



Our Resources

Welcome to the latest edition of the Our Plan e-Newsletter. This newsletter looks at the challenges we face to reduce our carbon emissions, the opportunities that will come from doing so, and the Our Plan strategies and policies that we think will help us achieve significant carbon reduction. But we need to know what you think?

Please remember...

This is your chance to help us shape new policies.

Tell us what you think about our early ideas by sending us your comments by 5th January 2015

The UK is committed to binding targets for reducing our carbon emissions, and that means being more efficient with the energy that we use, and also finding ways to generate energy that doesn't release carbon into the atmosphere.

For a long time the energy requirements of the UK have been met by either fossil fuels or nuclear energy. The percentage of energy that we generate from renewable sources has been slowly growing over the last 10-20 years, and is now making a significant contribution to our energy supply. There are numerous benefits of renewable energy; the resources used to create the energy – such as wind, sun or water - are free and naturally occurring, and they also reduce our reliance on energy supplies from outside the UK. And because renewable energy doesn't release carbon into the atmosphere when it creates energy, it helps us to reduce our carbon emissions.

Our Plan will need to include policies about carbon reduction and renewable energy. Global carbon emissions continue to rise, fuelled by an ever growing population and increasingly

resource hungry behaviours. Over the last few years the price of fossil fuels continues to increase, although in certain parts of the world prices have been volatile due to the finite nature of the resources and reduced energy security. In West Devon, where many of our existing buildings use energy inefficiently, this increase in fuel prices combined with relatively low wage levels have led to a large increase in the amount of households considered to be in 'fuel poverty', which in this day and age is hard to accept. As such, we need to use energy more efficiently in all aspects of our lives, reducing both our carbon emissions and the money we spend on energy.

We also need to generate energy closer to home to make our communities resilient to future energy issues. We all need to play our part in meeting the national targets for reducing carbon, and the government also requires all councils to show a positive approach to renewable energy. The government is also encouraging communities to take more ownership of renewable energy schemes, so that they can retain more of the benefits in the places where the energy is generated.



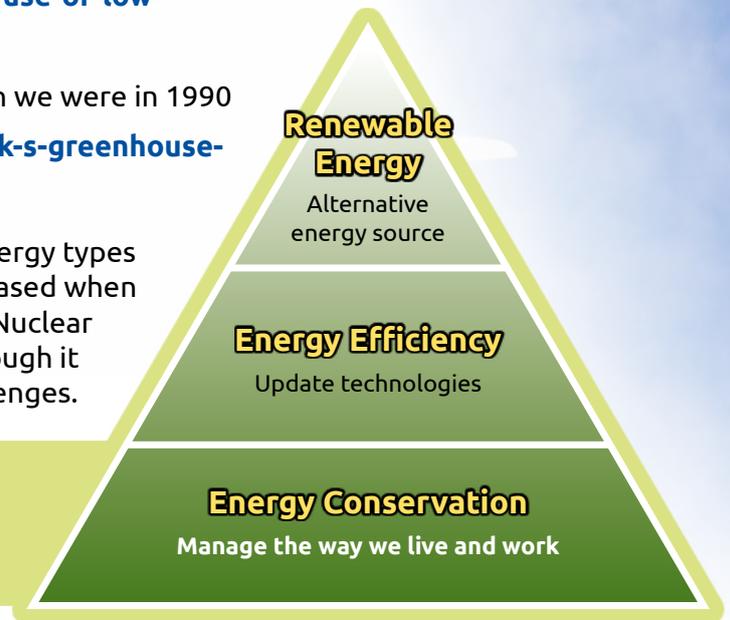
Why do we need to reduce our carbon emissions?

In the UK, there are currently two legally binding targets that we are working towards in order to reduce our carbon emissions:

- By 2020 we will be meeting **15%** of our energy needs from renewable source
www.gov.uk/government/policies/increasing-the-use-of-low-carbon-technologies

- By 2050 we will be emitting **80%** less carbon than we were in 1990
www.gov.uk/government/policies/reducing-the-uk-s-greenhouse-gas-emissions-by-80-by-2050

Carbon is released into the atmosphere when some energy types are used to create power. Typically more carbon is released when using fossil-fuel based sources such as coal, oil or gas. Nuclear energy is considered a low-carbon energy source, although it does generate waste that brings with it different challenges.



There are three key areas to focus on when reducing the carbon that we release into the atmosphere, these are:

How can we generate cleaner energy?

