



## Contents

- Welcome by the project leader
- What is the EVALOC project about?
- Focus groups
- Household Survey
- Community events
- Energy Display Library Literature Review
- Policy Issues
- EVALOC & 2012 LCCN conference
- Recent news from communities

## Welcome to the first newsletter of EVALOC project

I am delighted to welcome you to the first newsletter of the RCUK funded EVALOC low carbon communities project. The purpose of this newsletter is to communicate and share the techniques, lessons and concepts involved and evolved from the various work streams of EVALOC. As this is the first newsletter, we would like to introduce the EVALOC Team which is still growing.



Figure 1: EVALOC Team Photo (Starting from left: Rajat Gupta, Ruth Mayne, Nick Eyre, Sarah Darby, Jo Hamilton and Dimitra Dantsiou. Not present: Karen Lucas, Maria Adebowale)

**This first edition** of the EVALOC newsletter provides a short progress report. We are sending it to one key contact in each community for comments and contributions. When we receive your comments, we'll send you a revised version which you are welcome to distribute more widely. It will also be placed on the EVALOC web site ([www.evaloc.org.uk/](http://www.evaloc.org.uk/))

We hope that in the future the newsletter will become a useful means by which academics and communities can report to each other, while the internal facing website will provide a place to share ideas, reflections, learning, questions, solutions, and strategies.

**Thank you for your on-going support for EVALOC project**

*Professor Rajat Gupta, Oxford Brookes University  
Principal Investigator and Leader of the EVALOC project*

## What is the EVALOC project about?

EVALOC stands for EVALuating the impacts, effectiveness and success of DECC-funded low carbon communities on LOCALised energy behaviours. The project seeks to assess, explain and communicate the changes in energy use due to community activities within six selected case study projects that were funded under the Department of Energy and Climate Change's (DECC) Low Carbon Communities Challenge (LCCC) initiative, a government-supported initiative to transform the way communities use and produce energy, and build new ways of supporting more sustainable living.

The study runs for three years till the end of 2013 and it seeks to generate a body of evidence about the role of low carbon communities in reducing energy use and CO<sub>2</sub>

- promote learning within communities,
- provide the communities with evidence about projects outcomes and impacts to motivate local residents and members,
- generate evidence to help influence policy e.g. to help remove barriers to community action on energy issues.



Figure 2: Hook Norton primary school



Figure 3: Easterside, Middlesbrough

## Focus Groups

Many thanks to everyone who attended the first round of EVALOC focus groups.

Some of you may have felt you were repeating information you had already given to DECC, but it was important for EVALOC to gather comparable data across the projects and the focus groups provided some really interesting and rich learning. We will circulate a draft of the focus group report shortly to key contacts in each community to check for accuracy, sensitivity, and confidentiality. We will then share it with the six LCCs and EVALOC research team through the internal facing web site. We will not share the report more widely at this stage as taken on their own the focus group report only provides a partial snapshot of the six Low Carbon Communities (as it does not include information from other sources and the coverage of the research questions varied in each group). The EVALOC project intends to produce fuller public facing research outputs, in with community input, towards the end of the project drawing on a fuller range of data sources.

Please note, we would like to hold the **2<sup>nd</sup> round of focus groups next June**, ideally with the same people (up to a maximum of eight) and will be in touch nearer the time about the research questions/issues, facilitator and dates etc.

## Household Survey

EVALOC combines community-led action research and a programme of household level monitoring and evaluation of the DECC-funded interventions. These two core elements are expressed through four inter-related work streams. Community level research is carried out through focus groups and community events, while household level research is undertaken through household level measurement, monitoring and occupancy evaluation, energy display library & trials and social network analysis. The lessons learnt throughout these processes are disseminated through knowledge and policy transfer workshops which form the fourth work stream.

The household level survey aims to measure, monitor and map the impacts and effectiveness of low carbon interventions promoted by the six LCCs through the understanding of energy usage and behavioural patterns in selected households. The research will be carried out for a period of two years and 15 households from each community are invited to participate. **These households are divided into three groups (A, B and C) according to the level of involvement in their LCC activities and the low carbon improvement in their houses.**

- **Group A** includes households that have received some kind of (physical) treatment (demand side or supply side) from the Low Carbon Community (LCC), as a result of DECC funding.
- **Group B** comprises households that have received some support from the LCC which could be an energy display or behavioural intervention, or they would like to borrow and test one (or more) out.
- **Group C** has households that have had no interventions or support from the low carbon community (or others) and will act as 'control'.

