to which the Government's approach to managing the relationship between national and regional initiatives on sustainable energy was considered and systematic. A poorly considered approach risks mixed messages, duplication and inefficiency, and inadequate and/or inappropriate regional responses to national climate and energy policy priorities.

Against this background, and as an initial exercise to inform future strategy, the Energy Strategy team at BERR commissioned a brief study from the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) to assess:

- How different government departments and national agencies with relevant responsibilities currently consider energy policy and climate change priorities within their relationships with regional bodies in England, particularly with respect to performance management, funding and guidance.
- The extent to which regional bodies are provided with suitable direction and guidance to align (where appropriate) their activities and initiatives with national policy priorities.

The study's specific objectives were: (a) to map these relationships and comment on their quality and; (b) to identify opportunities to improve practice and consider the potential value of so doing.

The approach taken was to build on previous work undertaken by CSE (variously for Defra/DTI and EST)⁴ to define the potential roles of regional bodies in sustainable energy and to draw out a sense of the roles actually being played at present by the English Regions.

This was followed by a series of interviews and discussions with a variety of officials with apparently relevant policy and/or programme delivery responsibilities across different government departments. These were designed to answer the following questions:

1 DTI (2007) *Meeting the Energy Challenge: A White Paper on Energy May 2007 (Cm 7124)*, HMSO, London. See <http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file39387.pdf>

2 Thumim J, Redgrove Z and White V (2007) *Update on Progress of Sustainable Energy in Regional Strategies: Report to the Energy Saving Trust*, Centre for Sustainable Energy. See <http://tinyurl.com/yt9x59>

3 Such as Regional Development Agencies, Regional Assemblies, Regional Housing Boards and Government Offices.

4 Eg, Thumim et al (2007) (see Footnote 2), CSE with Impetus Consulting and QE2 (2005) *Local & Regional Action to Cut Carbon An appraisal of the scope for further CO2 emission reductions from local and regional activity*, Report to DEFRA and DTI for the UK Climate Change Programme Review, CSE, Bristol. See www.cse.org.uk/pdf/pub1057.pdf

- What level of understanding of actual and potential regional roles exists in different teams across government?
- How is this influencing policies and programmes?
- Is there capacity in the departments to 'challenge' any perspective provided by a region (and/or clarity on evidence requirements)?
- How are different players being co-ordinated and aligned (and guided to do so)?
- What improvements could be made (and at what cost/benefit)?

The lead officers on climate change (for the Government Offices – GOs) and on energy (for the Regional Development Agencies – RDAs) were also interviewed, particularly to 'sense check' the findings emerging from the 'Whitehall' interviews: "does it feel like this from where you are?"

The result is inevitably a snapshot with only limited detail. Within the resources available, the study could not be statistically representative nor exhaustive; there were plenty more officials who could have been interviewed and who may have had knowledge and perspectives that would have added further detail and colour to the picture which has emerged. In addition, the study was not designed to provide a detailed history of either the development of policy towards the regions or the development of initiatives within the regions with respect to energy policy.

That said, there was almost certainly a selection bias in choosing interviewees, with care taken to ensure that at least some of them were known to have engaged with the regions. For this reason, the snapshot presented here may actually give a more positive picture of engagement with the regions than would have been the case if more interviews had been conducted.

Nevertheless, in spite of these limitations, this approach has, in the author's view, provided sufficient detail to establish reasonably clear answers to the study questions and to suggest:

- A generally limited understanding within key parts of central government of the potential and value of regional action in supporting national energy policy and programme delivery
- Pockets of reasonable practice amid a general reticence to provide tightly defined input from the centre to the regions. This has resulted in often ineffective strategic guidance which has, over time, given rise to levels of regional variation that are not justified by regional differences
- A sense that improvements could be made with relatively modest effort and potentially significant value.

2 Regional bodies and their potential role in UK energy policy

A few years ago (as described in CSE et al 2005)⁵ it was not uncommon to encounter in central government a view of regional action to deliver national energy policy objectives as either of little genuine consequence or, worse, a messy and unreliable substitute for effective nationally determined programmes. Such a perspective carried little sense of such action as a potentially fundamental and integral component in delivering national energy policy objectives.

Things have changed. As described in Section 3 below, this view was not encountered in the interviews undertaken for this study. Indeed, there appeared to be interest in the purpose and potential outcomes of the study and its implications for future work with the regions.

However, the study did encounter a pervasive lack of a coherent picture and systematic consideration within central government of the role of regional bodies in the delivery of UK energy policy objectives. This suggests a need to set out clearly how (if at all) action at regional level, particularly by regional bodies, adds value to national programmes and, in some cases, is a necessary component of them.

Within the scope of this study, this draws first on analysis undertaken previously by CSE for Defra and DTI.⁶ That considered specifically the roles and functions involved in delivering effective carbon management in the UK and the different contributions which local, regional and national action can – or needs – to make. These are shown below in Table 1.

