



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 sources 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 them¹?
- 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 future²?
- If, for example, you have geothermal potential³ 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 or from industrial processes?
- If your area is coastal or has a working port, would your community support marine energy and the onshore industries which could grow around it?
- Increasingly 'smart' measures, such as matching energy supply with demand⁴ 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 upfront finance. The Council can help with this: www.cornwall.gov.uk/greencornwall

2 Some more information on the different technologies currently available can be found via this web link www.cornwall.gov.uk/renewableenergy

3 Geothermal takes the heat from Cornwall's underlying granite and turns it into electricity and heat.

4 For example, tools which programme your washing machine to start when your solar panels are working.