Response ID ANON-XMK1-539S-N

1 What is your name?

Name:
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2 Your contact details

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3 What is your organisation?

Organisation:
Keele University

4 We would like to hear your views about the definition of community energy outlined in Section 3 of the Call for Evidence. In particular:

4a Are you aware of any community energy projects that go beyond the goals of reducing, managing, generating and purchasing energy as outlined here?

Answer:
The evidence that follows is based on an ESRC/EPSRC-funded project called Reducing Energy Consumption through Community Knowledge Networks (RECCKN). The 'communities' we studied were mainly interested in the Reduction and Management strands in Fig 1 of the Call for Evidence. The project website can be found here: http://www.esci.keele.ac.uk/recckn/. This website will be fully operational and up-to-date by the end of the project, August 31st 2013. A 12-minute audio-visual summary of our findings can be viewed here: vimeo.com/publicspace/energysaving-social

4b Are there other types of community that should be in scope for the Community Energy Strategy? If so, please explain why they should be included.

Answer:
The examples of community given in the Call don't quite capture the dynamic, temporary and evanescent nature of some types of community.

5 We would like to here what evidence you have of the current and potential scale of community energy projects. For example:

5a Do you have evidence of the number of community energy projects or number of people currently involved in community energy projects in the UK?

Answer:
This depends on how one defines a 'community energy project', and it is also related to the answer given in 4b. Is a Church coffee morning devoted to discussion and knowledge sharing about energy and energy saving a 'community energy project'? Our view would be that it is, particularly if repeated, but it is unlikely to be turned up by a web search for community energy projects. Many small-scale, grassroots initiatives may not have the time or inclination to set up a web presence. This is not a negative, however. Rather, supporting the take-up community energy projects that are, in this regard, much less formal and 'professional' may help encourage their wider development - starting up informal discussion groups and support networks regarding reducing household energy consumption requires much less voluntary time commitment.

5b Do you have estimates of the potential future scale of community energy projects in the UK in terms of numbers of people, generation capacity, carbon or energy savings? Please explain the methodology used to reach any estimate that

you provide.

Answer:
We cannot provide estimates. Our research project has produced evidence that community-level projects have great future potential if they are given adequate support and address the practical concerns of citizens, both for useable, affordable technologies and for trustworthy advice.

5c If you are a community energy group, does your group intend to expand in the future?

Answer:
N/A.

6 We would like evidence or examples of the benefits of community energy approaches (please see Section 4 for more information on the types of evidence that we are seeking).

6a How have community-led approaches delivered energy and climate change outcomes more cheaply or effectively than top-down Government action? These outcomes could include generating renewable electricity or heat, reducing greenhouse gas emissions or helping consumers save money on energy bills.

Answer:
In our recent research project, we consistently found that top-down generic information provision, which attempts to 'transmit' knowledge through a one-way communication process, was not regarded by our respondents and participants as a useful way to learn about energy. Since one-way processes include no attempt to discuss with them their unique circumstances, they found this sort of information was often too generalised, banal and irrelevant. Top-down government action in the guise of very modest funding to enable the creation of self-organised community events that make energy visible, meaningful and 'discussable' would, however, be effective and worthwhile. Our research strongly suggests that interactive processes of knowledge exchange, often in the form of face-to-face discussion, are more likely to lead to meaningful learning that than top-down, one-way information transmission. In part, this is because a process of exchange, mutual discussion and scrutiny can build trust that information is accurate and honest. By allowing discussion and an exchange of ideas and circumstances, information also becomes contextualised to people's needs and circumstances, thus being more relevant and more useful to those involved. We found our respondents to be more knowledge-rich about energy reduction measures than often assumed, as they were able to draw on their own experiences with energy in the home, and moreover very prepared to share this knowledge with their peers and learn from one another if given the opportunity to do so.

6b How has participation in community energy projects changed attitudes to or increased engagement with energy and climate change issues?

