

Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 18th April 2023
Report Subject	North Wales Energy Strategy and Action Plan and Local Area Energy Planning in Flintshire
Cabinet Member	Collective Responsibility
Report Author	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is in relation to the regional energy planning process and incorporating priorities into strategic actions and intervention. It recommends endorsing the North Wales Energy Strategy and Action Plan and provides information regarding the commencement of Local Area Energy Planning in Flintshire.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To consider and endorse the attached North Wales Energy Strategy and Action Plan.
2	To note the commencement of Local Area Energy Planning in the county.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE REPORT
1.01	<p>North Wales Energy Strategy and Action Plan</p> <p>Each region in Wales has developed its own Energy Strategy and Action Plan. The North Wales Energy Strategy was drafted by Welsh Government Energy Service (WGES) with support and input from the Ambition North Wales (ANW), Welsh Government (WG) and regional</p>

	<p>stakeholders. The supporting Action Plan has been co-developed by ANW and WG with support from regional stakeholders via a Task and Finish group. The Task and Finish group, chaired by WG, comprised of representatives from ANW, WG, the North Wales Mersey Dee Business Council, all six local authorities and the Regional Skills Partnership.</p>
1.02	<p>The North Wales Energy Strategy was endorsed by ANW and WG's Minister for Climate Change in March 2021. The Action Plan was approved by ANW in September 2022. Democratic support from each constituent local authority is now being sought.</p>
1.03	<p>The North Wales Energy Strategy identifies key priorities and opportunities to deliver on the region's ambition for decarbonising its energy system. The Strategy sets out the following vision for North Wales:</p> <p><i>'Delivering maximum local economic, social, ecological and wellbeing benefits from transitioning to a net zero economy and becoming a net exporter of low carbon electricity through cross-border and regional cooperation'</i>.</p>
1.04	<p>The priorities for achieving the vision are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To harness the abundance of local low carbon resource to become a green powerhouse and diversify the energy mix.</i> • <i>To become a world-leader in offshore wind and marine technologies.</i> • <i>To improve the energy efficiency of the region's housing and accelerate the decarbonisation of North Wales' building stock.</i> • <i>To achieve a shift to lower carbon transport.</i> • <i>To maximise the opportunities for the commercial and industrial sectors to support the energy transition and drive economic growth.</i>
1.05	<p>The Action Plan translates the priorities in the Strategy into strategic actions and interventions. ANW and WG note it will be necessary to progress more detailed work to establish any funding requirements and sources for any un-costed actions. There are a number of actions in the plan where Local Authorities have been identified as the Lead. These have been extracted from the document and collated in Appendix 2 for ease.</p>
1.06	<p>ANW and WG have agreed that the existing Task and Finish Group transitions to a Steering Group / Project Board with a revised Terms of Reference to provide the governance to oversee the completion of actions within the action plan. Membership will be reviewed as an early priority. The Group will meet regularly and will agree arrangements for</p>

	reporting to the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, Local Authorities and WG.
1.07	The Strategy and Action Plan provide the strategic context for the development of a more detailed Local Area Energy Plan for Flintshire.
1.08	Local Area Energy Planning Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP) is a data driven and whole energy system, evidence-based approach that sets out to identify the most effective route for the local area to contribute towards meeting the national net zero target, as well as meeting its local net zero target.
1.09	LAEP is being funded by WG and involves dedicated plans being prepared within each local authority area in Wales. These plans will be co-developed by the local authority and local stakeholders with support from partners including ANW, WG and external support.
1.10	The work on LAEP commenced in January 2023. The timeline is to be confirmed but it is likely that the Flintshire LAEP should be completed in December 2023.
1.11	It is proposed that annual updates on progress are provided to the Climate Change Committee and Cabinet to secure effective democratic oversight of progress and to influence and decide on actions going forward into future years.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	For certain actions within the North Wales Energy Strategy and Strategic Action Plan, further detailed work on establishing funding requirements and sources has commenced by the Task and Finish Group.
2.02	Many of the actions identified with LAs as the lead are “engage” / “input into” type actions with “no funding required”. This will involve staff time across a range of service areas within FCC including the Climate Change Team, Planning, Energy Management, Public Health, Housing, Property Services, Fleet Management, Procurement, Public Protection, Transport, Communications and Business Support at a time when resource is constrained.
2.03	Local Area Energy Planning is being funded by WG. Consultants ARUP have been appointed by ANW to deliver the LAEP for Flintshire. Three roles have been recruited by ANW to support the delivery of these plans working with the Local Authorities in North Wales and ARUP.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	The likely impact of the LAEP on service areas in the Council are as follows:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Climate Change Team</u>- lead contact for this piece of work or ANW and ARUP, coordinating internal effort and delivering set tasks. • <u>Planning Department and Energy Management Team</u>- input to the data collection and development of the LAEP. • <u>Communications Team and Community Development</u> - input to the data collection and development of the LAEP, identifying stakeholders for engagement workshops. 	
3.02	Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact	
Long-term	<p>Positive:</p> <p>Decarbonisation of the Council's activities and services will require long term planning and a long-term vision to ensure systems and services are fit for purpose as the climate changes as well as reducing the impact of harmful climate change through mitigation.</p> <p>Decarbonisation activities such as planting trees and developing renewable energy will have long lasting impacts over tens to hundreds of years. These activities also contribute to the climate change targets set by Welsh Government particularly Wales generating 70% of its electricity demand from renewable energy by 2030 and becoming a net zero carbon nation by 2050.</p>	
Prevention	<p>Positive:</p> <p>In order to avoid the harmful effects of climate change it is necessary for the Council to reduce its carbon emissions and increase the amount of carbon sequestered in its land assets. Carbon emissions caused by human activities are the main cause of climate change.</p> <p>Mitigating climate change will help to reduce impacts such as extreme weather causing flooding / extreme heat, loss of wildlife and habitats, increased pests and diseases, etc.</p> <p>Adapting to the impacts of climate change now will improve sustainability of our communities as the climate changes.</p>	
Integration	<p>Positive:</p>	

