

Heat Network Zone Guidance

To accompany the “Heat Network Zone Proforma”



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This document is issued under Section 54(1) of the Heat Networks (Scotland) Act to provide statutory guidance to support local authorities to discharge specific duties in relation to review of areas that are likely to be particularly suitable for heat networks and the designation of Heat Network Zones.

This statutory guidance is to be used alongside the Excel file ‘Heat Network Zone Proforma’.

This guidance should be read alongside the Heat Networks (Heat Network Zones and Building Assessment Reports) (Scotland) Regulations 2023.

1 Introduction

“[The Heat Networks \(Scotland\) Act 2021](#)” (herein referred to as the Act) provides a legal framework for the establishment of a regulatory system for heat networks in Scotland. The Act is intended to encourage greater deployment of heat networks in Scotland, in the context of ambitious emissions reduction and fuel poverty targets. Further detail on the importance of heat networks and heat network zoning can be found in the [Heat Networks Delivery Plan](#) and wider [Heat in Buildings Strategy](#).

Within the Act, each local authority is required to carry out a review to consider whether one or more areas in its area is likely to be particularly suitable for the construction and operation of a heat network (section 47(1)). Following this review by a local authority, a further requirement of the Act is to make a decision on whether either the local authority itself or the Scottish Ministers should proceed to consider designation of areas as Heat Network Zones (section 47(4)). Further detail on heat network zones can be found in Section 1.2 of this document. After each review, the local authority must publish a statement in relation to each area considered which provides a rationale for decisions made regarding particular suitability. Each area considered likely to be particularly suitable must be identified the area by reference to a map and the statement must justify the route chosen for consideration for designation (section 47(6)).

For each area progressed for consideration for designation by a local authority, consultation is required (section 48(2)), as is subsequent publication of a decision on whether to designate or not (section 48(4)).

This statutory guidance document supports local authorities to discharge the duties outlined above. It is based around completion of a standard proforma, structured as follows:

- **Part A – area review decision (supports requirements of sections 47(1), 47(3) 47(4) and 47(6) of the Act)**

A review to identify areas likely to be particularly suitable for heat networks under section 47(1) should be carried out within a Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES)¹ and outputs can feed directly into the Part A. Note that there is scope to use other evidence, for example from feasibility work or other strategic assessment, to support completion of Part A. This base information is reviewed, with key insights in terms of suitability documented in the proforma. The proforma then requires a decision and justification of

¹ see [Local heat and energy efficiency strategies: guidance](#)

whether this information makes the area likely to be particularly suitable and to determine and provide rationale for the route to take forward to consider for designation. A note on the statement required by section 47(6) is provided in this guidance.

- **Part B – designation consultation (supports requirements of sections 48(1) and 48(2) of the Act)**

Captures information gathered during a statutory consultation period, to better inform the decision as to whether to designate an area as a Heat Network Zone. Guidance is also provided in this document to support engagement activity in relation to the area under consideration.

- **Part C – designation decision (fulfils the requirements of sections 48(3) and 48(4) of the Act)**

Captures the decision of whether a local authority designates the area as a Heat Network Zone or decides not to designate the area as a Heat Network Zone. A note on the publication of a document with the designation decision is provided in this guidance.

A summary of the main elements and stages to the decision of whether to designate an area as a Heat Network Zone is provided in Figure 1.

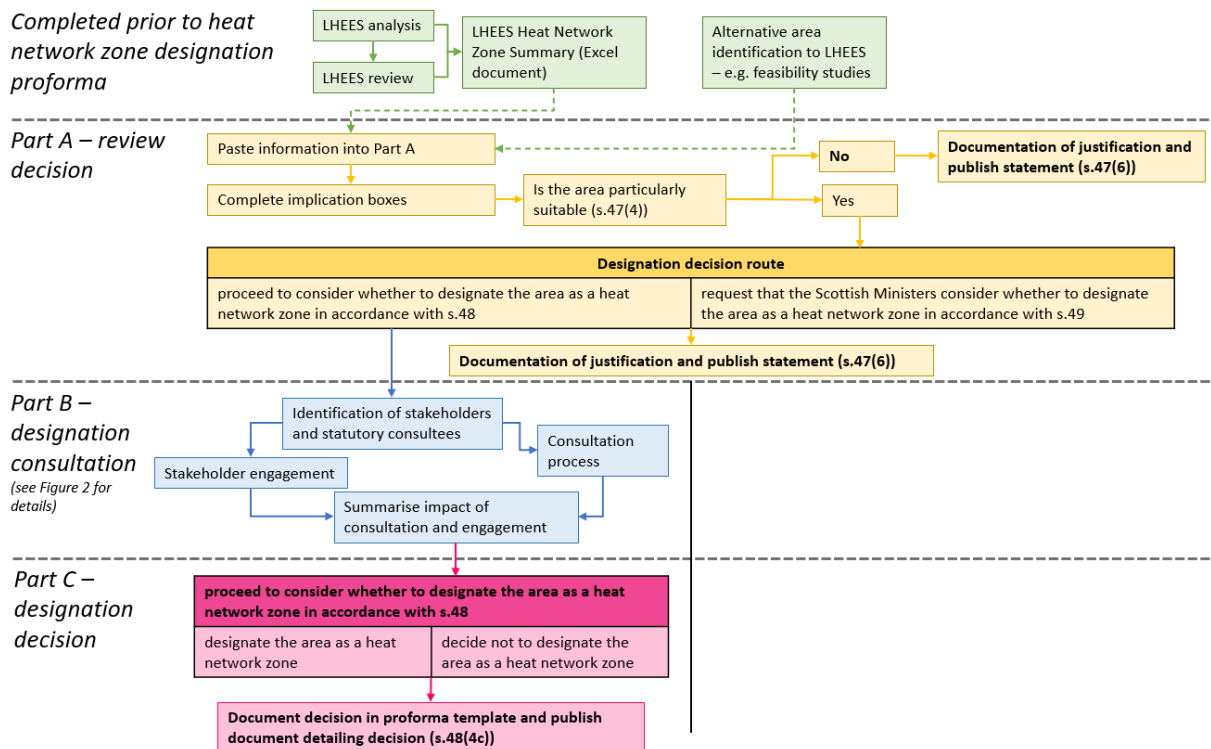


Figure 1 Summary of key stages in completing parts relating to decisions as to whether to designate identified potential heat network areas as Heat Network Zones.

