

## Service delivery case study

Beacon theme **Sustainable energy**

Authority name **Cornwall and partners**

Case study title **Working in partnership**

### Overview of service delivery

The Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership is an innovative and cohesive county approach to addressing the social, environmental and economic issues of energy supply and demand. Since 2001, the partnership has brought together over 80 key organisations to develop policies and active sustainable energy programmes. It has particularly concentrated on promoting the role that energy plays within sustainable development, placing it within an integrated energy strategy and delivery plan. The partnership was instigated by the eight councils of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly: Cornwall County Council; Caradon District Council; Carrick District Council; Kerrier District Council; North Cornwall District Council, Penwith District Council; Restormel Borough Council and the Council of the Isles of Scilly.

The local authorities are now play a leading role working in partnership with a range of other public and private sector organisations. Member organisations include all the local authorities, health trusts and housing associations, plus business organisations, community, education, renewable energy and energy efficiency organisations. Primarily, its work covers Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, however the individuality of its approach has influenced local authorities and regional organisations in Scotland, Wales and England, as well as providing an effective lobbying power base for approaching the national and European parliaments. The partnership has four task groups and a strategic steering group, and evidences its success through programmes such as the Home Health Fuel Poverty alleviation scheme, that delivers energy and heating measures to homes in deprived areas. Its main funding source is an allocation of government funding via the Energy Saving Trust.

The partnership 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 the funding from various sources, including the private sector (EDF Energy), project management income, and staff secondments from local authorities.

Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership 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. Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership develops programmes that utilise each of these teams.

### **Context**

Cornwall's peripheral location and pattern of scattered rural settlements means that many households do not have access to mains gas, and so are reliant upon expensive, polluting fossil fuels such as coal, oil and electricity, to heat their homes.

Cornwall's high humidity levels add to the problem of cold, damp housing conditions. Winters are predicted to become wetter in the region as a result of climate change, which will increase the need to improve the ventilation, heating and energy efficiency of the county's housing stock.

Although Cornwall currently has seven wind farms feeding onto the UK national grid, there is a recognised need to ensure that more renewable energy will have to be generated to assist with the sustainability of local communities.

Cornwall is likely to be particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. With the longest stretch of coastline of any English county, even a small increase in sea level would have profound effects, and any variance in the Gulf Stream, which gives the county its mild climate, would significantly change its weather patterns, possibly within the next 20 years.

Other key factors that describe the region include:

- Being an 'Objective One', highly rural and peripheral sub-region, Cornwall has been considered to be a scene-setter for renewable and energy efficiency projects.
- The sustainability of energy supply is a key issue in a sub-region, because of an over dependence on fossil fuels, and the lack of an adequate mains gas infrastructure.
- In April 2000, gross weekly earnings for full-time adult employees in Cornwall were 23 per cent below the national average. Low incomes mean that many households cannot afford to heat their homes adequately, or install energy efficiency measures themselves.
- 65 per cent of houses in Cornwall do not have central heating. Many houses lack adequate heating, and there is a very high proportion of 'old' housing stock. 'Hard to heat' homes (eg, with solid granite walls/ flat roofs/ in off-gas areas) require measures (such as cladding) that are not covered by the standard energy efficiency grants.
- At 0.48 per cent, Cornwall has a higher incidence of excess winter mortality as a percentage of the population than England and Wales (0.31 per cent). Cold, damp homes can lead to a worsening of potentially fatal health problems such as asthma, cardio-vascular disease, and pneumonia.
- The 2002 Fuel Poverty Indicator estimates that there are 45,489 households in fuel poverty in Cornwall, of which 15,717 (35 per cent) are in the Penwith and Kerrier districts.
- Cornwall's Objective One area status confirms the county's socio-economic problems. In 1996, the county's gross domestic product per head was only 71 per cent of the national average. Penwith and Kerrier districts are in the top 30 per cent of the English deprivation index.

