

## Notes from Worcestershire LEP Energy Strategy workshops Worcester (3/7/18), Pershore (16/7/18) and Hartlebury (19/7/18)

These notes reflect the discussions that took place at the Worcestershire LEP Energy Strategy workshops; they show the combined workshop discussions. The sub-headings reflect whether comments from individuals were related to local energy Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities or Threats to Worcestershire. These are then broken down into themes. The comments in green represent the key points fed back by each group at each workshop (22 in total). If the comment is preceded by a number in brackets, e.g. (2), it was mentioned by more than one group. Both the priority and duplicate comments are listed first under each theme.

### Strengths

Theme	Comment
<b>Planning, housing and energy efficiency</b>	Planning policy and its evidence base; the South Worcestershire development plan contains a mandatory '10% of developments must have renewables' policy (3)
	Energy efficiency, especially through the Business Energy Efficiency Programme (BEEP) (2)
	High demand for housing in south Worcestershire
	Eco/Ecoflex – heating and insulation schemes currently in operation
<b>Energy innovation, renewables and capacity</b>	Geothermal resource (2)
	Already a wide range of renewables in operation
	Renewable energy installers service
<b>Transport</b>	Electric vehicle infrastructure
<b>Local economy, business and skills</b>	Existing SME knowledge base, including solar, wind and AD installers, Bosch, Indra and other smaller cleantechs; there is a need to tap into this more (4)
	The digital sector, including remote/flexible working (3)
	Access to large industries
	Agri-tech sector and businesses, especially in the south
	Clean-tech support schemes already in place
	Low Carbon Opportunities Programme (LoCOP)
	Councils in the area are generally forward thinking
<b>Networks and collaboration</b>	Good partnership working being demonstrated, with strong relationship between LAs and providers and use of business expertise (2)
	Clean-Tech Innovators Group
	Innovative Low Carbon Working Group (ILCWG)
	There is already a will; many organisations/individuals are keen to contribute to this agenda
	Dissemination of information on incentives is good
	Already a significant number of community energy organisations in operation

### Weaknesses

Theme	Comment
<b>Planning, housing and</b>	Current new build standards not stringent enough or regulations not being enforced e.g. for local energy generation, leading to barriers from developers (3)

Theme	Comment
<b>energy efficiency</b>	Existing building stock (old, difficult to insulate, rented accommodation etc.) difficult to improve due to material, listed status, policy limits etc. (3)
	EPCs/running cost information not readily available or easy to understand
	Planning support for wind not strong
	Current development is very dispersed, e.g. rural areas have different levels of access e.g. to the grid vs urban areas
	Sustainability and energy is still an afterthought when it comes to planning and housing developments
	North Worcestershire Development Plan is fragmented
<b>Energy innovation, renewables and capacity</b>	Relatively poor grid strength and capacity and lack of access to an integrated electric system (2)
	Currently no restriction on the amount of energy that can come from the grid
	Uncertainty over what is the renewable capacity of the Worcestershire area, e.g. which areas are most suitable for solar, wind etc.
	Conflicting incentives in operation
<b>Transport</b>	Public transport integration and links / reliance of road transport (2)
	Local authorities cannot take on the asset management of EV infrastructure and have no incentive to get involved in domestic refuelling (2)
	Lack of safe cycle routes
	Review of investment plan for sustainable transport
	Lack an overview of transport needs in the county i.e. where people live, where they want to go and how
	Current inability to charge electric vehicles at home and work
	Lack of off-street charging options
	Limited EV/hydrogen infrastructure for HGVs, buses etc.
<b>Social</b>	Fuel poverty; past work on tackling this has not been as successful as desired and there has been a reluctance to provide a budget to install efficient heating systems in fuel impoverished areas (2)
	Air quality, especially in Worcester city centre
<b>Local economy, business and skills</b>	Lack of clarity over who pays to strengthen the capacity of the grid; the current model is not working. Cost of infrastructure is passed onto energy costs for businesses/consumers; SMEs won't be able to underwrite infrastructure costs and is therefore a blocker to economic development (3)
	Complexity and flexibility of funding access, e.g. payback and constraints (2)
	Innovations not being brought through by local businesses supported by demonstrators; there needs to be investment to incentivise first adopters and to de-risk technology
	Lack of current skills being brought through to sufficiently grow and serve the market
<b>Networks and collaboration</b>	Businesses are often unaware of various networks and forums that exist
	There is a lack of understanding of the existing local business base and therefore what collaborations could occur on the energy agenda.
<b>Knowledge and behaviour change</b>	Understanding of customer acceptability and perception (2)
	Technical expertise of decision makers
	Existing energy strategies not delivered well
	Informing and convincing local MPs about the energy/low carbon agenda remains a challenge