Answer:
In our project, we found energy is often considered a private, individualised issue, and so it is rarely talked about with others. We found that the key to increased engagement is to take energy knowledge out of the private household space and into a more public arena at the micro-local level, through locally organised and arranged events. This makes energy visible, meaningful and discussable. In all of our case studies, this had several positive impacts upon the engagement of our participants with energy issues. Notably, being part of a group discussion about energy, hearing how others use energy and the actions they are taking to save energy, leads people to reflect upon their own (often taken for granted) habits and energy consumption patterns. This provides the inspiration and motivation to monitor their usage, make energy saving changes, seek further advice, and make energy a more important issue in their lives. Moreover, through such group discussion participants become aware that that they know more than they previously realised, and are often willing and able to share the knowledge they have. This recognition of one's own capabilities increases confidence and capacity. In short, energy is no longer considered something private, oppressive and disempowering, but instead is a topic worth caring about and taking action on. We suspect that a virtuous spiral could be created in which this confidence and capacity give rise to further events which make energy public and discussable.

6c What are the wider social and economic benefits of community energy projects? These might include improving health, education, jobs or transport; strengthening communities; or tackling other local issues.

Answer:
We found several benefits to community energy discussion strategies. The focus groups and 'interventions' we enabled, and which the communities with which we were working organised, added to many participants' sense of wellbeing through enabling enjoyable connections with others they often had not met, and also allowing a process of learning. Trust between the participants (a vital ingredient in an effective knowledge network) also greatly increased as the project progressed. These outcomes have benefits both for individual wellbeing and mental and physical health, but also for the social cohesion and capacity of local communities. For this reason, it was essential that the events were enjoyable and informal. Moreover, as we note above energy discussion can lead people to become aware of their own knowledge and ability to act on energy saving. This again has important benefits in terms of building community capacity and empowering citizens.

7 Do you have evidence or examples of any potential drawbacks or negative consequences of community energy?

Answer:
Our participants certainly didn't see community action as something that should replace government responsibility - and were very much against 'downloaded' responsibility in this regard. They recognised that there are bigger structural issues that need to be tackled, particularly relating to the energy supply market and the lack of trust in the market processes of the Green Deal. Community energy should therefore not be seen as a replacement, but instead a supplement, to other energy consumption programmes.

8 What evidence or examples do you have of the barriers faced by community energy projects and the ways in which they have been overcome, or could be overcome? Categories might include: community capacity and capability; access to funding; legal and regulatory framework; selling electricity generated and grid connections; gathering evidence of the benefits of community energy and evaluating projects.

Answer:
In our research project, the major barrier we found to energy discussion, learning and knowledge exchange in communities is that, at present, energy knowledge tends to be '(wit)held' in individual households. It is often considered something private and individual, rather than something that is a collective concern and should be discussed with others. This prevented people from talking about energy with their friends or neighbours (even though they trusted them to give good advice and would have liked to hear their experiences with energy saving), or even from seeking out help from more formal sources such as advice charities (CAB, Age UK, Energy Saving Trust etc.). We found three major reasons for this relative privacy:

1. In the early stages of our project in particular, several of our participants seemed to have internalised a belief that they lacked knowledge and any capability in terms of energy saving, leading to a lack of confidence and motivation to undertake energy reduction strategies, and fear of embarrassment if they discussed energy with others. In fact, they knew far more then they realised, and were far more capable than they realised. When this knowledge was combined with that of others in group discussion, their capacity to take energy reduction measures greatly increased.
2. Again at the beginning of our project, there was a perception that, in most circumstances, discussing energy with friends or others was something of an 'odd' thing to do. Relatedly, there was also a concern that others would consider energy saving a 'boring' topic, and so they tended to avoid raising it in their everyday lives. The opportunity and environment where energy discussion became normal and interesting did not exist - it had to be enabled.
3. For some, particularly those on low incomes, energy was seen as potentially embarrassing to talk about, particularly if someone is in financial difficulty or fuel poverty. Yet, these may be the very people who would most benefit from discussing energy.

