

A Framework for Community Action on Climate Change

Cover-note to consultees

This report presents some ideas for improving the potential of community action on climate change in Scotland. If you have any interest in community action, the author group is keen to hear your comments. **Please read on, and respond by 20 January.**

Much progress has been achieved in CCF 1, with lots of useful experience gained. Difficulties have also been encountered; all agree the need to capture lessons and learn from them. This report has set out to identify the most important barriers and propose solutions.

The idea of a 'framework' of this kind was discussed in a paper circulated widely by Rachel Nunn and Simon Pepper in May 2010, and a subsequent meeting of interested parties in Stirling on 1 July 2010. A small group, comprising delegates from that meeting, have prepared this report, in an exercise funded by KSB. It draws heavily on ideas discussed in that paper, on the significant volume of very well-informed responses submitted by email, and on the outcomes of the meeting on 1 July itself.

The report currently has no real authority; the group has simply used its good offices to assemble these ideas, based on evidence from a range of sources. We hope its strength lies in that evidence and in the judgement and experience of the individuals who have contributed. But the legitimacy of the recommendations - and the strength of the case for action - will come from the level of support it gets from interested parties more widely.

Please note that this is not about carving out territory for a particular organisation or interest; the only aim has been to identify solutions to barriers. These solutions will probably lie in the hands of a number of players, preferably co-operating together, within the kind of agreed principles proposed here.

So, we are now circulating these proposals for wider comment and advice from stakeholders, on the following questions, before any further action is proposed.

We are asking for a *general* (not detailed, please!) **response, by 20 January** to the authors' email addresses below. It would be tremendously helpful if you could consider the following 4 questions:

- 1 whether you broadly support the recommendations;
- 2 any major differences of view or reservations that you have;
- 3 whether your organisation would be interested in helping its development;
- 4 any areas you would prioritise.

We'll then be back in touch at the end of January.

Many thanks and best wishes for Christmas and the New Year

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(Chair and facilitator of the Framework Group')

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A Framework for Community Action on Climate Change

Executive Summary

Introduction

Community action has a very distinctive and important role in the climate agenda, driving cultural change, and complementing the actions of government and industry.

This report proposes ways of creating a more fertile setting for communities to contribute to a low carbon future, while also promoting local resilience and well being. The recommendations (summarised below) are aimed at creating an accessible, open ‘framework’ of advice, help, encouragement, learning opportunities, and improved conditions for effective partnership with others.

The key elements of the proposed framework are:

- **A network of experienced help** to give better support for starting up, where this is currently insufficient;
- **A brokering service to help negotiate** clearer pathways where these tend to be blocked;
- **New funding packages** to provide easier access to appropriate finance;
- **Clearer definition of the roles that communities and all other players can play** in climate action, to facilitate better collaboration and mutual help, where this is not forthcoming;
- **Improvements in top level strategies** to give better alignment between the actions, policies and messages of different players, where these present perversities or contradictions.

The report draws on the experience of communities to date on our collective voyage of discovery to secure a low carbon future. It builds on the tried and tested stages, essential to all local initiatives, of:

- Involving individuals, businesses and partners;
- Building local capacity to take action;
- Preparing and implementing a plan for the future;
- Organising people and resources to make the plan happen;
- Learning as we go and measuring progress.

Note: The report is deliberately focussed in two ways:

- i) examining the barriers experienced by communities themselves. (We recommend a parallel but separate review of the context set by public and private sectors. See R20)
- ii) identifying only **what** is needed. **How** these needs can be met and **by whom** are, we propose, matters for a 'delivery group' to discuss, if these recommendations are broadly supported by stakeholders (see Proposed Next Steps, below).

Summary of Recommendations

Set 1: Capacity and Planning (*medium priority*)

- R1 Provide support for a user-mediated information network**, to assist access to information sources that are proven to be most useful/topical.
- R2 Encourage a flexible approach from funders**, based on an assessment process to ensure that funding is tailored to the needs of the group.
- R3 Assist strategic planning**: adapting existing advice and toolkits on planning for community action, so as to assist in the transition to a low carbon future.

