

UNLOCKING LOCAL POWER

Strategic local energy planning to cut bills, drive investment and build a fairer future in Yorkshire and the Humber



THE ISSUE

The UK's energy system is undergoing a fundamental transformation, from how we heat our homes, to how we power transport and industry. Decisions made now will shape our infrastructure, our economy, and our society for decades to come.

Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs) are a key tool for ensuring those decisions are made fairly and strategically, and are a chance to shift the balance of power. They map out an area's needs and opportunities, from building upgrades to infrastructure investments, so that the transition works for local people, aligns with national goals, and attracts long-term investment.

While some LAEPs are already helping to guide investment and coordination, others have struggled to connect with local governance or delivery systems. Done well, LAEP development can give local areas real power to shape energy decisions, offering a route to a locally-led transition and more resilient local infrastructure.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LOCAL LEADERS

1. **Treat LAEPs as central strategic documents** that are embedded across departments, championed at senior levels and used to guide funding bids and partnership working.
2. **Combine robust modelling with genuine local engagement** to support communities, respond to local priorities and increase the chances of community and political buy-in needed for successful implementation.
3. **Prioritise fuel-poor and vulnerable communities** and provide solutions that actively reduce existing inequalities and help tackle long-standing issues that people are concerned about.
4. **Plan for delivery from the start**, providing clarity on roles, partnerships and resources such as access to tools, investment and modelling support.

BACKGROUND & OPPORTUNITY

Yorkshire and the Humber has a collaborative public sector, strong local and regional leadership, and ambitious place-based plans. LAEPs provide the opportunity to build on these strengths, while tackling long-standing issues such as fuel poverty, ageing housing and inadequate infrastructure.

Local authorities usually lead LEAPs and have the potential to guide fair energy transitions. They offer democratic accountability, knowledge of local inequalities, cross-sector convening power and can align action with housing, health and economic priorities.

When done well, LAEPs:

- align energy planning with local priorities such as economic growth, reducing health inequalities and improving transport for communities
- create the opportunity for genuine community and stakeholder input, identifying key priorities and building support for delivery
- unlock public and private investment in upgrades to the grid, housing and infrastructure alongside renewable and community energy projects
- guide action on fuel poverty by highlighting where support is most needed and aligning funding and delivery to make it happen
- build a clearer local voice in national decision-making including with the National Energy System Operator (NESO), Ofgem and energy companies.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Enable local leadership through national support

To unlock democratic local energy leadership, local authorities need the right tools, capacity and mandate or they will not be able to deliver.

Central government must provide:

- strategic policy and investment support
- core funding and officer capacity
- access to modelling tools and updates
- long-term resourcing, not one-off grants
- stronger mechanisms for local voices to help shape emerging frameworks, such as regional energy strategic plans (RESPs).

The Yorkshire & Humber Climate Commission is actively supporting local areas to work together and create positive change. The region is ambitious and ready to lead, but without the right support for local systems, progress is at risk.

FURTHER INFORMATION

This briefing was developed through academic research with the Supergen Energy Networks Hub in collaboration with the Yorkshire & Humber Climate Commission, based on insights from stakeholder conversations across Yorkshire and the Humber, Greater Manchester and Wales.

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