# WRITTEN STATEMENT

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# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Launch of the Welsh Government Energy Service** |
| **DATE**  | **11 October 2018** |
| **BY** | **Lesley Griffiths AM, Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs** |

Today I am announcing the launch of the new Welsh Government Energy Service, which brings together the support services we have previously provided as Green Growth Wales and the Local Energy Service. The service now provides a single point of contact for public sector organisations and others seeking to develop energy efficiency or renewable energy schemes. Building on experience and learning over recent years, the service offers technical, financial and commercial support to public bodies and communities. The Wales Funding Programme and the Welsh Energy Loan Fund together provide loans, including low or interest-free loans, to support installations.

Since the launch of Green Growth Wales in 2015 and the evolution of Ynni’r Fro into the Local Energy Service, we have invested over £55m of zero-interest loans across the public sector in Wales and also supported the delivery of a further £27m of energy and energy efficiency projects, where finance was secured from alternative routes. This approach helps to reduce the running costs of public bodies across Wales and will realise savings of £138m over the life of the assets in which we’re investing and reduce carbon emissions by over 800,000 tonnes. Over the last three years the Local Energy Service has also invested £10m through loans to support new local renewable energy schemes.

The transition to a low carbon energy economy presents Wales with an enormous opportunity to create a system which delivers significant economic and social benefits for Wales. Doing this whilst meeting our legally binding carbon targets and budgets requires us to develop new policies and strengthen the policies and programmes already driving decarbonisation.

I have strengthened Planning Policy Wales, our national land-use planning policy document, to align with our energy ambitions and establish an energy hierarchy. We want local planning authorities to see renewable resources as valuable assets supporting prosperity. I have also introduced new requirements for local authorities to set local targets for renewable energy in their local plans. The service will support greater regional energy planning whilst providing the opportunity to secure the benefits of renewable energy generation, through increased local ownership within Wales.

Much of the benefit from the energy generation we host currently leaves Wales in paying energy bills. In the future, energy generation assets close to energy efficient demand centres, with real-time trading and balancing, will be the norm. We must ensure communities and our public sector are at the heart of and investing in this transition if we are to keep more of the benefits in Wales.

In 2017 I outlined my ambition for the public sector in Wales to be carbon neutral by 2030. The public sector has a key leadership role, through its various roles in place making, purchasing and service provision, whilst working with the communities, whose interests they serve. This is why I have chosen to integrate our public sector and community based services to ensure a more place-based approach, whilst retaining the continuity so important to existing service users.

I expect the public sector to use the service to actively seek opportunities to invest in energy efficiency and generating renewable energy. The public sector must use their available resources, such as land, buildings and funding, for renewable electricity and heat generation and work with local communities to develop and deliver energy projects.

My aim is for the new Energy Service to provide the impetus to drive forward my vision for a new energy system. The focus will be on enabling the public sector and local communities to work together to accelerate the development of carbon reduction projects whilst retaining the benefits within local communities, maximising benefits to the Welsh economy.

Further information on the new service and how to apply for support can be found at the following link: <http://localenergy.gov.wales/en/>