Set 2: Funding & Finance (*very high priority*)

- R4 Improve co-ordination of public and charitable sector funding** to support grassroots, community action for a low carbon future.
- R5 Develop and disseminate successful models of project finance**, including loan and equity funding models, for this sector.
- R6 Establish a brokering service to help community groups access finance**, co-ordinating national streams in response to community strategic plans.

- R7 Establish common protocols for assessing project proposals**, easily accessed by communities.
- R8 Provide a set of tools to measure the carbon consequences** of any investment decision, to help guide the choices that community groups make.

Set 3: Creating a Context for Partnership *(medium priority)*

- R 9 Undertake a scenario planning exercise to chart the role of local communities** in achieving the government's low carbon targets and their relationship to stakeholders.
- R10 Promote the value and significance of action at the 'community' level**, by publishing examples to explain and endorse their potential.
- R11 Use the 'public bodies duties' of the CC Act** to prompt support for community action and the role of local authorities as a local leader on climate change.
- R12 Confirm the role of community action by writing it clearly into top level strategies**, emphasising the need for other sectors to support community action.
- R13 Initiate negotiations with umbrella bodies** to use their good offices to encourage local community groups, whether geographic or communities of interest, identity or culture, to apply for funding to include action on climate change in their activities.
- R14 Consider the establishment of a network of public and private sector employers** prepared to support staff to work in their own communities.
- R15 Promote a more representative 'community voice'** to raise the profile and role of this sector.

Set 4: Measuring Success *(very high priority)*

- R16 Agree and disseminate measures for communities** to calculate their progress towards a low carbon future.
- R17 Consult communities, in a series of one-day feedback sessions** to establish critical areas such as targets and indicators of community change.

Set 5: Leadership *(high priority)*

- R18 Initiate a series of 'Climate Futures' events hosted by communities** to inspire, encourage, support and inform leading figures in the grassroots movement.

R19 Initiate an awards scheme to encourage, support and recognise effective leaders (and leading communities) in community climate action.

R20 Review the wider pattern of leadership offered by public and private sectors, to identify ways in which they could set the context for more effective community action.

Proposed next steps

1. Circulate this report to stakeholders, including those involved in earlier stages of this process (see Section 4); inviting responses indicating broad reactions by Friday 21st January 2011.

2. Depending on the level of support from stakeholders, establish a 'Framework review group' in early 2011, with representation from all relevant sectors, to:

- Consider the report and its recommendations in the light of emerging details of government spending plans and climate change strategies;
- Commission further work on any elements of the recommendations requiring further exploration;
- Agree schedule of implementation of recommendations receiving confirmed support from relevant parties;
- Oversee implementation process, promoting co-operation between those involved, as appropriate.

Supporting Detail

The recommendations and each 'Barrier Set' are expanded upon in the main report. They were developed through a series of 'think-pieces' initiated by the Framework Group. We have collated these in a separate Annex for further reference.

Simon Pepper and Alan Caldwell¹
For 'The Framework Group', December 2010

Acknowledgements:

This report is the product of a collaborative process described in Section 4.

'The Framework Group' comprised:

Simon Pepper (chairman), Alan Caldwell (facilitator), David Gunn (Climate Challenge Fund Manager), Hamid van Koten (North Howe Transition Town), Osbert Lancaster (Footprint), Rachel Nunn (Going Carbon Neutral Stirling), Eva Schonveld (Transition Scotland Support), George Tarvit (Sustainable Scotland Network), Alastair Tibbitt (Greener Leith), Morag Watson (WWF Scotland), Gary White (Agenda Carbon Ltd) & Shelagh Young (Sustainable Development Commission).

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1. Proposition

Alongside public and private sector interventions, communities have a crucial and distinctive role to play in taking action on climate change, encouraging environmental citizenship and creating a more sustainable future for Scotland. Full engagement of the public at the community level is an essential requirement in the delivery of the ambitious carbon reduction targets of the Scottish Government and plans for a low carbon future.