Currently, the process will require Part A to be completed for every area of interest for heat networks identified in the review. Decisions on consideration for designation are made on a case-by-case basis. It is considered likely that many of these areas would have been identified as part of a local authority’s Local Heat and Energy

Efficiency Strategy (LHEES). However, it is worth noting that the identification of particularly suitable areas under section 47(1) of the Act or consideration of whether to designate areas as zones under section 48(1) are not limited to outputs from the LHEES process (or its suggested approach²) – other review activity could feed into these considerations.

Equally, when deciding whether to designate an area as a Heat Network Zone, it is not essential that exactly the same area has previously been identified as particularly suitable under section 47(1), provided that proper consideration is given in accordance with section 48(1). For example: a designated Heat Network Zone may cover a smaller or larger geographical area than the area originally identified as particularly suitable; or an opportunity to designate a new Heat Network Zone could arise between the periodic reviews taking place under section 47(1), for example, due to the availability of a new heat source or changes to heat demand in an area.

1.1 Assessment of an Area as “Particularly Suitable”

Beyond suggested threshold settings that underpin the demand-based analysis carried out within LHEES, no strong steer or set of threshold values has been provided to define what makes an area particularly suitable. Suggestions are provided under the subheadings of Section 2 below that look to give examples of what might align with this definition, however, this part is intentionally flexible to encourage local consideration of factors and justification of any decisions regarding suitability.

1.2 Zone Designation – Policy Intention and Implications

As set out in the Policy Memorandum³, identifying and designating Heat Network Zones by a local authority or Scottish Ministers, will provide the heat network sector with greater awareness of development opportunities within Scotland; and set a boundary in which supporting actions aimed at reducing the demand risk faced by heat network developers can be suitably targeted.

The Act aims to maximise in particular the deployment of large, strategically sited district heating networks by introducing Heat Network Zone Permits. These could offer the market the opportunity to be the sole heat network operator within a Heat Network Zone⁴, following a robust initial competitive process for that right. The designation of a Heat Network Zone does not oblige the Scottish Ministers to award a Heat Network Zone Permit, but it will be a powerful tool available for use in delivering the infrastructure in those areas that have been deemed most suitable for heat networks. The potential for exclusivity (via the permitting process) within a designated Heat Network Zone is therefore an important consideration in deciding whether or not

² For full details of how to identify potential heat network areas using LHEES see: LHEES Stage 4: Heat Networks – Generation of Potential Zones – Detailed Practitioner Approach (which has been shared with local authorities).

³ [Heat Networks \(Scotland\) Bill - Policy Memorandum \(parliament.scot\)](https://www.parliament.scot/Heat-Networks-Scotland-Bill-Policy-Memorandum)

⁴ Note that operators of existing heat networks within permitted heat network zones may be allowed to continue to operate such networks, subject to the issue of an appropriate notice by the permit authority (see section 56(2)).

to designate an area as a Heat Network Zone, and also in determining the geographical extent of any designated Heat Network Zone.

It is worth noting that the detail of processes outlined in the Act such as consenting and permitting is under consideration, and as such, the exact interaction of these with the zone designation process is still to be established. Also worth noting are provisions within the Act to adjust the boundary of a Heat Network Zone once designated, but again, the detail of the circumstances when this could apply is still to be finalised. As such, bear in mind that this guidance is expected to evolve over time.

Designated Heat Network Zones will also be significant in planning terms. The Revised Draft National Planning Framework 4 requires that:⁵

- The spatial strategy should take into account areas of heat network potential and any designated Heat Network Zones;
- Development proposals that are within or adjacent to a Heat Network Zone identified in a Local Development Plan will only be supported where they are designed and constructed to connect to the existing heat network;
- Where a heat network is planned but not yet in place, development proposals will only be supported where they are designed and constructed to allow for cost-effective connection at a later date; and
- Development proposals for energy infrastructure will be supported where they:
 - i. repurpose former fossil fuel infrastructure for the production or handling of low carbon energy;
 - ii. are within or adjacent to a Heat Network Zone; and
 - iii. can be cost-effectively linked to an existing or planned heat network.

1.3 Roles and Internal Engagement in Proforma Completion

In the LHEES methodology, it is recommended that an internal review group is established to provide input into the heat networks review activity – including provision of local knowledge in sense-checking analysis outputs, making decisions on appropriate analysis settings and supporting completion of the output summary tables that are likely to contain some of the evidence upon which zone designation decisions are based. It is likely that there will be substantial cross over between the expertise in the LHEES review group (if established) and that required to complete the Heat Network Zone Designation Proforma, so continuity of membership might be appropriate.

If an internal review group has not been established as part of LHEES, Table 1 provides a list of key suggested persons within a local authority to engage to support completion of the zone designation proforma. Even if an LHEES review group is established, it is advised that membership be cross-checked against the roles outlined in Table 1 to ensure suitable expertise is included in decision making.

Additionally, senior oversight and input is likely to be required as part of the decision-making process, particularly for the designation of Heat Network Zones. Appropriate governance structures from LHEES or other related activity might be established already, that zone designation work could align with.

⁵ Draft laid before Parliament on 8 November 2022.

Table 1 Summary of suggested local authority stakeholders to engage.

Local authority role: Officer responsible for coordinating heat network analysis / zone designation

Level of engagement: Likely lead for the process.

Indication of insights: Coordinates discussion and input to completion of the proforma; likely to have the highest level of knowledge on the areas of interest.

Local authority role: Officer responsible for LHEES coordination (may be the same as above).

Level of engagement: Likely high.

Indication of insights: Act to provide a cross-check and context with other LHEES priorities and analysis, and to ensure continuity in messaging. For example, opportunities other than heat networks may have been identified through the LHEES process in the areas of interest.

Local authority role: Officer responsible for planning.

Level of engagement: Low to high – if there is likely to be substantial development in the area this will be high.

Indication of insights: Insights into where additional future demands and potentially waste or recoverable heat sources are likely to be. If there is significant development activity e.g., large-scale LDP sites, in the area under consideration, planning colleagues will be particularly important to engage.

Engagement should also be made with the Planning Officer with responsibility for the historic environment, in order to gain insight into historic sites (buildings, archaeological sites etc.) that could be a constraint for heat network routing or other infrastructure.

Local authority role: Officer responsible for properties and estates.

Level of engagement: Likely high, especially if there are a high number of local authority properties in the area of interest.

Indication of insights: Public sector buildings are often key anchor⁶ loads for heat networks. Certainty about these demands and any future planned changes to the public sector property portfolio are important to consider in the designation process.

Local authority role: Housing Officer and Fuel Poverty Officer (may be the same person).

Level of engagement: medium - dependent on type of area under consideration.

