The Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) is the primary professional body and learned society for those who design, install, operate and maintain the energy using systems, both mechanical and electrical, which are used in buildings. Our members therefore have a pervasive involvement in the use of energy in buildings in the UK.

Of the 13 DECC policy areas listed online, our expertise is particularly focused on ‘Energy demand reduction in industry, business and the public sector’. Our energy system is wasteful, costing consumers and taxpayers money as well as harming our natural environment. Yet the consequences of wasting energy are quite unlike most other forms of waste because they are largely hidden.

In comparison to investing in new generation and distribution capacity, reducing energy demand is a more time and cost effective approach but there needs to be a coherent policy landscape to provide appropriate market signals to encourage industry, business and the public sector to make savings. Like others, CIBSE has demonstrated that working on energy efficiency in existing buildings through better facilities management and refurbishment / retrofit is an effective way to reduce energy consumption and costs. The CIBSE Building Performance Awards shortlists highlight many examples of this over several years.

Reducing demand is currently the poor relation in the quest for decarbonisation, but is essential to meet UK’s challenging targets and enable both the private sector to remain competitive and the public sector to deliver best value services. We have the experience and knowledge to improve the performance of existing building stock, but need Government to provide an appropriate policy and legislative infrastructure to support to implement this on a national scale.

August 2015