Communities matter. They are where we all spend time together, sharing space, resources and ideas. People care deeply about the wellbeing of their communities and are prepared to invest time, energy and ideas in ensuring they are strong and healthy. They are a place where people can make (and see) real improvements to problems that may seem too big to influence in wider society. They are powerful hotbeds of action, bursting with potential to change behaviour and make things happen.

The potential is clear. Already there is a growing, grassroots movement taking action on climate across Scotland (see pointers below). This community action can:

- Reduce carbon emissions directly;
- Change culture and consumer behaviour giving politicians and business leaders the 'permission' to take the big decisions required of them;
- Tap into, and strengthen, the huge resource of social capital (our capacity to trust, care and co-operate) [see 'The Hidden Wealth of Nations' David Halpern];
- Provide an essential component in the range of strategies required to take action, from a local to national level.

Much has been achieved already. However, the route into participation can be fraught with difficulties and there are lessons to be learned. The pattern of assistance available is mixed – brilliant in some aspects, absent or even obstructive in others. For beginners, more handholding and path smoothing is required, to enable them to get up and running. Some pioneering communities have 'made it' across these barriers; these represent an enormously valuable resource of experience and expertise that can be shared with others starting out. The objective must be to learn from experience and create the most fertile environment possible for all to engage and make progress. To achieve this we are proposing this Framework.

2. Preface

2.1 What do we mean by 'communities'?

The term community is used here to describe a level of activity where social factors operate most effectively to change attitudes and behaviours – and ultimately social norms. There are many factors that influence behaviour, but it's at the level of community that people, who spend time together and share a sense of identity, influence each other to change. This effect is more powerful than many of the other behaviour change factors

put together. Community level social interaction takes place for most people in three settings:

1. Communities at home (residential, neighbourhood, etc)
2. Workplace communities (setting governed by employer)
3. Communities of interest/identity (setting organised by interest group)

It is very important indeed to address cultural change in each of these settings, in order to create greater reach, reinforce new cultural norms, and reduce the nullifying effects of contradictory signals.

This paper addresses the first of these – neighbourhood communities – where formal structures for organising innovation are often lacking (those with e.g. development trusts or strong community councils are a minority, already ahead of the game).

2.2 What do we mean by our Framework and what will it do?

“A set of inter-related measures providing easily accessible advice, help, encouragement and learning opportunities while creating a coherent context for effective action.”

At present, there is a very limited strategic arrangement of provisions within which action at a community level can proceed without perversities and confusions that frustrate objectives. The framework will seek to provide:

- **A network of experienced help** to give better support, where it is currently insufficient;
- **A brokering service** to help negotiate clearer pathways where these tend to be blocked;
- **New funding packages** to provide easier access to appropriate finance;
- **Clearly defined roles of communities, and all other players**, in climate action, to facilitate better collaboration and mutual help, where this is not forthcoming;
- **Improved strategies** to give better alignment between the actions, policies and messages of different players, where these present perversities or contradictions.

2.3 What is the current context?

This paper takes as its cue the Scottish Government’s unambiguous “commitment to community led action on climate change” by continuing the progress achieved by the £27m Climate Challenge Fund, through an increase in its budget for 2011-12, and to “build on key lessons from recent experience” (see Finance Secretary budget announcement 18 Nov 2010). It also responds to the short timescale of this (we hope

interim) commitment, prompting ideas for particular patterns of investment that will lay effective foundations for the future.

3. Pointers

The launch of the Climate Challenge Fund in 2008 led to a blizzard of applications and awards of funding to over 250 community groups tackling more than 330 projects on energy, travel, waste and food – directly reducing emissions and helping people to get to grips with the issues involved and the changes which are needed. This illustrates the huge potential of community action, driving cultural change, and complementing and supporting the actions of government and industry. In the process, many useful lessons have also been learned about the difficulties encountered.

The focus in this report is the potential for increased effectiveness. It draws on evidence and experience from a wide variety of practitioners to:

- Identify barriers which hinder action at the community level, and
- Propose solutions as a basis for more effective use of available investment.

