

**COMMUNITY ENERGY CONTACT GROUP
MEETING 5, 11 OCTOBER 2012
13:15 – 15:30**

CE Strategy Start-up

Attendees:

1. Paul Dee (DECC)
2. Will Walker (DECC)
3. Erin Beer (DECC)
4. Peter Lipman (Community and Climate Action Alliance, Chair Transition Network)
5. Peter Capener (Bath and West Community Energy, Community Energy Practitioners' Forum)
6. Garry Charnock (Ashton Hayes)
7. Nigel Farren (Energise Barnet)
8. Stephen Frankel (Wadebridge Renewable Energy Network)
9. Nicholas Gubbins (Community Energy Scotland) - via phone
10. Barbara Hammond (West Oxford Community Renewables/The Low Carbon Hub)
11. Simon Sjenitzer (Cumbria)

Agenda:

	ITEM	OWNER
1.	Introductions	
2.	Set agenda and timing	Will Walker
3.	Previous actions	Paul Dee
4.	Intro and background to CE Strategy	Paul Dee
5.	Project start-up session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scoping, key objectives and deliverables • Known risks and management actions 	Will Walker and All members
6.	Development and consultation plan	Will Walker
7.	Resourcing strategy development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing role of CECG / membership • Community input • DECC input 	Peter Lipman Peter Lipman Paul Dee
8.	Brainstorm for 'quick wins' / early implementation	Paul Dee
9.	Next steps on strategy	Will Walker
10	AOB	All

Actions and note:[Item 3: previous actions](#)

- 1) CECG members raised lack of progress on research requirements discussed at previous meeting as an outstanding issue. Stephen Rippon and Peter Lipman have been corresponding on the research paper outline – members do not feel the current version reflects the previous meetings discussions and outcomes.
- 2) **ACTION:** Peter Lipman to circulate next draft to members at the soonest.

Members re-iterated that the potential of this area of work is large and must be captured within the research scope of the strategy. The potential of financial / commercial models has been missed and there is a market gap. Research should look at synergies.

[Item 5: Project start-up session](#)

Much of the discussion focused on feedback members had sent to Will Walker in advance of the meeting. Members contributed the below as additional feedback/ food for thought.

Must haves for the Community Energy Strategy:

- Ministerial support
- Agreed definition of community (i.e. clarifying role of communities of interest and locality within delivery of action at local level etc.)
- Should cover renewables, energy efficiency and community buying
- Not just a comms strategy, must focus on community partnership and should address financing, community support and regulatory/policy environment
- Clear statement of the scale of the potential delivery assuming different delivery scenarios with clear assumptions about above factors
- Clear procedure re clarity on the interface between and the responsibilities of DECC's Strategic Group and the CECG.
- Strategy needs a clear annually reviewed and renewed delivery plan
- Needs multi-agency approach from enabling bodies etc. OfGem, Environment Agency
- Needs cross Govt. support particularly. DEFRA, CLG, BIS and Treasury. Members agreed that this support is essential but that we should press ahead as there is high level buy in from DECC for this and waiting for similar buy in from other departments will slow down the process. Other departments should be engaged as part of the process of strategy development. Ministerial support is also key and should be gained in due course. Paul Dee noted that the DECC ministerial unit are functioning as a whole coherent unit on this front.
- As this strategy is about local engaged change in demand and generation it needs to involve all agencies including; local govt., businesses (including energy suppliers), finance providers etc. as well as community organisations

ACTION: Will Walker to address known risks and management actions in the project brief and project initiation document separately, drawing on ideas submitted by CECG in advance of meeting.

