

Local Authority Common Ask (Gas) Guide – District Heating



Technical guidance for assembling data from a Local Area Energy Plan for District Heating

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

Name	Description
LAEP	Local Area Energy Plan
LSOA	Lower Layer Super Output Areas

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1. OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

This guide was written to accompany version 2.0 of the Local Authority Common Ask (Gas). The purpose of this guide is to explain the reasoning behind providing a local authority common ask, how to use it and address frequently asked questions. This document does not override the requirements of the local authority common ask definition itself, and wherever there is a perceived difference between this guide and the local authority common ask definition, the local authority common ask definition is to be taken as the authoritative definition.

This guide specifically covers the compilation of district heating uptake data. Other guides are provided to support the compilation of data for other technologies. Note that as well as the data requested for the technology in this section, metadata information for this technology should be provided in the local authority common ask questionnaire, which is in the “General Information” section.

The local authority common ask is intended to help in the understanding of data from the LAEP and comparison with other plans for the area. The requirements of the data are designed to allow for like for like comparison with different outputs. It should not require additional outputs to be produced but may require existing outputs to be transformed or reframed in a different way.

The local authority common ask consists of the local authority common ask definition in Microsoft Excel format (named Local Authority Common Ask (Gas) Definition – DH) this guide and the associated checklist in Microsoft Word and PDF format, a series of example sheets filled out with data demonstrating the format that data should be returned in using CSV UTF-8 (Comma delimited) format, and a series of templates in both CSV UTF-8 (Comma delimited) and Microsoft Excel Workbook format. The local authority common ask definition consists of a sheet describing the inputs required for the relevant technology. The document(s) to be returned are defined in the local authority common ask definition, which also specifies column naming, data types and includes a description of the data required for the column with examples. The local authority common ask definition itself does not need to be returned. Where templates are to be provided, these have already been partially filled out, and should be completed and returned in the same format as they are provided in. Apart from custom geographic area shapefiles, all documents returned should be in either CSV UTF-8 (Comma delimited) or Microsoft Excel Workbook format. The Local Authority Common Ask Questionnaire should be returned in Microsoft Excel Workbook format.

Note that where names are used for categorisation, then we ask that names match exactly with standard definitions, allowing no room for interpretation. This includes correctly matching the spelling, capitalisation and spaces present in the official definition of the name.

1.2 General guidance for preparing technology specific data

Existing data can be used as a basis for the data provided and converted into the correct format defined in the local authority common ask definition.

If the data template is used, then note that placeholder text has been included to indicate where the LAEP data will be needed to complete the file. Additional rows should be added so the data file encompasses all of the data contained within the LAEP, ranging across the different categories of data within the LAEP such as different geographical areas.

The “*unit*” column provided is for information only and should not be altered. The content of the column in the first row can be copied to all of the rows in the file.

The “*laep_name*” columns, which are present in all data templates to be returned, should contain a single name across all data and across all files which describes the LAEP work which the data originates from. This will be used to label the data distinguish it from data from other LAEP projects.

Where the local authority common ask definition specifies a column for geographical area information, then the naming of standard geographical areas should exactly match the definitions found on the [ONS Open Geography Portal](#) for the relevant boundary. The geographical areas referenced here should match the resolution declared in the local authority common ask questionnaire for this technology. If using LSOAs, note that the “General Information” folder of the local authority common ask contains lists of relevant LSOAs for both 2011 and 2021 boundary definitions, both of which can be selected as the geographical area in the local authority common ask questionnaire. If the data uses a custom geographical definition for which a shapefile has been provided, then the names of areas in these columns should exactly match the names in the accompanying shapefile provided. Note that if your data is at a higher granular resolution than LSOA, then we ask for you to aggregate it to LSOA level before submitting it. This is to ensure only an appropriate level of data is shared, and to avoid intellectual property concerns about disclosing the details of modelling approaches.

In some cases, there may be a trade-off between granularity in different categories, such as between high geographic granularity with data provided for years at set intervals and a lower geographic granularity with a full annualised forecast for every year between the base year and 2050. In these cases, the order of preference for granularity is first a preference for data resolved into archetypes that reflect the reference archetypes as closely as possible, then for geographic granularity, and finally for a full time series of data.

Where the local authority common ask definition specifies a column for categories referenced in an associated definitions file, then the naming of the categories in this column should exactly match the naming of the categories in the LAEP data from the relevant definitions file.

Where the local authority common ask definition allows columns for multiple years, then a base year column and a 2050 column must be included, but intermediate year columns should only be completed where output data from the LAEP is available for that year. The base year of the forecast will be taken as the first year for which any data is provided. Note that a column should be included for every year between the base year and 2050 to clearly indicate the years for which data is provided.

The definition of a year can be given in the local authority common ask questionnaire for each technology by specifying the day of the year on which values apply. For LAEPs with shorter timescales, this information could have a significant impact on the rate of uptake expected by a target date. However, for some LAEP datasets, this information will be less critical as the longer timescales make differences in the day of the year that uptake applies minor, such as for 2050 net zero plans. If a date is not provided, then a default date will be used in its place, so this information should only be provided if it is felt to be important for your case.

