

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

REPORT TO: South Cambridgeshire Local Strategic Partnership

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE SUSTAINABLE PARISH ENERGY PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITY AND PROGRESS UPDATE

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Partnership Members with an activity and progress update on the LPSA Reward Grant funded project to establish and develop the South Cambridgeshire Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership.

Background

2. As agreed in February 2009 the establishment, delivery and maintenance of the South Cambridgeshire Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership (SPEP) is a three year programme funded from a £200k capital LPSA reward grant.
3. The focus is upon actively supporting local communities across South Cambridgeshire in positively engaging with the issues of reducing energy bills, tackling climate change and building a more sustainable future.
4. The implementation over the three years comprises two distinct phases – Phase 1 running across all three years of the project and Phase 2 running over years two and three:

Phase 1: Energy Conservation and Efficiency (years 1,2 and 3)

This phase is designed to be fully inclusive and encourage as many parish councils as possible to take advantage of SCDC's flexible support framework for delivering local energy conservation and efficiency measures (budget allocation: £50k).

Phase 2: Renewable energy (years 2 and 3)

This will involve taking two or more of the first year Phase 1 parishes into high impact local renewable energy installation projects – tailored to parish needs as realised through the Phase 1 work (budget allocation: £150k).

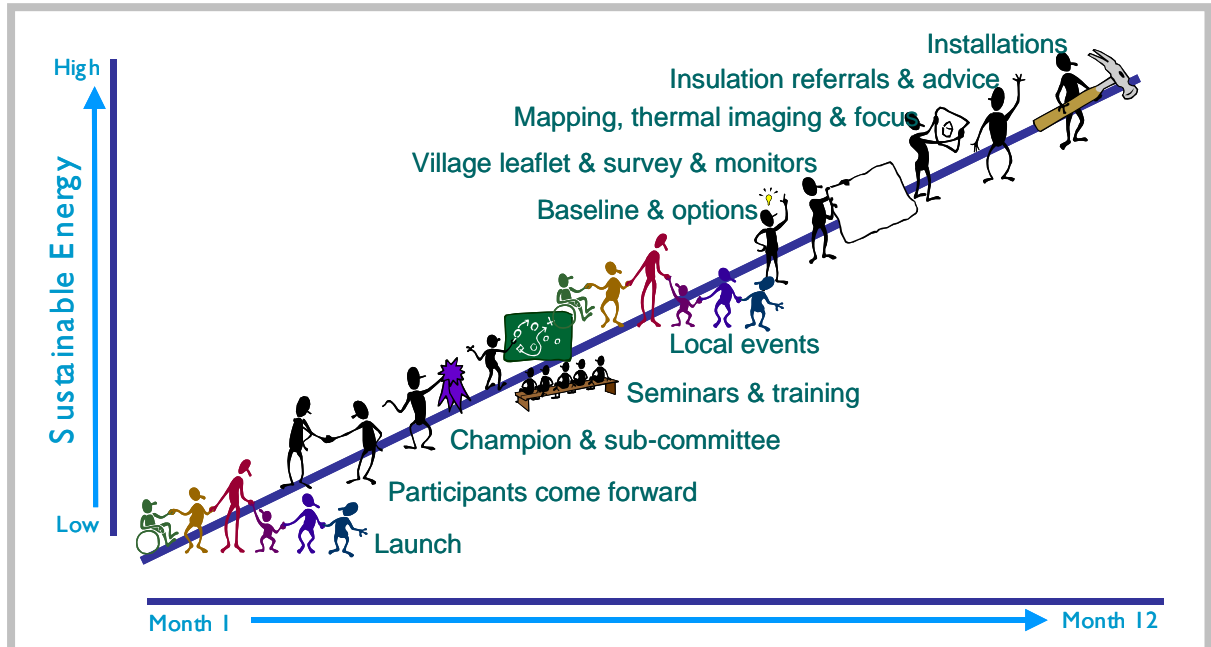
5. The partnership development approach is founded upon engaging both parish councils and local volunteer support groups within South Cambridgeshire's parishes. The parish council support, including the establishment of a parish council 'sustainable energy champion', is designed to provide a semi-formal base, longevity and local support infrastructure for volunteer groups keen to work on improving community and individual options for managing local energy use more sustainably.



