CORNWALL & ISLES OF SCILLY

LOCAL AREA ENERGY PLAN

Summary Report





Community Conversations



Planned and delivered by

Cornwall Climate Action Coalition

With support from

Sustainable Penzance, West Cornwall Friends of the Earth, Plan-It Earth Eco Project, Transition Penwith, XR West Cornwall, Fal Energy Partnership, Climate Action St Austell, Saltash Environmental Action, South Hill Action for Renewable Energy and Climate Action Partnership Redruth.

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Abbreviations

CCAC – Cornwall Climate Action Coalition

Commission – Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Climate Commission

Conversations – Community Conversations

LAEP – Local Area Energy Plan

1. Acknowledgements

This report was compiled from recordings taken at each of the Community Conversations, hosted by Cornwall Climate Action Coalition and host communities.

Thanks to all of the attendees that came along to a Community Conversation in their area. Sharing your personal experience, knowledge and views has been invaluable to forming this report and continuing to shape Cornwall's Local Area Energy Plan.

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This report was written by Isabella Hawkes.

2. Context

The sections below introduce Cornwall's Local Area Energy Plan, and the format of the Community Conversations that have been held across Cornwall.

2.1. Local Area Energy Plan

Cornwall's Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP) is a continuously evolving action plan to reduce Cornwall's fossil fuels across all sectors. It aims to make use of Cornwall's local resources, whilst acknowledging the limitations of our rural, coastal county. The LAEP requires the input of multiple stakeholders: communities, businesses, organisations, parish, town and county councils.

The following report has tried to reduce the amount of jargon used[1], below are some definitions relating to phrases that may appear:

Low Carbon: Low carbon refers to the reduction of fossil fuel usage. "Low carbon future" refers to the ambition for a future that uses as little fossil fuels as possible.

Energy Transition: Energy transition refers to the movement away from fossil fuel use, and towards a future that uses less energy, as well as alternative power such as renewable energy.

Retrofit: Retrofit is short-hand for home improvements that are taken to make a house more energy efficient. This might include improvements that make a house better at retaining heat, as well as cooling it, and replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy[2].

2.2. Community Conversations

Cornwall Climate Action Coalition's format for Community Conversations evolved from the People's Assemblies held at County Hall in 2021. People's Assemblies are opportunities for

[1] A frequent action of the Community Conversations was to reduce jargon and technical phrases.
[2] For example, switching from a gas boiler to a heat-pump, or exploring street-wide heating.

everyday people to come together to talk about issues that are important to them. They may begin by hearing a number of viewpoints from experts on a given topic, before responding to a question through collective deliberation. Cornwall Climate Action Coalition (CCAC) have hosted Community Conversations on topics including: Nature & Climate, Nature & Food and Climate Adaptation.

Cornwall Council and Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Climate Commission[3] commissioned CCAC to facilitate Community Conversations across Cornwall in order to review the proposed actions. Community Conversations[4] allowed CCAC to learn from local, lived experience about how the proposed actions might impact different livelihoods, as well as working with communities to consider what actions they could take forward themselves.

Conversations began in January 2026 and are [at the time of writing] ongoing.

It is worth noting that the first Conversations included frequent reference and consideration to the impacts of Storm Goretti on Cornwall, leaving many civilians without power and water. Conversations during Summer, on the other hand, occurred during a Summer of extreme heat, with temperatures consistently above average and Southern England experiencing its driest ever month since 1836[5]. During these months, Conversations were shaped by discussion of cooling and future climate impacts.

3. Objectives

Key outcomes from the Community Conversations were:

1. Learn from local, lived experience about how the proposed actions might impact different livelihoods.
2. Identify actions that communities could deliver themselves to reduce their fossil fuel use in their local area.
3. Assess sentiment for the proposed actions in Cornwall's Local Area Energy Plan.

The report reviews the key topics of discussion across all six Conversations, acknowledging place-based implications and considerations for different livelihoods. It was not possible to analyse all areas of discussion from the Conversations. However, all actions proposed at the events can be found in the Evidence Annex.

4. Method

Community Conversations are spaces for people to share and talk about topical issues. They are free events, open to all, hosted in accessible, community spaces. The Conversations focus on the topic of 'energy', looking at the six thematic areas of Cornwall's Local Area Energy Plan (LAEP).

