



# Growing Mid Wales January 2025

Happy New Year! We're kickstarting 2025 by highlighting the significant efforts underway to establish Mid Wales as an important contributor to sustainable energy solutions.

Last year, the Mid Wales Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs) were launched and we're delighted to share insights into these ambitious strategies aimed at guiding our region towards a Net Zero future. These plans, developed in collaboration with key stakeholders and local authorities, outline the most cost-effective ways to transform our energy landscape while prioritising community needs.

This edition also features an exclusive interview with Doug Hughes, Chair of the Regional Skills Partnership (RSP) Cluster Group for Construction and Energy, discussing the influence of sector-specific trends and the crucial partnership between education and businesses.

Stay connected and find out how Growing Mid Wales continues to support innovation, sustainable development, and economic resilience in our community. Follow us on our social media channels to stay up-to-date and engaged with the exciting projects and initiatives shaping the future of our region.

Helping to grow opportunity in Mid Wales,

***The Growing Mid Wales team***

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## Mid Wales takes bold steps towards Net Zero with Local Area Energy Plans

**By Huw Williams, Regional Energy Officer, Growing Mid Wales**

With the UK striving to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, Wales is leading the charge with innovative Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs). These plans are more than strategies for reducing carbon emissions—they are collaborative efforts uniting local authorities, energy providers, and community stakeholders. The goal is to align initiatives across the region, driving a unified approach to achieving a low-carbon, sustainable future.

### **A unique pathway for every community**

Each LAEP is tailored to reflect the distinct needs and characteristics of its area, offering practical frameworks for local authorities to transition to net-zero in a cost-effective manner. In Mid Wales, the rural nature of Ceredigion and Powys has shaped plans focused on renewable energy development, energy-saving measures, and environmentally friendly transport solutions. These plans ensure that the journey toward decarbonisation benefits from the region's specific strengths and addresses its unique challenges.

Wales is on track to be the first nation globally to implement an LAEP for every local authority. These plans collectively form the foundation of a national energy strategy, offering targeted actions for energy generation, transport, and building efficiency. For Mid Wales, this means utilising renewable resources and developing solutions that work for dispersed rural communities.

### **Collaboration for effective change**

The development of LAEPs has been a highly collaborative effort, bringing together a diverse range of stakeholders, from councils and energy networks to community groups and housing developers. This collaborative process has created a solid foundation of shared understanding and alignment, which will be instrumental as the focus shifts from planning to execution.

This unified approach helps ensure that local efforts not only meet community needs but also contribute to broader regional and national goals. By working together, we can support energy efficiency improvements, low-carbon transport systems, and renewable energy advancements across the region.

### **Overcoming challenges and seizing opportunities**

While the LAEPs provide a clear roadmap, implementing them will require resources and commitment from all involved. Local authorities play a central role, but achieving the plans' goals will depend on actions taken by businesses, residents, and developers alike. From upgrading homes to improve energy efficiency to transitioning to electric vehicles, these efforts are vital to reducing carbon emissions.

Funding remains a critical factor in turning these plans into reality. A combination of public and private investment will be essential to unlock the economic and environmental benefits of the LAEPs. These include job creation, expanded local supply chains, and increased opportunities for green investment in Mid Wales. The Welsh Government's efforts to

incorporate local plans into a broader national framework will help address shared challenges and streamline resource allocation.

### **Leading the way to a greener future**

Mid Wales is well-placed to lead the transition to a low-carbon economy, thanks to its strong renewable energy potential and the active involvement of its communities. By focusing on energy efficiency, sustainable transport, and renewable generation, the region is taking meaningful steps toward a more resilient and sustainable future.

These plans go beyond reducing carbon emissions—they represent a vision for improving quality of life and building economic opportunities across Mid Wales. While there are challenges ahead, with a clear plan and a united approach, we're ready to make the transition to Net Zero a reality.

To learn more about the Mid Wales LAEPs and how you can support the region's energy transition, visit [Growing Mid Wales](#). Together, we can shape a future where sustainability and opportunity go hand in hand.

