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BRIEFING

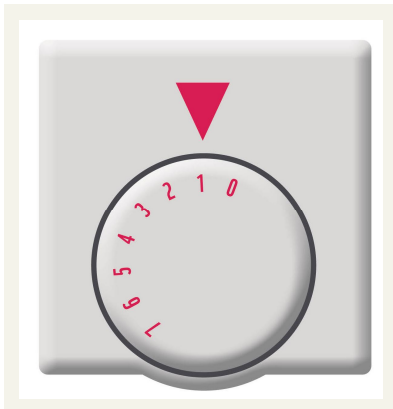
2014



BUILDING A POSITIVE VISION OF A LOW CARBON SCOTLAND

We think Scotland can be a global exemplar in low carbon living, implementing policies that bring about warmer homes, better transport and cleaner energy. Building a low carbon Scotland will reap many rewards, not just for the world's climate, but also for people's wellbeing, our way of life and the strength of our communities. Here, we set out three policies we think could, and should, be introduced in Scotland to build upon our vision of a truly low carbon Scotland.

Minimum standards of energy efficiency in private homes



The policy - A minimum standard of energy efficiency (for example, band E on an EPC, gradually tightening) for all private homes, at point of sale or rental. There may be exemptions for particular circumstances.

Current status - Described in the Government's climate plan as a 'proposal'. The Government has already indicated it wishes to introducing minimum standards of energy efficiency in private housing by 2018 and a Working Group has been set up to look at the timescales for their introduction. A consultation will be published in Spring 2015.

Rationale –Emissions from our housing makes up a quarter of our domestic emissions, and a third of us live in fuel poverty. Alongside incentives such as the Green Deal, regulation is an essential part of the toolkit required to reduce our emissions, and to ensure we all live in warm, comfortable homes. To protect our homes from the impacts of volatile fossil fuel markets, we need to drive up insulation rates, helping households to reduce their energy demand and improve the comfort of their homes. Homes in the social housing sector already benefit from higher standards than the private sector, we think the private sector should benefit from the same.

Why now? – The Climate Change Act (2009) first set out powers to regulate for minimum standards of energy efficiency. 5 years on, we think it's time to introduce regulation to incentives uptake of voluntary measures. In addition, uptake of measures under the Green Deal is too low and needs to be complemented by supportive regulation if it is to be a success.

Benefits – Scotland's private and rented homes will be transformed from cold, damp houses to decent, warm, dry homes. Scotland's worst performing homes (F&G rated homes make up 6% of Scotland's housing stock). Regulation is also likely to drive uptake of measures such as HEEPS insulation scheme, the Green Deal or ECO already on offer.

Other examples – Boulder, Colorado already has minimum standards for rental properties, which has generated an unprecedented level of investment in energy efficiency. The German Energy Act also requires minimum standards for any significant new refurbishment, resulting in thousands of retrofit jobs. Closer to home, England and Wales will have minimum standards in the private rented sector in place by 2018.

A nationwide rollout of travel planning schemes

The policy – Personalised travel planning identifies low carbon travel options for common journeys in order to encourage modal shift. Travel planning can be conducted in schools, workplaces and communities or local authorities.

Current status - Described in the Government's climate plan as a 'proposal', under the 'sustainable communities' package, and not expected to be fully rolled out until the mid to late 2020s. Pilot projects, such as *Smarter Choices Smarter Places*, have been run out in cities across Scotland, with positive results, but no commitment made to further rollout.

Rationale – Transport is responsible for around 25% of Scotland's carbon emissions, with two thirds of the total coming from road transport. The Government has a target to decarbonise road transport by 2050, and behaviour change measures such as travel planning have been identified as a significant factor in tackling these emissions.



Why now? – Emissions from transport are roughly the same now as they were in 1990, and we have seen the distances we drive by car increase dramatically over recent decades. Behaviour change does not happen overnight, so if we are to reduce emissions to the extent needed, we should start now. Travel planning is a simple measure and an important step in building a low carbon transport system.

Benefits –A full roll out of travel planning is expected to reduce urban car usage, particularly commuting, therefore cutting emissions, reducing air pollution and increasing active travel. A study commissioned by the Scottish Government in 2009 suggested that measures to reduce car demand had the greatest potential to reduce CO2 emissions.

Other examples – Sustrans offer programmes of Personalised Travel Planning for households, schools, businesses and communities, yielding encouraging results, including an 11% reduction in car driver trips and increases in cycling, walking and public transport use of between 15 and 33%. Pilot schemes *Smarter Choices Smarter Places* were carried out in Dumfries & Galloway, East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Falkirk, Glasgow, Dundee and Orkney.



More homes heated by renewables

The policy – A comprehensive policy framework and regulation designed to increase the uptake of renewable heat in Scotland. This should include the incentivisation of renewable heat technologies (such as biomass boilers, air- or ground-source heat pumps, solar thermal) and district heating, through long-term financial levers. It should also include regulation to require heat users, new developments, and public buildings to connect to district heating networks whenever feasible.

Current status – Described in the Government's climate plan as a 'proposal', with a target of at least 100,000 homes to have adopted some form of individual or community renewable heat technology for space and or water heating by 2020.

Rationale – 50% of Scotland's total CO₂ emissions come from heating our buildings and hot water. Currently only 3% of our total heating demand is met by renewable fuels, despite the Government target to 'largely decarbonise' the heat sector by 2050 and make 'significant progress' by 2030. The same focus and commitment that has resulted in great progress in decarbonising the electricity sector now needs to be focussed on our heating sector. Analysis by *Poyry* in 2009 concluded that without a shift in the market or regulatory environment there will be no significant additional uptake of district heating to the existing building stock.

Why now? – The Scottish Government has a target to 'largely decarbonise' the heat sector by 2050 and make 'significant progress' by 2030. Whereas we have seen great progress in decarbonising the electricity sector, we see the heat sector - particularly in domestic housing - lagging behind.

Benefits – Achieving a low carbon Scotland will be impossible unless we replace fossil fuel heating with renewable heating technologies. More effort on renewable heat will help stimulate, and remove uncertainty for an industry that has huge potential in the coming years. It will also help to inform consumers and provide reassurance and confidence in these technologies. 24% of the Scottish population is off the gas grid, so more effort on renewable heat will produce maximum CO₂ savings and address fuel poverty in our rural areas.

Other examples – In countries such as Denmark (49%) and Finland (60%), district heating plays an important role in decarbonising their heat supply. A number of rural renewable heat projects in Scotland have already benefitted from funding support by the Scottish Government's District Heating Loan Fund, including West Whitlawburn Housing Co-operative district heating scheme, where £400,000 was awarded for biomass wood pellet heating in two tower blocks and the Wick Assembly rooms, connected to district heating using wood fuel.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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