



Image: PaveAways

Our vision: One climate - One Powys





# **Red Kite Climate Vision & Strategy**

**A healthy and sustainable**

**Net Positive Powys**

**2021 - 2030**

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*Yn agored a blaengar - Open and Enterprising*

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## Foreword

Climate Change is close to home for many of us in Powys. We are already seeing increased extreme weather events perhaps most notably y flooding. Our recovery from covid provides us with an opportunity to attempt to build back better, and to have a green recovery. The Welsh public sector has an ambition not to simply meet net zero by 2050 as the whole economy must, or by 2040 as many in the private sector but to take global responsibility seriously and to be net zero by 2030. This is an ambitious aim but for good reason.

Acting on climate change can save lives and we must therefore tackle this from both sides. Reducing our impact (mitigation) on the climate and therefore the damage we will create as well as responding to the risks (adaptation) of climate change to build for climate stability and resilience.

We have already been on a long journey, making many changes to support climate action plus delivering numerous projects that have already reduced our impact on the environment. More recently Powys County Council declared a climate emergency in September 2020 and the council agreed to create a cross-party motion on climate change. This document builds on that declaration highlighting how acting on climate change meets all four pillars of vision 2025 and is delivering on and strengthening the councils existing policies and approach.

Through this strategy we aim to play our part in combatting climate change by facilitating change and providing civic leadership across our County that will encourage others to follow. We also recognise that we do not have the sole responsibility to make this happen and are keen to work with all local, regional, and national stakeholders in order to ensure sufficient action is taken and progress made.

## **Introduction: why act on climate change?**

Ambitious action on climate change saves lives. Climate change is a significant global issue with local impacts for everyone. Powys has already experienced extreme weather events including flooding and storm damage. These and other extreme events are also experienced globally and are making the news around the world.

Whilst we are already experiencing the negative impacts of climate change, we can still decide what our future looks like. Our actions today impact on both current and future generations. The urgency is clear.

Powys communities have received national recognition for their ability to rally together, especially at a time of crisis. With the challenges that Covid-19 has brought, we have seen the positive results of communities working together. We are capable of meeting challenges such as bringing the Red Kite back from the brink of extinction. Working together we can fulfil our role and rise to the climate challenge.

Some changes are already happening, though not at the pace and scale that will meet our current carbon commitments. This must change to ensure that we secure a sustainable future for the next generation. Funding for the transition to net zero by local authorities is something the Welsh Government are reviewing. Additional external funding will be required to ensure that we meet the level of change that is required to get to net zero by 2030.

## **The need for climate action now**

The impacts of climate change for the future are dependent on the choices we make now. We already know that adaption would have been a lot easier if we had started earlier and undertaken a more gradual transition away from fossil fuels and other sources of greenhouse gasses. The next chapter of our collective journey on responding to climate change is really one about what future we choose. Powys has helped save the Red Kite from the brink of extinction, by working together we can meet this even greater challenge.

Some changes are already happening, though more will be required to meet our carbon commitments. While we know the direction of change, how can we increase the pace of change? Our children are worried about our future environments (The British Medical Journal highlight the majority of child psychiatrists are seeing eco-anxiety). This strategy sets our ambitious vision:

## **Our Vision**

The Red Kite, the symbol of Powys County Council, is an incredible success story and a reminder to residents and visitors, of what we can achieve together in Powys.

“From near extinction, the spectacular red kite is back and booming in its ancient heartland of mid Wales” - Countryfile on Red Kites in the Elan Valley.

The Powys Red Kite Climate Strategy sets our ambitious vision for being carbon net zero by 2030 and carbon net positive beyond 2030.

### **What could Powys look, sound and feel like?**

A fantastic place to live, work and play.

With the potential decarbonisation of transport, our roads will be quieter. A walk through the countryside, in our villages and towns will be more peaceful and staying local is even more pleasant.

Our energy needs are met by renewable resources, finding sustainable and regenerative options to meet those needs. Remote working is becoming the norm, making it easier for people, especially the young to stay local, helping to sustain rural communities and retaining young talent.

Our built environment and towns come to life with local places for nature, increasing biodiversity and providing more access to green spaces and water to help improve wellbeing.

## **Our Mission**

To rise to the challenge of the climate emergency and create a climate conscious and resilient Powys.

A healthy and sustainable region which makes a positive environmental impact through efficiency, decarbonisation and restoration of ecosystems. Addressing climate change, both through decreasing our contributions to it and assessing climate risks to build organisational and regional climate resilience.