Table 1 The roles and functions required for effective carbon management

(Table 1 from CSE et al 2005 – see Footnote 4)

Role / Function Required
Energy pricing which better reflects environmental costs
Taxation which favours low carbon solutions
Regulatory framework for utilities and transport systems which enables and rewards carbon management and shares the cost of change fairly amongst customers
Distribution and trading systems managed to maximize the value of embedded and renewable generation
Tough and enforced equipment, vehicle and building standards
Effective innovation systems to bring forward any low carbon technologies and processes
Organised, well-trained, customer-focused energy services delivery and low carbon transport provision
Planning system which encourages and supports carbon management
Public sector infrastructure investment (transport, buildings, regeneration etc) that reflects carbon management priorities and supports low carbon economic development
Integrated and targeted grants programmes and efficient allocation of public monies on capital (cf revenue)
Willing, engaged and accepting population and communities
Leadership and exemplars to demonstrate, excite and inspire

5 See Footnote 4

6 See Footnote 4

The exercise required some thinking about the differences between action by local and regional and national bodies and what each level brings to the potential effectiveness of the overall effort. This, in turn, is informed by consideration of the following issues:

- the scale of impact required – is it every citizen or every school or just the UK's 100 largest business emitters of carbon dioxide?
- existing powers and structures (though these could potentially change)
- the need for commonality across the country
- the need to reflect genuine differences in regional or local needs and circumstances (eg available renewable energy resources, range of commercial activity, level of rurality, quality of existing energy infrastructure etc)
- the need to establish new partnerships and relationships to enhance delivery and the scale of organisation with whom partnerships are needed (eg for delivery of energy services, low carbon transport schemes, technology innovation etc)
- the need to engage directly with the citizenry (potentially as householder, energy consumer, transport user/driver, voter, community group member, business leader, inventor/innovator etc)

As CSE et al (2005) notes, fortunately this exercise is not starting from scratch. There are some individual policy areas (e.g. planning) which are characterised by reasonably clear definitions of the roles of local, regional and national bodies and the relationship between them.

Indeed, historically there has been debate and discussion around establishing these definitions for most other policy areas (e.g. taxation, utility regulation, provision of social housing, education, economic development, waste management, transport planning etc). Whether or not the current position for each policy area represents an ideal arrangement, they nevertheless represent a situation which can be assumed to have arisen for reasonably appropriate reasons. They can therefore inform the analysis here.

For example, there is an accepted potential for regional bodies, either directly or through the funding they can make available, to:

- establish clear strategic frameworks for planning, housing, economic development, transport and other issues across a region (eg Regional Spatial Strategy, Regional Economic Strategy, Regional Housing Strategy etc) within which individuals, communities, local authorities, and businesses take decisions and act
- support regional business, supply chain and skills development (often involving companies and organisations too small to participate in nationally co-ordinated activities)
- encourage innovation through effective regional partnerships with business and academic institutions and through accessible exemplar projects
- manage regeneration and economic development funds
- marshal regional, national and European funding streams into coherent spending programmes to make them relevant, manageable, targeted and accessible for sub-regional organisations, local authorities and businesses
- provide effective co-ordination of local action and partnerships, sharing resources, improving information flows and practice, reducing duplication and providing a common voice.

These are all described here without reference to sustainable energy because they represent what regional bodies already exist to do in order to serve other policy objectives. Yet the ways in which regional bodies carry out these roles has an influence (whether or not it is deliberate or positive or negative) on key factors such as carbon emissions and affordable warmth.

Indeed, each of these roles can be defined and performed in a way which embeds sustainable energy policy objectives and contributes significantly to their achievement. Or it can be performed in a way which ignores energy policy objectives – and potentially undermines them.⁷

It is important that this should not be seen as a ‘nice-to-have’ added extra which provides a small supplement to effective national action. There are three fundamental reasons why these are necessary components – ‘must haves’ – as part of a coherent national effort to deliver sustainable energy objectives:

- implementation of carbon management and affordable warmth is highly diffused – requiring a sustained change in behaviour, building energy performance and consumer choices by every householder, transport user, and business;
- amongst the individuals and groups who need to implement these changes, the current levels of motivation to act and the understanding of required actions are still relatively limited;
- the tools and technologies, services and skills to enable action are not all widely available and are currently often found in smaller organisations (voluntary, business or academic) which can fall ‘below the radar’ of national bodies.

Drawing on the analysis in CSE et al (2005), this does not mean that regional bodies are currently applying their attributes to delivering on national energy policy objectives. But, on the basis of this analysis, it is difficult to imagine an effective national effort to cut carbon emissions, maintain energy security, or tackle fuel poverty in which they don’t.

Table 2 below, from CSE et al (2005), applies this analysis to the potential level of influence and impact of regional (and local) action in relation to ‘required’ functions to deliver (in this case) effective carbon management. The potential level of influence and impact and the importance of involving this level in delivering the role or function has been given a rating – in ‘♦’ – in Table 2. A higher number indicates greater importance, influence and impact. Three ♦s is used to show a fundamental role; two ♦s indicates an important facilitating or supporting role; one ♦ indicates potentially valuable involvement to provide co-ordination or information.

7 These roles were captured in the Local and Regional Carbon Management Matrix, developed for CSE et al (2005), applied to the nine English Regions in Thumim et al (2007) on behalf of the EST, see Footnote 2

Table 2 The importance of national, regional and local action in carbon management roles/functions

(Table 2 from CSE et al 2005 – see Footnote 4)

Role/ Function Required	National	Regional	Local
Energy pricing which better reflects environmental costs	◆◆◆		
Taxation which favours low carbon solutions	◆◆◆		
Regulatory framework for utilities and transport systems which enables and rewards carbon management and shares the cost of change fairly amongst customers	◆◆◆		
Distribution and trading systems managed to maximize the value of embedded and renewable generation	◆◆◆	◆?	
Tough and enforced equipment, vehicle and building standards	◆◆◆		◆◆ (enforcement)
Effective innovation systems to bring forward any low carbon technologies and processes	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	?
Organised, well-trained, customer-focused energy services delivery and low carbon transport provision	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆
Planning system which encourages and supports carbon management	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆
Public sector infrastructure investment (transport, buildings, regeneration etc) that reflects carbon management priorities and supports low carbon economic development	◆◆◆	◆◆	◆◆◆
Integrated and targeted grants programmes and efficient allocation of public monies on capital (cf revenue)	◆◆◆	◆◆	◆◆
Willing, engaged and accepting population and communities	◆◆◆	◆	◆◆◆
Leadership and exemplars to demonstrate, excite and inspire	◆◆◆	◆◆◆	◆◆◆

2.1 Relationship between energy policy, regions and Government departments

From this analysis it is possible to map the broad requirements for delivery of national energy policy objectives onto both:

1. the particular relevant roles and responsibilities of regional bodies and agencies and
2. the relevant parts of central government which are 'implicated' through their roles either in sponsoring regional activity or in developing and delivering aspects of energy policy.

