

3. Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP)

Helen Vaughan-Evans (Head of Corporate Support Service: Performance, Digital & Assets) & Jane Hodgson (Climate Change Manager) attended the Strategic Planning Group meeting, to present Members with Denbighshire's Local Area Energy Plan.

Members were provided with a presentation during the meeting. A copy of the presentation will be shared alongside the meeting notes, as well as being saved on the Strategic Planning Group shared network drive. All Members were sent a link to a copy of the Officers covering report and a copy of the LAEP prior to the meeting taking place.

What is a LAEP?

- an evidence-based plan of action that identifies the most effective route to a net zero local energy system for the county
- scenario modelling tells us would be needed between now and 2030 to be on a trajectory towards meeting Net Zero by 2050
- sets out key actions that will be taken by various stakeholders across Denbighshire for the first five-six years to set the local area on a journey to achieve a net zero energy system
- for DCC, the LAEP actions align with our Climate and Nature Strategy
- the LAEPs will be used to create regional and national energy plans
- delivering LAEP actions will be subject to sufficient political, and financial support

How was it created (the process)?

- funded by Welsh Government
- 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
- this LAEP has been developed by bringing local organisations and groups together to discuss the evidence created as part of the development process and collectively agree on the best way forward to achieve this objective
- process and reports were created in a consistent way for all councils in Wales.

Next steps

- The LAEP will be taken to Communities Scrutiny Committee on 5 September 2024.
- The LAEP will be presented to Cabinet on 24 September 2024 for endorsement.

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

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.

Members were reminded that the LEAP is an aspirational document, it gives an aim in terms of energy based on a model. The modelling does not mean that the proposal can be delivered as it has not considered the practical feasibility, viability or deliverability. The LAEP is not a document that provides an assumption in favour of any development, and it is not a material planning consideration.

Following on from the presentation Members raised the following points and questions:

- Cllr John Harland stated that we should be moving away from using gas as it is one of the biggest contributors to Climate Change.
- Cllr Young asked if the calculations in the LAEP had taken into consideration the proposed Wylfa Nuclear Power Station in Anglesey.
- Cllr Emrys Wynne discussed the recent change in UK government which may lead to increase in on shore wind farms. Since large scale infrastructure projects are determined by Welsh Government, what influence can Denbighshire have over said projects?
- Cllr Emrys Wynne pointed out that the AONB has now been renamed Clwydian Range & Dee Valley National Landscape.
- Cllr James Elson highlighted the impact that schemes could have on local residents, highlighted the substation extension in Cefn Meiriadog.
- Cllr Martyn Hogg discussed making sure that Local Development Plan is aligned with the aspiration set out in the LAEP and the green infrastructure assessment.
- Cllr Mark Young asked how the Council can influence developers to use more renewable energy sources when building houses.

The LAEP supports moving away from using gas as an energy source, as set out on page 57 of the LAEP and supports the deployment of Heat Source pumps through the route map.

The proposed Wylfa Nuclear Power Station in Anglesey has not been taken into consideration within the LAEP as the LAEP is specific to Denbighshire.

While it is the case that applications of national significance are out of Denbighshire County Council's jurisdiction and will be determined by Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW) Denbighshire County Council is still able to have an input and will put together consultation responses highlighting any local issues.

Denbighshire County Council are not able to dictate to developers what energy sources they should or should not use. Through planning the Council can only encourage developers to use renewable energy sources. A change to building regulations would be required to force developers to use renewable energy sources.

Reducing energy demand is how the Local Development Plan assists the LAEP. Reducing demand includes developing in the most sustainable location e.g. closest to good transport links and services so that active travel networks are encouraged and the reliance on car use is reduced. Determining planning applications in accordance with national policy and the Local Development Plan will automatically reduce energy demands.

Members were taken through the recommendations in the officer's report and asked if they were in favour of those recommendations.

- 3.1. That Members of the SPG consider the final output from the LAEP process for Denbighshire (Appendix 1 and 2) and provide any observations before it is taken to Scrutiny for review and Cabinet for endorsement in September.
- 3.2. That Members of the SPG note that the LAEP may be used as evidence to inform and shape the developing LDP and other policies.
- 3.3. That Members of the SPG note that the LAEP for Denbighshire will be published on the webpages for Planning on DCC website.

Members confirmed that they were in favour of the recommendations set out in the report.