4.1. Locations

CCAC collaborated with host communities across Cornwall, running Community Conversations in Penzance, Truro, Falmouth, St Austell, Saltash, and Redruth. Cornwall Climate Action Coalition led the design and facilitation of the events, whilst Host Communities were

[3] Hereafter "The Commission"
[4] Hereafter also referred to as "Conversations"
[5] July 2026 weather stats: A regional breakdown - Met Office

responsible for booking the venue, and promoting the event. This allowed CCAC to focus on the design and delivery of the event, and the host community to use their local knowledge to promote the event in their local area.

4.2. Format

On arrival, attendees have a chance to review the LAEP Summary Report, and the six themes of the LAEP. There are six tables in the room, each table representing a 'theme'. Once attendees have familiarised themselves with the themes, they are invited to sit at the table of the theme they would most like to discuss. If two or less people sit at a given theme, then a facilitator will seek to merge this theme with another, or the participants can choose a different table to sit on.

The session opens by introducing the format, the topic (Cornwall's Local Area Energy Plan and its six themes), and ground rules of the sessions. The LAEP Community Conversations operate on a two-question format, whereby the first question is introduced and then the thematic tables discuss the question. There is around 20-30 minutes to answer each question. The two questions are as follows:

1. How does [insert theme] relate to your life?
2. For [insert theme], what changes need to happen for you and your community to take action?

Each table has a facilitator to guide the conversation, ensuring each person has an equal opportunity to speak. There is one scribe who takes notes for the table, and one nominated person to feedback following discussion. When the break-out has concluded, each group summarises their discussion, so that all attendees can hear perspectives of all 6 themes of the LAEP. Summary sessions are recorded, for later analysis. The session concludes when both questions have been discussed and summarised by all tables (see figure i.).

Agenda	
Arrival & Refreshments	30 mins
Intro to LAEP & Community Conversations	20 mins
Q1 group discussion	25 mins
Q1 feedback	15 mins
Refreshment Break	10 mins
Q2 group discussion	30 mins
Q2 feedback	25 mins
Conclusion, plenary, thanks & feedback	15 mins
Total	**Approx. 3hrs**

Figure i. Example agenda for Community Conversations

The table below details which themes were discussed at each Conversation:

Theme	Penzance	Truro	Falmouth	St Austell	Saltash	Redruth
Infrastructure, Skills & Supply Chain	✓	merged	✓	merged	Open Forum	✓
Renewable Energy	x 2	✓	✓	✓		✓
Buildings, Heating & Cooling	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Industry, Waste & Agriculture	✓	✓		✓		✓
Public Sector Estate		merged	✓	merged		✓
Transport	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

Figure ii. Themes discussed per Community Conversation

Following the event, summary recordings are transcribed. Transcriptions and notes are collated and reviewed for key topics and actions. Actions are input into an excel spreadsheet, where they are attributed by responsibility and aligned with LAEP themes and actions, where possible. Attendees are emailed to thank them for attending, and later with an overview of the discussion points from the session. Attendees and host groups are notified of updates and progress to the project, and encouraged to communicate where their communities have taken forward actions themselves.

4.3. Approach

At each Conversation, attendees responded to the question "For [insert theme], what changes need to happen for you and your community to take action?". Actions from each event were amalgamated into a master list to avoid duplication (see: Evidence Annex). The actions were grouped by who could be responsible for delivering the actions, recognising that some actions may be deliverable by multiple actors. Responsibility categories were as follows:

- Community
- Local Authority
- National Government / Policy
- System Change
- Other

114 actions were proposed in total across the six Conversations. Discussion of these actions, their alignment with LAEP themes, actions, and responsibility for delivering is discussed in section 5.1 and 5.2.

5. Discussion

The following section observes where proposed actions aligned with existing LAEP actions; who the actions are attributable to; unique actions proposed at Conversations; core issues discussed at all Conversations; and place-specific observations.

5.1. LAEP Alignment

Of the 114 actions proposed across the six Conversations, 71 (62%) aligned with existing LAEP actions. Figure iii. demonstrates the number of actions proposed at Community Conversations, grouped by theme.

Themes	No. Actions Attributed
Infrastructure, Skills & Supply Chain	23
Renewable Energy	22
Buildings	18
Industry, waste & agricultural processes	16
Public Sector Estate	9
Transport	14
N/A	12

Figure iii. Proposed actions grouped by LAEP theme.

