



**PROGRESS REPORT BY : THE ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK FOR PEMBROKESHIRE (TENP)**

**TO : THE PEMBROKESHIRE ENVIRONMENT FORUM (PEF), 7<sup>th</sup> October 2014.**

**ENDORSED BY THE PEF on the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2014.**

**PRIORITY:** Pembrokeshire will address the challenge of climate change.

**HEADLINE ACTION: Create Resilient Communities able to cope with climate change.**

1) Introduction

In the Summer of 2013 the LSB offered The Environmental Network for Pembrokeshire (TENP) the opportunity to lead on the delivery of this headline action, in conjunction with PAVS and PCC with funding from NRW.

PEF recognised that this headline action would take a number of years to achieve its objective and that TENP was best placed to engage with the voluntary and community sector on environmental issues across the County.

2) The project:

As a first stage TENP carried out three baseline surveys in January 2014, one each for the public sector, voluntary sector, and town and community councils, in order to gauge the level of understanding of community resilience to climate change.

Two consultants were then contracted to analyse the survey returns and deliver and report on three discussion events, one public sector only, one voluntary and community sector, and one joint event. The objective was to arrive at a list of actions to be considered by PEF and, if ratified by this group, by LSB. The actions were categorised into immediate actions, within 5 years, and within 10 years.

The number of participants in the survey were lower than hoped across all sectors, and particularly small in number from the community and town councils where awareness of and concern for climate change and community resilience was very low despite the survey being conducted during the winter storms.

The voluntary sector discussion event was relatively well attended (23), whilst the public sector event attracted only 10 participants, with no staff from the Health Authority or the Local Planning Authorities. The seniority of officers was also not as high as hoped for. The joint event was attended by 22 people, with only 2 community councils represented

One explanation for low numbers was the tight timescale for the project and the short notice for the events. However as this project is a first step in a long journey we feel it has been extremely worthwhile in 'kick starting' a debate and action across the public and voluntary sector.

We would hope to include the business sector and agricultural sector in future activities.

3) Findings:

- i) Action: The consensus over the 3 events was that the headline action was important and required a coordinated response, a view heightened by the experience of the extreme weather events over the previous winter and the associated floods. It was also appreciated that communities needed to have practical plans and actions to deal with longer term threats from climate change including a coherent set of actions for the next ten years. Actions suggested at the events ranged from: transport, food and renewable

energy initiatives to actions on engagement with communities and collaboration within and across sectors.

- ii) Collaboration and coordination: it was recognised that communities (towns and villages) acting alone, however resilient, did not have the resources to meet the challenge of climate change. The concept of community has to extend to include all sectors, including LSB members. In particular there needs to be a recognition and assessment of how public services help to enhance resilience but also, and perhaps more importantly, how policies and decisions, intentionally or unintentionally, increase the vulnerability of communities and residents.
- iii) Awareness and engagement: it is clear from the project that the profile of this headline action needs to be raised with elected representatives, policy makers, the business sector and the general public and that structures and procedures for greater engagement need to be put in place.

#### 4) TENP'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION:

- i) **Raise Awareness** of the issues and urgency for action across all sectors by disseminating the presentation by NRW at the final event, and the WLGA guidance note 'Adapting to Climate Change module' 2009, to all LSB member organisations and their senior/policy officers.

##### **Actions in year 1,**

- TENP and LSB members to place these 2 documents on their web sites.
- All LSB members to actively promote these documents to their senior managers and policy staff at corporate and departmental business plan meetings, and to notify all staff via in-house newsletters. This dissemination to be followed up by a series of in-house and LSB workshops to discuss the implications for local services. The discussions and findings to be made available to the public.
- All Community and Town Councils to be informed of these documents and to be encouraged by LSB members to discuss them and their implications for their work.

- ii) **A Community Resilience Audit** to be carried out by all LSB members of their policies and actions to arrive at a resilience 'baseline' for the County . As reference was made in the joint event to; Community Resilience Plans (approved by the County Council), a Community Response group and a Community Risk Register as well as a requirement for some LSB members to produce Community Adaptation Plans, we have the impression that an audit should not require a great deal of additional work.

##### **Action in Year 1, (then annually reviewed).**

- Audit to be coordinated by the LSB secretariat working with PEF/TENP/PAVS/PLANED.
- As a first step, to assess to what extent the activities listed above supply the information to satisfy an audit.
- At the same time to work with PCC's Emergency Planning Unit, and Audit staff to decide on the format, scope, and criteria for an audit exercise. TENP feel that the audit should include organisational arrangements as well as assessing policies and practices that enhance resilience or make communities more vulnerable.