To overcome these barriers, the right type of environment and conditions must be created where discussing energy is the topic of concern - it is 'normal', discussable, and 'public' at the micro-level. People need not worry about being perceived as boring, or feel embarrassed about sharing their knowledge or their problems. At the most basic level, then, the opportunity and space for discussion needs to be provided. Our findings suggest that, in the majority of communities, this will not happen 'organically' but needs to be 'seeded' or enabled, often by a trusted organisation or 'honest broker'. (We played this role as a team of researchers based in a university and social enterprise). Within this discussion space, there are other important measures that can be taken to overcome these barriers:

1) There needs to be a sense of equality amongst the participants. In practice, this crucially means that organisers need to ensure participants are clear that various different kinds of energy knowledge are valid and valued - not only 'expert' or technical knowledge, but also personal experience and 'lay' knowledge that is derived from everyday interaction with energy. Relatedly, various ways of communicating should also be encouraged - not only direct 'tips' or technical hints, but also sharing experiences through telling stories, which can be particularly effective. These alternative types of knowledges and ways of expression should be actively encouraged and welcomed by organisers. Doing this helps to overcome the barriers of a lack of confidence in one's own ability and knowledge, and a feeling that discussing one's own energy use is embarrassing.

2. A sense of commonality needs to be nurtured between those participating for conversation to be fruitful and organic. This can overcome the barrier that energy is an 'odd' or 'boring' thing to talk about, but also the barriers of embarrassment and confidence. A sense of commonality can be done through framing 'energy saving' itself as a common concern for everybody in society and in a community. We found that presenting discussion as about high energy prices, and a way to reduce energy bills, was one way of doing this, as many people share a concern for rising fuel prices. We also found, however, that making a discussion about mutual objects and mutual experiences with that object to be of great value for making energy discussable and encouraging knowledge sharing. In particular, in our project every participant was given an Electricity Display Monitor. Making energy 'visible' through this monitor, and interacting with the monitor in their homes - noticing when its readings rose due to certain appliances, and investigating how to cut out 'wasteful' uses of electricity - provided a mutual experience for our participants around which they could discuss energy and share tips, knowledge and experiences. Discussion was greatly enhanced because of this. If the roll-out of 'smart meters' across the UK does take place, we believe that their greatest value would not be in making energy visible to individual households, but in encouraging and enabling energy discussion at the community level.

To enable any public energy discussion to take place, there also needs to be an 'organiser' or leader. This may be a local person or persons with energy and some flair for organisation. However, some communities may not have this natural leader with the time, ability and energy (particularly if they are working and have other interests) to make such events happen. Therefore, it may be necessary for other organisations, particularly the charitable sector and social enterprises to step in. Both local leaders and third-sector organisations will require a very modest amount of funding, however (in our research project, the most expensive event cost only a few hundred pounds). This funding goes toward room hire of a building, advertising, food and refreshments, creation of some materials for the day, and perhaps payment of various 'speakers' for their time. Our suggestion to overcome this barrier is:
1. For a modest amount of grant funding to be available, either to local 'community champions', charitable organisations or social enterprises, to arrange and organise micro-local events. At this event, local people and trustworthy, independent experts share knowledge about practical measures for saving energy. Government should actively encourage communities and third-sector organisations to take up these funds.

Once these barriers are overcome, the way is open to local-scale knowledge exchange and the inspiration to act on energy saving/efficient use of energy.

9 We would like to hear your views about sources of information and advice for community energy projects. In particular we would like to hear from you about:

9a Which current sources of information or advice have you found most useful in setting up a community energy project?

