

Energy and Resources – Our Considerations

1. Issues and Opportunities

- 1.1. The need to take action in response to the global climate change is well documented. [Towards a Green Future for the Liverpool City Region](#)¹ sets out the key challenges and actions that we as a City Region can take. These include **global warming** and the imperative to decarbonise the economy; as well as the need to better manage our resources and move to a zero-waste and circular economy.
- 1.2. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the opportunity to achieve a [green recovery](#) in the City Region, driven by investment in low carbon industries and renewable energy projects, gives further impetus to act. Spatial planning can play a key role in implementing these actions, helping to facilitate and deliver them in land use terms².
- 1.3. With regards to carbon dioxide (CO₂) - the main greenhouse gas and contributor towards global warming – the Liverpool City Region (LCR) as an area has relatively high emission levels given its geographical size by national comparison (6,926 kilotonnes of CO₂ in 2018)³. However, per head of the population, the City Region has less emissions than the UK average⁴.
- 1.4. Estimates show CO₂ emissions in the LCR are falling faster than both the national average and the average for the North West and are now at less than 61% of what they were in 2005, indicating a significant improvement⁵.
- 1.5. In terms of existing renewable / low carbon energy generation, the LCR has a range of sources including solar, biomass, landfill gas, offshore and onshore wind⁶. Offshore wind is the most significant with Burbo Bank and the Burbo Bank extension capacity amounting to 4% of offshore wind capacity in the United Kingdom (17% of the North West)⁷.
- 1.6. Opportunities for renewable energy provision in the LCR to reduce carbon emissions and tackle climate change were previously identified in a 2010 study by

¹University of Liverpool Heseltine Institute (2019)

² [RTPI \(2020\) 'Plan the World We Need'](#)

³ According to BEIS estimates for local authorities

⁴ According to BEIS estimates for local authorities

⁵ According to BEIS estimates for local authorities

⁶ AECOM (2020) 'IIA Scoping Report'

⁷ [Ostead](#) and [BEIS](#)

Arup⁸. This included large scale onshore wind, biomass and district heating. The need to undertake updated work on this matter as part of the SDS's preparation is being considered by the CA.

- 1.7. Harnessing the tidal power of the River Mersey is a key priority for the Metro Mayor and Combined Authority with the potential to generate significant long term renewable energy capacity, contributing towards both carbon reduction targets and benefitting the local economy. A range of potential schemes are currently being considered as part of this ongoing project.
- 1.8. The Combined Authority is also supporting initiatives with industry in the delivery of hydrogen as a clean fuel to power transport, and as a methane replacement in the gas grid contributing towards a zero carbon economy.
- 1.9. The move towards a '[circular economy](#)' will mean using fewer natural resources, producing less waste, reusing and recycling, and recovering value for residual material such as energy in line with the [waste hierarchy](#). Disposal of waste must be the last resort.
- 1.10. Planning for the management of waste in the LCR is dealt with by the [Merseyside and Halton Joint Waste Local Plan \(2013\)](#). It covers all aspects of waste management including waste prevention and the provision of a network of facilities to manage waste materials generated across a range of sources in line with the waste hierarchy.
- 1.11. The LCR generates lower levels of household waste per person than regional and national equivalent figures (2018/2019)⁹. Rates of recycling¹⁰ have been experiencing a decline in recent years although targets to limit the amount of residual waste sent to landfill are being met (currently approx. 4%), with almost all remaining residual waste being recovered for energy¹¹.
- 1.12. In terms of mineral resources, there is little in the way of extraction of land won (or primary) minerals in the LCR although historically this has been significant. The City Region does, by virtue of its port facilities, play a key role in the landing and subsequent distribution of marine-won aggregate resources (sand and gravel). It also has a number of facilities processing construction, demolition and excavation

⁸ Arup (2009/10) LCR Renewable Energy Capacity Study (Stage 1 & 2)

⁹ AECOM (2020) 'IIA Scoping Report'

¹⁰ Local Authority Collected Waste

¹¹ [Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan Implementation and Monitoring Report 2018-19](#)

waste contributing to the supply of recycled aggregates. The LCR is one of the North West's main consumers of aggregate minerals needed in construction¹².

2. What is the Spatial Development Strategy required to do?

- 2.1. The issue of Climate Change and its consequences is one of the matters to which the LCR Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) must have regard in line with legislation¹³.
- 2.2. The [National Planning Policy Framework \(2019\)](#) sets out how the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, helping shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. This includes encouraging the reuse of existing resources and supporting renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. Plans should also consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy¹⁴ sources, and supporting infrastructure; and facilitate the sustainable use of minerals, safeguarding mineral resources and infrastructure.
- 2.3. [National Planning Policy for Waste](#) outlines the role of planning in delivering Government's ambition for a more sustainable and efficient approach to resource use, driving waste management up the waste hierarchy.
- 2.4. The Government's [25 Year Environment Plan](#) seeks to put the environment at the heart of planning and development to create better places for people to live and work. It commits to making sure resources are used efficiently and kept in use for longer, promoting recycling and re-manufacture, and setting a target of eliminating all avoidable waste by 2050.
- 2.5. The Government's [Planning White Paper – 'Planning for the Future' \(2020\)](#) proposes significant reforms to the planning system. Central to the proposals is a move towards an interactive map and development 'rules' based approach to land use planning, supported by identification of renewal, growth and protection areas.
- 2.6. It also seeks to further the planning system's role in proactively promoting long term sustainability to meet the 25 Year Environment Plan's ambitions and envisages

¹² [Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Halton, and Warrington Local Aggregate Assessment 2019](#)

¹³ Greater London Authority Act 1999, Part viii as applied by Article 4(2) of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (Functions and Amendments) Order 2017, with modifications made by Part 1 of Schedule 1

¹⁴ Under current legislation, large scale renewable electricity generating schemes greater than 50MW (100MW for offshore) are considered [Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects](#) (NSIPs) and are dealt with by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the government

planning playing a ‘strong part’ in efforts to mitigate and adapt to Climate Change. It refers to the role spatially-specific policies can continue to play in identifying opportunities where renewable energy creation could be accommodated.

