

Northern Gas Networks

Young Innovators Council



Session 4: Sustainability Strategy

October 2021

Sustainability Strategy Session



Contents:

1. Overview
2. Attendees
(YIC, S4TP, Northern Gas Networks & other)
3. Session theme and materials
4. Engagement methods
5. Key discussion points
6. Key recommendations (priorities)
7. Agreed actions for the YIC
8. Summary of modifications to be made after feedback
9. Conclusion

1. Overview

Background

Northern Gas Networks' Young Innovators Council (YIC) is the voice of young people at Northern Gas Networks. It will provide young people's perspectives and Northern Gas Networks will ensure these young people's thoughts and opinions are put at the heart of the business' decision making. Each session agenda will be co-created by S4TP, Northern Gas Networks and the Young Innovators Council, leading to meaningful and relevant engagement which will provide a real opportunity to influence decision-making. The council is made up of 34 young people aged 14–18 who are based across the footprint of Northern Gas Networks.

Key principles of all sessions:

- Empower young people to use strategies and methods to acquire information and knowledge and to use that knowledge to make decisions.
- Empower young people by recognising their experience and expertise.
- Respect their leadership activities.
- Build mutually respectful relationships between adults and young people.
- Involve young people in cocreation at all stages of the process from defining the problem to gathering and analysing data for decision making.
- Include young people in the evaluation process.

All sessions follow a distinct format:

- Knowledge sense test prior to witnesses
- Key information and knowledge given by 'witnesses': the witnesses may be from Northern Gas Networks or other specialists in the field. Information about a subject may also be given prior to the session. This methodology ensures that the young people are prepared to ask questions of the witnesses and have a framework for understanding the content of the session.
- Break out to smaller groups to discuss, offer ideas and prioritise into:
 - NOW = quick wins, easy to implement
 - WOW = big impact, take a little time to implement
 - HOW = big impact, not possible now
- Decide who will feed back 1 or 2 ideas from each of the above categories
- Feedback to whole group

Session 4: Sustainability Strategy at Northern Gas Networks

Total length: 120 minutes

People Involved: 2 S4TP facilitators, 2 Northern Gas Networks facilitators, 1 Northern Gas Networks witness, 1 external witness
(plus observers, see Attendees)

Date and Time: 06/10/2021

Panel attendance: 21

Panel apologies: 3

Objectives:

- A. Understand what sustainability means to young people.
- B. Identify what future customers would expect a company to be doing when it comes to being sustainable.
- C. Re Northern Gas Network's Sustainability Strategy:
 - i. Does it cover everything that's important to young people?
 - ii. Is it ambitious enough?
 - iii. What's missing, or anything included that is unnecessary?
 - iv. Is the language right, i.e., does net-zero mean something to you? Are the targets clear and understandable?
- D. How should Northern Gas Networks prioritise these commitments/ targets? (What are the top five?)

Prior to first session:

The Young Innovators Council members were asked to research companies that they felt had a good sustainability record and note any innovations that had an impact on sustainability.

TASK: Before next week's meeting, we'd like you to have a think about the following:

- **PRE-TASK:** do a little bit of research into companies that you think have a good track record when it comes to sustainability.
 - Which companies pop into your head because they have a great sustainability reputation
 - What do you know about this already, what are they promoting publicly, what else have you found out about?
 - What makes them a success because of the kinds of things they have done?
- Any examples you can tell us about would be brilliant to hear

Please watch this video to help contextualise some of the language we are going to be looking at next week - the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

[Sustainable Development Goals: Improve Life All Around The Globe](#)

2. Attendees

Young Innovators Council

Amanda	Kaitlin
Amiee	Kate
Bernard	Lina
Charlotte	Lydia
Declan	May
Drew	Maya
Ellie C	Millie
Ellie G	Samuel S
Imogen	Sophie
Joshua	Taylor
Josie	Yvana

Solutions for the Planet

Claire Fitton	Youth Insights Manager
Fran Isherwood	Youth Insights Coordinator

Northern Gas Networks

Jenny Wilkinson	Stakeholder Manager
Claire Spencer	Northern Gas Networks facilitator

