



LINK

LINK Energy Statement (July 2003)

Introduction

Climate change is already bringing very unpredictable weather affecting thousands of householders, businesses and many parts of the country's infrastructure. We must act now to slow the rate at which climate change is happening to mitigate negative impacts both on human society and on ecosystems. Action will bring benefits: as well as reducing these impacts it will create new, 'green' jobs, and help to reduce air pollution and related health problems.

The 2002 UK Energy Review by the Performance and Innovation Unit (PIU) indicates real potential for the UK to move to a low carbon energy system as part of the drive for continued carbon emissions reductions. The review shows that this can be reached through a combination of energy efficiency, renewable energy and combined heat and power. The UK and Scottish Governments should commit to driving the development of demand reduction and energy efficiency measures alongside clean technologies to reflect the potential identified by the PIU. This would avoid the need to rely on environmentally unacceptable technologies such as nuclear and would limit the damaging impacts of energy infrastructure on the wider environment.

However, Scotland can do much more to meet the climate challenge. Members of Scottish Environment LINK¹ propose a number of measures below.

1. A Scottish Energy Strategy

The Executive should consult on and prepare a Scottish Energy Strategy, to co-ordinate and drive forward action on demand reduction and energy efficiency, to maximise the opportunities for renewable energy and to prevent *ad hoc* development in areas that require protection. It should encourage a shift away from polluting technologies (coal, oil & gas, nuclear) to a combination of energy efficiency (with targets), reduced consumption (with targets) and renewable energy generation from a wide range of sources and technologies. The Scottish Energy Strategy should encourage local energy generation and supply. The Strategy should clearly relate to other government strategies which should seek to reduce overall energy consumption, in particular transport and waste. All Scottish Executive Departments and Agencies should contribute to the Strategy by, at a minimum, ensuring that their own frameworks and plans consider energy issues.

2. Targets: The Scottish Executive has taken a clear lead in endorsing renewables, and has set good targets for electricity from renewable sources - 40% of electricity production to come from renewables by 2020. This is a great start. These need to be complemented by targets for demand reduction and efficiency improvements.

3. Nuclear

The Scottish Executive should continue to resist the construction of any new nuclear capacity in Scotland, instead ensuring national investment in energy efficiency and expansion of appropriate renewable energy generation.

¹ LINK is the liaison body for Scotland's voluntary sector environmental organisations which represent around half a million people.

4. Planning and location

Scotland's National Planning Framework should address the implications of an ambitious and wide-ranging energy strategy. The Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive to come into force in the UK by summer 2004 should be applied to energy policy. We support the development of combined oil & gas and offshore renewables strategic environment assessments provided the strategic areas chosen are based on the ecosystem approach and look forward to working with the Scottish Executive and DTI to ensure that these are well informed and comprehensive.

Onshore wind energy schemes are currently meeting virtually all of Scotland's renewables targets which other technologies can increasingly contribute to in the future. The scale of onshore wind development needs to be planned for now. LINK members endorse the need for a national, locational framework and the crucial role which national guidance will play. The locational work carried out by Scottish Natural Heritage² is a welcome start but there is further work urgently required by other parts of Government. Meanwhile, sites where current carbon-storage capacity would be compromised by development should be avoided.

5. Protecting the wild land resource

Scotland has a much treasured and finite resource of wild land and seascape.³ NPPG6 deals poorly with the issue of wild landscapes. Wildness in Scotland's countryside, islands and seascape is a quality that is valued by Scots and by people from all over the world, not only in the remotest parts of Scotland but also in more managed countryside, and it is a key resource of Scotland's tourist industry. The quality of wildness is particularly vulnerable to some forms of energy generation, such as wind turbines on high ridges, hydro schemes in remote areas, and offshore wind turbines or other marine technologies close to the shore. A Scottish Energy Strategy must protect wild land qualities in Scotland's countryside as well as the small declining reserve of remote wild land and sea passages.

6. National Grid

The Executive should consider and consult widely on the needs and implications of an upgrade of the Scottish electricity grid.

7. Baseline Data

To meet energy objectives, to plan appropriately and for regular comprehensive monitoring, Scotland will need accurate data on energy production and consumption.

8. Research and Development

An ambitious Scottish Energy Strategy will need commitment of substantial monies for research into new and developing technologies, and into potential implications of their application in Scotland. This programme should be imaginative and wide-ranging, including options such as geothermal imports, tidal flow, wave, offshore wind, biofuels, solar, and should include innovative transport, heating and energy saving technologies.

9. Stakeholders

Development of the strategy will need full and genuine consultation with all stakeholders. Stakeholders, including communities, should be consulted about all plans, policies and schemes. There should be maximum community ownership of, and community benefit from, any schemes.

10. The Economy

The Enterprise Network should be required to develop policies and plans to realise the employment potential of the Scottish Energy Strategy.

11. The Scotland Act /

² SNH *Strategic locational guidance for onshore wind farms in respect of the natural heritage*, 2002

³ SNH Policy Statement *Wildness in Scotland's Countryside* 2002

11. The Scotland Act

It will be important to Scotland in the future to be able to adapt and develop its Energy Strategy to meet its needs and responsibilities. With energy issues divided between Westminster and Holyrood, it is important that these two administrations work together to the same aims, determined by the Scottish Energy Strategy. If it proves necessary to improve delivery, lead responsibility for one issue or another could be transferred.

The following LINK member organisations are signatories to this statement:

Association of Regional and Islands Archaeologists
Biological Recording in Scotland Campaign
Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group
Cairngorms Campaign
Friends of the Earth Scotland
John Muir Trust
Marine Conservation Society
Mountaineering Council of Scotland
The National Trust for Scotland
Ramblers Association Scotland
RSPB Scotland
Scottish Wild Land Group
Sustrans Scotland
The Woodland Trust Scotland
WWF Scotland

British Association of Nature Conservationists (Scotland) also support the statement.

Reference List

Performance and Innovation Unit *Energy Review* 2002 www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/innovation/2002/energy/report/index.htm
Scottish Executive *Securing a Renewable Future: Scotland's Renewable Energy* <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/environment/srfe-00.asp>
DTI Energy White Paper *Our Energy Future – Creating a low carbon economy*, 2003 <http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/whitepaper/index.shtml#wp>
DTI Offshore Wind SEA 2003 see http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/renewables/technologies/offshore_wind.shtml
NPPG6 *Renewable Energy Developments* 2000, <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/planning/nppg/nppg6-00.asp>
A Smart Sustainable Scotland, the potential for green enterprise and green jobs prepared for WWF Scotland by CAG Consultants, 2003. <http://www.wwf.org.uk/filelibrary/pdf/smartsotland.pdf>
Scottish Natural Heritage Policy Statement: *Wildness in Scotland's Countryside* <http://www.snh.org.uk/strategy/sr-frame.htm>
Scottish Natural Heritage *Strategic Locational Guidance for onshore wind farms in respect of the natural heritage*, 2002. <http://www.snh.org.uk/strategy/sr-frame.htm>

Further information:

Scottish Environment LINK
2 Grosvenor House
Shore Road
Perth PH2 8BD
Web: www.scotlink.org

The above LINK organisations' contact details are available on <http://www.scotlink.org/mem.htm>