It is important in this mapping to drill down below departmental level since:

- a. there is often more than one policy team in each department with a potentially relevant input, and;
- b. the focus here is to assess how an understanding of the role of regions plays out in the development of specific aspects of national energy policies and programmes, rather than to gain generalised 'broad brush' perspectives.

These relationships are shown in Table 3 below. This analysis drove the selection of interviewees for this project. It can also potentially be used for targeting any effort to improve central government's collective understanding and practice in relation to stimulating, engaging with, and guiding action by regional bodies in the delivery of national energy policy objectives

Table 3: Relationships between energy policy, regional roles and government departments

Energy policy 'requirement'	Regional role	Relevant government departments/agencies
Low carbon economic development	Regional Economic Strategy and RDA activities in infrastructure and regeneration	BERR RDA tasking team, CLG climate change team, Defra RDA team
Planning system promoting low carbon developments and secure, indigenous energy supply	Regional Spatial Strategy plus 'enabling' support for LPAs at regional and sub-regional level supply	CLG planning team, BERR renewables team
Effective innovation system	RDA-sponsored activities and university 'hubs'	BERR RDA and renewables teams, Carbon Trust, ETI, Defra/BERR ETF teams, DIUS
Leadership and collective ownership/public engagement	All regional bodies plus support for LAs within regions	Defra LA/public sector team, CLG LA team, EST, Carbon Trust, BERR energy strategy & RDA tasking teams
Appropriately skilled workforce	Learning & skills via SSCs, universities, RDAs	BERR RDA tasking team DIUS
Co-ordinated supply chain development	RDA funded activities	BERR RDA and renewables teams, Defra biomass and rural diversification teams, Carbon Trust
Access to high quality energy services for all	RDA (BREW), ESTAC integration, regional approaches to energy services	EST, Carbon Trust, Defra (EST, public engagement, BREW and CERT teams)
Improvement of lowest SAP homes & support for fuel poor	Regional Housing Board, co-ordinated approaches to Warmfront & CERT, ESTAC integration	CLG Housing team DWP benefits take-up team EST, Defra (fuel poverty team, EST and CERT teams), BERR (fuel poverty team)

Abbreviations used in Table 3

BERR	Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform
BREW	Business Resource Efficiency & Waste
CERT	Carbon Emission Reduction Target (placed on energy suppliers)
CLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DIUS	Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills
DWP	Department for Work & Pensions
EST	Energy Saving Trust
ESTAC	Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre
ETF	Environmental Transformation Fund
ETI	Energy Technologies Institute
LA	Local Authority
LPA	Local Planning Authority
RDA	Regional Development Agency
SAP	Standard Assessment Procedure (a measurement of energy performance of a dwelling)
SSC	Sector Skills Councils

3 Current Whitehall understanding & views of the regions

The description in Section 2 of the potential roles of regional bodies in energy policy and the mapping to the relevant government departments is likely to be neither comprehensive nor entirely accurate. However, its purpose is to provide an illustrative backdrop for the perspectives encountered in the 13 interviews conducted for this study. This allows some analysis of the extent of understanding and connection amongst government officials regarding the focus of this study: how central government considers and relates to the regions in the delivery of its energy policy objectives.

The interviewees are listed in Appendix A. As described in Section 1, the study objective was to interview a number of officials in different government departments who had involvement and responsibilities either for (a) the delivery of specific objectives within energy policy, or (b) specifically within BERR, for sponsorship of the principal regional bodies, the RDAs.

There were a number of themes which emerged from the interviews.

3.1 A lack of a coherent, shared picture of regional action on energy (though 'nice-to-have' if you get it)

The interviews revealed a lack of a coherent, shared picture for central government officials of what regional bodies are doing and can do in relation to the delivery of energy policy objectives. In particular, there was no sense that there had been systematic consideration by officials of whether there were regional actions that were either beneficial or necessary (or both) for the delivery of these objectives.

For example, Chapter 9 of the Energy White Paper only came up spontaneously in three interviews, and when it did emerge it was accompanied by a view that Chapter 9 was not the result of particularly strategic thinking.

As detailed below in Section 3.2, in some cases this limitation may result from limited understanding. But more generally it appeared to derive from the common experience that the role of the regions was not routinely considered in developing policy and programmes to delivery energy policy objectives. Indeed, some officials clearly had not considered the issue until confronted by the interview.

Overall, the situation can be characterised as follows: No one has a clear picture of what might be the result or benefits of such consideration, no one is asking for it to be considered and no one is checking whether it had been considered. It simply is not a routine feature of policy-making or programme delivery.

Where officials had deliberately and purposefully engaged with the regions (eg biomass sector development and renewables supply chain), this was usually the result of: (a) the potential value of doing so being highlighted by some external intervention (eg the Biomass Task Force and members of the Biomass Implementation Advisory Group) or; (b) being forced by the simple mathematics of trying to engage local authorities (eg briefing 9 Government Offices on fuel poverty local performance indicators avoids the need to brief every English local authority directly). In the case of the renewables supply chain, the engagement was initially driven by a view that the budgets needed to support supply chain development may be more available at regional level (eg through RDAs) than national.

In these circumstances, the officials expressed something akin to pleasant surprise at how much the regional engagement added to what they could achieve on their own. They also shared a sense that they would have gained significantly, in terms of shaping national activities and programmes, from adopting this approach earlier.

