



...lots



Co-funded by the Intelligent Energy Europe
Programme of the European Union

But first, why 'localising' renewable energy and what does that mean?

The TCPA is investing significant effort into promoting learning and the sharing of expertise based on the best examples of energy planning across Europe. In many cases these examples closely link energy planning with spatial planning, and the key message coming through is the need to localise renewable energy if you want to deliver while maximising the benefits of this.

Localised renewable energy means community owned, municipality controlled and locally supplied, with falling energy bills and maximum retention of the benefits to the locality. It is not an 'add on' to commercial developments, or a corporate social responsibility exercise for the big energy companies – it is the basis for an entirely new energy system. One that is already starting to emerge.

For local authorities, such as Cornwall Council, this means working to establish local energy markets, supported by positive planning frameworks, which drive community investment in renewable energy generation (large or small scale) and enable local customers to buy that energy. It means encouraging and investing in infrastructure to capture the value of energy generation and supply at the local level.

What is the role of planners and spatial planning?

- Planning has the **policy imperative and the tools** to drive the agenda, underpinned by the legal obligation to help the UK mitigate and adapt to climate change.
- But **delivery must be through Local Planning** by focusing on:
 - Encouraging community/municipality owned energy (and secure the benefits by promoting the right types of ownership);
 - Encouraging activity which promotes local generation and links it to local supply and demand. Activities can include co-location of generation and consumption, promotion of smart energy infrastructure and recognition of local energy supply as a tangible benefit;
 - The aim being to establish a local planning framework which enables local people to capture the maximum benefits from their energy system for the long term.
- **Planners are the great engagers**, brokers and visionaries and **decentralised energy needs a new vision**. Planners can work with local leaders to refocus, to look at the opportunities - which can build, support and empower our communities at a time of public sector austerity – rather than the current emphasis on the impacts of new technologies.
- **Make it a core requirement of new places** - new places, and new Garden Cities, can, and should, become community-owned energy systems, which provide long term revenue, creates jobs and safeguards fuel bills.



Emerging Local Plan and Renewable Energy SPD

Led by and meets the needs of local communities

- Community energy**
 - Local people can invest and make a return.
 - Surplus income stays in the Community.
 - Community control energy output (to allow cheaper energy supply).
- Collective investment**
 - Local people can invest and make a return.
- No local community investment, but scope for local benefits**
 - Local benefits could include supply of energy to local businesses, or local environmental enhancements.

emphasises community energy as a means of delivering long term, inclusive and accessible benefits to communities. The SPD provides a steer on the models which can achieve this, backed by 'particular support' in the Local Plan.

Neighbourhood Planning Advice Note encourages

communities to think differently about their energy challenges and opportunities. It promotes local policies which favour local ownership and directs generation towards the areas of greatest need in the community.

Neighbourhood Planning Renewable Energy Advice Note

To date, many Neighbourhood Plans have limited their consideration of energy to a question of whether or not residents support wind turbines or large solar farms. There is much more to be explored and many different ways in which a community can benefit from renewable energy. This note sets out some questions which communities may wish to explore to help ensure that Neighbourhood Plans get the most of Cornwall's clean energy resources for the benefit of residents.

Neighbourhood Plans can include policies which support a range of renewable energy technologies, which are appropriate for the area, promote community ownership and encourage associated jobs. In doing so, they can help to tackle some of the key issues facing communities today and in the future. Community and local ownership, in particular, already has planning policy support in the National Planning Policy Framework and the emerging Local Plan. By strengthening this, Neighbourhood Plans can steer the development of renewable energy towards supporting local businesses, providing a long term source of income for the community and reducing fuel bills by enabling local supply.

This Advice Note seeks to encourage communities to consider what Neighbourhood Plans can do to help solve the energy issues facing communities. The following questions may help identify how your Plan could help.

- What does your community think are their key challenges and costs associated with their energy needs, both now and in the future?
- How can renewable energy generation and efficiency measures help meet these challenges?
- Would your community support energy schemes which are owned by and benefit them?
- How might you use the revenue to improve local services and build long term community resilience?
- What are the energy needs and costs of the key employers in your community?
- What can your Neighbourhood Plan do to encourage energy efficiency and generation to reduce the cost of running those businesses (and the risk to local jobs)?
- What energy generation opportunities might there be in your area (in addition to wind and solar), small or large scale both now and in the future?
- If, for example, you have geothermal potential¹ would the community want to encourage this and benefit from the technology once it becomes established?
- Can you encourage jobs and new business opportunities in association with emerging technologies such as geothermal?
- Would your community support a positive approach to making use of any heat produced by renewable technologies at from industrial processes?
- If your area is coastal or has a working port, would your community support marine energy and the offshore industries which could grow around it?
- Increasingly 'smart' measures, such as matching energy supply with 'demand' and energy storage will become available. Does the community want to encourage these technologies to help tackle the cost of energy?
- Sustainable transport can be supported through Neighbourhood Plans through, for example, encouraging electric, vehicle charging points and cycle routes. Would this be of interest to your community?

1. There are a range of models to achieve this which don't necessarily require significant effort from the Council can help with this www.cornwall.gov.uk/geothermal/
2. Some more information on the different technologies currently available can be found at [this web link](http://this.web.link.www.cornwall.gov.uk/renewableenergy)
3. Consideration takes the heat from Cornwall's waterfalls, geothermal and biomass to electricity and heat.
4. For example, tools which programme your washing machine to start when your solar panels are working.

Neighbourhood Planning Renewable Energy Advice Note

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council - Local Plan

supports the establishment of Renewable Energy Service Companies and community-led renewable energy initiatives.

Babergh District Council – Local Plan encourages and supports community initiatives, including generation, energy saving and the use of ESCOs.

South Gloucestershire Council – draft Local Plan (supported by a **draft SPD**) gives significant weight given to renewable energy proposals which (i) enjoy significant community support and (ii) generate income for community projects.

