

Appendix A: Workshops

Interim findings for this study were tested with stakeholders at two workshops held at Hertfordshire County Council on 1st March 2010. Its aims were to obtain the opinions of key stakeholders regarding obstacles and opportunities for realising the renewable and low carbon energy resource within the district and the types of planning policies that will be needed in order to facilitate their development.

The following people attended the two workshops

Andrew Dutton	Persimmon Homes
Andrew Turner	Hertfordshire County Council
Andy Beavan	North Herts Council
Anne Day	Welwyn Hatfield Council
Bob Chapman	Hertfordshire County Council
Catriona Ramsay	Watford Borough Council
Casimir Iwaszkiewicz	Inbuilt
Clare May	Three Rivers District Council
Claire Skeels	North Herts Council
Cllr Derrick Ashley	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Ian Reay	Dacorum Borough Council
Colin Haigh	Broxbourne Borough council
Cuma Ahmet	Broxbourne Borough Council
Damien Manhertz	Welwyn Hatfield Council
Danny Pollock	MACE
Cllr Derek Scudder	Watford Borough Council
Frank Maloney	Mouchel
Jed Griffiths	Griffiths Environmental Planning
Jerome Veriter	St Albans District Council
John Gavin	Dacorum Borough Council
Justin Weber	Watford Borough Council
Karen Walter	Hertfordshire County Council
Manpreet Kanda	St Albans District Council
Marcos Higuera	Hertfordshire County Council
Martin Paine	East Herts Council
Matt Fisher	MACE
Maureen Armantrading	

Max Sanders	Watford Borough Council
Nathalie Bateman	Dacorum Borough Council
Neil Walker	Watford Borough Council
Nigel Dent	Renewables East
Pat Gold	Mouchel
Paul Baxter	Watford Borough Council
Paul Donovan	Hertfordshire County Council
Paul Sandison	John Laing Partnership Homes
Peter Hill	Welwyn Hatfield Council
Peter Quaile	Broxbourne Borough Council
Petra Klemm	Watford Borough Council
Richard Blackburn	Dacorum Borough Council
Richard Brewster	MACE
Sian Finney MacDonald	Watford Borough Council
Simon Warner	Hertsmere Borough Council
Tony Hincks	St Albans District Council
Tracy Mannings	Broxbourne Borough Council
Yvonne Edwards	Dacorum Borough Council

The key points raised in the exercise were as follows:

Workshop 1: Resource Potential

Have all potential renewable resource been identified?

Attendees consider that all large renewable resources have been identified. However absence of Hydro Power analysis and small scale renewables were questioned by almost all parties.

There were comments regarding the potential of unused weirs and utilising them for the new developments.

Visual impacts of the large turbines are creating very strong resistance in Hertfordshire.

Waste: It was recommended that we should get in touch with County Council Waste department to have an update on the waste policy especially about the large scale energy from waste plants (for electricity production).

Incineration has no alternative (such as CHP) currently this is because the waste plants are sited away from where the heat is needed. Therefore cost of pipework could be prohibitive.

Strong interest in AD. AECOM explained the cost of transport makes it unviable therefore smaller and local schemes (such as ADd's in farms) are more suitable rather than large central plants.

Energy from Waste pollution concerns – it was requested to please explain in the report to allay fears.

What barriers do local authorities envisage to RLC energy?

Visual impacts of the large turbines are creating very strong resistance in Hertfordshire.

Some suggested there is a large waste wood potential due to woodland trimmings and cuts, agricultural waste etc, however at the moment it is very badly managed due to no interest, funding etc.

Broxbourne Wood management –funding has been cut.

Human Challenge, hard to change people's perceptions, misconceptions etc. people are ignorant and sceptical about renewables and their contribution to overall energy need.

Education and awareness raising are key to the uptake of renewables (this was an overall conclusion)

Specific concerns about biomass waste wood - mixed views/comments/ recommendations on this.