Answer:
The community energy project(s) emerged from our research project, through a collaborative process in four study areas. The information and advice that we

utilised to create events where people had the opportunity to discuss energy and exchange knowledge came from our project participants - they provided the ideas about what type of event they would like to see happen, and how it should happen. However, it should be noted that although community members took the lead, most agreed in retrospect that the events could not have happened without the support and input from the research team. We therefore think it is important always to consider the role of public agencies (e.g., universities and third sector organisations) in providing trustworthy, impartial advice to community projects, and in putting in some work that organises and facilitates opportunities where energy discussion can happen. We would warn against romanticising the capacity of all communities everywhere to take the lead.

9b What information or advice would have been helpful when you were setting up a community energy project?

Answer:
Although not an issue for our research, as we utilised funding already provided by an ESRC-EPSRC grant, we expect that normally a community energy project would find information and advice on funding opportunities would be very helpful. Also, hearing the sorts of energy schemes and projects taking place in other communities could be a very important source of inspiration to get people thinking what might happen in their own community.

9c Do you think there is potential for a new information resource for community energy groups (see Section 7), and who might be best placed to develop and host such a resource?

Answer:
We believe their may be potential for a web resource where representatives of local community energy projects present the 'stories' and experiences of their project - what they did, why, whether it worked and the impact it had, their advice for making it work, how others could do the same. This would provide a trustworthy source of advice to communities elsewhere, grounded in practicalities and realities of making community energy projects happen. It would also provide an inspiration of what is possible, and the potential benefits of community energy (in our case, in making energy discussable). Moreover, coming from others who have already undertaken such a scheme would, we suspect, be well received. A strong finding of our research project has been the value of hearing others' experiences as a source of inspiration and knowledge. Resources lodged solely on the web, though, run the risk of reflecting and reinforcing the 'digital divide'. In our experience

9d How could more be done to build interest among those communities who are not already involved in community energy?

Answer:
None of the participants who took part in our research could be called a member of a 'community energy group' before we started working with them. Nor were many of them particularly interested in participating in such a group, or even in energy more generally. Yet over the course of the project their interest was built in energy and energy saving. This was done simply by providing an informal, enjoyable and convivial public space and an opportunity for them to talk about their experiences of using energy. In our answer to question 8 of this form, we provide a detailed response regarding 'how' energy was made an interesting topic of discussion in these settings. To briefly recap, this includes ensuring the encounter is informal and enjoyable, reassuring participants that all knowledge and input is valued and encouraging them to tell their stories, and to build a sense of commonality between those participating by highlighting their common concerns.

In our study, the discussion encounters took the form of focus groups in the first instance. We found our participants very ready to talk about energy with us and - more importantly - with each other. This led to them, with our assistance and modest financial backing, setting up four 'interventions' (one for each of our study areas), to which local people were invited, to seek and exchange energy knowledge from/with those participants who had been newly-empowered by the focus groups.

10 We are interested in your views about peer mentoring. In particular:

10a Do you have any examples of successful peer mentoring schemes?

Answer:
Our entire project could be described as an exercise in peer mentoring. We believe it to have been successful in terms of knowledge-sharing, confidence- and trust-building, and we have evidence that several of our participants have changed their practices to reduce their energy consumption as a result of their engagement with their peers.

10b What more could be done to support and enable peer mentoring schemes such as that described in Case Study 14?

Answer:
Case Study 14 describes a renewable energy community project. Most people will get nowhere near a project of this sort, for all sorts of reasons. Our project suggests that peer mentoring could have greater reach if it was practised at a more modest, yet potentially more significant, level - the 'entry' level at which most people find themselves, around reducing energy use/increasing efficiency of energy use. This is where we find the low-hanging fruit of the relatively disengaged. This disengagement is born of disempowerment and an internalisation of the 'deficit model' of energy knowledge, where individuals have become sick of hearing the same generic information on energy saving or frustrated by harrassment from energy companies. Making energy discussable at the micro-local level is an effective way of providing the opportunity for overcoming disempowerment and, hence, disengagement.