	<p>Becoming net zero carbon integrates with the following priorities under the Council Plan; Green Council, Ambitious Council and Supportive Council. It integrates with the public service board objectives in the Environment priority of the Wellbeing Plan as well as the Smart Access to Energy project in the North Wales Growth Deal. It also integrates with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and Welsh Government's decarbonisation of the public sector agenda.</p>
<p>Collaboration</p>	<p>Positive:</p> <p>The climate change programme offers multiple opportunities to work collaboratively both internally and externally – and this collaboration will determine the success of the programme. Collaboration with the following groups is needed to ensure decarbonisation is integrated into everything that the Council and the wider region does and plans for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welsh Government - Other public sector organisations such as local authorities, NRW, health boards, universities. - Private sector - Regional groups such as the North Wales Economic Ambition Board - Local Town and County Councillors - the local communities
<p>Involvement</p>	<p>Positive:</p> <p>If decarbonisation is to succeed and harmful climate change is to be avoided then everyone at a professional and personal level will need to be involved</p>
<p>Well-being Goals Impact</p>	
<p>Prosperous Wales</p>	<p>Positive:</p> <p>Reducing the Council's carbon emissions should enable strategic investment in projects and ways of working that could deliver savings or generate new income streams, therefore supporting delivery of local services. It should also</p>

		facilitate the development of the low carbon economy through infrastructure projects, sustained tree planting, land management etc which can support local businesses and communities.
	Resilient Wales	Positive: Decarbonisation of the Council's activities and services will promote resilience through actions such as: investment in renewable energy infrastructure which helps to reduce reliance on imports from across Europe and the World and the associated price fluctuations, and increasing ecological resilience through enhancing biodiversity particularly on land with low ecological value. By planning for climate change adaptation the Council's services and its communities will also be resilient.
	Healthier Wales	Positive: Decarbonisation requires a shift to active travel, investment in green infrastructure, support for local and sustainable food sources, and development of renewable energy which are likely to promote healthier lifestyles, improved wellbeing and reduced health impacts from poor air quality.
	More equal Wales	Neutral; No impact identified
	Cohesive Wales	Neutral; No impact identified
	Vibrant Wales	Neutral; No impact identified
	Globally responsible Wales	Positive: Reducing the Council's carbon emissions to net zero helps to mitigate climate change and therefore contributes to the achievement of Welsh Government, UK Government and international climate goals.
3.03	Not anticipated to be any negative anti-poverty, equalities, or environmental impacts of the scheme.	
3.04	<p>The Council's Well-being Objectives</p> <p>Decarbonisation of the Council's activities will support the Green Council objective with a key impact of reducing carbon emissions mitigating climate change, for example, through the development of alternative and renewable energy production, promoting active travel, shifting to electric fleet vehicles, engaging with the supply chain and promoting a low carbon economy through the goods and services purchased.</p>	

	It can also contribute towards the success of other Council Wellbeing objectives such as 'An Ambitious Council' and 'A Caring Council' through providing local job creation and apprenticeships and therefore potentially reducing poverty through maximising residents' income and employability.
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4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
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4.01	ANW has shared the draft Action Plan with each proposed lead and enabling organisation identified in the Plan, ANW Energy Programme Board, North Wales Planning Officers Group, North Wales Decarbonisation Group, Welsh Local Government Association, and all workshop attendees (circa 100 individuals representing 60 organisations).
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5.00	APPENDICES
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5.01	Appendix 1 – North Wales Energy Strategy Action Plan (pdf) Appendix 2 – Collation of actions where Local Authorities have been identified as the Lead within the North Wales Energy Strategy Action Plan
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6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
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6.01	1. North Wales Energy Strategy (https://www.gov.wales/regional-energy-strategy-north-wales)
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7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
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7.01	Contact Officer: Alex Ellis – Programme Manager Telephone: 01352 703110 E-mail: alex.ellis@flintshire.gov.uk
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8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
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