

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: New Communities Portfolio Holder

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AUTHOR/S: Executive Director – Operational Services / Corporate Manager – Planning & New Communities

SUSTAINABLE PARISH ENERGY PARTNERSHIP: ACTIVITY UPDATE

Purpose

1. This report provides an update on activity relating to the development and delivery of the South Cambridgeshire Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership.
2. This is not a key decisions but an update on a major area of Council community leadership work that also supports Council Priority Actions for 2010/11 (and proposed for 2011/12).

Recommendations and Reasons

3. The Portfolio Holder is recommended to note the progress being made in developing and maintaining the South Cambridgeshire Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership (SPEP).

Background

4. The South Cambridgeshire Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership (SPEP) is the product of a very special delivery programme designed to bring sustainable energy to our villages and parishes.
5. It directly helps our local communities do what they want to do to tackle their very real concerns over energy costs, energy security and carbon emissions.
6. In practice this means uniting local endeavours and enthusiasm for more local sustainable energy with a comprehensive but flexible programme of 'real-world' and 'real-parish' support.
7. To this end the District Council offers a broad 'menu' of practical help and activity built upon what parish councils and volunteer groups have told us they need. Delivery is via dedicated officer and limited external expert support and a small budget within the Council, a semi-formal link with respective parish councils, and community volunteer groups working across their neighbourhoods and local areas to engage residents in saving energy, money and carbon.
8. Initially focusing upon household heat and power we now also seek to cover travel and food.
9. The programme and partnership is built upon four core aims:
 - (a) to help our communities come together around tangible carbon and energy savings through supporting the work they want to do – building confidence and achievement through the power of 'doing';
 - (b) to match a practical range of sustainable energy support to real local need; circumstances and capacity - starting things up or helping things along.

- (c) to share local experience - the best cues for action come from those around us;
 - (d) to help parish council's tackle climate change - putting sustainable energy on their agendas as something they can now really do something about;
10. Overall, to embed the transition to a more resilient and sustainable future within the parishes, villages and households of South Cambridgeshire - prioritising sustainable energy as the norm in the decision-making of our communities and residents

Considerations: progress

11. The level of parish council sign-up to the SPEP continues to exceed expectations and now stands at 23 - almost a quarter of all parishes. The current partners are:

Barton	Gamlingay	Meldreth
Bassingbourn	Girton	Milton
Bourn	Great Shelford	Orwell
Comberton	Haslingfield	Pampisford
Coton	Histon	Rampton
Dry Drayton	Impington	Waterbeach
Eltisley	Kingston	Whittlesford
Fulbourn	Little Gransden	

12. We offer, for any/all partners, direct support in establishing community projects around the following deliverables:
- (a) Electricity monitor loan – domestic & commercial
 - (b) Village energy mapping
 - (c) Community carbon options calculator
 - (d) Thermal image camera training and loan
 - (e) Eastern Carbon Reduction Initiative (dependable insulation and renewables quotations)
 - (f) 'Carbon Conversations' courses
 - (g) Basic home energy questionnaire (Energy Performance Certificate-based)
 - (h) Village car share
 - (i) Parish energy booklets
 - (j) Promotion of the Cambridge Climate Change Charter.
13. Promotion and take-up of these projects is carried through the following:
- (a) Training and information workshops
 - (b) Site visits
 - (c) Newsletters
 - (d) Website

- (e) Eco-renovation directory
- (f) 1-to-1 visits
- (g) Village Energy Show

14. Alongside day-to-day support and co-ordination of the above, the following SPEP related activities have taken place over the last 6 months:

