

Introduction |

Within the south west, a number of local authorities are working together and with other partners at a county level to deliver renewable energy. This case study looks at some of the work of the Cornish Sustainable Energy Partnership (CSEP) and the Devon Sustainable Energy Network (DSEN). It illustrates how broader partnerships can add value to local authority work and help councils to deliver ambitious sustainable energy programmes.

Local Authority role |

CSEP was instigated by the eight councils of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly: The local authorities now play a leading role working in partnership with a range of other public and private sector organisations.

In 2002, the Devon Strategic Partnership (DSP) initiated the development of the Devon Renewable Energy Strategy and Action Plan - a key recommendation of which was the formation of the Devon Sustainable Energy Network. In March 2005 DSEN was launched along with the signing of the Devon, Plymouth and Torbay Declaration on Climate Change and Fuel Poverty by all of the Devon unitary and local authorities. DSEN is a partnership of organisations working towards a common goal - promoting the use of sustainable energy and working together to combat climate change and fuel poverty. DSEN has 235 members representing 140 organisations.

Context, funding, aims and objectives |

The aims of CSEP are to actively integrate sustainable energy into public, private and community sector activities across the region by:

- mainstreaming sustainable energy in existing partnerships and initiatives
- developing new partnerships and initiatives as required
- providing support to existing and new initiatives
- prioritising activities that explicitly address climate change and fuel poverty issues
- attracting funding for these activities

In 2004, the Energy Strategy for Cornwall was signed by 72 public and private sector organisations. The Strategy places energy at the heart of sustainable development in one of the UK's most peripheral and rural regions. The strategy provides an innovative and uniquely holistic approach to the energy needs of Cornwall and its communities. It promotes a joint approach of energy conservation and renewable energy generation in all sectors.

The strategy's 32 actions cover a wide range of energy related issues from fuel poverty to local generation of electricity and heat which are being delivered by the Partnership.

DSEN aims to improve the well being of Devon as a whole by increasing the use of sustainable energy. Its objectives are to:

- Raise awareness of sustainable energy and integrate into policy and practice across Devon.
- Improve co-ordination, communication and sharing of good practice.
- To build more effective partnerships, identify and fill gaps in current provision and increase resources allocated to sustainable energy.
- To demonstrate how sustainable energy can reduce the impact of climate change and improve the health and welfare of the people of Devon.
- To develop business opportunities and add value locally.

In 2006 the Devon Local Strategic Partnership agreed to develop a Sustainable Energy Strategy for Devon, which is now being led by a task group representing a variety of organisations and interests, including the Devon, Plymouth and Torbay LSPs. The purpose of the strategy is to; inform, educate, provide rationale, give advice, set priorities and demonstrate leadership, providing broad guidance to each local authority on potential targets and how to meet them. This provides the context for DSEN to facilitate a range of partnership projects and initiatives, for example Renewable Energy For Devon (RE4D), which is funded by Devon County Council..

Process/partners

Both CSEP and DSEN have brought together key organisations to develop policies and active sustainable energy programmes and to integrate energy within sustainable development delivery plans.

CSEP receives funding from the Energy Saving Trust via its Local Authority Support Programme (now called Local Energy Support), and its staffing has been increased through funding from various sources, including the private sector (EDF Energy), the EU, project management income, and staff secondments from local authorities.

CSEP is locally managed by Community Energy Plus, a registered charity and 'profit-recycling' company that also manages the Cornwall Energy Efficiency Advice Centre, a community outreach team, and an environmental advice service for businesses with six full-time staff specifically dedicated to coordinating, developing and facilitating the partnership's work.

DSEN was initially administered by the Devon Local Energy Support Team, funded by The Energy Savings Trust and DEFRA. Due to the end of the EST Local Energy Support Team programme, funding is now being sought from the Devon local authorities and the private sector.

Both CSEP and DSEN are organised with a strategic steering group. In Cornwall, this oversees and agrees the work of a Process Group and a Delivery Group. In Devon the steering group oversees the work of four sub groups. The work of the groups is outlined below.

How CSEP is organised

Process Group

The process group moves the Partnership towards a more jobs and industry economically focused approach without losing its roots in sustainable development. The Process Groups will also ensure that the key actions of the Energy Strategy for Cornwall are delivered. It has four sub groups as well as the steering group, namely:

Economic, Jobs and Industry Group

The group includes representatives from business umbrella organisations, plus Cornwall County Council, Government Office, Universities and renewable energy and energy efficiency organisations. The group has concentrated on the development of an environmental management advisory service. It supports energy, waste, water and transport and resource efficiency in Cornwall's 19,000 small and medium sized enterprises, which make up the majority of businesses in Cornwall. A strategy for business support has been written with the help of key business partners in Cornwall, such as: Cornwall Enterprise, Objective One Business Task Force and Business Link. These, and other partners such as the Environment Agency and Global Action Plan are part of the team who submitted a successful Objective One bid for an environmental advice programme for businesses, to run from 2005 to 2007.

Social, Health and Community Group

The group includes representatives from the health sector, Local Authorities and Government Agencies, the Voluntary and Community Sector and Young People's Organisations. It will strengthen the role of the health, voluntary and community sectors within CSEP.