The greatest number of actions were grouped within the *Infrastructure, Skills & Supply Chain* theme. This was the theme that contained actions for public engagement, awareness raising and communications: an area that participants felt their communities could act on, but also that all other groups had responsibility to deliver (see: section 5.4.3).

Summary: 62% of actions proposed at Conversations aligned with existing actions in the LAEP. This suggests support for the LAEP by attendees of the Conversations.

5.2. Responsibility

The second objective of this research was to identify actions that communities could deliver in their local area. However, many of the actions proposed were beyond the scope of community delivery. Therefore, actions were grouped by 'responsibility'; identifying what actors could deliver a proposed action. Figure iv. demonstrates how many actions were assigned to each group.

Responsible Actor	No. Actions Attributed	Percentage
Community	23	20%
Local Authority	44	39%
National Government	15	13%
System Change	9	8%
Other	23	20%

Figure iv. Actions assigned responsibility and grouped by LAEP theme

The LAEP requires participation from all sectors, including businesses, organisations, communities, parish, town and county council, and other parties in order to deliver a low-carbon future for Cornwall. This is evidenced in distribution of proposed actions by Community Conversation attendees.

It should also be noted that although the LAEP requires multi-stakeholder engagement across Cornwall, the actions proposed in the LAEP Actions List[6] are primarily aimed at a central coordinator, rather than the multiple-stakeholders. Therefore, whilst the majority (62%) of proposed actions from Conversations align with the LAEP, they do not match exactly.

Summary: When assigning responsibility to the proposed actions, responsibility was split across all groups, with Local Authority taking the greatest responsibility at 39%.

[6] https://letstalk.cornwall.gov.uk/laep 'Cornwall Actions' PDF

5.3. Unique Actions

Of the 114 actions proposed, 12 (11%) actions do not align with the six LAEP themes, and 43 (38%) have no comparable action. The following discussion considers the overlapping themes of these proposed actions. All actions proposed at Community Conversations can be found in the Evidence Annex.

5.3.1. Energy Reduction

Two key areas of discussion, which were not addressed within the existing LAEP actions, was the need for **energy reduction** and **local resilience**.

Energy reduction was explored at a Community, Business and System level issue. At a community and individual level, attendees discussed reducing their domestic energy use in the face of continued high electricity, gas and oil prices[7]. Energy reduction was discussed both in terms of actions that attendees were actively taking (e.g. turning down heating, not driving), as well as where they would like to reduce their carbon footprint, but were limited by broader social factors (e.g. cost of electricity, cost of retrofit installations and public transport availability). At one Conversation this was summarised as actions of "restraint" and "constraint". Attendees felt that more information and knowledge-sharing was required for businesses in Cornwall to reduce their energy usage, and that, currently, this was not sufficiently enforced upon businesses. There was unanimous sentiment that further promotion for how people could reduce their energy use and the benefits of doing so should be more clearly communicated by Local Authorities and trusted messengers.

Summary: Attendees viewed energy reduction a priority for communities, businesses and at a 'system' level, but were constrained by available infrastructure.

5.3.2. Energy Resilience

Just as attendees to Conversations discussed the importance of communicating the climate emergency (see: 4.4.3 engagement) alongside LAEP actions, resilience too was seen as inseparable from the LAEP. One action proposed that energy sector experts should "provide trainings for communities to increase resilience to extreme weather", whilst other Conversation attendees expressed the responsibility of NESO and other actors to reinforce Cornwall's infrastructure, at pace. Attendees repeatedly called for clear and accessible information for dealing with extreme weather (heat, rain & storms specifically) and emergency preparedness plans, that could easily be shared within communities. In Penzance, the severe impact of Storm Goretti even resulted in calls to reinstall copper landlines for resilience.

Summary: Extreme weather and the climate emergency shaped many conversations, with attendees viewing changes to energy as inseparable from resilience measures.

5.3.3. Community Land Purchase

Community Land Purchase was discussed at four of the six Community Conversations. At these events, attendees discussed exploring the opportunity to purchase land as a community, in order to use it for community energy or food production (see: 4.4.4 Local Production). This was coupled with discussion of seeking ways for 'multi-use' of land where renewables and agriculture could both exist. Actions to explore opportunities for Community Energy also included proposals to for Cornwall Council and local communities to work together to develop

[7] which was making it costly to heat homes even if home-owners had switched to heat-pumps.

