

ENVIRONMENT AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	Local Area Energy Plan
Meeting date	9 July 2025
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	This report presents the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP). This has been produced to provide a roadmap and informed action plan to enable the Council, working with partners and other organisations, to address its Climate and Ecological Emergency commitments and achieve the stated aim of carbon neutrality by 2045.
Recommendations	It is RECOMMENDED that: Cabinet accepts the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Area Energy Plan and agrees to explore the action plan of 15 priority actions to be taken forward to achieve area-wide carbon neutrality by 2045.
Reason for recommendations	The Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Area Energy Plan is an evidence-based document that provides a roadmap to achieving the Council commitment of working towards a carbon neutral area by 2045. Endorsement will support the Council's Corporate Plan objectives and Climate and Ecological Emergency commitments.

Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Andy Hadley, Portfolio Holder for Climate Response, Environment and Energy
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Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision

Background

1. BCP Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency in 2019, committing to becoming a carbon neutral Council by 2030 and working with partners towards a carbon neutral area by 2050 (since revised to 2045). Recognising the complexity of this task, the Council followed emerging best practice and commissioned a Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) that would set out the most efficient way to achieve our aims. City Science Corporation Ltd was engaged in 2023 to create the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole LAEP, in line with methodology drawn up by the Energy Systems Catapult (see links to background papers).
2. The key characteristics of a LAEP are that it:
 - Provides the level of detail for an area equivalent to a master plan
 - Is a data driven, whole energy system, evidence-based approach
 - Is led by local government in collaboration with defined stakeholders
 - Identifies the most effective route for the local area to contribute towards meeting the national net zero target, while meeting its local net zero target
 - Sets out the total costs, changes in energy use and emissions
 - Results in a costed and spatial plan that identifies the change needed to the local energy system and built environment.

The Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Area Energy Plan

3. The Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole LAEP document presented at Appendix 1 sets out an Action Plan of 15 priority actions. These, together with milestone targets set out in the LAEP Net Zero Pathway, will support the BCP area-wide journey to a net zero energy system. The Action Plan acts as a catalyst for future initiatives, with an intention to inform upcoming projects, policies, and strategies. It provides clear, but flexible direction, channelling the broader decarbonisation focus into a set of collective actions. It is important to note that the selection of priority actions does not preclude support for initiatives beyond this list or those featured in other plans. The actions are categorised and listed below, with further explanation in the appendix.

BCP LAEP Priority Actions

Crosscutting Enabling Actions

- 1: Develop a Net Zero Fund
- 2: Support Local Green Skills & Workforce Development
- 3: Support the energy transition through local planning policies

Generation & Network Actions

- 4: Set-up a Formal Process for Working with SSEN to Optimise Network Planning
- 5: Support Rooftop PV Deployment Across All Buildings in the BCP Area
- 6: Analyse & Map Alternative Fuel Demand Across Sectors
- 7: Develop a Support Programme for Community Energy Groups Across BCP

Building Efficiency, Retrofit & Heat Actions

- 8: Support the Development of a BCP/Dorset Retrofit Hub
- 9: Continue Working on Decarbonising the BCP Council Estate
- 10: Scoping Exercise to Fund Building Retrofit & Low Carbon Heating Interventions
- 11: Facilitate Development of District Heat Networks
- 12: Scale-up the Healthy Homes Dorset Scheme

Transport Actions

- 13: Encourage Modal Shift to Sustainable Transport
- 14: Encourage the Rollout of Public EV Charging Infrastructure Across BCP area
- 15: Transition to Zero Emissions Council Fleet and Decarbonise the Bus Fleet

4. Now the 15 appropriate priority actions are identified; the next steps will be to unpack each of them and:
 - Develop a phased delivery plan
 - Agree ownership of actions with partners and key stakeholders
 - Assess the funding and resource required and develop a plan for each action.

