

Evaluating low carbon communities funded by the LCCC

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Introduction

Jackson (2005) – suggests community offers something different to existing individualistic / rationalist approaches to behaviour change, but:

✦ “What is missing from this evidence base, at present, is unequivocal proof that community-based initiatives can achieve the level of behavioural change necessary to meet environmental and social objectives.”

✦ But how, and based on whose objectives?

Providing a critical contribution to the evidence base:

✦ Case study of DECC’s ‘Low Carbon Communities Challenge’ (LCCC)



A qualitative approach to evaluation

- ✦ Participant observation

- ✦ Documentation
 - ✦ Policy documents and reports
 - ✦ LCCC applications - successful and unsuccessful
 - ✦ Promotional materials, websites etc

- ✦ Semi-structured interviews
 - ✦ Policy Officials / Advisors
 - ✦ Community Practitioners
 - ✦ Participants in three LCCC projects

- ✦ Grounded approach to data analysis



The Low Carbon Communities Challenge

- ✦ DECC funded 'action-research' programme that ran between February 2010 and February 2012
- ✦ Designed to 'help government, local communities and a range of parties involved in the UK transition to greener, low carbon living understand how best to deliver this transition at community level' (DECC, 2009)
- ✦ Funding of up to £500k awarded to twenty-two winning communities across England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- ✦ May 2010: general election in UK resulted in change of government from Labour to Conservative-led coalition

The Low Carbon Communities Challenge



Supporting people,
projects and partnerships
for a low carbon future

The uncertain role of community in DECC's worldview

On community:

✦ "...it feels fluffy, that's the biggest thing here - it's too fluffy. Will we meet our targets? It doesn't answer that. It feels stuffy and complicated."

(DECC Policy Official)

And on meeting targets:

✦ "It doesn't matter who, it matters what"

(DECC Policy Official)



DECC exists to head off two risks: catastrophic climate change and a shortfall in secure, affordable energy supplies

The post-election repositioning of the LCCC



✦ The Low Carbon Community Challenge is a £10 million, two year research programme designed to test community-scale delivery of DECC's key policies and programmes – such as Green Deal and the Smart Meter roll out – as well as contribute to the Department's wider work around the 'Big Society'. (DECC 2011)

On the Green Deal:

✦ “The Green Deal is different to previous energy efficiency policies as it removes the barriers preventing people from making those energy efficiency improvements. The biggest barrier is obviously cost.” (Greg Barker, Minister of State, DECC 2011)

Different places, same message: save energy, save money

How we can give your home a GREEN MAKEOVER

There are lots of ways to make your home energy efficient and save money as a result. The ticked boxes show the measures that could be suitable for your property, and that we can arrange to install for you at a reduced cost.

Loft Insulation

Laying loft insulation will reduce heat loss through the roof for up to 40 years, which can significantly reduce your heating bills. The recommended thickness is 270mm, so even if you have loft insulation you may need a top-up.



What's the Saving?* – Up to £150 and 800kg of CO₂ per year (for a 0-270 mm installation)

What's the Deal?* – Free to those on eligible benefits*** or over-70
– Free to the first 100 other homes that sign up
– £50 for all other LCZ homes

Cavity Wall Insulation

If your home was built after 1920, the external walls are likely to be made of two layers. The cavity between them can be filled with insulation, which will reduce the amount of energy needed for heating.



Two ways to tell if you have cavity walls:

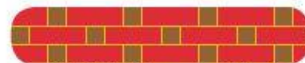
1. From the brick pattern (see below):
2. Measure the external wall width at a window or door - a cavity wall is around 260mm deep.

What's the Saving?* – Up to £115 and 620kg CO₂ per year

What's the Deal?* – Free to those on eligible benefits*** or over-70
– £50 for all other LCZ homes



Cavity Wall (equal brick size)



Solid Wall (alternating brick size)

* all figures are based on an average 3-bed semi-detached property. Actual savings may vary.
** costs are for materials and installation and may not cover all associated building works

Your GREEN MAKEOVER does not need to stop here!

By choosing to invest in the following measures, you would make the money back in savings from your energy bills over a period of 'payback' time.

Register your interest in our bulk buying scheme, to take advantage of these great savings. Call or email the Low Carbon Zone team for more information.

Efficient Boiler

Boilers account for around 60% of the CO₂ emissions in a gas heated home. Their efficiency is rated on a scale A to G - if your boiler was fitted over 15 years ago then it could be a G-rated boiler, which is very inefficient.