As the naming used in the categorical data columns are cross-referenced to other tables and data sources, it is important that the names used are precise to avoid any ambiguity when comparing names. For all files, we ask that the format of the names be carefully checked, including spelling, capitalisation and spaces, especially spaces that might occur at the end of names.

Note that if data is provided for fractions of LSOAs as defined in the “*non_standard_area_lsoa_definition*” file in the General Information folder, the data provided should only cover the fraction of the LSOA affected by the LAEP and should not be scaled up. If data is provided for a custom area defined in a geojson shapefile, then data should be relevant to the whole of the area referenced in the geojson file.

1.3 General guidance for completing definition templates

Where definition templates are provided, we are asking for an indication on how the categories used in the LAEP analysis correlate with standard categories we use.

Each definition file contains at least 3 columns:

- Left: A column that is empty when the document is supplied and is to be filled out with the names of the category or categories that correspond to the template category.
- Middle: A column of the names of the standardised categories for quick reference.
- Right: A column giving the detailed definition of each category to allow you to establish how your categories align with the categories in the template.

Some definitions files, such as the buildings definitions file, will have additional categorisation to increase the readability of the document. These categorisations are a repeat of information included in the definition description and SFS definition columns.

laep_heating_technology_building_archetype_definition	sfs_heating_technology_building_archetype_definition	fuel	size	age	sfs_heating_technology_building_archetype_definition_description
	DOMESTIC_FUEL_GAS_SIZE_SMALL_AGE_VERY OLD	Gas	Small	Very Old	Domestic building using natural gas as a primary fuel for heating, with 1-2 bedrooms (small), and which were built before 1918 (very old).

Figure 1: An example of the first line of a building archetype definition table with additional categorisation to increase readability.

There are the following options for defining categorisation matching:

- Where the category in the template aligns with a category in the LAEP data, then the category name from the LAEP data should be entered against the respective category in the template.
- Where the LAEP data uses broader definitions than are used in the template, then the same category name from the LAEP data can be provided against multiple template category names to indicate the template categories which should be combined to match the category in the LAEP data.
- Where the LAEP data uses more specific categories than are used in the template, then multiple LAEP category names can be provided against a single template category name to indicate the LAEP categories which should be combined to match the category in the template data.
 - For some technologies, this option is not available, as the process of converting this data to a usable format would require additional data to be provided, which could raise potential IP concerns about data sharing. Where this is the case, the local authority common ask definition and the guide include it in their description of how to handle the definitions files for the relevant technologies. In this case, we would encourage you to perform the data aggregation before submitting data, as you will have the greatest familiarity with the details of the data.
- Where there is not good alignment between LAEP and template categories, then categories should be aggregated to a level where agreement is possible. In extreme cases, all categories from the LAEP data could be aggregated into a single category, and disaggregation will be performed on the data using standard assumptions and methods.
- If a technology listed in a definition file is outside the scope of the LAEP work, then the column can be left blank to indicate there is no relevant data from the LAEP for this category, and standard data will be used in its place.

Note that for all LAEP archetypes defined in the definitions file, there should be corresponding data in the data files to avoid misinterpretation of the intention of the data.

2. DOMESTIC AND NON-DOMESTIC DISTRICT HEATING UPTAKE DATA

The preferred data format for this technology is for domestic and non-domestic data to be provided in separate files, as they may use different units and are handled differently in modelling. If distinction cannot be made in the LAEP outputs between domestic and non-

domestic heating uptake, then a single CSV file labelled “All District Heating Uptake” can be provided, but this is not preferable. When selecting options in the local authority common ask questionnaire, select the same option for both domestic and non-domestic heating questions on geographical area used.

For clarity, the equations below shows how heating technology uptake data should be calculated. Note how in the denominator, the building stock should already have buildings with district heating removed from the stock – this reflects the preferred data definition:

Heating technology uptake:

$$\frac{\text{Number of buildings with a given heating technology}}{\text{Total Building Stock}}$$

2.1 District Heating Demand Centre Definitions

The demand centre definition document for district heating is used to specify the key information about the demand centres that provide the heat for connected buildings as modelled in LAEP work. There should be an entry for each demand centre which has connected buildings within the LAEP, listing the name of the demand centre that is referenced in the uptake files, as well as its fuel type and the name of the network asset the demand centre will be connected to, if known. Note that the relevant fuel types which can be specified are as follows:

- Hydrogen
- Biomethane
- Natural Gas
- Blended Hydrogen and Natural Gas
- Blended Biomethane and Natural Gas
- Blended Hydrogen and Biomethane
- Blended Hydrogen and Biomethane and Natural Gas

If your LAEP includes a demand centre which has a fuel type other than the options specified above, it should not be included in this section of the local authority common ask. If the fuel type of a demand centre changes over time, we suggest that you list this demand centre multiple times with indicative name changes and fuel types reflecting the different fuels used by the centre, and you adjust values in the uptake data to reflect the changing fuel type. For example, if the fuel type is expected to change in a given year, then the building percentage uptake should be associated fully with the original fuel type demand centre name until that point, and then changed to the new fuel type demand centre name thereafter.