- The WLGA guidance module provides a useful checklist.

iii) **Community Engagement** is worryingly underdeveloped across the County. Participants were not aware of the WG guidance on National Principles of Public Engagement in Wales, launched in 2011. Greater engagement between policy makers and residents is known to enhance public services by making them more relevant and effective as well as save money. We feel that an ongoing public engagement programme on the headline action should be initiated, with a named and committed 'champion' from the LSB taking the lead and working in conjunction with the voluntary and community sectors and including town and community councils.

**Action: Year 1, and ongoing.**

- the LSB members in collaboration with Town and Community councils, PAVS and PLANED.
- PCC is currently developing, and about to launch, a community action tool-kit. This may provide the basis for engagement, along with the application of the National Principles. If it hasn't been done, Community and Town councils, and other community associations, would need to be consulted on this 'tool-kit' in order to judge its relevance and suitability to them. Other resources are also available such as, 'Ready for Flooding' , produced by the National Flood Forum ([www.floodforum.org.uk](http://www.floodforum.org.uk))
- Support Town and Community Councils to use the internet to assist in communication and awareness raising.

iv) **Energy: Renewable , Efficiency and Demand Reduction**, de-carbonising our society is key to reducing the threat of climate change and achieving energy security in what is a turbulent and uncertain future.

**Actions in Year 1, and ongoing, include:**

a) Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy:

- PCC and PCNP to actively encourage and support energy efficiency and renewable energy measures in the home and workplace using all the regulatory and planning and development control measures available. TENP/PLANED/PAVS to promote these policies and opportunities.
- PCC and PCNP, as local planning authorities, to draft a One Planet Development Policy and Strategic Guidance for urban residential development to support low carbon construction
- All LSB members to report on the energy efficiency measures they have adopted to date and the reduction in CO2 that has been achieved. To be publicised and also reported to the LSB on an annual basis.
- All LSB members should support and robustly implement the solar strategy recently launched by the UK Government which promotes the use of solar panels on public/community and commercial buildings.

- All LSB members to report on their programme of action and progress, annually.

**(FOOTNOTE:** One caveat is that the Feed in Tariff income stream associated with renewable energy initiatives is regressive in that it affects those electricity consumers in fuel poverty disproportionately and adversely. Compensatory action is therefore required).

b) Electric and Hybrid Vehicles:

- Support for the use of electric / hybrid cars and buses within the public sector.
- PCC to publicise its progress in reducing the CO2 emissions from its transport fleet (see PEF minutes for figures for the last 2 years.), and all LSB member to provide and publicise equivalent data.
- PCC Transport Department to carry out a feasibility study of the introduction of electric vehicles into its fleet, drawing the work currently being carried out by Milton Keynes in using electric buses (a project managed by eFleet integrated service joint venture between Mitsui Europe and Arup).
- LSB members to encourage staff use of electric and hybrid vehicles through the recalibration of mileage expenses payments (lowest payment for low mpg) and by providing charging points (links to solar strategy above). The principle of public money being used to reduce CO2 emissions and not encouraging fossil fuel use should paramount.
- TENP and PACTO to encourage the installation of charging points and the promotion car share clubs.

c) Community Renewable Energy Initiatives:

- Four participants and the project consultants suggested a Community Renewable Energy action, with a local authority 'revolving loan fund' (as pioneered by Cornwall County Council) which facilitates community ownership of renewable energy installations (wind turbines, biomass, hydro, etc). We believe that, although attractive, issues around governance, planning policy, impact on fuel poverty, accountability, practicality, economic viability and relevance to community resilience and adaptability need to be investigated.
- We recommend that,

**Action: Year 1**

- The LSB's Low Carbon Group to lead on the feasibility of a revolving loan fund model and to arrive at a set of best practice criteria for Community Renewable Energy initiatives.
- The two local planning authorities, PCC and PCNPA, to meet with TENP and local community energy groups to discuss the planning criteria and material considerations that need to be met to gain planning approval and produce a Planning Guidance note. (the attached case-study, from T Latter, to be used as a basis for discussion, See Appendix 1).