3. What is being done by the Combined Authority?

- 3.1. The LCR Metro Mayor has set out the vision for the City Region to be the cleanest and greenest in the country and at the forefront of innovation in sustainable technology.
- 3.2. The Combined Authority (CA) declared a [Climate Emergency](#) in June 2019 with the target of making the LCR carbon neutral by 2040. The [LCR Climate Partnership](#) has been set up to co-ordinate the City Region’s response to the climate emergency and are preparing a Climate Action Plan.
- 3.3. The draft [LCR Local Industrial Strategy \(LIS\)](#) reaffirms the ambition to become a leading clean and green City Region, pioneering approaches and initiatives in the transition towards a zero carbon economy. Key commitments include the delivery of energy infrastructure including the [Mersey Tidal Energy Project](#); and embedding the principles of a [circular economy](#) and resource efficiency, with an ambition to be zero waste by 2040.
- 3.4. An emerging LCR Energy Strategy will provide a strategic framework to support the realisation of the LIS’s ambitions on energy.
- 3.5. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, [Building Back Better](#) - the Economic Recovery Plan for the City Region – re-emphasises the CA’s commitment to tidal and hydrogen energy as key opportunities in generating investment and jobs as part of a low carbon economy and greener recovery.

4. What you told us

- 4.1. Responses to our previous SDS public engagement [‘LCR Listens: Our Places’](#) highlighted the following challenges and opportunities in relation to energy and resources:

Challenges

- The climate emergency is a matter of great concern to local communities in the Liverpool City Region. Taking meaningful action on climate change is about safeguarding future generations and ensuring the City Region is bold and visionary in its commitment to make the transition to a low carbon, circular economy, without leaving communities behind.
- We need to minimise waste and pollution to mitigate climate change.
- The need to facilitate renewable energy production – this includes wind energy (the use of which is restricted by national planning policy), solar power, and a potential tidal energy project.
- Rapid growth in renewable energy is needed to wean the off UK fossil-fuels. Sustainable energy infrastructure and renewable energy production must be delivered across the region in partnership with local authorities, communities, the renewable energy sector and energy utilities.
- We need to see a lot more training and job opportunities in the green economy.
- It is critical to ensure the protection of public water supply.
- Recognition of the role of mineral infrastructure in supplying building materials - wharfs and other infrastructure should be safeguarded from other development.
- It's critical we deliver sustainable waste infrastructure for the future competitive and carbon performance of the City Region.

Opportunities

- Promote sub-regional priority projects for clean energy - there needs to be a significant push on clean energy given the resources presented by the LCR's estuarine and maritime location.
- Designate areas potentially suitable for renewable energy production – for example wind turbines and solar farms, supported by evidence.
- Take a sustainable approach to waste, including a design approach which encourages the re-use of materials (e.g. building materials), improved or enhanced water management and use of sustainable materials and resources .
- Zero waste/ less biodegradable waste to landfill – increase in recycling, more re-use rather than single-use.
- Take a sustainable approach to using mineral resources.

5. How we could respond

5.1. Based on the above considerations and feedback we have received, a suggested policy approach is set out below.

To plan strategically for energy and resources, taking account of climate change, we suggest a policy approach that would:

- Support and identify strategic and sustainable opportunities for renewable and low carbon energy provision and associated infrastructure to help meet carbon reduction targets and support a green economic recovery. This will be in alignment with LCR's [Economic Recovery Plan](#), [Local Industrial Strategy](#) and Energy Strategy (when finalised) and informed by updated evidence.
- Ensure the management of LCR's waste is driven up the waste hierarchy to meet targets in alignment with the [Merseyside and Halton Joint Waste Local Plan](#) (or any subsequent update).
- Reinforce the principles of resource efficiency in building design and construction, including maximising the use of high quality recycled and sustainable building materials.
- Promote the use of secondary and recycled materials to conserve primary resources and reinforce the need to safeguard mineral resources and associated supply infrastructure (to be identified, where relevant, in Local Plans).
- Reinforce the need to ensure protection of water resources for public supply, consistent with advice from United Utilities and the Environment Agency.

We are also suggesting separate policy approaches for energy and resource (including water) efficiency of new buildings as part of Placemaking & Communities policy considerations.

5.2. We welcome your views on this. Comments received will help us in drafting a policy. We will review and refine this suggested policy approach in response to any further details that emerge following the Planning White Paper and as we develop our evidence base.

6. Which Objectives will this approach help to achieve?



Tackling Climate Change and creating a greener City Region



Delivering an Inclusive Economy

7. How can we make sure this approach would work?

7.1. Suggested ways and resources could include:

- Using digital tools (e.g. [SCATTER](#)) to plan, measure / monitor climate mitigation / adaptation improvements.
- Monitoring the percentage of renewable energy generated in the LCR ([Govt. data](#)).
- Updated evidence base on renewable energy capacity (TBC).
- Waste data and recycling rates (including [Waste Local Plan Monitoring Reports](#)).
- Monitoring of primary and secondary mineral production detailed in sub-regional [Local Aggregate Assessments](#).