



National Planning Framework 4 Early Engagement – Policies

DELIVERING HEAT

Scottish Planning Policy (2014):

154. Requires planning to support the transformational change to a low carbon economy, consistent with targets including 30% of demand from renewable sources by 2020, 11% of heat demand from renewable sources by 2020 and the equivalent of 100% of electricity demand from renewable sources by 2020. Planning should also support the development of heat networks, guide development to appropriate locations and advise on the issues to be taken into account when proposals are assessed. Planning should help to reduce emissions and energy use in new buildings and from new infrastructure by enabling development that contributes to energy efficiency, heat recovery, efficient energy supply and storage, heat from renewable sources, and from non-renewable sources where emissions can be significantly reduced.

155. Development plans should seek to ensure an area's full potential for electricity and heat from renewable sources is achieved, in line with national climate change targets, giving due regard to relevant environmental, community and cumulative impact considerations.

156. Strategic development plans should support national priorities for the construction or improvement of strategic energy infrastructure, including generation, storage, transmission and distribution networks. They should address cross-boundary issues, promoting an approach to electricity and heat that supports the transition to a low carbon economy.

157. Local development plans should support new build developments, infrastructure or retrofit projects which deliver energy efficiency and the recovery of energy that would otherwise be wasted both in the specific development and surrounding area. They should set out the factors to be taken into account in considering proposals for energy developments. These will depend on the scale of the proposal and its relationship to the surrounding area and are likely to include the considerations set out at paragraph 169.

158. Local development plans should use heat mapping to identify the potential for co-locating developments with a high heat demand with sources of heat supply. Heat supply sources include harvestable woodlands, sawmills producing biomass, biogas production sites and developments producing unused excess heat, as well as geothermal systems, heat recoverable from mine waters, aquifers, other bodies of water and heat storage systems. Heat demand sites for particular consideration include high density developments, communities off the gas grid, fuel poor areas and anchor developments such as hospitals, schools, leisure centres and heat intensive industry.

159. Local development plans should support the development of heat networks in as many locations as possible, even where they are initially reliant on carbon-based fuels if there is potential to convert them to run on renewable or low carbon sources of heat in the future. Local development plans should identify where heat networks, heat storage and energy centres exist or would be appropriate and include policies to support their implementation. Policies should support safeguarding of pipeworks within developments for later connection and pipework to the curtilage of development. Policies should also give consideration to the provision of energy centres within new development. Where a district

network exists, or is planned, or in areas identified as appropriate for district heating, policies may include a requirement for new development to include infrastructure for connection, providing the option to use heat from the network.

Development Management

169. *Proposals for energy infrastructure developments should always take account of spatial frameworks for wind farms and heat maps where these are relevant. Considerations will vary relative to the scale of the proposal and area characteristics but are likely to include:*

- *net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities;*
- *the scale of contribution to renewable energy generation targets;*
- *effect on greenhouse gas emissions;*
- *cumulative impacts – planning authorities should be clear about likely cumulative impacts arising from all of the considerations below, recognising that in some areas the cumulative impact of existing and consented energy development may limit the capacity for further development;*
- *impacts on communities and individual dwellings, including visual impact, residential amenity, noise and shadow flicker;*
- *landscape and visual impacts, including effects on wild land;*
- *effects on the natural heritage, including birds;*
- *impacts on carbon rich soils, using the carbon calculator;*
- *public access, including impact on long distance walking and cycling routes and scenic routes identified in the NPF;*
- *impacts on the historic environment, including scheduled monuments, listed buildings and their settings;*
- *impacts on tourism and recreation;*
- *impacts on aviation and defence interests and seismological recording;*
- *impacts on telecommunications and broadcasting installations, particularly ensuring that transmission links are not compromised;*
- *impacts on road traffic;*
- *impacts on adjacent trunk roads;*
- *effects on hydrology, the water environment and flood risk;*
- *the need for conditions relating to the decommissioning of developments, including ancillary infrastructure, and site restoration;*
- *opportunities for energy storage; and*
- *the need for a robust planning obligation to ensure that operators achieve site restoration.*

What has changed since 2014?

