

CABINET MEETING

31st January 2022

SOUTH WEST WALES REGIONAL ENERGY STRATEGY

Purpose:

To seek Cabinet approval to adopt the South West Wales Regional Energy Strategy.

Recommendations / key decisions required:

It is RECOMMENDED that:

- (1) The South West Wales Regional Energy Strategy be adopted, and
- (2) Delegated authority be granted to Officers to make typographical or factual amendments as necessary to improve the clarity and accuracy of the South West Wales Regional Energy Strategy.

Reasons:

To support the Welsh Government's approach to regional energy planning, by guiding the transformational interventions that will be needed to reduce carbon emissions and increase renewable energy production to help achieve a net zero Wales by 2050.

Relevant scrutiny committee to be consulted NO

Cabinet Decision Required YES

Council Decision Required NO

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:

Cllr Ann Davies, Cabinet Member for Communities and Rural Affairs

Directorate:

Environment

Name of Head of Service:

Rhodri Griffiths

Report Author:

Kendal Davies

Designations:

Head of Place and
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CABINET MEETING

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SOUTH WEST WALES REGIONAL ENERGY STRATEGY

Background and context

1. As part of the public sector response to the challenges and opportunities created by climate change, the net zero carbon agenda and the 'green industrial revolution', the Welsh Government has supported the development of four regional energy strategies across Wales.
2. With the support of the Welsh Government Energy Service (WGES) – established in 2018 to provide impetus to drive forward a vision for a new energy system – a regional energy planning group was established in January 2021. The core group consists of directors and lead energy officers from the four Swansea Bay region local authorities.
3. The core group is supplemented by a wider advisory and stakeholder group which, over the last nine months, has undertaken engagement and energy and economic modelling activity which underpins the regional energy strategy which is attached as an Appendix. The timing of the regional energy strategy is significant given the recent international focus on COP26, and the publication of Welsh Government's 'Net Zero Wales' in October 2021.

Main issues

4. According to the analysis, the South West region is 'over-consuming' and, whilst consumption has - and is - reducing, the current trajectory is not on track to achieve the net zero targets by 2050 (2030 for the public sector).

5. Accordingly, the vision is to:

'Harness the region's low carbon energy potential across its on and off-shore locations to deliver a prosperous and equitable net zero carbon economy which enhances the well-being of future generations and the region's eco-systems, at a pace which delivers against the regional and national targets by 2035 and 2050'

6. The vision is supported by six regional priorities:

- Energy efficiency
- Electricity generation
- Smart and flexible systems
- Decarbonise heat
- Decarbonise transport
- Regional coordination

7. Across the region there has been progress made in all these priorities with major projects supported by the Swansea Bay City Deal complementing the work that each local authority is doing through their respective Net Zero Carbon plans. In addition, the work that Public Services Board partners, communities and, crucially, business and industry are engaged in through a plethora of projects and initiatives – from neighbourhood micro-level up to macro-level transformational schemes – is helping to build momentum.
8. The scale of both the challenge and the opportunity is also recognised as a key economic driver for the region. Consequently, the recently updated Regional Economic Strategy (RES) and (Welsh Government) Regional Economic Framework (REF) identify “South West Wales as a UK leader in renewable energy and the development of a net zero economy” as one of three over-arching missions.
9. In terms of delivery, there are several initiatives in train, including: (1) local authority led thematic groups – focussing on domestic buildings, renewables, commercial and industrial, and transport; and, (2) the development of local area energy plans (LAEPs) that will bridge the landscape between local and regional initiatives. These are also supported by a network of local, regional, and national groups.
10. Responsibility for monitoring the regional energy strategy is likely to feature as part of the economic well-being function in the governance structures being developed to support the South West Wales Corporate Joint Committee.

Recommendations

11. It is RECOMMENDED that:
12. the South West Wales Regional Energy Strategy be adopted, and
13. delegated authority be granted to Officers to make typographical or factual amendments as necessary to improve the clarity and accuracy of the South West Wales Regional Energy Plan Strategy

Appendix: South West Wales Energy Strategy (Draft)

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

YES (As Appendix)

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report:

Signed: Rhodri Griffiths, Head of Place and Sustainability

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
YES	No immediate implications	No immediate implications	No immediate implications	No immediate implications	YES	No immediate implications

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

The Regional Energy Strategy sets a strategic framework to guide the transformational interventions that will be needed to reduce carbon emissions and increase renewable energy production to help achieve a net zero Wales by 2050.

It is integrated within the Regional Economic Strategy (2021) and will inform the context for the Carmarthenshire Local Energy Action Plan. In addition, it will form a key component of the proposed Wales Energy Plan (2024).

The Regional Energy Strategy has been a collaborative exercise developed by Welsh Government and the four local authorities, with input from a wide range of stakeholders - public, private, and voluntary.

Delivering the of local area energy plans (LAEPs), which underpin the Regional Energy Strategy, will involve significant coordination across the public private and third sectors with the involvement with businesses, communities, and agencies and will be led by the Place and Sustainability Division.

2. Legal

No immediate implications. The Regional Energy Strategy will be underpinned by the more detailed LAEPs. Specific implications will be identified and addressed as part of developing the Carmarthenshire LAEP.

3. Finance

No immediate implications. The Regional Energy Strategy will be underpinned by the more detailed LAEPs. Specific implications will be identified and addressed as part of developing the Carmarthenshire LAEP.

4. ICT

No immediate implications. The Regional Energy Strategy will be underpinned by the more detailed LAEPs. Specific implications will be identified and addressed as part of developing the Carmarthenshire LAEP.

5. Risk Management Issues

No immediate implications. The Regional Energy Strategy will be underpinned by the more detailed LAEPs. Specific implications will be identified and addressed as part of developing the Carmarthenshire LAEP.

5. Physical Assets

No immediate implications. The Regional Energy Strategy will be underpinned by the more detailed LAEPs. Specific implications will be identified and addressed as part of developing the Carmarthenshire LAEP.

6. Staffing Implications

The Regional Energy Strategy will be underpinned by the more detailed LAEPs. Specific implications will be identified and addressed as part of developing the Carmarthenshire LAEP.

Developing the LAEPs will require a dedicated lead within each local authority (not necessarily an energy 'expert'), and the 'EARTH' energy officers have been identified as a good fit to support the LAEP process. Whilst funding for these officers currently runs until 31/03/2023, Welsh Government are prepared to fund an extension to these contracts to cover the period of the LAEP programme, which currently runs to 31/03/2024. The funding would be for the extension of the contract of one EARTH officer per local authority.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: Rhodri Griffiths, Head of Place and Sustainability

1. Scrutiny Committee

2. Local Member(s) N/A

3. Community / Town Council N/A

4. Relevant Partners The Regional Energy Strategy has been a collaborative exercise developed by Welsh Government and the four local authorities, with input from a wide range of stakeholders - public, private, and voluntary.

5. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations N/A

**CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO
HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED**

Lead Cabinet Member to be consulted prior to meeting

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

THERE ARE NONE