

**4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of:**      **Community Energy Contact Group (CECG)**

**Date:**                      **2 July 2012**

**Venue:**                    **Department of Energy and Climate Change,**

**Attendees:**

Community Energy Contact Group (CECG)

- Peter Lipman (PL) (interim Chair)
- Michael Butterfield (connected by conference call)
- Pete Capener (PC)
- Garry Charnock (GC)
- Nigel Farren (NF)
- Professor Stephen Frankel (SF)
- Nicholas Gubbins (NG)
- Dr Barbara Hammond (BH)
- Simon Sjenitzer (SSj)
- Meeting invitees: Melissa Maynard, DECC
- Chris Nicholson: Secretary of State's Special Adviser
- DECC Officials: Paul Dee, Melissa Maynard, Stephen Rippon, Alison Bailey

**Agenda**

- Welcome and brief introductions
- LEAF update
- Presentation by Paul Dee, Communication Directorate
- Next Steps
- Further meetings

## **Report**

1. The record of the last meeting was circulated to CECG members for their comments.

### **Update on LEAF event - 21 June**

2. Stephen Rippon said that 140 LEAF communities (out of 236) attended the LEAF Experience event in London 21 June. They had shared their LEAF learning in small groups on a range of issues, such as public engagement, renewables and the Green Deal. DECC had received very positive feedback about LEAF and about the event which, DECC was informed, was being imitated, regionally.

3. Greg Barker's presentation had recognised the short delivery window of 3 months for LEAF. He had expressed his appreciation of what had been achieved by community groups and recognised that communities have a key role in the Green Deal from 2013. LEAF delegates had expressed their support for LEAF.

4. Greg had mentioned his support for another funding round similar to LEAF, but he could not confirm that funding would be available.

5. He also announced a forthcoming Community Energy Strategy Document for publication in spring/summer 2013.

6. A number of questions and issues on community policy would "wait" on the publication of the Community Energy Strategy Document which would draw DECC policy strands on a range of issues, possibly wider research into community energy, the outcomes of DECC's in-depth evaluation of LEAF, Green Deal policy on communities, RHPP2 etc

7. PL gave an update on RHPP2 (community stream) policy which will deliver a voucher through a competitive programme involving "bulk-buying" bids by community groups.

8. It was also reported that a small steering group has been set up for the £15m DEFRA rural community renewables fund which would start in 2013..

### **Community Energy Strategy Document - Paul Dee (Communication Directorate)**

9. Paul Dee led a discussion and set out the likely approach and issues around this work. He said that DECC was keen to take a strategy forward. He had obtained sign off to the work and some resourcing to support it for a short time, up to the end of the financial year, likely to be two fte's. Resourcing would be limited he to be alive to this issue in taking the work forward. Paul suggested that the work on the strategy be collaborative and that, for example, it might work well for half of the resource to be sourced in from communities.

10. The focus of the strategy should be community engagement, ideally setting out best practice and a model which all DECC community activity would follow. The strategy would be drafted by, and owned by, DECC. However, we would be looking

to work with a range of stakeholders collaboratively. CECG would act as key advisers on the work.

11. The Strategy could not seek to modify policies, except in respect to approaches to community partnership and community support. It may however recommend policy areas for further review.

12. The scope of the strategy was under discussion and would need to be agreed in DECC before work started, also taking into account views from the CECG and others as appropriate.

13. Given timing, Paul thought that the work would have little impact on the Green Deal, but early work could inform it.

14. Wide consultation would need to feature. Scotland would need to be involved.

15. Regarding DECC's research into CE, DECC was doing work to get "a picture" of what community energy research had been done already and would set up meetings with CECG to discuss their knowledge. Commissioning research would recognise strict deadlines (which might preclude some academic work) but it must meet DECC's quality control requirements, procurement procedures and independence.

#### 16 Action Points –

- Paul to take forward early prep work for the strategy and alignment within DECC including possibility of a steering group etc.
- Paul to liaise further with CECG on strategy scoping:
  - send a list of initial questions to CECG members to help us share thinking on the approach to be taken
  - followed by a note taking into account CECG responses
  - CECG would then respond more formally to DECC as a group helping DECC shape the approach to the strategy, its scope and TOR for the CECG.
- Paul to discuss further with CECG how the community sector resource might be involved in the strategy development, to best embody a collaborative approach
- Explore potential to join up work with DCLG, DEFRA, Lottery fund. Stephen – to get in touch with contacts at DEFRA, Lottery and DCLG
- All to consider whether the current configuration and membership of CECG was the best for this work. Is there a role for the Women's Institute, ACRE, faith groups? We would have to define "community expertise" and discuss how to get a full range involved.
- Barbara Hammond – form a CECG research sub-group

- Stephen to take forward LEAF and research follow up

## **CECG**

17. The next meeting would be booked and run by Communication Directorate not Heat Team and would take place in September.

**(Action Communication Directorate team to fix and book next CECG)**

CECG contact : [william.walker@decc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:william.walker@decc.gsi.gov.uk))