### **Objectives**

The aims of the Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership 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

### **Process**

In December 2000, a consultation process began across the whole of Cornwall, to confirm that the need for the partnership existed. In November 2001, the consultation process was complete. 50 organisations from the public (local authority and health), private and community sectors signed up in support of an action plan for energy partnerships for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly – towards well-being in a sustainable energy future. The Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership was launched, and its business plan was approved by partners. A steering group and four task groups were established to take forward the action plan.

Each of these task groups has developed and instigated programmes relevant to its sector. The Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership (CSEP) has set itself targets reaching to 2010 and beyond. The CSEP office, based at Community Energy Plus, has six full-time staff specifically dedicated to coordinating, developing and facilitating the partnership's work. This is done in conjunction with CSEP's Community Outreach team, and Cornwall Energy Efficiency Advice Centre staff.

CSEP's work focuses on energy efficiency and renewable energy. The CSEP office provides a central link, enabling the strategic and grass roots players in all sectors of the sub-regional partnership to work together and take a cohesive approach to delivering both the partnership's action plan, and their own individual programmes.

The establishment of this multi-sector partnership has laid the foundation for ensuring the coordinated implementation of future programmes of sustainable energy work across the sub-region.

The partnership enables us to access the maximum possible resources, to share expertise and avoid duplication of effort, thereby ensuring the most cost effective inclusive approach to delivering local, regional, national, European and international targets.

## Structure

The current structure of the partnership has been deliberately configured to allow as much proactive 'cross-sector' delivery as possible.



Recently, a further two working groups have been very successfully operating – Transport (linking the business and public sector) and Energy in Buildings (linking domestic energy and renewable energy).

### Four task groups: activities

- **Domestic energy and health task group**

Includes: representatives from each local authority, Primary Care Trust and housing association, plus renewable energy and energy efficiency organisations.

This group initiated the Home Health scheme – a 'zoned' practical programme delivering energy efficiency and cleaner, more affordable heating measures to homes in deprived areas of Cornwall. Multiple funding sources and partner expertise have been utilised to:

- create all-inclusive zones in which every household is eligible for assistance regardless of tenure or means testing
- provide additional training, advice and action on benefits eligibility, security, fire safety and crime prevention

A comprehensive referral mechanism, facilitated by health professionals and community workers, has increased take up and public awareness of the measures, convincing vulnerable people who would not otherwise have participated to take part.

Project development began in April 2002. Initial results have confirmed the value of the local partnership approach. Careful planning combined with the utilisation of local knowledge and local expertise has achieved up to 91 per cent access rates, with 80 per cent of homes in some zones requiring measures.

Surveyors have reported that the community cooperation and referral system has made this the easiest area in the UK they have ever worked in. Participation by GP surgeries is higher than elsewhere in the UK.

Home Health has been the major contributor to the successful delivery of Cornwall's LPSA fuel poverty alleviation target. By completion, this will have contributed approximately £900,000 to furthering this work of the partnership.

Work is currently in place with the Centre for Sustainable Energy in Bristol, on developing a fuel-poverty and energy efficiency action plan which - combined with an effective system of GIS mapping for fuel poverty in Cornwall - will further increase the efficiency of this successful programme.

#### **Business sector task group**

Includes: representatives from business umbrella organisations, plus Cornwall County Council, and renewable energy and energy efficiency organisations.

This 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.

#### **Public sector task group**

Includes: representatives from each local authority, health trusts, and government offices, plus renewable energy and energy efficiency organisations.

The group has undertaken a questionnaire-based survey of energy consumption in Cornwall's public sector-owned buildings, plus policies and strategies within the sector. This task group has been identifying and promoting examples of good energy practice and a template policy within local government, health trusts and other public sector organisations. It is also looking at ways to standardise the performance indicator targets between the organisations, making comparisons easier.

Successes include the procurement of 100 per cent 'green' energy in all district authorities. The group is developing a programme of training to ensure that energy policy is delivered across all departments of each public sector organisation.

#### **Renewable energy task group**

Includes: representatives from each local authority, plus renewable energy and energy efficiency organisations.

This group has worked in conjunction with Cornwall County Council to produce the Energy Strategy for Cornwall, launched by Energy Minister Stephen Timms, in July 2004. This document represents an innovative approach to delivery of sustainable energy programmes, and includes over 30 actions to be monitored and delivered by the partnership.

