District heating and consumers

The paradox of choice
The Association for Decentralised Energy is setting the vision of a local, efficient, low carbon energy system which enables energy users to make the choices which work for them.
It is critical to put consumer at the heart of the energy system

- This is particularly true in the context of decarbonisation – we need consumers making active choices that support this agenda.

- Irony is that, in the UK to date this has been most characterised by switching (of supplier), which district heating doesn’t allow for.
Choice: how important is it?

- The inability to switch has become one of the most important arguments made against district heating in the UK.

- However it seems less prevalent elsewhere – standardisation of build and customer experience has meant people care less about ability to switch.
From choice to decarbonisation

- Despite this, in the UK we still want and need consumer understanding and acceptance of district heating, so it's critical to involve them!
  - Whether they can choose supplier or not, whether they can choose to live on district heat networks or not – we want them to wish they could choose it
  - If customers do not embrace district heating then they will not get built at the scale needed to fulfill government ambition

...and this will mean we don’t meet decarbonisation targets.
How do we do this?

- Particularly challenging in a non-standardised market!
- Critical to consider and agree what the customer outcomes should be at the very beginning of the project
- Make everyone that works on the project aware of the necessary outcomes
- Continue to deliver minimum standards (and above!)
- Have a competitive price offering
Question remains:

What matters more: choice, or quality of service?
Feel free to contact me with any thoughts!

Lily Frencham
Head of Operations
Association for Decentralised Energy
E: Lily.Frencham@theade.co.uk