By using energy that comes from resources which are naturally replenished on a human timescale, such as sunlight, wind, rain, tides, water flow, waves and geothermal heat, we can significantly reduce our carbon emissions. Of course every area in the country will benefit from different levels of these resources, and it is important we encourage development in the right places and at the right scale, and that we explore opportunities for a wide range of renewable energy technologies:

Solar 	Wind 	Biomass 	Hydrogen 	Geothermal 	Ocean 	Hydropower 
Uses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Solar Power Plant 	Uses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wind Power Plant 	Uses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Biofuels ● Biopower ● Bioproducts 	Uses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fuel Cells 	Uses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Geothermal ● Power Farm ● Heat Pump 	Uses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tidal Power ● Wave Power ● Thermal 	Uses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hydropower Plant

The policies in Our Plan will be used to determine renewable energy proposals, and explain that permission for development should be granted if the impacts of the proposal can be made acceptable. Our Plan will be clear about the way we measure the impacts of renewable energy, and what is considered to be 'acceptable'. Our Plan will also need to explain how we think we can most effectively reduce our carbon emissions, both as a Council, and in the way we work with our communities.

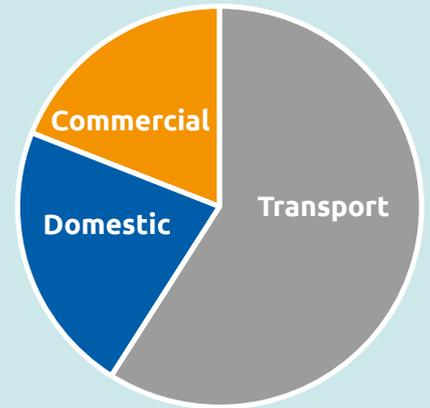
There are a number of external factors that affect what renewable energy technologies are considered suitable and in what locations. Financial viability, advances in efficiency, central government policy and the availability of suitable locations all play a part in bringing a renewable energy scheme forward. If any of these factors alters significantly it can bring with it new opportunities but also new challenges, and Our Plan will need to be able to responding to this fast changing area.

Low Carbon and Carbon Reduction Challenges

How do we reduce what we spend on energy, and can we retain more of our energy costs locally?

A large part of our energy cost is because West Devon covers a large, mostly rural, area with large distances between settlements. A dispersed population means that people have to travel further to work, to the shops and to access the services that we all need as part of our daily lives.

Source: [South West Devon Strategic Energy Study, University of Exeter May 2013](#)



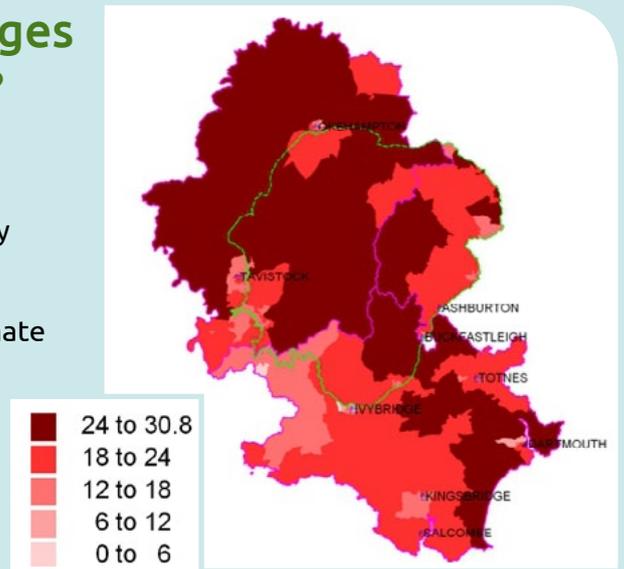
Proportion of £159m spent per year on energy in West Devon

How do we overcome the challenges of energy costs and fuel poverty?

The standard measure of fuel poverty is if a household spends more than 10% of their income on heating their home. The two main factors being how much the energy costs and how efficient the house is at retaining heat.

According to the Department for Environment and Climate Change (DECC), across the Borough there are **28% of households** considered to be in fuel poverty, and in some rural parts that figure is over 30%.

The increase in energy costs relative to wages means that fuel poverty is **forecast to rise** in years to come.



Renewable Energy Challenges

In total, there are currently 1414 renewable energy projects in West Devon, the lowest number of all authorities in Devon, and only 5.83% of the number of renewable energy projects in the county. Combined these have an installed capacity of 21.35MW (6.7% of the Devon total) of renewable electricity and 5.14MW (8.29% of the Devon total) of renewable heat (source: [RegenSW 2014 Progress Report](#)).

At present, West Devon has some of the lowest levels of renewable energy deployment in the South West, and one of the highest levels of potential renewable energy resource.

A number of challenges need to be addressed in Our Plan:

1 How can renewable energy resources be maximised in an appropriate manner that is sensitive to the landscape, settlements and rurally isolated dwellings of West Devon.

2 To help our communities understand the energy challenges that we face, and that energy security and continuity of supply are issues of increasing importance.

