

## **EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview Committee held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 30 August 2018**

#### **Attendance list at end of document**

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 8.25pm.

#### **\*6 Public speaking**

There were no public speakers at the meeting.

#### **\*7 Minute confirmation**

The minutes of the Overview Committee held on the 31 May 2018, were confirmed as a true record.

#### **\*8 Declarations of interest**

No declarations were made at the meeting.

### **9 Conversion to renewable energy**

The Chairman welcomed Tony Norton, Head of the Centre for Energy and the Environment, College of Engineering, Mathematics and Physical Sciences at the University of Exeter. Mr Norton presented the report prepared by Andy Wood, East of Exeter Projects Director, alongside some [slides of the data presented in the report relating to the deployment of renewable energy.](#)

Mr Norton reminded the committee of the work already underway within the District and into Exeter, such as:

- the roll out of heat networks in the West End of the District;
- adopting passivhaus standards for Council housing refurbishment;
- privately led projects such as wind turbines and the deployment of solar photovoltaic technology (PV);
- planned France-Alderney-Britain sub-sea connector has the potential to harness both low carbon nuclear and tidal power and will come ashore at Budleigh Salterton and connect through to the main national grid sub-station at Broadclyst.

Whilst local energy projects at Cranbrook and Monkerton were to be commended, particularly as the largest of such projects in the country, consideration had to be given to reducing energy demand, for example through a retrofit programme of energy efficiency measures to the existing housing stock, in order to achieve the wider objective.

National policy position was set out in the report, but the committee were advised that it was unlikely it will deliver the “inevitable” renewable energy option that seemed to be widely expected. The current policies would deliver some improvement, such as through the recently published Clean Growth Strategy. This recognises that the UK will need to nurture low carbon technologies, processes and systems that are as cheap as possible.

Locally, the committee were taken through some of the information derived from “The Low Carbon and Climate Change Evidence Base for the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan”, outlining that the GESP area will need to reduce emissions from approximately 2.8MtCO<sub>2</sub> (2014) to approximately 1.1MtCO<sub>2</sub> by the end of the plan period in 2040 (equivalent to a 60.7% reduction on 2014 levels) in order to be on track to meet the legally binding UK target for

2050. The relevant Planning Acts bind Local Authorities to ensuring that local plans include policies that contribute to the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.

[Slides were shared with the committee relating to the progress report to parliament](#), showing how the current policies would not deliver enough to meet the targets set by Government - “policy deficit” – and that regular amendment or replacement of policies was detrimental to delivery too. This policy deficit had been taken into account as part of the evidence base for the GESP process.

The potential for each renewable energy technology was examined for the GESP area, covering:

- Electricity
  - Onshore wind: Highest unconstrained RE resource but highly constrained
  - Photovoltaic (PV): The South West has the best solar resource in the UK. Ground mounted PV is the highest constrained RE resource
  - Run of river hydro: Small scale. Negligible resource. Abstraction licences a constraint. Economics difficult without existing civils infrastructure in place
- Electricity and Heat
  - Biomass energy: Resource not directly linked to location of technology which, to maximise efficiency, needs to be heat led
  - EfW energy: as above, resource not directly linked to location of technology which, to maximise efficiency, needs to be heat led
  - Anaerobic Digestion: Resource not directly linked to location of technology. Biogas export is the preferred technical solution to electricity generation (only). Combined heat and power (CHP) requires an adjacent heat load
- Heat
  - Heat networks: Heat demand led
  - Solar thermal: The South West has the best solar resource in the UK. Large scale solar thermal arrays will play increasing role where there are heat networks as evidenced in Denmark and elsewhere in continental Europe
  - Heat pumps: Large scale HP important in FAB Link type waste heat recovery opportunities. Potential for increasing standalone role as electricity grid decarbonises subject to electricity prices and grid constraints.

The committee were shown maps of the potential for wind and PV sites, based on detailed criteria and constraint of 2km maximum distance from the WPD electricity distribution grid. PV had many more potential sites across the GESP area than wind. Theoretically, if all the potential sites for PV and wind were developed, this would save 373 ktCO<sub>2</sub> compared to 2014 emissions of 821 ktCO<sub>2</sub> – 45%. Whilst this was a significant reduction, it was still not enough to meet the target. The committee were asked to bear in mind that it was just as important to consider how demand could be reduced.

The committee discussed the implications for the Council and the district as a whole, including:

- Welcoming the consideration of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the reality of providing additional energy in the GESP study;
- Commissioning a study for the district may only duplicate work elsewhere, and therefore continuing such research should be done across the GESP area; work was already underway by the GESP team including on potential sites and what the energy pros and cons would be;
- Existing grid capacity issue, in that the local distribution network had some constraints;

- Need to raise awareness of the impact both of energy use and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions;
- Implications of adding electric car charging points to car parks – what cost would producing that electricity bring and would it outweigh the benefit of an electric car;
- Member concern on impact of expanded PV use, such as aesthetics, and rain run-off. Technology needed to be sufficiently advanced to deliver as effectively as possible with minimal impact;
- Involving parishes in how they can contribute;
- Flat hilltop use for wind turbines may have less of a visual impact on surrounding area;
- Take the report and findings, particularly in respect of possible PV locations, to the Strategic Planning Committee to take into consideration for deliberating planning policy on PV installations, both as stand alone and for adding to existing structures;
- With a predominantly rural aspect, it would be unrealistic to expect communities to give up personal transport;
- Need to educate the public on what is available and how they can reduce demand;
- Concern on lifespan of PV units and what happens to the waste product of those;
- Personal and collective responsibility needed.

The Portfolio Holder for Economy spoke about the changes already in place but voiced that there was a clear need for further work on how the Council can contribute towards the goals of the GESP and look at own practices. He proposed that a step forward could be that he held a think tank on the topic, with an open invitation to any Members interested in the subject to contribute.

The Chairman agreed this as a way forward, asking the Portfolio Holder to provide a report back to the committee on the findings of the think tank, so that the committee continued to debate the issue and make proposals to the Cabinet in due course. He would raise the report with the Strategic Planning Committee at their next meeting to alert them to the value of the evidence within it.

The Chairman also thanked Mr Norton for his comprehensive presentation, which had raised more questions for Members to further pursue.

**RESOLVED: 1. The considerable evidence that underpins the potential for the renewable energy generation in the District be noted;  
2. A further report on renewable energy will be made by the Portfolio Holder for Economy on completion of his think tank.**

#### **\*10 Overview forward plan**

In addition to the published forward plan for the committee, a draft response to a government call for evidence would be considered at the September meeting of the committee. A House of Lords Select Committee is considering Regenerating Seaside Towns and Communities, with the call for evidence currently open until 9 October. The draft response with comments from the committee will go forward for Cabinet approval before submission.

**RESOLVED that the forward plan be noted.**

**Attendance list**

**Councillors Present:**

Graham Godbeer (Chairman)  
Ian Hall (Vice Chairman)  
Peter Faithfull  
Mike Allen  
John Humphreys  
Douglas Hull  
Rob Longhurst

**Councillors Also Present:**

Philip Skinner  
John Dyson  
Pauline Stott  
Brian Bailey

**Officers**

Richard Cohen, Deputy Chief Executive  
Graeme Thompson, Senior Planning Officer  
Anita Williams, Principal Solicitor and Deputy Monitoring Officer  
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

**Councillor Apologies:**

Mark Williamson  
Steve Gazzard  
Matt Booth  
Tim Dumper  
Chris Pepper  
Jill Elson  
Alan Dent  
Ian Thomas

Chairman .....

Date.....