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Minutes of Meeting on 21st January 2025 (Including note of Heat Network Roundtable)

**Venue:** Atlantic Quay 5, AQ GLENNIE A

**Time:** 09:00 – 17:00

**Type:** Panel Meeting

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Attendees

**Panel:** Alister Steele (Chairing) and Kirsten Jenkins

**Apologies:** Matthew Cole, Margaret Corrigan and Fraser Stewart

**Secretariat:** Philippa Brosnan, Trisha Melvin, and Roanna Simpson

Roundtable Attendees**:**

**Scottish Government – Heat Networks’ Team:** James Hemphill, Unit Head and Malcolm Rose, Team Leader, as well as Amy Nimegeer (attended as an observer) Principal Analyst from the **Housing, Homelessness & Regeneration Analysis** Unit.

**Ofgem:** Gareth Gill and Mike Leonard, Senior Policy Leads, Heat Networks’ Policy Team

**Consumer Scotland: – Heat Networks’ Team:** Alistair Hill, Head of Heat Networks and Michael O’Brien, Heat Networks Policy and Advocacy Manager **Scottish Futures Trust:** Stephen Vere, Programme Director, Net Zero **Dundee City Council:** Barbara Whiting, Sustainability and Climate Change Manager **East Ayrshire Council:** Andrew Brockett, LHEES Service Lead

Agenda item 1: Welcome

Alister opened the meeting and welcomed everyone, noting Matt, Fraser and Maggie’s apologies. He ran through the agenda and the running order of the meeting, including the Heat Networks’ Roundtable during the morning. Alister then noted that the Roundtable would include presentations from several stakeholders, who would set the scene for the legislative, regulatory and policy landscape, provide an overview of different types of heat network models, and talk about how Local Authorities are starting to prepare the ground for delivery following publication of their Local Heat Energy Efficiency Strategies. The afternoon would be spent reflecting on the Roundtable as well as discussing Panel activity to the end of March 2025.

There has been 1 online meeting since the Panel last met in-person on the 26th of November. This was on the 18th of December. The agenda for this meeting included:

* A presentation from Malcolm Rose – Team leader of the Heat Networks and Non- Domestic Buildings’ Team on Heat Network regulation in Scotland. Covering regulation; regulatory roles and touching on reserved and devolved heat network powers.
* A Panel discussion on the plan for the remaining meetings of the April 2024-March 2025 workplan, Panel governance including the production of the annual report for 24-25, workplan for 25-26 and the response to the Scottish Goverment’s first periodic report to be published in the first quarter of 2025.

Agenda item 2: Heat Networks’ Roundtable [09:30-12:45 pm]

A note of the Roundtable is published separately on the Panel’s website.

Agenda item 3: Panel Roundtable Reflections

Alister invited reflections on this morning’s Roundtable. There was consensus that it had been a really useful and insightful session with a frank and helpful discussion. The Panel considered how what they had heard this morning might inform their response to the Scottish Government on the draft guidance for the fuel poverty statement which forms part of the heat network consenting process. The Panel also discussed their evolving thinking on the potential for heat networks to contribute, or not, to meeting Scotland’s fuel poverty targets, and their developing understanding of their heat network statutory consultee role.

Agenda item 4 : April ’24-March ’25 Workplan and Response to Ofgem Debt Relief Scheme

The remaining activity under this year’s workplan: the bringing together and publication of the Panel’s work on rural fuel poverty in February and the exploratory discussion of a public health approach to fuel poverty to be held at the Usher Institute on 10 March. The upcoming publication of the Scottish Government’s Scottish House Condition Survey for 2023 on the 28 of January, was also noted.

Roanna took the Panel through the draft response to the Ofgem Debt Relief Scheme consultation. Their additional thoughts will be added and a further draft circulated. Sign off is required by 3rd Feburary to enable the 6th February deadline to be met.   
  
Roanna gave an update on the research plan – lived experience workshops will be completed by the end of the financial year. Further work will then by undertaken on these by Roanna to draw together the findings.

Agenda item 5 - AOB

The Panel discussed the possibility of inviting the University of Edinburgh MSc students, whom Alister gave external supervisory support to, to present their work on fuel poverty to the whole Panel. This will be borne in mind for a future Panel meeting.   
  
Future Meetings – The Panel have 1 online meeting in Feburary and an in-person meeting in March at the Usher Institue in Edinburgh.

The Panel noted that they are still unclear about how the average energy savings’ figure of around £300 per year in household energy bills, following the installation of energy efficiency measures, is calculated. (This was quoted in the Scottish Government’s “[Support for Pensioners with Energy Bills](https://www.gov.scot/news/support-for-pensioners-with-energy-costs/#:~:text=An%20additional%20%C2%A320%20million%20will%20be%20invested%20into%20the,year%20in%20household%20energy%20bills.)” announcement on 28 November 2024.)

Alister asked if there were any other questions and thanked everyone for their time and drew the meeting to a close.

**Next meeting** is the 17th of February 2025 online – exact timing still to be confirmed.