Two key elements of household survey are ‘**Baseline characteristics survey**’ and ‘**Semi-structured interview**’ which are applied to all the three groups of households (in varying degrees of detail). While the ‘Baseline characteristics survey’ helps to gather information about the physical and in-use characteristics of the house including specific details about any energy efficiency measures or low carbon technologies that have been installed, the ‘Semi-structured interview’ takes the form of a questionnaire detailing some information about the house, householders’ energy behaviour and involvement with the community group.

The LCCs will be invited to attend all the shared-learning workshops, but we hope each community will be able to propose (or help shape) one that meets their particular interests/needs. We are also developing a feedback sheet for participants at the community events, which we will circulate to you soon for comment. You are welcome to add your own questions to this. (We may also do a one month on follow up survey after the event with attendees).



Figure 4: For household level monitoring and occupancy evaluation: bespoke monitoring activities.

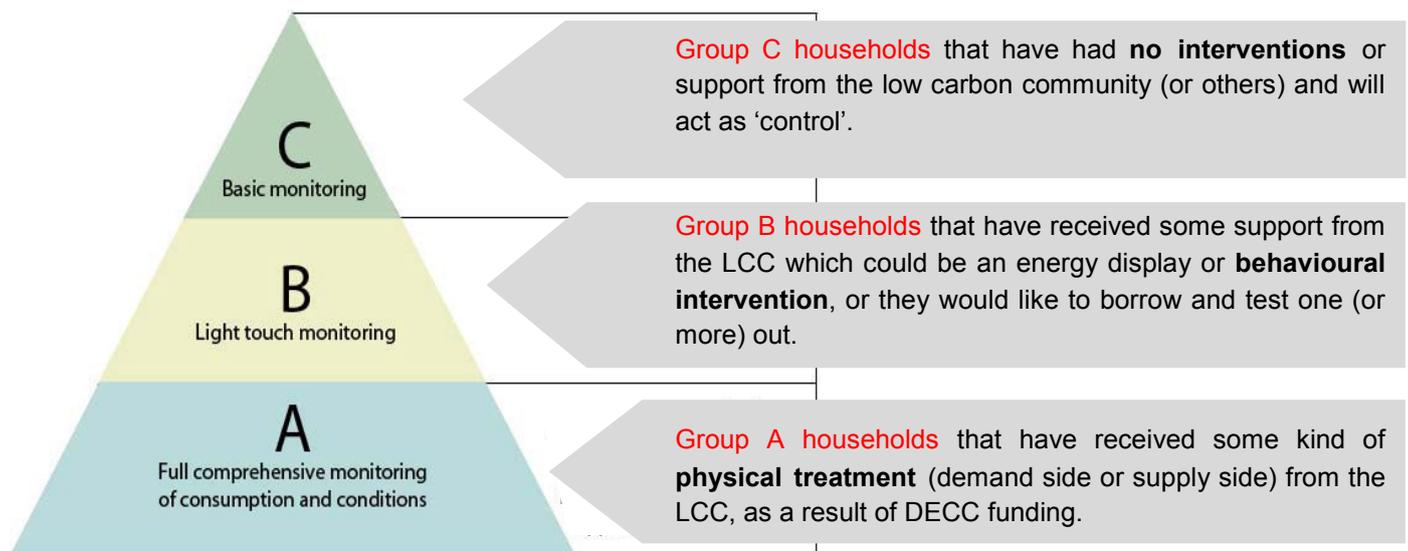


Figure 5: Household level monitoring and occupancy evaluation: hierarchical approach

## Household Survey continued...

Two key elements of household survey are ‘**Baseline characteristics survey**’ and ‘**Semi-structured interview**’.

An EVALOC household survey guide containing templates for undertaking ‘Baseline characteristics survey’ and ‘Semi-structured interview’, has been issued to the EVALOC low carbon communities for their review and feedback. The household recruitment from different communities is in progress and several householders have come back to us interested to participate in the project.

In LCWO participants were informed through the Focus Group gathering while Low Carbon living program kindly offered some of its time for the EVALOC program introduction.

