

# Worcestershire Energy Strategy: stakeholder engagement

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## Lead Organisation:

Sustainability West Midlands

Project Manager: Anna Bright (Chief Executive)

## Customers:



## Partners:



## Project Duration:

April 2018 – December 2018

## The Project

The Department for Business, Energy and Industry Strategy (BEIS) has provided all 38 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) in England with funding to develop an energy strategy for their area. The aim of this is to help activities related to low carbon energy be pushed higher up the agenda whilst supporting LEP aims around economic growth. Worcestershire LEP commissioned one of our members, [Encraft](#), to write the strategy for the area and SWM worked in partnership with them to run [three stakeholder workshops](#). These provided the opportunity for local experts to contribute to the strategy and to set their vision in terms of what the LEP needs to do to ensure that actions outlined in the strategy can turn into reality in the form of projects on the ground.

SWM also led on the conduction of six interviews that took place after the workshops to engage in-depth with individuals who could not attend the workshops. This involved asking a series of questions to drill deep into the expertise of key local stakeholders. Along with contributing our thoughts on the draft strategy, we also circulated a consultation to key stakeholders so that they could feed in their comments before the final version was developed in early 2019.

## Aims of the workshops

- Learn more about the Worcestershire LEP energy strategy, including its context, vision and progress.
- Contribute to the development of the energy strategy, including an opportunity to feed in local knowledge and project activity.

- Network with colleagues and ask questions about the strategy when required.

## Challenges and solutions

One of the main challenges we had was ensuring that a good spread and a cross-sector of individuals were invited to the workshops. They had to have knowledge of low carbon energy but also work in the LEP area so that they could help to inform the practitioner's viewpoint reflecting how energy can be a game changer in the area. How can investing in energy projects strengthen the economy, tackle fuel poverty, reduce air pollution and carbon emissions and establish energy security all at the same time?

The energy strategy steering group, consisting of us, SWM members Encraft and [Worcestershire County Council](#) along with Place Partnership, Act on Energy, Malvern Hills Council and, of course, the LEP provided an initial list of stakeholders they wanted to engage with which SWM then helped to expand upon.



As we have long-standing relationships with key organisations in the Worcestershire area, we were able to add considerable value to this process, but it was still very important and a challenge to ensure we got the balance between all sectors right.

We also wanted to give a strong voice to the SME community, both those who operate in the energy sector and large energy users. Whilst SWM does not have such a close relationships with these types of organisations, we have a very strong relationship with the council and Worcestershire Business Central. Together they have been supporting SMEs with energy issues (and other aspects of sustainability) for many years and have also been responsible for running two recent European funded low carbon programmes; the [Business Energy Efficiency Programme](#) (BEEP) and the [Low Carbon Opportunities Programme](#) (LoCOP). They were, therefore, able to use their huge repository of SME contacts involved in these activities to advertise the workshops to.

The only other challenge was trying to ensure that the incredible range and breadth of ideas and perspectives that came from workshop delegates were adequately captured in a tight timeframe – something which tested our powers of facilitation!

## The Outcome

As a result of appointing SWM in this role, we were able to bring together a combination of our vast workshop development, facilitation and thematic experience together with our local knowledge to run three very successful workshops that:

- Highlighted the area's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats around low carbon energy.

- Generated scores of ideas reflecting practitioner viewpoints on how the LEP should embrace the energy agenda once the strategy is completed.
- Helped the LEP to focus its future energy activity around the priorities of energy efficiency, fuel poverty, electric transport, energy supply and demand, renewables and other areas.
- Provided the LEP with a repository of local organisations that are both experts on the energy agenda and passionate about a low carbon energy future.
- Built on, and shared knowledge of, existing leading practice.

We were also able to offer brokerage between the stakeholders and Encraft, the council and the LEP, by circulating the consultation on the draft strategy and conducting the interviews, using our vast experience in both of these approaches. This helped the clients focus on the technical aspects of the work leaving all the stakeholder engagement aspects in our trusted hands.

## In the Future

We are keen to see the ambitions and ideas that were discussed at the workshops translated into reality. The workshops proved that there is an army of individuals and organisations located in the LEP area that are experts on the low carbon energy agenda and who are keen to get involved in future projects. The LEP needs to exploit these to help take forward this agenda and build on the good work already being done. SWM would welcome the opportunity to stay involved in the discussions and support the agenda going forward.



"The Murb," an urban wind turbine developed in Worcestershire by Murcott Energy, one of the interviewed stakeholders  
© <http://www.business-central.co.uk/low-carbon-opportunities-case-study/>

## The Extra's

### Accolades

- 98% of attendees thought the events were organised to a good or excellent standard
- 97% considered the aims were met to a good or excellent standard

*"So that this strategy is fit for purpose, reflecting local needs and can enable economic growth, we needed to ensure that we engaged the views of as wide a range of stakeholders and experts in the low carbon energy sector across the county as possible. We were pleased to work with SWM who enabled this engagement to happen in an open and structured way with a wide range of relevant stakeholders. Moreover, given their vast experience and excellent track record, we could trust them to ensure that all feedback was captured and fed into the development of the strategy" – Luke Willetts, Director of Operations, Worcestershire LEP.*

### Contact Details

For further information on the project or to work with us in one of a variety of ways, please contact the SWM team on 0121 237 5890 or [enquiries@swm.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@swm.org.uk).