Witnesses

Simon Pringle	Project Rome
Hannah Jewison	Northern Gas Networks Sustainability Lead

Others

Ivan Jepson	Observer
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3. Session theme and materials

Theme: Sustainability Strategy

Materials: Slido, Microsoft PowerPoint, Northern Gas Networks' sustainability strategy presentation

4. Engagement methods:

Feedback on actions from previous session – ‘You said / We did’

S4TP’s methods of engagement crucially hinge on businesses feeding back on the actions they have taken after hearing the voices of young people. Northern Gas Network’s Young Innovators Council is NOT a consultative body, it is a forum for co-creation and actions. Therefore, each session starts with Northern Gas Networks feeding back on any actions that they have taken in response to the previous session.



Figure 1: 'You said / We did' slides; YIC Session 4

Pre-engagement knowledge share

This information and expertise sharing from a witness enables young people to gain a level of understanding of the subject area in order to have a meaningful input to both breakout sessions and main sessions.

Slido Wordcloud was used to gain immediate insights into the subject covered.

Slido Polling was used so that the council members could prioritise the most important issues that the sustainability strategy should cover.

Polling using stamps inside the breakout rooms

One way to engage the council quickly and effectively about their preferences is using interactive polls. The council members were asked to 'stamp' their typed ideas and suggestions (which are displayed on an interactive whiteboard) with various icons, to highlight which suggestions which they felt were the most important for Northern Gas Networks to focus on.

Small group work

Small group work was written into the session plan as a result of feedback from previous sessions. It was indicated that many of the council members preferred the work undertaken in the breakout sessions.

Large group feedback

S4TP felt it important that the young people themselves fed back to the larger group, rather than the facilitators. We are aware that some of the same councillors are feeding back each week and will look to encourage some different voices for the large group feedback in the next sessions.

Co-creation

One of the most important parts of developing the Young Innovators Council is to build advocacy among the young people and, in turn, champion their views within Northern Gas Networks. Advocacy is built up over time and is the result of carrying out top quality meaningful engagement in partnership, to deliver results that work for everyone. Co-creation is a co-operative process in which, in this instance, young people with diverse experiences, skills and knowledge come together to address a common issue, and which enables them to be actively involved in shaping the things which impact their lives now and in the future.

Post-session feedback

In order to respond to the needs and the requests of the Young Innovators Council, post-session questionnaires are filled out (see Appendix). This ensures a holistic and innovative approach to responding to the young people's needs.

Agenda

Time	Activity	Lead	Timings (mins)
5:00	Welcome & feedback from previous session	S4TP/Northern Gas Networks	7
5:07	Introduction to session & objectives	S4TP	3
5:10	What does sustainability mean to you?	S4TP/JW Slido word cloud	10
5:20	Mind map a list of areas/themes/targets you'd expect a company to have in a sustainability strategy	Groups discuss around 2 themes each	15
5:35	Witness 1: Getting to net zero – Simon Pringle	Simon Pringle	10
5:45	Witness 2: Sustainability at Northern Gas Networks	Hannah Jewison Sustainability lead	5
5:50	Introduction to task Breakout rooms 2 Discuss Northern Gas Networks' plans	S4TP Experts to rotate	30
6:20	Return to main room: 6 groups feedback to everyone	S4TP & facilitators	15
6:35	Prioritisation of top five things they think we should focus on/ targets that are important for them as future customers	YIC	10
6.45	Q&A	All	10
6:55	End		

Table 1: Agenda; YIC Session 4

Objective A:

Understand what sustainability means to young people.

Exercise 1: Slido word cloud: What does sustainability mean to you?

