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| Title of Report: Transposition of the Medium Combustion Plant Directive including the regulation of thermal electricity generators | Officer Presenting: Director of Health & Community Author: Head of Health & Community Wellbeing |
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1 Purpose of Report/Recommendations

- 1.1 To inform members about the consultation on Transposition of the Medium Combustion Plant Directive (MCPD) including the regulation of thermal electricity generators.

2 Background

- 2.1 The consultation seeks views on proposals to reduce emissions of harmful air pollutants from medium sized combustion plants and generators in Northern Ireland. These plants are a significant source of air pollutants (oxides of nitrogen- NO_x, particulate matter - PM, sulphur dioxide-SO₂) which impact on air quality.
- 2.2 The Medium Combustion Plant Directive (MCPD) will help to reduce air pollution by bringing in emission controls for combustion plants with a thermal input of 1 to 50 megawatts.
- 2.3 Medium Combustion Plants (MCP's) are used to generate heat for large buildings (offices, hotels, hospitals, prisons) and industrial processes, as well as for power generation. The Directive provides important flexibilities to account for specific circumstances in which the Directive requirements might otherwise give rise to excessive costs to businesses or a risk to energy security.

3 Key Issues

- 3.1 The MCPD introduces mandatory registration or permitting of MCPs between 1 and 50MWth. It is estimated that the MCPD will affect around 1,200 plant in Northern Ireland. MCPs must comply with emission limits (set out in Annex II of the Directive) which are applied according to plant age, size, type and fuel used. Periodic monitoring is also required to demonstrate compliance with the Directive. It is estimated that in excess of 300 routinely operated MCPs will be subject to the provisions of the Directive in Northern Ireland, with the remaining MCPs being standby and back-up, which operate infrequently. Of the plant subject to emission limits, the majority are 1-5MW gas boilers but plant operating on solid (e.g. Biomass, coal) and liquid fuels are also affected.

- 3.2 Implementation of the MCPD across the UK will make a valuable contribution to improving air quality by providing an estimated 24% of the SO₂ and 9% of the NO_x emission reductions needed to meet the 2030 national emission ceilings.
- 3.3 The MCPD must be transposed into Northern Irish law and the Department are proposing to do this through the Pollution Prevention and Control (Industrial Emissions Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2013 (as amended).
- 3.4 The MCPD must be transposed into Northern Irish law By 19 December 2017. The controls will apply to new plants from December 2018. Existing plants must comply with requirements from 2024 or 2029, depending largely on size.
- 3.5 In order to control the potential growth in medium diesel generating plant and the high emission of pollutants from same the Department is minded to regulate air emissions from medium sized generators (between 1 and 50MWth) so as to protect local air quality
- 3.6 The consultation which ended on the 16th August 2016 seeks views and comments on the Department proposals via a questionnaire. The consultation response contained in Appendix 1 has been forwarded to the Department subject to Council approval.
- 3.7 The full consultation document is available for viewing at <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-medium-combustion-plant-directive>

4 Financial, Equality, Legal, HR, Improvement and other Implications

- 4.1 None. It is noted that the proposed regulatory regime will be subject to fees which are aimed at cost-recovery for the work undertaken.

5 Recommendations

- 5.1 That members approve the DCSDC response to the consultation on Transposition of the Medium Combustion Plant Directive including the regulation of thermal electricity generators

Background Papers

Appendix 1: DCSDC consultation response

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-medium-combustion-plant-directive>