Community Energy. For example, using Council land or buildings, and ensuring communities were involved and/or benefitting.

Summary: Greater civic land ownership for renewable energy and food production was discussed at Conversations, including exploring how the council and communities could work together.

5.3.4. Political & Systems Change

Attendees proposed actions for political change that they felt was needed in order to respond the poly-crises of climate, energy and nature. There was a sentiment across Conversations that current political systems were insufficient: from local to national levels. At the local level, this was explored through actions to strengthen Cornwall's regulatory autonomy, with discussion about the decision-making and spending power of Cornwall as a Foundation Strategic Authority or a devolved Cornwall (see also: 4.5.4. St Austell).

Meanwhile, a perceived 'short-term' approach to governance was seen to restrict opportunities for large scale investment and action in climate action (including fossil fuel reduction), with actions emerging for "electoral reform" as well as to “address short-termism”, "fund the transition" and "clear communication and commitment" to a low-carbon future.

Conversations sometimes took a systems-perspective on the issues and topics of the LAEP. At all events, attendees commented on the overlap between themes, often speaking about more than one topic. As a result, actions were proposed that included "reform siloed working and budgeting" and "deliver an integrated systems approach". Attendees saw the need for delivery-focused actions that require a central coordinator, or multi-stakeholder action to enact the actions of the LAEP.

Summary: Attendees called for an integrated, systems approach that considered LAEP themes together, with a central coordinator. Some felt local and national political system change was required to enable LAEP delivery.

5.4. Key Issues

The following four issues were the most frequently discussed topics across all Conversations. These were: a retrofit hub; investment in public transport; engagement and accessible language and local food production.

5.4.1. Retrofit Hub, Trusted Traders & Green Skills

At every Conversation there was unanimous discussion, often across several themes[8], for clear, impartial information for people seeking to make energy-related home improvements. This resulted in two clear actions. These were for:

1. A Retrofit Hub with impartial, jargon-free information about renewable energy technologies; guidance by housing type; signposting and support for funding, with local case studies
2. A Trusted Retrofit Traders Directory – signposting local contractors and suppliers

[8] Buildings; Infrastructure, Skills & Supply Chain; Renewable Energy

Attendees felt that these should be delivered by a trusted, neutral organisation[9]. They shared challenges of finding clear, unbiased, information relevant to their housing type and with signposting to trusted local suppliers as well as funding routes.

Local, independent businesses were a priority for many but, it was acknowledged that in some instances, there might not be sufficient local businesses to offer these services. Conversations explored the need for supported 'green skills'[10] and provision of this both for young people, and those looking to retrain[11]. As with the Hub and the Directory, it was stressed that education and job opportunities needed to be well-promoted, easy to access and in a central, trusted location. Often Conversations highlighted the existing local skills and expertise (including knowledge of the local landscape, history and heritage) that can contribute and inform future energy decision-making[12].

Within the same discussions, attendees shared their own experiences of energy-related home improvements[13], whilst others attended to learn from these. Learning from others was seen as a valuable and trusted way for people to gain knowledge, and 'Green Open Homes' were proposed as an engagement tool to enable this. At the events, people could visit homes in Cornwall that have made energy-saving improvements, where residents could share their experiences.

Actions were proposed at all stages of intervention: from initial signposting to funding to make improvements affordable; ensuring planning policy supported low-carbon home renovations; and environmental building standards enforced for social housing, landlords and new builds. Therefore, it was seen as the responsibility of multiple actors to deliver LAEP actions, often focused at Local Authority level, but also the responsibility of developers, tradespeople, landlords, and national government.

Summary: There was unanimous support for a Retrofit Hub with impartial, jargon-free information about renewable energy and domestic energy installations, as well as a Directory of trusted, local, retrofit traders.

5.4.2. Public Transport

Discussion of transport had a unanimous outlook across all Conversations: invest in active travel infrastructure, making bus routes more dynamic, reliable, inexpensive and coordinated, and provide transport hubs that *actually* connect bus and train routes. 14 actions were proposed relating to transport. More than half (64%) of these actions were viewed as a Local Authority responsibility, and the majority were focused on increasing access to active travel rather than personal car use[14].