4. Process

This initiative has progressed in the following phases:

- Discussion paper circulated in May 2010 to about 40 key reps of relevant sectors, eliciting a significant volume of overwhelmingly positive response.
- Meeting of responders and other interested individuals in Stirling 1 July 2010.
- Development of ideas by a Group of representatives identified on 1 July, facilitated by A Caldwell and S Pepper on contract from Keep Scotland Beautiful.
- This report, for consultation with original participants in Dec '10 - Jan '11.

5. Principles

From this process 11 principles have emerged to guide the development and delivery of the Framework:

1. **Facilitation** – encouraging communities to fulfil their potential in their own way;
2. **Empowerment** – providing essential support to communities; they can't act alone;
3. **Localism** - encouraging a shift of resources, capacity and control from the centre to communities, provided that due diligence is observed;
4. **Citizenship** – making climate action mainstream, a normal part of citizenship, driven by the key value of justice between people, near and far;

5. **Unlocking social capital** – harnessing and strengthening the huge untapped potential for community action;
6. **Culture and Carbon** – encouraging behaviour change that leads to carbon savings;
7. **Financial sustainability** – encouraging new models, mechanisms and sources of finance to maintain support for community action for a low carbon future;
8. **Joined up approach** – encouraging integration with other community support structures and partnership with other organisations taking climate action;
9. **Flexible support** - acknowledging the early need to build skills, experience and organisational capacity and the resources to follow;
10. **Interdependence** – communities are a vital cog in national climate action;
11. **Resilience** – a key objective all interventions, whether climate-related or driven by other imperatives.

6. Barriers to Progress & Actions Proposed

Through the process outlined at (Section 4 above) we have identified 21 barriers to community action on climate change (see appendix). These barriers are not theoretical; they reflect the practical and recent experience of communities delivering projects to tackle climate change and other community based regeneration activities over the years. They are fundamental and deep-seated, outside the direct control of communities and therefore requiring effective action by relevant partners so that progress can be made. These 21 barriers can be organised into 5 sets:

Barrier Set	Importance*	Form of Response
1. Capacity & Planning	Medium	flexible financial support Strategic planning in communities Training, Advice Information
2. Funding & finance	Very high	Training, Advice New models Partnership, brokering
3. Creating a Context for Partnership	Medium	Scenario planning
4. Measuring success	Very high	Training, Advice
5. Leadership	High	Training Peer to peer mentoring Awards

* these ratings are based on a survey of the views of 'development officers' in the CCF admin team, each holding responsibility for the administration of funding for 50-60 community groups. They attributed scores to indicate how important it was to get that issue resolved, reflecting their perception of its significance for groups and the frequency with which it arose.

6.1 Set 1: Capacity and Planning (*medium priority*)

The issue

Every community faces the issue of its capacity to deliver effective action on climate change. How can it identify and marshal the skills, expertise and resources available within the community? How can it identify and access help from enabling organisations that are there to support their work? How will the community organise itself to identify need, involve people, prepare plans, deliver projects and learn from the work it undertakes? How can it access the knowledge, information and expertise to be effective in its work?

Community groups tend to approach their challenges by means of a process which they invent as they go along. **This creative process can help bond the group as well as develop projects that are original and highly tailored to their specific locality. However, groups can also sometimes feel that they are re-inventing the wheel, and really value hearing about the experience of others who have had successes with similar ideas.**

This is an issue of helping to build capacity - organisational, technical and social – by providing easy access to targeted, relevant information, and opportunities to share learning and experience.

The evidence

In identifying the 21 barriers the following examples were highlighted:

- **Guidance on managing a community project** - *“We took a long time figuring out how to go about organising a project.”*
- **Financial and other management advice** - *“We’ve been held up by a lack of expertise in basic project management skills.”*
- **How to deal with consultants** - *“We weren’t satisfied with the paid help we received.”*
- **Accessing Technical Support** - *“We have found it really difficult to access sound technical advice on reducing carbon emissions and developing project ideas.”*
- **Dealing with conflicts and vested interests** - *“We have bumped into barriers to our progress with land owners who don’t want to co-operate and anti-carbon reduction views within our community. How can we access help to resolve these conflicts?”*
- **Meeting the information needs of community groups** - *“We wish we had known...”*

Analysis

This is one of the easier barriers to address. For the most part, the information and potential sources of support already exist. Some have worked well. There is an opportunity to capitalise on the valuable experience gained by KSB and SDC² in supplying capacity building support to communities during the delivery of the Climate Challenge Fund. A number of other agencies have been active in support of many groups. There is also scope for integrating better with the resources and talents of umbrella organisations which can have an enabling role. Most importantly, the talents, skills and experience of the more mature and successful community organisations represent a huge, untapped resource of support, learning, information and advice.