Indication of insights: Insights into the level of fuel poverty in a potential zone provides useful context, which should be considered through the designation process. This is particularly important if there is a high level of domestic heat demand in the potential zone.

⁶ Buildings with a large, reliable and long-term demand for heat, often with a stable and constant use profile, can act as anchors for a developing district heating network. Whilst the LHEES methodology default sets an anchor load threshold heat demand at "at least 500 MWh/yr", anchor loads could have lower annual heat demands, dependent on local context. Local or site-specific definitions of the term "anchor load" may vary.

Local authority role: Building Control Officer.

Level of engagement: Medium

Indication of insights: Responsible for ensuring that all new buildings install zero direct emission heating systems (ZDEH, for buildings warranted from 1 April 2024). Will be important to ensure they are aware of potential HNzs and what this would mean for granting warrants for new developments within those HNzs. This is to ensure that connection to the heat network was the means of meeting the ZDEH requirement.

Local authority role: Economic Development Officer

Level of engagement: Low to high

Indication of insights: Various

Local authority role: Community Planning Officer.

Level of engagement: Low to high.

Indication of insights: Where an area overlaps with a community planning partnership plan.

1.4 Data Sharing Restrictions

The suggested default outputs, in the form of area Summary Tables, to support the review and designation processes come directly from completion of the LHEES approach. These outputs draw on various data sources, including the Scotland Heat Map. Data sharing restrictions apply to elements of this dataset and potentially other datasets used to summarise areas of interest.

The processes supported by this proforma include engagement, consultation and the publication of statements related to area review, designation consideration and designation decisions. In completing this activity, consideration should be given to any data sharing restrictions on the information used and gathered.

2 Part A

The Part A section within the proforma mirrors an Excel summary table provided within the LHEES methodology documentation, with extension to enable completion for the specific tasks covered by Part A. Completion of this section is not contingent on following the LHEES detailed practitioner approach, however, following the overarching requirements of LHEES will create outputs that will enable completion of Part A. This includes documentation of information under the following subsections of the section:

- Zone Information & Opportunity Summary
- Matter 48(1a) - Renewable and Waste Heat Opportunities
- Matter 48(1b,e,f) - Consistent & Considerable Thermal Loads, Supply Targets and Building Assessment Reports
- Matter 48(1c) - Existing Infrastructure
- Matter 48(1d) - Fuel Poverty
- Matter 48(1g) - Other Matters

- Local Development Plan (LDP) Sites
- Constraints
- Is the area considered particularly suitable?
- Part A – Area Map(s)

The subsections are designed to provide summary detail on an area, covering aspects outlined in section 48(1) of the Act alongside aspects considered important to heat network opportunities from an LHEES perspective. Matters 48(1e) and 48(1f) are integrated with 48(1b) to avoid repetition.

The majority of Part A can be directly pasted in from the outputs of the LHEES detailed practitioner approach⁷ or completed using equivalent strategic analysis or feasibility work. If the officer responsible for LHEES is not completing the Heat Network Zoning proforma it is suggested that they are engaged at this stage, to avoid duplication of work. Decisions may have been taken during LHEES development activity, or may be taken at this stage, to alter the boundaries identified as part of the review activity, potentially reducing the scale of an identified area, or combining several identified areas. It is important any further assessment of areas carried out within LHEES (beyond the Stage 4 identification) is factored into consideration here, and also that due consideration is given to the appropriateness of previously identified areas for the purposes of zone designation.

The main addition of Part A, beyond the LHEES approach outputs, is that below each of the subsections listed above there is an “Implications for suitability – notes” box to fill in. This is to summarise how the insights captured from the LHEES (or equivalent) analysis help inform whether an area is particularly suitable. Overviews of the types of factors that could be considered to inform completion, and examples of the kind of notes a local authority may wish to capture, are provided in Section 2.1 to **Error! Reference source not found.** below.

Part A also includes a final section that is not part of the LHEES summary outputs. This summarises the review to consider whether an area is likely to be particularly suitable for construction and operation of a heat network (section 47(1) of the Act). The section also captures (and supports justification of) the associated decision relating to the decision of whether to progress to consider the area for designation and whether the local authority will carry out this process or whether to request for Scottish Ministers to consider designation. Guidance on how to complete this final section of Part A is provided in section 2.9.

To complete Part A, a map of the area should also be provided, this process is detailed in section 2.10.

Once Part A is complete a statement should be published, details are provided in section 2.11.

2.1 Zone Information & Opportunity Summary

Factors that could be considered include:

- High level reference to the location of the area in the local authority.

⁷ This is specifically Step 5 of the Detailed Practitioner Approach for Heat Networks.

- The linear heat density in the identified area. The linear heat density (LHD) which is most suitable to consider will vary from area to area. In the LHEES detailed practitioner approach and the First National Assessment of Potential Heat Network Zones⁸ different settings were used.
- A high number of anchor loads, particularly if many of these are identified as public buildings in review. To assist with this the proforma includes quantification of priority anchor loads – these can be demands that would be key to the heat network (for example they are strategically located) or more likely to connect (for example a public sector building).
- The ownership and tenure of key potential connections – these are important factors to the actionability of the opportunity, as control over connection decisions rests with the local authority for their own estate.
- Consideration of the location, for example, in a more rural location an area with lower heat density and fewer anchor loads may be more suitable for heat network development than an equivalent urban opportunity – particularly if local insight indicates the properties in question are off the gas grid (this would depend on the choice of counterfactual option to a heat network when carrying out an economic assessment).
- Rural communities: You may wish to have regard to the following points where a proposed zone includes an area considered to be rural:
 - The trend will be towards smaller buildings with lower heat demand, thus a lower threshold for anchor loads and linear heat density may be more appropriate.
 - There will be greater potential for a heat networks to traverse a nature conservation area (e.g. peat lands) or sites of special scientific interest. Therefore, Nature Scotland should be engaged at an earlier stage.
 - Community groups may need more engagement in order to ensure their buy-in to connection to a heat network.
 - Heat networks may be more expensive to develop in rural areas, thus special consideration should be given to the potential impact on fuel poverty.

Note also the inclusion of a “Buffer radius cap (m)” within the summary table as a screening parameter. This parameter is considered within the LHEES approach, with a default value of 250m, but is not recorded within the LHEES output Summary Table. The buffer radius cap is a useful parameter to note within map representations, as the cap alters the scale of buffering applied to larger demands and therefore is likely to influence the extent of identified areas.