To build on Wales' history of leading the world into fossil fuels, to help lead the world out of their mass usage, to utilising our practical and academic skills within the region to assist the building of a truly circular economy. Where our land not only feeds us, but powers our transport, heats our homes and supports our industry.

## **Our Objectives**

- To address climate change in a way consistent with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act. Being prosperous, resilient, healthier, more equal, globally responsible, vibrant culture and cohesive communities by embedding climate change at the heart of vision 2025.
- To work in partnership to overcome barriers to the development of renewable energy across the county and to promote the sustainable and appropriate use of renewable resources from air, land and water.
- To maximise opportunities for carbon sequestration and minimise carbon release through the appropriate management of our natural resources.
- To raise awareness so that our communities can understand the options and benefits of the choices they can make.
- To maximise the benefits of Welsh Government, UK government and wider funding opportunities to deliver change, and innovation.
- To promote funding programmes and initiatives in support of renewable energy and other energy saving projects.

## Taking Action

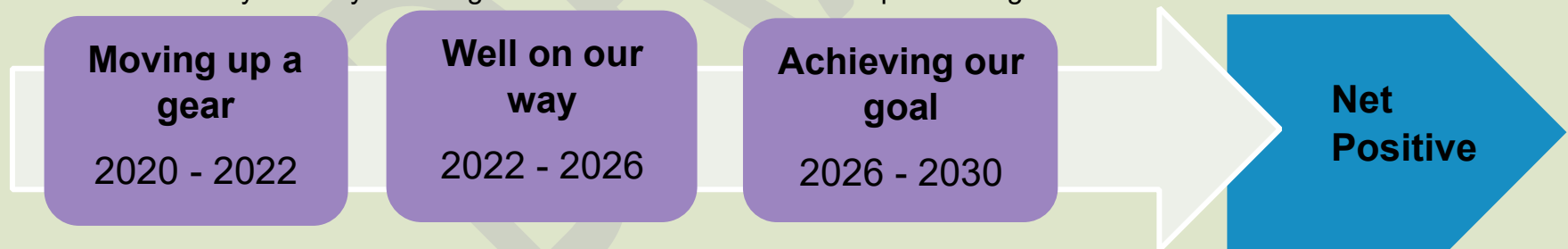
Our Draft Strategy is currently being developed into an accompanying action plan which draws on guidance from the Committee on Climate Change, the Partnership Council for Wales, the Welsh Government, the Local Government Association, Climate Emergency UK and other key sources of best practice and partners.

Thanks to all those teams and those who they reference for providing a foundation of national and wider best practice to build our own strategy and action plan for Powys, meeting the needs of diverse communities on our pathway to a sustainable region.

This is organised into five key areas which are:

- Buildings
- Mobility and transport
- Procurement
- Land use
- Council & governance

Delivering action across these themes and focusing on a clear pathway to change will help us reach our ambition of Carbon net zero by 2030 by following Welsh Governments Route map for change:



## The 5 key areas for change:

### - Buildings

Across our estate we will seek to improve energy efficiency and utilise renewable energy options.

#### Areas of focus

- Energy efficient housing - including social housing and affordable warmth using a whole building approach to optimise retrofitting
- 21st Century net zero schools – schools modernisation programme to provide new high energy efficient buildings
- Deploy renewable energy where possible at our sites and on our buildings
- Use timber and other locally available natural building materials where possible

#### The Benefits

- Lower energy bills
- Long term income from renewable energy
- Build local skills in refurbishment
- Provide local jobs
- Decrease climate and financial risk
- Demonstrating our commitment to climate action and inspiring others



- **Mobility and Transport**

Areas of focus

- Promote public transport
- Active Travel options will allow residents to make more positive choices
- Work with transport partners to improve transport infrastructure
- Provide opportunities for the electrification of transport (including school transport)
- Reduce the need for travel – opportunities for remote working

The Benefits

- Avoid and lower transport cost
- Promote Healthier lifestyles and have healthier residents.
- More energy efficient travel options
- Increased electric charging points for all to use
- Saved transport time from remote working

- **Procurement**

Areas of focus

- Create opportunities for the use of more sustainable products and services to supply to the Council
- Build local supply chains and industries
- New frameworks that ensure that the most sustainable choice is clear to decision makers
- Help develop the circular economy in Powys

