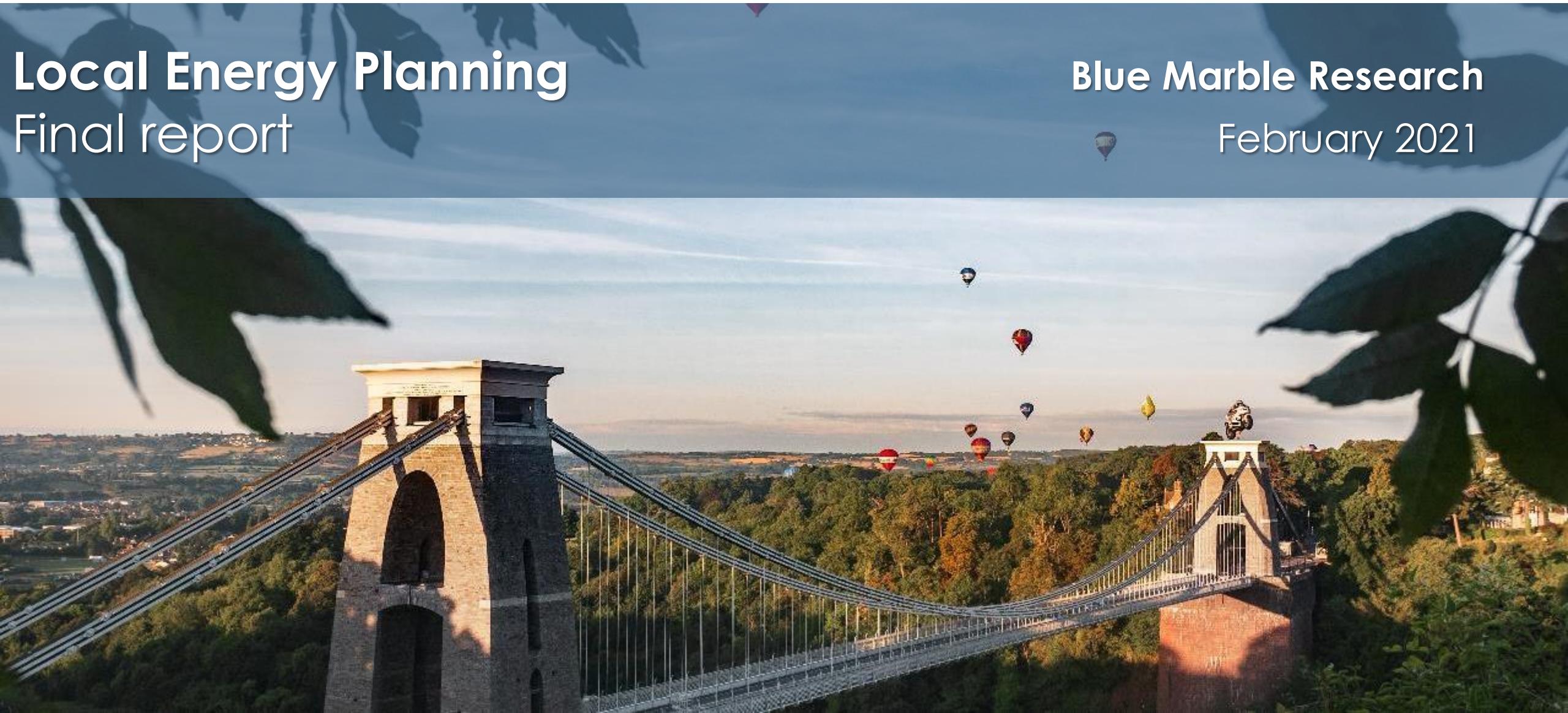


Local Energy Planning

Final report

Blue Marble Research
February 2021



Background and objectives

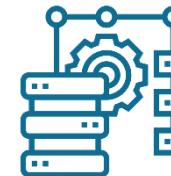
Background

- With the energy market changing rapidly as regulatory changes take effect and environmental issues rise up the political agenda, local energy planning is increasingly popular.
- Approaches to this planning vary enormously in scale and scope. The Energy Systems Catapult / Centre for Sustainable Energy paper from summer 2020 outlines an ideal method for developing local plans.
- Citizens Advice is seeking to enhance its understanding of this fast-moving area in order to inform its future work.

Objectives

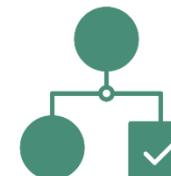
Overarching goal: **To explore how local energy plans vary in terms of governance, citizen and stakeholder engagement and funding.**

Specifically:



Governance

Exploring how projects are led and their decision-making structures and the process by which they are devised



Citizen & stakeholder engagement

Exploring who engages in energy projects, the nature of their involvement and the risk of insufficient engagement.



Funding

Exploring what information is available on the cost of projects, the source of funding and how consumers are involved in this.

Methodology and sample

1



Desk review

- Desk review to map universe of local energy plans and develop typologies
 - We explored 67 Local Authorities as part of this
- Scoping interviews with expert stakeholders
 - We conducted 5 interviews, each lasting c. 30 mins
- Fieldwork was conducted in October and November 2020.

2



Case study analysis

- Deep-dive into 10 local energy plans:
 - We conducted more detailed desk research, including reviews of strategy reports, engagement plans, meeting minutes.
 - We have conducted 44 depth interviews with stakeholders involved in these plans – 3-6 interviews per case study
- Fieldwork was conducted in November and December 2020.

Breakdown of interviews in phase 2

Local Authority	18	Energy company / DNO	5
Other Government department	5	Private company	1
Community group	4	Consultant	2
Third sector	8	Academic	1

Key findings (1/2)

1

The Energy Systems Catapult / Centre for Sustainable Energy model of Local Area Energy Plans has not been adopted in practice yet. Expert governmental and industry stakeholders want a consistent model along these lines, but this remains a long way from the current reality.

2

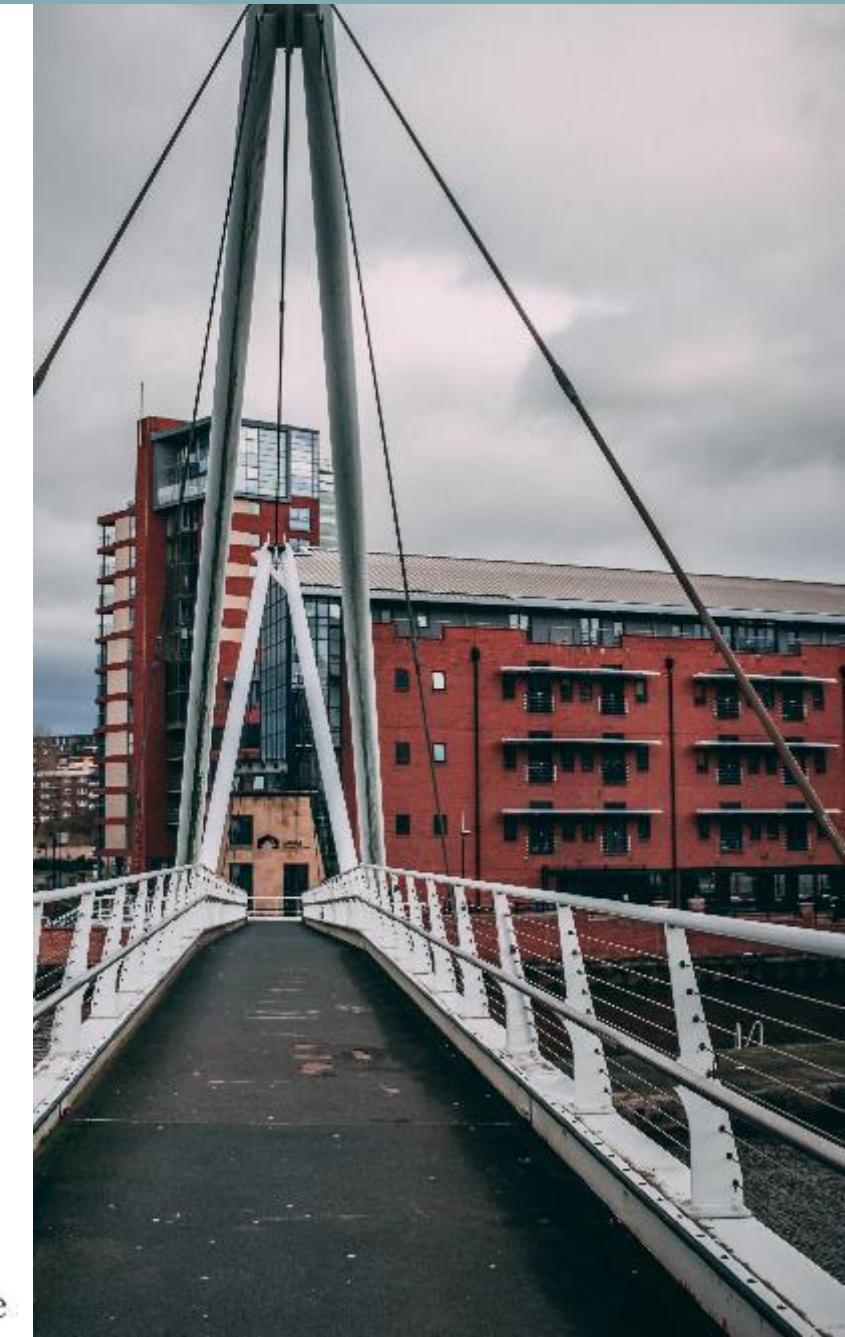
Few Local Authorities have a strategy solely focused on energy planning – often this is part of a broader approach to decarbonisation.

3

Information available in the public domain about local energy planning is often difficult to find and variable in detail. Many citizens are likely to have difficulty trying to understand what is happening in their region.

4

Following the case study deep-dives, we have refined our categorisation into four typologies: climate action plans, regional energy strategies, local development plans and innovation projects. The key differences between these are included on the next page.



Key findings (2/2)

Aim	Governance	Citizen and stakeholder engagement	Funding
 Climate Action Plan	Decarbonisation.	Led by a Local Authority and subject to standard Local Authority processes.	Third parties and citizens have been engaged in some form. Relatively limited inclusivity. Estimated costs – may not be budgeted. Funding may or may not be assigned.
 Regional Energy Strategy	Decarbonisation and regional economic growth.	Subject to processes of the LEP and regional Local Authorities; often led by a steering group of key interest groups.	Third parties typically consulted – can be relatively informal. No direct consultation of public. Estimated costs – not budgeted. No funding assigned.
 Local Development Plan	A framework for housing development.	Led by a Local Authority. Final plan scrutinised externally in quasi-judicial process.	Multiple rounds of formal consultation with stakeholders and public. Requirement to engage hard-to-reach audiences. Not costed.
 Innovation Project	Technological innovation to support low carbon energy network.	Project-dependent. Key third parties involved in project leadership.	Any consultation of other third parties is relatively informal. No direct consultation of public. Funded by a mixture of public and private investment.

Summary of key themes



The 2019 declarations of climate emergency have prompted a flurry of activity in many Local Authorities.

- **2019 marked a seismic shift in Local Authorities' approach to addressing climate change.**
 - Many Local Authorities are now intent on acting quickly on climate change, often due to a perceived shift in public opinion and pressure from lobby groups or activists.
 - Many Local Authorities have developed **climate action plans**, which often appear driven by a desire to demonstrate ambition (e.g. to reach net zero quickly). These are not always underpinned by a strategic approach to achieving these aims.
- **There is a large amount of work being conducted by Local Authorities on addressing climate change, and specifically on decarbonisation.**
 - Many existing projects and plans have been incorporated into this work.
 - Energy-related plans have shifted focus towards decarbonisation.
 - Some activities have been rebranded or adjusted to fit into the Local Authority's response to declaring a climate emergency.
 - UK Government has set national carbon budgets, but there does not appear to be a central plan coordinating the decarbonisation activities of local government.
- **COVID-19 has altered some Local Authorities' approaches to reaching net zero.**
 - Climate action plans drawn up before the pandemic are now being rethought in the context of planning to deliver economic growth through a "Green Recovery".
 - In addition, Covid (and Brexit) have placed further demands on already-stretched budgets and staffing which has led to fewer resources being available for this work.

Context

The local energy planning landscape is complex. Many citizens are likely to have difficulty trying to understand what is happening in their region.

- Few Local Authorities have a strategy solely focused on energy planning – and it can be hard to find clear information about what is happening on energy in any local area.
- We have found significant variation in local approaches to energy planning (and the information available in the public domain about these) across the country – specifically in terms of:
 - The aims of the plans e.g. to deliver decarbonisation or provide a framework for local housing developments; and to provide an overarching strategic plan or a detailed action plan
 - The role of different levels of local government, and interaction between these.
 - The role of third parties (such as energy companies, consumer groups, Local Enterprise Partnerships and academia)
 - The interaction between Local Authorities (e.g. across different levels of local government within a specific region)
 - Timelines
 - Approaches to cost – e.g. whether these are fully costed and budgeted, or whether financial figures represent an aspiration “best guess” of what will be required to achieve key goals.
 - Progress to date



Context

Very few Local Authorities have developed Local Area Energy Plans which map onto the ESC / CSE template.

