



District Heating Steering Group (DHSG)

Meeting Note from meeting #10 28th October 2022

Attendees

In Person Attendees:

- Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC)
- Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH)
- Dublin City Council (DCC)
- South Dublin County Council (SDCC)

Virtual Attendees:

- Department of Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC)
- Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU)
- National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA)
- DHLGH
- SEAI
- National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI)

Apologies:

- City of Dublin Energy Management Agency (Codema)

1. Agreement of minutes of 15 September and 6th October meetings

Minutes of the above meetings were agreed without amendment.

2. Finance WG update

NTMA's paper on private financing options has been incorporated into the draft Finance Chapter. Comments on the most recent draft Finance Chapter have been received by DECC. DECC is refining the Finance Chapter in order to align it with the rest of the Report.

3. Planning WG update

The draft Planning Working Group Report has been submitted and contains six recommendations. The Working Group (WG) concluded, among other things, that legislative provisions around Planning could be strengthened to assist the development of District Heating (DH).

The Chair of the WG referred briefly to the review of the Planning and Development Act, which is being undertaken by the office of the Attorney General. She also noted the upcoming review of the National Planning Framework due to take place in 2023, and the opportunity this would



provide to strengthen the reference to district heating in the Framework to reflect its potential to help in meeting climate targets.

4. Research & Policy Insights WG update

The draft Research & Policy Insights Chapter has been submitted. In preparing the draft report, the Working Group took into account the research undertaken in the National Heat Study and examined additional research requirements.

5. Economic & Consumer Protection Regulation & Standards WG update

The final draft of the report from the Economic & Consumer Protection Regulation & Standards WG has been forwarded to the Dept. for review. Content of the report is structured around considerations and recommendations in three main areas: how the district heating sector might be structured going forward, the economic & consumer protection regulation requirements, and areas requiring additional policy considerations or decision making.

6. Discussion – District Heating Sector Model

An extensive discussion took place around potential models for the sector that could be employed to best support the development of DH. Included in that was an examination of the requirements for setting up a centralised district heating centre of excellence, what form that might take, under whose auspices it might be run, resourcing, etc.

DECC is working to put in place appropriate arrangements for funding the CRU's role as Regulator for DH Networks.

7. Feasibility studies and local Government engagement

SEAI has gone out to tender regards the proposed feasibility study to be carried out on moving the Carlinn Hall group heating scheme to a renewable energy source. An engineering service provider has been engaged. The Chair requested SEAI to provide a written progress update/brief on the project to DECC.

DECC is currently preparing the Climate Action Plan 2023 and is considering Actions for inclusion in relation to furthering the expansion of district heating. A number of these Actions will be directed towards the local authorities and DECC intends to engage with local authorities on this via CCMA. DECC will prepare a presentation to be delivered at the appropriate CCMA Committee as and when an opportunity arises.



8. Discussion on the DHSG Report

The Chair reiterated that the timeframe for completion of the Steering Group Report is tight if it is to be delivered by the deadline of end Q4 2022, bearing in mind that it will have to be reviewed by the Group and will also be subject to DECC internal review before being submitted to Government.

9. Next Steps

The Chair requested that final feedback from the Steering Group, in relation to the draft Report be forwarded to DECC by the Friday, 11th November.

Further work is needed to identify the optimal model for financing the expansion of DH.

DECC will prepare a business case for creating a DH 'Centre of Excellence'.

10. AOB

A Heat and Built Environment Taskforce is being set up by DECC to accelerate and drive delivery in relation to retrofitting, renewable heat, district heat, decarbonisation and overall energy use needs of the building stock. The aim of the Taskforce will be identifying work on the critical path and ensuring alignment in the development of policies and activities underway across Government Departments and proactively managing risks to ensure targets are achieved. The Taskforce is expected to convene in early 2023.

An update on Building Regulations was given by DHLGH. The Regulations have been signed by Minister and published and will apply from Tuesday 1st November 2022.