



Report To: Leader's Portfolio Meeting
Lead Officer: Director, Health & Environmental Services

17 July 2014

Progress Report for the Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership

Purpose

1. To report on progress made by the Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership (SPEP) over the previous year, and plans for the coming year.
2. This not a key decision. The report has been prepared at the Leader's request.

Recommendations

3. The Leader is recommended to note and comment upon progress of SPEP in furthering the Council's aim of working with local communities to develop and deliver actions on green issues that make a difference, and plans for SPEP over the coming year.

Reasons for Recommendations

4. SPEP has been in existence since 2009. This report sets out progress of SPEP since its inception and plans for developing it further during 2014-15 in order to meet the Council action relating to the partnership.

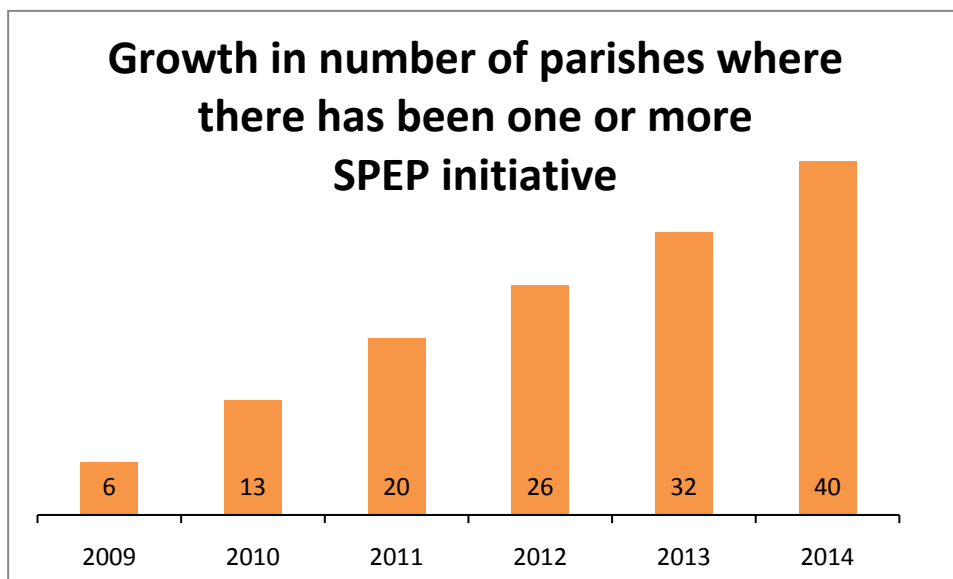
Background

5. SPEP is a network of parish councils, village groups and individuals in South Cambridgeshire supported by the Council to deliver actions on green issues that make a difference.
6. Actions are in the areas of:
 - sustainable energy, e.g. saving energy, using energy more efficiently and generating renewable energy
 - sustainable travel, e.g. use of public transport, cycling and walking where these are options, fuel-efficient vehicles and driving
 - sustainable food, e.g. sourcing food locally, understanding environmental impact of different foods
 - sustainable use of resources, e.g. reuse and recycling (supported by the Recycling officers)
7. Groups in the Partnership develop and deliver local projects, supported by the Parish Energy Project Officer. Most groups deliver one or more of three popular projects, namely
 - **Electricity monitors** – six electricity monitors are made available for lending to residents. The real time information about electricity use encourages

residents to save energy by switching off when not in use, and upgrading to more efficient lightbulbs and appliances.

- **Awareness raising events**, such as ‘Warmer Homes, Smaller Bills’ days. These events vary in style and content, but all bring village residents together at a fun and informative event to find out more about energy saving and/or renewable energy. Typically, they include talks and stalls from local installers of insulation and renewable technologies. Often there are workshops, eg on home energy DIY and no cost ways to save energy.
- **Thermal Imaging** – volunteers survey homes and other buildings using a thermal imaging camera to identify where heat is being lost. All volunteers first undertake a brief training session, learning basic operation of the camera and also how to signpost householders to further information about how to fix problems identified through the survey.