There is extensive, easy accessible guidance on planning for community action from involving folk, preparing a plan of action, organising the community to make things happen and learning while you go. This strategic planning process has been developed from the direct experience of communities involved in community planning and regeneration over the years. It offers a guiding structure that encourages creativity while avoiding pitfalls. It introduces strategic thinking, helping communities to think beyond individual projects and build a long-term basis for action. It also provides the basis to help partners broker the resources required to make things happen.

It is important to recognise that, while climate change may be the underlying motivation of project leaders, others in the community may respond more to a range of personal, immediate or local benefits. Taking action, for example, to promote local transport, save energy costs, grow your own food, look at alternative energy sources and caring for vulnerable folk within the community, all have a range of personal and community benefits as well as contributing to the wider imperative of carbon reductions. The key is to encourage a project design that responds to needs as perceived by the community, while also cultivating a capacity and interest in climate-related issues.

There is a strong case for the network of community groups to be supported in developing their own web-based information resource. This would provide assisted access to those sources of information that are tried and tested by community groups themselves. Several such sources exist already in a variety of locations; the priority must be to ensure that groups have easy access to those sources that suit their style and needs.

Recommendations

- **R1 Provide support for a user-mediated information network**, to assist access to information sources that are proven to be most useful/topical.
- **R2 Encourage a flexible approach from funders, based on an assessment process** to ensure that funding is tailored to the needs of the group. This should

² Keep Scotland Beautiful, Sustainable Development Commission

include pump priming assistance where appropriate, enabling communities to buy advice or practical help from others in (for example):

- Organising themselves (group formation, community profiles, skills audit etc).
- Setting up visits to other communities (with obvious linkages).
- Plan preparation and project development.
- Training of community animateurs (leaders – see Set 5 below).

Alternatively, the assessment process might confirm that the group could proceed straight to a more substantial project development proposal.

- **R3 Assist strategic planning:** adapting existing advice and toolkits on planning for community action, so as to assist in the transition to a low carbon future.

6.2 Set 2: Funding & Finance *(very high priority)*

The issue

Current funding patterns are overwhelmingly public-sector reliant and short term. Public funding – even if it is maintained at current absolute levels in the face of cutbacks (as proposed in the recent budget announcement) – may not continue indefinitely at the level of individual communities, where public and charitable funding is also notoriously short-term.

Notwithstanding the merits of investing taxpayers' money back into communities to make better places, these budgetary realities impose serious constraints on sustained community action, without a shift to income generation from other sources and encouraging a more entrepreneurial approach by communities (and their partners).

To access appropriate funding there is a parallel issue for both communities and the investors: they must have effective and efficient tools to ensure that any particular investment decisions will actually save carbon.

The evidence

In identifying the 21 barriers the following examples were highlighted:

- **Continuity funding** – *“What can we do when CCF runs out?”*
- **Short term funding** – *“Most of the obvious funding sources are so short term and project specific.”*
- **Showing a return from behaviour change** – *“A lot of our behaviour change work, the stuff that is crucial in our communities, can't ever make money and it is quite difficult to show what the actual return is.”*
- **Enterprising approach** – *“Increasingly we want to take an enterprising approach, renewable energy being a prime example. There are still real barriers to accessing equity and loan funding.”*

Analysis

There is a limit to what can be achieved through purely grant funding. There is, of course, a need for funders to recognise the importance of the 'core funding' of building capacity, feasibility work and early stage projects. These are the foundation for community action on climate change. The proposed brokering process can help to build a common understanding between communities and funders and the simplification of the application and assessment process (from both parties' perspectives).