Options Appraisal

5. Option 1: Cabinet accepts the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Area Energy Plan and agrees to explore the Action Plan of 15 priority actions to be taken forward to achieve area-wide carbon neutrality by 2045.
6. Option 2: Cabinet rejects the Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Area Energy Plan and the Action Plan of 15 priority actions and therefore risks not achieving area-wide carbon neutrality by 2045.

Summary of financial implications

7. There will ultimately be financial implications for the Council, businesses, householders and others from the individual proposals contained within this report and appendix (as there will be if climate change is left unchecked). These implications will be identified as the projects are developed and considered on a

case-by-case basis in the decision-making process. Early engagement with the Council's Financial Services will be sought. With respect to the Council's continued support for its climate and sustainability function, its 2025/26 Budget Report states: 'The budget continues to protect the staffing resources associated with climate change and ecological emergency activity. In addition, as at the 31 March 2024 £1.239m was available in an earmarked reserve to support project activity.'

8. However, though the activities in the Action Plan are led by the Council and some are already underway and resourced to some extent (e.g. decarbonising the Council estate, sustainable fleet replacement, rollout of EV charging infrastructure), all actions require involvement of partner organisations and funding that must be obtained from external sources yet to be identified. To this end, actions are included to address these funding issues (e.g. establishing a net zero fund, scoping exercise on building retrofit funding).
9. As a master-plan level document, the LAEP provides an indicative cost comparison between the recommended scenario to transition the BCP area energy system to net zero, and the scenario maintaining the present status quo. These compare the most material intensive sectors of buildings and road transport and consider the costs of replacing end of life equipment with identical models or low carbon versions, plus the operating costs and fuel costs for each. The resulting calculations find that overall, there is little financial difference between maintaining the 'business as usual' approach and taking positive measures to achieve net zero.

Summary of legal implications

10. Legal implications in delivery of any projects referenced within the LAEP will be considered on a case-by-case basis and early engagement with the Council's Legal Team will be sought.

Summary of human resources implications

11. The human resources implications of any projects developed as a result of the LAEP will be considered on a case-by-case basis when individual projects are assessed for approval.

Summary of sustainability impact

12. To establish impact on sustainability and other Corporate Plan objectives, Decision Impact Assessment ref. 719 has been completed and the report proposals have achieved a low carbon footprint, as they support the climate agenda.

Summary of public health implications

13. Climate change will result in increasing heatwaves, extreme weather events, floods, disease, and increased cancer risk. The measures proposed to transition to a net zero energy system will help to mitigate against these dangers and can even have a direct positive health effect (e.g., increased fitness from walking or cycling and better air quality from reducing car journeys).

Summary of equality implications

14. An EIA conversation/screening document has been completed. It concludes that endorsement of the LAEP itself has no negative equalities implications but potentially some positive outcomes, for example addressing health inequalities

stemming from fuel poverty. Resulting actions may require individual assessments to be carried out before commencement.

Summary of risk assessment

15. The Council must further its, and community, knowledge of Climate Vulnerability and Risk of the possible effects of climate change on our area. Failing to achieve our Climate and Ecological Emergency declaration commitments will contribute to an increasingly hostile global and local environment. Not acting on the LAEP recommendations will result in the Council failing to meet its commitments under the Climate and Ecological Emergency Declaration and therefore not helping global efforts to keep climate warming below 1.5°C to avoid further environmental damage, population displacement, biodiversity loss and risk to life.
16. The Council could also face reputational damage from negative publicity. However, if we act in a timely manner, many of the actions to tackle climate change will contribute to social, economic, and environmental benefits, reducing the likelihood of actual and perceived risks. Risk assessments will be carried out for individual LAEP Action Plan projects as required, on a case-by-case basis.

Background papers

Guidance on creating a Local Area Energy Plan: Energy Systems Catapult (2022)

<https://es.catapult.org.uk/guide/guidance-on-creating-a-local-area-energy-plan/>

The future of local area energy planning in the UK: Energy Systems Catapult (2021)

<https://es.catapult.org.uk/report/the-future-of-local-area-energy-planning-in-the-uk/>

Appendices

Appendix 1: Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Local Area Energy Plan