6. The attached leaflet (Appendix 1) was used to introduce the Partnership to potential parish partners. It outlines the nature of the offer and commitment.

Year 1 delivery

7. At launch in March 2009, eight parishes showed a keen interest in being a part of the project and, in essence, creating the foundation of the partnership. The membership is now twelve (Barton, Bassingbourn, Comberton, Coton, Cottenham, Dry Drayton, Gamlingay, Girton, Haslingfield, Histon, Impington and Milton).
8. The illustration below shows the basic Phase 1 journey that each parish has participated in.



9. The parish partners are all very different in terms of capacity and volunteer personnel but are united under the shared objective of promoting more sustainable energy use within their communities. The levels of expertise, knowledge and commitment across the whole partnership are very high.
10. In August the Council successfully recruited to the part-time Parish Energy Project Officer post (Alexandra Day). Alexandra has provided excellent and essential dedicated support for the partnership.
11. An SPEP activity listing is attached to this report (Appendix 2).
12. The take-up of the partnership offer has exceeded expectations. It was initially thought that six Year 1 partners would be a good start for a partnership of this nature starting from scratch. To have reached twelve within 10 months is an indication of the levels of concern, interest and appetite for support at the parish/village level across the district. We have also received indications of interest from another six parishes.
13. Key SPEP support elements (provided essentially free of charge) for each parish partner include:
 - Use and access to the bespoke South Cambs Parish Energy Calculator software.
 - Very large scale village maps to permit effective energy mapping and facilitate planning.
 - Access to Cambridge Carbon Footprint's renowned *Carbon Conversations* courses – including facilitator training so that local village based courses can be established.
 - Availability of 15 domestic energy monitors for the groups to use within loan schemes in their communities. These schemes have become very well developed

and include household questionnaires and follow-up visits. Sharing of experience between parishes has proved especially useful with these very valuable engagement tools.

- Introduction of the new regional Carbon Reduction Initiative to provide a direct, trustworthy and standardised route to obtaining subsidised quotes for cavity and loft insulation (Government/energy supplier Carbon Emissions Reduction Target subsidy). This has been offered to SPEP members with a referral fee element, whereby a small income to the parish council and local volunteer group is generated from any subsequent installations arising within each partnered parish.
 - Availability of thermal image camera training and subsequent loan of camera for two nights.
14. The above have been supplemented with numerous attendances at individual village/parish meetings, 3 well attended workshops, our first Village Energy Show (Impington Village College last October), a range of newsletters, fact sheets and SPEP dedicated web pages hosted on the SCDC website.
 15. We are presently working on the development of a Sustainable Parish Energy magazine – this will take the form of an illustrated template that the parishes can tailor to suit the character and image of their villages. These can then be distributed as individual booklets or the pages could be included within an existing parish magazine.
 16. Looking more broadly in terms of sustainable energy we are also in process of setting up trial village car-sharing schemes within the partnership.
 17. In summary the past 10 months have seen the creation of a very active and enthusiastic partnership, working to make local energy use more sustainable across 12 parishes in South Cambridgeshire. Some parishes have known what support they need and others have asked what they can do. The approach has been to work with the level of capacity that each parish can initially bring and to help them develop this and engage more and more on energy matters with their fellow residents. The underlying principle being that we take our cues from the people around us.
 18. Via the tailored support that the SCDC team offers, the LSP funds and their own determination, many partners are now starting to see the fruits of their efforts in their communities - in terms of actual carbon savings and gentle waves towards lower carbon living within the resident population. This will never be an overnight transformation. It will take several years of continued progress to create a lasting change as fossil fuel energy is so engrained in our current lifestyles.
 19. The SPEP is proving itself to be an invaluable and relatively unique channel of engagement. With continued support and attention it stands to make a real contribution to the transition to low carbon living in a low carbon economy across South Cambridgeshire (and may also provide a useful model for other local authorities to consider).
 20. The second year (2010/11) of the SPEP will be a crucial one as we: i.) seek to maintain momentum in further strengthening and developing the partnership, and; ii.) move into the principal capital spend phase of boosting the take-up of renewable energy technologies.

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