- Key expert governmental and industry stakeholders* refer to the Energy Systems Catapult / Centre for Sustainable Energy report (from July 2020) as a potential template for Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs).
- However, these experts say that such plans are largely hypothetical and that the development of these is at a formative stage.
 - In the report, examples are worked through for Bury, Bridgend and Newcastle.
- While expert stakeholders are aware of a range of plans, strategies and initiatives which touch on local energy planning issues across England and Wales, they generally see these as distinct from what LAEPs should be.
- None of the Local Authorities that we have looked at in this research – either in the initial desk review or in the more detailed case studies – have plans which look similar to the ESC / CSE template for LAEPs.

"Today this isn't a thing. The Government and / or regulator need to create requirements and conditions for this."
Expert stakeholder

"I don't think anybody is yet doing effective Local Area Energy Plans."
Expert stakeholder



*We interviewed 5 expert stakeholders from key governmental and think tank organisations as part of the initial scoping phase.

Expert governmental and industry stakeholders generally want a consistent approach to Local Area Energy Plans – but say that this is a long way from the current reality.

- In our initial scoping interviews with expert stakeholders in key organisations across government, regulators and think tanks, a consistent approach was seen as essential to delivering optimal outcomes for citizens, which are not skewed by vested interests.
- Expert stakeholders are generally supportive of the CSE / ESC approach as a first step towards setting out how a transparent, robust methodology could work.

"I don't think there's anything standard out there."

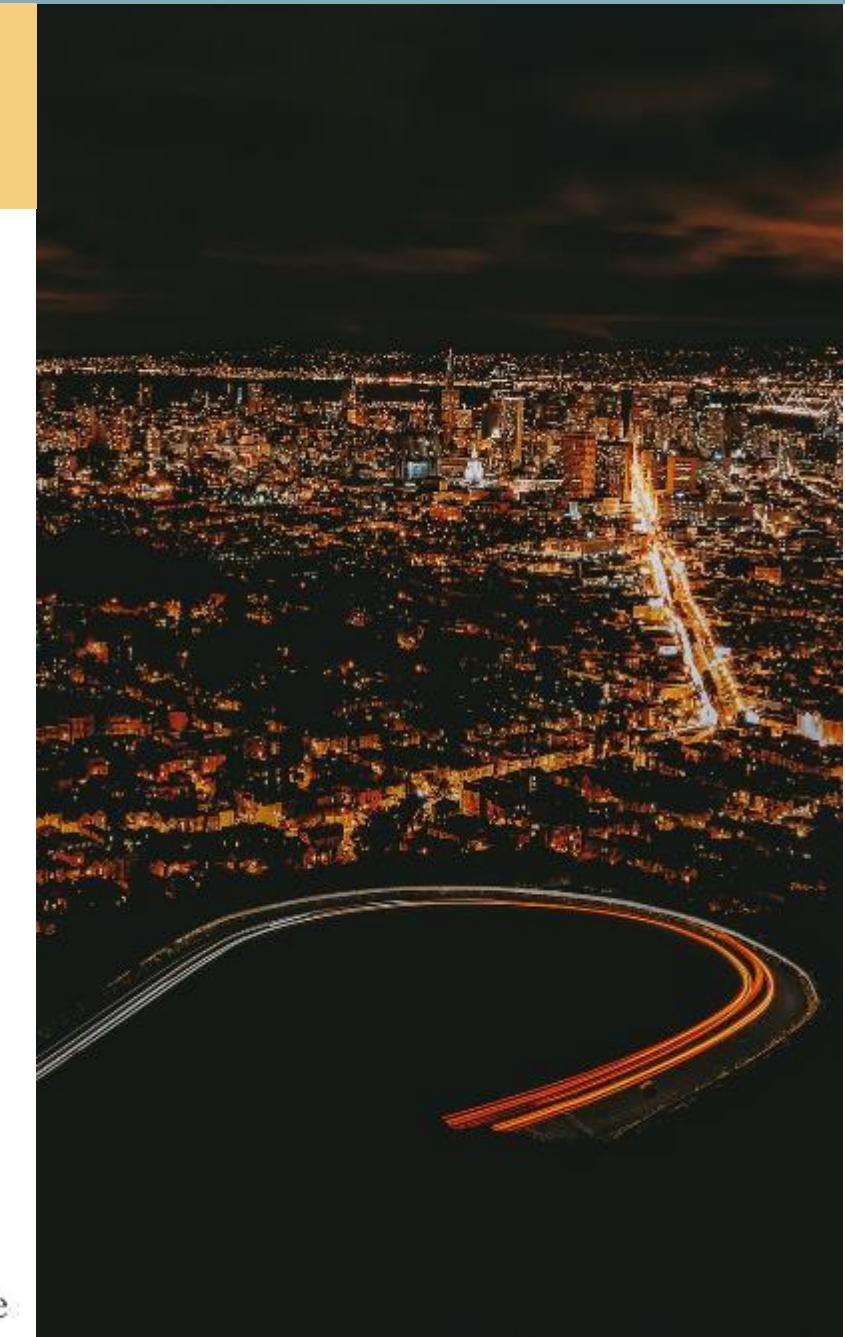
Expert stakeholder

"There are some real issues around creating a consistent methodology."

Expert stakeholder

"Doing this properly is going to require significant resource, and the best resourced people in the room are going to be the network companies, with possibly the strongest vested interest in the outcome of the process."

Expert stakeholder



Typologies of local energy planning (1/2)

We have refined our typologies to explain variation in approaches to local energy planning – although there is still significant variation within each of the typologies.



Climate action plans

- Developed in last 18-24 months, following declaration of climate emergency.
- Primary aim is to achieve net zero – timescales for this vary. Boosting economic growth has become an important priority since start of pandemic.
- Governance: Typically led by a Local Authority and subject to standard Local Authority processes.
- Citizen and stakeholder engagement:
 - Third parties have often been consulted but are not involved in leading the plan.
 - There has usually been a public consultation of some form – the extent to which this has reached a diverse array of local citizens is often relatively limited.
- Funding: Some refer to significant financial sums, although these are often estimates and may not be specifically budgeted.

Examples: WM2041, Cool 2 Wirral, Frome Climate Action Plan, Warwickshire Climate Action Plan, Gwynedd Local Plan.



Regional energy strategies

- Led by Local Enterprise Partnerships – usually with involvement from Local Authorities in the area.
- Have twin aims of decarbonisation and driving economic growth in their regions.
- Governance: Subject to processes of the LEP and regional Local Authorities; often led by a steering group of key interest groups.
 - Key third parties (esp. the energy sector) are involved in leadership of strategies.
- Citizen and stakeholder engagement:
 - Other third parties have typically been consulted – although sometimes this is relatively informal.
 - There has been no direct consultation of the public.
- Funding: The strategies estimate the costs of decarbonisation for the region – but are not fully budgeted. No funding has been assigned to delivering the strategy.

Examples: Sheffield City Region Energy Strategy, Swansea Energy Strategy.

Typologies of local energy planning (2/2)

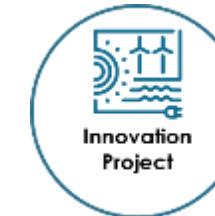
We have refined our typologies to explain variation in approaches to local energy planning – although there is still significant variation within each of the typologies.



Local development plans

- Broad planning frameworks focussed primarily on housing.
- These are not typically focussed on energy, although some include references to energy planning (esp. home insulation / fuel poverty and transport). Energy-related sections are often high-level aspirations, rather than detailed planning.
- Governance: Led by a Local Authority. Developed through extended, formalised consultation process.
- Citizen and stakeholder engagement:
 - Many rounds of formal consultation with stakeholders and the general public.
 - The requirement to publish a Statement of Community Involvement is a prompt to engage hard-to-reach audiences.
- Decision-making: High degree of transparency. Final plan scrutinised externally in quasi-judicial process.
- Funding: Not costed.

Examples: Chelmsford City Plan.



Innovation projects

- Led by a range of organisations – often involving partnership working between energy sector, public sector, community organisations and academia.
- Primary aim is to test technological innovations for delivering a low carbon energy network.
- Governance: Dependent on the specific organisations involved and source of funding.
 - Key third parties (esp. the energy sector) are involved in project leadership.
- Citizen and stakeholder engagement:
 - Any consultation of other third parties (not directly involved in project delivery) is relatively informal.
 - No direct consultation of the public.
- Decision-making: dependent on structure of project.
- Funding: funded by a mixture of public and private investment. Level of funding relatively easy to establish.

Examples: Oxfordshire LEO, North East Energy Catalyst.



There are numerous models for developing a local plan – with differing roles of Local Authorities and third parties.



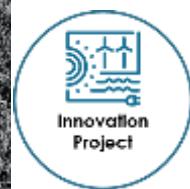
- **Climate action plans have usually been initiated and led by Local Authorities.**
 - Climate action plans such as WM2041 and the Frome Climate Emergency Strategy are all solely owned and led by the relevant Local Authority.



- **Regional Energy Strategies are led by Local Enterprise Partnerships, often in conjunction with relevant Local Authorities.**
 - The Sheffield City Region Energy Strategy, for example, is led jointly between the City Region and the LEP, and overseen by a steering group comprised of key stakeholders.



- **Local development plans are solely led by Local Authorities.**
- **Innovation projects adopt a range of approaches for leadership, depending on the organisations involved.**



- For example, Oxfordshire LEO is run as a partnership between 9 organisations, with governance processes developed accordingly. The formal partnership follows years of informal collaboration between key stakeholders.

The role of third party stakeholders, such as the energy sector, academics and consumer organisations, varies across the typologies.

Third party role in leading / steering	Third party role in providing input	Case studies
 Typically only involve the Local Authority – external stakeholders have no formal role in the leadership of these.	Have usually consulted stakeholders in some form.	WM2041 Warwickshire / Frome / Gwynedd Climate Emergency Strategy Cool 2 Wirral
 Significant third party involvement – through steering groups and LEP boards.	Have usually consulted stakeholders in some form.	Sheffield City Region Energy Strategy Swansea Energy Strategy
 Solely led by the Local Authority. Third parties may be consulted but do not lead the development of these plans.	Involve multiple rounds of formal consultation with both stakeholders and the public.	Chelmsford Local Plan
 Significant third party involvement – third parties may lead these, either solely or jointly.	Do not typically involve formal consultation with stakeholders not directly involved in running these projects.	North East Energy Catalyst Oxfordshire LEO

2. Citizen and stakeholder engagement

15



The extent of public consultation varies, with larger climate action plans most likely to have consulted the public. (1/2)



- Large climate action plans (such as WM2041 or Warwickshire) have typically conducted public consultation – although the format and scope of this varies. The perceived need for speed may limit councils' approaches to public consultation.
 - At an early stage of its planning, WM2041 consulted several hundred local residents through online surveys and focus groups.
 - Warwickshire included its climate emergency objectives within its Local Plan, which was put out to public consultation, and is seeking further feedback on the way it spends money allocated to resulting actions.
 - Smaller schemes such as Gwynedd County Council have not conducted public consultations or engagement exercises yet – although have been criticised for this.

2. Citizen and stakeholder engagement

16



The extent of public consultation varies, with larger climate action plans most likely to have consulted the public. (2/2)



- Regional energy strategies, led by LEPs, tend not to have conducted public engagement. Public consultation is not always deemed appropriate given the technical and conceptual nature of the subject matter.
 - The Sheffield City Region Energy Strategy has not conducted any public engagement yet.



- Local development plans are required to conduct extensive public consultation.



- Innovation projects do not usually involve formal public consultation.
 - The technical nature of the subject matter means extensive consultation is not often considered appropriate, although Oxfordshire LEO is conducting community outreach exercises to understand local priorities.

2. Citizen and stakeholder engagement

Many Local Authorities find it difficult to engage a representative group of citizens on energy issues.



- Where Local Authorities have conducted consultations (whether in relation to climate action plans or local development plans), these tend to attract disproportionately white, older, and more affluent citizens.
- For climate action plan consultations, many participants also have a strong pre-existing interest in environmental issues.
 - Local Authority stakeholders spoke of seeing “the same old faces” in traditional public engagement exercises (such as town hall events), particularly where these are conducted face-to-face.
 - Compared to environmentally-focussed participants, there is relatively little representation from consumer protection groups (e.g. representing vulnerable citizens). However many projects did see some engagement from social action groups representing people who may not otherwise have been included. For example The Democratic Society arranged for research with users of adult social services to source their views on WM2041 and Warwick District Council invited community groups to engage with the consultation around its Green Shoots fund.
 - Time is seen as the primary barrier to more widespread engagement – with younger audiences much less likely to take part in face-to-face consultations.
 - Some perceive that participation will not make a difference
 - A lack of Local Authority resources (or time) can also limit the ability to reach a diverse group of citizens.

