

Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy Public Engagement Summary Report

1. Introduction

A six-week public engagement exercise for the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy took place between 18th September and 29th October 2023. A draft of the strategy, including a high-level delivery plan¹, was published on a dedicated [webpage](#). Alongside the strategy a [web map](#) showcasing baseline building data, strategic zones, and heat network zones was also published.

The public engagement took the form of an online survey, with a public information session also taking place on 5th October. The survey and session were advertised in the local press; Council and officer social media channels; and stakeholder networks. Presentations were also delivered to interested groups on request.

40 responses were received from the online survey, of which 10 were on behalf of organisations. The attendance numbers of each presentation are detailed below:

- Councillor CPD workshop – 12 attendees
- CPD Event: A Just Energy Transition - Local Heat & Energy Efficiency - 68 attendees
- Public Information Session – 6 attendees
- Fife Voluntary Action Lunchtime Learning – 11 attendees
- Fife Communities Climate Action Network – 8 attendees
- Cosy Kingdom Partnership Meeting – 14 attendees

During the production of the strategy, key internal and external stakeholders were also engaged, including via two workshops.

2. Summary of Key Responses

The following section provides a high-level summary of the online survey findings. It also highlights where any significant amendments have been made to the strategy², or where items will be considered for inclusion in the detailed delivery plan.

2.1 Vision

The majority (60%) of respondents agreed with the Council's vision. 30 respondents provided feedback, however some of these were focussed on the priorities, and are captured later in this report. Key comments on the vision, and the Council's response are detailed below:

- The use of the phrase climate friendly, ready, and just and other technical climate language was questioned by some respondents. Climate friendly, ready, and just were included to reflect the three core principles of the [Climate Fife Strategy](#) (described in chapter 3.1.2). An explanation of these has been added to the Overview section of the Strategy. There was a need to strike a balance between use of plain English with technical language.
- The challenges of achieving the vision were raised. The strategy recognises these challenges throughout the document and will continue to develop a process by which these challenges can be addressed.

¹ To be published by early 2025.

² This document only summarises the key changes, other small changes have also been made.

3. Priorities

Most respondents agreed with all of the priorities and outcomes of the strategy, and thought the titles were clear and easy to understand (Figure 1 and Figure 2).

