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16 December 2022

Dear Convener,

As part of the ongoing implementation of the Heat Networks (Scotland) Act 2021, I am pleased to inform you that today we will publish “Consultation on a 2035 heat networks target.” This is a consultation on a proposal to introduce a 2035 target for the supply of thermal energy to be supplied by heat networks in Scotland. The consultation can be accessed at <https://www.gov.scot/isbn/9781805253129>

The consultation sets out that

- we propose to set the following target, where the combined supply of thermal energy supplied by heat networks in Scotland reaches at least 7 TWh by 2035.
- we will review the 2035, and if appropriate other, heat network targets once more evidence is available, such as local heat and energy efficiency strategies and heat network zones designated by local authorities.

Following feedback from the public consultation process, Scottish Ministers can then take steps to finalise and lay a draft of an affirmative Scottish statutory instrument containing regulations specifying a 2035 target – as per Section 92 of the Heat Networks (Scotland) Act 2021. The 2035 target will relate to the output from the combined supply of thermal energy by heat networks in Scotland.

Consulting on the 2035 target was one of the actions set out in the Heat Networks Delivery Plan, which sits in the context of wider heat decarbonisation policy, in particular, the Heat in Buildings Strategy.

The heat networks regulations work streams set out in the Heat Networks Delivery Plan, most immediately the Building Assessment Reports and Zoning workstream, will be subject to separate consultations and publicised, where appropriate, on Citizen Space - <http://consult.gov.uk>. These will build on ongoing stakeholder engagement to develop these regulatory mechanisms.

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I look forward to working with Committee to take forward the targets and other key aspects of the Heat Networks Delivery Plan, notably implementing the Heat Networks (Scotland) Act 2021 in order to secure and accelerate the deployment of heat networks in Scotland.

PATRICK HARVIE

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