3 To accept that all areas of the UK have a responsibility to deliver renewable energy schemes. For a long time we have been able to rely on a constant supply of energy from distant sources, but with traditional energy resources increasingly scarce, expensive and unreliable, we all need to take more ownership of where our energy comes from if we want to ensure a sustainable energy supply.



Sustainable construction challenges

Many of our older buildings do not retain heat efficiently through poor insulation and poorly sealed doors and windows.

Our Plan needs to ensure that new homes make the best use of layout, orientation, design and materials so that energy efficiency can be maximised.

The government has an aspiration that all new homes will be built to 'zero carbon' standards by 2016 and that this will be monitored through the Building Control function.

Our Plan will need to ensure that building efficiency and construction standards continue to rise towards 2016 when the zero carbon homes standards are introduced, and on to 2019 when the standards are applied to commercial buildings.

Low Carbon and Carbon Reduction Opportunities

Housing

It is possible for many homes to improve their efficiency, and the range of measures to do this is increasing all the time. The main benefits of this will be cheaper bills and warmer, drier homes. There is an opportunity to invest in education and energy awareness also, as a more efficient home will need less heating.

There is funding available to do just that, such as the **Green Deal** and the **Energy Companies Obligation (ECO)**. ECO pays for improved energy efficiency of housing for households that do not have the means to pay for some of these measures themselves. ECO is funded by a small additional tariff on peoples energy bills, and in Devon this is used to fund the **Cosy Devon** scheme.



Business

There is also assistance available for to improve the efficiency of business premises, reducing overheads as well as carbon emissions, and helping to keep the SW region competitive.

The economic benefits of reducing our carbon emissions are well documented too, and investment in low-carbon industries is a significant opportunity, and is consistent with the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership **Low Carbon Strategy**.

Working with partners we can also increase broadband speeds to enable home working, use 'virtual meetings' instead of travelling to meetings, and allow our businesses to compete with others across the UK who already benefit from high broadband speeds.



Transport

Whilst we aren't able to change the geography of West Devon, we can reduce the impact of travel and transport on our energy use.

Working with partners we can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our public transport services, increase the range of transport options available to our communities, locate jobs and services in places that be reached by different modes of transport, and making sure we have the right facilities available to increase the amount of walking and cycling we do in place of shorter journeys.



Renewable Energy Opportunities

A **2013 study undertaken by Exeter University** on behalf of the South West Devon Community Energy Partnership (SWDCEP), has shown that West Devon (including the area within Dartmoor) has the potential to deploy 811MW of renewable energy capacity, taking into account constraints such as environmental designations and learning from deployment rates elsewhere in the south west. This study does consider environmental designations and only reports the resource that could actually be harnessed.

We need to show a positive approach to dealing with applications which can demonstrate that they are making the most of our renewable energy potential without incurring significant harm to our landscape and settlements.

There can often be misunderstanding about how the impacts of certain types of renewable energy proposals are measured. In West Devon this has been typical of wind turbine proposals, and we are proposing a positive response to this.

If a dwelling is located within a specified radius of a proposal site, we will be requesting comprehensive residential impact information, which gives the applicant the opportunity to fully demonstrate how all potential noise and visual impacts on local residents have been assessed. This will make it easier for decision makers to understand the impacts of the proposal, and for residents and communities to better understand what factors are taken into account when considering such applications.

Community Energy Opportunities

Another significant opportunity to make the most of our renewable energy resources comes through Community Energy Partnerships. The Government is keen to encourage community-led renewable energy schemes. It's 2014 **Community Energy Strategy** recognises the many benefits of community ownership.

As well as generating clean energy and increasing our energy security, the financial benefits of such schemes stay within our local area. West Devon is fortunate to have The South West Devon Community Energy Partnership (SWDCEP) operating in our area. It brings together a dozen community energy groups across West Devon, South Hams and Dartmoor National Park along with the district and county councils and not-for-profit energy agencies. The Partnership has an extensive knowledge and understanding of the issues specific to West Devon and is working towards securing these benefits for our communities.

Shared Ownership

From the start of 2015, communities will have the right to invest in renewable energy proposals that have a project cost of £2.5m or over. Different ownership models will be required to be offered to communities as part of the obligation, and communities have the opportunity to negotiate the most appropriate package. Assistance in understanding the options and making the most of these opportunities will be available from the SWDCEP and **RegenSW**.

Sustainable construction opportunities

Housebuilders will be able to meet the zero carbon standards by investing in on or off-site carbon reduction measures through the 'Allowable Solutions' regime, although central government has yet to confirm how this will be achieved.

There will be opportunities to work with housebuilders and other organisations to achieve the most effective and appropriate carbon reduction measures for West Devon.