However, the real key is unlocking the potential of a more entrepreneurial approach, with the aim of long term self-financing. Many communities around Scotland are taking a stake in community scale renewable projects. These are excellent examples of carbon saving projects helping to change behaviour and generate sustainable income streams to support the while process. Supported by Community Energy Scotland, these communities are funding every stage of the strategic planning process (see Set 1) where community companies are using their income to implement their plans for the future and sustaining the organisation to make it all happen.

The next step for this enterprising approach is to create revolving loan funds to support community action for a low carbon future – emphasising mutuality. The mechanisms are not rocket science and are already in operation in principle through, for example, the Scottish Government's Social Investment Fund. Charitable Foundations are increasingly looking to invest their capital in community backed action rather than conventional investment funds. The private sector through groups such as the 2020 Delivery Group is looking at how private investment funds can be directed to community level projects.

There is a need to look at improving the linkage between grant funding and an enterprising approach, to support the strategic planning process at a community level.

- **Grant funding** is typically relied upon for the early stages of a community group's existence, but is usually short term.
- **Enterprise funding**, generating income and revolving funds (both at a community and national level) can underpin the longer-term sustainability of community action.

Recommendations

- **R4 Improve co-ordination of public and charitable sector funding** to support grassroots, community action for a low carbon future.
- **R5 Develop and disseminate successful models of project finance**, including loan and equity funding models, for this sector.
- **R6 Establish a brokering service to help community groups access finance**. This would link communities with funding and finance of all descriptions guided by the strategic plans produced at a community level.

- **R7 Establish common protocols for assessing project proposals**, easily accessed by communities.
- **R8 Provide a set of tools to measure the carbon consequences of any investment decision**, to help guide the choices that community groups make.

6.3 Set 3: Creating a Context for Partnership *(medium priority)*

The issue

There is no doubt that community groups can benefit enormously from the help of a variety of partners. Without that help, they can be much less effective. However, collaboration with partners is a two way street, requiring mutual understanding, shared objectives, and complementary roles/skills/capacities to deliver these objectives. Many of the difficulties in securing support and co-operation arise because these factors are weak or missing. These are issues that may affect community groups in any aspect of their work – not just climate action. Remedies will therefore benefit not only their climate-related activity, but also all aspects of community empowerment and resilience.

The evidence

Six of the ‘barriers’ identified relate to collaboration with partners or the importance of ‘situating’ the initiative within an empowering context:

- **Negotiating support from partners** - *“Getting help from partners is time consuming and frustrating.”*
- **Getting help from representative bodies** - *“We are too small to have any clout.”*
- **Clarifying the roles of relevant players** - *“It took us ages to work out what we could expect from Local Authorities and other bodies; often they didn’t seem to know themselves.”*
- **Promoting a culture of partnership within a wider strategy of change** - *“We are doing our bit, but local business, agencies and others don’t seem to be doing theirs. Aren’t we all in this together?”*
- **Linkage with 2020 groups etc** - *“We feel disconnected from the big strategy.”*
- **Understanding Scenarios to 2050** - *“We are aware that government is involved in scenario planning to achieve their carbon reduction targets (and wider sustainability issues). How can we take part and learn from these scenario planning exercises?”*

Analysis

Potentially supportive partners tend to fit one of three types:

- 1 **Climate-focussed organisations** that clearly identify this support as a key way of meeting their own objectives. These have yielded **good support**, no doubt with potential for improvement;
- 2 **Community-support organisations** that – although willing to help - have tended not to include climate change in their agenda, due to separate infrastructures being created to do so. This is an area of **missed opportunity** for improved integration which would benefit both parties;
- 3 **Public and private sector organisations** including Local Authorities and businesses, which need to take a more creative view of their remit before they will commit resources in this direction. Their co-operation however can be vital to the success of a community project. The worst-case scenario arises (all too often) when support is promised, but not delivered. This is an area **requiring urgent attention**.

Community action is supported by government, but has had a low profile in government's emerging strategies on climate change. These references need to be strengthened so as to legitimise and acknowledge the importance of community action.