10c Are you aware of any other models of peer mentoring or advice sharing which could help community energy projects address skills and knowledge gaps?

Answer:
Our project model of a) face-to-face focus group discussion about energy between peers, leading to b) local 'interventions' at which these 'citizen experts' make themselves available to offer energy advice to other local peers, is a highly successful form of peer mentoring. Some citizens will be 'expert' in certain topics,

some in others. By networking with other members of their community, people come to realise that, as a collective, they hold a vast amount of knowledge and ability. This can be shared and exchanged with others, so that everyone can access the knowledge, inspiration and confidence they require to reduce their energy consumption in the home.

10d What more could be done to support peer mentoring schemes in the community energy sector?

Answer:
Providing the modest funds, with no strings attached and shorn of bureaucracy and competition, for setting up simple focus groups and other local discussion events. Funding is very modest, required for basic things such as venue hire, food and drink, and perhaps payment for the attendance of representatives of energy charities (important note: our participants did not want to attend events where energy companies would be present). This funding should be available directly to local people or community champions, but also to 'third-sector' organisations that work in areas where no such champions are forthcoming.

11 How can we ensure that vulnerable groups, including those in fuel poverty, are able to take part in and share the benefits of community energy projects?

Answer:
Many community participants in our project were from fuel-poor households or were elderly participants: a 2008 survey established that 40% of the households in one of our case study areas (in Newcastle-under-Lyme) live in fuel poverty. Our research shows that micro-local level events, which are fun, enjoyable, convivial, and non-threatening, at which energy is made discussable by and between peers, is an effective way of including vulnerable groups in community energy.

12 We are interested in your views on the potential for community groups to engage in delivering the Energy Company Obligation (ECO). In particular:

12a What could be the role for communities in delivering ECO, either through participation in ECO brokerage or building partnerships with energy companies?

Answer:
The role of communities could potentially be very significant. Through our research we have found that contacts exist locally between friends and neighbours, and that some already have the links and know-how locally to advertise and promote energy efficiency events through word of mouth, local newsletters, coffee mornings, stalls at events or personal contacts. We have also found plenty of evidence that householders in the project already possess enough knowledge to talk to others in their communities about energy reduction measures. This includes two householders being part of an open-house event, and others advising peers on cavity wall and loft insulation, tariff switching, pv rent-a-roof schemes, electricity display monitors and behvaioural changes around energy reduction. And this is amongst participants with no/limited connections to exisitng environmental groups such as Transition Towns.

12b What might be the potential barriers to community groups participating in ECO brokerage?

Answer:
1. Energy Companies call the shots and decide which measure they will support and when. Under the current ECO scheme this has proved particulalry hard to pin down and can change without discussion or consultation. As an eg one energy company is already signalling (26 July 2013) that it has met its quota for new boilers under the HHCRO criteria and therefore isn't looking for many/ any new leads. This is 6 months into a 2 year scheme!

2. In this timeframe it is virtually impossible for a community to get its act together to build the relationships (within both its own community and with ECO partners) and knowledge base to be able to play a significant role. This is disappointing as all sorts of comunity derived benefits around making energy reduction more discussable, growing local knowledge, confidence and trust are all completely missed out on.

3. Even where switched-on community groups wih several years experience under their belt exist, it's been extremely diffcult for them to understand the ECO offer and to engage potential ECO partners, let alone starting to promote it meaningfully. Even for NGO intermediaries it's been a very slow process of understanding and marshalling the opportunities.

4. There is a barrier around money. ECO has been set up to be discharged by big business and big business is driven by money. From a community perspective it has to get itself together, engage energy companies, understand the offers of potential partners and their processes, engage their wider community, find good leads, monitor the first round of installed measures and then re-promote if it seems to be going well. And all this in working with organisations that they and their communities largely DON'T TRUST. Energy companies will then pay a referral once a measure has been installed. Up until this point not a penny is available to help communities with this process. Communities could still get to this point and then find that their new partner, for money reasons, is no longer interested. Given this context, it is not surprising that communities aren't stepping up to the mark and starting to realise their potential. There are entire cycles of community development that need to by supported before the vast majority of communities can play an meaningful role. 3 month LEAF and DECC competitions aren't any good - 3 years maybe.

