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The Sussex Energy Group

Newsletter

March 2013

Foreword by Steve Sorrell and Florian Kern

Since our last newsletter was published a number of important changes have taken place within the Sussex Energy Group. First, Professor Jim Watson has taken up his new post as Research Director of the [UK Energy Research Centre](#) at the beginning of February. Congratulations to Jim on his prestigious new appointment and a very big thank you for his successful and inspiring leadership of the Group over the last few years. While Jim is sorely missed on a daily basis, he continues to be part of the Group and spends one day a week at SPRU.

The University has committed to recruiting a new director for SEG at senior level (Professor or Reader) in the near future. In the interim SEG's Steve Sorrell and Florian Kern have taken over some of Jim's functions as joint co-directors until the new director is in post.

The second item of big news was SEG's unprecedented funding success as part of the [EPSRC's call for Centres on End Use Energy Demand](#). SEG, in collaboration with the Universities of Oxford and Manchester as well as non-academic partners was awarded a 5-year, £3.5 million *Research Centre on Innovation and Energy Demand*.

More information on this important new Centre is included in this newsletter.

The third item of news is that our first cohort of MSc students on the new [Energy Policy for Sustainability](#) course are more than halfway through their programme. Judging by the feedback we have received so far, the students really value and enjoy the course. We are currently accepting applications for 2013 entry and hope that we will be able to attract an equally interested, committed and diverse cohort of students for the coming academic year. A range of [scholarships](#) are available for interested applicants.

Fourthly, for people who have recently joined the growing Twitter community and always want to be up to date with the latest news from SEG, please follow us [@SussexNRGGroup](#).

Dr Steve Sorrell
Dr Florian Kern
Joint Co-Directors of the Sussex Energy Group

New Research Centre on Innovation and Energy Demand

The Sussex Energy Group is leading a new £3.5 million, five-year Research Centre on Innovation and Energy Demand. This is one of five new research centres on End Use Energy Demand (EUED) funded by the Research Councils UK Energy Programme ([RCUK](#)) and was won against strong competition from 34 other bids.

Led by Dr Steve Sorrell, the new Centre involves an interdisciplinary team from the Sussex Energy Group, the Sustainable Consumption Institute at the University of Manchester and the Transport Studies Unit at the University of Oxford. It aims to use a range of research techniques to examine how 'low-energy innovations' emerge, how they diffuse and what impact they are likely to have. The Centre defines 'low-energy innovations' as new technologies, organisational arrangements and behaviours that are expected to improve energy efficiency and/or reduce energy demand – such as energy-efficient buildings, electric vehicles and real-time feedback on energy consumption.

The Centre's research will be organised around three themes – emergence, diffusion and impact – with a

series of research projects under each theme, together with cross-cutting projects and wide-ranging stakeholder engagement activities. Six first-round research projects will begin in the autumn, namely: innovations in low carbon urban transport; the energy implications of 3D printing; learning from history and other countries; the diffusion of energy service contracting; what works for household energy efficiency policy; and rebound effects in UK transport. Several of these projects will be undertaken in collaboration with partners including Transport for London, Oxfordshire County Council, Brighton and Hove City Council, SSE and The Discovery Mill. Two further rounds of projects are planned and there is considerable scope for collaborative research with the other Centres and with a broader range of stakeholders.

The Centre will allow major expansion of research activity at SEG, including the recruitment of a new Senior Fellow, three new Research Fellows, a Centre Manager, a Communications Manager and five PhD studentships. It will form the basis of an exciting new phase of work in this important area.

New Teaching Appointment

The SEG is seeking to appoint a highly motivated individual with suitable academic experience to contribute to its expanding postgraduate teaching in the area of energy and climate policy.

The post holder should have interests and expertise in areas relevant to the Group's research and teaching activities, including energy policy, climate change policy, transitions to low carbon energy systems, low carbon development and energy technology innovation. The successful candidate will have:

- a PhD in a related area (e.g. economics, policy studies/political science, geography, science and technology policy studies, or similar)
- a track record of high quality research in the area of energy and climate policy
- teaching experience in the area of energy and climate policy, including economics and innovation
- enthusiasm, flexibility and a commitment to working within an interdisciplinary, policy relevant field

Informal enquiries about this 50% post may be made by email to Steve Sorrell or Florian Kern. For a full job description and application form, please see the [vacancies](#) section of the university website

US Breakthrough Institute interviews Dr Steve Sorrell



Dr Steve Sorrell

The US Breakthrough Institute has published online interviews with four economists on the topic of 'rebound effects' from energy efficiency improvements which includes an [interview](#) with Steve Sorrell.

Breakthrough's 2011 publication - [Energy Emergence: Rebound and Backfire as emergent phenomena](#) - proved controversial in the US.

The publication was very closely based on the earlier UKERC study, led by Steve Sorrell: [The Rebound Effect: an assessment of the evidence of the Economy wide savings from improved energy efficiency](#).

New paper by Dr Steve Sorrell on UK rebound effects

Steve Sorrell is co-author of a new paper 'Turning Lights into flights: Estimating direct and indirect rebound effects for UK households' which finds that the rebound effects from the range of household energy efficiency improvements are relatively modest - typically in the range 5–15% when measured in terms of GHG emissions.

However, the anticipated shift towards a low carbon electricity system in the UK will lead to much larger rebound effects.

- [Read the paper in full on ScienceDirect](#)

SEG research fellow presents at Climate Geo-engineering Governance

Dr Rose Cairns, Research Fellow at the Sussex Energy Group, will be presenting her work on 'Framings of Geo-engineering' to an international workshop in Oxford on the 18/19th March, on the academic and policy context of climate geo-engineering governance.

More information on the conference can be found [online](#).

SEG and SPRU presence at the "Climate Transitions: Connecting People, Planet and Place" PhD Conference

Doctoral researchers [Cian O'Donovan](#) and [Jake Barnes](#) will be representing the Sussex Energy Group and SPRU when presenting their respective PhD research at the annual [Tyndall PhD conference](#) in Cardiff in early April.

New papers co-authored SEG members

Adrian Smith and Florian Kern are co-authors on two new papers:

- ['The development of solar PV in The Netherlands: A case of survival in unfriendly contexts'](#) and:
- ['Spaces for sustainable innovation: Solar photovoltaic electricity in the UK'](#)