Attendees felt that current public service provisions were not fit for purpose and restrict citizens from choosing low-carbon transport options. Examples shared in the Conversations showed that the lack of diversity in bus routes, sizes and frequency, and poor cross-transport

[9] Perhaps Cornwall Council, the coordinator of the LAEP, or similar, trusted organisation.
[10] Vocations and skills relating to renewable energy, energy transition and low carbon innovation.
[11] "The Future is Green" funding provides training, re-skilling and upskilling opportunities in the green economy.
[12] For example, repowering water mills, knowledge of mine systems, previous use of the local landscape.
[13] E.g. wall and loft insulation, heat-pump installation and solar panels.
[14] Only 3 of the proposed actions were car-based. These were 'increase 20mph zones', 'increase EV charging' and 'make EV charging accessible for terraced houses'.

connections[15] severely limited public transport options for commuters, shift-workers, families, elderly and disabled citizens, as well as young people.

In some Conversations, there was sentiment that these issues were not new to Cornwall, where rural communities have experienced poor public transport provisions and become increasingly reliant on personal combustion car use.

In other Conversations, groups took the opportunity to envision how fossil-fuel free transport would look in Cornwall. One vision saw Cornwall as a "cycling heaven" promoting the county as a cycling destination (providing current cycle routes were completed and more invested in). Another reimagined transport use in Cornwall, focusing on rail to transport goods, small electric courier vans and providing community buses and taxis. One action proposed demonstrated the need to encourage all types of active travel: "invest in all public rights of way" which would allow better connections between rural villages and hamlets, whilst also diversifying modes of transport.

Shared experience, including the loss of Mousehole Harbour Bus Stop[16], demonstrates the importance of prioritising public transport. Investing in public transport for communities across Cornwall is a first step to reducing reliance on combustion cars, providing a low-carbon transport alternative, whilst also offering independence and freedom to non-car users.

Attendees at Conversations expressed their preference for using public transport in place of personal vehicles, but that it lacked the infrastructure to make using it realistic. As a rural county, with dispersed communities, reliable public transport links are essential.

Summary: Invest in active travel infrastructure, making bus routes more dynamic, reliable, inexpensive and coordinated with other public transport.

5.4.3. Engagement & Accessible Language

25 of the 114 actions proposed were centred around communication and engagement[17] and featured across five of the six LAEP themes. The actions were seen as the responsibility of all, with actions attributed to Community (11), Local Authority (6), National Government (6), System Change (1) and Other Actors (1).

Communication was seen to primarily be a responsibility at National and Local levels. Actions focused on information sharing (e.g. "improve The Hive advertising" and "National Information Ad Campaign"), as well as promoting or raising awareness of particular issues. This included: direction for how individuals can take steps to reduce fossil fuel reliance; the impacts of the climate emergency on local communities; and communicating local and personal benefits of taking low-carbon actions. In particular, attendees expressed that to increase participation in the delivery of Cornwall's LAEP, discussion needed to be made meaningful to local communities, including communicating the impacts of the climate emergency for Cornwall.

Feedback throughout the Conversations was that the titles of the themes, and the LAEP actions, were not in accessible language. In particular, "decarbonisation" was referenced as a word that people did not connect with. The theme "Infrastructure, Skills & Supply Chain" – a topic that covers energy-related training and education, local jobs, public engagement and

[15] e.g. switching from bus to train

[16] Mousehole Harbour Bus Stop was relocated by bus operator Go Cornwall Bus following 90 years of use. The new location is a walk up a steep hill without a footpath, leaving residents feeling isolated, in danger and some physically unable to reach the new bus stop.

[17] 9 relating to communication, 16 to engagement

distribution of local supplies – was not immediately engaged with, until it had been broken down into more accessible phrasing.

Actions attributed to 'Local Authority' demonstrated how attendees perceived leadership as a connector and communicator of information. Proposed actions included sharing information about the climate emergency; responding to extreme weather; and encouraging the uptake of LAEP actions[18].