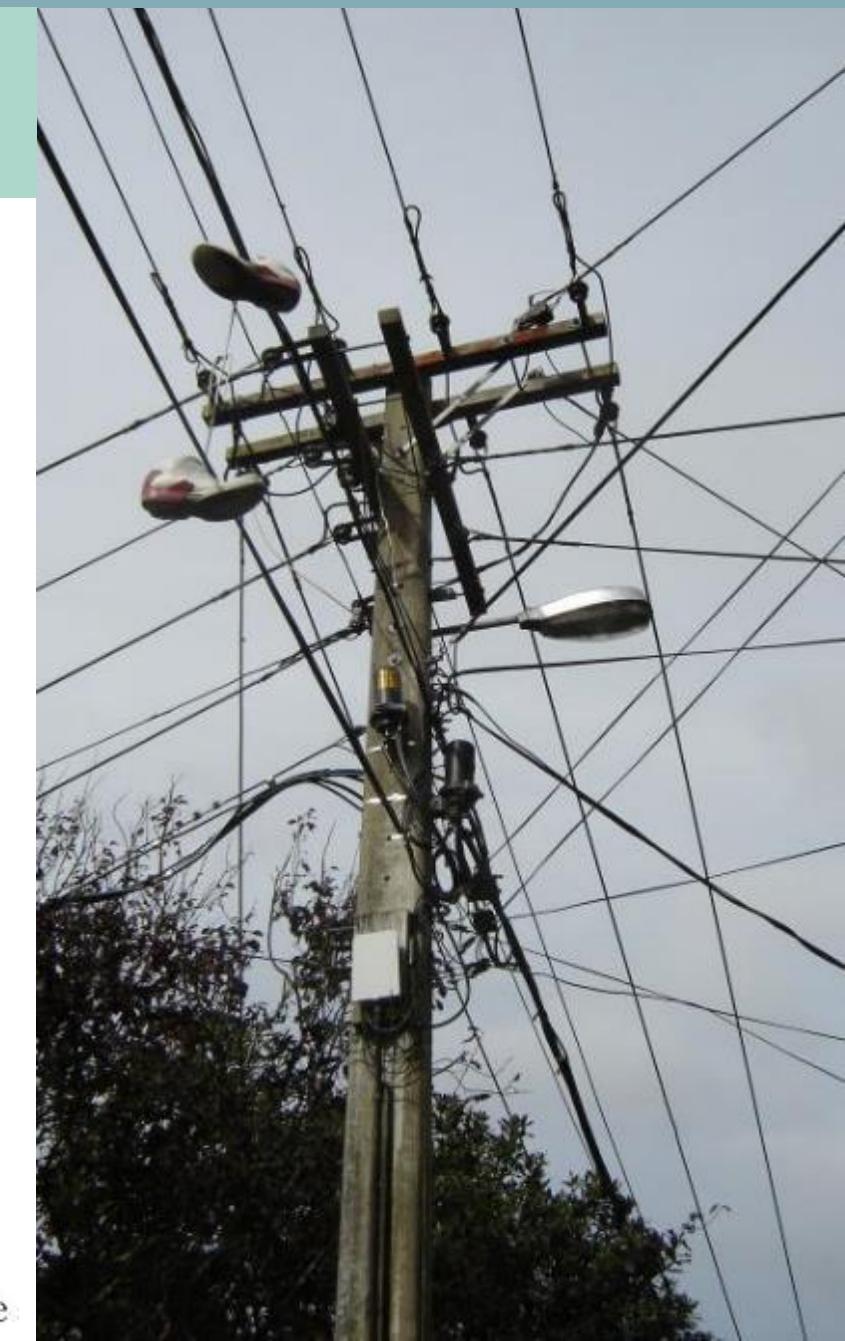


2. Citizen and stakeholder engagement

Most Local Authority public engagement efforts are relatively traditional. A lack of time and resources can hamper the ability to reach a more diverse group of citizens.



- Local Authority consultations on **climate action plans** are open for the public to respond to but are often not actively promoted among hard-to-reach groups.
 - “Out for consultation” typically means a council-written survey hosted on the Local Authority website and publicised through council communications channels.
- Cost can be a barrier to more widespread engagement – one Local Authority wanted to conduct a citizens assembly but was unable to for cost reasons.
- **Local development plans** are developed over a relatively long time and are subject to formal requirements (including a Statement of Community Involvement and approval by an external inspector). Local Authorities have often taken significant steps to engage hard-to-reach audiences.
 - Chelmsford City Council commissioned a market research company to speak to the travelling community in its local area.
 - Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Essex County Council has switched from predominantly face-to-face to online engagement approaches, and reached a more diverse sample.



2. Citizen and stakeholder engagement

Local energy planning is subject to different levels of scrutiny depending on which typology it fits into. (1/2)

- **Climate action plans are governed by standard Local Authority processes.**
 - This means that they are subject to scrutiny boards, etc.
 - The exact degree of transparency can vary – but it is usually possible to find at least basic information (e.g. the minutes of council meetings) online. Some key information may still be very difficult to find.

- **Regional energy strategies are subject to a combination of LEP and Local Authority governance processes.**
 - Transparency can be lower than for climate action plans, with information about decision-making sometimes difficult to find.
 - There is less consistency in terms of transparency and scrutiny requirements which are potentially less systematic than they are for climate action plans
 - For instance, in one case it was not clear to all members of the strategy Steering Group how decisions about changes and amendments to various drafts were being made as it was passed ‘up’ to the LEP which ‘owned’ the strategy.
 - There are variations in how clear it is who ‘owns’ the strategy and who has been involved in its development.



2. Citizen and stakeholder engagement

20

Local energy planning is subject to different levels of scrutiny depending on which typology it fits into. (2/2)



- Local development plans follow a standard and systematic governance process under the National Planning Policy Framework.
 - Energy is rarely a key focus, however – so it can be challenging to find information about the impact of the plans on energy planning.
- Innovation projects are governed by bespoke governance processes.
 - Where public money is a key funding source, there is accountability to the funding provider (e.g. Innovate UK).
 - However, the level of public transparency is more limited – although community outreach events (such as in Oxfordshire) can provide key information to local communities.



3. Funding



The financial figures attached to climate action plans and regional energy strategies are usually broad estimates for achieving decarbonisation aims.



- For **climate action plans and regional energy strategies**, costs are typically aspirational and based on best estimates.
 - These are not fully costed strategies of how the local area will achieve its goals (e.g. net zero).
 - Where headline cost figures have been given, these often equate to “best guesses” rather than fully detailed cost analyses. Original cost estimates have often been superseded by changes in circumstances – such as technological innovation and the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - The source of any funding for achieving aims has often not been agreed.



- **Local development plans** are, by their nature, uncosted.
 - They provide a framework for local development in their area.



- **Innovation projects** are relatively short-term interventions, funded by a mixture of public and private investment.
 - This might involve grant funding from central or local government, as well as funding from key third parties (such as energy companies).

Conclusions

1

Approaches to developing Local Area Energy Plans vary widely across England and Wales.

- The Energy Systems Catapult / Centre for Sustainable Energy model of Local Area Energy Plans has not been adopted in practice yet.
- Expert governmental and industry stakeholders want a consistent model along these lines, but this remains a long way from the current reality.
- There does not appear to be a central plan coordinating the decarbonisation activities of local governments.

2

Few Local Authorities have a strategy solely focused on energy planning.

- Energy is often part of a broader approach to decarbonisation or overall planning matters.
- Local Area Energy Planning activities are likely to be further influenced by technological advances and emerging issues such as Brexit and Covid-19.

3

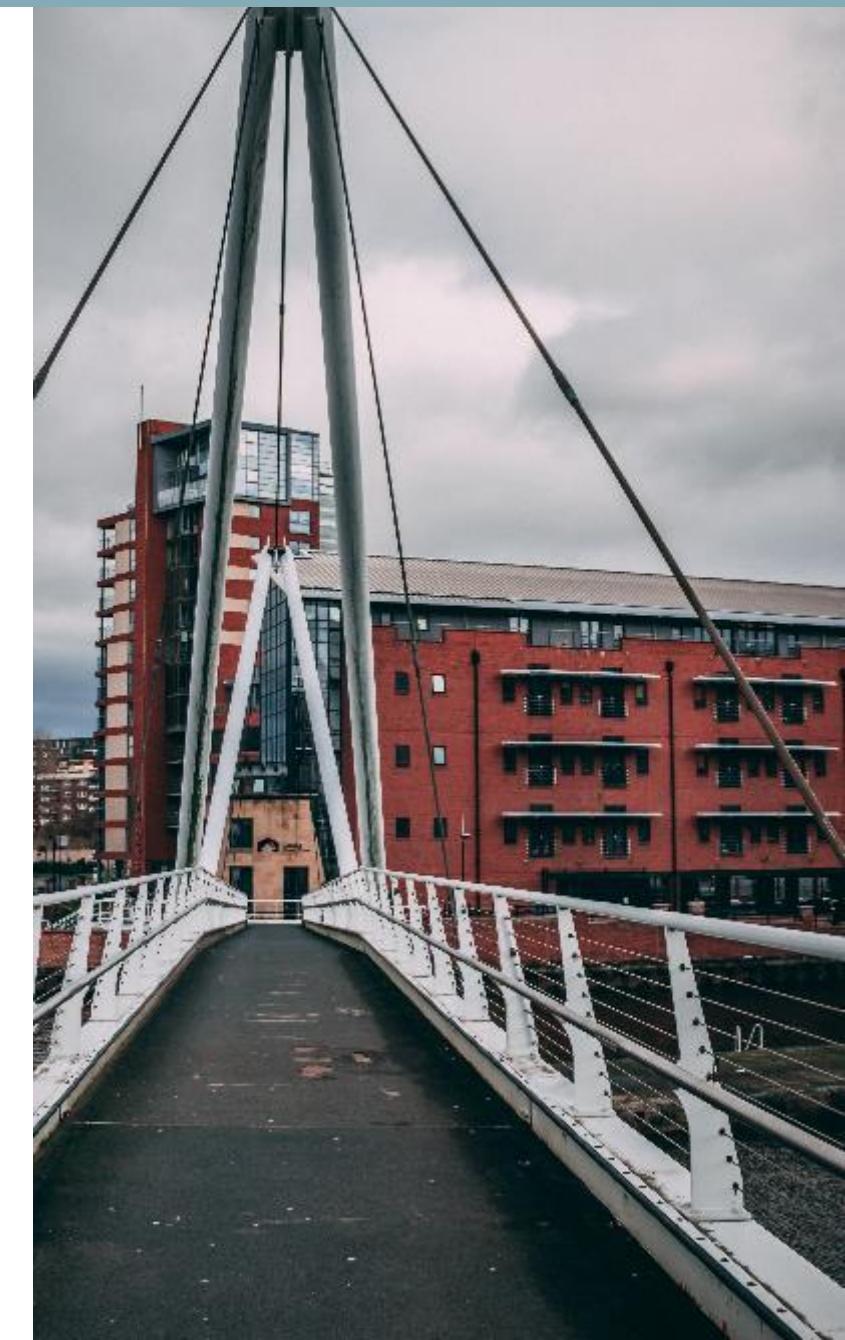
Information available in the public domain about local energy planning is often difficult to find and variable in detail.

- This is compounded by the lack of a standardised approach and variance in governance frameworks.
- Many citizens are likely to have difficulty trying to understand what is happening in their region.

4

We have defined four typologies of projects which have similar characteristics.

- These are climate action plans, regional energy strategies, local development plans and innovation projects.
- These typologies exist at the current time, but it is very likely that approaches to Local Area Energy Planning will change over time.



Appendix: case studies

Context

- In June 2019, the West Midlands Combined Authority declared a climate emergency and set a target to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2041. A 'green paper' was then written giving options for how the region could achieve this target, outlining 73 actions of varying scale, complexity and investment requirement. This was approved by the Combined Authority Board in early 2020 and put out to public consultation.
- Energy is just one element of a much broader plan which is divided into 5 areas: Policy, Transport, Infrastructure, Industry and Environment. Along with a regional plan for renewable heating and cooling, there are such actions as green roofs on bus shelters, encouraging more walking, cycling and public transport, exploring a skills programme for industries at risk from climate change and a regional retrofit programme.
- In September 2020, WSP, a multi-disciplinary professional services consultancy, was appointed to advise WMCA on developing and delivering a plan for WM2041. It is currently working on a five year plan which will provide guidance on what measures need to be implemented and how engagement should take place with constituent local authorities and wider stakeholders.



Governance



Ownership & decision-making:

- WM2041 and the Five Year Plan are owned by West Midlands Combined Authority and all decisions must pass through the normal council decision-making and scrutiny processes.
- Stakeholders spoke of the importance of decentralized energy in achieving decarbonisation and said that they would like increased local governance over the future of critical infrastructure; currently OFGEM must approve investment in Western Power Distribution's upgrades.
- The agency shaping the 5 Year Plan has consulted with a range of people, including those who have a vested interest, but this is necessary due to the information and expertise that those stakeholders can share. The agency stressed that it will be working with all of the information that is in front of them to provide the best solution for the combined authority.