Education and Skills Group

Its role is to develop an awareness of the need for sustainable energy; understand the opportunities and constraints; make informed decisions/opinions about the options and develop ownership of the outcomes and, importantly, will provide the key skills and education link with the development of an economic sustainable energy infrastructure in Cornwall.

Local Authority Members Forum

The Local Authority Members' Forum enables officers and members of the authorities across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly to share ideas and best practice in sustainable energy and to drive forward the Energy Strategy for Cornwall in each authority.

CSEP also co-ordinates two discussion groups, The Domestic Energy and Renewable Energy Discussion Forums which each meet twice a year. The Forums offer partners from different sectors the opportunity to share information, network and increase their knowledge on sustainable energy technologies.

The Renewable Energy Forum provides a mechanism for the wider renewable energy agenda to be discussed bringing together the knowledge from experts in various low and zero carbon technologies. For example, at the first Renewable Energy Discussion Forum in September 2006, over 100 people attended, focusing on micro generation, with the opportunity to question a wide range of experienced renewable energy manufacturers and installers on current technologies, costs, planning, and installation.

Delivery Group

The Delivery Groups are the main delivery mechanism for the Partnership. They will deliver the actions of the Energy Strategy for Cornwall by working on specific projects. The delivery group has five sub groups:

Bio Energy Group

The Bio Energy Group is a key delivery mechanism for all relevant energy production and efficiency matters for those involved in agriculture, farming and forestry in Cornwall.

The Energy in Buildings Group

The group is a key delivery mechanism for all Energy in Buildings matters with the exclusion of i. Commercial and Public Sector Energy Management and ii. Health and Community related issues such as fuel poverty.

Energy in Transport Group

The Energy in Transport Group is a key delivery mechanism for all transport related matters.

Marine Renewables Group

The Marine Renewables Group was formed in 2004, primarily to assist with the development of the Wave Hub project in Cornwall. In order to provide this assistance, the group will cover both the economic and environmental interventions of offshore electricity generating projects

Sustainable Energy Planning Group

The Sustainable Energy Planning Group will bring together the appropriate personnel from Local Authority Planning and Building Control Departments to ensure best practice sustainable energy procedures for both developers and local authorities in rural and urban regeneration and development.

HOW DSEN is organised |

DSEN operates through a steering group and four sub groups (see diagram 1. DSEN Structure) and, as part of the Sustainable Energy Strategy for Devon, reports to the Devon, Plymouth and Torbay LSPs. Each sub group works to an action plan which supports existing policy and strategy.

Domestic energy and health group

The group incorporates the Devon Affordable Warmth Steering Group, the Plymouth Affordable Warmth Steering Group and the Devon HECA group. It promotes and demonstrates how the sustainable use of energy in the domestic sector can help to improve housing standards, reduce the numbers of households in fuel poverty as well as helping to address the impact of CO2 emissions on climate change and make improvements in public health. As part of a Devon-wide marketing campaign, the group promotes the Energy Saving Trust "Save Your 20%" campaign.

Business sector group

Devon focuses on raising the profile of how sustainable energy can make good business sense to all Devon businesses through the provision of appropriate energy support services and incentives to drive action. RE4D also offers business sector support and promotes the benefits of renewable energy.

Public Sector group

The aim of the Devon group is to promote sustainable energy in public sector buildings, particularly the energy being used in buildings owned by local authorities, new builds and how local authorities can deliver this through influencing local policy and development, and by the demonstration of good practice. The group promotes Public Sector related events / training through Westcountry Energy Action, who are running a series of training seminars aimed at improving understanding in all sectors of energy efficiency, building regulations and renewable energy.

Renewable energy task group

In Devon the group's aim is to promote the development of the Renewable Energy sector in Devon through increasing demand for renewable energy technology across all the sectors and by providing support for renewable energy businesses to finance the generation of renewable energy and supply the appropriate technology.

Renewable Energy 4 Devon (RE4D) , officially started in April 2006 and running until end March 2008, it aims to:

- Maximise opportunities for local economic benefits and business growth for renewable energy companies in the Objective 2 area (rural) by increasing demand for and deployment of smaller scale renewable energy installations (microgeneration)
- Assist Small to Medium Enterprises(SMEs) with reducing costs, improving productivity and credibility through the installation of smaller scale renewable energy technologies
- Assist organisations in other sectors - communities, schools, large businesses and public sector
- deliver this through a one-stop-shop of advice, mentoring and grants

There are six delivery partners: DCC (project host and management), Devon Association for Renewable Energy (DARE), Centre of Energy and Environment (University of Exeter), West Country Energy Action, Global Action Plan and Trans-send. RE4D covers the rural objective 2 area of Devon (North Devon, South Hams, West Devon, Torridge, and transitional areas in Mid-Devon).

It provides:

- Dedicated line for advice and information
- Support from enquiry to installation, including applying for grants and planning
- Free independent expert advisors on RE technologies
- Funded feasibility studies and grants for SMEs and communities
- Renewable energy 4 Devon supports businesses, communities, schools, households and the public sector.

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