



North Wales Economic Ambition Board
30 September 2022

TITLE: North Wales Energy Strategic Action Plan
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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. To seek the Board's approval of the draft Action Plan to the North Wales Energy Strategy and their recommendations regarding local authority endorsement.

2. DECISION SOUGHT

- 2.1. The Board's approval of the draft Action Plan.
- 2.2. The Board's approval of the proposed governance arrangements for overseeing delivery of the Regional Energy Strategy and Action Plan.
- 2.3. Endorsement for the Action Plan to be considered by each Local Authority, subject to approval by the Board.

3. REASONS FOR THE DECISION

- 3.1. The [North Wales Energy Strategy](#) was endorsed by the North Wales Economic Ambition Board and Welsh Government's Minister for Climate Change in March 2021. The development of the Action Plan is the next stage of the regional energy planning process and is directed at translating priorities into strategic actions and interventions.

4. BACKGROUND AND RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

The Regional Energy Strategy and Action Plan

- 4.1. In March 2021, the Ambition Board and Welsh Government's Minister for Climate Change endorsed the North Wales Energy Strategy and confirmed support for developing the Action Plan. The Strategy was also endorsed by Welsh Government's Minister for Climate Change.
- 4.2. The North Wales Energy Strategy identifies key priorities and opportunities to deliver on the region's ambition for decarbonising its energy system. The Strategy sets out the following vision for North Wales: *'Delivering maximum local economic, social, ecological and wellbeing benefits from transitioning to a net zero economy and becoming a net exporter of low carbon electricity through cross-border and regional cooperation'*.
- 4.3. The priorities for achieving the vision are:
1. To harness the abundance of local low carbon resource to become a green powerhouse and diversify the energy mix.
 2. To become a world-leader in offshore wind and marine technologies.

3. To improve the energy efficiency of the region's housing and accelerate the decarbonisation of North Wales' building stock.
4. To achieve a shift to lower carbon transport.

Through discussion with the Task and Finish Group, an additional priority around the commercial and industrial sector was included for the purposes of the Draft Action Plan.

5. To maximise the opportunities for the commercial and industrial sectors to support the energy transition and drive economic growth.

4.4. The development of the Action Plan is the next stage of the regional energy planning process and is directed at translating priorities into strategic actions and interventions. The Strategy and Action Plan provide the strategic context for the development of more detailed Local Area Energy Plans in each Local Authority Area.

4.5. The Action Plan presents strategic actions generated from four thematic workshops held with a cross-section of sectoral stakeholders from across the region. Each workshop was developed with support from a sectoral thematic lead from within the region. Workshops were held between November 2021 and January 2022. Following the workshops, the Action Plan has been drafted by the sectoral thematic leads and the Welsh Government Energy Service, with support from Ambition North Wales and the Welsh Government. Its development has been overseen by a Task and Finish Group comprised of representatives from the public sector and the business community and chaired by Welsh Government. Representation includes the North Wales Mersey Dee Business Council, all six local authorities, and the Regional Skills Partnership.

In addition to the organisations on the Task and Finish Group, the following stakeholders have been consulted on the draft:

- All workshop attendees (circa 100 individuals representing 60 organisations)
- Ambition North Wales Energy Programme Board
- North Wales Planning Officers Group
- North Wales Decarbonisation Group
- Welsh Local Government Association

4.6. The strategic actions have been mapped against the priorities outlined in the Energy Strategy. Where actions contribute across multiple priorities, they have been defined as cross-cutting actions. Lead organisations, enabling organisations, indicative timescales, funding status and progress status have been specified against each strategic action. All lead and enabling organisations have been consulted on the draft Action Plan and have had the opportunity to feedback on their recommended roles.

Approval of the Action Plan

4.7. The Executive Group endorsed the draft Action Plan on the 22nd July 2022. The Executive Group also recommended that, subject to approval by the Board, the Action Plan be submitted for approval by each Local Authority.

Proposed Governance Arrangements for the Regional Energy Strategy and Action Plan

4.8. The Task and Finish Group have considered the appropriate governance arrangements for overseeing the delivery and review of the Action Plan. The Task and Finish Group have recommended that appropriate governance arrangements are required to deliver the following duties.

- To provide guidance on delivery / prioritisation of actions to lead officers

- To monitor delivery of actions
- To oversee reporting to the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, Local Authorities and Welsh Government
- To influence regional stakeholders to support delivery of actions
- To oversee review of the Action Plan & Strategy

4.9. Similar to the Regional Economic Framework, the Energy Strategy has been co-developed by Ambition North Wales and Welsh Government. Therefore, it is recommended that the proposed governance arrangements should therefore include both parties, with arrangements agreed to report to the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, Local Authorities and the appropriate Minister / Board within Welsh Government. Following a review of options, the Task & Finish Group recommend the existing Task & Finish Group transitions to a Steering Group / Project Board with a revised Terms of Reference. The Task & Finish Group has successfully overseen the development of the Action Plan and already includes key stakeholders from key organisations. Membership would be reviewed as an early priority and the Group would meet regularly and would agree arrangements for reporting to the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, Local Authorities and Welsh Government.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. No direct financial implications at this stage. In addition to ongoing support from the Welsh Government Energy Service, Welsh Government are providing grant funding for new posts within the Portfolio Management Office. The posts will support both the delivery of this draft Action Plan and the development of Local Area Energy Plans.

The draft Action Plan includes the funding status of each strategic action. It should be noted that many actions require no funding, or are already underway or planned through existing programmes or initiatives, whilst others will be progressed subject to the appropriate funding or resources being secured. Where necessary, further work will take place during this year to quantify the resources required to progress implementation of the various actions identified.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The Action Plan, if approved by the Board will need to be considered and approved by each Local Authority prior to implementation.
- 6.2. The proposed governance arrangements would see regular reporting to the Economic Ambition Board on progress against the action plan subject to approval from all Local Authorities.

7. STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

7.1. Welsh Government are providing grant funding for new posts within Ambition North Wales. The posts will support both the delivery of this draft Action Plan and the development of Local Area Energy Plans.

8. CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN

- 8.1. The draft Action Plan has been shared with all workshop attendees (circa 100 individuals representing 60 organisations) and the following groups/boards:
- The Task and Finish Group
 - Ambition North Wales Energy Programme Board

- North Wales Planning Officers Group
- North Wales Decarbonisation Group
- Welsh Local Government Association

The draft Action Plan has also been shared with each proposed lead or enabling organisation identified within the draft Action Plan.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1 Draft North Wales Energy Strategy Action Plan

STATUTORY OFFICERS RESPONSE:

- i. **Monitoring Officer – Host Authority:**
“I will provide any comments on propriety at the meeting.”

- ii. **Statutory Finance Officer (the Host Authority’s Section 151 Officer):**
“I can confirm the accuracy of Part 5 of the report. Ambition North Wales has already accepted the grant proposal to fund the staffing of this Scheme following its meeting on 25 March 2022, and the grant acceptance letters have been returned. I am satisfied that Welsh Government will provide grant funding to cover the costs of delivering the plans in due course.”