

**BEST
PRACTICE**



with the support of



Plymouth's multi-faceted Energy Community

Plymouth, United Kingdom - 264 200 inhabitants

Community energy – Solar energy – Fuel poverty

As part of a 2012 political commitment to a “Greener Plymouth”, the city supported the launch of two sister cooperatives aiming at increasing the share of community-owned renewable energy and tackling fuel poverty in the city.

Project in a Nutshell

The surplus solar revenues generated by the cooperative specialising in the funding of renewable energy installations (Plymouth Energy Community - Renewables) are used by its “mother cooperative” (Plymouth Energy Community) to fund energy savings, advice and supplier switching measures targeting vulnerable households, in a city where close to 15% of the population lives in fuel poverty.

Impact & Next steps

Solar panels have already been installed in over 30 schools and community buildings as a result, giving these institutions access to cheaper electricity without having to bear the cost of the installation, supported by the cooperative. This also translated into educational opportunities, by using digital displays showing children the amount of energy generated in their buildings and teaching them about the associated environmental benefits. In addition, a former landfill site was put back into economic use for the construction of the city's largest solar array, generating enough energy to meet the yearly demand of some 1 000 households.

Replicability: Challenges & Success Factors

Core to the project's success was the crucial investment of the Plymouth City Council from beginning to end. Indeed, the local authorities not only provided the cooperatives with access to public land, municipal buildings and crucial staff expertise, it also financially supported projects through over 1 million provided in loans.

With regards to future challenges ahead, the city will have to deal with a national policy framework reducing the financial support for renewable energy installations. In light of this, the cooperatives are now investigating options to work with new industrial partners and looking into storage and biomass opportunities.

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