



Clean Power 2030 Action Plan

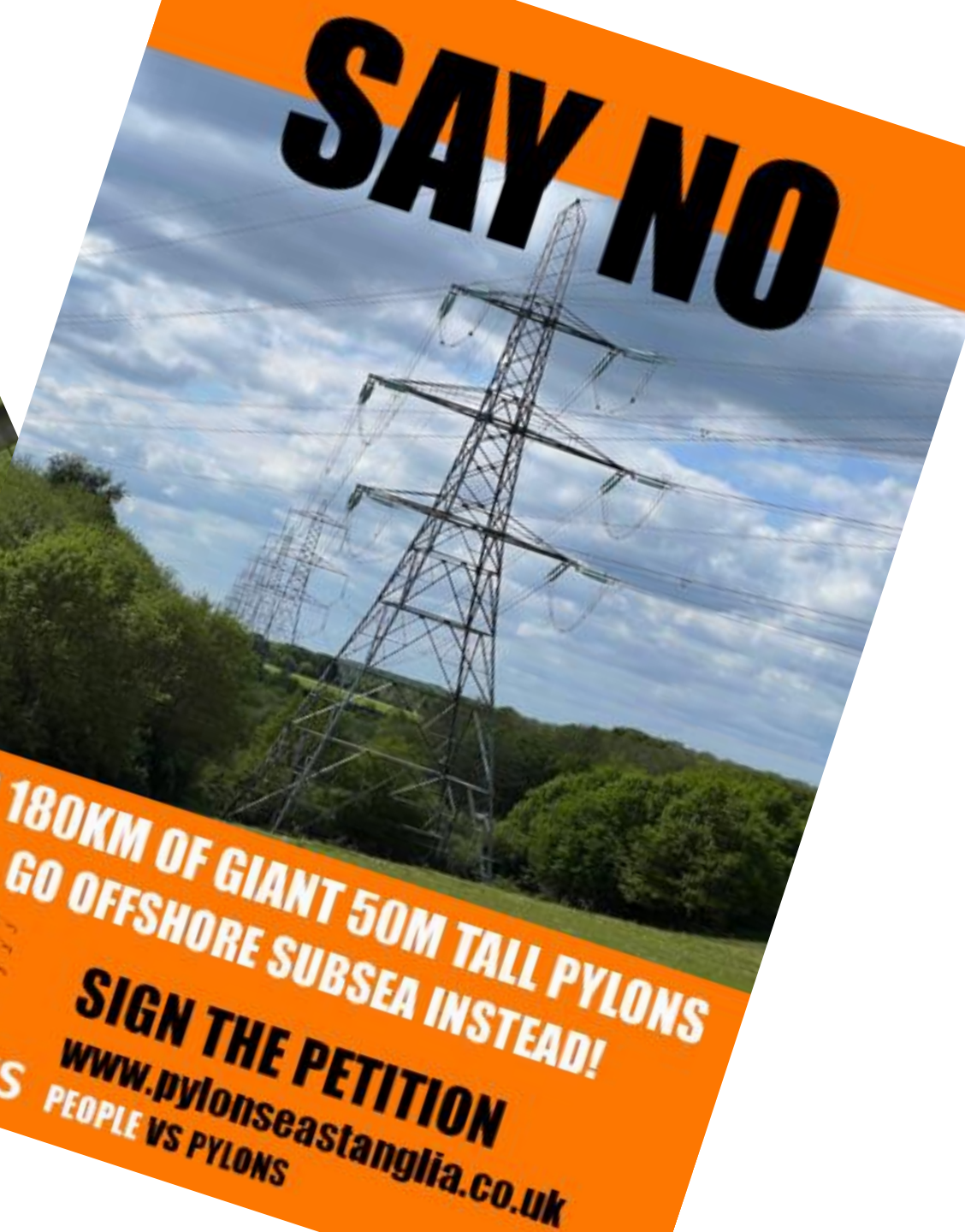
A Planner's Perspective

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Planning is not Working... (?)