However, they acknowledged that their approach of engaging with the regional bodies had not emerged from any routine process or internal pressure. They were also not convinced their approach would sustain beyond their involvement.

Significantly, even in these cases, the distinct impression given in the interviews was that action by the regional bodies was ‘nice-to-have’ rather than an integral component of policy delivery. We encountered a strong sense that directing or requiring a region to act on a particular issue was not an option. Yet there was also little thinking even about how they might be cajoled to do so (see Section 3.3 below).

Even where regional bodies have a statutory duty to deliver (eg Regional Spatial Strategies) with relevant national guidance (eg Planning Policy Statements on Renewables and Climate Change), there still appears to be a mild sense of gratitude amongst officials that the regions have acted where they have.

Those officials in BERR with a specific responsibility for, and relationship with, RDAs confirmed this perspective, highlighting that a good understanding of the roles and activities of regional bodies was not commonly found in Whitehall. Still less common was a policy-specific understanding of what regional bodies could deliver in relation to that policy area.

Representatives of regional bodies also reinforced this impression, talking of a “*vagueness in expectations of the regions*” amongst central government officials.

The lack of a coherent picture was also exposed by the failure of any official to provide a reasoned position that can justify the extent of regional variation in approaches to delivering energy policy objectives on the basis of relevant differences between the regions (see also Section 3.3 below).

Implications

This lack of a coherent, shared picture and the absence of systematic thinking and process create a risk that policies and programmes are being developed without informed consideration of whether or how regional bodies could usefully be involved. This almost certainly means that productive opportunities to align national policies and programmes with guided action by regional bodies are being overlooked, principally because they are not even being considered nationally.

As described below in Section 3.3, this shortcoming may also lead to a sub-optimal level of direction and guidance from ‘the centre’, potentially resulting in more variation between the regions than is perhaps justified by *relevant* differences between the regions. In addition, it weakens the potential for officials systematically and uniformly to provide a robust challenge to regional plans and priorities against defined expectations of the regions.

3.2 Islands of good understanding in a sea of limited awareness

As might be expected from the analysis in Section 3.1, the overall level of understanding of the regional bodies demonstrated by the interviews was not, on the whole, particularly sophisticated or comprehensive.

In some cases, understanding and consideration of the potential role of regional bodies appears to extend only as far as the knowledge that someone else (eg BERR in respect of RDAs) would be able to help if needed (though it was not obvious what might stimulate such an enquiry of BERR).

Understanding of the regions within BERR’s Energy Group itself was considered to be generally quite weak. Of course, most officials in the Group do not require a detailed knowledge of the role of the regions in delivering energy policy objectives (particularly if a few officials have specific responsibility for the issue). However, several interviewees considered that the levels of awareness and understanding across the Group were sub optimal, particularly in the light of the achievements of those policy officials who had engaged with the regions in their work.

The study did encounter pockets of good understanding and reasonably purposeful practice to engage and work with regional bodies on common objectives (eg renewables supply chain, renewables planning,

biomass sector development). As described above in Section 3.1, this understanding tended to have been developed in response to factors other than routine policy development or process.

Typically, these officials have also developed, through direct experience and engagement with the regions, an awareness of variation in quality and commitment across the regions to their particular issues. This brings its own challenges which are explored in Section 3.3 below.

There has also been a relatively recent engagement by Defra officials with the potential value of GOs as a route to encouraging local authorities to support and deliver national policy objectives. Arising in the last 6-8 months, this has been driven principally by Defra's decision to promote the new local performance framework indicators on carbon emissions and fuel poverty (and, just as importantly, by the maths of trying to reach all LAs from the centre). However, there is recognition (both in Defra and from the GO representative) that support to the GOs to do this has not been particularly systematic or well-resourced. Nevertheless, the regions had noticed and responded positively to this new interest and application.

It was a common feature of interviews that officials tended to equate 'regional action' with only one regional body, most commonly the RDA. CLG's planning team clearly had its sights on the Regional Assemblies to reflect their pre-eminent role in the development of the Regional Spatial Strategy. As mentioned above, the interviewees from Defra have recently engaged purposefully with GOs. By contrast, officials involved in renewables deployment and biomass sector development had reportedly found value in approaching each region with an open-mind rather than assuming an RDA locus for action on energy policy.

Implications

In addition to the implications outlined in Section 3.1 of a lack of a coherent and shared picture, the pervasive lack of understanding of what can be done and what can be expected of the regional bodies limits the capacity of central government to challenge and test the plans and priorities of the regional bodies.

Moreover, if, as suggested, understanding of regional bodies in relation to energy policy delivery is treated as a specialist knowledge, this potentially undermines any effort to make consideration of regional roles more routine across energy policy development and delivery. This is examined further in Section 4.1.

3.3 A sense that regions should be left as much as possible to their own devices (resulting in the regions having a range of different devices)

It is clear from the interviews that thinking in central government about the regions has been dominated in the recent past by a notion that the regions should be largely left to their own devices to determine their own priorities, within some oversight from GOs. This notion has arisen from an over-riding policy direction across Government that regions should have a high degree of self-determination.

It has translated in practice into a sense amongst government officials that the guidance and direction they provide to regional bodies has to provide space for the region's own perspective to dominate.

This approach does not appear to be nuanced by particularly sophisticated thinking about what aspects of regional action on energy policy are most effective if they are undertaken uniformly across all regions. In other words, what aspects of energy policy would justify regional self-determination?

A good example of this identified by regional representatives is the lack of prescription for a methodology for establishing regional carbon emission baselines, even though there would be significant benefits in terms of comparability, computability, and avoided cost (both nationally and to each region) of having a common approach in all regions.