The Benefits

- The circular economy principles reduce the cost of spend
- More local opportunities are found to help the Council to meet its supply needs
- Community benefits from procurement increased
- Demand for repairing helps create local skills which can service the wider community

## Land Use

### Areas of focus

- Understand the environmental impact on our land and the opportunities available
- Give our local communities a voice to help express local preferences through place-based planning
- Support and encourage best practice including local sustainability and innovators
- Encourage community groups to develop green spaces and other similar initiatives

### The Benefits

- We can measure climate impacts from our land
- Protect land-based businesses, including agriculture, horticulture and forestry through climate resilience
- Improved community health and wellbeing
- Decreased flood risk
- Improved biodiversity

## Council and Governance

### Areas of focus

- Integrate emerging legislation and strategy plans from international to local – UN, UK, Wales, Mid Wales and Powys
- Utilise best practice
- Develop clear roles and responsibilities
- Build on the inclusive governance and collaboration framework for Climate Action
- Develop policies in support of climate action
- Support communities with carbon positive initiatives
- Provide appropriate training for our staff
- Develop funding opportunities to support our transformation
- Embed climate change risk assessments to help services and partners manage risk and create a climate resilient Powys

### The Benefits

- Gain the resources to enable the transition
- Compliance with a complex and evolving regulatory framework
- Be a corporately globally responsible organisation
- Identifying more funding options in support of net zero
- Creating the environment for transformation
- Create a highly desirable place to live, learn, work and play.

## Meeting Vision 2025 Objectives

Our Corporate Improvement Plan sets out the council's vision for the future of Powys and includes the four objectives we will focus on to help make our vision a reality:

- **Economy:** We will develop a vibrant economy
- **Health and care:** We will lead the way in providing effective, integrated health and care in a rural environment
- **Learning and skills:** We will strengthen learning and skills
- **Residents and Communities:** We will support our residents and communities

The Red Kite Climate Strategy supports each of these objectives as well meeting the needs of a range of policy, strategy and ministerial ambition detailed in the appendices.

## Sustainable Development Principles

- **Long Term:** We are looking to 2030 in our plans and have split this into three terms for ease of planning. We acknowledge that for many workstreams, looking through a longer-term lens potentially identifies opportunity for earlier intervention.
- **Integration:** The recent publication of “Net zero carbon status by 2030 A route map for decarbonisation across the Welsh public sector” has been fully utilised and the structure of this document includes the headings found there. Based on work with the Partnership Council for Wales and published by the Welsh Government. This plan also includes work on all six priority areas of the Mid Wales Energy Strategy and incorporates suggestions from the Powys Public Service Board’s draft work on creating a Carbon Positive Powys. Bringing together Regional, Sub-national and National workplans into one document.
- **Involvement:** We meet every month as a cross party working group with member representatives from across the county to discuss climate change. We are using the place-based approach to not only increase involvement, but to understand and meet the needs of the diverse communities across our vast region. We have published information on climate change, why it matters, what the council is doing and how you can get involved on our website.

- **Collaboration:** We are working across the council through our climate champions group and our steering group. We attend regional steering groups and are the regional local authority representative on the decarbonisation strategy panel at a national level.
- **Prevention:** The work on inclusion, engagement, involvement, education, skills and just transition all work towards the sustainable development principle.

## **Just transition (meeting vision 2025 equality objectives)**

Climate change is driving a significant shift in the way we live, work and play. Like with all changes, we have to ensure that this transition is fair. The aim here is often referred to as a just transition.

We will reach this aim via the following active projects:

- **Affordable warmth** including addressing fuel poverty, projects listed in buildings section of action plan
- **Zero Interest Loans Fund** for energy efficiency and renewable energy
- **New Ways of Working**, including remote working, avoiding travel time and cost
- **Digital Inclusion** so the shift to digital can be inclusive, including rural broadband
- **Public transport and Active Travel** improve mobility, health and address transport poverty
- **Public EV Charging Infrastructure** facilitate a continuous roll out of charging infrastructure

## **Summary**

The Red Kite Vision and Strategy recognises the urgency for change. We aim to create a region that retains talented people through high skilled work and innovative projects which draw national and wider attention, including funding. This will help build our local economy and assist with the delivery of each of our four pillars in Vision 2025 and strengthening them.. When we choose the path of listening to the climate science and proactively acting in a strategic way, we can see

