

**Nuclear Free Local Authorities**  
Councils working for a renewable, safe and peaceful future



# Tackling the climate emergency in a post-pandemic era



**Sean Morris**  
**NFLA Secretary**  
**NFLA Welsh Forum webinar, April 2021**



## NFLA – at the heart of climate policy

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- NFLA has advocated low carbon local energy since the early 1990s
- Look at national / international LA low carbon best practice
- A large suite of reports on decentralized energy
- Calls for more powers and central resource to Councils
- Also advocates Councils to look and follow best practice
- Renewables, battery storage, smart energy, local energy and energy efficiency – our energy policy
- Recent reports Green recovery, 100% renewables and White Paper reports
- New report on LA climate emergency plans in a post-pandemic era





# Green recovery – build back better

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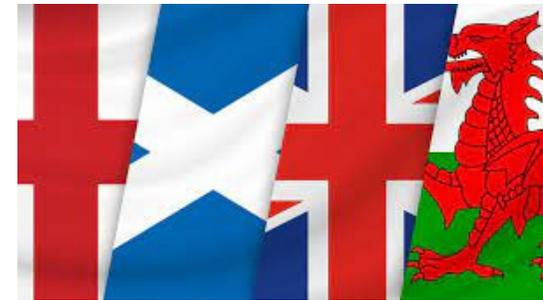
- **Around the world \$12tn committed to recover from the pandemic - Bloomberg 0.2% of it for low carbon work**
- **Strong green stimulus could help net zero plans**
- **A ‘green recovery’ could deliver new jobs, empower citizens, improve public health & drive innovation**
- **Local & Combined Authorities are critical to provide a local lead to such positive policies**
- **LA’s need to develop partnerships with energy networks**





## However,... LA limited powers

- **Lack of LA powers being seen as a real barrier to creating transition**
- **Even UK Energy White Paper acknowledges this!**
- **Polly Billington, UK 100 – Councils cannot reach net zero without more local devolution of powers**
- **Pandemic has also decimated LA budgets**
- **Green Alliance report recommends new framework –**
  - **agreed methodology on emissions reporting**
  - **single contact in central govt for LA decarbonisation**
  - **strategic approach to gaps and national green jobs strategy**
  - **stable funding and reforms to planning for sustainable needs**





# Moving on to the hard bits of decarbonisation

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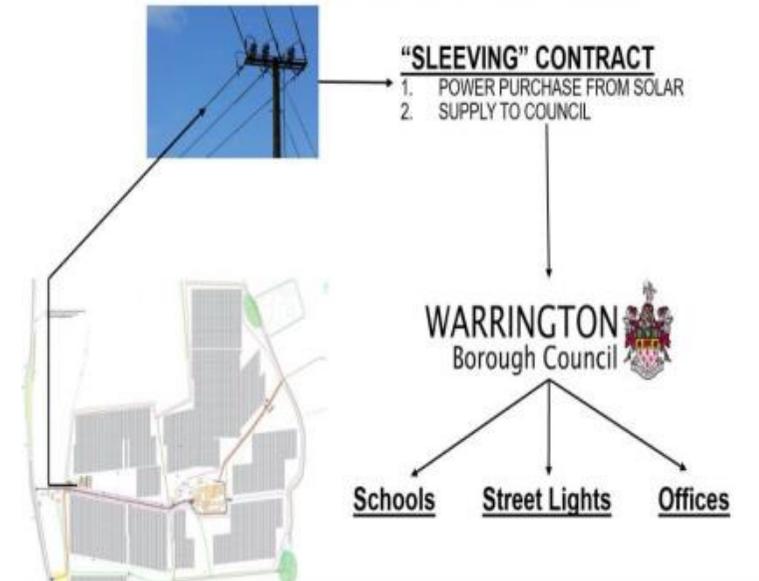
- Progress on decarbonising electricity very successful – large amount of renewables on grid
- Decarbonising heating & transport much harder
- Local knowledge essential – local transport patterns, housing stock, pockets of fuel poverty
- Next phase of decarbonisation needs to be consumer and local-friendly
- It will have to be FAIR
- It will need the devolving of power within it



# Why Councils are good for green recovery

- More than 10,000 Councils have committed to climate action
- 60% of over 1,000 European cities are on track to meet climate targets
- Over 320 UK & Irish Councils have climate emergency resolution plans
- All target net zero between 2035 - 2050

## FROM YORK AND HULL >> WARRINGTON





# Devolving power

- **Market reform – e.g. removing VAT from energy saving equipment, incentivise carbon reduction**
- **Enable local government to deliver & support heat decarbonisation – give residents a share**
- **Ask your residents what they want – citizens assemblies – discussing with them how to live**
- **Reports from such bodies have been far more radical than expected**
- **Give local government a local target as part of real devolution**