Example text entry:

1. High level of suitability due to a cluster of public sector anchor loads forming the basis of the area, the majority being local authority owned properties.
2. Moderate level of suitability due to relatively low heat density and only two anchor loads. Both anchor loads being public sector and a rural off gas grid location are positive aspects in terms of suitability. This being merely an

⁸ [First National Assessment of Potential Heat Network Zones](#)

example, please note that circumstances may change due to market price fluctuations in relative cost of fuels.

3. Low level of suitability despite a high heat density and six anchor loads. Stakeholder engagement carried out in LHEES has highlighted that two of the prospective anchor loads identified do not in reality have a heat demand associated with them and three of the remaining anchor loads would be challenging to connect to a heat network due to current heating systems.

2.2 Matter 48(1a) – Renewable and Waste Heat Opportunities

Factors that could be considered include:

- The scale of heat resource, for example, one of the SEPA Waste Heat Sites is a large energy from waste (EfW) facility with a high waste heat potential. The potential for relatively cheap heat from an EfW, which would otherwise be wasted, could be a strong driver for heat network development in the area.
- Location of the heat resources, for example, there is a waste water treatment works near the area, but it is located far away from the key anchor loads. Greenspace falls next to the main heat demand (which is a public building) making it a good location for an energy centre using a ground source heat pump.
- Understanding resource availability, for example, there is a large factory with a high process heat load, this has been examined before and the company were not able to offer heat to a network.
- Outputs from the Park Power project⁹ in relation to heat network analysis.
- Heat sources that have been identified but are not captured specifically can also be noted, this could include waste heat from mains sewers.
- Waste heat sources close to but outside the area identified. Some heat sources, such as large energy from waste sites, can supply heat in large volumes and at low costs which mean they can be outside the boundary of a review area.
- Existing heat networks in the area – there may be potential for expansion or extension using the same heat source.

Note that the review of potential heat resources is not comprehensive and there may be opportunities that have not been identified within the summary tables. As such, a lack of identified low carbon supply opportunities is unlikely to justify discounting an area.

Example text entry:

1. Although there are a few potential heat sources identified in review, none of these seem likely to be suitable to contribute to a heat network. The SEPA waste site is a recycling plant which is unlikely to have waste heat and the primary substation identified is very small and thus unlikely to be a viable source of waste heat.
2. There is a large substation and waste water treatment works in the western portion of the area. Given the location of key demands also in this area, these could provide a useful source of heat to a potential network. Scottish Water

⁹ For more detail see the [Greenspaces Scotland website](#)

Horizons have already been engaged in LHEES and indicate that there could be potential for heat abstraction. The Distribution Network Operator would need to be engaged to assess viability of the substation as a heat source.

3. There is an energy from waste facility within a kilometre of the area. Heat network development activity using surplus heat from this facility is underway. With significant heat demand on a connecting route, this presents a potential opportunity for interconnection with the heat source in future.

2.3 Matters 48(1b,e,f) – Consistent & Considerable Thermal Loads, Supply Targets and Building Assessment Reports

This considers accurate quantification of demands including those smaller than anchor loads. It also includes a summary of any key insights from building assessment reports (BARs).

Factors that could be considered include:

- Accuracy of demands – are any demands duplicated?, do they seem too low or too high? There is likely to be varied confidence in the demand data used to identify areas.
- The scale of demands – for example, there are a high number of demands between 73 and 250 MWh/yr. A network opportunity with a large number of medium-scale demands rather than a small number of large-scale demands is likely to have greater stakeholder complexity.
- Longevity of demands –for example, one of the key anchor loads is a secondary school which is going to be demolished and relocated away from the area.
- Type of heating system – for example, there are several buildings using LNG as heating fuel rather than natural gas, which may improve the financial viability of a heat network (this would depend on the choice of counterfactual option to a heat network when carrying out an economic assessment). Other considerations of heating system type could include if heating systems are known to be wet¹⁰, as wet systems are generally easier to connect to a heat network. In relation to heating system type it is suggested to focus on properties/buildings with larger heat demands.
- Changes in heat demand – for example, one of the primary schools in the area is going to have a large extension which will increase the heat demand. As with the heating system type this should focus on properties/buildings with larger heat demands.
- Change in heating system – for example, the boilers in the council HQ are due to be replaced in 2 years. The change could be a trigger point for the heat network and the plant room could potentially be used to host the network energy centre.

Example text entry:

1. The demands of the university campus do not seem to be fully captured; this should be investigated as it may improve the viability of the heat network. The leisure centre close to the NHS site is undergoing scoping for a new heating

¹⁰ i.e. heat is distributed around buildings via water in pipes rather than the flow of air.

system. If acted on quickly this could be a key opportunity to act as the initial core of a heat network in the area. BARs have confirmed the demand of two schools also located in close proximity and that their heating systems are suitable for connection to a heat network, increasing overall confidence in the viability of the area for a heat network.

2.4 Matter 48(1c) – Existing Infrastructure

This section considers existing infrastructure in the area that could assist in the development of a heat network in the area, and this consideration could highlight both opportunities and constraints. Key considerations will include:

- Headroom of substations¹¹ – for example, there are two substations in the area both of which have a red rating for headroom – which means there is likely to be limited capacity for heat pumps.
- Existing heat networks – for example, there are already two communal systems and one larger heat network in the area.

Example text entry:

1. There is a large privately run heat network currently in the area. Engagement with the operator is required to establish the detail and extent of the network, and also if they are able to integrate into a wider network or expand the current network.
2. There are three communal heat networks operated in flats in the south of the area, which increases the viability of connection of these buildings to a wider network. The flats are predominantly social housing and the system operators have shown interest in connection to a wider heat network that could offer lower carbon heat than the existing gas-fired systems. Substation information indicates that there is headroom available for electrified low carbon solutions.

2.5 Matter 48(1d) – Fuel Poverty

This section is to note the prevalence of fuel poverty rather than assessing if a heat network could act to reduce its prevalence. A method is provided in the LHEES detailed practitioner approach, using Energy Savings Trust's Home Analytics data. Items which could be considered include:

- The number of households, i.e., low to high based on estimated property count (from Home Analytics data).
- How the estimates on fuel poverty reported compare to local insights, and both local authority and national averages. Local insights into fuel poverty are likely to be better than Home Analytics at a zone level.
- Information could also be captured on the level of social housing in the area, lower incomes in these areas are likely to result in a higher risk of fuel poverty. These social housing areas can also be slightly easier to connect on scale to a

¹¹ For clarification both primary substations and grid supply points are listed in the proforma document. This aligns to the electricity network operator data, with grid supply points being the larger transmission level network and primary substations the distribution level infrastructure.

heat network due the central housing provider (making it a less complex model than involving private owners). Guidance on how to gather tenure information is given in LHEES¹²

Example text entry:

1. There is a high level of fuel poverty in the zone according to Home Analytics, however, local insights indicate that this is likely to be an overestimation. Local knowledge also indicates that significant fabric improvement works have taken place in the area in recent times, and that most properties have modern, efficient, gas-fired heating systems. Given these factors and the low heat demand density of housing, there may be limited opportunity for a heat network to have a positive impact on fuel poverty in the area.
2. There is a high level of fuel poverty in the area, combined with a high proportion of social housing. This opportunity to connect a higher density of properties is like to improve the economic viability of the heat network and also have the potential to help alleviate fuel poverty in the area.

