



**REPORT TO:** Leader's Meeting  
**LEAD OFFICER:** Director, Health and Environmental Services

24 September 2015

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## Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership

### Purpose

1. To review the Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership (SPEP). To present details and outcomes of public consultation and suggest improvements going forward.

### Recommendations

2. It is recommended that Leader
  - (a) Notes the history and achievements of SPEP.
  - (b) Notes the successful engagement achieved by consultation.
  - (c) Notes outcomes of consultation.
  - (d) Approves the re-visioning and rebranding of SPEP to improve engagement and meet needs and interests of communities.

### Background

3. SPEP was formed in 2009. It received £200k reward grant funding from South Cambs Local Strategic Partnership (SCLSP). The original intention was that it should run for a period of three years, working with twelve parishes per year to improve energy efficiency standards and popularise the use of micro-generation in people's homes.
4. The delivery of SPEP was expected to cover two phases: Phase One was allocated £50k, and intended to focus on energy *efficiency*. It proposed
  - (a) to offer a flexible package of direct support tailored to individual partner parishes;
  - (b) establish a network of volunteers;
  - (c) facilitate the running of small-scale projects aimed at improving energy efficiency.
5. Phase Two was allocated £150k of the original budget, and intended to focus on the transition from basic energy efficiency to *generation*. It proposed to:
  - (a) focus on community level micro-generation;
  - (b) encourage the take-up of small-scale microgeneration technologies (pv panels and wind turbines) at domestic and small-to-medium sized business level;
  - (c) promote the Government's Clean Energy Cashback Feed-in Tariff (FiT);
  - (d) assist customers with grant applications;
  - (e) to actively engage in installation of energy conservation and efficiency measures following successful grant applications.
6. One option considered for the delivery of Phase Two was to develop Histon and Impington Climate Change Action's (HICCA) proposal 'Project Lighthouse'. Project Lighthouse proposed "seeding the community with low cost PV home lighting systems."

7. It was proposed that for the purpose of SPEP Phase Two, the District Council would purchase 75 PV home lighting system 'modular kits' (5 each for 15 SPEP parishes) and fund installations and de-installations for a period of 18 months (Jan 2011 – June 2012). It was expected that this would reach 225 households at a total cost of £153,375.
8. Changes in government, and the removal of vital funding streams marked an important juncture for SPEP. Phase Two was abandoned (although the focus on generation was referred to other initiatives including the Green Deal and Action on Energy).
9. However, Phase One of SPEP had gained considerable popularity at a local level. A total of 31 parishes signed-up as members of the programme.
10. Via the original partnership scheme, SCDC had made contact with established community groups and interested individuals committed to tackling climate change and promoting sustainability. These groups appreciated and continued to take advantage of the smaller-scale support initiatives offered by SCDC. These services include:
  - (a) thermal imaging camera training and loan;
  - (b) electricity monitor borrowing scheme
  - (c) energy saving lightbulb library;
  - (d) a programme of evening events
11. Following the removal of grant funding for the original two-phased SPEP project, and also following the restructure of the Sustainable Communities and Partnerships Team, it was considered an appropriate juncture at which to review the project.

### **Considerations**

12. From 21 May 2015 to 31 August 2015 we ran a public consultation of the Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership. This consultation took the form of an online survey, details of which were widely disseminated.
13. The consultation was publicised in the following locations:
  - (a) South Cambridgeshire District Council Website
  - (b) South Cambridgeshire District Council Facebook page
  - (c) South Cambridgeshire District Council Twitter feed
  - (d) South Cambridgeshire District Council Parish eBulletin
  - (e) Via Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership Mailing List
  - (f) In parish magazines of partner parishes, including:  
Barton Parish Magazine; Bassingbourn Village Voice; Bourn Church and Parish Magazine; Comberton Contact; Coton Community News; Gamlingay Gazette; Girton Parish News; Gransden News; Horningsea Herald; Madingley Newsletter; Meldreth Matters; Orwell Bulletin; Panser News; Sawston Scene; Shelford News; Teversham News; The Abingtons and Hildersham News; Whittlesford Website.
14. The aim of the public consultation was two-fold: to generate data on existing SPEP services and to identify the areas of sustainability that interest the residents of South Cambridgeshire.
15. The level of engagement achieved by the consultation was high: there were a total of 107 responses.