## Opportunities

Theme	Comment
Planning, housing and energy efficiency	Embed a consistent approach to planning policy for renewables/energy across the county's six districts (4)
	New town development; potential for 'zero-carbon' towns and large scale mixed housing developments to encourage an integrated approach to transport and energy (3)
	Quality and standards for retrofit to help ensure better protection for consumers. Opportunity to trial new retrofitting technology and develop demonstrators. Potential to reduce energy consumption by 30% (3)
	South Worcestershire Development Plan being produced and wider planning policy could include EV charging, broadband and renewables to drive uptake
	Establish energy planners in local authorities, an individual who checks for energy standards and demand
	Establishing the required national policy/guidance, including the review of local plans and ECO (3)
	Build houses near to EfW plant to use energy/heat (2)
	Publicise when good ideas don't happen due to planning restrictions
	Put solar PV on all new developments
	Develop CHP and district heating schemes in high-density new homes
	Fabric-first approach
	Opportunity to establish a requirement for better energy efficiency in new developments off the gas network
	Creation of demand for new technologies, e.g. low energy housing
	Windfall tax on energy companies to fund hard to treat properties through national lobbying
Energy innovation, renewables and capacity	Community energy / decentralisation important function of energy mix and associated access to funding (3)
	Local councils have the opportunity to lead by example in their own developments (2)
	Local authorities could act as an enabler for infrastructure and could help take away "project blockers" on, for example, electric vehicles
	Solar PV and anaerobic digestion development especially from dairy, increasing opportunities for low carbon economy (4)
	Geothermal resource (e.g. Worcester basin) (3)
	Demand management through battery storage (the cost of which is reducing) and private wire generation (2)
	Rivers Avon and Severn could be considered for hydropower (2)
	Former Severn Trent reservoir; use for energy storage
	Biogas from sugar beet
	Access to funding for micro grids and micro district heating schemes
	Develop a Worcestershire energy company to generate and sell energy
	Using rurality to county's advantage to provide access to gas network for existing houses and significantly reduce carbon emissions
	Potential to establish a limit to force people to generate their own energy if they want more to help resolve grid capacity issues.
	DSR and load shifting due to off-grid technology
Heating technology, especially replacing storage heaters with communal heating	
Chance to review opportunities from past feasibilities	

Theme	Comment
	Proper, local energy strategy will achieve a better whole-system outcome
Transport	Encouragement of high quality jobs and off-site working to reduce travel (2)
	Development of a more integrated transport system; encourage use and development of public transport (2)
	On-street parking and EV chargers in car parks potentially using OLEV funding (2)
	Develop different car ownership models, e.g. car-pooling/sharing for young people and different models in urban vs rural areas
	Vehicle to grid; utilisation of battery storage expertise
	Destination charging to boost tourism
	Develop Worcestershire-wide EV charging strategy, to include passing, destinations, off-street options (e.g. car parks), visitor attractions etc.
	High-speed broadband leading to a reduction in travel
	Changing the design of spaces to reduce public transport and encourage home working
	Use of electric bikes, utilising local businesses that sell them
	Redevelopment / design for HGVs for more efficient operations (i.e. refuelling with low carbon)
	Undertake mapping of high pressure gas main to encourage use by HGVs and to establish best locations for refuelling stations
	Active travel corridors
Social	Warm Homes Fund starts in September and can fund first time gas heating
	Low cost surveying of domestic properties to tackle fuel poverty, e.g. could focus on drought reduction to improve comfort
	Use air quality agenda and importance of issue to boost uptake in public transport
	Fuel poverty and domestic cleantech can be cost effectively combined
Local economy, business and skills	Scope for innovation in Worcestershire is growing the low carbon economy; can the strategy be used to reflect this?
	Development of Energy Innovation Zones, using WMCA model
	Inform and guide employers and award-making bodies regionally and nationally to develop skills in the energy sector
	Build on ESIF projects and develop local business pilots
	Development of local low carbon sector and diversification of skills, including traditional trades that could be encouraged to take up wider skill sets
	Investment in an integrated energy system can given more confidence to businesses to move to and invest in Worcestershire
	Could consider business rate reductions linked to carbon/energy savings as incentive
Networks and collaboration	Local authorities should act as leaders to access funding, establish demonstrators and bring together cleantech SMEs; LAs have the opportunity to act in a coordination role
	Learn from other LEP areas and consider cross-LEP working, using BEIS' hub
	Work in partnership with priority customers e.g. bus companies and RCVs
Knowledge and behaviour change	Educating and empowering people and changing behaviour through education programmes, e.g. can lessons be learnt from the popularity and thus ways that EVs and flexible working have been marketed, and this translated across to other technologies such as boilers? Potential to create demonstrator projects (4)

## Threats

Theme	Comment
<b>Planning, housing and energy efficiency</b>	Planning policy appeals
	Building regulations and construction industry standards may lag behind
	Scale of new housing developments
<b>Energy innovation, renewables and capacity</b>	Lack of funding and investment especially in developing efficient infrastructure for an integrated energy system and a more joined up approach (2)
	Rising energy costs
	Opposition to some forms of renewable energy development
	Community energy regulation to be rolled back?
<b>Transport</b>	Electric vehicle infrastructure; although strong in Worcestershire, infrastructure may struggle to keep up with vehicle uptake; who will; be responsible for resolving this? It needs to be affordable, accessible and practical (2)
	Demand for travel may increase too much
<b>Social</b>	Fuel poverty, especially as a consequence of poor building fabric, in both homes and high fuel costs for businesses (2)
<b>Local economy, business and skills</b>	Lack of knowledge and skills in key organisations, e.g. engineering and planning and there is a disconnect between research and undergraduates. More demonstrators required (3)
	Unabated consumption will result in higher electricity system charges; who pays for investment? There is a requirement to establish the need and who will benefit before investing
	Grid constraints/capacity and its impact on growth
	Risk aversion
	Solar PV may actually increase business rates
<b>Knowledge and behaviour change</b>	National policy may not match the will
	Availability and quality of data and how much of this is shared?
	Suggest an audit of who is doing what by working with LA low carbon support programme
	Look at best practice from elsewhere for supporting low carbon economy
	Learn from other commercial models around community energy, e.g. Energy Local in Wales