

Hello neighbour,

It's Andrew again with an update on the proposal for a **low carbon local district heating scheme**.

What's the proposal again?

The starting proposal is a district heating network taking in the Academy, swimming pool, Applegrove and Anderson's primary schools, the library / community centre, perhaps the Legion, and as many of the houses along Sanquhar Road and South Street as want to connect. A central plant – probably wood fired – would generate hot water which would be distributed to all the individual users via buried insulated pipes. That heat would then be used to heat buildings in the same way as hot water generated by your gas fired boiler. That's the starting point but the network could be altered or expanded in future.

What progress?

I have submitted and had approved an application for a fully funded feasibility study under the Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES). This will be carried out over the next few weeks by a consultancy specialising in renewable heating. As I understand it, this will consider technical and commercial feasibility and provide advice on funding sources which may be available to help get the proposal off the ground. (*Into the ground, really... groan*)

I have spoken to the Council's climate change strategy officer. He is supportive and after checking with various colleagues at the council he was able to confirm that the Council have no objection to their facilities in town being "considered for inclusion". No commitment, no promises – but no objection, and he's interested in the outcome. This is important to us because the Council's facilities would provide a decent baseload heat demand and we householders would benefit from the economies of scale which their facilities could provide.

What next?

We have created a simple website to share information and links, and to post updates, rather than do any more letter drops. This is here – www.iv36.org.uk - so keep an eye on the website and we'll update it with relevant information.

Would you like to help?

I have notes of interest / support from 15 households out of 43 along Sanquhar Road and South Street. Thanks for those. Any more would be appreciated and helpful. If you would like to add your voice, just send me a text message on XXXXX XXXXXX with your name and address and few words to say whether or not you are interested. (Or a note through the contact page on the website.) Some people have perfectly valid reasons for not being interested and that's fine, but I would like to know about them too. There's no commitment, cost, or risk at this stage. If you've already voiced your support, then maybe you could persuade your neighbours to do so? A strong local interest would help in our discussions with the Council.

Depending on the outcome of the feasibility study, we might need to formalise the 'project' a bit more, with some kind of organisation committee. If anyone has interest, experience (or both!) in helping with the communications, admin, supporting activities then please let me know, just a text to me or a note through the contact page of the website is fine. I'm not sure yet what will be required so I'm being deliberately vague around this! Maybe you have experience with organisations and all that that entails?

If you're interested, there is a similar proposal in place in Inverurie, Kintore and Blackburn. They have a presence on Facebook – Garioch District Heat. This might give you a better idea of what this is all about.

Andrew