Plan development:

- **WM2041:** The green paper was developed by council officers over six months following the declaration of a climate emergency by the WMCA. Following approval by the WMCA board, the paper underwent consultation.
- **Five Year Plan:** An agency has been commissioned to shape the plan in conjunction with WMCA and is working with regional data to model the potential progress of actions towards decarbonisation.

"Resources are required to ensure that a local area energy planning process is undertaken and consider the critical infrastructure plans of the region and local authorities, to identify where network upgrades are needed."

"WM2041 is a commitment to making the West Midlands net zero by 2041. It also encompasses an aim that while we're doing that the rest of society and the economy prospers at the same time."

Citizen and stakeholder engagement (1/2)



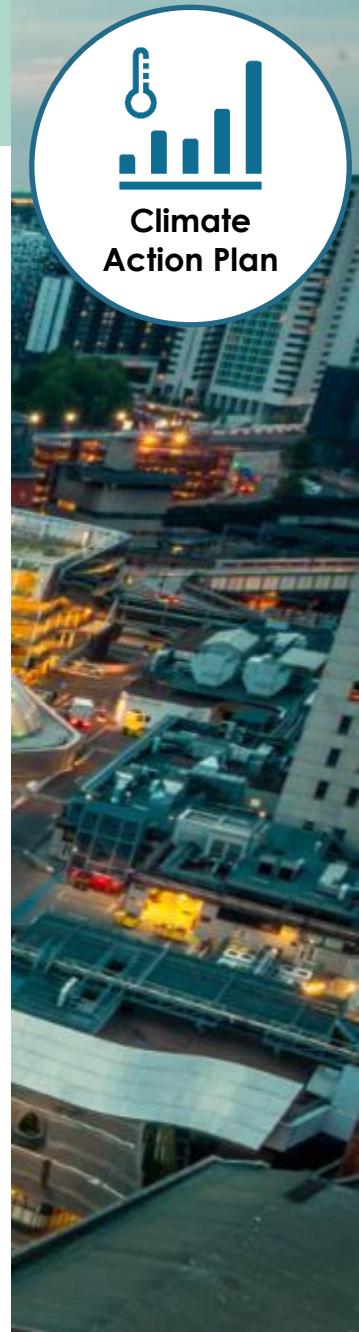
Consultation:

- **WM2041:** The public consultation was run over 6 weeks through a WMCA-hosted survey publicised through its own communications channels and those of the local authorities; a Facebook Messenger questionnaire run using chatbots; and in 2 in-depth workshops run by an external organisation.
- **Five Year Plan:** The agency has consulted with 80+ stakeholders from across the area to inform the plan, including local authorities, higher education, local education, charitable sector, local business, housing associations, utilities, airport etc.
- The public can engage through a public link to a 10 question survey with a supporting video but “it’s fair to say that [the public] is not the focus.” It is seen as a professional project which has stemmed from the overarching WM2041 document which gave everyone an equal opportunity to engage.

Inclusivity:

- **WM2041:** The consultation received the views of 832 members of the public. It also invited opinion from business and organisations, with 31 responses received through email and letter.
- WMCA’s key aim is “to achieve inclusive growth whilst alleviating poverty and inequalities” and the first of the five key principles underpinning WM2041 is that “We will make the journey to 2041 without leaving anyone behind”.
- The plan is intended to benefit the whole community, but it is unclear whether the views obtained in the consultation represent the diversity of the local population. The report on the consultation does not mention actions to engage specific groups, other than the two focus groups which were run with young people and Adult Social Services users and carers.

Citizen and stakeholder engagement (2/2)



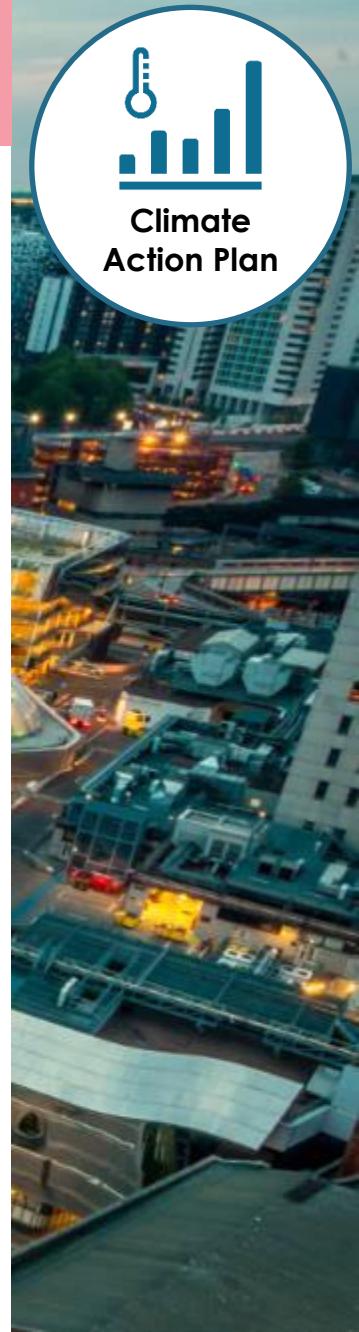
Citizens' experience of engagement:

- A key action following the consultation on the green paper was for the combined authority to build an ongoing engagement programme with the people of the region, blending approaches taken by local authority partners, as well as existing community-led activity.

Impact of engagement on plan:

- The consultation asked people how they might like to be involved as the strategy is further developed and implemented. The response to this has been reflected in a list of key principles that will form the basis of WMCA's future public engagement work.
- The combined returns from the consultation period – including formal and informal discussions at relevant events – will be folded into a revised version of WM2041, which will become the strategic vision for 2041. This plan will also reflect the need for environmental and economic recovery following the Covid pandemic.

Funding

**Information on cost:**

- The pre-consultation plan suggests that an investment of £40bn over 21 years (2020-2041) will be required, based on the estimates in the July 2019 carbon budget.
- Understanding financing options was a key request from the consultation process.

Source of funding:

- The plan states that some of the actions will be paid for through taxation and government borrowing, however multiple other investment streams are being considered, including green bonds and other financing options for low carbon investment, the West Midlands Future Fund, where public funds are used to crowd in private investment (e.g. West Midlands Pension Fund could invest), 5G funds with DCMS matched funding, and corporate sponsorship.

Context

- Warwickshire County Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019 and made a commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

The Council Plan 2025:

- The Council Plan 2025 is a broad plan for the council covering the full spectrum of planning issues. An action plan outlining commitments to addressing climate change and laying out broad goals for the next five years was included within the Council Plan 2025 that went out to public consultation and was subsequently agreed by Cabinet in February 2020.

The Green Shoots Fund:

- The Council Plan 2025 allocated £4M to climate change initiatives and agreed that £1M of that would be allocated to the Green Shoots fund focussed on community-run initiatives. Community groups can bid to secure project funding from the pot allocated for this purpose.

The Climate Action Plan:

- A further “Climate Action Plan” is in the very early stages of development and will consider how the remaining £3M could be spent. This plan will pinpoint what needs to be done to achieve zero carbon and is action-focused rather than a strategy; a strategy is needed but has not yet been written due to the urgency around making progress towards decarbonisation.
- Separately, other Local Authorities in the region have also declared climate emergencies, both at district and borough level. However, targets differ between authority (carbon neutral by 2030 for the County Council and 2025 for Warwick District Council) and not all of the boroughs have declared emergencies.



Governance



Ownership & decision-making:

- Warwickshire County Council is leading the process for developing its own Climate Emergency Strategy. The other levels of Local Authority in the region have ownership of their own plans.
- The Green Shoots Fund is managed by another team within the council.

Plan development:

- **Council Plan 2025:** A cross-party working Group produced an action plan which outlined commitments to addressing climate change and this was included within the Council Plan 2025 that went out to public consultation.
- **Climate Emergency Strategy and Green Shoots Fund:** The process for developing the plans is yet to be determined, but they are likely to be drawn up by the relevant council teams using feedback from public engagement.

Scrutiny:

- There is no energy-specific scrutiny process in place, but council figures are accessible due to the way in which progress is reported e.g. preparing figures for progress meetings which are recorded and published in the minutes.
- No plans are yet in place for how to evaluate those projects which are funded by the Green Shoots Plan.

"We do like to engage via the web, we also have other ways of engaging but we do push people onto the web, we do advertise the web more than other streams because that's how we want people to engage with us."

"We've put it quite far and wide because we want to get as much community input as we can."

Citizen and stakeholder engagement (1/2)



Consultation:

- **Council Plan 2025:** An engagement programme was conducted in Autumn 2019 to understand sentiment towards the plan's outcomes and objectives, determine public priorities and receive suggestions for inclusion in the plan. A questionnaire was available online and on paper, the council hosted nine roadshows and the public could also provide a direct written response to the plan.
- **Green Shoots Fund:** An engagement process is currently underway. The consultation is predominantly web-based, because that is the way council prefers to engage, particularly because it makes it easy to analyse data.

Inclusivity:

- **Council Plan 2025:** 2000 responses were received. Respondent characteristics were recorded but there doesn't appear to have been any particular aim to ensure diversity.
- **Green Shoots Fund:** The consultation has been widely advertised through social media, press releases, community and voluntary organisation mailings, council e-zines, as well as through partner organisations and the district and borough councils. Particular community groups with a focus on recycling, tree planting and climate change issues have been emailed as likely bidders for funding. It is expected to have around 200 responses by time it ends. The diversity and representativeness of the sample cannot be determined because limited profiling information has been collected, for example respondents are not asked for their age or location.

Citizen and stakeholder engagement (2/2)



Oversight:

- There is a hope that there will be ongoing engagement for groups who secure funding, but it is too early to know what that would look like and there are no plans in place. It will likely be led by the council and be dependent on the nature of the project.

Impact of engagement on plan:

- **Council Plan 2025:** The results were fed back into the plan, which then passed through the normal decision-making processes. The council published a “You said, we did” piece outlining the public’s top priorities and how these have been reflected in the plan.

Risks of inadequate engagement

- **Green Shoots Fund:** The consultation is currently in progress and so its impact is not yet clear, but it is intended that the outputs will be used to design the scheme (for example the eligibility criteria) which will be launched in February 2021.
- It is unclear whether conducting engagement activities for the Green Shoots Fund was a formal requirement or not. There is a sense that it was “over and above what was required” but was considered useful and a good idea.

“We desperately need an action plan to focus our mind on key actions up to 2025. It may be a little bit the wrong way round, we need an overarching strategy on top of that to guide our thinking over to 2025. But we need the action plan, it's needed more quickly than a strategy document.”

Funding

**Information on cost:**

- £4M was allocated to actions towards the Climate Emergency. Of that £4M, £1M has been allocated to Green Shoots.

Source of funding:

- The plan for how much money to allocate to actions pertaining to the Climate Emergency Strategy was included in the Council Plan 2025 and was agreed by cabinet when the plan was signed off. It was funded through 'Council money' e.g. not obtained by grants, and the decision went through the normal processes involved in agreeing council budgets.
- Cost and funding sources for specific elements of the action plan have not yet been determined, but will involve bidding for funding from the £4M fund allocated within the council budget (as above) and the decision for whether those are granted goes through a number of committees and boards for approval.
- Warwickshire District Council intended to raise £3M from Council Tax increases to fund actions from its Climate Emergency Strategy. It was due to hold a referendum in May 2020, but this was cancelled due to Covid-19.

"We will have to test things and see what it will involve, as for other grants we will need to see what is out there."

Context

- In 2018 Frome Town Council declared a climate emergency, setting out its aim for the town to be carbon neutral by 2030. In Autumn 2019 it started developing a strategy for how to achieve this goal and an action plan focusing on Energy, Transport and Resources was published in Spring 2020.
- Frome had already been doing a lot of renewables, energy efficiency and sustainable transport work before the Climate Emergency was declared and the strategy was intended to build on this work to scale up the good ideas and identify missing initiatives and projects.
- All three levels of local authority in Somerset have declared a climate emergency and as each has its own areas of responsibility, Frome is working sensibly to avoid duplicating work and also to advocate for its residents.



"We are being the voice of the local community at a higher level"



Governance



Ownership & decision-making:

- Frome Town Council employs a Resilience Officer who has led the process from beginning to end.
- A number of local experts and interested parties have also been involved in helping to shape the project, although ultimate decision-making responsibility lies with the council.
- One respondent was involved in the consumer panel as a subject matter expert and was, at the time, working for an insulation contractor. He followed the standard council process of declaring a conflict of interest, and very much felt that the planning process was shaped around local needs and was not influenced by private companies for their own gain.

Plan development:

- The resilience officer created a draft strategy laying out reasons for addressing specific areas, as well as key actions. These were further developed by consumer panels which focused on specific initiatives the community can take, rather than a broader strategic view.

Scrutiny:

- As a council-owned plan, all decisions are subject to scrutiny through the normal local authority processes.

"It's always going to attract a certain type of person with a certain agenda. They tend to be middle class retired white males, people who are very concerned about environment and have three hours to spend going to a consultation in the evening."

"There's a very big risk that [the less engaged population in Frome] won't have their say but I don't know how you can engage the people that ordinarily won't engage with that."