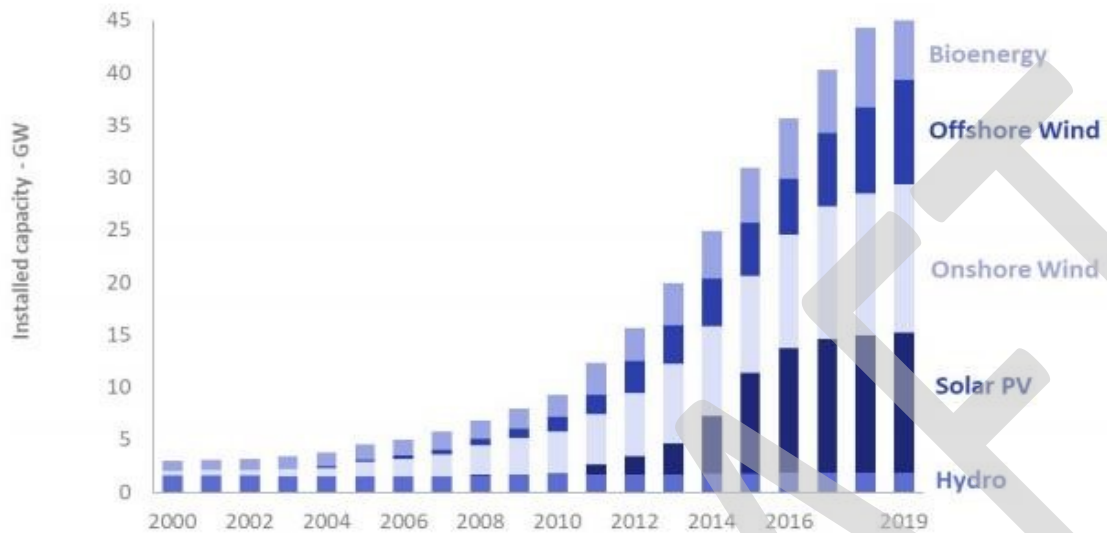
that the solutions to climate change are so often the solution to other hurdles. From affordable warmth to flood resistance, from energy efficiency to creating space for nature, these solutions and many more “multisolve” activities. Our climate response is a key part of the organisation’s transformation, strengthening and enhancing this established vision and supporting a new way of working. In doing this, we will undertake some vital work, helping to save lives, improve livelihoods, and offer a realistic and aspirational vision of sustainable living in Powys.

## **Appendix 1 - Building a vision**

Looking five years into the future can be a challenge, ten years even more so. However, when we first look back, and remember the successes achieved and also the changes that have come before, it can help us imagine the future. We are in the decade of action on climate change.

How can we imagine 30 years into the future? What do we want that to look like? It was 30 years ago this year that the first “dash for gas” power station came online in 1991. Converted from Coal 30 years ago and demolished 6 years ago in 2015. We can also see a huge shift to renewable energy. The below breaks this down by source and renewable energy over 20 years. From a few GW in 2000 to around 45GW in twenty years. For those who don’t follow the sector it can sometimes be hard to keep up with the pace of change and the chart below gives an outline of this transition.

**Chart 6.5: Electrical generating capacity by main renewable sources 2000 - 2019**



*(1) All waste combustion is included because both biodegradable and non-biodegradable wastes are burned together in the same plant.*

*(2) Hydro includes both large scale and small scale, and shoreline wave (22 MW in 2019).*

Renewable energy sources are now producing over one third of the national demand for electricity.

Locally, in Mid Wales we are net producer of renewable energy and meet 100% of our annual electrical needs from renewable sources. There is still significant market development potential to meet the needs of the electrification of transport and heating. There is also the potential opportunity to switch from imported oil to Powys generated electricity to fuel our vehicles. There could be a huge opportunity environmentally, financially and also economically through supporting the local and foundational economy.



## **Appendix 2 - Integration**

As the committee on climate change highlights, we will only be successful if the government, regional agencies and local authorities work seamlessly together. The below gives some headlines on our progress.

The Welsh Government declared a climate emergency in 2019. Noting that the first town to declare a climate emergency in Wales was in Powys at Machynlleth, in 2018.

At the Mid Wales level, we have adopted the Mid Wales Energy Strategy, approved by both cabinets in 2021 which sets out the energy landscape and ambition for the region to build on our 100% (net) renewable electricity generation and go further. The first action plan for this strategy will be published in 2022.