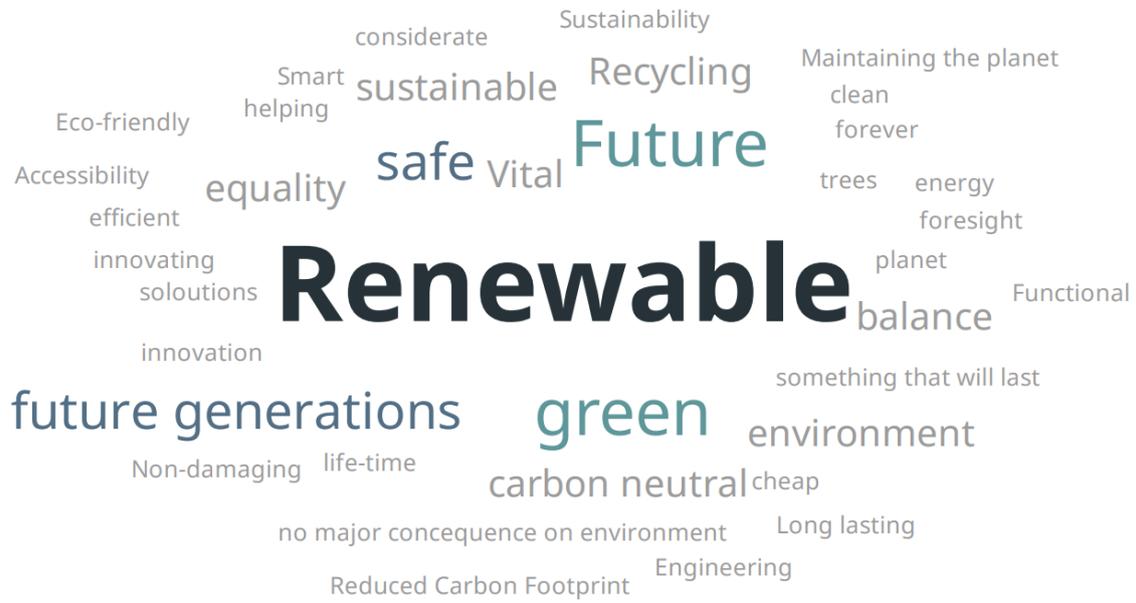


Figure 2: Slido; 'What does sustainability mean to you?'; YIC Session 4

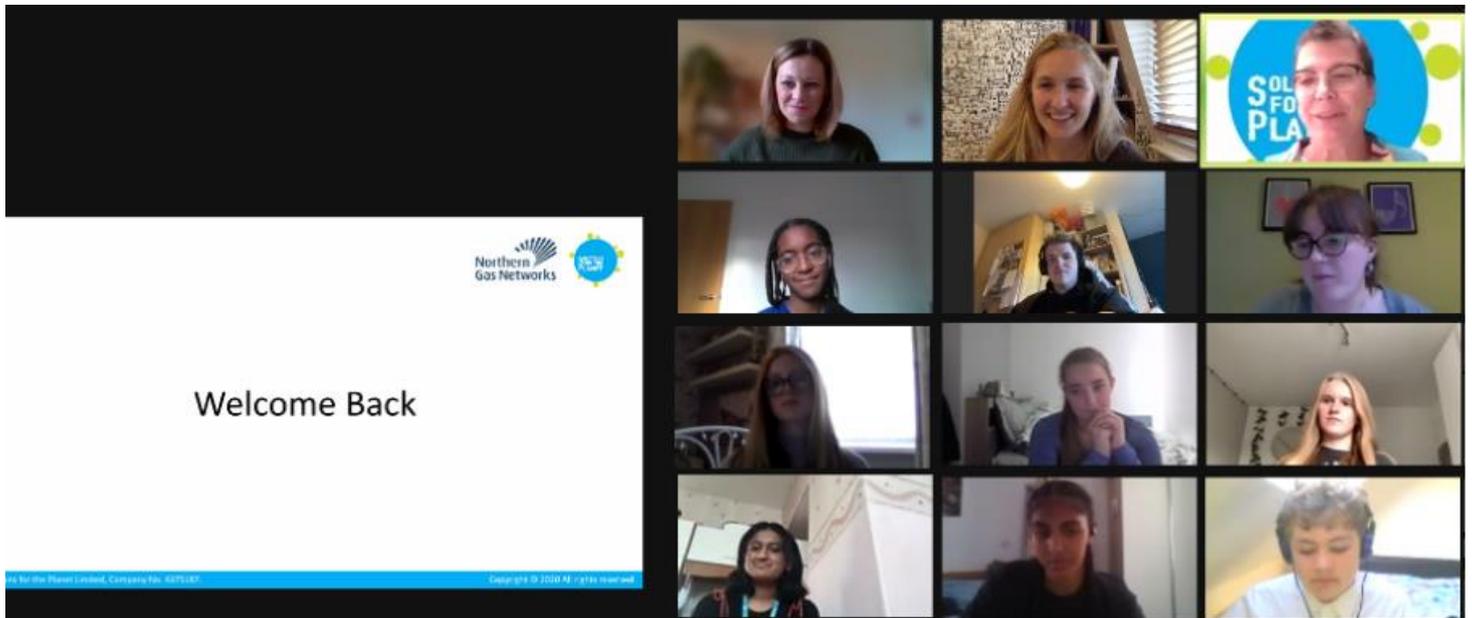


Figure 3: Screenshot; YIC Session 4

“...I have really enjoyed these sessions, thank you so much for everything!”

Council Member

5. Key Discussion Points

Objective B:

Identify what our future customers would expect a company to be doing when it comes to being sustainable.

Exercise 2: Breakout exercise to mind map a list of areas/themes/targets you’d expect a company to have in a sustainability strategy, i.e., single use plastic, gender pay gap, zero carbon, etc. Each of the three groups were given the themes below to aid the discussions.

<u>People</u>	<u>Planet</u>
Equality & wellbeing	Energy & transport
Community & affordable energy	Biodiversity
Volunteering & partnerships	Waste & pollution

Table 2: Northern Gas Networks' sustainability themes for breakout rooms; YIC Session 4

People	Planet
Have a diverse workforce	Encourage the use of public transport within business
% of profits donated to charities	Free bikes for employees
Representative of the communities the business serves	Use hydrogen or electric vehicles
Partnerships with communities & charities	Use of sustainable packaging and all other materials used
Ethical in decision making	Innovative decarbonisation technology
Include supply chain	Clear, transparent commitments
Involve local communities	Clean, green carbon neutral energy
Encourage volunteering	Target driven
Supportive of colleagues	Use of lasting engineering techniques
Fair & inclusive employment	Net zero pensions
Have a 'moral' component	Produce less waste rather than focussing on recycling
	Ensuring clean-up of any spills at works
Great working conditions	Include E-waste
