



# SURRE Energy Centre

## A Vision Document

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Sustainable and Renewable energy for Wharfedale

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**Sustainable and Renewable Energy in Wharfedale**

## Executive Summary

This is a proposal to create a SURE Energy Centre similar to the Centre for Alternative Technology at Machynlleth in North Wales coupled with a full scale heat and power generation scheme which supports an 'eco-village' comprising of affordable housing and associated community buildings.

It involves forming a Social Enterprise company to manage the raising of grant monies to buy the existing site of Garnett's Mill site in Otley, West Yorkshire.

The main buildings would be refurbished to demonstrate the best practice when making an older property energy efficient. Other buildings would be designed to use the best current building practice for energy conservation and sustainable living.

The whole site would create all of its own heat and power using a combination of hydro power from the Wharfe, a biomass boiler, ground source heat pumps, a whole roof of solar thermal and solar photovoltaic panels – and other forms of renewable energy as they become economically viable.

It is expected that power would be exported to the National Grid as part of a continuing revenue stream to run the Centre.

### **The following benefits would be realised:**

- Restoration of the two existing hydro electricity turbines in Garnett's Mill.
- Providing information and inspiration about renewable energy and carbon reduction to an audience of literally millions.
- Creating a very significant showcase site and tourist destination run on renewable energy.
- Development of over 100 affordable houses.
- Catalysing the development of the Wharfe riverside through Otley.
- Retention of an important part of Otley's heritage.
- Helping to build a sustainable community.
- Creating jobs for the town.

### **Unique selling points would be:**

- The most publically-accessible renewable energy centre in the UK
- The only hotel in Britain solely run solely on sustainable energy.
- Restaurants and pubs similarly fuelled by renewable power.
- Workshops for related social enterprise companies.
- Training and entertainment facilities.
- Community based heating and power schemes ultimately aimed at making the whole of Otley a Carbon Neutral Town.

### **Related Leeds Initiative Strategic Objectives**

- NI 188 Planning to adapt to climate change
- NI 155 Number of affordable homes delivered
- NI 154 Net additional homes provided
- NI 187 Tackling fuel poverty
- NI 192 Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting.
- NI 185 CO2 reduction from Local Authority operations
- Facilitate the delivery of major cultural schemes of international significance.
- Increase international communications, marketing and business support activities to promote the city and attract investment.

### **Funding**

It is believed that as a flagship project, funding would be available from a number of major sources including Future Energy Yorkshire, Yorkshire Forward, ERDF and Key Fund Yorkshire. The local community would also be invited to own part of the scheme through a share subscription offer.

## Introduction

This potential flagship development is being proposed by SURE Energy (Sustainable and Renewable energy for Wharfedale), a community group based in Otley, West Yorkshire. The project would include three major elements.

- The first would be the creation of an educational and tourist destination designed to excite and inform a wide audience about the opportunities for using renewable energy sources
- The second would be a full scale heat and power generating facility capable of supplying energy not only to the educational centre but also to the third element of the project
- The third element would be the development of a sustainable 'eco village' of some 100 dwellings. These affordable homes would be built to a very high level of energy efficiency and offer some novel funding models for prospective purchasers.

## Overall Objectives

The proposed SURE Energy Centre / Yorkshire Centre for Alternative Technology (YCAT) is seen as a high-profile, exemplar development able to meet and indeed exceed regional and national targets for both green energy generation and the fostering of sustainable communities.

The scheme has the potential for job creation in the area, economic stimulus to the region and to create a symbol of the renewed national commitment to energy efficiency, carbon reduction and fuel security.

