
European energy efficiency experts flock to Durham

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County Durham has hosted a conference kick-starting a five year Europe-wide project to save money and the environment.

Due to our previous successful work on energy efficiency schemes, £340,000 of funding was awarded to us to take part in two European schemes over the coming years as part of the Interreg programme.

The first of these, Locarbo (<http://www.interregeurope.eu/locarbo/>), launched with a conference of the European partners at Durham Town Hall. Fully funded by the European Union, the project will see the partners raise awareness of energy innovation with local businesses to ensure they make the most of the cost-savings on offer by switching to more efficient sources. By reducing energy costs the scheme aims to make County Durham businesses more competitive giving them an even better chance of success in the future.

Successful schemes

Alessandro Attolico, project lead partner from the Province of Potenza, Italy, said: "Locarbo is all about how local authorities can come together to not only help people see the benefits of energy efficiency but to show businesses how they can benefit from it too. It was great to start the project in Durham, sharing ideas with all of the partners as well as seeing, first hand, some of the many successful schemes that have been put in place around the county."

As part of the visit, leaders from local authorities around Europe visited several energy schemes already in place across County Durham. As well as a tour of Thorn Lighting in Spennymoor, the group visited the 100kW micro-hydro site in the river Wear at Freeman's Reach in Durham City and saw how the latest sustainable energy technologies are being used at Brandon Primary School and Framwellgate Moor Community Centre.

Fantastic

Cllr Neil Foster, our Cabinet member for economic regeneration and culture, said: "It's fantastic to know that, as a council, we're seen as leaders in energy efficiency across Europe. We're looking forward to sharing what we've learned with the partners and taking ideas from them to make County Durham even more environmentally friendly and help local businesses further benefit from energy efficiency."

The work will complement the council's ongoing carbon reduction strategy and awareness raising of more environmentally friendly and cost-saving energy measures.