This is another manifestation of the lack of a coherent and shared picture of what is needed from the regional bodies to support the delivery of national energy policy objectives; the 'nice-to-have' notion described in Section 3.1.

Moreover, there does not appear to have been consideration of appropriate level of difference between regions in the ways in which they deliver on energy policy objectives. How much difference can be justified between the approach of the South West and that of the East Midlands? And on what basis?

Yet many of the government officials interviewed seem to share a perception that differences between the regions (in terms of what they were doing) are the result of careful evidence-based analysis of needs and priorities undertaken by each region. This perception sustained, even if it was not resulting in activity they felt was necessary or beneficial for the delivery of national energy policy objectives. Others were more doubtful that regions had adequate or appropriate expertise or resources to develop their own approaches.

However, there are signs of change. The interview process detected a growing sense that central government should be more prescriptive on the core expectations of what regional bodies should be doing as integral to the delivery of national priorities.

Regional representatives reinforced this, talking of the value of clearer tasking frameworks and guidance for the regions on energy. They are not particularly impressed by the level of guidance and support they have been given by Whitehall to shape their work to date. Where tasking frameworks have been established and Energy White Paper chapters written, resourcing and guidance have been limited (in some cases more so than originally indicated). There is also no expectation of consequence from failure to perform.

This sentiment was most prevalent amongst officials who had engaged purposefully with the regions. In so doing, they had encountered regional variations in priorities and quality which they found hard to justify on the basis of what they considered to be relevant differences between the regions (such as available renewable resource or incidence of fuel poverty).

Perhaps ironically, the regional variation now evident may well be a result of several years without clear and specific guidance and direction from central government on energy policy action for regional bodies. It is a self-fulfilling process. The belief that the regions should have a high degree of self-determination has led to a lack of precise guidance. This has resulted in a wide range of initiatives and approaches and institutional structures emerging across the regions. The range can potentially be taken subsequently as proof that the regions really do have relevantly different needs and legitimately different priorities. In turn, this would justify the continuing lack of precise guidance!

This situation reflects findings of CSE's analysis of regional performance on sustainable energy for the EST (published in 2007)⁸. It also creates some challenges in the development of nationally consistent approaches that require regional input or delivery.

The Carbon Trust, which has recently developed a small number of pilot programmes around significant energy users and SMEs in partnership with RDAs in some regions, echoes this. They have yet to find a single template for working with regional bodies such that it would be straightforward to roll out to other regions a project that had been successful in one region. The difference between regions in how they have organised themselves were seen as presenting some challenges in the development of a cost-effective national programme of regional partnership initiatives.

Nevertheless, the Carbon Trust's newer approach of developing regional delivery partnerships is a change to their model of employing a network of regional managers principally to drive the delivery of certain Carbon Trust national programmes in the regions. The account managers continue to work on regional projects but also have a national sector based brief. The newer partnership-based pilots appear to reflect a

8 See Footnote 2

view that there could be potential 'win-wins' through closer alignment of the efforts and resources of the Carbon Trust's national programmes and the activities of regional bodies (particularly RDAs).

Regional bodies appear to take a sanguine view of this variation, but have a clear message for what this means for future approaches from national to regional levels:

"Not all regional bodies have turned out the same in each region. Whether that's appropriate or not is less important than that's how it now is. Which means national functions need to plan for what is called in the jargon 'asymmetrical engagement'"

The Energy Saving Trust (EST) appears to have adopted this '**asymmetrical engagement**' approach (though they may not use that particular jargon!). The EST has recently – and purposefully – developed a reasonably sophisticated understanding of regional bodies and their potential role in supporting its principal objective of securing carbon emission reductions from the household sector.

As a result it has initiated a new network of regional managers across England with a remit both to (a) further the objectives of the EST in the region through engagement with existing and new regional and sub-regional initiatives and (b) reflect regional and sub-regional perspectives and experiences back to EST's head office team to inform further programme and policy development. In essence, it is seeking to involve itself in, and have positive influence over, what is happening in each region, irrespective of whether the initiatives are part of a common national programme or a region-specific 'one-off'.

Implications

Given the level of variation between approaches taken by regional bodies to common energy policy delivery priorities, it is unlikely that it will prove easy to enforce a more uniform approach in the near future. The 'slightly messy' situation is therefore likely to continue.

Nevertheless there is an opportunity to respond to the desire of both regional representatives and well-informed officials to improve the quality of guidance and support and to establish clearer expectations of regional bodies with respect to energy policy objectives. This will require greater understanding and flexibility in approach than would have been the case if guidance had been more precise and directive in the past. But in future, the flexibility should be reserved for genuine and relevant regional variations (which should, in turn, be well understood and evidenced).

3.4 Can it be different with the Integrated Regional Strategy?

A number of interviewees were aware of the Sub-National review (SNR) and its implications for the structure of regional bodies. They was also a general sense that this might provide an opportunity, however undefined, for national energy policy priorities to be embedded more effectively within the strategies, spending plans and programmes of the regions.

BERR officials focused on the RDAs were particularly keen that Whitehall 'got its act together' to lay down clear expectations (in the form of tasking frameworks) and guidance for the regions. There was recognition that this would require the Government to come to a clear collective view of what these expectations should be. They also highlighted the risk of leaving the engagement too late or in the hands only of those officials generally responsible for 'regional bodies', emphasising the importance of applying appropriate subject knowledge.

4 Opportunities for improvement

Each interviewee was asked to consider areas for improving the understanding and engagement between national energy policy development and delivery and regional bodies. They all responded positively and indicated that they felt the improvements were necessary and valuable. They also all appeared to share a hope that the improvements may actually take place.