According to the Government:

- Our current planning systems across Great Britain are not working at the pace required to meet our target for clean power by 2030
- Our planning system needs to quickly change to enable government's missions to grow the economy and deliver clean power
- The urgent need for change means we must undertake a wide-ranging reform programme



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The Solutions

1. We will equip organisations across the planning system with the tools they need to help deliver Clean Power 2030 and government's wider missions
2. We will update the National Policy Statements for Energy and Planning Policy Guidance in 2025, and we have confirmed changes to our National Planning Policy Framework
3. We will undertake an ambitious programme of legislative reform, including through the Planning and Infrastructure Bill
4. We will ensure that the protection of nature is embedded into the delivery of Clean Power 2030
5. We will ensure communities directly benefit from clean energy infrastructure they host
6. The Scottish and Welsh Governments have implemented programmes of planning reform which support the delivery of clean power

APPROVED

Key Actions

- Resources will be increased (however there is shortage of Planners)
- This is system wide (60% of delayed applications are related to EA responses)
- Better cost recovery mechanisms to support decision makers across the system
- Increased support for developers
- Increased performance management and a focus on productivity
- Reforms to Planning resourcing (and supporting specialisms)
- Increased resources for LPA's (£46M)
- Improved standards of NSIP applications
- More convening of communities and stakeholders in advance of applications

Policy Reform

- Updates to National Policy Statements (NPS)
- Regular updates to NPS
- reintroducing onshore wind into the NSIP regime at a new threshold of 100 MW and are altering the existing threshold for solar to 100 MW
- De-facto bans on onshore wind lifted in England
- Updates to PPG to reflect the considerations required to develop policies that reflect the imperative

Upcoming Legislation

- Planning and Infrastructure Bill
- Secondary legislation regarding licenses and legal challenges
- Review of NSIP Judicial Review rules

Nature Recovery

- Nature recovery as a priority planning gain
- Reducing pressures on protected sites
- A requirement for nature to be hardwired into developments
- Marine Recovery Funds
- Better modelling and data for marine developments
- A round of public engagement to gain nature recovery ideas
- Communities and nature are identified for protection

Community Benefits

- Incentives are being developed to support host communities of significant clean power projects
- Could include several mechanisms including
 - Local employment
 - Nature based projects
 - Incentives and concessions on bills for those in need
 - Rights of way improvements
 - Education and skills