A vision

1 Our Plan needs a “Vision” that encourages sustainable development and a low carbon future. Renewable energy will be part of this Vision. Some of the energy-related things we think Our Plan should try to achieve are:

- A reduction in carbon emissions
- A contribution to energy security and resilience
- A positive approach to new renewable energy development in appropriate locations
- More locally owned and generated sustainable energy
- The retention of income from energy generation in West Devon
- Improve the efficiency of existing homes and build new homes with exemplary energy efficiency standards
- Make significant progress towards eliminating fuel poverty in West Devon
- More local jobs in environmental technologies
- Conservation and enhancement of the natural and living environment

Do you agree with these aims? Do you think there is anything missing, and why?

What sorts of policies do we need to achieve this Vision?

2 **A broad ranging low-carbon policy that:**

- Supports other policies in the Plan that aim to help reduce carbon emissions;
- Aims to increase our contribution to national carbon reduction and renewable energy targets;
- Promotes low carbon development and energy conservation;
- Supports sustainable construction and resource management; and
- Reduces the risk to communities from extreme weather and flooding events

Will these points help us achieve our Vision? What else should be included and why?

3 **A policy for sustainable construction and low carbon buildings that:**

- Supports continued improvements in building standards towards the zero carbon homes standards by ensuring good layout, orientation and design to maximise natural heating, cooling and lighting
- Promotes the use of low carbon and renewable energy systems on new domestic and commercial buildings
- Requires a mix of on and off-site carbon reduction measures in accordance with central government ‘allowable solutions’ guidance

Do you agree with these suggestions? What else should be included and why?

4

A policy for renewable energy development which:

- Requires the proportionate assessment of positive and negative impacts (including cumulative impacts) of renewable energy development, using established methods and best practice as recognised in national guidance.
- Can demonstrate how residential amenity is being respected by providing a comprehensive assessment of residential impacts where rurally isolated dwellings and hamlets are close to proposal sites
- Requires the Devon Landscape Sensitivity work to be taken into account
- Does not compromise the purposes of international or national landscape, environmental or heritage designations
- Supports the use of brown field land and roofs where possible
- Requires early consultation with communities for all types of development
- Requires removal of technology once generation ceases
- Requires developments over £2.5m to offer a minimum 5% stake of the development for community ownership
- Justifies site selection where farm land is used, and continued agricultural use and/or biodiversity gain
- Supports development that makes use of waste heat
- Encourages proposals that use energy on site, particularly where it supports a business need

Do you agree with these suggestions? What else should be included and why?

5

A policy for community led development, that supports projects to promote energy efficiency, energy generation and energy management, where ...

- The impacts of the proposal are acceptable, or can be made acceptable, and meet the requirements of the policies above.
- The project is community led – the project can demonstrate a consensus among the local community or the project is part of a Neighbourhood Plan
- There are social and community benefits and structures in place to manage the project

Will this approach increase the number of community led low-carbon and renewable energy projects? What more can be done to encourage community-led projects?

Our Vision

- Aims and framework for future growth
- Our priorities and challenges

Our Homes

- Future housing numbers
- Affordable housing
- Self-build
- Gypsy and traveller provision
- Housing mix and type
- Design standards

Our Economy

- Employment strategy
- Employment policies
- Town centre and retail policies
- Regeneration
- Diversification
- Enabling flexibility and supporting change

Our Heritage

- Conservation areas
- Listed buildings
- Heritage assets
- Reuse of land and buildings
- Archaeology

Our Infrastructure

- Communications
- Roads and transport
- Education
- Health and social care
- Waste and recycling
- Utilities
- Sport
- Cultural facilities

Our Communities

- The development strategy
- Role for neighbourhood planning
- Defining 'sustainable development'
- Sustainability Appraisal
- Community empowerment and enabling

Our Environment

- Biodiversity
- Designated and protected landscapes
- Green infrastructure
- Trees and hedges
- Water resources and quality
- Soil resources
- Flood risk

Our Resources

- Renewable energy
- Zero carbon
- Climate change
- Energy hierarchy
- Sustainable construction
- Resource management

Our Wellbeing

- Social inclusion
- Public safety
- Open space and sport
- Community assets
- Health infrastructure
- Sustainable and community transport
- Fuel poverty

Our Partners

- Neighbouring authorities
- Voluntary sector
- Infrastructure providers
- Clinical Commissioning Groups

Have your say!

This e-newsletter has hopefully provided you with useful information about how Our Plan can reduce the carbon emissions for West Devon, and how we could deal with renewable energy generation in the future. With your help we can design new policies that meet the aims of our Vision and help to bring about a low carbon West Devon for future generations.

If you have any comments about what we've suggested or would like to share ideas about options we could explore then we want to hear from you.

Please tell us what you think by using our Form.

The consultation starts on 1st December.

Please make sure your comments reach us by

5th January 2015

For more information

Follow us on Twitter and find us on Facebook to keep up to date with progress being made on Our Plan and to find out about events near you.



www.facebook.com/OurPlanWD



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