The opportunities for improvement identified can be categorised as:

- Establishing a more coherent framework for regional action to deliver energy policy objectives
- Improving understanding across relevant parts of central government
- Developing common standards for engagement, guidance, resources and communications between national and regional bodies
- Ensuring an effective, cross-departmental input to the development of the new Integrated Regional Strategies
- Demonstrating priority and value through leadership commitment

The last of these emerges from the experience of a brief period in the recent past (c. 2004-06) described by the RDA energy lead. During this period, there was senior intervention from BERR (DG Energy) with RDA chief executives. This reportedly helped to galvanise RDAs into engaging with the energy agenda (or at least those parts of it which they saw as aligning with their economic development agenda). This proactive and high level engagement does not seem to have been sustained, giving rise to a concern from regional representatives that the influence and resulting sense of priority is waning.

Before examining each of these opportunities for improvement in more depth, including an assessment of potential costs, it is legitimate to ask why they have not already been put in place. To address this question, it may prove useful to examine why understanding of regional bodies is currently limited and consideration of their potential role in energy policy delivery is not systematic.

4.1 A lesson from recent history: avoiding the dangers of 'point' expertise

In recent years, there has been an approach of having one or two officials within BERR (then DTI) with detailed knowledge of the regions' activities on energy policy. They develop knowledge through several years of engagement with the regional bodies as a core focus of their work and they become the repository of such knowledge in the department. But there is a risk that they leave gaps if they move on from BERR.⁹

This study found gaps following such a situation, with only a limited legacy of know-how and influence more widely within BERR's Energy Group or other government departments.

This is a common situation within organisations but it also represents a challenge in terms of both succession planning and knowledge dissemination.

It may be that an official's knowledge about regional approaches to energy policy is treated in a similar way to knowledge about a particular energy technology (eg wave energy) or policy (eg the Renewables Obligation); 'specialised' and thereby assumed to be 'narrow in application'.

The reality was that this detailed knowledge about regions was potentially wide in application because knowledge of the regional bodies is not policy or technology specific. Indeed, as Section 2 demonstrates, it is a legitimate consideration in many aspects of energy policy, both within BERR and more widely. This would justify an approach which did not rely solely on specialised expertise at one 'point' in the organisation, but also improved knowledge of the role of the regions more generally across relevant parts of central government so they could apply it routinely to their own policy thinking.

⁹ A reasonably similar situation can be traced through part of Defra where key personnel with knowledge of regional activities on energy have recently left.

To make the most of knowledge and understanding with potentially widespread application across energy policy delivery, it makes sense strategically to:

- (a) embed that knowledge and understanding within commonly-used policy development and delivery processes and systems (not just people) and;
- (b) disseminate that knowledge and understanding to ensure it is available (at an appropriate level of detail) to all to whom it may be useful.

As two interviewees put it:

“This knowledge – a perspective of the regional bodies – should be a basic component of every government official’s knowledge development.”

“It’s not something that should be considered the preserve of specialists. But it also can’t be left to the ‘regional’ generalists who don’t know the energy policy detail.”

This challenge, to combine policy-specific knowledge with the regional understanding, lies at the heart of the following programme for improvement.

4.2 Establishing a more coherent framework

In order for national government officials to develop a clearer understanding of the potential role of regional bodies in the delivery of energy policy objectives, the government will need, itself, to have a coherent picture it can share amongst relevant officials and with the regional bodies.

The exercise in Section 2 above started the process of establishing a clear picture of the specific aspects of national energy policy where the involvement of regional bodies is (a) necessary and/or (b) value-adding. It is by no means comprehensive or complete and has nothing like the detail required.

However, it could act as the starting point for a short process to draw up a more detailed version, drawing in views from relevant teams across Whitehall and the regions. This could be driven by BERR (potentially a combined effort of the Energy Strategy and RDA tasking teams) and involve regional bodies through the English Regions Energy Policy Group.

The resulting framework could also form the basis of a coherent tasking framework on energy policy for the regions (and, as more than one interviewee pointed out, not just the RDAs). This would meet a need frequently expressed by interviewees to have a more codified set of expectations of the regions, together with clarity as to the appropriateness of, and room for, regional variation.

In essence, it should define reasonable limits to the asymmetry between regions so that the current need for ‘asymmetric engagement’ (see Section 3.3) does not undermine the potential for effective regional delivery of nationally organised programmes.

The framework could also establish a ‘checklist’ for policy development and delivery initiatives, to ensure that adequate consideration is given to the value of engaging regional bodies in these processes.

Recommendations

- BERR should initiate a process, potentially building on the analysis in Section 2, to draw up and to test and determine the potential importance and value of such action through iterative engagement with relevant national and regional stakeholders.
- The framework should form the basis of a regional tasking framework on the delivery of energy policy objectives, to be applied across Whitehall and the regions.
- The framework should be used across relevant departmental teams involved in energy policy development and delivery (across Whitehall) to ensure that they are giving adequate consideration to regional action.

4.3 Improving understanding across central government

This study has exposed an undeveloped level of understanding of the regions amongst some officials, even though their roles and responsibilities in relation to delivering national energy policy objectives would suggest that consideration of regional action and purposeful engagement with regional bodies could prove valuable.

In Section 4.1 above, it was suggested that the treatment of knowledge of the energy policy activities of regional bodies as ‘specialist’ within BERR’s structure may limit ‘knowledge transfer’ of what is appropriately considered to be widely applicable knowledge.

All of the interviewees expressed a need to improve understanding amongst officials of the potential role of regional bodies in the delivery of energy policy objectives. The first step in such a process would be to engage relevant officials in a series of short cross-departmental seminars. These could introduce the more coherent framework and explore how this knowledge and approach applies in their policy areas. The seminars could be followed by guidance, advice and support on appropriate strategies for engaging the regions (BERR’s RDA team readily offered such involvement).