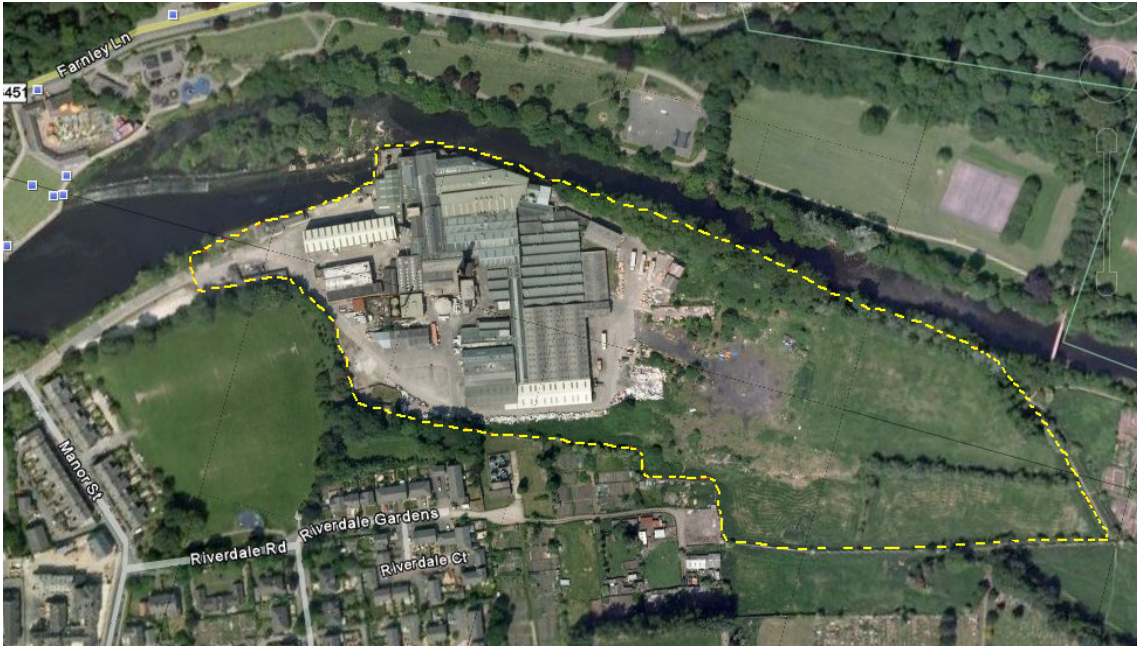
The development links a number of UK priorities for affordable housing, the reduction of fuel poverty and the imperative of at least an 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050.

The refurbishment of the 1700's mill using current best practice for retro-fitting energy efficiency measures to hard-to-treat properties will act as a catalyst for similar developments. In particular, it can form the basis for the strengthening of the local skill base in the field of home refurbishment work along sustainable lines.

The Centre for Alternative Technology, placed so centrally in England and easily accessible by the rail and road network, will serve a very considerable population base and generate both jobs and revenue for the region.

This project is to be driven by a Social Enterprise company led by local people and represents a community taking responsibility for its own energy use.

## The Proposed Site



The old Garnett's Mill in Otley, West Yorkshire is the proposed site for this three part development. The mill ceased operations in late 2007 and has since been partly cleared. It occupies a position on the side of the river Wharfe and lies on the north side of the town centre.

The open area of land to the east of the mill site is currently used as occasional grazing land. It is anticipated that this could become partly wetlands for wildlife and partly a managed source of biomass for use in the SURE Energy Centre. The management of this resource would of itself create employment in the locality.

Outline planning permission was granted on 14.11.06 for a housing development, hotel, pub, retirement home and offices.

It is understood that the development of this site has now been postponed because of the current economic climate which is particularly affecting the construction industry.

## Contact

SURE Energy is a community group based in Otley, West Yorkshire. It operates in an area including Otley and the surrounding towns and villages. It draws its active membership from this area and in addition welcomes expert advisors from further afield. Its aims include the reduction of fuel poverty in the locality, the reduction of carbon emissions and the fostering of a sustainable community. (See [www.sure-energy.org.uk/constitution](http://www.sure-energy.org.uk/constitution))

Through lively monthly public meetings, mini trade fairs and information days it seeks to engage the community in saving money on their energy bills and in so doing reduce their energy usage. SURE has an active range of community projects in progress and is well supported by the Otley Town Council, the Otley Chamber of Trade, the Otley Town Partnership and the local MP. (See [www.sure-energy.org.uk/support](http://www.sure-energy.org.uk/support))

Already the SURE Group has attracted a deal of positive comment in the local media and is now being approached by regional agencies including the Energy Savings Trust to deliver initiatives in the locality. (See [www.sure-energy.org.uk/media](http://www.sure-energy.org.uk/media))

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