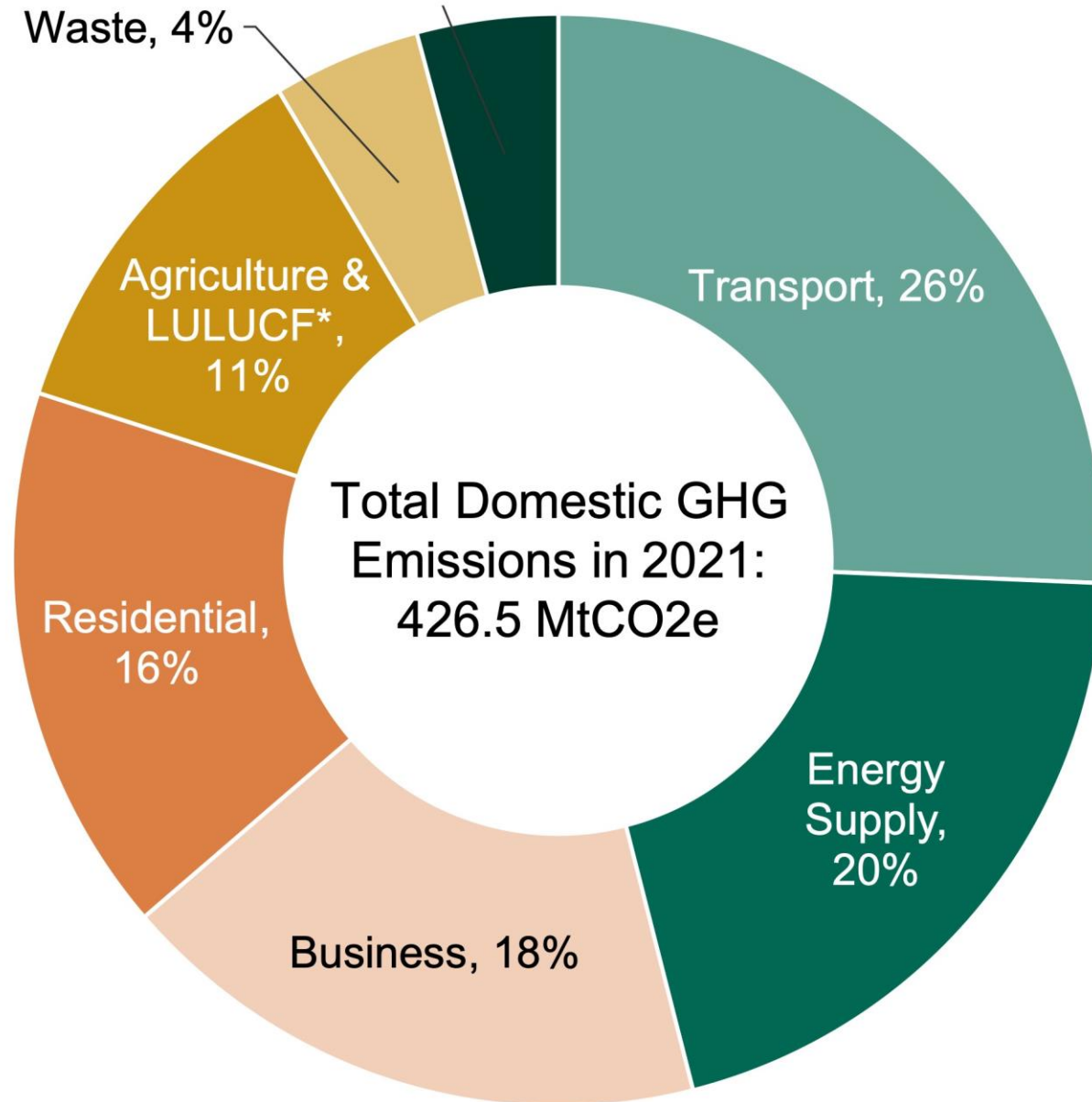
Planning Reforms in Wales and Scotland

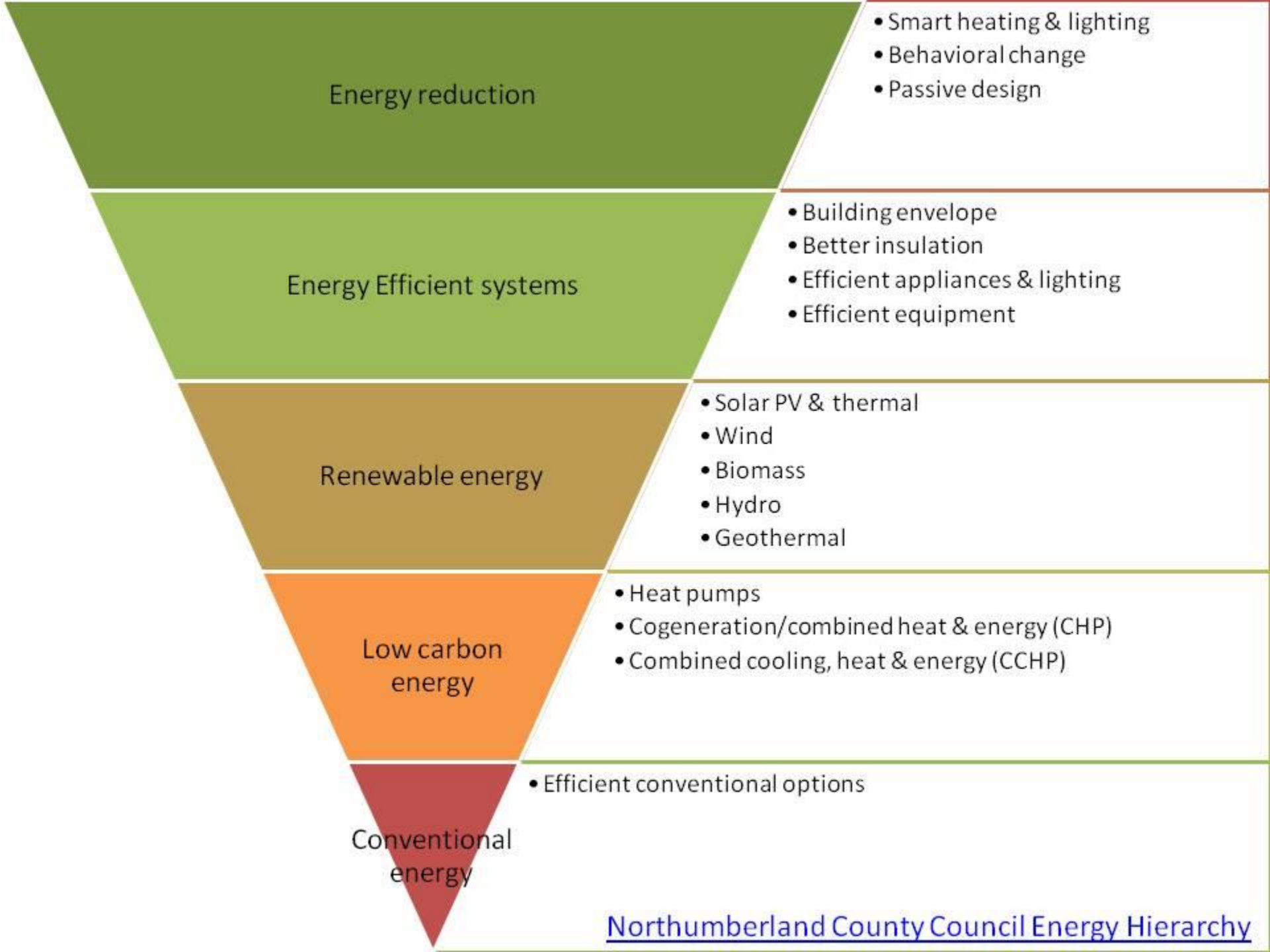
- UK and Scotland Government collaboration to remove historic barriers
- The Welsh Government has recently taken action to accelerate their infrastructure planning decisions. Immediate action has included enabling Planning and Environmental Decisions Wales (PEDW) to take decision on energy projects up to 50 MW, and prioritising applications for Developments of National Significance which have the greatest public benefits.