The group has also been responsible for the joint brief for a research report aimed at educating and informing planners, elected members, architects and developers on the social, environmental and economic benefits of developing renewable energy schemes in Cornwall. This 'Planning Guidance' document has been used to inform the Cornwall structure plan, and is now in its final consultation phase. It will be used as a delivery mechanism for the Cornwall Energy Strategy. Both the Planning Guidance and the Strategy can be accessed from the CSEP website: [www.csep.co.uk](http://www.csep.co.uk)

The Renewable Energy Task Group is made of public and private sector organisations. It currently has four working groups attached to it:

- 1) The Bio Energy Group\* - responsible for the development and delivery of Bio Energy projects in Cornwall.
- 2) The Education Working Group - responsible for the development of education programmes in colleges, schools and the public awareness of sustainable energy issues.
- 3) The Marine Renewables Group - currently responsible for bringing together all relevant stakeholders for the delivery of a major marine renewables programme off the coast of Cornwall (the Wave-Hub, in conjunction with the South West regional Development Agency and region SW).
- 4) The Energy in Buildings Group - includes members of the Domestic Energy Group to combine the use of renewable energy and energy efficiency in buildings across Cornwall.

\*The Bio Energy Group commissioned a research document called 'Biomass in Cornwall: an assessment of opportunities', completed in June 2003. This can also be accessed from the CSEP website: [www.csep.co.uk](http://www.csep.co.uk)

## **Achievements**

### Energy saved

CSEP has laid the strategic foundation for achieving significant energy savings across county, as well as achieving actual savings through its project and advice work.

### Energy produced by renewables

Funding applications are in progress. CSEP's policy work will facilitate the future development of renewable energy projects, speeding up the planning process.

### Economic benefits

The task groups' work on improved energy efficiency in the domestic, business and public sectors will save money and stimulate the local economy.

### Environmental benefits

One of CSEP's objectives is to stimulate the development of cleaner sources of power generation, especially those from renewable sources and combined heat and power.

### Jobs created

Nine full-time jobs have been created to date.

### Behavioural changes achieved

CSEP has already changed attitudes and increased interest and knowledge in the area, drawing attention in particular to the social benefits of sustainable energy. Take-up of energy efficiency grants by local communities has been increased, as a result of the referral and community consultation work pioneered by the partners of the Home Health scheme.

### **Lessons learned and repeatability**

Sustainable energy has now become a standard element of the strategic, policy and practical work of many of CSEP's partner organisations. Partners are now more aware and informed regarding the social impacts of energy supply and demand. Partners have learnt from each other and have received training organised by CSEP. Through working in partnership we have been able to access major grants that would not otherwise have been available.

There was an element of scepticism from some organisations initially, but attitudes towards sustainable energy and the partnership approach have grown more positive as a result of CSEP's activities. There was a lack of resources and staff to implement and develop the work of the partnership. Since 2002, CSEP has obtained funds to recruit additional fixed-term staff, which has increased their capacity in this respect. Sufficient funding will need to be sourced to continue to expand CSEP's work, however the assistance of Cornwall County Council in providing a dedicated secondment has been invaluable, and offers a viable option for cash-strapped authorities who cannot afford direct financial input.

Working in partnership has particularly assisted those authorities whose officers have a small proportion of their time allocated to sustainable energy work– CSEP has been working hard to keep sustainable energy on their agenda, as well as providing practical support to help develop projects (eg, information and research resource, community consultations, bid-writing).

If sustainable energy targets are to be met in the most inclusive, efficient, cost-effective way, we feel it is essential that this kind of multi-sector sub-regional partnership approach be repeated throughout the UK. We would be pleased to see replication of this approach, providing CSEP is cited as the model. Having set the precedent, we can also offer a consultancy advice service for organisations interested in applying the sub-regional partnership model elsewhere.

### **Contact details**

Joanna Harrison, Beacon Coordinator Cornwall County Council  
Tel: 01872 323406  
Email: [beacon@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:beacon@cornwall.gov.uk)