Please refer to the [general guidance on completing definition templates](#) for further advice on how to complete the template.

demand_center_name	demand_center_fuel_type	connected_asset
	THE FUEL TYPE SHOULD BE SELECTED FROM THE FOLLOWING: HYDROGEN, BIOMETHANE, NATURAL GAS, BLENDED_HYDROGEN_AND_NATURAL_GAS, BLENDED_BIOMETHANE_AND_NATURAL_GAS, BLENDED_HYDROGEN_AND_BIOMETHANE, BLENDED_HYDROGEN_AND_BIOMETHANE_AND_NATURAL_GAS	

Figure 2: The first line of the district heating demand centre definition table.

2.2 Domestic District Heating Uptake Data Input

This file will contain the data describing domestic district heating uptake across the LAEP area between the base year and 2050, indexed by geographical area and demand centre. Please refer to

the [general guidance on preparing technology specific data](#) for advice on how to compile the data and checks to perform.

The file should contain the following columns:

- *laep_name* – this should be the universal name for the data from this LAEP, as described in the general advice section.
- *demand_center_name* - this should be an index for the demand centre that buildings indicated in the row have their heating demand served by, the naming of which should exactly match the naming in the “demand_center_name” column of the district heating demand centre definition file.
- *geographical_area* – this should be an index for the data describing the area which the row corresponds to, the definition of which matches the definition declared in the local authority common ask questionnaire, and is either a standard geographical area, or a custom area for which boundary data has been supplied.
- Annualised data columns from base year to 2050 – there should be as many columns as required to span, with one column for each year. The unit of each column should be the percentage of buildings in the geographical area with heating demand served by the relevant district heating demand centre. The value of each row in the column should be greater or equal to than zero and less than or equal to 100.

laep_name	demand_center_name	geographical_area	unit	2023
TO BE COMPLETED BY LAEP PRACTITIONER - ADD ROWS FOR EACH DEMAND CENTER AND ASSOCIATED GEOGRAPHICAL AREA IN YOUR LAEP	TO BE COMPLETED BY LAEP PRACTITIONER - ADD ROWS FOR EACH DEMAND CENTER AND ASSOCIATED GEOGRAPHICAL AREA IN YOUR LAEP	TO BE COMPLETED BY LAEP PRACTITIONER - ADD ROWS FOR EACH DEMAND CENTER AND ASSOCIATED GEOGRAPHICAL AREA IN YOUR LAEP	%	TO BE COMPLETED BY LAEP PRACTITIONER - COMPLETE ALL YEARS FOR WHICH YOUR LAEP REPORTS DATA

Figure 3: First row of domestic district heating uptake data template including first year of data, with comments detailing how data should be entered. Identical to non-domestic template.

2.3 Non-Domestic District Heating Uptake Data Input

This file will contain the data describing non-domestic district heating uptake across the LAEP area between the base year and 2050, indexed by geographical area and demand centre. Please refer to the [general guidance on preparing technology specific data](#) for advice on how to compile the data and checks to perform.

Note that the percentage of building stock values for non-domestic heating uptake used in this file should use units of percentage of buildings with heating if possible for consistency with other data sources. If values can only be provided in terms of percentage of I&C building floorspace, this will be accepted but should be noted in the metadata section of the local authority common ask questionnaire.

The file should contain the following columns:

- *laep_name* – this should be the universal name for the data from this LAEP, as described in the general advice section.
- *demand_center_name* - this should be an index for the demand centre that buildings indicated in the row have their heating demand served by, the naming of which should exactly match the naming in the “demand_center_name” column of the district heating demand centre definition file.
- *geographical_area* – this should be an index for the data describing the area which the row corresponds to, the definition of which matches the definition declared in the local authority common ask questionnaire, and is either a standard geographical area, or a custom area for which boundary data has been supplied.
- Annualised data columns from base year to 2050 – there should be as many columns as required to span, with one column for each year. The unit of each column should be the

percentage of buildings in the geographical area with heating demand served by the relevant district heating demand centre. The value of each row in the column should be greater or equal to than zero and less than or equal to 100.

laep_name	demand_center_name	geographical_area	unit	2023
TO BE COMPLETED BY LAEP PRACTITIONER - ADD ROWS FOR EACH DEMAND CENTER AND ASSOCIATED GEOGRAPHICAL AREA IN YOUR LAEP	TO BE COMPLETED BY LAEP PRACTITIONER - ADD ROWS FOR EACH DEMAND CENTER AND ASSOCIATED GEOGRAPHICAL AREA IN YOUR LAEP	TO BE COMPLETED BY LAEP PRACTITIONER - ADD ROWS FOR EACH DEMAND CENTER AND ASSOCIATED GEOGRAPHICAL AREA IN YOUR LAEP	%	TO BE COMPLETED BY LAEP PRACTITIONER - COMPLETE ALL YEARS FOR WHICH YOUR LAEP REPORTS DATA

Figure 4: First row of non-domestic district heating uptake data template including first year of data, with comments detailing how data should be entered. Identical to domestic template.