2.6 Matter 48(1g) – Other Matters

This is a placeholder for any other matters which are included by Scottish Ministers. No other matters have been added to date.

2.7 Local Development Plan (LDP) Sites

LDP sites are key for identifying future demands. Information to consider for inclusion could be:

- The number of LDP sites.
- Site location within or near to the wider potential heat network area.
- The type of development considered for the LDP site¹³ (for example the number of housing units or area for commercial or leisure use or for residential institutions), and implications for demand.
- Development status and upcoming development milestones that could have implications for decisions on heating systems for the sites of interest.
- Whilst this section is labelled for local development plans it can be also be used to capture other key developments, for example Windfall Sites.

Example text entry:

1. There are a high number of LDP sites within or in close proximity of the area. Two key LDP sites are the 1000 residential unit development near the existing leisure centre and the 5000 m² commercial development alongside two blocks of flats with communal heat networks in place. These LDP sites could thus be key to linking the spatially separated demands in the potential heat network area, improving heat network viability.

¹² For example, LHEES Stage 4: Generation of Initial Delivery Areas. Poor building energy efficiency and Poor building energy efficiency as a driver for fuel poverty. Detailed Practitioner Approach

¹³ For a list of LDP classifications, refer to: [The Town and Country Planning \(Use Classes\) \(Scotland\) Order 1997](#)

2.8 Constraints

Key to the constraints section is consideration of these in the context of other elements of the analysis, for example, demands and heat sources. It might be that a constraint presents a significant physical barrier within an area that could justify splitting an area for zoning purposes. These physical barriers could be major transport links like railways, or environmental /ecological constraints such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Another environmental constraint which could be significant in some areas is the presence of peat, which is likely to cause an increase in costs due to the protection it carries. Various environmental / ecological and historic factors (e.g. archaeological sites and conservation areas) could have a similar impact. Not acting as a hard constraint to preclude development but requiring additional consideration and management to progress.

Guidance is provided in Table 1 regarding which internal stakeholders to engage within the local authority area to inform these constraint considerations.

Example text entry:

1. The waste water treatment works could be challenging and expensive to connect due to being separated from the majority of heat demands by a major railway.
2. The majority of demands are not impacted by constraints. However, a minor river does separate a supermarket and LDP site from the rest of the area. A small footbridge does cross this, which may be suitable to support a heat network pipe.

2.9 Is the Area Particularly Suitable?

Section 47(1) of the Act requires consideration of whether an area is likely to be particularly suitable for the construction and operation of a heat network. Section 47(4) then also requires that, for those areas considered as likely to be particularly suitable, the local authority should proceed to consider (or ask Scottish Ministers to proceed to consider) whether or not the areas should be designated.

A conclusion in relation to section 47(1) should be informed by the other subsections of this guidance (i.e., having regard to the matters mentioned in section 48(1)).

Drawing together these elements should give direction, making the decision evidence-based and the process replicable. The outcomes of these decisions then need to be published in accordance with section 47(6).

Some local authorities may be better equipped than others to make a judgement on the suitability of an area for heat networks, depending on the experience of staff. There may be specific circumstances where local authorities feel it is most appropriate to request that Scottish Ministers consider whether to designate. Currently, this route is considered to be the exception rather than the rule.

To finalise Part A of the proforma, the subsection of the proforma entitled “Is the area considered particularly suitable?” should be completed. The “Decision and justification” text box should be completed to provide an overall summary and decision on the area in terms of its particular suitability for the construction and operation of a heat network. Under “Designation pathway”, one of three options needs to be selected from a drop-down list:

- Proceed to consider whether to designate the area as a Heat Network Zone in accordance with section 48 of the Act.
- Request that the Scottish Ministers consider whether to designate the area as a Heat Network Zone in accordance with section 49.
- Do not consider for designation.

It is important to use the “Decision and justification” descriptive text box prior to this drop down to justify the option selected.

Example text entry:

1. There is a high level of uncertainty over demands in the area and two major public sector buildings are being demolished, so will not function as anchor loads. Another key anchor load operator has completed a BAR and this indicates the building would not be suitable to be served by a heat network, further reducing the number of anchor loads. A potential waste heat source has been identified in the wider area, however, this is separated from the heat demands by a major railway by some distance with no significant demands on the connecting route, limiting its viability for connection. Due to ongoing demolition and lack of connection suitability of key demands, this area is not considered likely to be particularly suitable for the construction and operation of a heat network.
2. Although the area is small there are two public sector anchor loads and a large residential LDP site which could form the initial core of a heat network. There is also a river nearby and substantial greenspace, creating opportunities for water source and ground source heat pumps. Also, there are no obvious constraints and there are potential private sector connections that would allow for expansion from an initial development phase focused on public anchor loads and new development. Therefore, the area is considered likely to be particularly suitable for the construction and operation of a heat network. Given the key demands in the area are local authority owned, the decision is for the local authority to proceed to consider whether to designate, in accordance with section 48 of the Act.
3. The area is very large with over 50 anchor loads identified, many of which are private sector so will be more challenging to engage. The area does have a high heat density but being located in the city centre there are a large number of constraints across the area and much of it is a conservation area. Additionally, there are a number of existing heat networks within the area, as well as several significant development sites. There are no large-scale waste heat sources in the area but there is a river which could provide low carbon heat. Due to the large scale of heat demand, the area is considered likely to be particularly suitable for the construction and operation of a heat network, however, with the high level of complexity, it was decided that further, more detailed assessment work is required in the area to determine an appropriate boundary (or boundaries).

2.10 Part A – Area Map(s)

Alongside Part A, a map of the area considered should be provided if the area is considered likely to be particularly suitable. A tab ‘Proforma Area Map(s)’ is provided

in the Excel HNZ proforma to include a map. If it is considered more suitable, a PDF or alternative format can also be appended. Additionally, a GIS file of the zone boundary should also be provided. For compatibility this should ideally be in ESRI Shapefile format¹⁴ in a British National Grid¹⁵ projection.

