

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET – 7 AUGUST 2018
REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (PUBLIC PROTECTION, PLANNING AND GOVERNANCE)

LOCAL ENERGY EAST STRATEGY

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 A grouping of three Local Enterprise Partnerships, known as Local Energy East, has prepared a strategy which aims to reap the economic, social and environmental benefits of the changing energy sector. Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council has been asked to formally endorse the strategy and engage in its on-going delivery.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That members endorse the strategy and accept that officers will continue to engage with colleagues from Herts Local Enterprise Partnership to deliver its actions.

3 Explanation

- 3.1 The Local Energy East Network was established in response to the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) offering each Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) funding to develop a Local Energy Strategy. The three LEP areas of Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough and New Anglia joined together and working with their local authorities, the Distribution Network Operator (DNO), universities, third sector and energy sector businesses.
- 3.2 This tri-LEP group has produced a local energy strategy for the combined area.
- 3.3 The purpose of the strategy is to unblock current challenges in order to capitalise on local energy generation, storage, distribution and supply opportunities.
- 3.4 It anticipates major changes within the energy industry; such as rising demand from evolving markets, continually improving unit costs for renewable energy generation, improving battery technology and a transition from petrol/diesel to electric vehicles.
- 3.5 The strategy recognises that the east is already a leading area for renewable energy and well-positioned in terms of the strategy's four themes: clean economic growth, housing and commercial growth, low-carbon consumption and clean transport networks. Its aim is to reap the economic, social and environmental benefits of the energy revolution – in terms of jobs, supply chains, innovation, energy supply networks, energy markets, emissions and air quality.
- 3.6 The project has started with wide-ranging engagement with stakeholders and a detailed mapping exercise of energy related information.
- 3.7 The strategy has an agreed set of objectives and identifies the actions and targets that it considers are necessary to deliver on its four themes. These include:

investment in energy and storage technologies; creating high-quality jobs; diffusing energy innovation into other sectors such as construction, agriculture and manufacturing; enabling housing growth and commercial land; investing in upstream reinforcements in the grid; decentralisation of the energy network; tackling fuel poverty; improving energy efficiency of buildings and vehicles; transforming transport networks and methods of transportation; enabling the large-scale roll-out of electric vehicles; introducing electricity and hydrogen into public and freight transport; changing behaviours to low-carbon forms of transport; and many other actions.

3.8 There are several areas of the strategy of specific significance which include fuel poverty, the Local Plan and the increasing demand on local energy provision.

3.9 It is intended that the three LEPs involved in the east area will form part of a wider Greater South East Energy Hub, with dedicated human and financial resources to start delivering the identified actions.

4 Legal Implications

4.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

5 Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report. The strategy may result in new research and investment in energy in the Welwyn Hatfield area.

6 Risk Management Implications

6.1 There are no risk implications associated with this report. It can be presumed that the grouping of local enterprise partnerships and other stakeholders will continue to progress and deliver the strategy, even if this Council chooses not to endorse it.

7 Security and Terrorism Implications

7.1 There are no security or terrorism implications associated with this report. There is merit in more locally produced energy in response to global economic uncertainty.

8 Procurement Implications

8.1 There are no procurement implications associated with this report.

9 Climate Change Implications

9.1 There are no direct climate change implications associated with this report. The strategy includes actions to create cleaner energy, reduce pollution, improve air quality and encourage a shift to more sustainable modes of transport, all of which accord with many of this Council's corporate and planning policies.

10 Link to Corporate Priorities

10.1 The subject of this report is linked to the Council's Business Plan 2015-2018 and particularly Priority 2 to protect and enhance the environment and Priority 4 to help build a strong local economy.

11 Equalities and Diversity

11.1 An EqlA was not completed because this report does not propose changes to existing service-related policies or the development of new service-related policies.

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Date	July 2018

Background Papers:

Local East Energy Strategy
Local East Energy Strategy – Mapping Analysis Report