- As a contribution to this discussion PCC and PCNPA to provide an analysis of planning approvals and refusals for wind turbines:

i)-the proportion (and number) of approvals for those submitted by the land owner for energy use on-site. The number that went to appeal before achieving approval.

ii) - the proportion (and number) of approvals for those submitted by the land owner for the generated energy to supply the grid. The number that went to appeal before achieving approval.

iii)- the proportion (and number) of approvals for those submitted by community groups. The number that went to appeal before achieving approval.

iv)-Provide a map indicating the location of approvals, approval on appeal, and refusals.

**v) Food Security.**

The impact of climate change on food security was mentioned at all events. The WLGA module 'Sustainable Food', 2009, points out that *"In terms of the mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to climate change, more sustainable food systems will play a crucial role"*, and is better for the local economy as well as providing huge potential to improve health and the environment.

Contributors saw local food initiatives taking many forms: allotments, better space standards in residential developments to allow for kitchen gardens, linking local producers to local buyers to improve food in schools, hospitals, etc.

We are aware that Pembrokeshire has taken a number of initiatives since 2004; promoting local food in schools (2004), withdrawing unhealthy food and drinks from schools and leisure centres, (2006), as well as supporting farmer's markets and food festivals.

**Action Year 1**

-The LSB members to provide a baseline of current food security initiatives, to be publicised through TENP and public sector web sites.

-PCC and PCNPA, as the Local Planning Authorities, to formally adopt sustainability as the priority material consideration when considering planning applications, of which food security is a significant dimension.

-PCC and PCNPA and to adopt a policy for 'greening' urban areas to include the provision of allotments or productive community spaces and improved space standards for residential developments (for more initiatives see: [www.GreenCitiesFoundation](http://www.GreenCitiesFoundation)).

-PCC, PCNPA, PLANED and the Hywel Dda Health Board to jointly convene a procurement working group with the objective of promoting the local purchasing of food for staff canteens, schools, hospitals and care centres/extra care homes.

APPENDIX 1:

**Abergwaun Community Turbine (joint venture project with land owner)**

Comparison of criteria assessment at initial planning refusal (07.01.2014) and granting at subsequent appeal (01.08.2014)

Criteria	PCC	WG Inspector
Recognition of need for renewable generation	Yes	Yes
Visual impact on landscape	Unacceptable, and 'substantial' The PCNPA '.....concludes that the proposed turbine would have significant and unacceptable adverse effects on the visual qualities of this special landscape area.'	Acceptable 'Set within a modern agricultural landscape, its effect on the general character of the area would also not be significant, bearing in mind its modest scale.'
Visual impact on the conservation area of Lower Town and Fishguard	'In the absence of information which demonstrates the potential impact of the turbine on the setting of the conservation area there is a concern that it would tower over parts of the town and have an adverse effect on the attractive composition of the buildings within the valley which extend down to form the Lower Town Conservation Area.'	'I consider the development would have no more than a slight adverse impact on the setting of the Conservation Area when viewed from certain locations. Whilst there would be no conflict with the statutory duty to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area itself, my conclusion of slight impact on its setting is a material consideration.'
Community benefit	'This offer is voluntary and has no bearing on the merits of the proposal and carries no weight in consideration of the application.'	'.....it is also clear that the scheme would bring substantial community benefits in terms of income from the scheme over its projected 25 years life. The scheme is jointly promoted by a community group.....This community involvement is also in line with national policy, and the community benefits of this involvement are a material consideration of some weight.'

Impact on the local ecology	'.....it is concluded that the proposed development would accord with the requirements of criterion 4 of Policy GN.1 and Policy GN.37 (Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity)'	'...provided suitable mitigation measures were applied during construction, the risks to birds and other wildlife would be low.'
Local amenity	No adverse impact	No adverse impact
Conclusion	'It has not been demonstrated that the proposal would protect or enhance the character and integrity of the Fishguard and Lower Town conservation area. The proposal therefore fails to accord with the relevant policies of the LDP. There are no conditions that could be imposed that would acceptably mitigate the harmful effects. The benefit of the scheme in terms of the production of renewable energy does not outweigh the harmful effects.'	'My overall conclusion on the proposal is that any small harm to landscape or visual amenity, including to the settings of the nearby National Park and Fishguard Conservation Area, would be substantially outweighed by the benefits of the scheme, which are strongly supported by policy aims for sustainable development in terms of renewable energy generation and community benefits. I have taken all other matters into account but nothing outweighs the considerations that have led me to my main conclusions.'

C. mason September 2014.