At the Blacon sustainability event we had the opportunity to meet and talk with locals involved in Blacon Energy management program while adding them into the EVALOC participation list.

## Energy Display Libraries

Many thanks to you all for selecting your energy displays, and for helping set up the community display libraries. There is a really interesting range of outlets being planned, including through local libraries, schools or the LCCs' own energy programmes.

The delay to the survey (see above) means we now have until mid-January to set up the community energy display libraries. Ideally we would like the Group B households to have first call on choosing the displays so they will need to select their displays from the library shortly before the first household survey starts in February/March.

If you haven't already received your energy displays we will be sending them to you soon, plus publicity materials for the library, and a draft feedback form for lenders to fill in when they return the displays. Please let us have any comments or suggestions on the latter when you receive them, and feel free to add your own questions.

Please note that although EVALOC would prefer that the communities can keep the energy displays at the end of the research project as a 'thank you' but we need to first check with the ESRC whether or not this will be possible (as the application says that they own the kit).



Figure 6: Energy display at Hook Norton primary school



**Group B:** Energy display monitors, Light touch monitoring of temperature and humidity using i-buttons and hobos

Figure 7 : For household level monitoring and occupancy evaluation: Energy display monitors

## Community Events

As you are aware the main purpose of the community events is to prompt further energy reduction and behaviour change in the communities, but EVALOC also wants to use them to research the effectiveness of different methods of social learning. The table below provides of current ideas for EVALOC- supported community events within each community, as well as shared learning workshops between communities.

In most cases, the second and third events (TBC) are suggestions from us, based on what we know about your projects and what we've heard other people say they're interested in, so they are there to spark ideas rather than being set in stone!

We hope the table will spark further ideas. Please let us know your views on what you would like to see happen at these events. (We hope each event will predominately be based on one learning method, although they will also contain elements of others).

The LCCs will be invited to attend all the shared-learning workshops, but we hope each community will be able to propose (or help shape) one that meets their particular interests/needs. We are also developing a feedback sheet for participants at the community events, which we will circulate to you soon for comment. You are welcome to add your own questions to this. (We may also do a one month on follow up survey after the event with attendees).



Figure 8: Introduction of EVALOC project in the community-university partnership workshop.



Figure 9: LCCN conference participants visiting the EVALOC information stall.

Learning category & method	Knowledge & information: (didactic methods eg presentations, info sheets)	Show & tell/ social: (observation & demonstration eg practical demonstrations, visits to other communities, plays, poetry)	Interactive group learning and development: (co-operative enquiry eg participatory workshops, creative learning)	Shared-learning between communities: (combination of methods eg participatory workshops, visits to other communities)	Monitoring and communicating energy reductions: (show and tell of Decorum and other monitoring and feedback tools)
<b>Communities</b>					
<b>Awel Aman Tawe</b>	1st: Launch of Conscious oil exhibition (Nov 15th)			Tbc: sharing insights about arts and climate change	TBC
<b>Easterside</b>	2nd: Visit to another community?	1st : School energy play or event (March 2012)			TBC
<b>Hook Norton Low Carbon</b>		1st : Visit to Stonesfield Community Land Trust re: building low carbon affordable local homes (Dec 2011 or Jan 2012)	3rd: Community workshop agreeing future priorities/ widening engagement/ working with schools/housing association?	2nd: Communicating & gaining public support for wind turbines. (Proposer: LC-HN)	TBC
<b>Kirklees</b>	2nd: Launch of community FiTs Fund		1st: To raise awareness of and promote action on fuel poverty and energy saving (Dec 2011)		TBC
<b>LCWO</b>	2nd: How to engage local business Or piloting a behaviour change house (Tbc)		1st : Workshop with local schools (Feb 2012)	3rd: Community-Council partnerships on domestic energy reduction (LCCN conference, January 17th) (Proposer LCWO)	TBC
<b>Sustainable Blacon</b>		1st: Feedback and discussion of the Blacon Energy Project with participants			

Table 1: EVALOC - supported community events and shared learning workshop between communities.

In the Community-University workshop **Professor Rajat Gupta** and **Dr Nick Eyre** used community-based **EVALOC** and **UNLOC** research projects, to share their views and visions on potential ways communities and academics could build **mutually-beneficial collaborations** through postgraduate and doctoral theses as well as specialist input to activities such as thermal imaging, carbon footprinting etc. Such partnerships would help to raise the awareness on energy and governance issues on a local level.