What's the Saving?* – Up to £225 (from G to A-rated) and 1,100 kg CO₂ per year

Register Interest

Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Panels

Solar PV panels convert sunlight into electricity – a typical system can produce 40% of the electricity used by a household each year.



Once you have paid for the installation, your energy bills will be reduced as you produce your own free, green electricity. The Government's (FIT) will pay you for generating electricity, and you can sell excess electricity to the grid.

What's the Saving?* – Up to £900 (using the FIT) and 1,000kg CO₂ per year

Register Interest

Solar Water Heating Panels

Solar water heating systems use heat from the sun to warm domestic hot water. This is stored in a cylinder, providing around 50-70% of your household's hot water. A conventional boiler can be used when solar energy is unavailable.



What's the Saving?* – Up to £80 and 570kg CO₂ per year

Register Interest

* all figures are based on an average 3-bed semi-detached property. Actual savings may vary.

There are bigger barrier than cost (1): even free isn't enough for some people...



“...we followed up that with an actual door knock and said ‘You’ve been selected for free Solar PV by Nottingham City Homes. They’ve given us your address, are you interested? Here’s the information’...

...I had 6 people turn me down on the doorstep. One woman who said ‘I’ve seen ‘em I’m not having that on me roof. It looks a right monstrosity...

...‘Yeah but you’d be looking at a 30% reduction in your fuel bills?’

...‘Nah.’”

(Community Practitioner, Meadows)

There are bigger barriers than cost (2): patterns of normal behaviour



In the home:

✦ “I bought a load [tungsten light bulbs] when Woolworths was closing down [laughs]. So it’s a case of, you know, there’s savings to be made but there’s, you know, savings that are costed against other, you know, the saving on one is a cost in another column if you know what I mean?”

(Community Member)

In other social contexts:

✦ “I’m a bit worried about being referred to as a crank, you know, if I start going on about things like that. But I don’t think enough people take enough notice of it.”

(Community Member)

There are bigger barriers than cost (3): energy demand remains unchallenged



“They’re [solar PV panels] stuck up on the roof, you don’t think about them, once they’re there you kind of almost forget they’re there because, you know, they’re not intrusive in any way...

Unless you actually look at your electricity meter every day, you don’t, you don’t really... there’s nothing really to [PAUSE] for you to sort of see that they’re there, you know...

...I think unless you come to have some sort of consciousness about the way you live anyway, I don’t... I think they could limit, they could have a limitation as to how much they change people’s lifestyles, yeah.”

(Community Member)

The non-carbon related nature of community for participants

- ✦ Knowing your neighbours
- ✦ Local – a desire to create ‘a better place’
- ✦ Non-existent

- ✦ Either something you do:
 - ✦ “I’m a joiner” (Participant, Blacon)
 - ✦ “We’re all in this together” (Participant, Blacon)

- ✦ Or you don’t:
 - ✦ “I’m not a joiner” (Participant, Meadows)
 - ✦ “I’m not really a community person” (Participant, Meadows)

Blacon Energy Management Programme
Meeting 6
‘Blacon Bites’ Food Sustainability Event



- Recipes
- Perfect Portions
- Save Time & Money
- Locally sourced and seasonal food
- Top Tips & Storage
- Food Waste
- Composting

We will be joined by:
Julie Hesmondhalgh, Waste & Resources Action Programme (WRAP)
Waste Reduction Volunteers
Waste Strategy Team, Cheshire West & Chester Council

Blacon Community Centre
Church Way, Blacon, CH1 5HS

Monday 24th January 2011
6.30 - 9pm

As usual, please arrive earlier to register and hand in your meter readings

Special Invitation: Bring someone from your community group along to the event!

Please let us know ASAP if you can attend and would be interested in ear sharing:
01244 379 021 / julie@sustainableblacon.org.uk

Summarising the roles of community in the LCCC

✦ Policy actor

- ✦ Delivery mechanism – for energy efficiency measures and behaviour change targeted at individuals/households
- ✦ Carbon reduction aggregator

✦ Place / Identity Making

- ✦ Local neighbourhood (sometimes *very* local)
- ✦ A desire to create ‘a better place’, a ‘sense’
- ✦ Fulfilled by ‘doing your bit’ – often not very much...

✦ Not about carbon, energy or saving money for most members of the ‘low carbon community’ areas studied

