

Agenda Item	14
Report No	PLA 13/17

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Places Committee

Date: 15 June 2017

Report Title: Scottish Government Consultations on draft Scottish Energy Strategy, Scotland's Energy Efficiency Programme, Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies & Regulation of District Heating, & Onshore Wind Policy Statement

Report By: Director of Development & Infrastructure

Purpose/Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of responses to the Scottish Government's consultations on the draft Scottish Energy Strategy, Scotland's Energy Efficiency Programme, Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies & Regulation of District Heating, and the Onshore Wind Policy Statement.

Recommendation

Members are asked to homologate the consultation responses provided to the Scottish Government in respect of the draft Scottish Energy Strategy, Scotland's Energy Efficiency Programme, Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies & Regulation of District Heating, and the Onshore Wind Policy Statement.

1. Background

- 1.1 On 27 January, 2017, the Scottish Government published various draft consultations in relation to their vision for the future of the energy system in Scotland, for the period to 2050. The flagship consultation document is the draft [Scottish Energy Strategy](#), which sets out the priorities for an integrated system-wide approach which considers both the use and supply of energy for heat, power and transport over the coming years.
- 1.2 Alongside the draft Scottish Energy Strategy, the Scottish Government consulted on the draft [Onshore Wind Policy Statement](#), [Scotland's Energy Efficiency Programme](#) (SEEP), and [Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies and Regulation of District Heating](#) (LHEES). The consultations provide focus on specific areas of the energy system, and have been drafted to complement the consultation on the draft Energy Strategy.
- 1.3 This report sets out details of the consultation process and provides links to the various responses to the consultation documents. The deadline for submissions of a response to the LHEES consultation was 18 April 2017, whilst the deadline for submission of responses to the other consultations was 30 May, 2017. Members are therefore asked to homologate these responses.

2. Consultation Process

- 2.1 Various meetings between relevant officers were held to discuss the draft consultation documents and to plan robust responses. Written responses were requested and received from officers in the Planning, Development, Energy & Sustainability, and Climate Change teams.
- 2.2 Views were also sought from colleagues at HIE, UHI, SSE, Community Energy Scotland, Resource Efficient Scotland, the Highland Affordable Warmth Partners Group (HAWPG) as well as local housing associations.
- 2.3 On 11 April, 2017, a consultation event and workshop was held at the Town House in Inverness to seek the views of colleagues from other local authorities, development partners, and private business on the draft Scottish Energy Strategy. An overview of the strategy was provided by the Scottish Government's Director of Energy & Climate Change, Chris Stark.

3. Draft Scottish Energy Strategy

- 3.1 The consultation on the draft Scottish Energy Strategy amounts to 17 questions in total. The response to this document can be found [here](#). It is important to note that an energy strategy for Scotland is welcome – there are significant changes (both real and anticipated) in respect of the energy landscape in Scotland over the coming years, and the draft strategy aims to bring these together into a coherent document, despite significant levels of uncertainty.
- 3.2 Whilst most of the questions within the consultation are pertinent to the Highland Council, questions have only been answered where a response is relevant and / or where officers are of the opinion that changes are required to ensure the strategy can be delivered effectively.

4. Scotland's Energy Efficiency Programme, Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies & Regulation of District Heating, & Onshore Wind Policy Statement

- 4.1 The draft Energy Strategy is an important document in its own right, but the supporting documents contain much of the detail around how the ambition of the Energy Strategy will be achieved.
- 4.2 The response to Scotland's Energy Efficiency Programme (SEEP) can be found [here](#). SEEP aims to build an integrated approach to energy efficiency over the next 15 to 20 years. SEEP will help local authorities to pilot new and innovative approaches to energy efficiency with community groups and businesses, helping to reduce costs and improving warmth in homes, schools and businesses. £500m has been committed to SEEP over the next four years by the Scottish Government, and its key aim is to transform energy efficiency and heating of buildings so that all buildings are near zero carbon by 2035.
- 4.3 The response to the Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies & Regulation of District Heating document can be found [here](#). This document consults on the proposed role of local heat and energy efficiency strategies (LHEES) in enabling local authorities to plan for energy demand reduction and heat decarbonisation of buildings, in a phased approach to planning area-based delivery programmes. It also examines the requirement for a regulatory framework for district heating (DH), including area-based zoning for DH schemes, the granting of concessions for DH networks, licensing, connecting supply etc.
- 4.4 The response to the Onshore Wind Policy Statement can be found [here](#). As a technology that can make a significant contribution towards decarbonisation of the electricity grid and at relatively low cost, the Scottish Government will continue to support the case for onshore wind energy. It is therefore welcomed that the Government reaffirms its existing onshore wind policy in which continuing support is given in the context of ensuring that the Scottish environment and its residents are protected and able to benefit economically from its deployment.

5. Implications

- 5.1 Resource Implications: It is unclear from the consultation documents what the likely impact on Council budgets is going to be, and clarification has been sought at several points within the responses.
- 5.2 Climate Change/ Carbon CLEVER Implications: Through the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, and as required under the Public Bodies Climate Change Duties, The Highland Council has a duty to reduce emissions throughout the organisation, to encourage and work with others in the local community to take action to adapt to the impact of climate change, and to make public its commitment to action. Several of the proposals contained within the consultation documents will assist the Council in achieving these aims.
- 5.3 Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural): A key theme which runs through all consultation documents is the alleviation of fuel poverty, which has a disproportionate impact on rural communities. Various measures are proposed in respect of improving the energy efficiency of buildings, generating heat and power at a local level, creation of district heating networks etc., which are likely to have positive impacts for rural communities. No equalities implications have been identified.
- 5.4 Gaelic Implications: No Gaelic implications have been identified.

- 5.5 Risk Implications: It is important that the Council is involved in and contributes to the consultation process, as many of the proposals will have a significant impact on the work of the organisation over the coming years.
- 5.6 Legal Implications: The consultations propose various new regulatory structures and changes to legislation, which will likely impact various Council functions.

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