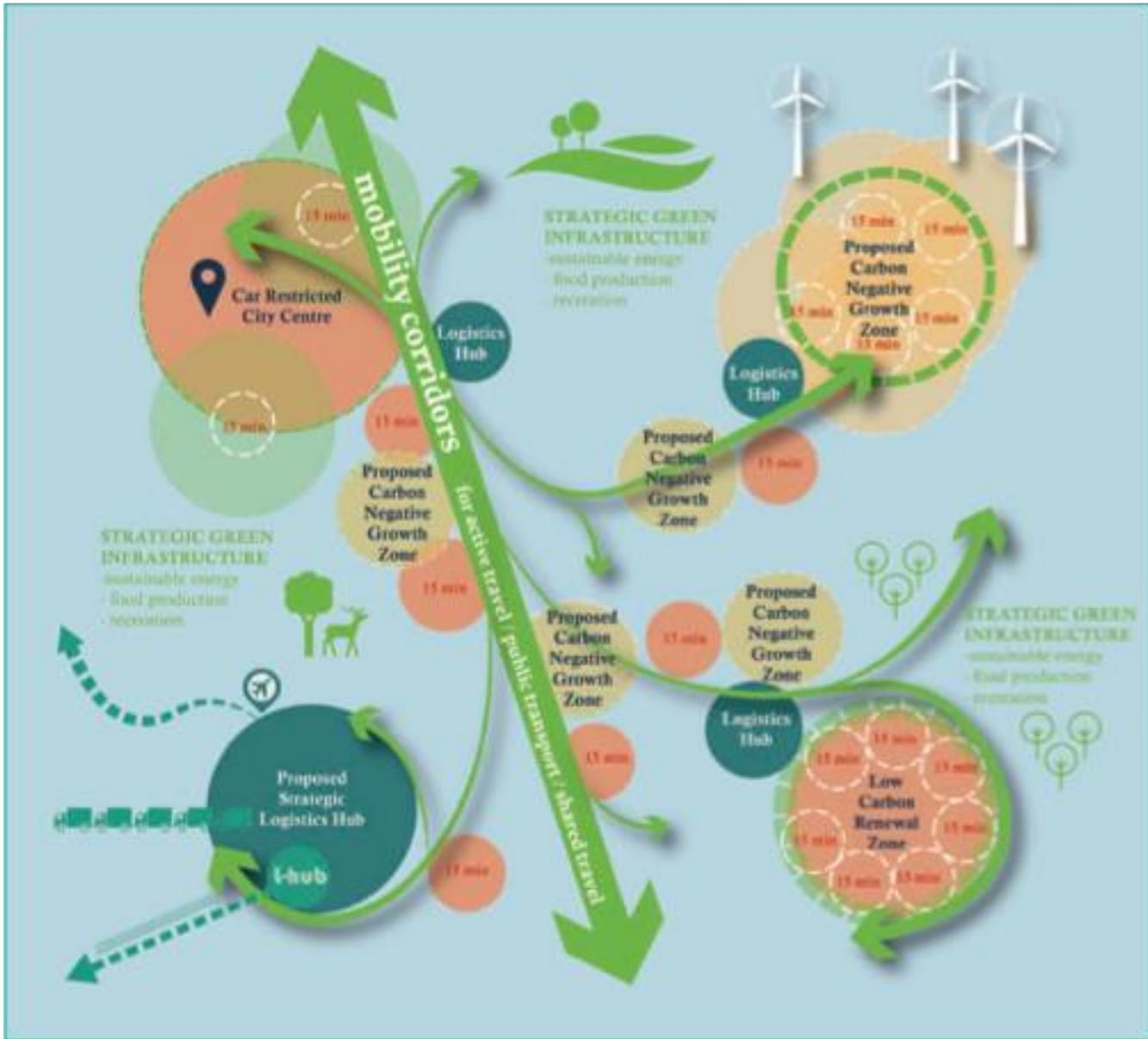


Local Approaches

- The return of Strategic Planning
- Spatial Development Strategies could include energy and power layers
- Some possible delays between National Energy System Operator (NESO) to produce first ever spatial plan for energy in 2026
- In the meantime...










