

Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) and Delivery Plan Public Consultation Summary Report

February 2025

1. Introduction

A seven-week public consultation on the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) and Delivery Plan took place between 23 December 2024 and 7 February 2025. The consultation was launched via the Council's website¹ dedicated to LHEES.

The consultation took the form of an online survey in a Microsoft Word format. It was promoted on social media posts (including LinkedIn) and through professional networks of individual Highland Council Officers. In addition to this, key stakeholders were contacted requesting them to participate in the consultation.

During the development of the Strategy and Delivery Plan, key internal and external stakeholders, including Elected Members, were consulted and given the opportunity to input. This was achieved via online and in-person meetings, workshops and public events alongside the wider Climate Change and Energy Team. All feedback received has been reviewed and, where appropriate, incorporated into the updated Strategy and Delivery Plan since its first publication.

The online Microsoft Word survey has been viewed and downloaded 29 times. Only one contribution has been returned to the Council. It was completed on behalf of an organisation from both domestic and non-domestic perspective.

2. Summary of responses

The following section provides a summary of the public consultation findings. The response has been anonymised for publishing the results of the consultation.

2.1 Local Priorities and Drivers

The respondent agreed with the local priorities and drivers included in the Strategy. The respondent emphasised that their main interest is in Net Zero Strategy and decarbonisation as well as fuel poverty and energy efficiency.

2.2 Fuel Poverty and Energy Efficiency

The respondent agreed that fuel poor energy efficiency is one of the contributors to fuel poverty in the Highlands. However, the respondent disagreed that a fabric first approach should be prioritised to maximise the performance of the building fabric, followed by heating upgrades and solar measures.

It was noted that prioritising a fabric first approach is fine where it presents a quick and cheap option to retrofit buildings. The feedback indicated that there are solar

¹ <https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1210/environment/1097/the-local-heat-and-energy-efficiency-strategy>



battery schemes now available that can be used to bring down bills and provide ownership of assets after 5 years, which may be a quick win alternative to fabric first to keep energy bills under control.

2.3 Heat Networks

The respondent agreed that the development of heat networks should play a part in decarbonising the Highlands. No further comments were made under this section.

2.4 Building Level Heat Decarbonisation and Energy Efficiency

Feedback on heat pumps focused on challenges around running cost (compared to gas) and affordability to install one even with the Scottish Government's grant of £7,500.

The respondent agreed that solar energy should be considered as part of the heat decarbonisation, when combined with electric heating systems, due to solar battery schemes becoming more attractive in the current market.

Feedback on concerns and barriers for undertaking any energy efficiency and decarbonisation improvements focused on cost. It was noted that electricity costs are too high compared to gas. It was added that solar photovoltaic (PV) and battery are one of the few options available that are cost competitive to support the decarbonisation journey.

2.5 Delivery Plan

It was emphasised that ongoing engagement and collaboration between the Council and the respondent organisation is needed to support implementation of the Council's LHEES and plan for any future network upgrades.

3. Conclusions

Actionable points to be included in the Strategy and Delivery Plan are summarised as follows:

3.1 Local Priorities and Drivers

No further action required from the point raised.

3.2 Fuel Poverty and Energy Efficiency

No further action required from the point raised.

Although renewable energy technologies such as solar PV were not part of the LHEES methodology, they were included in the Highland Council's LHEES analysis.



The Council has been delivering the Scottish Government's Energy Efficiency Scotland: Area Based Scheme (EES:ABS) for 12 consecutive years, which offers households the opportunity to benefit from grant-funded energy efficiency and innovative measures such as solar PV. The funding is also utilised through other government schemes and SSE Renewables grants.

https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1210/environment/829/energy_and_sustainability

3.3 Heat Networks

No further action required from the point raised.

3.4 Building Level Heat Decarbonisation and Energy Efficiency

No further action required from the point raised.

3.5 Delivery Plan

No further action required from the point raised.

