



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

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## PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

### **Cornwall to grasp economic opportunities from tough new European climate targets**

A delegation from the Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership (CSEP) will be taking a Cornish perspective on how to achieve a sustainable low-carbon economy to the corridors of European power in Brussels next week. This high-level trip follows on from Wednesday's European Commission announcement which detailed a raft of policy measures designed to take EU member states towards a sustainable future.

During a strategic seminar hosted by CSEP & Cornwall County Council, which will be attended by MEPs & senior European Commission officials, in Brussels on Tuesday 29 January CSEP will be presenting the case for increased support to rural and peripheral regions such as Cornwall. The Partnership and Cornwall County Council will be putting forward a case that recommends a move away from the increasingly urban-focus of EU energy policies.

As well as the MEPs and the Commission officials the meeting will be attended by other European regions. It is being organised in the context of the European-funded ASPIRE project, which sees CSEP working with partners in 10 peripheral regions across the EU to develop a model for creating 'Sustainable Energy Communities'.

Tim German, CSEP Director, said that *'although urban areas account for higher energy usage and carbon emissions, peripheral and rural areas tend to have far greater renewable energy resources and can therefore significantly contribute towards EU targets. CSEP is therefore actively working with its European partners to raise awareness of the sustainable energy strengths of peripheral areas and to bring these issues further up the European agenda'*.

One of the keynote speakers at the seminar will be Graham Watson, Member of the European Parliament for the South West and leader of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats, the third largest group in the European Parliament. Graham said that *'through its integral involvement in the development of EU policies the European Parliament has a key role to play to ensure that the policy framework actively supports and encourages peripheral regions to maximise their renewable energy resources. This in turn will help to secure a sustainable energy supply for Europe's regions and communities'*.

The European Commission's controversial announcement clarified the UK's contribution towards the EU wide target of a 20% greenhouse gas reduction by 2020, which was agreed by Tony Blair in 2007. Alongside the robust greenhouse gas reduction targets the European Commission will also be announcing plans to mandate member-states to generate 20% of their energy from renewables by 2020 and to improve energy efficiency performance across the continent by 20% in the same period. Cornwall has been one of the areas that has traditionally led the UK in the development of sustainable energy solutions, and consequentially has developed a strong alternative energy sector.

As the UK lags behind many other members-states on renewables, currently generating less than 2% of its energy from renewable sources, we have been set a below-average target of 15%.

However given our comparatively low starting point even achieving this modest target will be a huge task for the UK and Cornwall. Particularly as a result of the challenges associated with deploying renewable heat technologies alongside low-carbon transport options within a rural context, this target could translate into a 2020 renewable electricity target of between 35-40% - about four times Cornwall's 2010 target. Cornwall currently produces between 6-7% of its electricity demand through renewable means.

In response the CSEP team hopes to show delegates from across the European Community that Cornwall and similarly positioned rural communities are critical in ensuring that collectively we can rise to this challenge, whilst maximising the substantial opportunities for economic development and job creation that could follow this strong lead from Brussels.

A recent UK government study has calculated that achieving the European Commission's 20% renewable energy target alone would cost in the region of £2.5-£6 billion nationally. Obviously this would signal a huge shift in capital investment trends, and if handled correctly could finance a new green industrial revolution, with the Cornish sustainable energy sector playing a leading role.

Ben Simpson CSEP's Carbon Policy Officer, responsible for the production of the Cornwall Climate Change Action Plan, said *'the deployment of innovative mechanisms, like the local energy company proposed for the CPR area, and rapid development of the Cornish sustainable energy sector, more generally, will be critical in achieving these targets set down by Europe. This should ensure that Cornwall benefits from the substantial economic gains that could follow this recent raft of targets, which are signalling the start of a shift towards a low-carbon, and resilient local economy'*.

## - ENDS

### Notes to editors

- **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 and low carbon competitive 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](http://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**.
- The **ASPIRE** project was launched in October 2006, bringing together a partnership of 12 organisations representing 10 communities across the EU. The main objective of the project is to develop a replicable model for creating 'Sustainable Energy Communities' in peripheral areas of the EU. The county of Cornwall is represented in the ASPIRE project by the three neighbouring towns of Camborne, Pool and Redruth (CPR). For more information please visit the ASPIRE website at <http://www.aspire-project.eu/>
- CSEP is a Campaign Associate for the **EU Sustainable Energy Europe Campaign**, a European Commission initiative to raise awareness and contribute to the achievement of the European Union's energy policy targets within the fields of renewable energy sources, energy efficiency, clean transport and alternative fuels. CSEP's event will be taking place during the EU's Sustainable Energy Week, a pan-European series of events focussed around energy issues, which runs from 27 January – 1 February. For more information see: <http://www.sustenergy.org>

- Further information on the new EU targets are available at [http://ec.europa.eu/commission\\_barroso/president/focus/energy-package-2008/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/president/focus/energy-package-2008/index_en.htm)

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