

Briefing Note:

Low Carbon Scotland: The Draft Report on Proposals and Policies (RPP)

The draft RPP, published alongside the Scottish Budget on 17 November 2010, sets out how Scotland can deliver annual targets for reductions in emissions to 2022, including a 42% reduction in emissions by 2020. It is based on delivery of the Scottish transformational outcomes:

- A largely decarbonised electricity generation sector by 2030;
- A largely decarbonised heat sector by 2050, with significant progress by 2030;
- Almost complete decarbonisation of road transport by 2050 with significant progress by 2030;
- A comprehensive approach to ensure that carbon (including the cost of carbon) is fully factored into strategic and local decisions about rural land use.

The report states that increasingly Scotland's wealth will rest not in depleting finite resources but in conserving and promoting our valuable assets, reducing consumption and redeploying expertise to develop new economic opportunities based on our rich renewable resources.

The report will have implications for local authorities. The role of local authorities is specifically discussed on page 24 (para. 1.26 – 1.28) and this section is appended to this briefing.

The RPP discussed policies (adopted) and proposals (not yet adopted) in relation to energy supply, homes and communities, business and the public sector, transport, rural landuse and waste. Some examples are given in the table below:

Examples of policies (confirmed)	Examples of proposals (under consideration)
10,000 ha/ye afforestation rate	15,000 ha/yr afforestation rate
New build energy targets for 2010	New buildings energy efficiency standards from 2013
Zero waste policies – zero waste plan	Community Hubs
SRDP funding for anerobic digestion	Speed limit enforcement at 70mph
Renewable Heat Incentive	Travel planning
CRC energy efficiency scheme	Low carbon vehicles and infrastructure
Smart metering	Fuel poverty and insulation programmes
EU mandatory vehicle targets	Cycling and walking infrastructure investments

Estimates regarding implementation cost and potential emissions reductions are put forward where possible.

It should be noted that the policies alone (left hand column) are not enough to meet the 2020 target. Delivery of all policies would deliver a 38% cut in emissions by 2020. To achieve the 42% target there will also require to be a shift in EU policy to lever change through the EU Emissions Trading System and/or implementation of proposals (right hand column) not yet built into policy. Given that it is likely that amendments and changes may be required to some of the policy areas (for example we are currently experiencing changes to the CRC energy efficiency scheme following the UK spending review), significant implementation of proposals or unanticipated innovations are likely to be needed to ensure targets are met. These will require to be selected and shaped in the near future.

The RPP states that a voluntary approach will be preferred, however also highlights the need to use every tool available to achieve the necessary scale of change, including regulation where voluntary approaches prove unsuccessful.

It has been estimated that implementing all the proposals and policies identified as of June 2010 would cost £8 billion to 2022, an average of around £800 million each year. This estimate, however, did not consider the significant financial, economic and social benefits that would result from such spend. It should also be noted that the policies and proposals spread the costs across different sectors and parts of society. For example, through the renewable heat incentive householders and local authorities would pay the initial cost of installation of the technologies but would then benefit from the incentive payments from government.

The report is an overview and provides references and links to give the detail in relation to the various topics it covers. Other key Scottish Government documents which provide such detail include:

- Low Carbon Economy Strategy (published)
- Public Engagement Strategy (forthcoming)
- Energy Efficiency Action Plan (published)
- Draft Electricity Generation Policy Statement (published)

The report will now be considered by parliament for a 60-day period before finalisation in the new year, taking account of comments made during this period.

Appendix: Report Excerpt

Low Carbon Scotland: The Draft Report on Policies and Proposals, p24, para. 1.26 – 1.28

1.26 Local government in Scotland has a clear role to play in supporting the transition to a low carbon economy, and in the preparation for and delivery of action on climate change. Scottish councils have a position of influence both as organisations in their own right and as members of Community Planning Partnerships, and have already demonstrated consistent commitment and political leadership on climate change with the signing of their Climate Change Declarations and the inclusion of local outcomes related to climate change in the Single Outcome Agreements. Local government will continue to work towards the delivery of the new statutory obligations of Scotland's Climate Change Act, including the public bodies climate change duties, and to provide leadership to wider civic society as Scotland moves to a low carbon economy.

1.27 The Scottish Government and COSLA are working together, alongside business, communities and others, to map out what needs to be done to achieve Scotland's emissions reduction targets, determine priorities for action, and identify policy and financial approaches. This will ensure that, wherever possible, we maximise the benefits of what can be delivered at a time of significantly constrained public spending and build upon the strong foundations already established at national and local level to take action on climate change.

1.28 Action is required by local government to fulfil its part of the public sector's contribution to Scotland's statutory emissions reduction targets both within its own right, and through influencing wider area emissions. Progress is already being made through Scotland's Climate Change Declaration, Single Outcome Agreements and the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme. However, more detailed consideration is required of the potential contribution, and associated opportunities and other issues such as public engagement, support to businesses and individuals, regulatory roles (nationally and locally) and enforcement powers. These will therefore form part of work to map out the route towards achievement of the emissions reduction targets and wider climate change action.

(full report available at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2010/11/18104445/0>)