- 11th July – promotion at Shelford Feast
- 14th July – Orchard Park PC presentation
- 23rd August 2010 – SPEP Renewables Workshop: PV and FiTs (Coton)
- 16th September 2010 – Green Communities Training Workshop (Community Buildings)
- October 2010 – Parish Editors Workshops
- 4th October – Rampton PC presentation
- 7th October – Meldreth PC presentation
- 11th October – Sustainable Shelford Insulation Evening
- 20th October – SPEP & Transition Cambridge: Community energy project manager meeting
- 21st October – Bourn PC presentation
- 28th October – Hockerton – community turbine visit
- 19th Nov – Fulbourn PC presentation
- 13th Nov – Rampton Drift Residents Meeting
- 22nd Nov – SPEP Workshop (Cottenham)
- 27th Nov – The Village Energy Show 2010
- 4th December – Melbourn volunteering event
- 11th December – Eltisley Information Day
- 13th January 2011 – SPEP Workshop (Girton)

Considerations: new developments

15. To provide support for volunteer groups in approaching local businesses and organisations we are developing a volunteer training and business/organisation engagement pack through linked up working with our joint City/SCDC project promoting the Cambridge Climate Change Charter. This stands to provide all SPEP groups with a potentially very promising access route to bringing local businesses/organisations on stream and networked into parish-based sustainable energy activity. We hope to have this work stream active and rolling out, following workshop/training sessions, from March.
16. The new Parish Energy Booklet templates are also close to completion. These stand to be a very important introduction/ongoing engagement vehicle for all volunteer groups. The intention is to produce a useable generic version that can simply be 'badged' by the parish or edited to a smaller/greater extent to carry forward key volunteer group workstreams and local parish case studies etc..

17. Community-scale renewable energy projects are a key interest area for many of the partners (as well as being a district and national priority). Over the next two months we will be researching this area in some depth – especially around financing package options tied to making best use of the Feed-in Tariff and forthcoming Renewable Heat Incentive.
18. Several groups are keen to work up or extend the delivery of local food production projects. Local 'landshare'/ 'garden share' initiatives stand to provide a good channel in this area of activity and we will be looking to draw on experience in South Cambridgeshire, the City and further afield to provide examples of delivery frameworks and additional confidence.
19. Recycling and waste reduction continue to be an important area: reducing food waste and recycling of compact fluorescent light-bulbs are both attracting priority interest. We are liaising with colleagues in Environmental Services to take support work forward.
20. Daily dedicated support for the SPEP is provided by the Council's Parish Energy Project Officer (PEPO). The current post-holder has recently left the Council to take up a full-time post elsewhere (from 17th January). In recognition of the success of the project, its standing as a priority action for 2011/12, the rapid rate of take-up, and increasing pressures on broader environmental sustainability work across the Authority as a whole, the Council has agreed to an extension of the PEPO contract to the end of March 2012 (previously due to run until August 2011), an increase in hours from 2.5days to 3.5days per week, and permission to advertise (initially internally). It is hoped that we can fill the vacant post from March 2011. In the interim, internal SPEP support will be covered by the Sustainable Communities Team Leader with additional back-up as/if available from members of the New Communities Team.

Implications

21. Financial	None – summary update to previously agreed expenditure
Legal	None – summary update only
Staffing	None – summary reporting of previously agreed resource allocation
Risk Management	None – summary update only
Equal Opportunities	None – summary update only
Climate Change	The whole SPEP project is fundamental to the Council's response to the climate change agenda.

Consultations

22. None – summary activity update only

Effect on Strategic Aims

23. The development and ongoing support of the SPEP is the principal means by which the Council is delivering the following 2010/11 priority action: "we will work with parish councils to complete at least 6 local projects to contribute to the County target for the reduction of CO₂ emissions".

Conclusions / Summary

24. The South Cambridgeshire Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership continues to develop very strongly with a steady stream of interest and sign-up from parish councils and volunteer groups across the district. Activity levels and enthusiasm also continue to grow with all participants as a reflection of the effectiveness of facilitated partnership working that holds the following principals close:
- (a) the power of 'doing'
 - (b) matching support to real local need and capacity
 - (c) sharing local experience

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

None

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