LGBTQ+ Training for staff	Use Ecosia as default search engine

Table 3: YIC expectations for a sustainable business; YIC Session 4



Figure 4: Image to represent people and planet expectations; YIC Session 4

Equality & Wellbeing

UN Sustainable development goals
 Providing jobs and workspace
 Developing countries and sources of income

Jet Project

Amazon - set up a global climate pledge over 100 companies joined - 100% renewable and using electric cars to deliver. Investing decarbonisation technologies

Other

Lush - pots and bottles recycled plastic
 Carrier bags and bags
 Stance on animal testing

100% recyclable - Seventh generation

Clothing - transparency on reporting and official boards. Companies that are monitoring companies

Transport a& Energy

Fusion and no nuclear waste
 JCB - more sustainable energy solutions especially fuel. 80% of waste receyclable

Working on machinery that uses hydrogen

Encouraging use of public transport and bikes for free for employees

PaveGen - build paths that are triangular that convert footsteps into electricity. Used in Paris marathon to power a vehgicle

Figure 5: Screenshot; Example of first breakout room discussions; YIC Session 4

Witness 1:

Simon Pringle - Project Rome

Simon covered Project Rome's journey to net zero and its focus on both social and environmental sustainability. The focus was not only on a smaller, agile company but also covered the importance of organisations such as the Yorkshire Climate Commission.

Questions for Simon Pringle:

What was the hardest part of starting up Project Rome?
How much time do you dedicate to thinking about sustainability
Can your sustainability grow with the business??
Is this model applicable to other businesses?
Does your business focus mainly on environmental, social, or economical sustainability?