Some suggested there is a large potential due to woodland trimmings and cuts, agricultural waste etc, hence it should be emphasised (potential and perhaps mismanagement in this country)

E.g. Broxbourne Wood management – however funding has been cut - and Hertfordshire hearts biomass management potential

HCC has a very large rural estate hence waste wood potential should be large.

Air quality – this is only a concern in urban areas and AQMA. However more important than this is the misconception about biomass and air pollution is a barrier.

There is no supply chain management of biomass fuel in Hertfordshire. Some don't believe there is a biomass potential and there is no funding to explore the potential and develop a supply chain.

People find the issue complicated (overall biomass including storage, supply chain etc)

Wind: there is a report for East of England – Whole Region Wind Assessment has been carried out and the recommendation is that south of the region (including Hertfordshire) is less windy therefore less viable compared to Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and Suffolk etc.

Human Challenge, hard to change people's perceptions, misconceptions etc.

Recommendations:

Ownership such as community owned wind turbines, promotions and marketing to change people's views

A short section on potential of unused weirs and utilising them for the new developments.

Waste wood potential due to HCC having a very large estate, Herts Hearth and other woodlands it should be emphasised (potential and perhaps mismanagement in this country)

Ownership such as community owned wind turbines, promotions and marketing to change people's views

Workshop 2: Policy formation for new development

Emphasise the usefulness of the study to upcoming Core Strategies. Specifically, the relevance of the energy opportunities map beyond 2016 and of setting policies tougher than Building Regulations before ZeroCarbon to encourage the installation of DH infrastructure. Earlier encouragement of DH infrastructure will allow capacity building and experience that will be crucial when buildings will need to be ZeroC. This will also allow existing buildings to be connected to DHN's, resulting in further CO₂ reductions.

Joined up thinking

Contribution from a developer – there needs to be more joined up thinking and coordination when it comes to building developments. There are a multitude of studies carried out independently, but findings aren't synthesised together to provide clear guidance. Studies carried out in isolation not useful, there is burden on developers to carry out this synthesis.

Viability

What determines viability?

Where will money come from for meeting of policies that exceed BR? (it was felt that money is a significant barrier)

What size of development makes the installation of DHN "viable"? (e.g 500 houses plus 10,000 sqm commercial?) Are there any guidelines?

Is there a need to be prescriptive about viability of installing RLCs? Otherwise the concept is ambiguous and open to interpretation.

If LA asks for CL5 and CL6, where will funding come from to achieve this?

Is there any benefit to developer in meeting policies that exceed BR? (one answer was marketability of property for lower fuel bills; another answer suggested that ESCOs could take the extra cost and risk of installing RLCs and receive payback over longer time period; another answer suggests that payback from RLCs could be shared with developers.

Will there be sufficient space under roads, pavements etc to install district heating pipework in areas of high heat density?

How will DHN's be funded? (currently uneconomic)

How far can you push a developer beyond BR? How can you justify targets beyond East of England Plan?

How can gap between 2013 and 2016 be bridged?

Technical viability

David McKay's book suggests ASHP are the way forward, not gas CHP powered DH (but this will only apply when grid is decarbonised, besides there is flexibility of fuel source with DH)

Policy Consistency

If one LA asks for targets on a development beyond BR, will the developer simply look to build in a less strict LA?

Can there be coordination between all Herts Boroughs and County Council to ensure consistency of targets for new developments?

The idea of making policy site specific was generally accepted.

Monitoring and standards

A number of people pointed out that energy studies for new developments are variable in terms of presentation and methodology. It would be useful if LA's in

Hertfordshire had a standard format for energy studies (e.g Energy hierarchy in London Plan and associated CO₂ savings calculation methodology)

How will monitoring be carried out to ensure CO₂ reduction targets are met? Currently, there may be installation of RLCs but these may not be used! E.g solar PV not being plugged in, biomass boilers not being run because of economics. (one suggestion was to install smart meters as part of RLC installation and send data back to Council. Otherwise it is difficult for Development Control to determine whether RLCs are being used as promised)

Hearts and Minds

People's attitude to RLCs and climate change in general needs to be considered, perhaps through education. It was suggested that this is the main obstacle to use of RLCs. People generally do not understand benefits of sustainable living and only see increased costs.