At a County level, we have now developed this One Climate One Powys draft strategy for engagement

At the organisational level, we are incorporating climate into our vision for the council (vision 2025) published in 2021 and strengthening in our revision for 2022. We also have a vision for a climate resilience Powys and how a just transition can get us there going through internal review and then governance. We are also developing our action plan for delivery.

## Welsh Government policy, strategy & ambition

### Legislation

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Amendment of 2050 Emissions Target Regulations 2021

### Strategy

Prosperity for all - Economic Action Plan (2017)

Prosperity for all – A Low Carbon Wales (2019)

A Low Carbon Wales 2021

Hydrogen

EV charging strategy

### Ministerial Ambition

Carbon Neutral Public Sector by 2030

70% of Wales electricity consumption to be renewable by 2030

Local Ownership - 1GW of electricity generated in Wales to be locally owned by 2030

Local Ownership – all new developments by 2020 to have an element of local ownership

## UK Key elements

### ➤ Policy

- **The Climate Change Act (2008)** – made the UK the first country to establish long-term legally binding framework to cut carbon emissions and have a legal process to adapt. It now contains targets to at least be 100% (“net zero”) by 2050 and assess risks and adapt accordingly. It also setup the Committee on Climate change (CCC), an independent statutory body to advise governments on emissions targets.

### ➤ Advice

- **The Sixth Carbon budget (2020)** – From the CCC, this sets out how we can meet upcoming carbon budgets. This gained headlines for a number of recommendations, it is notable for talking about lifestyle.

Climate impacts lifestyles substantially and therefore the clarity behaviours can often be changed without the financial and environmental cost of capital projects.

**The Climate Change Risk Assessment (2021)** is the assessment of risks required from the climate change act (2008) published by CCC. The climate change officer has made a summary of this for the Powys context, available on request. Most risks are to land, putting Powys which not only has 25% of the country, but also an important agriculture and land sector particularly pertinent. In short, Powys has substantial health, safety and economic risks from the impact of climate change. Understanding the risks is a useful step towards building climate resilience.

- **Committee on Climate Change publish a 2021 Progress report**, highlighting that at a global level, emissions are not yet decreasing. “The 2010s was the hottest decade on record globally, driving dangerous weather patterns and affecting societies and ecosystems around the world. Without a much stronger and urgent effort, we will breach 1.5°C of warming in the early 2030s and remain ill-prepared for the future”.

They also talk about the **impact of lockdown** which is often asked about. “Lockdown is not a blueprint for decarbonisation. The fall in UK emissions in 2020 was much larger than the annual change needed on the pathway to Net Zero. However, it did not materially affect the structural changes that are needed in our underlying economic, social, energy, transportation or land systems to reach Net Zero. In order to combat COVID-19, people in the UK have heavily restricted their movement with damaging economic and social consequences. This stands in contrast to the fair, well-planned and sustainable transition to Net Zero that is possible. It can bring improvements to our quality of lives: new jobs, cleaner air, quieter streets, more green spaces, comfortable homes and healthier lifestyles. “

➤ **Strategy:**

- Climate Change links to a lot of strategies. There is the high level [UK Gov road to zero](#) and there are also a range of more specialist strategies including
  - ✦ [Industrial decarbonisation strategy](#)
  - ✦ [UK Gov Clean Air Strategy](#)
  - ✦ [UK Gov Clean Growth Strategy](#)

➤ **Ambition:**

- The level of ambition on climate change is the highest we have ever seen it. The UK government issued a [The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution](#) And we can see potential emerging policy in the [Energy white paper: Powering our net zero future.](#)

- **National – Wales**

○ **Policy**

**Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** made Wales the first country in the world to embed the United Nations Sustainable Development goals into national policy. In Powys, this act is brought through the Public Service Boards through to corporate, service and individual targets through a “golden thread”.

Linking all levels of targets together for integrated policy. It’s important to note that the sustainability goals are interwoven, and that sustainability means addressing all these together.

**The Environment (Wales) Act 2016** aims to help manage natural resources in a sustainable way. When reference is made to our “Section six duty” to protecting biodiversity, it is from this act.

**Air Quality Standards (Wales) Regulations 2010** includes monitoring progress on decarbonisation. We have integrated climate into our Air Quality Reporting already in Powys.

○ **Advice**

One Planet Standard – The wellbeing of future generations act provides a range of valuable advice; in Powys we integrate this through the golden thread and our PSB and vision work links back to it. The One Planet Standard gives us a way of measuring action and a clear goal, to live within the resources available on one planet. It could offer a useful metric for progress.

Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Carbon Reporting Guide . Was published in May 2021 which outlines what the Welsh Government consider in scope for public sector emissions and the methodologies suggested to report.

This clarity is valuable, and while it aims to align to international established rules, it has a number of limitations, as new large pieces of policy often do. Methodologies which assume lowest cost is lowest carbon are crude, as

are methodologies based on the number of people in the organisation. Neither offer the opportunity to measure the carbon savings from choosing lower cost procurement or from implementing waste saving strategies.

## ○ Strategy

Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales (2019) - This set out Wales commitment to tackling climate change. It is currently being updated.

WG Energy Efficiency in Wales (2019) published (2019) with plans till 2026.

The socio-economy duty (2021) – creates a clear duty on the addressing of inequality. Many see climate change as an equality issue, those most impacted are generally those least responsible for causing climate change. A small number of people financially benefit, while in the UK alone it is predicted that us playing our part of the Paris agreement would save over 100,000 lives per year.

There are aims to build the Foundational Economy. This ties into the socio-economy duty. It's also good economy strategy, as those with the least money are the most likely to spend it if they get more. Those with the most money are unlikely to spend more. Therefore strategically, it will support the economy the most.

Net zero carbon status by 2030: A route map for decarbonisation across the Welsh public sector. Set out a headline ten-year plan to net zero across the five priority areas aligned to political timelines. Aligns well with our Carbon Action Plan.

The Circular Economy Strategy is to build on Wales leadership in recycling rates to go further which will ensure a greener, fairer and more prosperous community in Powys.

## ○ Ambition

Team Wales is aiming for net zero by 2030 in the public sector and economy by 2050.

### - Regional

## Mid Wales Energy Strategy

The Mid-Wales Region has developed a regional energy strategy identifying key interventions to deliver on the region's ambitions for decarbonising its energy system. It has been developed by the Growing Mid Wales Partnership, Powys County Council and Ceredigion County Council, with support from regional stakeholders and the Welsh Government Energy Service.

**Our Energy Vision:** *To achieve a net zero-carbon energy system that delivers social and economic benefits, eliminates fuel poverty, better connects Mid Wales to the rest of the UK, and contributes to wider UK decarbonisation.*

**The strategy sets out 6 Key Priorities to tackle energy issues in the region:**

**Key Priority 1:** Drive forward the decarbonisation ambition of the region's housing and building stock

**Key Priority 2:** Work proactively to ensure that electricity and gas grids in the region are suitable for a decarbonised future

**Key Priority 3:** Boost the use of renewable energy through new generation and storage

**Key Priority 4:** Support the shift to zero carbon transport and improve connectivity

**Key Priority 5:** Help develop and harness the potential of agriculture to contribute to zero carbon goals

**Key Priority 6:** Harness innovation to support decarbonisation and clean growth

**The strategy will seek to deliver the following benefits to the economic region of mid Wales:**

1. Raise the level of ambition regionally on energy
2. Secure cross-sector stakeholder support for a shared place-based energy system vision for the region

3. Provide the evidence needed to demonstrate the economic benefit of investment in local energy systems
4. Develop a regional pipeline of deliverable projects and programmes that will achieve the vision

The Mid Wales Energy Strategy document was approved by both Ceredigion and Powys Cabinets in 2021, The next stage will see the region produce a strategic action plan by March 2022 that identifies strategic actions across the different priority areas identified, to bring the region closer to its vision. This will involve drawing on expertise and knowledge across the region to define actions that consider the local as well as national context and support existing activities.

- [Vision for Growing Mid Wales Strategic Economic Plan & Growth Deal Roadmap \(May 2020\)](#) Highlights many residents currently having to commute outside the region for work. The approach here of implementing cost saving measures at scale and utilising the skills within the region could help address this.
- The Hydrogen and alternative fuels strategy (2021) have considered the climate impact and the opportunities for green hydrogen to create a differential advantage, funding and investment in the region.

## Local

Public Service Board – The Public Service Boards are tasked with collaboration across the public sector to meet the wellbeing of future generations act. The Powys PSB has a range of steps which are all interwoven. These include nature recovery, digital and transport which all link to climate change plus a dedicated step on climate change, step 7 – A carbon positive Powys. Which is part of the Towards 2040 – Powys PSB Well-being Plan.