Citizen and stakeholder engagement (1/2)



Consultation:

- The council involved people as much as possible by running three climate panels on energy, transport and resources in Autumn 2019.
- The sessions were hosted by the council and a selection of subject matter experts (e.g Frome Renewable Energy Cooperative) and attended by a total of 150 people from the local community.

Inclusivity:

- Attempts were made to draw in a wide sample of the population, with advertising in the local paper, which has broad readership, as well as on the council and partner organisation websites and social media. They conducted workshops with Frome College and some of the other middle schools, which included 290 people, and also approached students participating in the School Strike. Working groups included consumers who were concerned with particular topics, e.g. the bus passenger user group and the cycling club.
- Although there was a mix of participants, there was over-representation from older, affluent, white males who were already very engaged with climate change and have spare time to devote to taking part in events. Stakeholders agreed that perceived lack of time is a major barrier to engagement from the community, particularly within the 20-40 age bracket.
- The council wanted to hold a Citizens Assembly of 45 people sampled through 'sortition' which would ensure a representative sample across the population, but it was too expensive.

Citizen and stakeholder engagement (2/2)



- Oversight:**
- The council employs a Resilience Officer to lead the development of the plan, facilitate projects and manage the ongoing customer engagement.
 - The council has limited budgets and cannot fund multiple projects directly, so the Resilience Officer is responsible for helping projects get off the ground e.g. assisting with funding bids, or coordinating people in community
- Impact of engagement on plan:**
- All discussions in the engagement process were recorded and fed into the plan and interviewees were clear that agreed that consumer opinions were evident in the final document
- Risks of inadequate engagement**
- Although not a formal requirement, engagement is seen as pivotal to achieving the aim of the strategy and that it is not possible to achieve net zero without widespread involvement of the community.
 - Consultation is also seen as important to maintain the reputation of council, because without it it is possible to misjudge what people value and create projects based on general views rather than things that are locally suitable.

"If you don't do it right then you can alienate people and they don't do it, it starts to feel like plans are put together by people who can afford to make those changes and then people are sore that they have to make changes that they can't afford."

"For me the only way to scale is to involve more people and the way to get more people is to get them doing stuff, and stuff that they have originated. The council sees itself as the facilitator and enabler of the community."

Funding

**Information on cost:**

- The amount of funding for projects has not been decided. Funding was discussed in the consumer panels, such as the realities of cost of retrofit, but this was more to inform blue sky thinking rather than determine acceptability.

Source of funding:

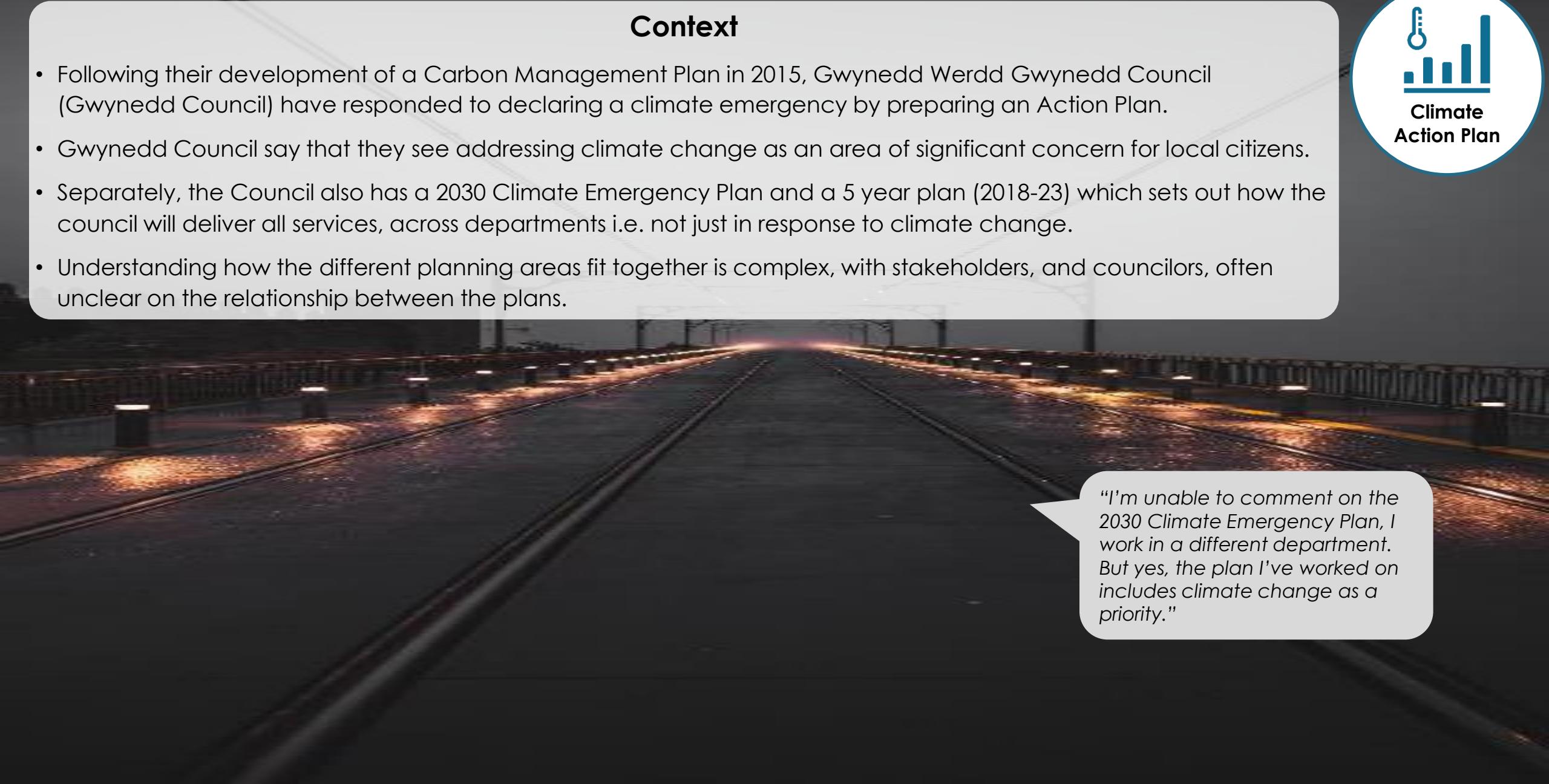
- The source of funding is not yet decided, but it is not the intention that plans will be paid for by consumers; it is largely a community energy model.
- Some funding has been allocated to provide a salaried Resilience Officer who will lead the work, but this is a relatively small sum and that amount is agreed by councillors who are elected representatives for local people. The council is hoping for increased funding to deliver the plans.
- Money could be raised through community shares where local people invest in a local project, e.g. a solar farm, and receive a 3% return over 10 years.
- The council may also decide to work with commercial partners, for example changing the fleet of public transport vehicles to electric.

Context

- Following their development of a Carbon Management Plan in 2015, Gwynedd Werdd Gwynedd Council (Gwynedd Council) have responded to declaring a climate emergency by preparing an Action Plan.
- Gwynedd Council say that they see addressing climate change as an area of significant concern for local citizens.
- Separately, the Council also has a 2030 Climate Emergency Plan and a 5 year plan (2018-23) which sets out how the council will deliver all services, across departments i.e. not just in response to climate change.
- Understanding how the different planning areas fit together is complex, with stakeholders, and councilors, often unclear on the relationship between the plans.

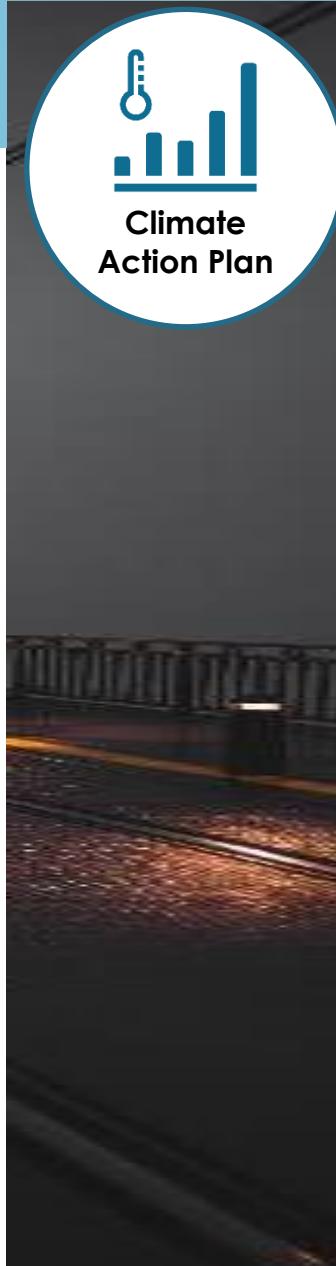


Climate
Action Plan

A dark, atmospheric photograph of a multi-lane road at night. The road is illuminated by the headlights of approaching vehicles, creating a bright, glowing path that recedes into the distance. The sides of the road are dark and feature some low-level lights or signs.

"I'm unable to comment on the 2030 Climate Emergency Plan, I work in a different department. But yes, the plan I've worked on includes climate change as a priority."

Governance



Ownership & decision-making:

- Gwynedd Council have overseen the planning process throughout – and this dates back to the development of the council's first carbon management plan in 2005.
- All decisions are made by the council following normal council processes.

Plan development:

- The council worked closely with the Carbon Trust to devise the 2005 plan, which included using a structure developed by the Carbon Trust. One stakeholder told us that the next carbon management plan is likely to use a Friends of the Earth template due to the focus on the climate emergency.

Scrutiny:

- The Carbon Management Plan was scrutinized by the council's scrutiny panel – including local members of the cabinet, the head of finance, the head of environment and some “on-the-ground” officers.
- The 2018-23 plan also has a scrutiny committee which challenged the draft plan and continues to review and challenge progress during an annual review process.

“The first one used a report template from Carbon Trust so the guts of the report was there.”

“We have a scrutiny committee. Their responsibility to monitor and challenge the plans. They are backbench members, anybody who is not a cabinet member, cross party members.”

Citizen and stakeholder engagement (1/2)



Consultation:

- **Council Plan 2018-2023:** The council has been working with various stakeholders on developing the Council Plan 2018-2023 – these include Carbon Trust Wales, Bangor University, local colleges, community groups and industry (Anglesey Energy Island). DNOs have not been involved in any stage of the plan.
- Public consultation was conducted during the development of 2018-23 plan. This involved an online residents' survey; face-to-face events with residents; consulting with Third Sector Organisations; and internal meetings with back bench councillors who represent the views and needs of residents.
- **2015 Carbon management Plan:** Public consultation was deemed unnecessary for the 2015 Carbon Management Plan, due to the fact that this was heavily focused on council / community buildings. However, specific aspects of the carbon management plan (and how it was developed) have been shared with Extinction Rebellion and also via some press releases.

Inclusivity:

- The involvement of community groups and local colleges in stakeholder engagement suggests that some measures have been taken to reach hard-to-reach audiences.
- For the 2018-23 plan, the residents' survey sample included a good mix of age and location. However, no efforts were made to make the sample representative of the authority area and likely did not include some hard to reach audiences e.g. digitally excluded

Citizen and stakeholder engagement (2/2)



Citizens experience of engagement:

- Stakeholders spoke of the importance of engagement not only through formal consultation, but also within the everyday interactions of frontline staff, who may be in a position to determine the needs and priorities of local people.
- Gathering feedback in this way may help to overcome the limitations of formal consultation, for example by including those who do not have internet access and therefore cannot participate in an online consultation.

Impact of engagement on plan:

- Although not pertaining to energy, one stakeholder spoke of children's mental welfare becoming a priority in the council's plans based on evidence presented by frontline staff who were able to determine needs through their everyday engagement.

Risks of inadequate engagement

- The relatively low level of public engagement carried out previously is seen as a reputational risk to the council and has attracted criticism in the past. However, others suggest that the public have the ability to have their say through voting at council elections.
- The main risk of not engaging local people sufficiently is that their needs are not known and so the council cannot be sure that it is providing the right services.

"Finding out needs is a continuous process... its always there in the work that you do [...] it comes from front line staff experiencing and talking with families, not always the consultation process. It's our evidence, collecting evidence from the day job, not just consultation. We are aware there is a limit to online consultation, we're unlikely to reach certain people like people without internet access."

Funding

**Information on cost:**

- The first two carbon management plans involved a £7m investment across the two plans. This has so far led to a saving of £4m.
- The total cost of the Council Plan 2018-2023 is unclear and likely undetermined at this stage. However, for 2020/21, the Council's budget is £97m split across all departments, with a £3.5m budget allocated for the Environment Department.