16. The distribution of responses by patch can be seen in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

### **Survey Results**

17. Key statistics from the survey are as follows:  
Of the 107 respondents
- (a) 75 had previously heard of the Sustainable Parish Energy
  - (b) 53 had previously used SPEP services
    - 41 had used the thermal imaging camera
    - 27 had used the electricity monitor borrowing scheme
    - 14 had used the energy saving lightbulb library
    - 44 had attended evening events
  - (c) 86 said that they would use SPEP services in the future
    - 65 said they would use the thermal imaging camera
    - 40 said they would use the electricity monitor borrowing scheme
    - 36 said they would use the energy saving lightbulb library
    - 59 said they would attend evening events
  - (d) 67 said that they would like to be kept up-to-date on SPEP and registered their details.
  - (e) Furthermore, 25 stated that they would be either 'Very Likely' or 'Likely' to register as a local SPEP volunteer.
18. Appendix 3 shows the number of respondents that registered their details and their answers in the above categories (personal information redacted).
19. Survey respondents were also asked what aspects of sustainability most interested them (see: Appendix 4.1):
- (a) 78.57% are interested in energy saving/ carbon reduction
  - (b) 76.76% are interested in recycling/ waste management
  - (c) 65.98% are interested in sustainable transport
  - (d) 60.83% are interested in water conservation
  - (e) 55.10% are interested in sustainable food/ grow-your-own initiatives
20. We also asked participants what factors impacted upon their interest in sustainability (see: Appendix 4.2):
- (a) 75.26% felt the moral obligation to tackle climate change was an important factor
  - (b) 62.62% felt money saving was an important factor
  - (c) 80.80% felt seeing improvements in their communities was an important factor
  - (d) 75.75% felt that improving their personal health and wellbeing was an important factor
21. Participants were also asked how likely they would be to engage with SPEP in a variety of mediums (see: Appendix 4.3):
- (a) 75.26% said they would be likely to visit a dedicated website for further information
  - (b) 57.74% said they would be likely to sign up to an online newsletter
  - (c) 58.16% said they would be likely to attend a one-off event
  - (d) 59.18% said they would be likely to attend a meeting locally
  - (e) 35.05% said they would be likely to register as a volunteer

## **Options**

22. The Leader could decide to
- (a) allow the Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership to continue to run with no changes;
  - (b) disband the Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership;
  - (c) permit officers to re-vision and rebrand the Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership to reflect the outcomes of the public consultation.
23. If the Leader agrees to re-vision and rebrand the Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership (paragraph 22, option (c)), officers will
- (a) set out a clear vision and purpose for SPEP
    - establishing firm objectives that meet the Council's corporate objectives around sustainability
  - (b) put together a programme of projects with
    - clear timescales
    - measurable outcomes
    - firm objectives directed by the Council's Corporate Plan
    - reference and relevance to the outcomes of the public consultation
  - (c) establish a dedicated webpage that brings together all of the Council's sustainability work in one place and signpost to relevant organisations / websites
    - Vision
    - Projects
    - Local partners
    - Contacts
    - Useful resources

## **Implications**

24. 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: -

### ***Financial***

25. The cost of running SPEP is currently being operated within budget and the end of the year forecast is also within budget.

### ***Staffing***

26. The re-visioning and rebranding of SPEP will be carried out in house and tasks will be distributed amongst existing staff.

### ***Risk Management***

27. There is a small risk that rebranding SPEP will encounter slight opposition from existing groups. The risk ought to be mitigated by the fact that the rebrand will refocus the Council's objectives around sustainability while continuing to deliver existing services.

### ***Climate Change***

28. The project's focus is upon sustainable energy and carbon reduction. Improving the delivery of SPEP to meet the needs and interests of South Cambridgeshire residents is integral to fulfilling the objectives laid out in the Corporate Plan 2015-2020.

### **Consultation responses (including from the Youth Council)**

29. See paragraphs 15-21. The Youth Council also participated in the online survey consultation.

## **Effect on Strategic Aims**

### **Aim 1 - Engagement**

30. The Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership contributes to the Council's objective of working with tenants, parish councils and community groups to create sustainable, successful and vibrant villages.

## **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.

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