## **Local Area Energy Plans**

Regional Energy is being led by Growing Mid Wales, who play a key role in bringing stakeholders together across the region to facilitate the transition to Net Zero, as well as supporting the local authorities lead by example.

In 2024, Ceredigion and Powys unveiled their Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs), revealing the most cost-effective ways to reduce the local energy system's carbon emissions.

All Welsh local authorities published their LAEPs in 2024. these will be scaled up to create a National Energy Plan for Wales, mapping out future energy demand and supply for all parts of Wales.

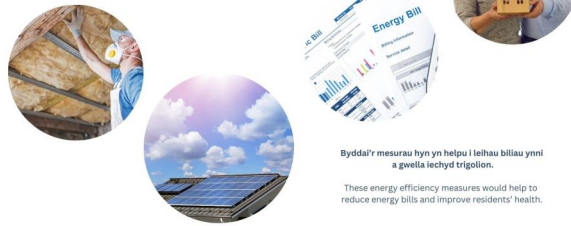
This month we are providing an insight into the Mid Wales LAEP reports, combined with results from our LAEP public engagement survey, designed to assess the perception of the changes needed for the energy transition, which over 500 residents in the region responded to in 2024.

For more detailed information on the Mid Wales LAEPs and the LAEP survey visit our site: [www.growingmid.wales/LAEP](http://www.growingmid.wales/LAEP)

# Energy Efficiency

Mae'r CYALI yn dangos y gallai 58% o gartrefi yng Nghanolbarth Cymru elwa o uwchraddio'u hadelladwaith, e.e. inswleiddio'r atig a wallau cwtod, tra gallai 29% elwa o baneli solar ar y to.

The LAEPs show how around 58% of homes in Mid Wales could benefit from fabric upgrades, such as loft and cavity wall insulation, whereas 29% could benefit from rooftop solar panels.

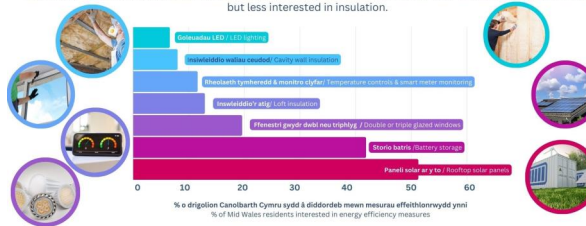


Byddai'r mesurau hyn yn helpu i leihau biliau ynni a gwella iechyd trigolion.

These energy efficiency measures would help to reduce energy bills and improve residents' health.

Yn ôl ein harlowg, mae gan drigolion Canolbarth Cymru ddiddordeb arbennig mewn cael paneli solar ar doeau a storio trydan mewn batris ond llai o ddiddordeb mewn inswleiddio.

Our survey shows how Mid Wales residents are particularly interested in rooftop solar panels and battery storage but less interested in insulation.



Dyweddodd dros 67% mai cost yw'r prif rwystr i ôl-osod, yn enwedig y costau sydd i'w talu ymlaen llaw.

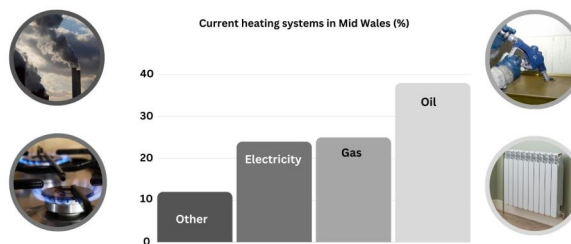
Over 67% said cost is the main barrier to retrofitting their home, with upfront costs being the biggest issue.

To check if you are eligible for financial support for energy efficiency measures, please visit the Ceredigion and Powys County Council websites: Ceredigion: -

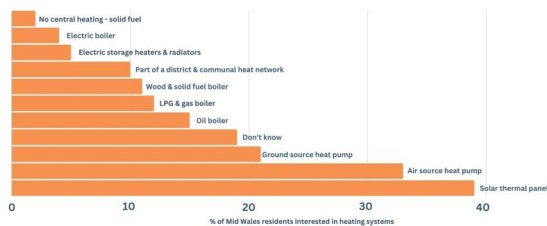
<https://ceredigion.gov.uk/resident/housing/financial-assistance/energy-efficiency-schemes/...> Powys: <https://en.powys.gov.uk/article/14595/Warm-Wales-Powys-Energy-Saving-Scheme-ECO4-Flex...#MidWalesLAEP>

# Low carbon heating

Notably, 35% of homes in Mid Wales are heated by oil. To help Wales meet its net zero targets, our modelling shows 82% of Mid Wales' homes need to switch to heat pumps by 2050.



