



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL

Environment, Regeneration and Streetscene Services Cabinet Board

14th April 2023

Report of

Head of Property & Regeneration - Simon Brennan

Matter for Information

Wards Affected: All Wards

Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) Project – Neath Port Talbot Council

Purpose of Report

1.0 To inform members of the commencement of the formulation for NPT Council's Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP).

Executive Summary

2.0 This report outlines the Welsh Government funded local area energy plan programme which is currently in progress for NPT Council.

2.1 The LAEP sets out the change required to transition a Local Authority's energy system across all sectors to net zero within a

given timeframe (2050). This is achieved by exploring potential pathways that consider a range of technologies and scenarios and combined with stakeholder engagement lead to the identification of the most cost-effective preferred pathway and sequenced plan of proposed actions to achieving an area's net zero target.

2.2 The duration of formulating NPT Council's LAEP commenced in January 2023 and is anticipated to conclude within December 2023 / January 2024.

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2.3 The LAEP whole-systems approach will provide an insight to empower decision-making, support stakeholder engagement, and create a route to successful energy investments and a faster, more effective energy transition. A successful LAEP will strengthen leadership, community involvement and cohesion and support other sectors, such as transport when implementing a local area climate action strategy.

Background

3.0 It has been identified that both regional and localised approaches are required for Local Authorities to reach net zero across all sectors. The Welsh Government has committed to Local Area Energy Planning and established the Welsh Government LAEP Programme. The programme is being rolled out across each Council on a regional approach across Wales.

3.1 Through the Energy Catapult, the UK Government has developed a structured and formalised approach called a local area energy plan. The rollout of local area energy plans within Wales has been funded by Welsh Government. Welsh Government is working to ensure that all local authorities in Wales have a local area energy

plan by the end of the 2023-24 financial year. This commitment is set out in Welsh Government's Net Zero Wales Plan (2021-25).

- 3.2 The local area energy plan process considers the whole energy system in a local area context (heat, power, and transport within the Local Authority region) and has the potential to inform, shape and enable key aspects of the transition to a net zero carbon energy system by 2050.
- 3.3 The LAEP sets out the change required to transition a Local Authority's energy system to net zero within a given timeframe (2050). This is achieved by exploring potential pathways that consider a range of technologies and scenarios and when combined with stakeholder engagement lead to the identification of the most cost-effective preferred pathway and sequenced plan of proposed actions to achieving an area's net zero goal.
- 3.4 It is important to understand the difference between:
 - Local area energy plan (LAEP)
 - Regional energy strategy

The regional energy strategy has a strategic focus which identifies an overarching prioritised list of actions and a long list of opportunities but does not define the exact location of deployment. The local area energy plan will produce more granular detail and location for improvement actions and programmes at the geographical area of a Local Authority.

- 3.5 The core aims of the LAEP are to enable and provide:

- Improved understanding of what the transition to achieve net zero carbon emissions is likely to involve across the geographical area of a council in a local context.
- A clearer understanding of the wider conditions, locally and nationally, is required for these changes to take place.
- Increased local stakeholder awareness of what needs to be done over time, to achieve decarbonisation targets.
- More comprehensive and effective local, regional and national plans.
- Identified commitments to action from localised stakeholders to deliver the plan.

Local Area Energy Plan Scope

4.0 The following scope details the key elements and focus of the LAEP:

- Data driven and whole energy system, evidence-based approach that is led by local government developed collaboratively with defined stakeholders. It 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.
- LAEP results in a fully costed and spatial plan that identifies the change needed to the local energy system and built environment, detailing 'what, where and when and by whom'. LAEP sets out the total costs, changes in energy use and emissions, and sets these out over an incremental period to meet net zero by 2050.

- Provides the level of detail for an area that is equivalent to an outline design or master plan; additional detailed design work is required for identified projects to progress to implementation.
- LAEP defines a long-term vision for an area but should be updated approximately every 3-5 years (or when significant technological, policy or local changes occur) to ensure the long-term vision remains relevant.
- LAEP identifies near-term actions and projects, providing stakeholders with a basis for taking forward activity and prioritising investments and actions.

Project Programme

5.0 The duration of formulating NPT Council's LAEP commenced in late January 2023 and is anticipated to conclude in December 2023 / January 2024. WG indicate that local area energy plans typically take 12 months to create and will form a core part of the National Energy Plan which the Welsh Government will develop in 2024. The LAEP outputs will be scaled-up to form a national view, to produce a whole Wales perspective with regard to localised energy system delivery.

5.1 The key stages of the local area energy plan programme consist of:

- Preparation - LAEP Scope.
- Stakeholder Identification and Engagement.
- Representing the local area - Using common data and information to understand the local area.

- Modelling options for the Future - Scenarios and sensitivity analysis.
- Actions priorities & decisions – Implementation.
- Creation of the plan.

LAEP Objectives

6.0 The LAEP whole-systems approach will provide insights to empower decision-making, support stakeholder engagement, and create a route to successful energy investments and a faster, more effective energy transition. A successful LAEP will strengthen leadership, community involvement and cohesion and support other sectors, such as transport when implementing a local area climate action strategy.

6.1 LAEPs reduce uncertainty around what changes and initiatives local authorities need to make to drive towards a decarbonised future. By providing a strong roadmap and sense of direction, they encourage greater investment in low carbon technologies and business growth in sectors which support the net zero carbon transition.

6.1 The key output objectives of the LAEP consist of:

- Understand the local energy system (Energy network and transport systems).
- Model the cost effectiveness of low carbon and renewable pathways achieving a ‘least cost’ net zero pathway.
- To empower the local economy, supporting tourism and the creation of local renewable jobs.

- To provide localised community engagement, leadership, and ownership.
- To provide a resilient energy system capable of meeting future energy demand and resilient to climate change.
- To support agriculture and the rural economy, ensuring the best use of land.
- To identify actions which enable local ownership and participation in investments for a net zero energy system.
- To deliver affordable solutions for all, reducing fuel poverty and supporting off-gas grid customers.
- To facilitate innovation to support Welsh and UK decarbonisation.
- Develop long and short term business cases for priority pathways.

Financial Appraisal

7.0 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Integrated Impact Assessment

8.0 There is no requirement to undertake an Integrated Impact Assessment on this report.

Valleys Communities Impact

9.0 There are no valley community impacts associated with this report.

Workforce Impact

10.0 There are no workforce impacts associated with this report.

Legal Impact

11.0 There are no legal impacts associated with this report.

Risk Management

12.0 There are no risk management implications from this report.

Consultation

13.0 There is no requirement at this point in the project for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

14.0 For Cabinet to note Council's commencement of the Welsh Government funded local area energy plan work.

Reason for Proposed Decision

15.0 To inform and invite Members to provide feedback on the LAEP project.

Implementation of Decision

16.0 Matter for information.

List of Background Papers

17.0 Welsh Government's Net Zero Wales Plan (2021-25). [Wales Low Carbon Delivery Plan \(2021-2025\) \(gov.wales\)](#)

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