

Manchester Climate Fortnightly

www.manchesterclimatefortnightly.info

Issue 6, August 31 2008

Thanks a million?

First the bad news. A million pounds that Manchester City Council has earmarked for its "Carbon Reduction Innovation and Investment Fund" has sat for almost six months gathering... well, interest (we hope).

The money was announced as part of the Council's 'Climate Change Principles document' in February 2008, and the council hoped that these funds would be matched by 'stakeholders' and partners. That hasn't (yet) happened, and barely a penny has been spent. Meanwhile, CO₂ continues to pour into the atmosphere.

Now the good news: The Council has told MCFly that it is within days - or at most weeks - of announcing a series of specific projects that will be funded with that money. These projects are 'commercially-robust' and 'future-proof'. These 'council-ese' words mean that rather than giving away the money via a two week spasm of "come get yer free solar panels," the money will be spent in ways that are a) self-sustaining, and b) measurable.

The specific criteria for success - whether a reduction in absolute emissions, or 'energy intensity' (amount of carbon per unit of economic activity) - have not been disclosed. Not all the expertise needed for these projects is available 'in-house'. The Council has confirmed that some of the million will be spent on hiring the 'right' consultants, but was not in a position to name names. MCFly speculates that Deloitte, who recently completed the 'mini-Stern' review of Climate Change costs and policies for Manchester Enterprises, may well be in the running.

The Council is also keen that the work it does with the money from the Innovation and Investment Fund fits in with what is happening at the Greater Manchester level. Manchester City Council is only one of ten local authorities within "AGMA", the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities." In March 2009 the city-wide "Manchester Climate Change Agency", part of the new Environment Commission, will be opening its doors.

The Council states that it has been learning from other cities that have engaged in low carbon projects, such as Southampton, Birmingham and Aberdeen. Manchester, along with Bristol and Leeds, was also part of central government's "Low Carbon Cities Partnership" www.lowcarboncities.co.uk.

MCFly will keep tabs on this story as it unfolds.

Hydro-power to the people

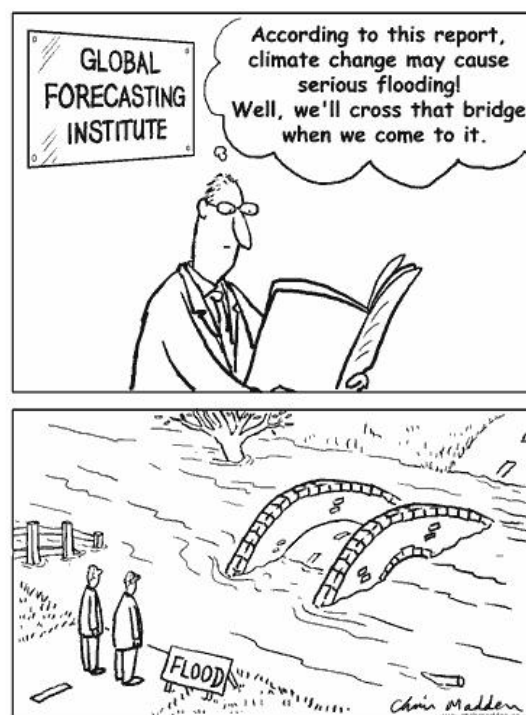
An active community in New Mills, Derbyshire has demonstrated what can be achieved with a little innovation and a lot of dedication by launching the UK's first community-funded hydro-electric scheme this September.

The basic idea behind the project is to generate green electricity from water running down the local Torr weir (a low dam built across a river to divert/direct flow) on the Goyt river. Torrs Hydro New Mills Limited was also set-up to allow the local community to own the hydro electric scheme which will help regenerate the area and also promote environmental sustainability.

The community-owned Archimedean Screw generates electricity from water flowing downhill. It will produce an average surge of 70Kw and will just turn off when river levels are low. They approximate that 260,000 Kilowatt hours of electricity will be generated annually through clean and sustainable means - that's enough electricity to power 70 houses.

