

Subject:	Sussex Energy Update		
Date of Meeting:	16 October 2024		
Report of:	Chair, Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Natasha Bridge	Tel: 07808 572262
	Email:	Natasha.Bridge@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 On 16th July 2024 the Greater Brighton Economic Board (“the Board”) supported the launch of the Sussex Energy mission.
- 1.2 This report gives a Sussex Energy update, 3 months on from the launch of the mission.

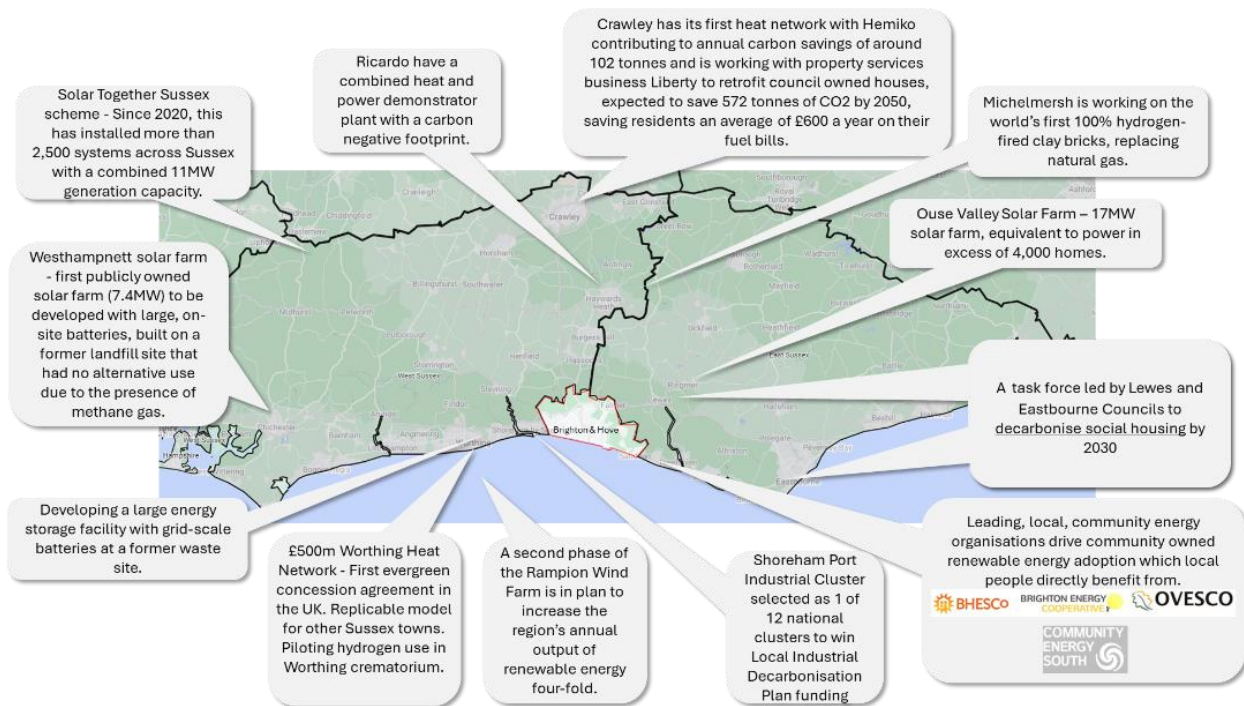
2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Board notes the progress on Sussex Energy since the launch.
- 2.2 That the Board supports the next steps needed to take Sussex Energy forward: Formalising a network of collaborators and working with them to prepare a bid for funding to build capacity.
- 2.3 That the Board agrees to receive a further update on Sussex Energy at the March 2025 Board meeting.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Sussex Energy aims to achieve net zero energy status by 2040. This ambitious goal seeks to ensure that our community's energy use equals the amount of zero-carbon energy generated locally, thereby enhancing energy security, driving down energy bills and addressing urgent climate concerns, at the same time as driving economic growth.
- 3.2 The current energy demand for Sussex is 14 times more than the current supply from renewable sources, with a gap of ~25 TWh/yr. Assuming Rampion 2 goes ahead and that new, more energy efficient technologies are adopted, this gap decreases to ~5 TWh/yr. To give an idea of the scale of this metric, it equates to ~770 large turbines. Local community energy organisations estimate to fulfil ~1% of this gap with their pipeline.

3.3 Sussex Energy is a current priority of the Board. The Board is using its convening powers and influence to drive transformational change through this mission across the region. Sussex has a strong record of energy work, some of it is highlighted in the visual below:



3.4 The launch event was held on 16th July 2024 at Crawley College. This was a success with over 60 attendees from over 35 organisations. There was positive press coverage of the event (see this [news article](#)) and 3.6k views of the agenda on an X post.

3.5 In early August, a meeting was held to discuss funding and capacity for Sussex Energy with the conversation progressing in September. Some of the key messages to come from the discussion:

- i. The importance of identifying and securing **diverse funding sources** i.e. public sector, private investment, community ownership, explore monetising energy solutions.
- ii. **Procurement** can be used to shape the market and develop supply chains by aggregating demand for bulk procurement. Sussex Energy should explore leveraging existing procurement frameworks.
- iii. The Board is hosting and incubating the Sussex Energy collaboration. **Core capacity** requirements:
 - a. Structure:
 - i. Network of collaborators: Partners playing active role to contribute to the Sussex Energy mission meet regularly to share challenges and shape direction.
 - ii. Core team (need funding to establish this): Kick start the work by accelerating a bid pipeline and provide expertise to fuel projects. E.g. data analysis, project assembly, proposition development, bid writing, building relationships, reviewing challenges to current projects to try and ease them, collate information about existing energy work and engage with local

leadership / MPs to socialise this with government / investors, spatial mapping (including where / when energy demand is) to identify where potential solutions would be beneficial, reviewing local area energy plans, etc.