As a minimum this map should be a redline boundary for the area, with a suitable background map. Additional information could be marked. If the user considers it useful supplementary maps can be included, such as one highlighting waste and renewable heat sources. The LHEES methodology documentation provides detail on how such maps can be produced. Part A is not prescriptive for these additional elements, the key element is clear documentation of the area considered.

When preparing a map or maps, it is important to consider that this will be published as a public facing document, thus attention should be given to ensuring that no information is published that infringe GDPR or is commercially sensitive.

2.11 Part A – Publication of a Statement

Section 47(6) of the Act requires that after each review, the local authority must publish a statement in relation to each area considered as part of the review. The detail to be included in these statements and any requirements around their publication is specified in the Heat Networks (Heat Network Zones and Building Assessment Reports) (Scotland) Regulations 2023.

From the Act, for each area considered as part of the review, the statement will include detail on:

- Whether the local authority considers that the area is likely to particularly suitable for the construction and operation of a heat network, and;
- The reasons for that view.

Additionally, for those areas considered likely to be particularly suitable, the statement will:

- Identify the area by reference to a map, and;
- Give reasons for the decision to proceed in accordance with section 48 or section 49.

The information captured within the proforma is intended to support this activity.

¹⁴ A Shapefile will have six associated files in various formats (.cpg, .dbf, .prj, .qpj, .shp, .shx) when it is created, please ensure all six files are appended.

¹⁵ The code for this projection EPSG:27700

3 Part B

Section 48(1) of the Act requires that a local authority has regard to defined matters in considering whether to designate an area in its area as a Heat Network Zone. If an area has progressed to consideration for designation from the review activity carried out in section 47, regard will have been given to these matters through the review process. In this instance, a review of the information documented is advised with regard to its currency under section 48(1), particularly if there has been a significant time period between review and consideration for designation.

For areas being considered for designation that haven't been identified through the review processes required by section 47, regard must be given to the matters outlined in section 48(1) prior to progressing through the following subsections of section 48. A suggested approach is to complete the Summary Table within Part A of the proforma using information from assessment of the area of interest. The additional analysis outlined in the LHEES approach¹⁶ could also be used to support completion of this Summary Table.

Part B of the proforma is primarily concerned with section 48(2) of the Act, which states:

“Before deciding whether to designate an area as a heat network zone, a local authority must consult such persons, and in such manner, as the Scottish Ministers may specify by regulations.”

Engagement activity is strongly recommended to inform designation decisions and the consultation process. Completion of Part A of the proforma will, alongside other guidance contained in this section, help to inform the identification of persons to engage in Part B. Engagement and consultation will help gain insights into the suitability of the area for designation. A summary of the key suggested steps is provided in Figure 2.

If multiple areas are under consideration for designation, it is suggested engagement could be carried out collectively for these, so a single engagement is carried out where there is potential interest in multiple areas.

¹⁶ This is specifically Step 4 of the Detailed Practitioner Approach for Heat Networks.

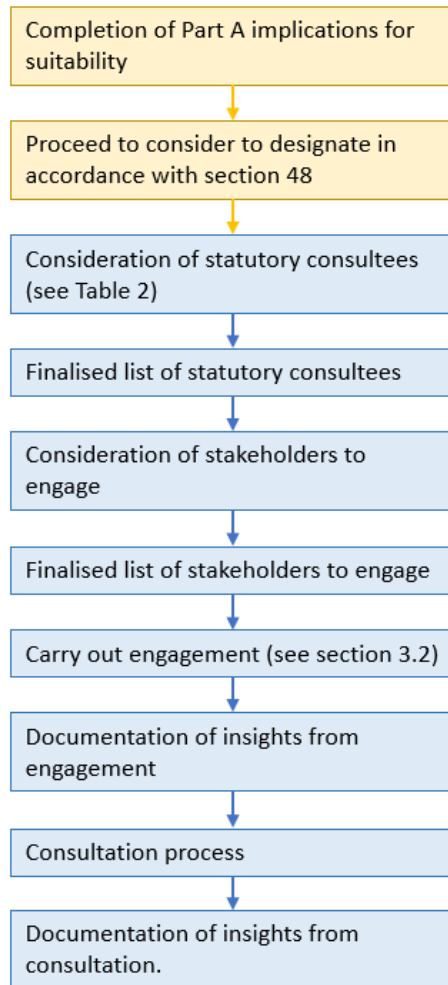


Figure 2 Overview of the engagement and consultation processes.

Section 3.1 supports identification of area-specific statutory consultees. Section 3.2 provides guidance to support engagement activity and documentation of insights from this process. Section **Error! Reference source not found.** provides a note on consultation, and guidance to support documentation of key findings from the consultation process.

3.1 Consider area-specific statutory consultees

Table 2 provides details of area-specific statutory consultees, who must be consulted where relevant interests have been identified in an area. Detail is provided within this table across three key elements as set out below.

1. **Consultee** – the persons (organisations) who should be consulted in specific circumstances.
2. **Circumstances for consultation** – details of the circumstances for statutory consultation.
3. **Suggested prior engagement points** – the type of information the consultee could be engaged regarding, ahead of a formal consultation process.

Table 2 Area-specific statutory consultees, including circumstances for consultation and suggested prior engagement points.

Consultee: National Park Authority¹⁷

Circumstances for consultation: Only when an area falls within or partially within a National Park boundary.

Suggested prior engagement points: Capture of any key natural/environmental impacts as well as wider strategy in the National Park if applicable.

Consultee: Neighbouring local authority(ies).

Circumstances for consultation: Where there is potential for an area under consideration for designation to extend across a local authority boundary (i.e. where there is collective heat network development potential that extends across local authority boundaries)¹⁸.

Suggested prior engagement points: There may be various circumstances that could result in potential for an area under consideration for designation to extend across a local authority boundary, and importantly, there may be advantages in consideration of cross-boundary opportunities collectively in terms of designation decisions. Up-front engagement (prior to consultation) regarding cross-boundary opportunities is highly recommended as it could result in changes to proposed boundaries for designation purposes, prior to formal consultation. Engagement is recommended with neighbouring local authorities regarding cross-boundary heat network opportunities in relation to all areas being considered for designation that are close to another local authority boundary. Specific triggers for engagement could include nearby demands and opportunities across the boundary such as: significant anchor loads, existing demand concentrations or potential zones, new development sites, existing heat networks, cross-boundary zones identified in the First National Assessment (FNA)⁸ of Potential Heat Network Zones, a significant low carbon heat source near a boundary e.g. an Energy from Waste site).