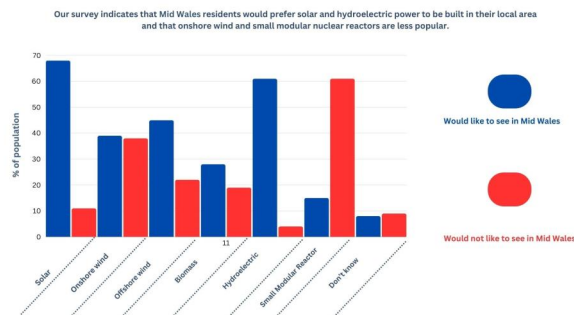
Our survey found that Mid Wales residents are most interested in switching to heat pumps and solar thermal panels.



About 1/3 of people plan to change their current heating system when it breaks, but 63% might switch sooner if financial support was available to them.

## Renewable energy generation

Maximising the generation and use of renewable energy locally has been identified as a key priority for Mid Wales. Using flexible technologies like smart electric vehicle chargers and batteries can avoid the need for expensive upgrades to our electricity network.



## Transport

Mae'r CYALL yn dangos sut y gall cynyddu'r defnydd o drafnidiaeth gyhoeddus, cerdded a beicio leihau allyriadau carbon Canolbarth Cymru.

The LAEPs show how increasing the use of public transport, walking, and cycling, can reduce Mid Wales' carbon emissions.

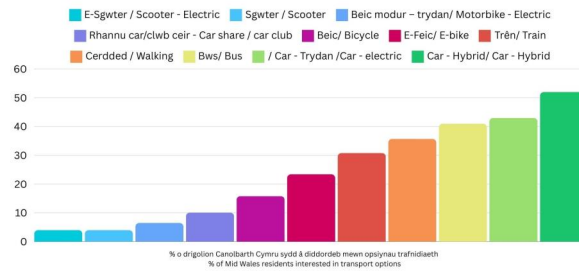
Ond mae realiti bywyd yng nghefn gwlad yn golygu bod pobl yn debygol o barhau i ddiybnnu ar eu ceir, felly bydd ceir trydan yn bwysig.

However, the realities of rural life mean that people are likely to remain reliant on their cars therefore electric cars will play a significant role.

Most people surveyed would consider using electric or hybrid cars in the future and there was notable interest in using the bus.

Yng Nghanolbarth Cymru, byddai'r rhan fwyaf o bobl a ymatebodd i'n harolwg yn ystyried defnyddio ceir trydan neu hybrid yn y dyfodol, ac roedd cryn ddiddordeb mewn defnyddio bysiau.

In Mid Wales most people surveyed would consider using electric or hybrid cars in the future and there was notable interest in using the bus.



The top 5 things that would encourage people to switch to low carbon transport options:

1. Increased availability of public transport
2. Reduced cost of electric vehicles
3. Reduced cost of public transport
4. Increased availability of low-cost electric vehicle charging infrastructure on key routes
5. Electric vehicle charging at home



## Meet the RSP Cluster Group Chair for Construction and Energy



1 - Doug at the RSP Employment and Skills Plan event at the Royal Welsh Show, 2024

**Doug Hughes, Managing Director Douglas Hughes Architects Ltd:** Newtown, Welshpool, Aberystwyth - Dougs' main business, Hughes Architects, has been in existence for over 21 years and has completed over 5,000 buildings of every shape and size. From the very outset, Hughes Architects undertook community consultation as one of its core skill sets. This early engagement with key stakeholders was recognised by RIBA as an exemplar practice.

**1. Sector Impact on the Mid Wales Economy:** What are the key trends or challenges currently affecting your sector in Mid Wales?