5. Where switched on community groups don't exist - which is the majority of communities - there is still an essential role for intermediaries to play in bridging this gap between energy companies/ Govt policy and communities. Keele University and Marches Energy Agency have played this role for our research, and could play it again in developing wider projects, scaling up our research, across our sub-region of Shropshire/ Staffordshire/ Stoke-on-Trent.

13 If you are a community energy project, what has been your experience of accessing funding from Feed-in-Tariffs (FiTs) or the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI)?

Answer:
In our Newcastle-U-Lyme research communities we have found that householders benefit indirectly. As most of them can't afford the initial capital outlay a small,

but growing number have benefitted from rent-a-roof schemes. Householder experiences from such schemes have been very positive - you can hear from beneficiaries in our video. Through our research we have sought to encourage and spread their learning more widely.

14 Do you have any other examples of, or ideas for, innovative revenue-generation models for community energy projects, particularly for projects not based on electricity generation?

Answer:
No.

15 We would like to understand the different types of funding available for community energy projects at different stages of their development and the barriers to accessing these. In this question we are particularly keen to hear from potential investors in community energy projects, as well as community energy groups.

15a In addition to those sources mentioned in questions 12-14 above, what types of funding are available for community energy projects at different stages of their development?

Answer:
Not relevant to us

15b What barriers do community energy projects face in accessing funding at different stages of their development?

Answer:
Through our research we co-designed 4 interventions. Salary issues aside, such interventions as energy coffee mornings and energy Question Time can be run relatively cheaply for £50-£few hundred pounds. However our 4 communities aren't ready to undertake this on their own, and further intermediary support is required for a while as they continue to grow in confidence.

16 If you have been involved in community energy, what legal, regulatory or planning barriers have you encountered during your project?

Answer:
We found none of these types of barrier in our project, since our solution of collective discussion groups, which brought energy into the public and community sphere, was so simple and straightforward. However, we anticipate that, if funding were to be made available to fund such discussion groups in other areas, that a barrier may be an over-burden of bureaucracy.

17 We would like to hear your views on the role of Government or others in making it easier for communities to deal with these regulations. For example:

17a Are there any regulatory processes that could be improved or simplified?

Answer:
No evidence of this sort in our project.

17b What support could help community energy groups navigate these regulations?

Answer:
No evidence of this sort in our project.

18 How could it be made easier for community energy projects to sell the energy they generate and connect to the grid?

Answer:
No relevant evidence from our project.

19 Research published alongside this Call for Evidence (Community Energy in the UK: A review of the Evidence) has found that the evidence base for community energy is currently limited. We are interested in how community energy projects are evaluated and how better evidence could be collected.

19a What approaches have you taken to evaluating the impact of your community energy project? Where have these worked particularly well or badly?

Answer:
Our main source of evaluation was asking participants themselves, at various stages throughout the project. These questions covered their experiences of their Energy Display Monitors, the focus groups, the local interventions, and their thoughts on group discussion of energy and energy saving - in short, whether they had found it useful, enjoyable, empowering, something they had learnt from etc. This was done at all the focus groups, and a series of one-to-one follow-up interviews between participants and a member of the project team.

Those local residents who attended the 'interventions' designed by our participants, but who were not members of the research project, were asked to fill in a questionnaire providing their feedback on the event.

We aim to send out a final project evaluation shortly, but anecdotal evidence suggests that roughly three-quarters of our participants will report energy savings

19b What kind of evidence would help potential investors and funders make more informed financial decisions about community energy projects?

