

Report to	Communities Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	5 September 2024
Lead Member / Officer	Cllr Barry Mellor (Lead Member for Environment and Transport) / Jane Hodgson (Climate Change Manager)
Head of Service	Helen Vaughan-Evans (Head of Corporate Support Service: Performance, Digital & Assets)
Report author	Jane Hodgson (Climate Change Manager)
Title	Denbighshire's Local Area Energy Plan

1. What is the report about?

1.1. This report is about the Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) that has been developed for Denbighshire, as part of a Welsh Government project, prior to it being submitted to Cabinet for endorsement.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. To provide Scrutiny Committee with information regarding the LAEP Main Report and Technical Report.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1. Communities Scrutiny Committee considers the LAEP Main Report and Technical Report (Appendix 1 and 2) and provide feedback on aspects contained within.

3.2. That the Committee confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix 3) as part of its consideration.

4. Report details

Progress to date

- 4.1. 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 [area based] net zero target.
- 4.2. LAEP aims to: account for local and national conditions to achieve net zero; consider how cooperation with adjacent areas can bring success; and increase local stakeholder awareness to increase consent and facilitate credible commitments to achieve the plan.
- 4.3. LAEPs feed into regional energy strategies, which relate to national policies: Future Wales: the national plan 2040 (Cymru'r Dyfodol: y cynllun cenedlaethol 2040), climate change targets (targedau newid hinsawdd), and National Energy Plan 2024 (Cynllun Ynni Cenedlaethol 2024).
- 4.4. On behalf of the Welsh Government, Ambition North Wales are managing a contract with consultants developing the LAEP for Denbighshire, and the other north Wales counties.
- 4.5. The plans will fall under the ownership of each local authority in Wales. They are aimed at being a guidance tool in how best to work towards a fully decarbonised energy system by 2050. All LAEPs will be aggregated to inform the development of the National Energy Plan by the end of the year.
- 4.6. Local authorities are requested to endorse the Local Area Energy Plan through due process. The LAEP has been reviewed by Greener Denbighshire Board and the Cross-Party Political Working Group (Climate Change and Ecological Emergency) and will be taken to Cabinet for endorsement. The Councils Strategic Planning Group have also reviewed the LAEP.
- 4.7. The final versions of the Local Area Energy Plan and the Technical Report are attached as appendices 1 and 2 respectively.

Next steps – future stages and timetable

- 4.8. The LAEP will be presented to Cabinet on 24 September 2024 for endorsement.
- 4.9. With Ambition North Wales and other counties in Wales, a delivery/ monitoring mechanism to progress LAEP actions will be developed, including: Agreeing on a governance structure; Align north Wales Regional Energy Strategy (+Action Plan) with the LAEPs; Identify KPI's; Regional Steering Group
- 4.10. The LAEP is provisionally due to be reviewed in five years' time, as we approach 2030 and the public sector net carbon zero target deadline.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?

- 5.1. The Denbighshire LAEP will contribute towards the Corporate Plan 2022-2027 theme of 'A Greener Denbighshire', specifically providing a positive contribution to the Climate and Nature Strategy (2021/22-2029/30) by reducing emissions across Denbighshire County Council. It also supports 'A prosperous Denbighshire' theme, with the opportunity to stimulate economic growth and grow Denbighshire's green economy.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

- 6.1. The Denbighshire LAEP includes high-level indicative costs. Actions identified in the plan are assigned to many organisations in the county and funding for actions is not expected to come only from DCC and/or the public sector more generally.
- 6.2. Specific projects would require full feasibility assessments. Any proposed costs to be provided by DCC for LAEP projects would be subject to the robust business case process. Additional feasibility work and increasing staffing resource would be required to ensure a strong programme of delivery is in place. The delivery of all projects and actions identified, and yet to be identified, is subject to securing the necessary funding.
- 6.3. The LAEP provides an opportunity to align strategies and policies to contribute to reduction of carbon emissions across the county, as discussed at Strategic Planning Group in July 2024 (see Appendix 4 for an excerpt of minutes from that meeting).

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

- 7.1. The WIA (Appendix 3) concludes that the Local Area Energy Plan is a long-term, collaborative plan (to 2050) that applies the sustainable development principle ie proposing actions that seek to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It has a positive impact on five well-being goals and a neutral effect on two well-being goals. This WIA shows how the plan's proposals provide opportunity for: decarbonisation of energy supply and delivery in Denbighshire, new non-temporary/non-seasonal jobs, better energy efficiency in homes that can increase quality of life and health and reduce energy requirements, reduced air pollution and increased energy resiliency. For the proposed actions, feasibility studies would be needed, and these studies or related projects would be likely to require a further impact assessment.
- 7.2. The WIA was undertaken by relevant officers, following receipt of the final LAEP reports.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

- 8.1. The LAEP has been reviewed by Greener Denbighshire Board, the Cross-Party Political Working Group (Climate Change and Ecological Emergency) and the Strategic Planning Group (SPG). Feedback from SPG is in Appendix 4.
- 8.2. Externally, the LAEP was created with stakeholders operating in Denbighshire (geographical area). Identification and engagement of stakeholders e.g. in workshops, was a key part of the process of creating the LAEP. Details are included in the Technical Report (Appendix 2).

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

- 9.1. As set out within the report and the attachments a plan to fund the Council's programme of works to enable the delivery of the LAEP will be developed as part of the next steps.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

10.1. Pertinent risks are noted in Appendix 5.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. Section 7.2.2 of the Constitution.