- The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act. 2019¹ commits Scotland to becoming a net-zero society by 2045 in line with the advice of the UK Committee on Climate Change. This includes a new target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 75% by 2030. A Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change will explore recommendations on how this can be achieved.
- The Scottish Government has committed to updating the Climate Change Plan within 6 months of the Climate Change Bill receiving Royal Assent (30 October 2019).

¹ [Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2019](#)

- In 2019 the Scottish Government set out a vision to 2030 for Scotland’s electricity and gas networks², supporting an inclusive transition to a decarbonised energy system; a whole system approach across heat, transport and electricity; and smarter local energy models. New transmission infrastructure will be required, including links to meet the needs of the islands, within Scotland and with the rest of the UK. Improved distribution, including through innovation, demand management, builds resilience and ensures supplies will be required.
- In 2017 the Scottish Energy Strategy³ was published, based on three principles of: a whole system view; an inclusive energy transition; and a smarter local energy model. Priorities include energy efficiency, system security, innovative local energy systems, and renewable and low carbon solutions. A more co-ordinated approach to planning and meeting distinct local energy needs is supported, to create a flexible approach to transformation of the energy system. It sets out a commitment to a land use planning approach which continues to support development while protecting our landscapes. Reference is also made to expanding permitted development rights for certain renewable energy installations. The Strategy refers to the review of NPF and the opportunities to collaborate on a revised set of national policies in line with the goals of the energy strategy and climate change plan.
- The Planning (Scotland) Act allows Scottish Ministers to direct planning authorities to provide information on systems for the supply of energy in particular land available for the development and use of facilities for renewable sources of energy. The same information is also set out as an issue for local development plans to address for their areas.
- In 2017 the Scottish Government issued a consultation paper⁴ to explore a co-ordinated approach to the local planning and delivery of energy efficiency and heat.
- Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES) will set out the long-term strategic plan for each local authority area for heat decarbonisation and energy efficiency. They will be tailored to local circumstances, will guide delivery through Energy Efficient Scotland, and act as an investment prospectus – helping to attract and steer inward private sector investment. They will adopt an area-based approach to assessing the most appropriate heat decarbonisation solutions across Scotland.
- In 2015 the Heat Policy⁵ set out three objectives for decarbonising heat: reducing the need for heat, supplying heat efficiently and using renewable and low carbon heat.
- Research undertaken by Ironside Farrar on the adoption of Scottish planning policy in local development plans⁶ found that whilst the policy support is provided in principle for heat networks, implementing them is much more difficult. It also suggested a need for future flexibility to allow for new forms of generating technology?
- SG has strong ambitions for a growth in heat networks in Scotland and this is widely shared by the market and third sector organisations. SG will bring forward a Heat

² [Scotland's electricity and gas networks: vision to 2030](#)

³ [The future of energy in Scotland: Scottish energy strategy](#)

⁴ [Heat and energy efficiency strategies and district heating regulation: consultation](#)

⁵ [Decarbonising heat: policy statement](#)

⁶ [Adoption of Scottish planning policy in local development plans](#)

Networks Bill in 2020. The Bill aims to contribute to our climate change ambitions by regulating heat networks.

Proposed key objectives of NPF4: To maximise the contribution of renewable heat generation and systems to deliver renewable heat (such as district heating, electrical network upgrades) and reduce the cost of delivering this transition (such as supporting heat and electrical storage systems) to meeting our net zero targets in a sustainable way.

Issues to consider:

- Is the existing policy approach fit for purpose? What aspects need to change?
- How can land use planning support our wider objectives for heat efficiency, and renewable heat generation and distribution as set out in the Heat Networks Bill and LHEES – and when Heat Decarbonisation Policy Statement issues?
- How can implementation of the principle be better supported?
- What heat generation and supply technologies need to be addressed by the policy framework?
- Should the policies say more about co-location and requirements for connections to heat networks?
- What else is required to help deliver the aims of the Energy Strategy and net zero ambitions for buildings?
- How far should the policy go in supporting renewable heat, and what can be addressed in guidance?

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