BURO HAPPOLD

Project: Inverness Strategic Heat Network

Title: Heat Network Vision Statement (draft)

Purpose: The Heat Networks Vision Statement sets out the anticipated role that heat networks will play in the decarbonisation of heat across Inverness, and the position that the Highland Council expects heat networks to play in the delivery of broader policy outcomes and/or objectives. It draws on evidence compiled as part of Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES) and other heat network scoping activities carried out in Inverness. This statement can be used to introduce new internal and external stakeholders to heat networks opportunities in the area as well as helping to define the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and other consideration for the strategic assessment of heat network opportunities in Inverness.

Vision statement summary

As a cornerstone of the Highland Council's decarbonisation strategy, we envision developing and expanding heat networks to deliver sustainable, affordable, and efficient energy solutions, thereby supporting Scotland's Net Zero goals by 2045 and providing social, economic, and environmental benefits to the region.

Through LHEES and aligned with national policies, the Council envisions a number of heat network zones across Inverness. These zones will reduce reliance on fossil fuels, decrease carbon emissions, and support energy resilience. The Council recognises that the heat network can deliver different benefits:

- **Carbon emissions reduction:** By transitioning to low-carbon and renewable energy sources, heat networks significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions which is essential for achieving the Highland Council's ambitious Net Zero emissions target by 2045.
- **Tacking fuel poverty:** Heat networks can provide consistent and reliable heating and hot water on demand. Providing affordable heat particularly in areas with a high proportion of older, less energy-efficient homes.
- **Creating job and economic growth:** The development and operation of heat networks stimulate local economies by creating jobs and supporting the growth of a skilled workforce. This economic boost can contribute the overall prosperity of the region.
- **Energy Security and Resilience:** By diversifying energy sources and localising heat production, heat networks enhance energy security and resilience. This approach reduces dependence on imported fuels and mitigates the impact of global energy price fluctuations.

  Environmental Sustainability: Heat networks facilitate the integration of various renewable energy sources, such as geothermal, solar, and biomass, promoting environmental sustainability and contributing to cleaner air quality in urban areas.

By embracing these benefits, the Highland Council can ensure that the development of heat networks in Inverness not only addresses environmental concerns but also delivers tangible social and economic advantages to the community.

Alignment with National Legislation and Local Development Plans

Heat Networks (Scotland) Act 2021: Mandates local authorities to designate Heat Network Zones, streamline permissions supporting the development of heat networks.

Heat in Buildings Strategy: Outlines Scotland's approach to reducing emissions from buildings, emphasizing the role of heat networks in achieving these goals**.**

The Inner Moray Firth Local Development Plan (IMFLDP2): sets out ambitions for low and zero carbon development, requiring new developments within identified Heat Network Zones to connect to existing networks or implement future-proofing measures.

The new Local Development Plan (LDP) - the Council is developing the new LDP for the whole of Highland excluding most of the Badenoch & Strathspey area for which the Cairngorm National Park is the Planning Authority (CNPA); (CNPA will likewise be developing a new LDP). The plan will set out how the land can be used by developers for the next twenty years and will be used alongside National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) as a framework for planning of development and investment.

Strategic Approach:

The Highland Council adopts a comprehensive approach to developing heat networks.

- **Identifying Potential Heat Network Zones:** Through the LHEES, areas suitable for heat network development are identified, focusing on energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation.
- **Undertaking Feasibility Studies and Business Cases:** Detailed feasibility studies and robust business cases ensure the viability of heat network projects, as evidenced by feasibility studies in Inverness Castle and Inverness West Bank.
- **Engaging with Stakeholders**: Collaboration with communities, developers, energy suppliers, and investors is prioritised to ensure successful implementation.
- **Securing Funding and Investment:** Active pursuit of funding opportunities, including grants, loans, and private sector investment, supports heat network development.

Identified Heat Network Zones in Inverness:

The LHEES process identified three potential Heat Network Zones in Inverness.

- **Inverness 1:** This zone encompasses Inverness High School and the Highland Council Headquarters. It's characterised by a combined heat demand of 1,645 MWh/yr and interaction with eight existing heat networks. This existing infrastructure

suggests a potential for expansion and integration with a new or expanded heat network.

- **Inverness 2:** Located around the Justice Centre and Police Scotland buildings, this zone has a combined heat demand of 1,431 MWh/yr and interacts with two existing heat networks. The presence of a SEPA waste site within the cluster could offer a potential source of waste heat for a heat network in this area.
- **Inverness 3:** This zone is centred around Police Headquarters and Bannatyne Health Clubs, with a combined heat demand of 1,956 MWh/yr. While it currently has no existing heat networks, the presence of anchor loads like Police Headquarters and a fitness centre suggests a substantial and consistent heat demand that could be served by a heat network.

Long-Term Strategic Vision:

Recognising that the zones identified during LHEES are smaller than the Highland Council's ambition for heat networks. A more long-term strategic view is required. This approach considers wider opportunities, demands and connections, building on LHEES, previous feasibility studies and an ongoing study in areas like Raigmore. The strategic work will characterise and assess potential Heat Network Zones in Inverness. This will help sequence heat network deployment to increase interest and promote deployment.

By embracing these strategies, the Highland Council aims to ensure that the development of heat networks in Inverness not only addresses environmental concerns but also delivers tangible social and economic advantages to the community.