Workshop 3: Delivery of RLC measures in Hertfordshire

Local authority participation in Energy Services Companies (ESCOs)

There is potential for collaboration between the public and private sector to set up local ESCOs to help deliver schemes in both the new build sector and the existing buildings sector.

Mixed views on financial input:

- Input from the public sector may need to be non-financial as funds are currently limited and likely to remain so into the future. So any finance will need to come from other parties or mechanisms, for example allowable solutions.
- Other views that finance could come from public sector or levered by public sector.

Public sector understanding and strategic support of schemes important to ensure that scale of schemes is maximised, for example strategically assessing sites with a view to linking new developments and existing opportunities. Council encouragement and support of schemes vital.

There is a role local authorities can make in supporting ESCOs in non financial ways, for example the provision of land, planning policy support, and wayleave support for digging roads to install infrastructure.

The report should provide an outline discussion of, or links to case studies where local authority partnerships have been used to procure or set up ESCOs.

Politics

A long term view of energy is necessary – does not necessarily fit in with current short term political structure and planning. There is a need to take a bottom up long term political view at local level which is independent of current national or local government.

It is important to engage well with local political groups. For example, the Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Council (HAPTC). Achieving buy-in with local political groups is vital to ensure community buy-in and acceptance of schemes.

District heating

District heating is generally seen as being viable in the new build sector due to drivers in the form of building regulations, and the cost benefits of installing DH network alongside other new infrastructure. However DH seen as expensive in the existing sector due to practicalities, for example, digging up roads, and encouraging existing buildings to connect although this has been achieved in places such as Sheffield and Southampton. Connections need to be seen as attractive to existing buildings, for example offering economically attractive heat tariffs.

The Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) seen as a big driver for public sector to reduce its own emissions, and potentially as a driver for energy schemes based around public sector portfolio. Large public buildings could act as a catalyst for DH networks.

Education

Education generally seen as vital to changing attitudes and views surrounding energy efficiency and renewable technologies.

One popular ideas was to make visual statements at educational facilities, for example, installing small scale wind turbines in all school playing fields. This would educate both the school children, but also parents.

There is a lot of misunderstanding about certain technologies, for example energy from waste. Education is required to target these technologies, perhaps by showing case studies etc of other successful installations.

Energy performance certificates seen as a method by which higher levels of improvement can be encouraged in both the commercial and domestic sectors. These in time may come to educate building owners and occupiers about energy efficiency.

Engaging with communities

Community based / owned energy projects could be one method of encouraging renewable uptake and by offering a local financial incentive, overcoming “Nimbyism”. Linking profits and economic return to local community an important step to increasing uptake.

Could council tax be linked to community ownership as an incentive. It would be difficult to assess who should and shouldn’t receive benefits and what the radius of effect is. There are examples of this in Europe, but usually in areas with isolated communities.

A general view was given that on the whole, people don’t care about climate change or renewable energy, and that the main driver is money. Perhaps a sustainable community strategy could be developed which communities could take up to provide local benefits both financially and non financially.

Wind turbines

Recent application for 3 turbines in Benington turned down to local opposition. It was generally seen that the local population in Herts are anti-wind with many vociferous activists setting up opposition groups. It is important that the people who may oppose turbines are educated with real facts and figures from reputable sources and the benefits of the turbines explained in the context of Hertfordshire’s energy supply and contribution to CO₂ reduction in the region.

It was noted that the community approach at Swaffham has been successful leading to the installation of a second turbine, and that the community approach can work.

Expertise within councils

It was acknowledged that the rise of energy and CO₂ on the planning agenda has meant many planners and local authority stakeholders are not experts in this area and need support. A proposal was for an expert energy advisor to be employed by each or a group of local authorities who could assist planners on technical issues, but also act as a strategic advisor. Concerns were raised over how this could be funded by local authorities.