



Cornwall Sustainable
Energy Partnership

CSEP is a public & private sector partnership working to achieve a sustainable energy future for Cornwall, its communities and businesses

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Climate change creates a real challenge to our local economy. Council leader embarrassed that Cornwall has not grasped the opportunity for leadership.

Cornwall and the World at large are facing a crucial point in the survival of our communities. No matter what Gordon Brown announces in his budget speech today Cornwall's strategic leaders have been told that Cornwall has the opportunity to do something great and take the lead on climate change and sustainability issues to ensure we don't look back in 50 years time and hear our children ask why we stood back and did nothing.

This was the key message given to Cornwall's strategic leaders at the 6th Annual Meeting of the Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership (CSEP) this week. At the meeting at Cornwall County Council 130 representatives of strategic public and private sector organisations were told some shocking truths about how Cornwall will miss opportunities to 'regenerate' our communities if crucial decisions are not made over the next few months.

Climate change and energy sustainability have been identified as economic priorities in the documentation being prepared to send to the European Commission in advance of Cornwall receiving vast amount of Euro Funding.

In her role as Chairman of CSEP Carol Wells, of the Federation of Small Business, said at the outset of the event:

"A brave economic decision needs to be made. Here in Cornwall, we have ahead of us an opportunity to make a massive leap forward in sustainable energy over the next decade. This is no longer an aspiration but a necessity."

Cornwall's leaders were warned that they ignore Climate Change and the problems of energy security at their peril. The kind of heat waves and extreme weather patterns that have recently occurred in conjunction with the highest CO₂ concentration levels recorded in the last 600,000 years* show this simple relationship.

Apart from the famine and droughts happening amongst some of the poorest nations in the world, hurricanes like that of Katrina and tsunamis in Thailand, these weather patterns are happening closer to home. In 2003, Europe was hit by a massive heat wave that killed 35,000 people. Floods in Boscastle 2004, a tornado in Birmingham in 2005. Since July we have been experiencing some of the hottest months since records began.

The Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership, a consortium of 72 public and private sector organisations, is working with all councils and strategic leaders in Cornwall on a sustainable energy programme which will combine economic gain with social benefits. The Partnership has managed to secure just over £1.5 million in sustainable energy and carbon reduction project funding since January 2006 for Cornwall.

Investment in resources needs to start now if we are to stabilise emissions. Last month, with the help of the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Nicholas Stern released his review on the economic effects of climate change. In order to stabilise emissions in the next 20 years the UK would need to invest 1% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The GDP for Cornwall was around £5.6 billion in 2003. This means that local government should be investing £56.5 million per year, which is around £112 per inhabitant.

This year's guest speaker at the annual meeting was Ray Morgan, Chief Executive of Woking Borough Council, recognised as the most advanced council in the UK for leading sustainable energy and community policies. Woking made the choice to make the reduction of CO2 equivalent emissions, adaptation to climate change and the promotion of sustainable development, its priority when it came to the same cross roads that Cornwall is now facing with impressive results.

Woking has achieved impressive statistics including 79% CO2 reductions and sustainable energy self generation of 82%.

“The one overriding theme and blessing we have had is the positive engagement from our community.” Said Ray Morgan. ***“Woking Borough council has invested substantial amounts into combating climate change and ensuring a sustainable future for our borough without passing the cost onto tax payers. Councillors work for their constituents and they should carry out the will of those who elected them. Cornwall can use our model to create economic wealth and reduce their CO2 emissions by adapting our model; it's up to the voters to tell their representative to make the issue a priority.”***

“Woking isn't as fortunate as Cornwall is with the abundance of natural resources available to create energy and become self sufficient but to also export that energy to other parts of the UK,” continued Ray.

“Cornwall is on the verge of a great opportunity to regenerate its communities as it did in the 17th and 18th century with the tin mining and become a world leader in sustainable energy. I'm embarrassed for Cornwall that it has not already taken advantage of its location, the spirit

of the people and is looking likely to be left behind other areas not so fortunate.”

Tim German, the Director of Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership is confident that Cornwall will not miss out on this ‘unique opportunity’:

‘The next few months and years will be crucial in shaping a sustainable energy future for Cornwall, its communities and businesses. It is amazing the Chief Executive of the UK’s most advanced council for sustainable energy sees even greater opportunities for Cornwall. We have to reduce consumption and our carbon emissions, utilise our vast natural resources to support local energy programmes, assist those who cannot afford their energy, and encourage business development in sustainable energy technologies. All this is do-able – keep watching this space.’

‘We do not want a situation when future generations suffering from the severe effects of climate change look back to 2007 and say why didn’t they take the right decisions when they had the opportunities. If we do not take the opportunities that are available to us now – we will never do it’

Notes to editors

* Source: An Inconvenient Truth, Al Gore, pg. 66

- **Community Energy Plus (CEP)** is a registered charity (Number 1068990) and profit-recycling company. Established in 1998 with financial support from Carrick District Council, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Health Authority and the Energy Saving Trust. CEP manages the international award-winning* Home Health project which was developed by the 72 members of the Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership.
- The **Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership** (founded in 2001) and managed by CEP, is a consortium of 72 organisations from the public, private and health sectors that are committed to a multi sector approach to a sustainable energy future for Cornwall. It is the first partnership of its kind in the UK and is providing a model for other parts of the UK. www.csep.co.uk
- CEP manages the **Cornwall Energy Efficiency Advice Centre** supported by the Energy Saving Trust (EST) and the County and District Authorities of Cornwall. It is one of 52 independent centres across the UK, providing free, impartial and locally relevant advice to households. Please call free on **0800 512012**.

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