Date: 10th March 2025

Contact: Emily Bolton

Climate Crisis Strategy Manager

Cambridgeshire County Council

Email: Emily.bolton@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Economy & Climate Change  
Place & Sustainability

To: Fiona Campbell

Subject: Cambridgeshire County Council’s Response to the RESP Consultation

Dear Fiona,

Please find attached Cambridgeshire County Council’s response to Ofgem’s consultation on the Regional Energy Strategic Plan (RESP). We welcome the opportunity to provide our views on the RESP policy framework and its impact assessment, and we appreciate Ofgem’s efforts to develop a coordinated approach to regional energy system planning.

Cambridgeshire County Council recognises the importance of a whole-system, place-based approach to energy planning, ensuring that local needs and opportunities are effectively integrated into regional and national strategies. Our response reflects our commitment to supporting the transition to net zero in a way that maximises benefits for our communities, businesses, and the wider energy system.

We trust that our feedback will be considered as Ofgem finalises its approach to the RESP. Should you require any further clarification on any of the points raised, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully,

Emily Bolton  
Climate Crisis Strategy Manager  
Cambridgeshire County Council

Cambridgeshire County Council's Response to Ofgem's Draft Impact Assessment on the Regional Energy Strategic Plan (RESP)

# Do you agree that we have, to a reasonable extent, identified and understood the potential impacts of the introduction of the RESP?

Cambridgeshire County Council acknowledges that Ofgem has made progress in identifying the potential impacts of the RESP. The recognition of the need for a coordinated, whole-system approach to energy planning is welcome. However, there are areas where further clarity and refinement would be beneficial. For example, the integration of Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs) and the role of local authorities in shaping and implementing RESP should be further developed to ensure that regional energy planning effectively reflects local priorities and infrastructure constraints. Additionally, more detail is required on how regional variations and unique challenges such as existing grid constraints and significant national growth ambitions in Cambridgeshire will be accounted for.

# Do you agree that we have, to a reasonable extent, captured and understood the potential impacts of the introduction of the RESP on different stakeholders, including persons engaged in the generation, transmission, distribution or supply of electricity, as well as consumers?

The impact assessment highlights broad categories of stakeholders but does not sufficiently detail how different levels of local government, including county and district councils, will be actively involved. Local authorities play a crucial role in land use planning, economic development, transport, and social services, all of which are directly affected by energy system planning. It is essential that their role is explicitly defined to avoid a disconnect between strategic energy planning and local implementation. Regard for future changes related to Local Government Reform would also be beneficial to recognise here.

# Has anything in this draft IA changed your views/response to our July 2024 RESP policy framework consultation? If so, please explain what part of your response/view has changed and the reasons why.

While Cambridgeshire County Council generally supports the principles outlined in the RESP, the draft impact assessment does not sufficiently address how strategic energy planning will align with existing local and regional governance structures. The lack of clarity around funding mechanisms, capacity-building support for local authorities, and integration with LAEPs raises concerns. The Council reiterates the need for explicit recognition of local government-led energy planning efforts and the importance of ensuring that communities benefit directly from RESP-driven infrastructure investments.

# Do you agree that we have, to a reasonable extent, identified and understood all the potential costs of implementing the RESP?

The cost assessment is a useful starting point but does not fully account for potential financial burdens on local authorities and other regional stakeholders. Effective RESP implementation will require significant engagement, data-sharing, and integration efforts at the local level. Without dedicated funding and resource allocation for local authorities, there is a risk that some of the efficiency and coordination benefits projected in the impact assessment may not be realised and/or may be realised only in certain areas further entrenching existing inequalities.

# Have we, as accurately as possible, identified and understood all the potential benefits of implementing the RESP?

The identified benefits of improved coordination, strategic investment, and efficiency savings are well-articulated. However, additional benefits should be explored, including how RESP can support community energy projects, facilitate a just transition for vulnerable communities, and accelerate the deployment of distributed energy resources. Cambridgeshire County Council urges Ofgem to provide greater clarity on how RESP will directly benefit local communities and not just national-scale energy infrastructure. Clarity on the roles of the RESPs in delivering national ambitions and their interface with Great British Energy would also be welcomed.

# Are there any unintended consequences of implementing RESP that we have not identified?

There are several potential unintended consequences that should be considered:

* **Centralisation Risks:** A national/regional planning framework may inadvertently reduce the influence of local decision-makers, undermining locally-led initiatives.
* **Grid Access and Infrastructure Delays:** Without clearly defined mechanisms to accelerate grid connection processes, there is a risk that RESP could exacerbate existing delays in bringing new renewable generation and energy storage projects online.
* **Resource Constraints for Local Authorities:** If local authorities are expected to play a key role in RESP implementation but are not adequately resourced, the plan may create additional administrative burdens without delivering the intended benefits.