
Taking the Plan Forward

1.1 Overview

A Community-led Local Energy Plan provides a note of a community's ambition and aspirations regarding its energy and transport needs. Depending on what these ambitions and aspirations look like it can also set out some opportunities for change – including specific project opportunities in some cases.

Items could include:

- Support to residents and businesses in switching fuel tariffs to save money
- Developing a programme of building insulation works targeting vulnerable households in the LEP area
- Feasibility study of a community hydro scheme
- Design of a heat pump system to serve the local community hall
- Replacement of conventional community minibuses with battery electric vehicles

These opportunities are at different stages of development (some at early feasibility, others at the point of seeking investment to implement them) and will need some local community management in order to be completed.

1.2 Prioritising Actions

The Action Plan included within the LEP will list a number of opportunities as well as timescales for when they might be looked at. Some will be short term; others will be much longer term.

This will provide an initial prioritisation as to which actions to take forward.

As actions are completed, particularly where feasibility studies outcomes become known, there will need to be a review of these priorities. This is for several reasons:

- If feasibility studies are inconclusive or show an opportunity to be unviable then it will have a lower priority
- Where there are multiple action points, there will need to be an idea of who within the community will take them forward. Given limited volunteers or groups to do so, this could mean needing to prioritise one action over one (or more) others
- Access to funding opportunities may steer priority towards one option rather than another
- As action points are completed so there may be new action points (either to take forward a given project, or to identify other opportunities)
- Community circumstances may change and opportunities previously unrecognised (or parked as unviable) may now become available

1.3 Who Takes Forward Actions?

The community team responsible for developing the LEP may take many different forms. For example:

- Specifically formed group of representatives in place only until completion of the LEP
- Sub-committee reporting to a Community Council
- Community Trust special committee

Given the extent of voluntary input likely to come through any of these structures, representatives may not feel able or comfortable in implementing action points within the LEP.

There may be other individuals and organisations in the community that were not keen to take a leading role in developing the LEP, but feel more comfortable about implementing individual action points.

Co-ordinating progress across the different action points, and updating the list of action points as items are revised, added or completed, needs to be via a recognised community body. This could be the same group that developed the LEP – but not necessarily.

1.4 Ownership of the Local Energy Plan

Co-ordinating the action points within the LEP is most likely to be done by the same community group that also holds the documents and details that form the LEP.

Over time, there will be changes to energy and transport systems as action points are implemented. There may also be changes to the energy requirements of the community as buildings change use, better insulation is installed or there are new buildings.

Clearly the Local Energy Plan is something that everyone in the community has an interest in, and as a holistic plan it will look to provide benefit to all.

It is a living document, and needs to be updated periodically in order to reflect:

- Changes in the priorities or aspirations of the community
- Progress against the original action points identified
- Significant changes in the energy and transport needs of the community
- Identification of new opportunities or ideas coming from wider national or international work

Who 'owns' the LEP within the community will differ according to how the original LEP was put together. It could be:

- Community Council
- Community Development Trust
- Retained LEP Development Group
- Community Association

Whichever group takes responsibility for the LEP should make this clear to the community. This can be by retaining a news item within its publications, via websites or social media pages or a combination of all of these.

1.5 Updating a LEP

The core analysis supporting the energy baseline will remain valid for several years. However, implementing some of the actions in the LEP, and wider changes in energy use, will mean that the baseline will change more significantly with time.

There is no single 'rule of thumb' or defining amount of change that can be used to determine when a full update of the LEP should take place. This is for the community to determine. Examples of situations where a full update should take place include:

- When new Census data becomes available (on a ten year cycle)
- Where there is significant new development proposed for the local area (for example via allocated sites within the Local Development Plan – updated on a five year cycle)

- Changes in Scottish Government Energy Policy accelerate significant change in building and/or transport energy use
- Evaluation of programmes of work within the community suggests that there is a significant change in overall energy use
- Opportunities for community scale grant funding require updated supporting evidence

1.6 Storing and providing access to the LEP

The LEP will be produced in electronic format. This, and all the supporting information and data files, will need to be stored by the local community.

There are many different means by which this can be achieved, via cloud-based systems, archive servers and locally-based IT solutions.

Whatever the chosen solution, there should be clear note of where the files and data are stored and how they can be retrieved (login and password details as applicable). By way of example, keeping details as attachments to personal emails does not offer transparent access for the community.

Access details should be retained by at least two users, to avoid reliance on single individuals and reduce the chances of login and password details being lost.

It is useful to make the latest version of all the plan documents available via a local community website or social media page. This can be via the community council, or any other organisation that has been involved in the development of the LEP. This offers direct access to all members of the community, and also provides a reminder to everyone of ongoing action points and opportunities that can be delivered.