Table 4: Questions asked by YIC of witness Simon Pringle; YIC Session 4

The council also heard a presentation from **Hannah Jewison, Sustainability Lead at Northern Gas Networks**. This presentation covered what Northern Gas Networks is currently doing in terms of sustainability, which stakeholders they have already consulted, and why they needed the YIC's input into their strategy.

Objective C

Re our long-term goals:

- i. Does our strategy cover everything that's important to you?
- ii. Is it ambitious enough?
- iii. What's missing or anything included that is unnecessary?
- iv. Is the language right, i.e., does net-zero mean something to you? Are the targets clear and understandable?

Exercise 3: Three breakout groups were formed to discuss Northern Gas Networks' long-term goals and agree consensus on whether, as future customers, Northern Gas Networks' targets are enough. Do they cover everything that's important to YIC members? Do they go far enough, or is there anything missing that's important to the YIC? Does the language work?

The commitments:

- The council is largely comfortable that the commitments cover everything that is important to them. However, it was noted that the targets are quite top level, and the YIC would like more detail. The council would like to see immediate targets against the commitments. "It feels like there's a lot of intent, but that Northern Gas Networks will figure out how to do it later."
- The Council want to know how the targets will be achieved and to have some clarity and accountability for Northern Gas Networks on what it will deliver. Will this be externally verified?
- Could Northern Gas Networks make a checklist of goals that have been reached, e.g., eliminate emissions?

- Mainly opinion-based rather than data driven. Data would be good to back up if achieved. (*N.B the panel were not given this level of information – see point 8*)
- 2050 net zero target: there should a bigger sense of urgency.
- The SDG regarding life below water isn't mentioned; it might seem irrelevant, but in fact energy companies do have an impact here, e.g., single use plastic.

Language:

- There is general agreement that 'sustainability' is a phrase that is "thrown about a lot" but it's not very specific and covers too broad a set of themes; Northern Gas Networks should personalise it.
- It was suggested by one member, and another two supported this, that 'community' is perhaps a better reflection than the use of the word 'people'. It broadens the term out from individuals and reflects a wider society.
- In general, the YIC aren't that keen on the use of the word 'net'; it feels "lacking" or "vague". Also, the language used is sometimes vague, e.g., what does Northern Gas Networks mean in the commitment to eradicate inequality?
- Some of the phrases in the sustainability strategy's commitments sound very "professional" and aren't very accessible to the general public.
- One member suggested it might be nice to make it feel like a set of community promises so it could be consumer/customer facing as well and bringing people along on the journey.
- The YIC noticed there are several negative words, e.g., eradicate, eliminate. Instead of eradicate inequality it could be 'embrace equality'.
- The term 'reflect the diversity of our communities' doesn't link succinctly enough to sustainability development goals.
- 'Ethical': what makes a company ethical? This needs to be set out by Northern Gas Networks
- If abbreviations or unusual words are used, then a list of definitions should be included.

Title

- Overall, the council liked 'People and Planet' (with the understanding that people mean the whole of the community). The council felt the title needs to reflect the plan and that 'People and Planet' does that.
- Suggestion of: 'rebuilding strategy' or 'repairing strategy'

