

**Engaging with community
energy action:
future opportunities**

Chris Church,

**Chair of Low Carbon Communities Network
Director, Community Environment Associates
September 2012**

Community Energy needs to develop...

- *Beyond its' current niche
- *Beyond the Muesli Belt (and beyond its' comfort zone?)
- *To make a significant impact
- * ... To survive in the long term

Not all small-scale local energy is Community Energy

- * Many social enterprises do not have good community links
- * Many local businesses have no direct community benefit
- * As their reach develops, so social businesses tend to find it harder to remain as community businesses

Community Energy – there are real opportunities

- * Increasing financial benefits
- * Economies of scale
- * Favourable political climate?
 - Community Energy Strategy
 - Green Deal? And other funding
 - Localism

And real uncertainties

- * Upscaling risks
- * Competition
- * Negative media
- * Unfavourable political climate
 - Powerlessness of DECC

So how do we make it work?

We need:

- * The Policy and Strategy (and not just a CE Strategy) – political will
- * The infrastructure to support upscaling
- * Popular engagement

Upwards and Outwards

Upwards - Scaling up through

- * New partnerships
- * CICs / SEs working to deliver for larger agencies
- * Recognising common interests with commercial sector (as well as competition)

- * Seeing what works and finding the new opportunities – and not being directed

Outwards...

- Talk to each other to tell a better and more coherent story (and tell it properly)
- Do more than talk to each other
- Do the evaluation (with academics) to show the real impacts (socially and economically)
- Find ways into all the sectors
- Support the social agenda (and be realistic)
- Better engagement with the climate policy agenda

Find ways into the communities that don't talk about this.

Communities need to want to do this!

Communities will need to:

- * Understand what they can achieve
- * Want to engage
- * Feel confident to start doing it
- * Know where to get information and examples
- * Be well supported

Thank you!

Chris Church – chrischurch@cooptel.net