Beyond this, the expectations of officials’ understanding of the regions could be enhanced by building such requirements into civil service career development schemes, fast-track programmes, and future job descriptions for relevant energy policy-related posts

Recommendations

- BERR should develop and deliver a short programme of ‘energy policy and the regions’ seminars for staff from all relevant departmental teams (See Table 3), explaining the more coherent framework which has been developed (see previous recommendation) and helping officials explore the potential implications for their policy areas and programmes.
- All departments should take steps to improve the engagement between their ‘regional policy’ specialists (eg RDA tasking teams) and energy policy subject-matter specialists
- The Cabinet Office should review civil service career development plans and ‘fast-track’ programmes to create opportunities for greater understanding of effective relationships between national and regional government, and reflect in relevant job descriptions, potentially making it an ‘essential attribute’ for key energy policy-related posts.

4.4 Developing common standards for guidance

Many of the interviewees believed there would be considerable value in having a clearer set of standards for how different government departments engage with, guide, provide resources to, and communicate with the regions in relation to energy policy issues. And, very importantly, vice versa.

There are efforts underway, being led by GOs, to establish a ‘National Demonstration Project’ on establishing a clear framework and process for such interaction in relation to climate change. While it remains, in terms of cross-departmental approaches, rather Defra-focused, it does seek to involve other relevant national agencies (eg Environment Agency, Natural England, Energy Saving Trust and Carbon Trust) and the Local Government Association.

More importantly, the initiative does achieve what appears to be an important breakthrough compared with the general approach found in this study; it brings together regional and Defra expertise in (a) climate change policy, (b) regional policy, and (c) local authorities AND a sample of regional representatives (RDAs and GOs, including, interestingly “non-Defra facing GO reps”). In other words, it combines policy specialist knowledge and regional engagement specialists, responding directly to the challenge raised above.

This initiative may prove to be a model for a ‘process guide’ in relation to relevant aspects of energy policy. It could be particularly helpful to BERR to understand this project in more detail and assess its potential application to energy policy delivery.

Recommendation

- BERR Energy Strategy team, with the GO energy lead and RDA energy lead (or a sub-group of the BERR English Regions Energy Policy Group), should review the GO Network National Demonstration Project on Climate Change to consider whether it represents a model for overseeing national-regional engagement on energy policy.

4.5 Ensuring effective cross-departmental input to Integrated Regional Strategies

Those interviewees who were familiar with the Sub-National Review were very clear that the new 'Integrated Regional Strategies' represent a major opportunity for national energy policy objectives to be embedded in regional priorities.

However, they were also doubtful that this would happen without purposeful effort to co-ordinate input from the various relevant parts of Whitehall (see Section 2 above) and to ensure each part's input is of high quality. This lack of confidence would appear reasonable on the basis of the findings of this study.

There are signs of attempts to do this in the recent past. The Government's PSA Delivery Agreement 7, published in October 2007, talks of the Government's vision for the regions. This includes: "*addressing the challenges and opportunities of climate change, ensuring regional economies successfully adjust to a low carbon, low waste economy.*"¹⁰

However, the document does not explain how this particular aspect of its vision will be embedded in the activities of the wide range of departments it identifies as relevant. Indeed, it isolates this 'low carbon' objective as one for Defra (with a vague "in conjunction with BERR where appropriate") and then focuses on a rather narrow range of business-sector activities, rather than even the range of those aspects of climate policy covered by Defra. The section on BERR's involvement makes no reference to energy policy objectives or low carbon elements thereof (such as renewable energy). Similarly, the references to DIUS, CLG, DWP and DfT make no reference to this low carbon objective or how it relates to each department's various activities with the regions.

That said, the document demonstrates the potential to establish (or, at least, to describe an aspiration for) a cross-departmental approach to the regions on a particular policy dimension. The forthcoming development by each region of an Integrated Regional Strategy, combining economic development and planning functions, offers an ideal opportunity to bring together energy policy subject-matter expertise from across Whitehall with those officials with good regional programme knowledge

Recommendation

- BERR, working closely with Defra, CLG and HM Treasury and other departments as relevant, should develop a cross-departmental plan for securing appropriate energy policy and programme commitments within Integrated Regional Strategies (including a clear process for regional engagement). This should be led by specialists from each aspect of energy policy with a regional dimension, with support and advice from regional programme specialists within each department and on the English Regions Energy Policy Group.

¹⁰ See http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/5/E/pbr_csr07_psa7.pdf

4.6 Providing leadership

As identified at the beginning of Section 4, there has been a short recent period when BERR's DG Energy deliberately engaged with RDAs at senior level (typically Chair and/or Chief Executive) to highlight the importance of regional action to support national energy policy delivery. This is no longer happening and, when combined with turnover of Board members and staff in RDAs, this is likely to have ensured that its brief positive influence is likely to have waned.

As several interviewees pointed out, there is nothing to guarantee that the regional bodies will share national energy policy priorities, even if action by the regional bodies is necessary in delivery terms. Securing commitment from the regions will require leadership from the centre to demonstrate the importance and value placed on effective regional action to delivery national energy policy objectives. This will also be important if the role of regional action is to become more important to government officials.

Such leadership is not just about peppering speeches, policy papers and communiqués with references to the importance of regional action. It needs additionally to (a) express a coherent case for aligning national and regional priorities and actions (i.e. why 'regional' is part of 'national') and (b) be backed up by genuine efforts to ensure that appropriate areas of energy policy and delivery programmes routinely embed a relevant regional dimension.

Recommendation

- Building on the other improvements described here, senior energy group officials (and potentially ministers) in BERR and other relevant government departments (particularly Defra and CLG) should develop a joint programme of engagement with relevant regional bodies (particularly RDAs and GOs) to highlight the priority to be given to aligning national and regional action on energy policy objectives.
- Senior energy officials in BERR should also ensure that this alignment is given appropriate and visible priority within relevant departmental policy development processes, internal and external communications, and staff development and training.