3.2 Engagement Process

Alongside the identified statutory consultees for an area, there are other stakeholders who could be considered important to engage with regarding designation proposals. Some key stakeholders (or categories of stakeholders) who could be considered for engagement include:

¹⁷ The local National Park authority, established by virtue of schedule 1 to the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000

¹⁸ Note that the linear heat density approach used to identify potential zones within LHEES² provides a very coarse strategic steer regarding viable connection distances, and could be used to inform consideration of cross-boundary opportunities in terms of the likely viability of connecting demands that lie across a boundary. No numbers have been suggested for proximity as the consideration of viable connection distance is complex and depends on many factors – 2 important variables are the ground conditions (soft dig is more affordable and suggests longer connection distances will be viable) and the cost of heat available (particularly so where relatively low cost excess or waste heat is available). The latter may also present opportunity to take heat over considerable distance to connect supply sources with demand concentrations, potentially offering up connection opportunities to demands on route.

- **Key anchor loads** – before engaging with key anchor loads in an area of interest, consideration should be given to the need for additional information (if a recent BAR has been completed already, this may contain sufficient context to understand the potential for connection). It is also important to consider the scale of an area. For large areas there is likely to be too high a number of anchor loads to feasibly engage. A view should be taken as to which stakeholders are most important to engage. This could be based on scale of heat demand or location as well as more detailed information about the building type – there may also be key stakeholders with interests in several buildings within an area of interest, where engagement would be considered important, for example a university, college and/or NHS campus. The LHEES Stage 4 detailed practitioner guidance relating to non-domestic properties could assist with consideration of property type with regard to connection suitability. It should also be noted that domestic loads (which to be an anchor load would likely be a block of flats) should not be precluded from engagement.
- **Sources of renewable or waste (or recoverable) heat** – relevant stakeholders could include, for example, data centre operators, industrial sites, the British Geological Surveys (who hold information regarding the suitability of mine workings for heat pumps) or Scottish Canals.
- **Social housing providers** – if there is significant social housing which could be connected to a network, engaging the social housing provider(s) will give useful insight to their suitability for consideration, as well as potentially providing insights into issues such as fuel poverty prevalence.
- **Operators of existing heat networks in the area (including communal heat networks and shared ground loop arrays)** – understanding of the suitability and willingness to connect to a wider heat network. Information as to the scale of the heat network and existing infrastructure is also useful information to gather.
- **Community groups** – where relevant groups are already in place they can help with public outreach. Also, if an area is to be designated, early community involvement and buy-in is likely to be key to how it is received and how it progresses. Focused engagement of community groups would help streamline this process.
- **Electricity Grid DNO:** Primarily consideration of the ability to electrify heat without incurring large infrastructure upgrades. Indication of any waste heat from substations for use in a network or major pipe routing constraints could also be considered. Also, any constrained windfarms in the area which might provide a source of green and more affordable electricity.
- **Gas DNO:** Consideration of any unused gas infrastructure that could be utilised for thermal storage or the future supply of hydrogen. Also, any possible constraints on installation of heat network infrastructure.
- **Scottish Environment Protection Agency:** advice on environmental constraints in the area, ability of water sources or waste sites or other sites regulated under the Pollution Prevention and Control (Scotland) Regulations 2012 to provide heat.
- **Historic Environment Scotland:** Highlight any constraints or risks to be aware of in the area, e.g., historic sites that could be a constraint for heat network routing or other infrastructure development.

- **Scottish Water Horizons:** Indication of scale of waste heat available from assets, ability to site suitable infrastructure to extract heat.
- **Nature Scotland:** Capture of any key natural/environmental impacts.
- **Industry bodies:** Groups such as the ADE could be useful to provide advice as to an area's suitability for a heat network.
- **Crown Estate Scotland:** As well as being large landowners, in some areas, for example, if a marine source heat pump is being explored as a source of low carbon heat, they are a key stakeholder to engage regarding abstraction.
- **Organisations that have completed a BAR within the area:** It is suggested that those organisations that have completed a BAR with the area under consideration are engaged regarding zone designation considerations, both as a courtesy to those that have taken the time to complete a BAR submission and to keep these stakeholders informed regarding designation considerations.
- **Organisations that have produced an Energy Action Plan:** Since 2016 regulations have required non-domestic buildings over 1000 square metres to produce an Energy Action Plan at the point of sale or rental.
- **Local Enterprise Agency:** Insights into wider activity in the area.
- **Botanic Gardens:** (only when such sites fall in or near an area considered for designation): Consideration of routing and integration/use of existing technology or plant room.
- **Local Roads Authority:** road network technical considerations, such as ground or traffic conditions, and/or information regarding any forthcoming roadworks within vicinity of the area.

Stakeholders will vary from one area to another and it is advised that an area-specific list of stakeholders to engage is developed. This list could be informed by any area-specific statutory consultees from 3.1, and also by the information compiled in Part A. Within Part B of the accompanying proforma, there is space to document "Key stakeholders to engage" under each of the subsections of the Summary Table. It is suggested these fields are populated to record details of key stakeholder relevant to the area of interest, with this list considered alongside statutory consultees and other identified stakeholders for the engagement process. Contact details may be available from LHEES contact/stakeholder lists, alongside details regarding previous engagement activity carried out as part of LHEES.

The engagement process could have several stages. Initially, it is important to consider how key stakeholders could be engaged. A key basis for engagement will be a clear explanation of the intention behind and implications of zone designation; this should be set out in initial communication and included as a point for stakeholders to respond to or discuss further if unclear. There are three general levels of engagement suggested:

1. **Call** – this could be the initial form of engagement or as a follow up to an email if a key stakeholder has not responded. This could also be relevant if the consultee has a large quantity of detailed or complex information which is best discussed in a call rather than email.
2. **Email** – this could be the initial form of engagement, or an option if an attempt to call has been unsuccessful. An email could include a map of the area (which should be produced to complete part A), a short description of the area,

and an outline of the information/insights where feedback from the stakeholder would add value.

3. **Meeting/workshop** – this can be useful to gain insights beyond a call or if feedback is being sought for a large number of areas from one stakeholder. A key benefit of meetings or workshops is being able to discuss summary information and maps, and to interrogate areas of interest in a live environment. Workshops also provide a way to engage multiple stakeholders at once, which can be beneficial if insights from stakeholders are likely to be interrelated.

A suggested structure for documenting engagement with each of the identified stakeholders is detailed in Table 3.

