



Case Study:

Sustainable Energy Partnerships in Devon

Summary

Devon County Council provided direct SEACS funding to develop two sustainable energy community partnerships in South West Devon (South West Devon Community Energy Partnership) and North Devon Biosphere (North Devon Biosphere Sustainable Energy Partnership).



Objectives

- To bring together local authorities, community groups and other interested organisations to pursue sustainable energy projects in South West and Northern Devon.
- To build capacity and knowledge of the partnerships
- To put the partnerships in a position to attract funding to make them sustainable

Methodology/approach

In South West Devon a nucleolus of community groups with an interest in sustainable energy along with engaged local authorities existed. In North Devon, SEACS funding was used to develop a nucleolus. In both cases, Devon County Council provided direct funding to cover the expenses of Chair and to fund activities that developed these partnerships. These activities included regular partnership meetings and events, strategic area focused energy studies, community champion training, pop up stands and longer-term business planning workshops.

Tools used, including those to reach target groups

A number of partnership events took place to engage with stakeholders in respective areas. These involved launching the strategic energy studies that were undertaken for South West and Northern Devon.



How was the project managed?

The Devon SEACS Energy Ambassador provided administrative and co-ordination support whilst the Chairs of the partnerships led partnership activities.

Who were the project partners?

South West Devon Community Energy Partnership (Transition Tavistock, Newton Noss Environment Group, Transition Town Totnes, Sustainable South Brent, PL21, Greener Teign, DARE, Dartmoor Circle, South Devon Coastal Renewable Energy Network, Ashburton Futures, Teignbridge District Council, South Hams District Council, West Devon Borough Council, Dartmoor National Park and Devon County Council)

North Devon Biosphere Sustainable Energy Partnership (North Devon Biosphere Reserve, 361 Energy, North Devon Sustainable Energy, Barnstaple Chamber of Commerce, Torrington District Council, North Devon District Council and Devon County Council)

How was it financed and much did the project cost?

Devon County Council financed the SEACS Energy Ambassador's administrative co-ordination time, expenses for Chairs and direct project activity costs.

What were the lessons learned from the project?

This is a summary of the lessons learned:

- Partnerships that involve community groups, local authorities and other interested organisations can greatly increase communication and co-operation to achieve common goals
- Most local authorities welcome and support these partnerships and it is important to work hard to co-opt their involvement as they are key stakeholders
- These partnerships rely on the goodwill from volunteers to attend meetings and deliver projects. Chair's were unpaid and they devoted a significant amount of time towards developing and leading these partnerships. It is essential that highly motivated and dedicated Chairs are selected to lead partnerships
- Partnerships that involve a number of community groups across a wider area and that involve local authorities are able to attract the attention of funders for specific projects
- The partnership have ensured that duplication is avoided and increased capacity by sharing skills, expertise and experience amongst groups
- Partnerships take time to establish themselves and its important not be discouraged if at first they do not work
- The strategic energy studies of the areas were useful as a reference to guide future activity and formulate plans

- It is important that partnerships tackle both energy reduction and generation projects

Contact for further information. Links to website information

SWDCEP Community Energy Plan-
<http://www.swdcep.org.uk/the-community-energy-plan/>

North Devon Biosphere Reserve Sustainable Energy Study-
<http://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/sustainable-energy.html>

National links –

Community Energy Strategy
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-energy-strategy>

Rural Community Energy Fund
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/rural-community-energy-fund>

Communities for renewables
<http://communities4renewables.co.uk/>