4.7 The costs and benefits of improving understanding and practice

It is not within the scope of this study to undertake a detailed cost-benefit analysis of these opportunities for improvement. However, it is possible to assess the likely 'programme costs' of the recommendations identified above. This will need to be added to the obvious requirement for staff resources to follow through the recommended programme and to engage with its resulting dissemination. These are outlined below.

Benefits

The benefits of following the programme of improvement recommended here are extremely difficult to determine. Aside from the problem of knowing how much transformation the programme would actually achieve, it is even more difficult to establish the benefits of greater alignment of national and regional effort in the delivery of national energy policy objectives.

That said, it is possible to draw on the experiences of those officials who have recently engaged systematically with the regions with respect to a particular aspect of energy policy with a strong regional dimension (according to the analysis here).

"My recent engagement with the regions has given me huge benefits in terms of understanding the detail of what is and isn't working and where coherent initiatives have been developed. Most particularly, it helped me think about how we need to adjust or improve national policy and programmes so that they make the most of what the regions can do – while also understanding their limitations"

"There's real leverage available from working with RDAs on supply chain development; they can see the detail on the ground, initiate programmes suited to regional opportunities and provide funding in ways we find difficult"

“If I can tap into the right people to talk to in each region, it can provide a really useful sounding board for what we’re doing and how it matches what the regions need”

These officials perceive significant value in their engagement with the regions. Many interviewees who are currently less engaged also anticipated significant value in improving their understanding.

Clearly, this assessment does not come close to putting a value on the available benefits. Nevertheless, whatever the overall scale of the benefits, it is reasonable to conclude from this study that the current level of alignment is not particularly effective, suggesting that there is a large proportion of any available benefits still to be gained.

Costs

The main cost of this recommended programme of improvement will be in staff resource costs. BERR will need to resource its proposed role in leading the programme, from establishing the ‘coherent framework’ and engaging with the English Regions Policy Network to overseeing a cross-departmental input to the Integrated Regional Strategies. And staff from other parts of BERR and other government departments will need to ‘give time’ to the seminars to improve their knowledge and understanding.

Beyond these costs, the programme support costs are likely to be modest, principally relating to external support to provide specific stakeholder engagement and seminar leadership skills. We have estimated these costs:

‘Coherent framework’ development process	£30,000
Seminar programme development and delivery (to c.60 - 100 key officials across Whitehall engaged with aspects of national energy policy with a regional dimension)	£40,000
Supporting the cross-departmental input to influence Integrated Regional Strategies	£30,000
Direct costs for regional leaders engagement process	£10,000

As mentioned above, there is no measure available of the benefits of the improved policy effectiveness that may result from implementation of this recommended programme. However, the combined costs of programme support and staff time appear relatively modest in the light of the gains reported by officials who are engaging with the regions.

5 Recommendations to BERR (& Government more generally)

This study makes the following recommendations to BERR and other relevant government departments:

- 1. Establish a clear picture of the specific aspects of national energy policy where the involvement of regional bodies is (a) necessary and/or (b) value-adding.**
 - a. BERR should initiate a process, potentially building on the analysis in Section 2, to draw up and to test and determine the potential importance and value of such action through iterative engagement with relevant national and regional stakeholders.
 - b. The framework should form the basis of a regional tasking framework on the delivery of energy policy objectives, to be applied across Whitehall and the regions.
 - c. The framework should be used across relevant departmental teams involved in energy policy development and delivery (across Whitehall) to ensure that they are giving adequate consideration to regional action.
- 2. Disseminate knowledge by developing and delivering a series of seminars to improve understanding across relevant parts of government of the role and potential of regional bodies on the energy policy agenda and how best to engage with them.**
 - a. BERR should develop and deliver a short programme of 'energy policy and the regions' seminars for staff from all relevant departmental teams, explaining the more coherent framework and helping officials explore the potential implications for their policy areas and programmes.
 - b. All departments should take steps to improve the engagement between their 'regional policy' specialists (eg RDA tasking teams) and energy policy subject-matter specialists
 - c. The Cabinet Office should review civil service career development plans and 'fast-track' programmes to create opportunities for greater understanding of effective relationships between national and regional government, and reflect in relevant job descriptions, potentially making it an 'essential attribute' for key energy policy-related posts.
- 3. Develop common standards for engagement, guidance, resources and communications between national and regional bodies**
 - a. BERR Energy Strategy team, with the GO energy lead and RDA energy lead (or a sub-group of the BERR English Regions Energy Policy Group), should review the GO Network National Demonstration Project on Climate Change to consider whether it represents a model for overseeing national-regional engagement on energy policy.
- 4. Ensure an effective, cross-departmental input on relevant energy policy objectives to the development of the new Integrated Regional Strategies**
 - a. BERR, working closely with Defra, CLG and HM Treasury and other departments as relevant, should develop a cross-departmental plan for securing appropriate energy policy and programme commitments within Integrated Regional Strategies (including a clear process for regional engagement). This should be led by specialists from each aspect of energy policy with a regional dimension, with support and advice from regional programme specialists within each department and on the English Regions Energy Policy Group.
- 5 Re-introduce the high level leadership initiative to engage senior officials from regional bodies with senior energy policy officials**
 - a. Building on the other improvements described here, senior energy group officials (and potentially ministers) in BERR and other relevant government departments should develop a joint programme of engagement with relevant regional bodies to highlight the priority to be given to aligning national and regional action on energy policy objectives.
 - b. Senior energy officials in BERR should also ensure that this alignment is given appropriate and visible priority within relevant departmental policy development processes, internal and external communications, and staff development and training.