- iii. Working groups: Groups of experts focused on different themes (energy production, energy reduction, skills and jobs) to provide expertise to steer Sussex Energy. Members of the network of collaborators and core team would link into each of the working groups.

3.6 Awareness and relationships are being built to support Sussex Energy. For example:

- i. **Department for Energy Security and Net Zero:** Initial engagement highlighting the region's track record in energy innovation and opportunities for growth.
- ii. **West Sussex County Council:** Initial conversations being held with intent to identify areas of commonalities, areas of focus and to explore the business case for partnering.
- iii. **NHS Sussex:** The Sussex Energy mission dovetails with the 'Net Zero' National Health Service targets and they are keen to explore collaborative solutions to advance their goals. They are also interested in becoming a Board member which would strengthen this working relationship.
- iv. **Rampion:** Held initial discussions with key members of the Rampion team. Depending on time commitments they will be able to support as Subject Matter Experts (e.g. engineering expertise, working with system operators).
- v. **Community Energy Organisations:** In addition to the umbrella community Energy organisation (Community Energy South) being involved in meetings, establishing working relationships with local, community energy organisations.
- vi. **Local Authorities:** Establishing contacts with key teams in local authorities to lay the foundation for successful future working.
- vii. **External Organisations** with useful resources / support / channels E.g. UKPN Net Zero Team, UK100.

3.7 Next steps:

- i. October – November 2024: Formalise a regular meeting of Sussex Energy network of collaborators.
- ii. October – November 2024: Develop bid with key collaborators for funding to build capacity to fuel a pipeline of projects with funding / expertise.
 - a. A government funded Investment Readiness Fund is in development (not yet launched) with grants for development/design work, but not for Capital projects. This is being seen as a potential fund to target to pay for the additional capacity. After the budget announcement there is an expectation that more funding would become available to bid for which would hopefully provide other options.
 - b. The Sussex Energy network of collaborators would help shape this bid.
 - c. Sussex Energy would be targeting £250k to fund:
 - 1. Technical expertise: Familiar with designing/implementing energy solutions.

2. Economic expertise: Experienced at making projects economically attractive (e.g. with commercial models, awareness of funding, etc) to build the right kind of growth.
3. Community energy organisation expertise: Someone from a community energy organisation who is familiar with their work, the challenges, contacts etc.
- d. The £50k from GBEB agreed in July 2024 would be included in the bid to strengthen it.
- e. The extra capacity would be doing the following sorts of tasks:
 1. Bid writing (to provide funding for Sussex Energy projects).
 2. Data analysis
 3. Engage key stakeholders to tackle common challenges to accelerate project implementation (e.g. UKPN, planning, etc.).
 4. Develop a project assessment framework (to assess the various existing projects/opportunities to identify which would be most beneficial for Sussex Energy to support).
 5. Project assembly
 6. Project delivery
- iii. When there is visibility of the timeline of funding opportunities, a Sussex Energy roadmap can be developed.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The Board could provide funding directly for projects, but the impact would be far less than incubating collaborative working to attract funding into the region for energy solutions, culminating in the implementation of scaled solutions which could make a large impact to the UK net zero goals. The new Government has highlighted decarbonisation of energy as a priority with aims to transition to a zero-carbon electricity system by 2030, create 650,000 new jobs by 2030 through investment in clean energy and infrastructure and install thousands of clean power projects which local people directly benefit from. This direction confirms the right approach is an ambitious goal.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Community engagement is an important principle to Sussex Energy. The approach will vary depending on the proposed energy solution, from consulting the community, offering community ownership options to enabling communities to implement their own solutions. Community engagement options will be different for each working group / project but will be considered and prioritised.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Board is asked to agree the recommendations 2.1-2.3, which will mean the work to operationalise Sussex Energy will continue.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications resulting from this report. From the July 2024 Sussex Energy report, a total of £100,000 was agreed to be set aside from the Greater Brighton Economic Board Operational Budget to support the working groups in delivering the net zero energy status by 2040. £50,000 of initial funding would be met from the 2024/25 Operational Budget. The current ambition is to include this in a funding bid to strengthen it. A further £50,000 is committed in 2025/26.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Haley Woollard, Head of Finance, Planning & Reporting
Date: 04/10/24*

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

*Lawyer Consulted: Siobhan Fry, Head of Legal, Commercial
Date: 08/10/24*

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 Sussex Energy is aiming ensure that the benefits of the transition to net zero energy will be shared across the City Region, whilst addressing fuel poverty.

Sustainability Implications

- 7.4 The driving force behind Sussex Energy is to reduce carbon emissions and accelerate the journey to net zero, which will help protect the environment, enhance natural capital, limit the effects of climate change, and build resilience in key infrastructure and the supply of energy. This is the foundation of all work under the Sussex Energy umbrella.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