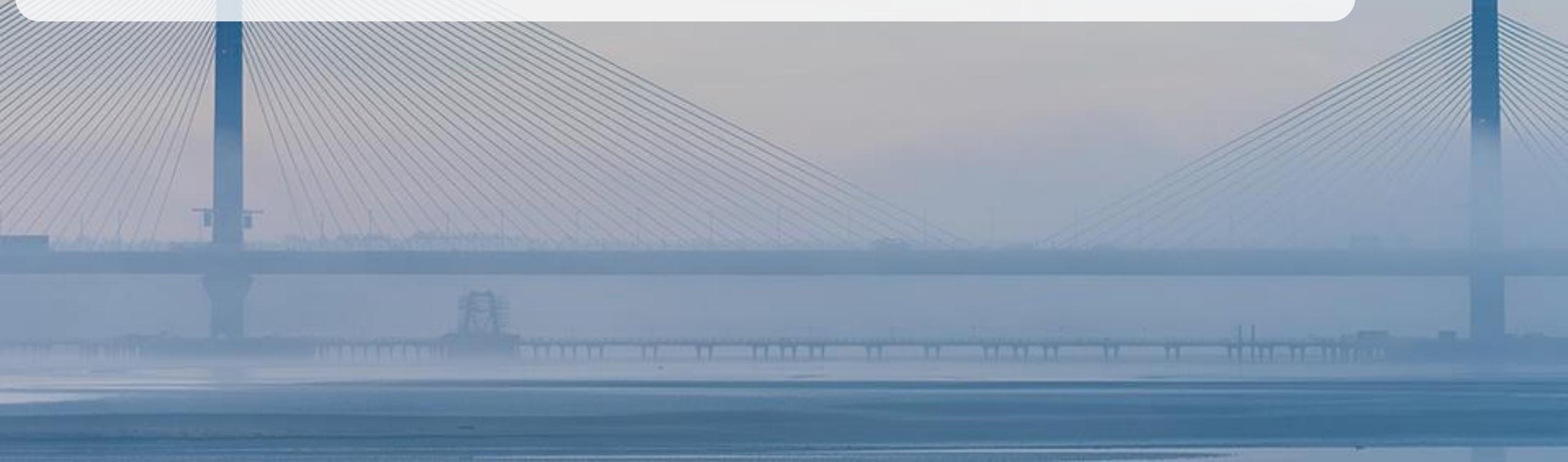
Source of funding:

- The carbon management plans were funded largely by the council and capital revenue. There was also some funding from the Welsh Government and from Salix Finance, a not-for-profit organisation that provides interest-free loans for energy efficiency projects.
- If working with other organisations to deliver a project then funding can come from grants e.g. National Lottery Community Fund

Context



- Cool 2 Wirral is a strategy for Wirral in the face of the global climate emergency which was published in 2019.
- This is the second strategy of the 'Cool' strategies. The first plan was Cool Wirral, written for 2014-2019 and was used as a template and context when developing Cool 2. The declaration of the global climate emergency has also steered the direction of the plan
- It intends to provide a holistic approach to tackling the climate emergency and includes a range of issues such as renewable energy, transport, energy storage, the economy and health.
- Its targets include becoming fossil-fuel free by around 2030 and reaching zero carbon by 2041.



Governance



Ownership & decision-making:

- The strategy is not owned by a single body, rather it is a shared regional strategy for all to strive towards – however, Wirral Council are taking ownership of the annual reporting.
- Decisions are made by a steering group called the Cool Partnership, which includes public, private and third sector organisations. The area's DNO, Scottish Power Energy Network, is part of the Partnership.
- The group meets every 2-3 months.
- The group monitors progress against objectives and will take action if things are not going to plan.

Plan development:

- The process of writing the plan involved various partners, stakeholders and residents.
- The steering group reviewed the progress of Cool Wirral and agreed the focus for Cool 2. Several drafts of the plan were reviewed by the Partnership before final sign off.
- In comparison with the development of Cool Wirral in 2014, there was more publicly available information and tools to help develop the Cool 2 Wirral plan. For example, the team was able to use the Tindle Centre carbon budget tool to inform their estimates. The Tindle centre is a specialist academic unit associated with the University of Manchester and the Paris Agreement.

Scrutiny:

- Details of the strategy and decision-making are included in the published annual report.

"Before all of this, environmental programmes were driven by central government and national indicators but now we realised we need local strategies and that's where the Cool strategies have come from."

"The primary reason for an independent chair is so it is not a council-owned strategy.... ownership is not just the council, it's the responsibility of everyone involved and individuals involved across the borough, we all have a role to play."

Citizen and stakeholder engagement (1/2)



Consultation:

- Cool Wirral involved a residents' survey to identify key needs and priorities. These needs and priorities were used to inform the development of the Cool 2 objectives. There were also 'Cool Yule' and 'Eco' school events in December 2018 to gather information from the pupils about the things that matter to young people.
- A draft of the Cool 2 Wirral plan was put out to public consultation to obtain the views on residents. The online survey was run in-house and obtained 700 responses.
- In the summer of 2019, the Council and Partnership hosted an event to canvas the views of residents and the community.

Inclusivity:

- Although 60-70 people attended the summer face to face event, it attracted the 'same old faces' of people engaged in environmental issues, and the attendees were not necessarily representative of the community.
- Beyond getting a young people's perspective, Cool hasn't tried to reach any minority groups. Some different groups have been reached organically e.g. faith communities but this happened because a faith group joined the Partnership, rather than being part of the plan.

"You have to try and engage as much as possible, but there is a limit of resource and time. Cool does lots of engagement, it's constantly reaching out for engagement. Sometimes people just don't notice."

Citizen and stakeholder engagement (2/2)



Engagement oversight:

- 'Cool communities' is a strand of the strategy which focuses on engaging communities and businesses. During lockdown they have been running Zoom sessions across the community, educating people on a variety of environmental behaviours that can help achieve Cool 2.
- Cool Communities is running a Zoom Q&A session in December and will have a local celebrity speaking.

Impact of engagement on plan:

- During consultation, a member of the public criticised the look of the document, which shaped the way the document was presented.
- 'Cool Communities' was established as a direct result of a residents survey conducted by one of the charities in which people said that they wanted to be more involved.

Risks of inadequate engagement:

- The main risk of inadequate engagement is that the goals laid out in the plan will not be achieved. Engagement is required to achieve buy-in from local communities so that they feel a sense of ownership of the strategy and are prepared to make the required changes to their behaviour. Environmental issues may not be a priority for some people and it is necessary to find ways to connect with them effectively.

"During the second strategy consultation, people were asking for more, to go further and faster, more urgency, which affected the tone of the strategy."

"For some people their agenda is getting their next meal. We need to incorporate the environmental agenda in a way that is meaningful for them."

Funding

**Information on cost:**

- No figures are given in the plan; the document is seen as a strategy, rather than an action plan with specific costs associated to it.

Source of funding:

- The projects involves many partners which each have access to different funding streams and resources can therefore be pooled to fund the scheme.

"It's an open-ended developmental programme, it's not a costed action plan."

Context



- The Sheffield City Region comprises the Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA), the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the SCR Executive Team. It works with Local Authorities, businesses, communities and other partners to support economic growth across South Yorkshire and the wider city region.
- The Energy Strategy was published in June 2020 to provide a high level strategy for the region to address the climate emergency. It is a holistic plan with 4 goals:
 1. Drive clean growth and decarbonisation in our local businesses and industry whilst maintaining their competitiveness.
 2. Promote investment and innovation in low carbon energy generation, distribution and storage technologies.
 3. Improve the energy efficiency and sustainability of our built environment, and encourage communities to be part of the transition.
 4. Accelerate the transition to ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) and transport systems through modal shift and supporting infrastructure.
- Since then the Energy Strategy has been incorporated into the Net Zero Programme alongside the Strategic Economic Plan and the Transport Strategy.

Governance (1/2)



Ownership & decision-making:

- The whole process has been overseen by Sheffield City Region (SCR) Programme manager with input from a steering group.
- There is some criticism of the power of the LEP board (e.g. potential to veto proposals from the steering group or the Programme Manager) and their lack of knowledge and understanding of the green economy. Some questions over the representativeness of the and the potential for this to allow “hidden vested interests” to act.
- Some criticism of lack of action – in part due to lack of senior resource in LAs with expertise to drive forward.

Plan development

- SCR has developed the plan, based on initial research carried out by the Carbon Trust.
- The plan development was led by a steering group, which included the 4 Local Authorities in the area, 2 universities and 2 internal stakeholders from the SCR. (Local Authorities were invited to ensure the strategy aligned with LA-level strategies). Meetings were held approximately quarterly with the circulation of drafts over the 2 years. Local Authorities were more a ‘consultee’ rather than a key decision maker.
- SCR employed a Programme Manager (who drove the process) to write the strategy, which took 18 – 24 months

“It [the strategy] disappeared into the LEP and then came out again, it was controlled by the LEP, but there were opportunities to comment on the drafts.”

Governance (2/2)



Scrutiny:

- Various drafts were presented to the SCR Infrastructure Boards before being finalised in June 2020.
- There was pressure from BEIS and the Energy Hub to complete the strategy as quickly as possible since all the other regions in the Energy Hub had already developed their strategy.
- Once confirmation of the 'Growth Fund' funding is received in April 2021 then the formal Governance process will be followed. This will involve a written proposal going to the SCR Executive Board and then to the LEP and Combined Authority Board for final sign-off of spend.

“[Representation of the views of local population] didn’t happen as much as we should have because of the pressure to get it done.”

Citizen and stakeholder engagement (1/2)



Consultation:

- 2 stakeholder events were convened including c.100 stakeholders – among them were Local Authority partners, Community Energy England, local activist groups such as Sheffield Climate Alliance and local businesses from different sectors including SMEs and steel companies (that are looking decarbonise).
- The events were open to anyone who wanted to come along but were not actively marketed to consumers/residents. However, some key groups e.g. Manufacturing Forum not adequately represented.
- The events were run as mix of information giving and gathering views – attendees were asked what they would like to see happening and the interventions they would like to see included in the strategy.
- The information from the stakeholder events were given to Ricardo (a consultancy) which developed a carbon budget to inform the strategy.
- Further consultation work has been conducted via Urban Foresight (20-30 discussions with stakeholders) including LAs, universities, Climate Alliance, Extinction Rebellion) to inform the net zero plan. No consumer groups were consulted but the Net Zero Partnership board includes a union representative.

"There could have been more consultation with Local Authorities, but the final document reflects our position."

"There were some real hiccups with the early drafts... but voices were taken into account and we were taken seriously."

Citizen and stakeholder engagement (2/2)



Inclusivity:

- The SCR is aware that the stakeholders were not a representative sample of the region.
- Inclusion or disadvantage has not been considered to date. Once this Energy Strategy moves towards an action plan then public engagement/consultation would be carried out and the issue of inclusion will be addressed as part of the standard governance and assurance processes.
- Currently a prioritisation framework is being developed for the implementation of the net zero programme – one of the 16 ‘boxes’ within this framework is inclusion.
- In the development stage, the University worked with a local energy centre – but no public consultations were conducted. During this development stage the issue of social justice (e.g. fuel poverty) was considered by the academics working on the plan.

Risks of inadequate engagement:

- There has been no direct consumer engagement with the plan through any form of consultation but this was not considered a risk by those interviewed due to the stage the strategy is at currently.
- Some members of the Steering Group question the potential role the general public can play when developing the strategy which requires expert knowledge and understanding and use of technical language.
- The public will be better able to give an opinion on an action plan later in the process.

“We did not actively include or exclude anyone.”

“Inactivity is a greater criticism than exclusivity.”

Funding

**Information on cost:**

- The Strategy identifies need for £29 billion to reach the targets laid out in the strategy. This was a '*very rough estimate*', '*back of an envelope*' based on proportioning the figures in the Committee on Climate Change for decarbonising the UK and also factoring the desire to reach net zero carbon 10 years quicker than UK targets.
- There is an assumption that any final budget and costs will be available to the public as part of the normal transparency procedures.

Source of funding:

- Development of the SCR Energy Strategy was supported by £40k from BEIS and further £30k from SCR funds and support from BEIS to employ a full-time Programme Manager hosted by SCR to lead on energy and sustainability and finalise the strategy. The University also funded work (via the central Research Council) to carry out initial policy and development work to inform the strategy.
- The assumption is that this £29 billion would come from 3 different sources: public sector funding; large private sector investors (e.g. spend to buy electric vehicles); and small pots from SMEs or home-owners.
- No budget is currently allocated to the Energy Strategy, but there is £400k from Mayoral capacity fund to spend on starting the net zero project.

"The £29billion figure is a very rough estimate based on the committee on climate change... we took their figures for decarbonising the UK and proportioned it out based on geography and per capita basis..."

