

Local Authority role |

Local Area Agreements (LAAs) can present an opportunity to support local activity on sustainable energy. LAAs are made between central and local government and set priorities for action within a particular area. They include indicators and targets across a range of different issues. Their aim is to achieve local solutions that meet local needs, while also contributing to national priorities and the achievement of standards set by central government.

Many local authorities have already incorporated sustainable energy into their Local Area Agreements and the three in the South West region, referred to in this case study, are using LAAs to fund new work on renewable energy. Each is at a different stage with Gloucestershire's at final consultation.

LAAs offer an opportunity to deliver renewable energy solutions against a number of broader "blocks" and themes.

Context |

Local Area Agreements seek to:

- provide intelligent and mature discussion between local and central government, based on a clear framework and shared understanding of national and local priorities
- improve local performance, by allowing a more flexible use of resources, to achieve better outcomes and devolve responsibility
- enhance efficiency by rationalising non-mainstream funding and reduce bureaucracy to help local partners to join up and enhance community leadership

LAAs are developed through Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) with local authorities as key partners. The content of LAAs is drafted locally then negotiated with the relevant government departments through the regional government office (GOSW).

Process/partners and activities |

Development of LAA targets requires significant time input. Most of the LAAs that have incorporated renewable energy have been driven by council officers or staff from other stakeholder organisations (such as Energy NGOs). As with many other activities it is important to have at least one "champion" for the project who will drive the development of the LAA target and ideally a team of staff.

The targets for the three LAAs are:

area	outcome	indicator
Cornwall	Grow Cornwall's sustainable energy economy, reduce green house gas emissions and reduce fuel poverty	kW installed - heat, electric, cooling domestic & community buildings with micro generation installed. No. of installations.
Dorset	Increase the installed capacity and uptake of (micro, small and medium scale) renewable energy technologies which deliver electricity or heat in the public and community sector* in Dorset	i) Installed capacity in kW of micro, small & medium scale renewable energy technologies in the public and community sector* ii) Number of renewable energy installations completed in the public and community sector*
Gloucestershire	"More resilient communities" - in relation to climate change. Increasing the amount of local renewable energy generation.	(i) Number of renewable energy installations in domestic, public sector and community buildings (ii) Installed capacity of new renewable energy systems

*Public sector is Dorset County Council, the six Dorset district/ borough councils. Community sector is: village halls and other community owned and managed buildings.

Each county has set targets against which progress will be measured. The proposed activities in each county are outlined below.

There is also a 'reward element' of LAAs that can deliver new resources for local action on sustainable energy and climate change. In order to access this funding the LAA must include one or more "stretch" targets that are higher than the area's statutory targets and will therefore stretch local resources. In order to achieve these targets "pump-priming" funding is available through the LAA for activities that will help to achieve the target. If the target is achieved within the time-scale of the LAA then a "reward" grant is available.

Cornwall

Cornwall performance

- **1072 kW new installed capacity 2006-2009**
(without reward = 405kW)
- **146 new installations 2006-2009**
(without reward = 72)

Because the LAA stretch pump-priming funding is limited, the Partnership will seek alternative funding to complement the wider LAA energy activities, which includes a non-stretching target to install 3166 homes with insulation between 2006-2009. The stretch targets will attract about £110k of pump-priming funding over three years and on successful achievement of the target in 2009, £1m reward funding.

Proposed CSEP Actions to deliver the Stretch Target are:

- New Technical Project officer post based at CSEP - to encourage and facilitate projects.
- Events - supplier meets market, conferences, seminars
- Marketing and awareness raising of technologies available
- Data collection, monitoring, reporting
- Capital support for microgeneration measures
- Advice service for developers, housing providers, community groups and householders

Dorset

Performance expected without the reward element of the LAA is:

Nine renewable energy installations or 9.9 KW of installed capacity of micro, small and medium scale renewable energy technologies, which deliver heat or electricity, installed in the public and community sector in Dorset.

Performance expected with the reward element of the LAA:

65 renewable energy installations or 809.9 KW installed capacity of micro, small and medium scale renewable energy technologies, which deliver heat or electricity, installed in the public and community sector in Dorset.

Proposed actions to deliver the targets

- Re-establishment of Dorset Energy Group
- (The ultimate reporting and accountability of Dorset Energy Group lies with the Dorset Strategic Partnership.)
- Establish Renewable Energy Technical Advisor post
- Establish Renewable Energy Development Officer post
- Establishment of county renewable energy programme - to include the following key elements
- Development and implementation of support service for renewable energy projects
- Development of monitoring system for the target including documentation of projects
- Support of working group to steer the project
- Support for other technology specific working groups
- Implementation and monitoring of the overall strategy.

Gloucestershire

The Gloucestershire target is still being finalised but the draft target has been set as follows:

Performance expected at the end of the period of the LAA without the Reward Element:

- number of renewable energy installations during the lifetime of the LAA would be 150 installations.
- increase in installed capacity of renewable energy during the lifetime of the LAA would be 10.6 MW.

Performance target with the reward element:

- Stretch target would be 300 renewable energy installations.
- Stretch target on installed capacity is 1.2 MW of renewable energy in the county

Proposed actions to deliver the targets:

To provide impartial domestic renewable energy advice service in the county. This will be well-integrated with energy efficiency advice services, local and national sources of grant funding, and local renewable energy installers.

The service would provide domestic consumers with practical help and advice to encourage installations of renewable energy technologies and would include:

- Providing information about renewable energy technologies and companies that can provide systems
- Assistance with understanding the economics of renewable energy, identifying funding sources and grant applications
- Monitoring of progress against the targets

Projects/spin offs

The potential benefits of including sustainable energy targets in LAAs are:

- LAAs can be used to set targets relating to carbon emissions, renewable energy or energy efficiency. This can help to raise the profile of sustainable energy and prioritise local action to deliver those targets.
- Incorporating sustainable energy into an LAA can help to engage LSPs with sustainable energy and stimulate partnership working to reduce carbon emissions. It can also help to engage new partners within the LSP with sustainable energy.
- If "stretch" targets on sustainable energy are included within the LAA then pump-priming funds are available to help deliver those targets, providing new resources to stimulate local action on sustainable energy. If the targets are achieved then "reward" grant funding is available, this could be used to fund further activity on sustainable energy

Contact, sources of advice

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