# Climate emergency declarations

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- **Over 75% of UK & Irish local government made them**
- **Need to include Local Area Energy Plans**
- **CCC report welcome this and recommends LAs to:**
  - **develop energy efficiency & heat strategy and act in 2020s**
  - **update carbon reduction plans for council estate**
  - **talk and engage with residents on these matters**
  - **identify areas for low carbon heat clusters**
  - **deal with 5% of homes off gas grid as such heating will be phased out**
  - **support smart meter roll out**
  - **implement planning policies on new build that encourage net zero**





# CCC LA report and transport

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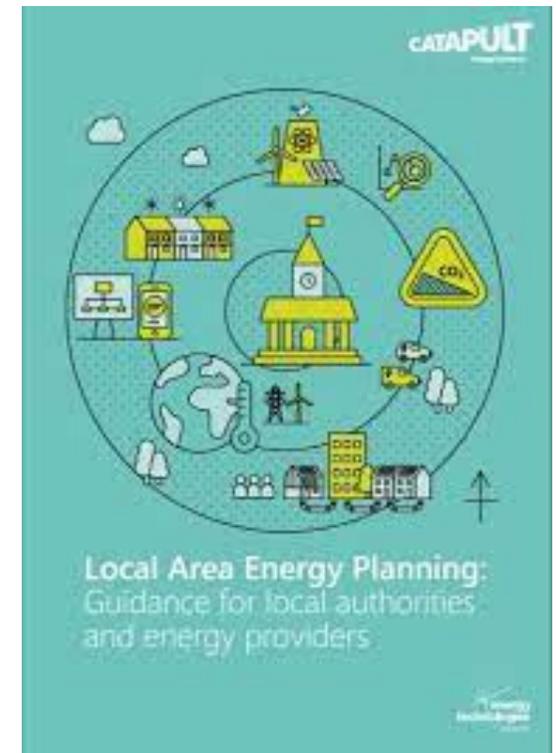


- Promote walking, cycling and public transport plans
- LAs need a good Local Walking & Cycling Plan
- Work with bus companies on low carbon buses with fair fares structure
- Promote EV uptake
- Use traffic powers to reduce HGV emissions
- Work with other LAs and network providers on local area energy plans that quantify transport / heat needs



# Local Area Energy Plans (LAEP)

- **LAEP should be used to build a map of the current energy system, model future transition pathways, work with local stakeholders and identify priority projects**
- **See report from Energy Systems Catapult**
- **Combine it with transport, food and biodiversity plans can create a local target to the national Net Zero plan**





# Examples of Community-led LAEPs

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- Local Energy Scotland case studies in Highlands and Islands outlines community involvement
- Energy Systems Catapult pilots in Bridgend, Bury and Newcastle – created planning network for LA, energy providers & local stakeholders
- Fife Council's Burntisland Community Energy Masterplan to reduce carbon footprint by 80%
- Bristol City LEAP procuring funds for a £875m investment in low carbon energy improvements



# Support from central government

- Welsh Government has net zero public sector target by 2030
- All Welsh Councils need Net Zero Action Plans in place by March 2021
- Technical, commercial and financial support being offered as part of this from WG
- Net Zero Reporting Guide
- WLGA providing training for good practice
- 4 regional strategies developed with further work with LAs planned





# Campaign for a Green Recovery

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- **Group of 24 Mayors and local leaders set up a Resilient Recovery Taskforce**
- **Recommended:**
  - **Net Zero Development Bank to work with Las**
  - **Renew grid for smart decentralised energy**
  - **Huge retrofit programme**
  - **Speed up low carbon transport schemes**
  - **Expand local powers to take action through an enhanced devolution settlement**





# Finding the money

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- **In past decade LA budget has dropped by up to 38%**
- **CCC say decarbonisation cost £50bn a year**
- **Fivefold increase of funds required**
- **Abundance Investments – raised £100m with Las through green municipal bonds**
- **Bring in strategic partners to attract investment**
- **See LGA advice for grants, borrowing / Salix finance**
- **Community energy co-ops can also help and create good partnerships**



# Conclusions

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- **Devolution to local government of powers and responsibilities on climate action is urgently required**
- **Councils will need adequate funding to meet climate objectives**
- **Still ways to fund transformation via grants, borrowing and investing, and new vehicles like Municipal Bonds and energy co-ops**
- **Key start is a good plan worked on with partners and the local community – the people need to be brought with you!**