Surrey Energy Partnership Steering Group Meeting 21 March 2023

# Present

Cat Reeby (chairperson, Surrey Climate Commission), Avi Baidya (SSE Energy), Cath Cole (University of Surrey), Jacquetta Fewster (Surrey Climate Commission - notes), Jenny Ritchie (University of Surrey), Melania Tarquino (Surrey County Council), Nik Thomopoulos (University of Surrey), Sean Rendall (Thameswey Ltd), Richard Essex (Surrey Climate Commission).

# Chairperson’s Report

Review of the last year:

* SEP membership has grown by 40%, from 101 to 146 members, largely because of SEP events.
* The Leaky Pipeline Project saw a partnership between the University of Surrey, SEP, SCC, and ThamesWey to investigate why residents drop-out of home energy schemes (results due soon), showing SEP’s skills at forging partnerships.
* The Sustainable Transport (virtual) Forum in Sept 2022 was successful and well attended.
* The University of Surrey agreed to provide more resource to SEP, enabling the secretariat to be provided by Surrey Climate Commission.
* Regular newsletters have been published during the year, and have moved to Mailchimp in 2023.
* See Chair’s report for more detail.

Looking to the future:

Cat would like to see SEP gear up and have a greater role in accelerating the transition to clean, fair and sustainable energy in Surrey. The feeling was that members from funded organisations with a direct interest in energy had been more proactive in SEP to date. We need to understand our members’ interests and engage them in relevant projects and activities. **Action: create an engagement strategy.**

# Elections

Cat Reeby was nominated by Avi Baidya and seconded by Richard and elected as Chairperson.

Sean Rendall and Avi Baidya were nominated by Richard Essex and Cat Reeby and elected as Co Deputy Chairpersons.

# Future Priorities and Projects

* There are similar priorities and close links between the Surrey Energy Partnership and Surrey Climate Commission. It was agreed that SEP’s sustainable transport work should be transferred to the Surrey Climate Commission. **Action: Cat and Richard to liaise with Chris Hyde and Nik Thomopoulos.** Similarly, Surrey Climate Commission’s housing net zero activity will come to SEP.
* It was agreed that SEP should focus on 1 – 2 priority areas in order to achieve greatest impact. These areas are: domestic energy (i.e. energy use in homes), and renewable energy.
1. Encouraging greater take-up of energy efficiency / net zero measures in Surrey homes.
* Build the supply chain for net zero measures, and link to SCC and partners to develop the business & economic opportunities. **Action: meet with Nick Royle** from Economic & Growth Team from Surrey University.
* Sean commented that barriers for change in the domestic energy sector include changing criteria for grants, relatively high proportion of better housing stock in Surrey which reduces the availability of central government grant-funding, and skills shortage. **Action: lobby government about the need for long term and effective funding for retrofit, using data and case studies from the Leaky Pipe project and local examples**, potentially through the Surrey Climate Commission’s umbrella organization, PCAN.
* It was thought the able-to-pay market should be targeted by SEP. In Surrey, this market is significant, and significant carbon savings could be achieved for around £2k - £10k per household of improvements.
* A barrier identified was there were few links from trusted home energy audits to local supply chain (for installation). Melania recommended SEP make contact with SCC contact Andy Gaisford, who is leading on the SCC on stop shop concept. **Action: make contact with Andy.** Once the Leaky Pipeline results are known, a brainstorm could be organized to develop ideas for action. **Action: follow up with Leaky Pipeline colleagues.** Consideration will be given to apply for a Lottery grant (energy is the new theme of the Climate Action Fund) through a partnership between SEP and others e.g. SCC and Surrey Climate Commission.
1. Supporting renewables and its infrastructure in Surrey

Another core area of interest is to accelerate the take up and installation of renewable energy technology in Surrey. There have been a lot of good small-scale activities but this needs to gear up. This is a core interest for both SSE Energy and SCC (Melania). **Action: convene a project group on renewables.** Sean, Avi and Melania volunteered. Melania will share her recent presentation on the feasibility of renewables in Surrey.

# Update from SEP members

* Avi Baidya reported that SSE is partnering with the University of Surrey on a 12MW solar farm on UoS land. It is a sustainable solution to the University’s energy needs but it is in a potentially contentious area, being adjacent to AONB. PR support would be welcomed from SEP and partners.
* Melania reported that SCC is also working on establishing a number of solar farms in Surrey and has five sites going through feasibility currently, max 5MW. The big challenges are National Grid restrictions in east Surrey, and controversy about local solar farms. Local area energy planning, neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood, is being started with district councils. Additionally, SCC is working with Community Energy South to support nine community energy initiatives; next stage is to scale up to support the creation of many more community initiatives. SEP & the Commission may be able to assist SCC with the community engagement side of the Local Area and Energy Planning.
* Nik reported that the University of Surrey is looking for letters of support for funding bids, including for a European-funding retrofit project around remote-working; is planning a summer event on transport; and is developing expertise around food including supply chains and reducing emissions.
* Richard reported on the Surrey Climate Commission’s work supporting climate change action through communities. The Commission has just been awarded SCC funding to run a ‘Community Grants for Sustainability’ grant scheme. Skills and capacity in the energy retrofit supply chain remains a problem. Melania and Sean agreed skills and capacity is a big challenge. Potentially an area for SEP to develop.

# Next Forum Meetings

The next SEP forum will be in May / June, with topics of Domestic retrofit for Net Zero and / or Renewables - TBC.

**Appendix 1**

**Breakdown of SEP membership**

During the meeting we spoke about the profile of SEP’s membership. Please see the attached breakdown.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Academia  | 30 |  |
| Cooperative -- energy | 1 |  |
| individual | 1 |  |
| Landowner | 1 |  |
| NHS | 5 |  |
| Police | 2 |  |
| Private sector -- unknown |  | 2 |
| Private sector -- Built environment |  | 1 |
| Private sector -- Built environment / engineering |  | 2 |
| Private sector -- defence |  | 3 |
| Private sector -- Energy |  | 13 |
| Private sector -- energy, built environment, management consultancy |  | 2 |
| Private sector -- management consultancy |  | 2 |
| Private sector -- sustainability consultancy |  | 2 |
| Private sector -- Transport |  | 2 |
| Private sector TOTAL | 29 |  |
| Public sector | 36 |  |
| Third sector | 25 |  |
| unknown | 11 |  |