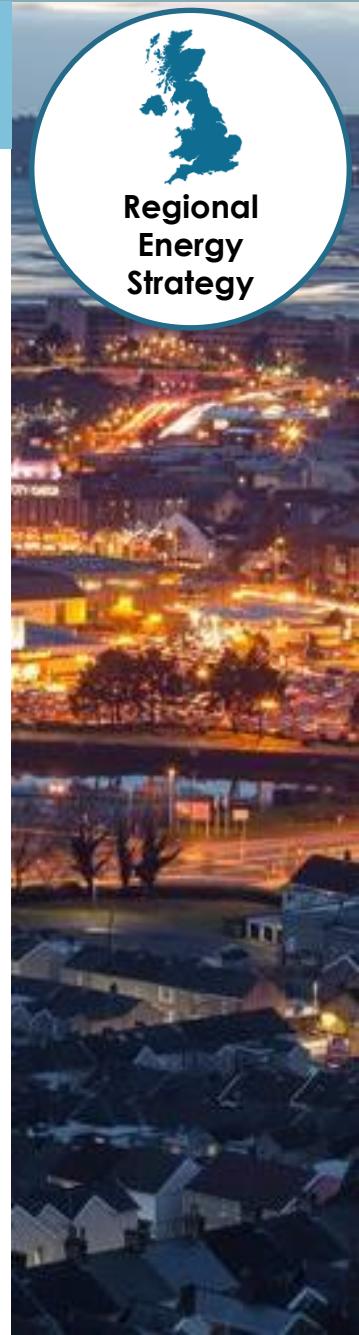
Context

- The Welsh Government Energy Service has been supporting each of the 4 regions in Wales to develop an energy strategy. The overall outcome will be for '*each region to have an effective governance structure to coordinate public, private and community collaboration to deliver decarbonisation impact over the longer term.*' Local Area Energy Plans will follow-on from the regional strategies (indeed funding for the first 2 local area energy plan pilots in Wales was announced in December 2020).
- The Swansea Bay City Region is a partnership of the four west Wales local authorities of Swansea, Neath Port Talbot, Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire. The Regional Energy Plan for the Swansea Bay City Region (SBCR) is currently under development (at Stage 1 before moving on to developing a delivery plan). It aims to set out a future vision for decarbonising the region and identify the priorities for achieving this vision.
- The Swansea Bay City Region Energy Plan is building on previous work undertaken in the region, particularly the Institute of Welsh Affairs (think tank) report 'Swansea Bay City Region: A renewable Energy Future' by Regen which also involved bringing together representatives from industry, regional stakeholders and academia with objective of providing practical plan to create a low carbon energy system vision for the Swansea Bay City Region to 2035. Since then the landscape has changed with the declaration of a climate emergency.
- Within the Swansea Bay City Deal 3 of the 11 projects relate to energy – it is hoped that the Regional Energy Strategy will build a strategic overview providing a structure for how these other projects will fit together in the long term.

"We're looking to develop regional energy strategies and embed those within the regions and then the eventual plans is to move into local area energy plans and link up the regional strategies with the local plans and make sure they are aligned."



Governance (1/2)



Ownership & decision-making:

- The Welsh Government Energy Service is supporting the development of the strategy and establishment of the governance structures to ensure that it is “owned by the region”.
- The pre-existing Regional Directors Group (of the 4 local authorities) will provide the overarching governance structure and a specific energy strategy subgroup is in the process of being established which will ensure appropriate involvement of public, private and community sectors and also the City Growth Deal. (N.B. In other regions of Wales the energy strategies have been under the governance structure of the Growth Deals)
- There is currently some confusion about the ownership and who is driving the agenda amongst local stakeholders e.g. the relationship between the developing strategy and the City Deal is not clear to all stakeholders.

Plan development

- The strategy is in the early stages of being developed and is expected to be completed summer 2021.
- N.B. Other Welsh regions are further ahead and in the process of having their strategies approved by Council. Swansea Bay is City Region has in part been delayed due to Covid.

Citizen and stakeholder engagement (1/2)



Consultation:

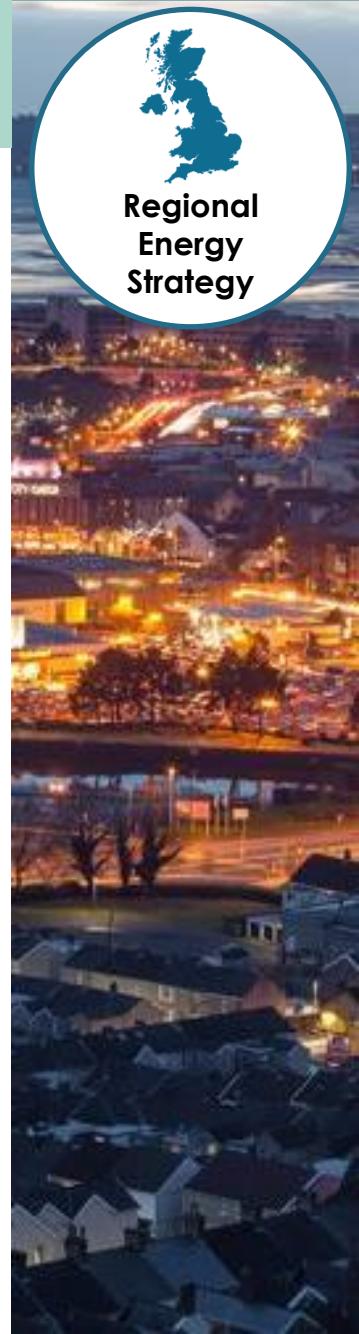
- 2 'visioning' workshops have been conducted (Spring 2020) – convened by Welsh Energy Service, Swansea Bay City Deal and in part facilitated by Carbon Trust.
- The workshops were attended by range of stakeholders: Local Authorities, Universities, health authorities, private sector, DNOs and voluntary organisations.
- Formal stakeholder mapping is currently being undertaken to determine who to invite as part of the core group and is expected to include community energy representatives
- Future consultation and stakeholder engagement is planned when moving towards Stage 2 and the development of the Energy Delivery Plan and when reaching the delivery stages.
- Some stakeholder perception that insufficient public and stakeholder engagement was conducted in the development of the City Deal and hopes that this will not be the case for future energy strategies or local plans.

Inclusivity:

- No evidence of how this has been considered to date
- No evidence of how this has been considered to date

Risks of inadequate engagement:

Citizen and stakeholder engagement (2/2)



Consumer experience of engagement:

- There has been no direct citizen engagement with developing the strategy to date. This is because it is at the 'visioning' stage and it is difficult to get people to engage with the technical details and abstract concepts.
- There is an expectation that community involvement will not occur until the next stage of developing Delivery Plans or local area energy plans
- There is awareness of the challenges associated with engaging with a representative sample of citizens/residents and some caution over how representative organisations/lobby groups that attend stakeholder events are of the wider population.

Barriers to engagement

- Covid-19 has presented challenges for running stakeholder consultation events – the first event was switched online at late notice
- Lack of resources and competing priorities
- Some stakeholder perception that generally public and community consultation takes place too late in the planning process
- Awareness that workshop consultation events only reach those stakeholders who are actively interested and engaged with energy policies and net zero.

Funding

**Information on cost:**

- Cost modelling for the strategy is currently being done

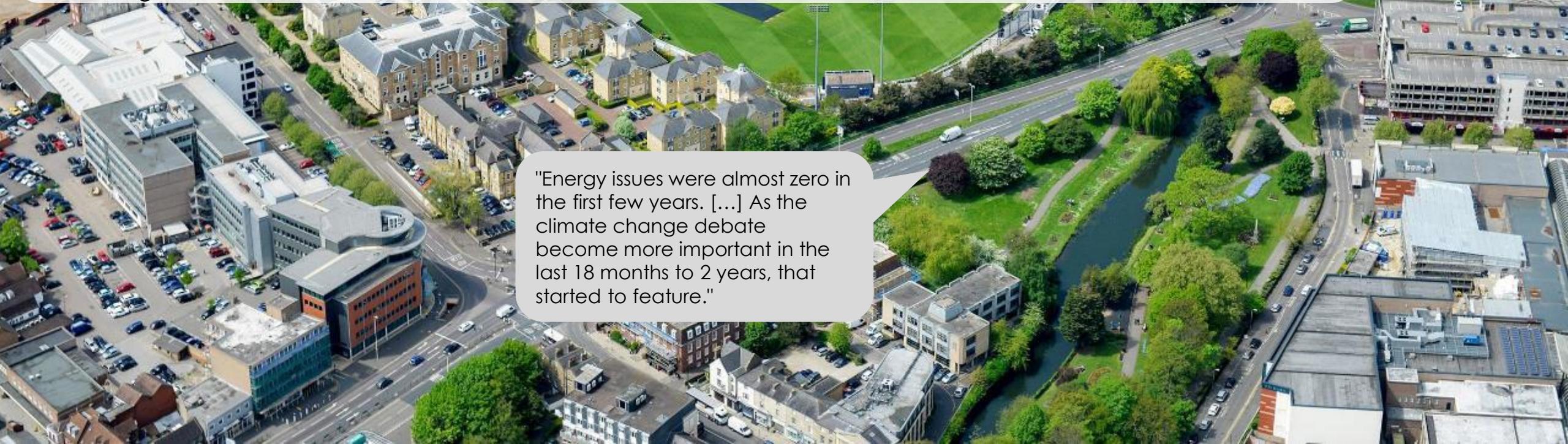
Source of funding:**City Deal**

Cost information for the Swansea Bay City Deal is available: total investment of £1.30 billion and the break down for the 3 energy projects within this:

- Homes as Power Stations: total £500 million (£15m City Deal, £115m public sector, £375m private sector)
- Pembroke Dock Marine: total £60 million (£28m City Deal, £18m public sector, £15m private sector)
- Smart Manufacturing: total £61 million (£48m City Deal, £8m public sector, £6m private sector)

Context

- Chelmsford City Council has spent 7 years developing the Chelmsford Local Plan, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework. It has now been approved, outlining a master plan for local development, including housing, transport and other issues.
- Energy plays a relatively minor part of the planning considerations. Stakeholders say that this was largely due to timing; policy and guidance post-2010 did not concentrate on reducing the carbon emissions of the community and the plan was already in the final stages of its approval process in 2019 when the political mood became more environmentally focussed. There was limited opportunity for change, and although the plan and the neighbourhood plans underneath it express an aspirations of what they would like to achieve, they are not concrete strategies for delivering this.



"Energy issues were almost zero in the first few years. [...] As the climate change debate become more important in the last 18 months to 2 years, that started to feature."

Governance



Ownership & decision-making:

- Chelmsford City Plan – and specifically the Spatial Planning Team – have overseen the process from beginning to end, following the formal planning process as laid out in the NPPF.
- All decisions are made by the city council, although closely based on the consultation and subject to scrutiny by an independent examiner (as well as all documents being in the public domain).
- They aimed to understand broad principles of what residents want or need, rather than asking them about the details of planning proposals and produced a “you said, we did” after each stage of the consultation.

Scrutiny:

- It is required by law to seek to engage hard-to-reach audiences and deliver a Statement of Community Involvement for review in a process akin to a public enquiry. The Chelmsford plan was approved by one Inspector, who said that they had gone far beyond what was formally required in terms of public engagement and outreach.

Citizen and stakeholder engagement (1/2)

**Consultation:**

- There have been four rounds of formal consultation with local stakeholders and residents, as well as extensive informal consultation. This has included town hall and village hall events, surveys of the local population, publication of documents online (and invitation to respond), as well as bilateral meetings between the council and key stakeholder groups.

Inclusivity:

- The council specifically targeted hard-to-reach audiences – including the local traveller community through commissioned market research, as well as outreach to schools and work with the YMCA.
- While numerous efforts were made to engage local communities (including promotion in various online and offline media), stakeholders said it attracted comments from a small subsection of the population – typically older, more affluent and whiter. Participation also varied hugely across the local area – with high engagement in areas likely to be heavily impacted by the plan and low engagement in other areas. Community groups were frustrated that engagement was lowest among audiences likely to be greatly affected by the plan in the long term, such as young families.
- The primary barrier to more widespread engagement is a perceived lack of time – with the working age population unlikely to want to engage more fully in the process given the pressures of family life, etc. Others thought engagement would not have any impact based on the response of the council to consultation exercises.
- During the Covid restrictions, Essex County Council has been able to engage a much more diverse sample than normal in its countywide planning consultations by running virtual exhibitions and online forums. As a result, the City Council are considering adopting hybrid (face-to-face and online) approaches for their next Plan.

Citizen and stakeholder engagement (2/2)



Citizens' experience of engagement:

- Certain stakeholders felt that elements of the consultation process were a “box-ticking exercise” and highlight how residents were given very narrow choices on the local plan. For example, residents could vote on 3 different proposals, but for the residents of one affected village the part of the proposal relevant to them was identical across all 3. The city council say that the process is intended to build consensus through its journey, with increasing agreement at each stage of the planning process. They say that they are unable to please everyone.

Impact of engagement on plan:

- The council has published a number of ‘You Said, We Did’ feedback reports outlining actions taken as a result of public feedback. For example, all feedback received on the Preferred Options document was detailed along with a response from the council and any actions taken.

Risks of inadequate engagement:

- The greatest perceived risk of inadequate engagement with local communities is a procedural risk that the council is not deemed to have provided a sound evidence base for their Local Plan, leading to it being rejected or subject to significant criticism. This may in turn affect the council’s ability to access funding from central government. Beyond this, there are broader risks to the council, particularly reputationally – the plan may lack community buy-in, and undermine faith in “the system”, inc. local government.

“Generally, there's lots of opinion that when these things come out, they're a done deal. When you looked down the list of 'you said, we did', the city council didn't do a lot of things that they had asked for.”