Attendees often considered what engagement was required with businesses in Cornwall, proposing actions such as information and knowledge sharing between businesses to reduce their fossil-fuel use. At one event, this was proposed as a 'showcase' where businesses could learn from one-another. Suggestions also included promoting circular business models and the LAEP. This was seen as a responsibility for leadership to deliver, as well as for businesses and organisations to participate in. Attendees proposed actions that they could take within their communities to engage with local businesses: encouraging energy reduction and sustainability, demonstrating their support, providing that businesses and those in leadership also took action.

At a Community level, attendees proposed joining or participating in local groups (including Community Energy); hosting local engagement and awareness-raising events; engaging with MPs and promoting LAEP actions such as active travel within the local community. There was sentiment that engagement needed to be "bottom-up not top-down", with support for People's Assemblies, Community Conversations, and other democratic, deliberative methods.

Summary: Local and national leadership should deliver engagement and information-sharing about fossil fuel reduction, connecting it to the climate emergency and local issues. Language should be clear and jargon-free.

5.4.4. Local Production

At all Conversations, there was a strong sentiment towards supporting local, independent businesses and producers, as well as considering community land ownership (for both food growing and community-owned renewable energy). This was centred around a need to enhance Cornwall's resilience and self-reliance, enhancing the economy and ultimately reducing energy use by "shortening the supply chain". For example, industrial agricultural processes were viewed as carbon-intensive and nature-destructive. Further, Cornwall's reliance on imported produce was perceived as having damaging 'food miles'[19] and using excessive plastic packaging which, itself, was seen as carbon intensive through its creation, use, and destruction. One Conversation even proposed investment in food packing in Cornwall, in order to reduce transport energy and provide employment.

At a community level, attendees felt they could take action by choosing to shop locally, supporting independent businesses, participating in Community growing projects as well as buying less and/or repairing more. Discussion was focused on making these actions more affordable or convenient, in order to compete with supermarkets. However, barriers were acknowledged that restricted individuals choices. These included being unable to afford to shop local, organic and independent; being unable to access local or independent businesses due to transport restrictions; and lack of existing local suppliers. Additionally, without these

[18] These actions could also be delivered by a central coordinator.
[19] The carbon associated with transporting goods by air, sea, rail and road.

local businesses, and due to the aforementioned barriers, attendees expressed that it is difficult to 'signal' community support for local, independent produce.

Each Conversation took a whole-system approach to localising food production, where it was seen as an approach to reduce energy (through transport, processes and packaging), whilst also providing employment opportunities, supporting local businesses, and improving the natural environment.

Summary: A whole-system approach to localising food production that reduces energy from transport, processes and packaging, and supports employment, local businesses and the natural environment.

5.5. Place-based observations

Community Conversations took place at six locations across Cornwall. Each with their own geographical, social and energy related differences. Discussion below highlights context and topics raised that were specific to a particular location.

5.5.1. Penzance

Penzance Community Conversation was hosted in early February, following one of the wettest winters on record and in the wake of Storm Goretti, which had left many people in Penwith without power. This provided context whilst discussing the LAEP, as attendees joined the dots between the changing climate and lifestyle changes expected as part of reducing fossil fuel reliance. One attendee shared that a whole house retrofit – from oil to a wholly-electric home – left them without power and water during Storm Goretti, making them more vulnerable to extreme weather than before the installation.

5.5.2. Truro

At Truro, discussion covered a range of topics. There was a clear call to improve cycling infrastructure, making it safer and easier for people to choose to travel by bicycle. Attendees voiced the mismatch of environmental policies with opportunities to install renewables. Policy 'mismatch' was also voiced at Penzance where planning policy and renewable uptake was seen to work against one another. Encouraging further action from Schools and GPs to deliver their Carbon Action Toolkits signalled the need for all organisations to contribute to the actions of the LAEP. Meanwhile, there was criticism of Cornwall's Housing Decarbonisation Plan for failing to go far enough to address the specifics of Cornish Housing Stock.

5.5.3. Falmouth

Attendees at Falmouth took a community-centred approach to the themes of the LAEP, feeding back the value of working together across community, authority and businesses to bring about change. They stressed the importance of considering the themes (and costs) of the LAEP together and avoiding siloed delivery.

The session concluded with a call for a "Cornwall Bank" that would invest locally for a greener future for Cornwall. A similar sentiment was proposed at Truro in the form of "green municipal bonds", using ISA's to generate revenue to be invested in renewable technologies and opportunities.

