

## **BRECKLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Report of:** Executive Member for Growth and Commercialisation

**To:** Cabinet - Tuesday, 24 July 2018

**Author:** Robert Campbell, Inward Investment Manager

**Subject** Local Energy East Strategy

**Purpose:** To consider the Local Energy East Strategy for formal endorsement

### **Recommendation(s):**

- 1) That Cabinet approves formal endorsement of the Local Energy East Strategy

### **1.0 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Breckland District Council has been invited by the New Anglia LEP to give formal consideration to the local Energy East Strategy document; a strategy that has been produced to support both local and regional energy issues that are prohibiting growth in the areas covered by the New Anglia LEP, the Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority and Hertfordshire LEPs.
- 1.2 The purpose of the strategy is to capture and set out activities designed to unblock current challenges concerning energy, alongside activities to capitalise on local energy generation, storage, distribution and supply opportunities. It has been funded by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).
- 1.3 All local authorities within the geography covered by the study, which includes Breckland Council by virtue of its membership of the New Anglia LEP, have being asked to provide feedback on the strategy (which we have been given), and also to consider providing formal endorsement to the draft strategy and its stated aims. The feedback provided will in-turn help to shape the delivery plan for the strategy. All public sector organisations that endorse the strategy will be referenced within the final published document as a supporting partner.
- 1.4 Officers have considered the strategy in detail, and have formulated some initial feedback on the strategy. The response provided by the authority is included within an appendix to this report.
- 1.5 The following summarises the initial feedback provided by the authority on the strategy;
  - That the four key objectives of the strategy are appropriate, those being 1) clean economic growth, 2) housing growth and commercial site infrastructure, 3) secure, local, affordable, low carbon consumption and 4) the need to support clean transport networks.

- Whilst there is a strong dialogue within the strategy to expand local employment opportunities close to the source locations of clean energy generation, we would suggest that more focus needs to be given to supply chain opportunities within both clean energy generation and in uses of clean energy.
- The draft strategy correctly identifies the likely significant increase in electric vehicle manufacturing which stricter emission standards will bring about but it does little to identify the sector growth opportunities which this could bring to the East of England. Bearing in mind the growing expertise in both electric motor technology and power control systems at the Hethel Engineering Centre, it would seem opportune to explore the creation of a clean automotive engineering centre, including specialised manufacturing, along the Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor
- Whilst the strategy details the likely increase in electricity usage in the home for heating and car charging, we would suggest that delivery of the strategy should also encompass the specific opportunities for the East of England to become leaders in the development of underpinning technologies, especially in energy control systems and increased efficiency electric based heating.
- We welcome recognition of the need to support accompanying infrastructure to support the energy sector and would be interested to understand what further steps the LEPs plan to take, during the delivery phase, to add further weight to such infrastructure proposals.
- New Anglia's Energy Sector Skills Strategy has identified a number of skills challenges in the existing energy economy. We would suggest that those large scale energy producers seeking permissions to operate in the New Anglia area are 'incentivised' to make significant contributions into local training funds for this key sector.
- Whilst the strategy identifies the potential increased requirements in electricity supply due to electric vehicle charging and a move away from gas powered domestic heating towards electric heating, the focus seems to be mostly on ensuring that the grid coverage and capacity is sufficient to meet the likely demand. We would suggest that the delivery of the strategy should include an increased focus on how the design and construction of new homes can be influenced to lower overall energy usage and to mainstream local home based energy generation and storage.
- We strongly support the strategy's acknowledgement of the need to build a much more robust local electricity distribution network.
- With regard to community scale energy schemes, we would suggest that this should also apply to the development of new housing developments so that house builders are working at the cutting edge of energy distribution, usage and storage, as an integral part of the housing scheme designs.
- As a final point of feedback, we would encourage New Anglia LEP to fully involve Local Authorities at an early stage in the preparation of delivery plans relating to this key new strategy so that the benefits of the actions taken can be as inclusive as possible across the region.

1.6 Having considered the strategy in detail, officers are minded to recommend that the Council provides endorsement to the strategy and its stated aims, given its alignment with the authority's own priorities relating to housing and economic growth, alongside the focus within the strategy in addressing issues that impact upon the growth, including power generation and distribution. Consequently, the recommendation contained within the report is that the Council should consider formal endorsement of the Local Energy East Strategy.

## 2.0 **OPTIONS**

2.1 Option 1: To provide formal endorse of the Local Energy East Strategy, as per the report recommendation. Under this option, Breckland Council will become a named signatory of the strategy and will provide formal endorsement.

2.2 Option 2: Do nothing. Under this option, the Council will not provide formal support for the strategy.

## 3.0 **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)**

3.1 As set out earlier within this report, the Local Energy East Strategy is focused around a number of matters of relevance to the Council's own strategic priorities, notable concerning housing and economic growth, alongside the focus within the strategy in addressing issues that impact upon the growth, including power generation and distribution. For these reasons, it is recommended that the Council provides formal endorsement of the strategy.

3.2 There is an opportunity for Breckland Council to influence the delivery of this energy strategy now that we have direct representation on two NA LEP boards. We can best exert this influence as a named signatory of the strategy.

## 4.0 **EXPECTED BENEFITS**

4.1 It is anticipated that the Local Energy East Strategy will assist power distributors, utility companies and policy makers in taking steps to ensure that future energy provision in the East of England will be robust enough to support growth in a sustainable manner.

4.2 There is an opportunity to capitalise on the growth of clean energy technology as a driver of tech growth along the Cambridge Norwich Tech Corridor.

## 5.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

In preparing this report, the report author has considered the likely implications of the decision - particularly in terms of Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues; Constitutional & Legal; Contracts; Corporate Priorities; Crime & Disorder; Equality & Diversity/Human Rights; Financial; Health & Wellbeing; Reputation; Risk Management; Safeguarding; Staffing; Stakeholders/Consultation/Timescales; Transformation Programme; Other. Where the report author considers that there may be implications under one or more of these headings, these are identified below.

### 5.1 **Carbon Footprint / Environmental Issues**

5.2 By maximising the amount of renewable energy used in the district, distributed through local, green power networks, the Carbon footprint of the district will be reduced with associated environmental benefits

### 5.3 **Corporate Priorities**

5.3.1 The stated aims of the Local Energy East Strategy align closely with the delivery of the Council's own corporate priorities, namely to 'encourage the local economy to be vibrant with continued growth'.

### 6.0 **WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED**

6.1 All wards

### 7.0 **ACRONYMS**

7.1 LEP – Local Enterprise Partnership

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Background papers:- [See The Committee Report Guide for guidance on how to complete this section](#)

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#### **Lead Contact Officer**

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**Key Decision:** Y

**Exempt Decision:** N

**This report refers to a Discretionary Service**

#### **Appendices attached to this report:**

Appendix A Breckland Council Energy East Response  
Appendix B Local Energy East Strategy-updated