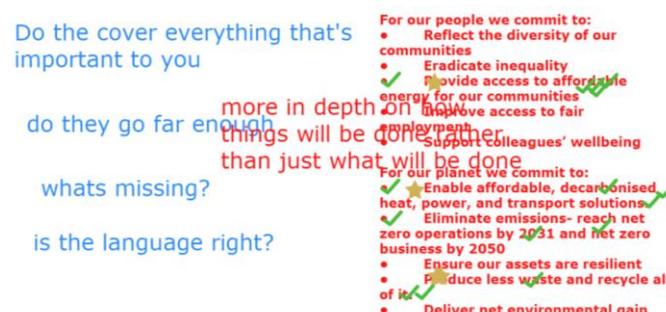


Figure 6: Screenshot; Example of second breakout room discussion; YIC Session 4

6. Key recommendations (priorities)

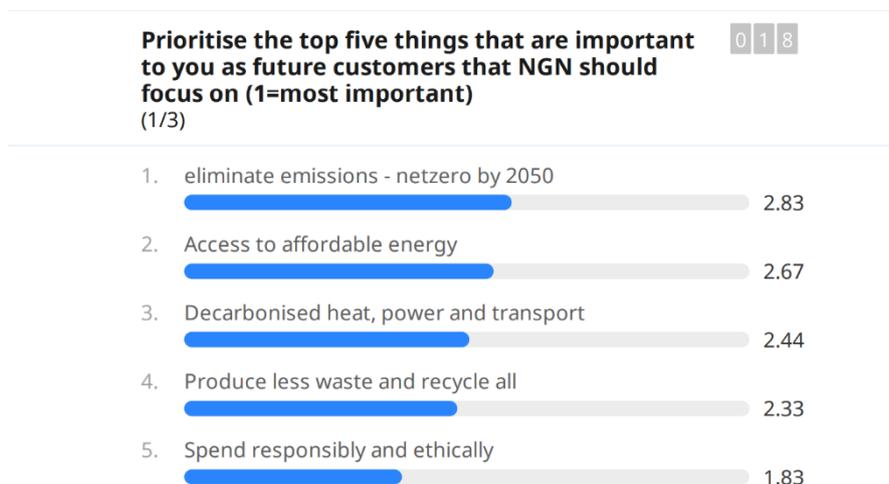


Figure 7: Slido poll; YIC prioritisation of Northern Gas Networks' sustainability targets; YIC Session 4

7. Agreed Actions for the Young Innovators Council

- To fill in post-session survey
- To forward any research task work undertaken to S4TP

8. Summary of modifications to be made after feedback.

Both during and after the session it was noted by council members and facilitators that more detail of the strategy was needed in order for the council to give a more detailed response. The length of the session made this difficult and had been discussed with S4TP and Northern Gas Networks prior to the session. After feedback it is suggested that S4TP canvas the council to determine if two or three members would like to work with Northern Gas Networks' sustainability team on the more detailed plans, targets, and actions. It is also suggested that another session on this subject would be useful in 2022.

9. Conclusion

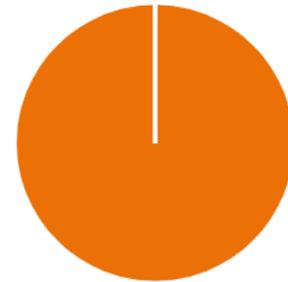
A high level of satisfaction was shown in the feedback from the council members for this session. Given the importance of the subject matter this is not unexpected. Using techniques such as word cloud and pre-work ensured that the session was both lively and informative and it is recommended that using such techniques in future sessions will help to keep the council members connected, informed, and inspired.

Appendix 1: Young Innovators Council Session 4 – Feedback

1. Do you feel the session was long enough for the topics covered?

[More Details](#)

● Too short	0
● About the right length	13
● Too long	0
● Other	0

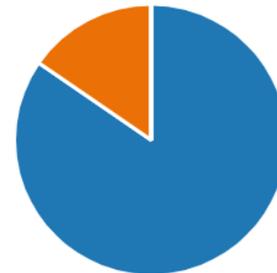


2. Did you feel that you had the opportunity to contribute?

[More Details](#)

[Insights](#)

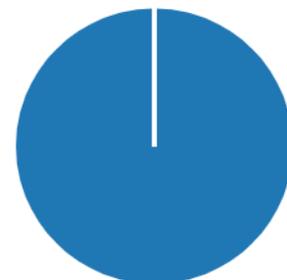
● Strongly agree	11
● Tend to agree	2
● Neither agree nor disagree	0
● Tend to disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0



3. Did you feel that your ideas were listened to?

[More Details](#)

● Strongly agree	13
● Tend to disagree	0
● Neither agree nor disagree	0
● Tend to disagree	0
● Strongly disagree	0



Any other comments?

I was able to discuss everything.

I have really enjoyed these sessions, thank you so much for everything!

Thank you I found the session really interesting!

Brilliant. I loved every session, and I will miss it until next year!

Just want to say thank you to you all for this experience!

Thanks again :)

thank you so much, I have very much enjoyed these sessions over the past year and I have learn a lot :)