



ENERGISING LOCAL COMMUNITIES
Promoting the Neighbourhood Approach to Energy Saving
Tuesday 10 March 2009

Chair:

David Green *Chief Executive, UKBCSE*

Speakers:

Colin Macleod	Department of Energy and Climate Change
Mark Johnson	<i>London Warm Zone</i>
William Edrich	<i>Kirklees Warm Zones</i>
Dave Pearson	<i>RWE npower</i>
Simon Tao	<i>Bradford District Council</i>
Lucy Darch	British Gas New Energy
Sam Peacock	Scottish and Southern Energy

Colin Macleod, Project Manager, Community Energy Savings Programme, Department of Energy and Climate Change

Colin Macleod outlined the key consultations launched by the Government on 12 February 2009 – the Heat and Energy Saving Strategy (HES), Community Energy Saving Programme (CESP) and changes to the Carbon Emissions Reduction Target (CERT). He noted that there will be a series of road shows across the UK to discuss the consultations, and the Government would welcome early feedback.

The Warm Zones Model - Mark Johnson, Operations Director, London Warm Zone

Within the Warm Zone Model, each 'Zone' encompasses an entire Local Authority ensuring parity between neighbourhoods. The Warm Zones team maintain close ties with Local Authorities and delivery partners to keep standards high. The model is flexible and can be adapted to meet local needs.

The London Warm Zone is contracted to 24 Local Authorities and has a good partnership with the Greater London Authority (GLA), on Fuel Poverty. They work closely with Warm Front and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Barking and Dagenham Local Authority have made four benefit advisors available to operate across London, providing a bespoke benefits service.

Based upon the London Warm Zone pilot underway in Hillingdon, they are currently writing a best practice model to be rolled out across London.

Kirklees Warm Zones - William Edrich, Director, Kirklees Warm Zones

Kirklees Energy Services manages the Warm Zone on behalf of Kirklees Council. They have prioritised delivery and offer free cavity wall and loft insulation to people regardless of income. The scheme involves 175,000 homes with a timescale of 3-3½ years. They found that most people were keen on the scheme and carried on with energy saving measures long after installation had taken place.

Bill Edrich believed that this approach could drive forward delivery on a national level. Through an area based approach such as the one in Kirklees he felt that the whole of the UK could be tackled in 3-5 years, building upon the industry information base.

Community Warmth - Dave Pearson, Community Initiatives Manager, RWE npower and Simon Tao, Consultant, Bradford District Council

The Community Warmth scheme covers five wards chosen because of the high level of fuel poverty, and the type of properties in the area. It is based upon a door to door model, but with added security to increase uptake amongst older residents. Their project utilised a PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) survey system from the beginning, allowing same day assessments and real time data feedback.

When the Community Warmth scheme was originally started it was targeted at areas with the highest levels of fuel poverty, however, as the properties in these areas were hard-to-treat, they found that there was little they could offer to help the householder. Therefore, they welcome the focus of CESP on more costly measures such as solid wall insulation.

Green Streets - Lucy Darch, Head of Brand & Market Development, British Gas New Energy

The Green Streets project chose eight streets to compete against one another to reduce their energy consumption over a year. Diverse ranges of energy saving measures were implemented in 8 houses from each street, and community groups were encouraged to meet and decide upon how savings could be made. They were monitored closely and given access to specialised advisors and engineers.

British Gas is seeking to build on the community based approach with Green Streets 2 in 2010, which will also explore installing community and household scale renewable technologies.

From the Green Streets project they felt that a fast track to smart metering was the way forward, as engaging people in their real time energy usage was one of the best ways to alter behaviour.

Challenge North Leigh - Sam Peacock, Energy Public Affairs Manager, Scottish and Southern Energy

Scottish and Southern Energy are currently undertaking three pilot schemes to gain practical understanding of how demand reduction can be achieved at a community level. They are trialling Smart Metering and different approaches to traditional metering systems, including comparative billing and internet based alternatives, with a view to altering people's usage patterns.

In each community they have provided participants with a selection of different measures including real time display equipment, infra-red surveys, energy efficient lighting and insulation, offering prizes to communities which reduce their consumption by 10%.

Looking at specific data from North Leigh, they have achieved a real reduction in energy usage of approximately 9% based upon the previous year's figures. They will continue to report progress further down the line.

Panel Discussion - chaired by David Green, Chief Executive, UKBCSE

Issues discussed included:

- Cost of installing solid wall insulation and potential for CESP to address this.
- Need for financing mechanisms which provide upfront capital for measures which consumers can pay back over time.
- Whether this type of approach is suitable for addressing fuel poverty and that in such cases potential energy savings may not be achieved due to increased comfort level.
- Potential for rising block tariffs, however, it was noted that this could disadvantage larger families.
- Need for hands on project management and training on solid wall insulation and microgeneration.

In conclusion, David Green thanked all the participants and speakers and encourages attendees to feed into the DECC consultation on the Community Energy Saving Programme.