The scheme hopes to eventually supply power to around 18,000 homes. Steve Welsh of Water Power Enterprises which helped to launch the project stated; "This scheme will save the equivalent of 13 million car miles in its lifetime. It will be a tremendous local resource."

www.torrshydro.co.uk



Cartoon by Chris Madden, www.chrismadden.co.uk

Local and Regional

August 18 The Lowry Outlet Mall has increased recycling rates, with baling machines for cardboard boxes and bins for aluminium cans and plastic bottles. This could "become a blueprint for other shopping malls to follow."

August 19 Salford University researchers have invented a device to make sure wind farms are put in the most consistently windy places.

August 23 Manchester Airport bosses expected 320,000 passengers to fly in and out over the Bank Holiday. Popular destinations included Spain, Florida, Mexico & Las Vegas.

August 27 Northern businesses have the most responsible and realistic attitude to energy efficiency in the UK, according to research by energy consultancy EnergyTEAM. They cite that 72 per cent of businesses in the North have an energy management policy in place.

August 29 Manchester-based Chester Developments has launched its own carbon offsetting scheme "Carbon Keepers", tied to Sri Lankan projects.

August 29 Skelmersdale-based Construction Partnership UK will create its first eco-homes in Manchester. Its £1.9m contract with Crosby Lend Lease for a new apartment development will set new standards in green construction in the North West.

National

August 18 Chris Smith, head of the Environment Agency, said stretches of Britain's coastline are doomed and plans will need to be made to evacuate people from the most threatened areas.

August 23 Labour, recently bruised in a Glasgow by-election, scraps a scheme to subsidise energy projects in the Scottish islands.

August 25 The Department of Communities and Local Government HQ gets an F rating for energy efficiency - the 2nd worst possible score.

August 29 London Mayor Boris Johnson launches London's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy.

Global

August 22 Three major US green groups have written to David Miliband, warning that UK proposals for up to 8 new coal plants threaten the chance of the US signing a post-Kyoto agreement.

August 27 UNFCCC talks finish in Accra. Cautious optimism about progress to Copenhagen.

August 30 Republican Vice-Presidential candidate Sarah Palin is "not totally convinced one way or the other [on man-made climate change]. Science will tell us..." She believes that the jury is still out.

Bury good news

Bury Council has achieved an 11% increase in the number of households getting free help with heating and insulation measures over the last year. Its Energy Team credits a variety of initiatives, such as including energy information in letters sent to people likely to be eligible e.g. people receiving council tax benefit or a disability benefit, or even flu vaccinations. Front-line staff have also received training. Fuller info on the MCFly blog.

The Apocalypso Beat

August 19 VLM Airlines (<http://www.flyvlm.com>), which operates up to six return services between Manchester Airport and London City every day reports a rise in business following severe disruption to train services to and from London. The managing director, Johan Vanneste said: "Imagine what would happen if government moves to increase air taxation forced airlines to discontinue domestic services. There would be no alternative should the rail network be disrupted and rail operators would not face any competition on pricing."

Correction: We stated in MCFly #5 that the biofuels action had taken place on "Weds August 9". It took place on Thursday August 7. The MCFly editors haven't had a decent date in years...

WHAT'S COMING UP

Tuesday Sept 2 at 7pm Manchester Climate Action meeting, backroom of Jabez Clegg, Dover St (off Oxford Rd) www.manchesterclimateaction.org.uk

Saturday Sept 6 10am to 4pm "Climate Change; What Next?" at Central Hall, Oldham St.

www.manchesterclimateforum/whatnext.html

Monday Sept 8 at 7.15pm Campaign against Climate Change meeting, Friends Meeting House

www.gmcacc.org.uk

Wednesday Sept 10 at 7pm "Stop Expansion at Manchester Airport" Meeting Green Fish Resource Centre, 45-50 Oldham St. City Centre.

Wednesday Sept 17 from 8pm Launch of "Only Planet" The Sandbar, 120 Grosvenor St. www.onlyplanet.info

READ ALL ABOUT IT

Manchester Climate Change Agency bulletin #2 is out now, from the Manchester Enterprises website or

<http://tinyurl.com/683v2s>

Comments, leads, leaks and offers of no-strings money to editor@manchesterclimatefortnightly.info
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