Answer:
The evidence we have offered from this project in answer to questions above is the kind of evidence that could and should make a difference. We have shown that relatively small amounts of money can make a big difference to people's energy knowledge, confidence and capacity.

19c What support do community energy groups need to better evaluate their projects and collect evidence of different outcomes and benefits?

Answer:
Support from the HE sector, especially, where expertise and experience of evaluation lies, is very important.

20 We want to hear your views about how central Government could engage communities more effectively in developing and delivering its policies.

20a Do you have examples of where Government engagement has worked well or badly?

Answer:
Our project was not geared to evaluating Government engagement. However, Government fared reasonably when we asked our participants which were their most trusted sources of energy knowledge and information. Friends, family and local peers came top. Large-scale energy companies and 'cold calling' business selling energy saving products came near the bottom, and led to disengagment with energy issues. Government came somewhere in the middle.

There was also a critique of 'top-down', one-way communication of energy information through mass advertising campaigns. Whilst participants recognised that such a process did raise their general awareness of energy saving, it did little to provide them with the detailed knowledge, ideas and inspiration they needed to actually take action in their own homes. Instead, because such processes provide information that is so generalised, they often considered it generic, irrelevant or banal. Alongside such top-down advertising, they advocated a greater level of 'interactive' processes that communicated energy advice through discussion.

20b Are there specific Government processes that make it hard for communities to engage?

Answer:
Top-down, 'information'-driven, transmission model, 'do-this', processes are ineffective, disengaging and disempowering.

20c How could the role of local authorities as 'brokers' between central Government and communities be strengthened?

Answer:
Local authorities could potentially act as the 'honest broker' sometimes required to get local energy discussion groups started in some areas. In places where there is no local 'champion' who is willing or able to put in the time required to organise energy discussion events, the local authority could fill this role. However, our findings also suggest that this might work best when the local authority is supporting a local charity or third-sector organisation, as these are more likely to be trusted by many people compared to the local government.

21 What could be the role for Government in helping community energy projects to build partnerships with other organisations, such as energy companies, local authorities and installers?

Answer:
We have found a good deal of evidence for the distrust of energy companies which we have mentioned earlier. If energy companies continue to be the Government's preferred vehicle of choice for addressing fuel poverty and affordability of energy amongst the most deprived communities, then honest-broker intermediary support must be made availbe to bridge the trust gap. We have found evidence that communities are capable of responding very positively, but to assume thay can do so on their own is naive - help is needed.

22 How might several community energy projects work collectively in order to negotiate and partner with larger organisations more effectively?

Answer:
Again this is a role that intermediaries should be able to undertake very effectively. Through our research we have been able to engage a range of stakeholders wider than just the householders, including local schools, local businesses, local Government, voluntary sector organisations, local charities and housing associations. These relationships can be built and enhanced to ensure they become part of the wider Community Knowledge Network within which our research householders our located.

23 How might Government encourage greater community ownership of or involvement in larger energy infrastructure projects?

Answer:

For our research communities, this will take time. Adjacent to one of them there is a fantastic spot for a wind turbine on a former colliery site. However to suggest that as an option now wouldn't gain traction. But work progressively over a number of years to build confidence, trust and visibility around sustainable energy options, then in time a wind turbine with significant community ownership should definitely be something to aspire to and introduce as the time feels right. Again intermediaries have an absolutely key role to play in spreading the learning from elsewhere, and in helping the idea gain traction locally.

24 How might 'community benefits' packages associated with large energy infrastructure projects help support community energy schemes in the area?

Answer:

Linked to 23 above - 2 of our 4 communities are in ex-coalmining/ industrial communities. Apart from ECO which continues to be administered on an individual basis, a community benefits package for a say a wind turbine could help provide a sense of purpose, identity and income into areas still struggling with the demise of their industrial sectors.

25 For some respondents we would like to follow up with additional questions. Are you happy to be contacted for further information if required?

Yes