Resources	Actions	Outputs	Short Term Outcomes	Medium Term Outcomes	Long Term Outcomes	Impact
Landscape and green infrastructure	Local plan review (brownfield first, compact growth) and area wide design code based on local distinctiveness	Local Plan with targets and compact allocations. Low embodied carbon and energy efficient design code	Improved design quality with energy efficiency 'built in' alongside passive measures – reduced emissions from new development	Exemplars changing design culture and standards in Ashford	Reduced trip demand from sustainable locations reducing emissions from transport	Reduced 'fixed' and transport related emissions
Council housing stock	Decarbonise and deep retrofit existing council housing stock – consider a 'centre of excellence' to increase uptake in OO and PR sector investment	100% housing stock retrofit by 2030 – Energiesprong or equivalent retrofit programme	Greater tenant satisfaction and compliance with legislation	Local supply chain opportunities for green businesses	Improved health and wellbeing for residents and greater spending power in the local economy	Improved health outcomes in the local population
Resident support	Climate Assembly and further stakeholder / anchor institution workshops	Co-produced Community Climate Strategy and LAEP	LAEP adopted (2024)	Project roll out (2025)	Wider investments in renewable energy, nature based solutions and retrofitting	Reduced fixed emissions scope 1,2, and 3
Location and micro-climate	Local Area Energy Plan	Renewable energy strategy across ABC estate and mechanisms for community scale investments	Retrofitting programme business case (2025)	Deep retrofit phase 1	Deep retrofit stage 2 (2030)	Decarbonised and offset estate leading to reduced emissions (consider to scope 3)
	Establish emissions baseline – scope 1,2 and 3	Defined incremental change required	Carbon account and reporting developed	Quick wins and emission reductions	Harder to complete actions (2040)	Carbon Negative Ashford (2040)

Urban greenspaces	Blue - green infrastructure strategy aligned to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) opportunities – net zero emphasis and local food opportunities included	Net zero LNRS providing certainty for investment in BNG, local food production and offsetting	Framework for investment in greenspaces securing multiple stacked benefits (air quality, flood and water management, urban cooling, recreation and play, active travel and improved image of place leading to health improvements)	Development of an internal BNG and carbon offsetting market with certainty of stewardship	Improved health and wellbeing, reduced flood risk, more and better-connected places for nature	Improved environmental quality and reduced climate risks for vulnerable populations
Transport network	Alignment of LCWIP, LTP4 and Local Plan	Integrated planning embedded in Local Plan policies	New walking and cycling infrastructure	Modal shift towards active and sustainable travel	Improved air quality and reduced carbon emissions from transport	Improved population health through active travel and air quality
Political will*	Placemaking and street retrofit programme	Pipeline of local projects aligned to KCC street improvement works and investment	Demonstration projects that learn by doing and gain wider public support and buy-in for low traffic neighbourhoods	Reduction in downstream flood risk and improved air quality and temperature regulation	A wider network of green infrastructure close to where residents live	Carbon sequestration, climate change adaptation and improved population health
Dedicated staff resources	Local Development Order for district heating (DH) network	Prior approval for DH works including underground pipes, heat exchangers and associated plant	LDO approved (2024) alongside current feasibility work on DH network (by others)	Roll out of phase 1 DH and cooling network (2025)	Wider DH and cooling network	Reduced fixed emissions, reduced fuel poverty

Key Messages

- There is more to Planners and planning than the regulatory function
- Strategic Planning is returning, do you have the resources and skills?
- Clean Power 2030 is welcome in terms of certainty and delivery, there are challenges in terms of the recruitment of planners and resourcing the sector
- Tensions are likely with ‘planners in the middle’ between developers and communities who may be opposed to projects
- Changes in NSIP thresholds may hold up some projects and / or be subject to local politics
- Concentration on power generation and management could eclipse other important energy considerations

The image is a composite background for a presentation. The foreground is filled with a grid of solar panels, their blue and white surfaces reflecting the light. In the background, several wind turbines are silhouetted against a bright, hazy sky. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow that permeates the scene. The overall composition suggests a focus on clean, sustainable energy.

Questions and Comments