

**Community Energy Contact Group meeting
20 May 2013, DECC**

Attendees

Peter Lipman, Community and Climate Action Alliance, Chair Transition Network (Chair)
Peter Capener, Bath and West Community Energy, Community Energy Practitioners' Forum (phone)
Garry Charnock, Ashton Hayes, Cheshire
Nigel Farren, Energise Barnet
Stephen Frankel, Wadebridge Renewable Energy Network
Dan McCallum, Awel Aman Tawe Community Energy, Wales (phone)
Agamemnon Otero, Brixton Energy, Repowering South London
Becky Willis, Independent Researcher and Community Energy Coalition
Simon Sjenitzer, Eden Valley, Cumbria

Ravi Gurumurthy, Director of Strategy DECC
Jim Robinson, Strategy Projects Team Leader DECC
Melissa Smith, Community Energy Strategy DECC
Lara Phillips, Community Energy Strategy DECC
Ian King, Community Energy Strategy DECC

Apologies

Barbara Hammond, Low Carbon West Oxford
Nicholas Gubbins, Community Energy Scotland
Will Walker, Community Energy Strategy DECC

Note

1) Welcome & introductions

All members of the Community Energy Contact Group (CECG) and DECC team introduced themselves. The only change since last time is that Jim Robinson has recently joined the DECC Community Energy Strategy team as team leader.

2) Plans for Call for Evidence launch

Agamemnon outlined the plans for the Call for Evidence launch event on 6 June, which will take place at Repowering South London's new solar project. Some of the young people who have undertaken paid work experience as part of their projects will meet the Secretary of State at the event, which will mark the start of the 8 week period for people to submit responses to the Call for Evidence to DECC.

3) Call for Evidence – last opportunity for factual corrections/minor changes

- The DECC team noted that the final draft document is with Ministers, and therefore only minor factual corrections can be made.
- Dan McCallum suggested that the figure for Danish Wind needed double-checking.

- CECG members requested that the document should be clearer that it was seeking input on legal implications of consumer credit licencing with regard to involvement of community energy groups in the Green Deal.
- It was noted that the case studies in the document tended to focus on the more successful community groups, and that this may not represent the groups who DECC were hoping would respond with evidence about barriers faced by the sector; Sussex University work looking at failed projects was cited.
- The CECG asked for clarification in the document on the size of the CARES loan pot.
- Pete Capener asked that it be made clearer in the introduction to the document that its purpose is to inform the strategy and implementation thereof.
- CECG members thought that the current questions were not best designed to seek evidence on public engagement in health and fuel poverty.
- Pete Capener wished to see a log of comments that had been received and the responses to these.
- There was a request for an annex of case studies, and also for more clarity on who should respond, including e.g. health professionals and Green Deal providers.
- Distribution of the document was discussed, with various CECG members agreeing that they would engage with local media around the launch.

4) Update on Community Energy Strategy project plan, workstreams & next stages

- Jim gave a brief run-through of the project plan for the strategy from the launch to publication in the Autumn. During the call for evidence period, there will also be extensive stakeholder engagement work by the DECC team. CECG members noted a spectrum of stakeholder views and asked that DECC engaged people across this including finance providers, large energy companies, district network operators and local authorities. Jim agreed to circulate a list of stakeholders who will be contacted to the CECG.
- Lara gave an update on the research project being undertaken by Databuild for DECC and Consumer Futures. The steering board for this, which will discuss the second work package is this afternoon; the interim report from the rapid evidence assessment of existing literature will be published alongside the call for evidence. Becky requested that Coops UK be contacted as part of the qualitative interview work for the research.
- The CECG asked that the meeting between regulators and the Secretary of State which he had suggested at a recent Community Energy Coalition event happen early enough in the process to be able to make significant changes for the strategy.
- There was discussion of the CECG's role during the next stage of the process, and it was agreed that whilst they would not attend every stakeholder meeting, thought needed to be given to the best timing for the next meeting such that the CECG could arrange a pre-meeting and also secure maximum attendance.

5) Any other business

- Becky Willis updated the group on a recent meeting with the Energy Bill team in DECC to discuss amending the Feed in Tariff threshold for community energy groups.
- The CECG requested better sight of emerging DECC policies so that they could provide community energy input.