[Item 6: Development and consultation plan](#)

Will explained the process for developing the plan:

1. Discuss with CECG (done!) (11 October)
2. Hold face to face meetings with key policy leads within DECC (26 Oct)
3. Draft project brief and outline of CECG resources required to CECG (29 Oct)
4. Project brief circulated to Steering Group (2 Nov) for presentation (6 Nov)
 - i) Any key issues identified will be circulated to CECG (12 Nov)
 - ii) CECG agree and sign off PB at next meeting (tbc15Nov)_
5. Project implementation plan completed (14 Dec)
6. Strategy development – options analysis/testing, and first draft (Dec-March)
7. Informal consultation through the CECG (Mar-Apr)
8. (tbc) Formal consultation – Apr–Jul
9. (tbc) Publish Strategy – Aug-Sep

Members noted that the Strategy and the supporting delivery plan must be realistic. Important to know that the purpose of the strategy is to ensure that local people and organisations can deliver on local energy issues.

Will to clearly define the problem at scoping stage. The strategy will identify ways to address and solve these issues.

Members agreed that CECG is the best vehicle through which to engage/ consult with wider groups. Also agreed that CECG will play an active part in roll out.

[Item 7: Resourcing strategy development](#)

Members reminded DECC that they are an invited group. Membership reflects the role they play within their wider communities.

Discussed who / what area of expertise was missing from the Group. Members agreed

- that Wales and Scotland needed representation in the Group
- there may be a need to strengthen membership from practitioners focused on household scale projects rather than community scale projects, though several existing members do work at that level
- lack of Women in the team
- to keep the group small, tight and focused
- need to consider whether to involve one of the large community network membership organisations
- need to consider whether links with the Community Energy Coalition through existing CECG members are sufficient or whether Coalition representation on CECG should be strengthened

ACTION: Peter Lipman to approach contacts identified and agreed by CECG who may be suitable members for the group

ACTION: Will Walker to acknowledge contribution of retiring members of group and update CECG membership list on DECC website accordingly.

[Item 7: Community input](#)

Lengthy discussion of how to provide as much community support and input to DECC for the development of the strategy.

Members offered support to DECC for the co-design of the Strategy and wider consultation with communities.

Peter Lipman offered support from partner NGOs prepared to resource 2 x paid posts for 3 months each to help harness community skills and expertise.

DECC confirmed that CECG would play a key advisory role in the development of the strategy.

ACTION: Will Walker to produce draft overview of CECG resources required, and ideas for where community input would be of most use, alongside the project brief

Item 8: Quick Wins

Quick wins – discussion focused on what actions would have the biggest impact rather than what could be done easily and quickly.

- 1) State Aid and how DECC implements this.. Suggested that DECC solicitors will need to comment.
- 2) Finance round-table with finance providers, seeking commitment to the development of innovative solutions to community finance for renewables
- 3) Similar approach as 2) to unlocking finance and funding to support community partnership in delivery of Green Deal, with a focus on Green Deal Providers
- 4) RHPP2 Community strand – suggested that weighting and scoring could be reviewed, with small changes potentially having a large effect
- 5) Reviewing DECC approach to assessing value for money so it acknowledges and values wider community benefits e.g. feedback from communities indicates that some LEAF projects are perceived have built community capacity and prepared communities to more effectively engage with Green Deal, RHPP2, which may result in higher carbon reduction in future. These perceptions are currently being explored further in the LEAF evaluation etc.
- 6) More appropriate definition needed. Suggestion that community tariff could be fixed at next step down in rates, so as to offer a premium to communities in recognition of additional added value offered by community partnership - gives a good signal of support for community energy
- 7) Definition of community organisations utilised within community FIT needs to acknowledge different community structures in Scotland and include charities and Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisations (SCIOs)
- 8) Developing a clear and beneficial offer to communities from within the Green Deal £200mil incentive pot (recognising that the majority of these funds have now been allocated, and this includes a contribution to the 'Pioneer Places' competition, which will support communities).
- 9) Introduce funding support for community projects that operates over longer time scales and is accessible and appropriate to community needs
- 10) Develop mechanism for offering transparency to communities on the deals available through Green Deal Providers so communities are able to negotiate from a stronger position

Item 10: AOB

Becky Willis to talk to group in the near future (as meeting agenda allows) to discuss EMR.
ACTION: Peter Lipman to manage and arrange a telephone conference

Item 11: Date of next meeting

ACTION: Peter Lipman to arrange with members and confirm to Erin Beer/ Will Walker.