“It was quite clear from day one that we'd got a problem. We did try to focus more on people with young families.”

“We spoke to thousands and thousands of people. We had all the events in village halls, the exhibitions...it was quite a traditional process. The means and methods that we use are quite traditional.”

Funding

**Information on cost:**

- As a planning framework, there is no cost attached to the Plan – it simply outlines where developments can / should be built in the local area, and the infrastructure needed to support this.
- The cost of implementing new development largely isn't considered; it is assumed that developers, and ultimately home owners, will bear this cost. This is also true of environmental and energy considerations; local neighbourhood plans include aspirations to power their communities on green energy or to install EV charging points, but the costs of these are not considered.

Source of funding:

- Development of the plan itself is very expensive for the council, requiring staff time to develop the plan, and for external consultants to deliver key documents.

"The consultation with developers felt like a bit of a farce. They had to tick the box that they had consulted local people, but they weren't listening."

Context

- Oxfordshire LEO is a multi-partner project between local government, energy companies, academia and community organisations. It is an “ambitious, wide-ranging, innovative, and holistic smart grid trial” which aims to improve the understanding of the opportunities arising from the transition to a smarter, flexible electricity system and how households, businesses and communities can realise its benefits.
- The project has now been running for several years and is due to run until the end of 2022.
- The project will use Innovate UK funding to create a legacy of a system which can continue after LEO is mothballed. The scheme has trialled numerous cutting-edge interventions – such as “Grid Edge” connectivity – in locations around the county.
- It is more focussed on trialling technology than on developing a strategy for delivering energy to the county – this is covered by the Oxfordshire Energy Strategy.
- Separately, Oxford City Council has conducted extensive citizen engagement following its declaration of climate emergency – including a major citizens assembly project.



Innovation
Project



Governance (1/2)

Ownership & decision-making:

- The project is jointly run by a group of 8-9 organisations. It is a partnership and there is no single lead organization.
- The project has formal governance processes set out in the original pitch document. These involve numerous levels of committees jointly overseen by representatives of the various partner organisations. Disagreements have apparently been relatively few and far between – but all accept that these are inevitable in a complex multi-partner arrangement. Where these have arisen, they have been resolved satisfactorily by the committees.
- Work has been divided into 6 “work packages”, with a different organisation leading each. Project management is overseen by SSE, with the primary role being to minimize siloing and maintain links between the different working groups. Externally, SSE are not seen to have a particular vested interest in the development of the scheme.
- There is a view that smaller organisations in the partnership may have found the processes and bureaucracy of the larger organisations limiting – esp. where this has slowed things down, such as in SSE’s ability to connect specific schemes to the network and to do so at a reasonable rate.
- Covid has made the process of working together more challenging, with a greater tendency to feel siloed, and less opportunity for softer interaction that can help smooth working relationships.
- Project LEO is required to provide regular reporting as a condition of its Innovate UK funding – this includes progress reporting, financial reporting, and key documents including project plans and risk registers. Project LEO also publish a library of information and documents about the project on their website.

Scrutiny:



Governance (2/2)

Plan development:

- Organisations including Oxford University, Low Carbon Hub and Oxfordshire CC have been in close contact for 15+ years and came together to pitch for Innovate UK funding.
- Energy companies also became involved because Ofgem is encouraging them to engage in schemes like this. For SSE, the switch from DNO to DSO is a major change in role, and they already had internal projects on this which aligned closely with the project objectives. So for them it is a “win-win” – providing a “proof of concept” about various aspects of the change from DNO to DSO and giving them the opportunity to understand what their role will look like in the future, and what they need to work on to achieve this.
- There was a narrow bid writing window, and then once the bid had been successful, Innovate UK had some difficulty in sorting out the paperwork for allocating the funding – largely because of the involvement of the non-profit community-focussed organisation Low Carbon Hub, which was central to the success of the bid but also not typical for this kind of project.
- SSE believe that Oxford is unusual and not that reflective of other areas of the country – in terms of the engagement of the local population (energy is a big issue), the presence of world-class universities, the strong relationships between the actors and the diversity of suitable local locations for trialling new tech.

"SSE have been assiduous in keeping to the understanding that in making the transition to distribution systems operator they are a neutral market facilitator so we haven't really felt that they are pushing their own agenda in quite the way that you might imagine."

"It was one of those things that has evolved over years and then had to come together really quickly to put the bid together, the government gave us a really short timeline, we then worked on that."



Citizen and stakeholder engagement



Consultation:

- No formal public consultation has been conducted because the project is primarily about innovation. However, Low Carbon Hub does provide some community engagement.
 - Separately, Oxford City Council ran a major citizens assembly in 2019 – this is unconnected to LEO.

Inclusivity:

- Low Carbon Hub is considered a specialist in community engagement and has a strong track record of this.
- Its model of Smart and Fair Neighbourhoods is central to the consumer engagement aspect of the project – it is also considered highly unique to Oxfordshire.
- LCH go into specific communities (often low engagement neighbourhoods) and drive community engagement to decide how they would like their energy system to work in the future. LCH have deliberately targeted “exemplar” communities – incl. a mix of urban vs rural / affluent v not affluent, etc.

Risks of inadequate engagement

- Stakeholders say that there are risks to insufficient community engagement – above all, not getting community buy-in to deliver what is required to hit the country's climate and energy goals.
- Very local engagement is also seen as important to ensure that the whole community (or the whole of society) is taken into account when designing new energy systems.

"Most of those people who have influence at national government and regulatory level are people with similar understanding who are large organisations and they do not understand how to work right down in the scale of an individual household."

"You don't get to zero if you don't involve absolutely everybody."

Funding

- Information on cost:**
- The project is a medium-term one which is focussed on innovation, costing £40m.
- Source of funding:**
- £13m is a grant from Innovate UK, following LEO's success in bidding as part of a wider competition
 - The remainder is matched funding from the private sector, especially SSEN and EDF.
 - The funding pays for specific investments in projects around the county – usually schemes to trial new technology. The project coordinators hope that this funding will enable them to put in place a system that is self-perpetuating after the project is completed.
 - Stakeholders say that Oxfordshire will benefit from LEO happening there. Above all, it will enable them to ensure that the local energy network is fit for purpose and ready for future changes (such as widespread use of EVs). So Oxfordshire will be ahead of the game relative to the rest of the country.



Innovation
Project



Innovation
Project

Context

- North East LEP have worked with c.50 stakeholders to develop the North East Energy for Growth Strategy (the organisations are listed at the front of the strategy). The strategy was published in 2019.
- The aim of the Energy for Growth strategy is “to drive growth in the North East while delivering on national energy objectives at scale”. It advances the agenda of the North East Strategic Economic Plan, in place since 2014, which identified energy as a strategic priority for the region, particularly in terms of jobs.
- The Energy for Growth strategy identifies 13 themes where the North East can contribute to national energy policy and drive regional economic growth – these include offshore energy (already an area of significant strength for the area), heat networks and geothermal energy using former mining sites.
- The strategy is built around three workstreams:
 - Offshore energy and subsea technology
 - Regional energy projects
 - Energy demonstration and innovation.
- In parallel, North East LEP have set up North East Energy Catalyst, a partnership between the LEP and partners from industry, academia and the local public sector to “catalyse an integrated energy system, which grows a productive, clean economy for prosperous communities”. This is an innovation-focused partnership – partners meet on a regular basis to discuss ways in which the local energy infrastructure which need to adapt to meet the challenges of the future.

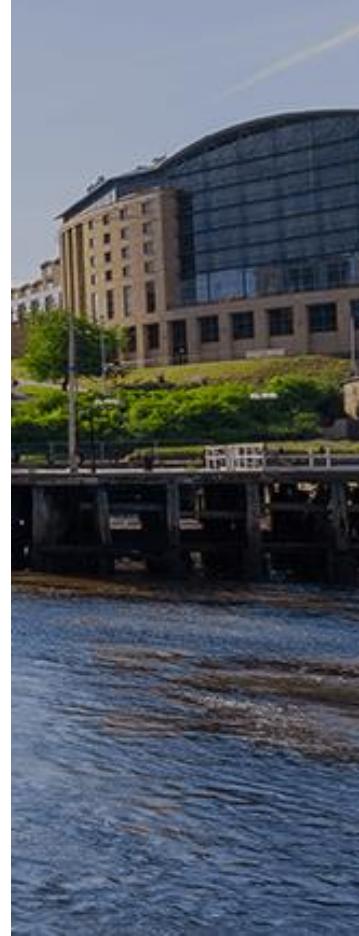
Governance

**Ownership & decision-making:**

- North East LEP has led the development of this plan and says they have consulted with various stakeholder audiences including:
 - Northern Gas Networks
 - Northern PowerGrid
 - Northumbrian Water
 - Local universities
 - Local authorities
- Decision-making around the strategy lies with North East LEP.

Scrutiny:

- The strategy is publicly available, via the North East LEP website – a short executive summary is also available and appears designed for a general public audience.
- We were not able to gain any evidence of other scrutiny mechanisms. The strategy is presumably subject to the LEP's own internal processes; scrutiny of partner activity is unclear.



Citizen and stakeholder engagement



Consultation:

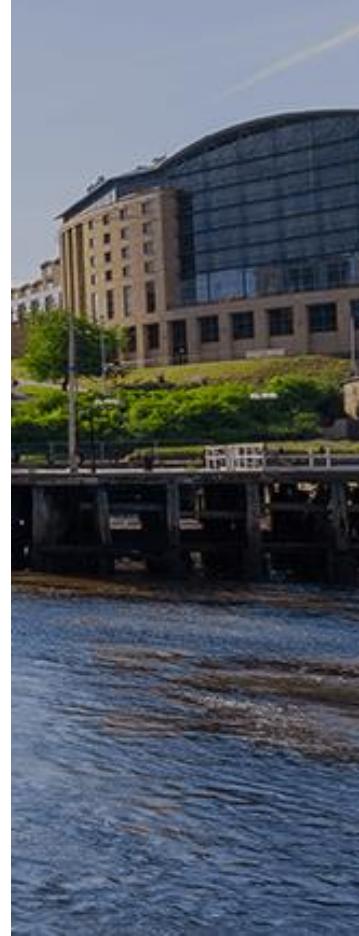
- Stakeholder consultation took the form of 2-3 workshop events and lots of interviews.
- There has been no direct consultation with the public about the strategy, although NELEP say that they have involved the views of the public indirectly – through conversations with local government officials and civil society groups (see below).
- The strategy is primarily focused on helping local businesses, rather than local citizens directly. The LEP says that it has a strong understanding of the local business context.
- If successful, the strategy would drive inward investment in the North East region and therefore be beneficial to local businesses. It would indirectly benefit consumers in potentially leading to more and higher skilled jobs (the strategy aims for 100,000 by 2024, compared to the baseline of 2014). Beyond this, consumers in the region are unlikely to see other benefits in the short- to medium-term. Over time, all consumers (i.e. not just those in the North East region) are expected to benefit from the innovation that the strategy fosters.

Inclusivity:

- The North East LEP have spoken to civil society groups such as Age Concern and National Energy Action about the strategy.

Risks of inadequate engagement

- No specific risks highlighted in conversations.



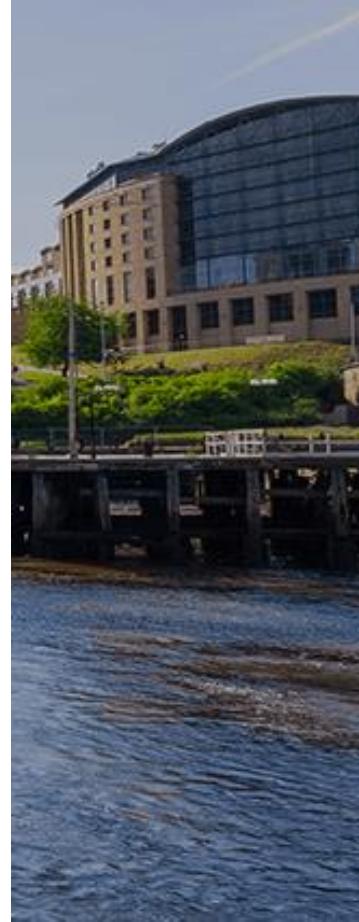
Funding

**Information on cost:**

- No specific funding information is easily accessible in the public domain, or was provided in the depth interviews that we conducted. Funding tends to come in project-specific tranches, usually from public grants for specific technological trials (see below).

Source of funding:

- Funding is primarily from public sources – specifically, innovation funds overseen by central and local government. Indeed, this is a key advantage of the strategy for North East LEP – having a strategy in place (which includes a pipeline of potential innovation trials that stakeholders consider priorities) makes it easier to bid for and access sources of funding.
- Specifically, the strategy makes it easier for the LEP to react quickly to funding opportunities. For example, the team were able to respond very quickly to the Get Britain Building funding that was made available by central Government as a response to COVID-19, and successfully gained funding for a local ‘trial village’ project.
- One interviewee also said that having a strategy in place made it easier for the LEP team working on this to justify the value of their roles.





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