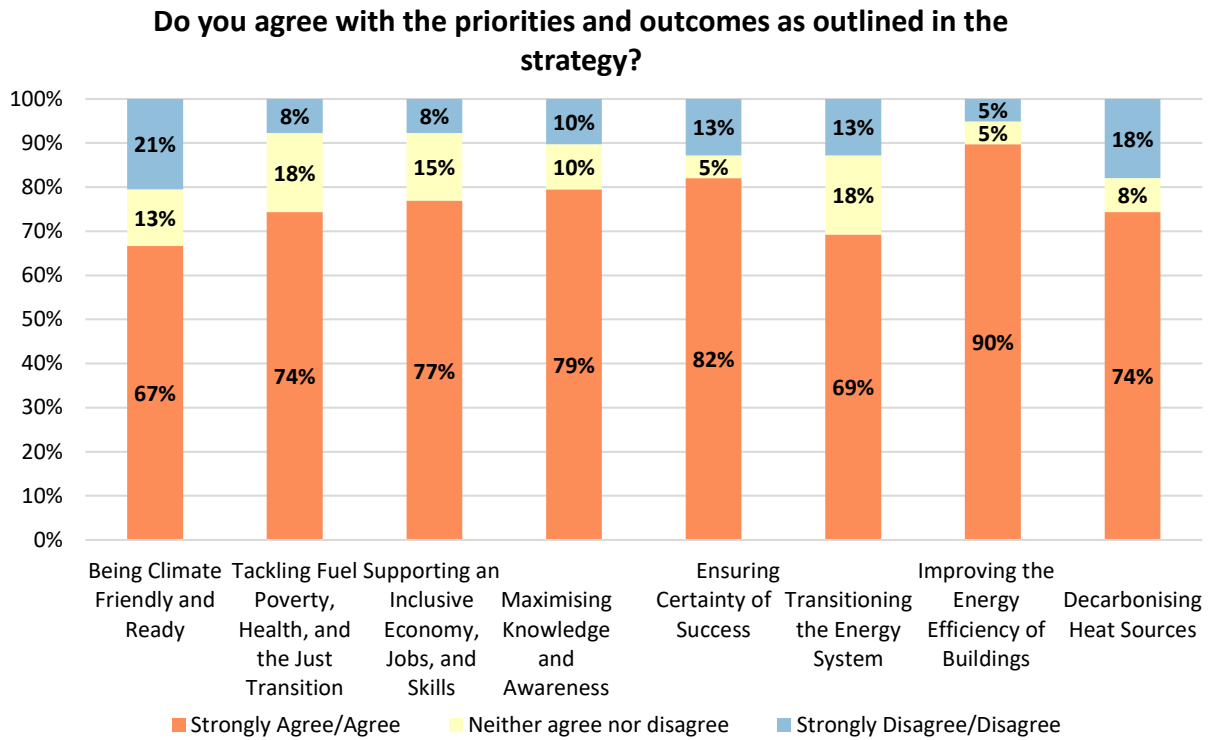


Figure 1: Agreement with priorities and outcomes

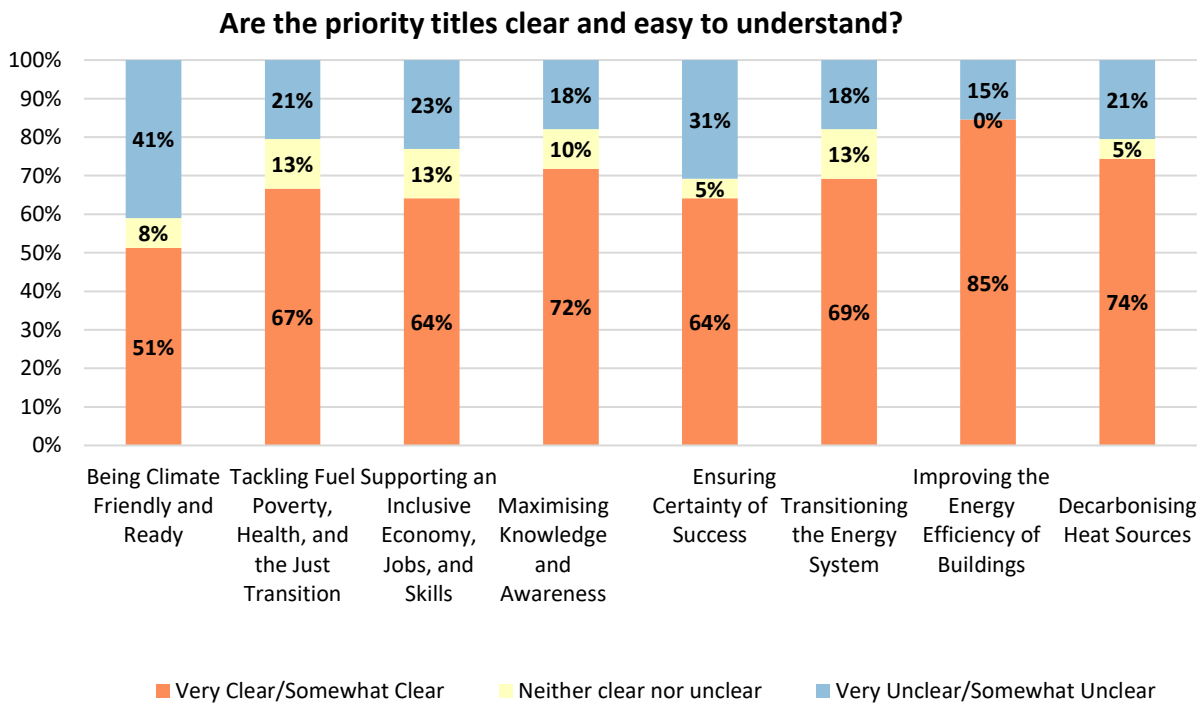


Figure 2: Clarity of priority titles

3.1 General comments

General feedback on the priorities focussed on strengthening the wording of the outcomes; referencing specific targets; explanation on whether numbering of priorities indicated importance; and how technology and policy changes might impact the strategy.

- National targets which this strategy will align with are yet to be ratified (Heat in Buildings Regulations). However, wording of outcomes 1.1, 7.1-7.4, and 8.1-8.3 have been revised to reference contributing Fife's share, on a proportional basis, towards national targets.
- The numbering of priorities is not an indication of importance. All priorities are equally important and reliant upon each other to drive forward change. Additional clarification has been added to Chapter 6.
- It is recognised evolving technologies and policies may impact analysis used to identify building level actions. The detailed delivery plan will include actions focussed on regularly reviewing policy and technology changes to ensure these are considered in future iterations of the strategy.

3.2 Being Climate Friendly and Ready

Feedback was centred around the phrase "climate friendly, ready and just". The Council's response to this is provided above.

3.3 Tackling Fuel Poverty, Health, and the Just Transition

Comments focussed on this priority included: providing a definition of just transition, and how focussing on fuel poverty and a just transition may slow down achievement of net zero.

- A definition of "just transition" has been added to the Overview section and Chapter 6.2.2.
- Fuel poverty and the just transition have to be considered within the strategy. The national guidance states the strategy should:
 - *"be primarily driven by Scotland's statutory targets for greenhouse gas emissions ... and fuel poverty."*
 - *"Reflect the objectives to the pathway for net zero, as set out in the Heat in Buildings Strategy."* This includes: *"By 2045 our homes and buildings no longer contributing to climate change, as part of the wider just transition to net zero."*
- Details on the resources and time required to collect improved data on fuel poverty will be included in the detailed delivery plan.