5.5.4. St Austell

Transport was a key topic of conversation at St Austell (see: 4.4.2 public transport use). In particular, this was linked to Cornwall Council's statutory powers, with one group summarising

“franchise transport…without a mayor”. They signalled the importance for Cornwall Council to have independent statutory authority and funding to make decisions about low-carbon public transport, without entering into devolution deals that would tie them to Mayoral Strategic Authority governance.

An area raised by St Austell attendees was also the need for appropriate, enforced, building regulations for social and rented accommodation that focused on carbon-reducing home improvements alongside health and comfort.

5.5.5. Saltash

Saltash held an open forum format for discussing the themes of the LAEP, mainly discussing Industry, Waste & Agriculture and Buildings. Outcomes of discussion at Saltash included a desire for greater parish and town council action towards climate and sustainability actions, for example having a dedicated Climate Officer. They explored how energy reduction, climate response and nature protection need to be considered together, as well as how local and global issues impact the potential for local change (e.g. the 2026 Iran War, Cornwall Council’s decision to use Glyphosate[20]).

5.5.6. Redruth

At Redruth, discussion connected the dots between funding for home energy improvements, impartial advice and using local expertise (see: 4.4 Key Issues). In particular, it was acknowledged that in Redruth historic local knowledge, skills and infrastructure[21] could inform future energy planning. Conversation also covered the funding required to make energy efficient changes at home, and how to ensure these kept people warm in Winter and cool in Summer. The impact of Summer’s extreme heat extended beyond the home, with calls for solar canopies on schools and car parks.

Summary: Topics of discussion often centred around local issues, infrastructure and current events, demonstrating the need for engagement and delivery that is alert to the diverse needs of communities in Cornwall.

6. Other Topics

This report covers only the most frequently discussed and unique actions. However, there were many other areas of discussion. These included:

- Types of renewable energy generation available in Cornwall
- Affordable funding for domestic/individual energy generation
- Support for businesses to reduce their fossil fuel use
- Enforcing energy efficient and environmental building standards on landlords, new builds and social housing
- Opportunities for community retrofit, including bulk-purchase of solar, home insulation, and street-wide ground source heating (e.g. Kensa - Heat the Streets)
- Alignment of planning and environmental policy. In particular, where the two contravened or restricted the other. Examples included environmental protections

[20] In April 2026, proposals to re-introduce the use of the weed-killer Glyphosate sparked concern amongst residents of Cornwall, ultimately leading to Cornwall Council rescinding the proposal.
[21] Including water mills, steam power and mining knowledge

restricting renewable energy development, and rejected planning permission for domestic retrofit.
- Attendees called on Public Sector Estate to set an example and accelerate efforts to decarbonise, and publicise their changes.

The Evidence Annex contains all of the actions proposed across the Conversations, which provides some insight into the topic and scope of discussion.

7. Successes & Limitations

7.1. Successes

The design and delivery of the Community Conversations has created a replicable model, that can be delivered across the county, and applied to other topics. It has provided a communication route between communities and the council, with attendees commenting on the value of deliberative methods compared to traditional consultation. Time between each Conversation has provided space for feedback, learnings and reflection, creating an iterative process. At each event there was constructive feedback from attendees which was taken onboard and acted on. Dedicated facilitation training, with regular refreshers, developed the skills of the facilitators, improving confidence and delivery. These learnings have been invaluable and provide a strong foundation for further Community Conversations.

7.2. Limitations

Learnings can be taken from the planning and delivery process of the Community Conversations. In the planning phase, the amount of LAEP content, the broad scope of the project, and the ambition of the team made it difficult to choose where to place parameters of the Conversations. For example, the LAEP covered six different themes, with multiple discussion points within them, making it impossible for attendees to cover all the topics in one session. An option could have been to host a workshop per theme, but this would have limited the workshops to only one location.

The planning, delivery and coordination of these events was completely voluntary, including the support of the host communities. This provided a limitation to the amount of time and resource that could be allocated to the Community Conversations. Additionally, host communities had varying levels of capacity and readiness to support and promote in their local area.

Despite best intentions, there was limited attendance beyond environmental circles. Attendance at Community Conversations demonstrated the strong connections and communications amongst like-minded groups. In some instances, attendees had engaged in similar workshops prior to the Community Conversations and left feedback asking "what next?" in terms of action. CCAC improved their signalling of how action could continue, and the intended outcomes of the Conversations, however it demonstrated the importance of continuing the momentum, as well as the difficulty of beginning to implement change within a community.