Figure 10,11: Event planned on 9 January 2012 by Sustainable Blacon to feedback learning from the University of Chester about Blacon Energy Management Programme. EVALOC added interactive element of designing posters and generating slogans for future outreach plans.



Figure 12: Event planned on November 15 2011 by Awel Aman Tawe (AAT), to raise community awareness and engagement on climate change. EVALOC evaluated the event, together with evaluation of AAT's DECC funded arts and climate change project.

## EVALOC and 2012 Low Carbon Communities Network (LCCN) Conference

On 14 January 2012, the Low Carbon Communities Network (LCCN) organised its annual networking conference on 'New times, new ways forward' in Kings Conference centre, Oxford. Over 200 people attended the event which featured a series of inspiring talks, sessions and facilitated workshops sharing ideas on the way communities can develop a stronger local action covering issues such as Green Deal, fuel poverty, collaboration with local councils, universities and private sector, carbon allowances and many other. Online information on the event is available on:

<http://lowcarboncommunities.net/2012/01/17/the-lccn-conference-4>

The EVALOC project had a strong presence at the LCCN conference as a sponsor and convener of two workshop events on Community-University and Community-Council partnerships. It seemed opportune to deliver the two EVALOC workshops at the LCCN conference, as this would allow learning to be gathered from, and shared with, a wider range of participants; enable communities to benefit from other conference workshops; and provide added capacity to the LCCN conference organisers. A feedback form was available at the EVALOC information stall to gather participants' perceptions and thoughts on mapping energy consumption of individual households on a community level.



Figure 13: LCCN conference in Kings Conference centre



Figure 14: Community presentation on the EVALOC community-council partnership workshop

The Community-Council energy partnership workshop helped to facilitate shared learning (between Low Carbon Communities) about council-community partnership approaches/strategies to household energy reduction/generation interventions with both the 'able to pay' and low income/fuel poor households.

The workshop included presentations on three examples of partnership working across the UK (Oxford, Easterside, Haringey). Kirklees Council provided a presentation but was unable to attend the conference. It was felt that Energy partnerships can increase the reach and effectiveness of carbon reduction initiatives by enabling different actors to work in a collaborative and mutually reinforcing manner to achieve shared goals. A summary of the EVALOC's activities at the LCCN conference and a brief report on the Community-Council partnership workshop will soon be available on the EVALOC website ([www.evaloc.org.uk](http://www.evaloc.org.uk)).

## Literature Review

The literature reviews for the research are underway or nearing completion. They cover: influences on energy use and change pathways; community energy initiatives; local energy governance; a review of community energy guides, toolkits and carbon foot-printing tools; action research and social learning approaches; and energy and transport. We are considering producing a number of short briefing notes based on these reviews where we have found gaps or think we can add value to community facing materials. Please let us know if you think any of these ideas would be helpful and/or send us any other ideas.



Hook Norton

## Policy Issues

We are aware that the LCCs are currently affected by, and actively engaged in policy influencing on a range of issues. We anticipate that further down the line EVALOC will develop policy recommendations, in collaboration with community groups, based on the project's research findings. In the meantime we hope you will feel free to use the web site to exchange information, or contact each other directly. Please let us know if at any point you would like us to facilitate a webinar between communities on any issue.

## Recent news from communities

Sustainable Blacon recently held a successful Blacon Sustainability Convention. One of the many highlights of the event was the announcement that Blacon Community Trust had been granted the Big Society Award. Awel Aman Tawe recently held a successful event 'We're oil in this Together', which combined an exhibition of a series of large lino prints about oil, with theatre performances, singing, and storytelling. Awel Aman Tawe has also launched a second climate change poetry competition. Further information can be reached online: <http://www.awelamantawe.co.uk/>.

## Our Stakeholder communities



Hook Norton



Kirklees



West Oxford



Easterside



Blacon



Awel Aman Tawe



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Grant Reference:  
RES-628-25-0012

EVALOC is a three-year multi-disciplinary project worth £1.14 million funded by the UK Research Council's (RCUK) Energy Programme. The energy programme is a RCUK cross council initiative supported by EPSRC, ESRC, NERC, BBSRC and STFC.