3.4 Supporting an Inclusive Economy, Jobs, and Skills

A common response was how delivery of the strategy, and the wider heat transition, would be funded, and what the potential costs for property owners might be. The funding challenge is recognised in Chapters 4.3 and 6.3, with a specific ask for Scottish Government in Chapter 7.2. Chapters 4.3 and 6.3 have been further strengthened to reference the lack of available funding, and the cost impact for building owners. The high-level delivery plan has been amended to include two additional actions to be taken forward in the detailed delivery plan:

- Explore alternative funding sources to support retrofit/heat decarbonisation.
- Maximize existing energy spend to benefit Fife.

Other feedback suggested to ensure young people and community organisations are engaged regarding the skills gap and consider place-based solutions to help with community wealth building. Both will be considered when developing the detailed delivery plan.

3.5 Maximising Knowledge and Awareness

Comments for this priority focussed on whether behavioural change is sufficiently addressed, the challenges around this, and the role of community organisations.

- This priority has been further expanded to ensure it references behavioural change, communication challenges, the role of community organisations.
- Actions will be included in the detailed delivery plan focussing on behaviour change and communications.

3.6 Ensuring Certainty of Success

The most common feedback for this priority was regarding challenges of retrofitting historic buildings. This is already recognised in the strategy - further wording has been added. Actions will be included in the detailed delivery plan focussing on improving understanding of retrofitting these buildings.

Other comments requested further clarity on the phrase "Actions will be prioritised on certainty of success and minimal potential unintended consequences" and how this would be achieved. Explanations have been added to Chapters 4.3, 6.5, and 7. Chapter 6.5 has also been strengthened to state the optioneering process *"will also be used to identify early wins, where energy efficiency actions are more straightforward and can be supported in the short term."*

3.7 Transitioning the Energy System

Some comments raised concerns around hydrogen. Though the strategy references hydrogen as a potential solution, it also states *"Scottish Government do not envisage hydrogen having a role in heating buildings in the near term and is not a focus in modelling for this strategy."*

It was suggested the strategy should make further reference to smart energy solutions. This was already referenced in Chapter 6.3. Chapter 4.2 has been amended, and Chapter 7 now includes an action focussing on this.

3.8 Improving the Energy Efficiency of Buildings

Feedback on this priority was minor and focussed on specific challenges such as:

- Implementation of Energy Performance Certificates - reform of Energy Performance Certificates has recently been [consulted on nationally](#). This is aiming to ensure they are more effective in helping meet net zero.
- Many buildings requiring repair work prior to any retrofit. This is referenced in Chapters 6.5 and 6.7.
- Consideration of embodied carbon. Chapter 6.7 has been revised to reference this.

3.9 Decarbonising Heat Sources

Feedback on heat pumps focussed on challenges of ensuring an appropriate coefficient of performance. This are recognised in the strategy, and further strengthened where appropriate.

A few comments were received on heat networks, including suggestions to add on benefits of networks, and further references mine water heat. The heat network section of the strategy has been significantly revised. The detailed delivery plan will include specific actions around heat networks.

4. High-Level Delivery Plan

Opinions on the proposed high-level actions was mixed, however the largest proportion of responses thought either all (24%) or most (23%) of the actions were suitable (19% stated “Don’t Know”). No comments were provided on which actions are unsuitable.

Some responses focussed on the ambition and details of the delivery plan. As stated in the strategy and survey, only a high-level summary of actions was provided. These will be used as a foundation for a detailed delivery plan, published by early 2025. This will include indicators to measure progress, timescales, and delivery partners. Stakeholder will be engaged to ensure a joined-up approach across Fife.

Suggestions for actions to include in the detailed delivery plan are detailed in Table 1. Actions referenced previously in this report are not duplicated here.

Table 1: Suggested actions for detailed delivery plan

Category	Suggested actions for detailed delivery plan
Building Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore use of Solar PV as mechanism to support heat decarbonisation. • Support and encourage maintenance and repair of building prior to retrofit action.
Heat Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions focussed on the operational and funding models of heat networks. • Early engagement with, and involvement of, the private sector regarding interest, investment, and procurement for potential heat network zones. • A study on levels of waste heat from industry, and opportunity to utilise heat from mines. • Consideration of connection of council-owned buildings to networks.
Energy System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore community energy generation schemes to generate funding for retrofit of community buildings. • Explore the opportunity for energy sharing, peer-to-peer trading, and private wires. • Engage with community groups to support development of area energy plans.
Skills & Jobs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of Council staff to maintain heat pumps. • Development of a trusted installer scheme.
Knowledge & Awareness Raising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion of, and guidance for, simple measures such as draught proofing. • Mechanisms to encourage and involve individuals and communities to improve energy efficiency and decarbonise heat. Including consideration of the Shifting Normal guide.
Data, Modelling & Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration of standardisation of retrofit options for different building archetypes and promotion across Fife. This could include the development of a “road map” for the best solutions for Fife buildings.

8 organisations provided information on actions they could deliver or support they could provide. These included:

- Provision of technical knowledge and support.
- Provision of heat network expertise – design, build, operation, and maintenance.
- Development of low carbon heating opportunities for housing and horticulture.
- Support to assess and tackle the jobs and skills gap.
- Data sharing.
- Engage with local forums/networks to provide clear and reliable information and gather feedback.
- Promotion of the strategy.