*The only difference from the trends and challenges across the UK is that they are amplified by our geographical position in the UK, our leaky borders with England where margins are greater, and size of the region.*

*The main issues facing the industry in 2019 identified in the Farmer Report are pretty much the same in 2025 - low productivity, low predictability, structural fragmentation, leadership fragmentation, low margins, adversarial pricing models and financial fragility, a dysfunctional training, funding and delivery model, workforce size and demographics, lack of collaboration, lack of R and D and investment in innovation and poor industry image. We have a lot to conquer!*

**2. Collaboration with Education and Training Providers:** How are you working with education and training providers to ensure that skills training aligns with the needs of businesses in your sector?

*We have had consistent and productive engagement with colleges that deliver construction training in the region. The delivery of energy training in the region has no identifiable or singular curriculum.*

*The challenge here is to justify demand for courses in the region. There is a huge distance between locations in Powys and without critical mass in those towns or areas it is understandably difficult for educators to run courses. It is not dissimilar to the issues facing educators in Ceredigion as well. We are working on that one and need to be innovative as we are not intending to make the region any smaller!*

*Another of our objectives will be to improve the image of a career in construction and ensure that young people are in possession of all the facts well before they start choosing their GCSE options. Part of this will involve engagement with lower years of secondary schools and probably involve engagement with primary schools as well. The aim here is to make sure that parents and careers teachers know what a career in construction in 2025 looks like and how satisfying and financially rewarding it can be.*

*We also need to make sure we develop ideas to signpost those who are looking for a career change into the industry.*

**3. Importance of Cluster Group Participation:** How important do you think the business voice is in shaping the education and training offer for your sector?

*This is simple, if you don't have any input into this opportunity you cannot expect any output. Everyone we have spoken to, from educators to contractors, is coming at this from the same direction so there is incredible will to come up with Mid Wales solutions to Mid Wales problems. Yes, we have a reduction in apprenticeship funding from Welsh Government but we are looking at other routes of entry into the construction industry in the region. We are being proactive in coming up with ideas to solve this one and I am enjoying the frank exchanges of ideas.*

*There are many good things that individual groups are already doing in the region and also pockets of incredibly good practice. It just needs a bit of joining up and this is where the RSP comes in. Without the RSP meetings we would not have known what is going on on the patch. We just need more businesses around the table. So, if you know of any business that wants to engage please let me know.*

**4. Success Stories and Opportunities:** Can you share your thoughts on the opportunities you see for businesses in the future as a result of engagement with the RSP?

*I hope that we could be the shop window for the construction and energy industry in Mid Wales. The opportunities for businesses that engage with the RSP are many and evolving.*

*Through our quarterly meetings, we have developed a clearer understanding of what businesses are looking for in order to grow the skills, knowledge and capacity the industry needs in the region to meet the challenges of the ever-increasing demand for a sustainable built and energy environment in the region. Our meetings give the companies that participate the ability to ensure their concerns are heard by educators and courses designed around that requirement.*

*We are also engaging with the major procurers in the region such as the County Councils and Health Boards to hear what opportunities are in the pipeline and how we can make sure local businesses are on approved contractor lists. In my many meetings with procurers there is very much a will to use local talent on local projects in the region, it's just not as joined up as it should be so we are working through those issues in our RSP meetings. We will crack this one.*





More information the the Sector Cluster Groups can be found on the [RSP website](#).

## Keep up to Date

Need to catch up on what's been discussed in our meetings? Here's a reminder of where you can find the minutes for the following meetings:

- All minutes relating to the Growing Mid Wales Board are hosted on Powys County Council [website](#).
- Papers relating to the Growing Mid Wales Partnership can be found on our [website](#).

Keep up to date with Growing Mid Wales news, developments on activity and organisations we support by following our X, LinkedIn pages, and YouTube channel:

<https://twitter.com/growingmidwales>

[www.linkedin.com/company/growing-mid-wales](http://www.linkedin.com/company/growing-mid-wales)

<https://www.youtube.com/@TCC-GMW>

We're eager to reach out to as many organisations and businesses across Mid Wales as possible. You can make this possible by following, liking and sharing our pages.

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