8. Pledge

Cornwall Climate Action Coalition and the participants of the Community Conversations have contributed their time to the formation of the actions and report provided here, in order to

inform the delivery of Cornwall's Local Area Energy Plan. In return, contributors request that implicated parties provide **acknowledgement of reading this report** and **commit to prioritising and delivering the 'Key Issues' actions proposed** (see section 4.4 Key Issues). Implicated parties include:

Cornwall Council Climate & Energy Team
Cornwall Council Leadership Board
Cornwall LAEP Stakeholder Group
Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Climate Commission

Participants of Community Conversations across Cornwall repeatedly expressed their desire to reduce their carbon footprint, but felt limited in their actions due to inaction by local and national authorities, businesses and organisations.

Additionally, the actions produced from the LAEP appear to be directed at a Project Management Office or similar body that would oversee the delivery of the actions across multiple stakeholders. Without this organisation, it is unlikely the LAEP actions will be completed. Therefore, the report also requests that an **LAEP central coordinator is established to oversee the delivery of Cornwall's Local Area Energy Plan.**

9. Conclusion

Hosting Community Conversations provided an engagement opportunity that learnt from people's lived experiences, developing proposed actions by those that participated, informed by their own lives and experiences. In total, attendees proposed 114 actions, 22 of which could be delivered by, and for, their own communities. With 62% alignment between the actions proposed and the LAEP actions, it can be assumed that there is support for the LAEP actions, by those that attended.

The events also raised issues not currently covered in the design of the LAEP: encouraging energy reduction; considering energy resilience and climate resilience together; exploring the benefits of community land ownership and taking a wider view of LAEP delivery, that encourages the overlap of its themes. Frequent discussion of certain topics has demonstrated support, offering an opportunity to prioritise some LAEP actions. For example: a central retrofit hub; accelerate support for public transport infrastructure and accessible communication.

Attendees consistently connected changes to energy use (both switching to renewables, and reducing our energy use) with ensuring climate resilience and nature protection. There was sentiment that decisions about Cornwall's future should take on each of these considerations. The whole-system approach to localising food production demonstrates a desire to address each of these issues, in a way that benefits Cornwall's economy.

Next steps following the Community Conversations are:

- Honouring the pledge proposed in this report (Section 6)
- Communities taking action within their neighbourhoods
- Consideration for how, where, and if, there should be further Community Conversations
- Resourcing a central coordinator to implement the LAEP, working with local stakeholders

10. Section Summaries

Alignment: 62% of actions proposed at Conversations aligned with existing actions in the LAEP. This suggests support for the LAEP by attendees of the Conversations.

Responsibility: When assigning responsibility to the proposed actions, responsibility was split across all groups, with Local Authority taking the greatest responsibility at 39%.

Energy Reduction: Attendees viewed energy reduction a priority for communities, businesses and at a 'system' level, but were constrained by available infrastructure.

Energy Resilience: Extreme weather and the climate emergency shaped many conversations, with attendees viewing changes to energy as inseparable from resilience measures.

Community Land Ownership: Greater civic land ownership for renewable energy and food production was discussed at Conversations, including exploring how the council and communities could work together.

System Change: Attendees called for an integrated, systems approach that considered LAEP themes together, with a central coordinator. Some felt local and national political system change was required to enable LAEP delivery.

Retrofit Hub: There was unanimous support for a Retrofit Hub with impartial, jargon-free information about renewable energy and domestic energy installations, as well as a Directory of trusted, local, retrofit traders.

Active Travel: Invest in active travel infrastructure, making bus routes more dynamic, reliable, inexpensive and coordinated with other public transport.

Engagement & Communication: Local and national leadership should deliver engagement and information-sharing about fossil fuel reduction, connecting it to the climate emergency and local issues. Language should be clear and jargon-free.

Local Production: A whole-system approach to localising food production that reduces energy from transport, processes and packaging, and supports employment, local businesses and the natural environment.

Place-based: Topics of discussion often centred around local issues, infrastructure and current events, demonstrating the need for engagement and delivery that is alert to the diverse needs of communities in Cornwall.