Table 3 Summary of suggested headings to document the engagement process, including notes on the information which could be documented under these headings.

| Headings | Notes on information to document |
|-----------------------|---|
| Stakeholder | Company name |
| Individuals engaged | Names and contact details |
| Type of engagement | Email, call, in person meeting / workshop |
| Local authority lead | Who is leading engagement from the local authority side (e.g. housing or planning) |
| Date of engagement(s) | dd/mm/yyyy format. If multiple list and indicate who was present at each with initials and the type of engagement. |
| Discussion points | Details of what was asked for, e.g. availability and scale of waste heat, ability of existing heat network to expand, request for completion of a BAR, validation of demand |
| Insights gained | Documentation of insights gained. If documents are provided these should be referenced but the main requirement is a short summary of relevant insights relating to impacts on heat network suitability. Note any information which is not for publication. |

3.2.1 Level of Engagement

The engagement process is intended to inform zone designation decisions, rather than establish the feasibility of a heat network. Although the two are closely related, it is important to consider the difference the level of detail expected as a minimum

when undertaking engagement. Examples of the differences between the levels of detail are provided in Table 4. For designation (required by the Act), key insights which could influence decisions should be gathered.

To shift from designation to a detailed feasibility study, in-depth techno-economic analysis will need to be undertaken, this will include detailed pipe routing as well as in-depth engagement with relevant stakeholders. The Act does not require local authorities to complete this level of analysis and engagement for zone designation purposes.

Table 4 Examples of the difference between insights gained in the Part B engagement and those for detailed feasibility studies.

Consultee: Scottish Water Horizons

Part B insights: The waste water treatment plant is suitable for waste heat extraction and there is room on site for necessary plant to extract the heat.

Feasibility Study insights: The waste water treatment works would allow for a constant extraction of 1.2 MW of heat. There is space for required infrastructure next to the main treatment pond (as presented on the attached schematic).

Consultee: Heat network operator

Part B insights: The operator is willing to consider connection into a wider heat network development and is content for the existing connections on their network to be included within the designated zone. Currently 11 buildings are connected, with an annual demand of 3.2 GWh.

Feasibility Study insights: The existing heat network would be suitable to connect to a wider heat network, with space for additional heating equipment in the main plant room (see attached map). Currently the heat network supplies 3.2 GWh/yr of heat to 11 buildings (see attached map for locations of these buildings). The system has 300 kW (electrical) of installed heat pump capacity with 2 MW of gas boilers for peaking and back up. There is a peak heat demand on the heat network of 1.9 MW and a current flow temperature regime of 70-50.

Consultee: Electricity DNO

Part B insights: Although there is limited headroom currently in the area, the primary substation will soon be upgraded creating additional capacity. The substation is small so unlikely to be suitable for heat recovery.

Feasibility Study insights: There is currently no spare headroom on the substation but planned upgrades in June next year will add an additional 5 MVA of capacity. The transformers (both current and planned additional capacity) are oil cooled and thus likely to be suitable for heat recovery. However, the relatively low rating of the substation (currently 12 MVA being upgraded to 20 MVA) means the volume of heat is relatively low (see attached schematics for detailed information).

If a recent feasibility study or engagement through LHEES has been carried out for the area being considered for designation, the findings from this could feed into zone designation considerations. When drawing on recent feasibility work, it is important to consider how recently the information was gathered and how likely it is to still be

relevant. If information is not current, it should not be given weight in the designation process.

3.2.2 Completing stakeholder engagement aspect of Part B

The information captured in the engagement process is likely to be extensive, and not all of significance in terms of its potential impact on a designation decision. It is suggested that only key points from the engagement activity that could have a bearing on a designation decision are captured within Part B of the proforma. There is space provided to document key points under “Insights from stakeholders” for each subsection of the summary table. More general points and an overall summary of the engagement process can be captured under the yellow section entitled “Insights from stakeholder engagement - summary”. This summary should include any changes to the area following engagement. If changes are made to the area boundary as a result of engagement, a revised area map should be added to the proforma.

Before entering the key insights from stakeholders into Part B of the proforma, engagement information should be reviewed, summarised and censored. This last part is key, as the summary comments contained within the proforma may form part of a published document. As a minimum, the name and details of the individual engaged should not be documented in the proforma for GDPR reasons.

3.3 Consultation process and documentation

It is suggested that information and insights gained through the engagement activity summarised in 3.2 should inform consultation. The Heat Networks (Heat Network Zones and Building Assessment Reports) (Scotland) Regulations 2023 stipulate specific requirements of the consultation process.

When completing Part B of the proforma, it is suggested that key summary notes relevant to the subsections detailed in sections 2.1 to 2.8 are documented based on consultation feedback. As highlighted in section 3.1, there is space in Part B of the proforma to document statutory consultees for the area under consideration. Where these consultees are noted, reference could also be made as to whether they responded to the consultation process.

When documenting the information gathered from the consultation process there is flexibility. Local authorities may wish to document the feedback in relation to specific consultees or to summarise the information from multiple consultees. What is key is that all pertinent implications for the designation decision are captured.

There is a summary section within Part B of the Proforma (underneath “Is the area considered particularly suitable?” in Part A), where a summary of the insights gained from the consultation process should be provided.

4 Part C

Part C of the proforma supports a local authority to fulfil requirements under section 48(3) and section 48(4) of the Act. The completion of Part A and Part B of the proforma should allow the local authority to form a judgement of whether to designate an area as a Heat Network Zone.

In Part C, there is a box to be completed which summarises the key considerations for designation, this draws together the outputs of Parts A and B to act as an overall justification for the local authority's decision of whether to designate the area as a Heat Network Zone. There is a drop-down menu in Part C of the proforma which documents the decision.

Section 48(4) requires that, if a local authority designates an area as a Heat Network Zone, it must:

- a. identify the area in a document by reference to a map,
- b. specify in the document the day on which designation takes effect, and
- c. publish the document in such a manner as the Scottish Ministers may specify by regulations.

The detail regarding publication of this designation document is included in the Heat Networks (Heat Network Zones and Building Assessment Reports) (Scotland) Regulations 2023.

Within the proforma, there is also a box in which to enter the date of the designation decision, this may differ from the date the designation decision takes effect noted in section 48(4)(b).

The requirement for a map (section 48(4)(a)) should have been completed in Part A. The local authority should ensure that an appropriate map is included in the 'Proforma Area Map(s)' tab of the proforma at this stage. However, if the zone designated is different to the area considered in Part A, or has been amended following engagement and consultation, a new map should be created to detail the designated zone, providing information in the same manner as detailed in section 2.10.

It should be noted that prior to publishing material in Part C, attention should be given to any sensitivities within the information to be included in published documentation, including maps.



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