



12.30-14.00 14 November 2013

Committee Room 4, Scottish Parliament

Chair: Jim Eadie MSP

Off-grid Solutions

1. Attendees

A provisional list of attendees is attached to the end of this note. If you attended and are not shown on the list, please email Elizabeth Leighton (Elizabeth.leighton@est.org.uk).

2. Introduction and approval of minutes from the last meeting

Jim Eadie MSP welcomed everyone to the meeting, introduced the speakers and asked if there were any corrections to the previous minutes. There were no suggestions.

Neil Phillips (Positive Solutions) agreed and Alex Hill (Met Office) seconded that the minutes represented an accurate description of the last meeting.

3. Presentation: District heating – a secure, affordable, low carbon solution: Ken Brady (EST Scotland)

Ken Brady of Energy Saving Trust Scotland presented the benefits of district heating in terms of reduced energy bills, lower carbon emissions, and security of supply. He described the District Heating Loan Fund which provides low interest loans on a commercial basis for low carbon and renewable schemes. The Warm Homes Fund also provides low interest loans and development grants for district heating in communities suffering from fuel poverty – loans of up to £5million are available. The presentation included examples of district heating schemes in Scotland ranging from a small community such as Wick, to a holiday development on Loch Ness and a wood fuel scheme in Shetland. These schemes have delivered between 30-40% savings in energy bills. He noted that the Scottish Government has responded to the Expert Commission on District Heating with an Action Plan, along with the establishment of a Heat Networks Partnership, and continued investment in Heat Mapping. These initiatives are setting the policy framework and raising priority of district heating as part of Scotland's low carbon economy.

4. Presentation: Maximising opportunities and overcoming challenges in remote and rural properties, Moira Scobbie, Energy Advice Services Officer, Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association

Moira Scobbie explained the Energy Advice Service of the Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association. The service has two trained advisors covering Lochalsh, Skye and Raasay - over 1000 square miles – who also work with Highland Council and other RSLs further afield. In their experience, rural

communities have not been well served by fuel poverty and energy company obligation (ECO) schemes because they properties tend to be more difficult and expensive, to treat due to the housing types and remoteness.

In their view, the call centre approach was not appropriate for many clients and there was a need to develop trusted, local support. While this intensive service may seem a luxury, the Energy Advice Service believes it is necessary for isolated and vulnerable clients to identify their specific needs in relation to comfort levels and costs. Ms Scobbie argued that there is a need to review the eligibility criteria for fuel poverty schemes to ensure those in need aren't excluded. She also suggested that Scottish Enterprise and Highlands and Islands Enterprise could develop the capacity of local contractors to do the work to tap into local knowledge and save on travel costs for installations.

The Chair suggested that the cross-party group send a letter to the Minister regarding these concerns for rural areas.

5. Presentation: Insulation solutions for off-grid properties – present and future, Wilson Shaw, Director, The BCA Group; Chair, National Insulation Association Scotland Forum

Wilson Shaw gave a detailed presentation on the variety of insulation measures available to off-grid properties. These properties can provide higher carbon savings and hence can receive a higher level of ECO support. However, there are higher costs associated with remote locations and lack of local contractors. Regarding measures, there is a perception that there is a lack of solutions for these properties but technical solutions are available. The presentation reviewed the pros and cons of different measures according to housing types. In terms of developing further solutions, Mr Shaw stressed that investment will only happen with confidence in a long-term market – continual changes in government schemes create uncertainty. He also noted that Historic Scotland trials for traditional properties have been successful, but the measures are not ECO funded because of the lengthy process of certification – there can be a two year waiting list for new methods. He concluded that it is important to increase awareness and understanding of solid wall insulation, and find ways to allow innovation to progress in relation to off-grid properties and non-traditional construction.

6. Questions

A range of questions were directed at the panel; please note that the intention of this meeting note is not to record a verbatim account of the meeting. Questions posed to the panel included:

- Jamie McGregor, MSP, praised the excellent briefings and asked if water heat pumps are better than air source heat pumps. Ken Brady replied that they have a similar output. Moira Scobbie noted the need to address fabric first before installing renewable technologies.
- Mike McKenzie, MSP noted a concern that the scale of challenge in addressing rural fuel poverty is underestimated. He recommended the proposal for an 'islands tariff' which would use idle wind power to supply low cost energy to locals. He also raised concerns about the costs of solid wall insulation. Wilson Shaw said that the average internal wall insulation can be done for £6-8K including redecoration costs. Moira Scobbie noted it is important to take into account the disruption caused particularly for the old and vulnerable.
- A participant asked if there is funding for connections to district heating. Ken Brady acknowledged it is difficult to plan for expansion and to fund this upfront cost. The

government schemes fund extensions to existing systems and the renewable heat loan fund can help fill the gap.

- Bill Rodger asked about the particular issues that make rural and remote schemes difficult. Moira Scobbie replied that government schemes don't always suit these areas. Sometimes the issue is they simply don't have the scale, numbers of houses, to make it worthwhile for the installers. Wilson Shaw noted that the HEEPS ABS scheme has targets to get the biggest bang for the buck – so rural areas can lose out.

7. Date and Topic of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on 23rd of January 2014 between 12.30pm and 2.00pm in Committee Room 2. The meeting will focus on energy performance standards for new and existing domestic buildings, and planning issues for micro-renewables.

8. AOB

For suggestions for correction of this note and to request copies of presentations, please contact the secretariat, Elizabeth Leighton (Elizabeth.leighton@est.org.uk).

9. Attendees

Martin	Surridge	Arup
Emma	Megaughin	Bellenden
Caroline	Henderson	Bellenden
Douglas	Prentice	Geocapita
Andrew	Bright	Energised Environments
Elizabeth	Gore	Energy Action Scotland
Chris	Cook	Nordic Enterprise Trust
Paolo	Buoni	EU Energy Centre
Colin	Campbell	Currie and Brown
Willa	Straker-Smith	
Nigel	Holmes	Scottish Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Association
Jamie	McGrigor MSP	Scottish Parliament
Andrew	Faulk	Consumer Futures
Annie	McGovern	Consumer Futures
David	Stewart	SFHA
Iain	MacKinnon	Charlesfield First LLP
Lorna	Ross	
Moira	Scobbie	Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association
Ken	Brady	Energy Saving Trust
Wilson	Shaw	BCA Group
Jim	Eadie MSP	Scottish Parliament
Stefan	Buettner	Scottish Parliament
Jamie	Carruthers	Dormont Estate
Simon	Kemp	Carillion

Trevor	Jackson	Charlesfield
Neil	Phillips	Positive Solutions
Claudia	Beamish MSP	Scottish Parliament
Ross	Moffat	EU Energy Centre
Bill	Rodger	
Mike	Martin	Associate of District Energy Development Ltd
Grant	Thoms	MacThomais Political Consulting and Public Relations
Neil	Anderson	Ledingham Chalmers LLP, Solicitors
Richard	Leslie	Tods Murray
Mike	MacKenzie	Scottish Parliament
Elizabeth	Leighton	Secretary
Gavin	Donoghue	Secretary
Patrick	Jack	Scottish Parliament
Karen	Freel	Perspectiva Consultants
Alex	Hill	Met Office
Patrick	Harvie	MSP
Ian	Lindsay	EUROWind UK
Maureen	Parnell	SERA Scotland
Shane	Campbell	Office of Claudia Beamish, MSP