

LNP Wood Fuel Brainstorm

3rd July 2014

Forestry Commission, Haldon Forest

PURPOSE

Identify initial ideas, thoughts, activities that could be taken forward to promote wood fuel across Devon.
Acknowledged that a wider constituency than those in attendance needs to be brought into the discussion.

Attendees:

Corinna Woodall (Chair)	Tamar Valley AONB
Rob Walton	Devon Hedge Group
Lisa Schneidau	Devon Wildlife Trust/ND Nature Improvement Area
Mark Prior	Forestry Commission
Jane Hart	Silvanus Trust
Elaine Hayes	North Devon AONB
Linda Bennett	Blackdown Hills AONB
Tim Crook	RegenSW
Melanie Sealey	Devon County Council
Andrew Shadrake	Green Enterprise/Plymouth Energy Community
Kevin Lindegaard	Crops4Energy
Stephen Green	South Devon College
Ross Dickinson	Woodfuel Supplier
Richard Hayman	Devon County Council
Doug Eltham	Devon County Council
Lucinda Fletcher-Neal	Trees and Land CIC

BASELINE

South Devon College - SW Energy Centre

- Undertaken a review of the effectiveness of DCC's and FC's biomass support 2012 – 2014
 - Most projects have potential to be national examples
 - Good working relationships between partners and the LNP
 - Devon has good potential for wood fuel demand due to off-gas grid properties (1TWh_{TH})
 - Local wood resources need to be used wisely – mustn't use valuable timber for wood fuel. Conifers are used for chip, whilst broadleaves are used for logs.
 - Some demand will be met from national and international markets.
 - Potential for biomass in district heating schemes (Exeter, Cranbrook).

District Heating

- Existing schemes at [High Bickington](#) and [Cranbrook](#)
- Schemes being considered include South Molton and Exeter.

County Council

- Schools are able to take local decisions to install biomass boilers.
- Local authority is valuable – trusted, recognised brand in the community.
- Community energy groups are becoming well established and locally recognised across the county.

Forestry Commission

- Can identify woodland owners in Devon
- Has capital available for Woodland Plans
- LEADER funding
 - FC producing guidance
 - Farming & Forestry Productivity Scheme (£7m nationally, could be £21m)

GAPS/ISSUES

Knowledge

- Landowners are not familiar with wood fuel propagation, harvesting, processing etc. Training is required.
- Advice needed for consumers about suppliers and installers.
- How do we reach the unengaged?
- There has been significant delay in delivering the Renewable Heat Incentive. Just 2,500 domestic applications nationally so far.
- High quality boilers need high quality fuel. How do we remove the myth about fuel quality?

Funding

- Where will match funding come from? Project revenue? Community cooperative finance?
- It costs £1/m to flail a hedge, and there is an opportunity to reduce this cost through positive management.
 - Business start-up needs £12k/employee
 - LEADER can be used for this purpose, but it has a low intervention rate – 40/50%.
 - Issue – 1st year of business plan has no revenue because the first year's logs are still drying.

OBJECTIVES OF FUTURE PROJECT

- Promotion of wood fuel in Devon embracing all forms of biomass: typical woodfuel from woodland management, hedgerow wood and woody energy crops (SRC, SRF and miscanthus)
- Baseline research
- Removing barriers
- Enhancing supply and demand
- Local economic benefit
- Coordination and awareness throughout the chain from forester/farmer to post-boiler installation support

IDEAS

Fuel

- Develop a local authority backed scheme to certify 'Devon Fuel', working with the existing '[Woodsure](#)' quality certification scheme.
- Understand the economics of producing woodfuel from different types of unmanaged woodland (i.e various grades of topography, access and remoteness) to see the real costs of doing this.

Suppliers

- Farmers' confidence
 - Improve knowledge
 - Get farmers working together in small groups to show it works
 - Can provide income to the farm
 - Communication needs to be through relevant channels –Mole Valley; Farmers' cooperatives; NFU.
- Encouragement to young people to enter the industry
 - Agricultural college syllabuses
- Develop a trade association for biomass heating industry – the government-backed Microgeneration Certification Scheme already exists <http://www.microgenerationcertification.org/>
- Community ESCo can be used to reduce risk to consumer
 - ESCo takes on the risk of supply and ensuring quality.

Consumer Advice/Confidence/Training

- Map advice already available
- 'Trip Advisor' style review website of boilers, installers, fuel suppliers etc.
- Independent provision of advice – LNP as 'one stop shop?'
 - Training packages for community groups to act locally
 - Link to Trading Standards' 'Buy with Confidence' scheme
 - 'Renewable Heat at Work' is an existing RegenSW brand

- Feasibility studies for RE technology
- Cranbrook – people are buying the houses – use as a case study

Machinery rings and locations

- Local resources for harvesting and processing are required. The [Rokwood](#) project is working on this.
- Smaller installations will result in equipment lying dormant. Centralised facilities, with the facility to be loaned out to communities, would be a better idea.
- Need to understand how we can work with existing processing facilities – e.g. Clinton Devon Estates
- [Crops4Energy](#) project is providing infrastructure for wood fuel processing in Somerset and Torbay.

Installers

- Can we explore opportunities for low specification boilers?
- Service of installers needs to improve – skills for maintenance after installation

Strategic Planning

- Planning guidance on biomass district heating for planning officers and developers

Monitoring

- Develop LNP targets for wood fuel
 - No. of farmers engaged
 - MW installed
 - Habitats in positive management

FUNDING

Strategy – Local Enterprise Partnership’s Structural and Investment Fund’s Strategy

Small scale capital – LEADER

Skills and Training – European Social Fund/Heritage Lottery Fund

Delivery – Interreg

- Communities can team up with farmers to access [HLS](#) funding for hedgerow coppicing
- Community share issues can be used to raise match funding

NEXT STEP

- Corinna, supported by DCC, to determine how these ideas can begin to be translated into viable projects.
- Determine how to engage the wider wood fuel constituency.

If anybody would like to make suggestions on either of these points contact:

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