8. In addition, many groups have developed their own projects, making the most of their particular interests and expertise. This is encouraged and supported. The range of projects can be seen in Appendix 1.
9. As well as running projects, groups play a valuable role in disseminating information about grants, offers and other initiatives, especially the rapidly changing government support for home energy improvements. Information about these is passed to groups through SPEP workshops and email updates from the Parish Energy Project Officer. Groups then post information on village websites and in parish newsletters.
10. The partnership has grown more than six fold in number since it was launched with six parish councils on board in March 2009. 40 parishes are now, or have in the past been, involved in SPEP. See Appendix 2 for details.
11. Over this time, the background in terms of government initiatives to support sustainable energy has developed considerably. From the start, SPEP has been able to respond flexibly to take advantage of new opportunities. SPEP was initially set up as part of a plan to develop three community renewable energy schemes, funded by the LPSA Reward Grant, but when this scheme was withdrawn as a result of national funding cuts, SPEP refocused on domestic initiatives, encouraging installation of solar photovoltaic panels to take advantage of the then new Feed in Tariffs for electricity generation.
12. More recently, with the council led Action on Energy scheme up and running, SPEP groups are increasingly taking a role introducing the scheme to residents and helping overcome barriers of distrust and lack of interest in home energy improvements.
13. SPEP has also evolved in order to reach residents in more parishes. The first parish councils to sign up to SPEP either set up a specific group to organise activities, (eg Barton Energy Group), or established a formal link with an existing community group with a sustainability remit (e.g. Histon & Impington Climate Change Action Group). More recently, parish councils have wanted to run specific projects but have felt unable to maintain a group beyond the specific project and this has been accommodated.
14. SCDCs role is to coordinate the partnership, provide regular communications to members, loan energy monitors and thermal imaging equipment for projects, support events and enable networking between groups.



Progress over the year 2013-14

15. Over the past year, SPEP has continued to develop with 8 new parishes becoming involved (Haslingfield, Ickleton, Bar Hill, Landbeach, Elsworth, Sawston, Landbeach & Arrington).
16. The launch of the council led energy efficiency scheme, Action on Energy has been a key development and two SPEP workshops were held, the first reporting on the Green Deal Pioneer Places project, and the second with information about how SPEP groups can get involved with Action on Energy.
17. An article about thermal imaging in the South Cambs magazine generated much interest, and an additional thermal imaging camera was purchased, allowing demand for this project to be met. Seven thermal imaging training sessions were delivered and 23 projects ran, involving 82 volunteer surveyors and an estimated 177 houses surveyed.
18. SPEP groups organised seven public events, including Village Energy Day type events in Fulbourn, Haslingfield, Gamlingay, Girton and Histon & Impington, a forum on Energy Efficiency in Heritage buildings in Little Gransden, a Low Energy Lightbulbs event in Barton and the launch of Greener Sawston.
19. SPEP groups also had stalls or gave talks at a further 10 community events.
20. The District Council has continued to support SPEP public events, attending a total of 20 events, sharing relevant information at events and via email/newsletters and generally supporting the network through sharing information between groups about local projects.

Plans for 2014-15

21. The plan over the coming year is to continue to facilitate popular projects, especially the thermal imaging projects whilst encouraging SPEP groups to develop new projects.

22. A programme of outreach, both to parishes already involved and to new parishes, is planned to run alongside promotion of the Action on Energy scheme by staff from Climate Energy Ltd, see Appendix 3 for schedule.
23. In response to the difficulties SPEP groups often experience in finding people to run activities, we plan to bring together individuals and groups from adjacent villages to run activities together wherever possible. It is anticipated that the move to patch based working will be helpful in reaching out to new parishes.

Options

24. The Leader is asked to note the report and comment upon progress as appropriate.

Implications

25. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

There are no significant implications.

Consultation responses (including from the Youth Council)

26. There has been no consultation on this report. However, members of SPEP are regularly asked regarding methods of communication and SCDC support for the partnership. The support provided to SPEP members varies depending on need.

Effect on Strategic Aims

Aim 1 - Engagement

27. Continue to engage and empower local communities through the Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership – this report updates directly on progress made towards achieving this Council action.

Background Papers

Where [the Local Authorities \(Executive Arrangements\) \(Meetings and Access to Information\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) require documents to be open to inspection by members of the public, they must be available for inspection: -

- (a) at all reasonable hours at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council;
- (b) on the Council's website; and
- (c) in the case of documents to be available for inspection pursuant to regulation 15, on payment of a reasonable fee required by the Council by the person seeking to inspect the documents at the offices of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

Report Author: Siobhan Mellon – Parish Energy Project Officer
Telephone: (01954) 713395