Given its crucial role, the 'community' sector is too weakly represented in the body politic – a serious flaw that needs urgent remedy. Too often it is swept into the category of '3rd sector', where it sits uncomfortably and obscurely alongside organised lobby groups and service providers. The development of a stronger representative voice for this sector should be encouraged.

Among local authorities and businesses there is a need for a **wider appreciation** of:

- The teamwork required between all sectors in meeting government targets;
- The crucial and distinctive role which community groups can play in the delivery of these targets, to which public and private sectors are also committed;
- The mutual benefit of engagement with communities for Local Authorities and local businesses, creating greater social cohesion, community spirit and teamwork;
- The high level of dependence of local community groups on this support, both in cash and in kind;
- The many forms that this support can take, ranging from consistent messaging to loans or gifts of materials, helpful planning policies, access to facilities, releasing staff to participate in projects and funding.

There is also a **need to mobilise the existing infrastructure** for supporting communities, encouraging relevant organisations to use their good offices, not only to support new groups but to encourage the thousands of existing community groups, whatever their current preoccupations, to consider climate issues as a core element of all community action. This is an important activity in its own right, but its value is enormously amplified by the way it contributes to the consistency of message and the critical mass of climate action underway,

In a similar way, there is scope for **mobilising a wide range of local communities of interest**, identity and culture (including sports, social, ethnic, faith groups,) to include a consideration of climate issues in the way they organise their activities. Again this has huge potential for increasing the reach and the critical mass of climate action, aimed initially at quite modest but significant shifts in awareness, attitudes and behaviours.

Recommendations

- **R9 Undertake a scenario planning exercise** to explore the above issues between representatives of community groups and other agencies/authorities/business interests. This could be a pilot for similar exercises that may be appropriate to take place in communities as part of their group's planning processes (see Set 1) until the pattern of relationships becomes more familiar and better established.
- **R10 Promote the value and significance of action at the 'community' level**, by publishing examples to explain and endorse their potential not only to contribute meaningfully to national emissions reduction targets, but also to influence behaviours and create new cultural norms. You-tube is a powerful device!
- **R11 Use the 'public bodies duties' of the CC Act** to prompt support for community action and the role of local authorities as a local leader on climate change.
- **R12 Confirm the role of community action by writing it clearly into top level Strategies**, emphasising the need for other sectors to support community action.
- **R13 Initiate negotiations with umbrella bodies** to use their good offices to encourage local community groups, whether geographic or communities of interest, identity or culture, to apply for funding to include action on climate change in their activities.
- **R14 Consider the establishment of a network of public and private sector employers** prepared to support staff to work in their own communities.
- **R15 Promote a more representative 'community voice'** to raise the profile and role of this sector.

6.4 Set 4: Measuring Success (*very high priority*)

The issue

Measuring progress towards carbon reduction and a sustainable future is currently very confused with numerous tools, techniques and indicators. This has downsides for many aspects of support, and for consistency of reporting, comparison and sharing of skills.

The issue is how to provide meaningful, easy to understand and accepted ways of communities measuring the success of their strategic plan and the actions within it. This must acknowledge that carbon saving is seldom the primary motivation for citizens' participation in community action.

The evidence

Measures of success - "Carbon metrics are a nightmare. Everyone gives different advice, and we can't compare with other groups who are using different metrics".

This is the universal feedback from every community taking action for a low carbon future. Not a single community has said that they have found a satisfactory way to undertake this work.

Analysis

As part of funding requirements and demonstrating legitimacy, communities are often required to show progress against stated aims and objectives. While agencies do provide guidance on developing progress indicators, community projects are diverse and often don't fit within common formats. Hence project leaders can often struggle with the complexities of understanding and monitoring the impact of individual behaviour change.

Indicators need to reflect accurately the effectiveness and impact of key actions undertaken by the community. Finding appropriate generic measurement indicators can be problematic, particularly with a diverse group of community types and activities. Metrics designed to monitor outcomes often focus on activity, as this is easier to measure, and meaningful behaviour change can be difficult (if not impossible) to isolate and allocate to specific interventions.

Also, metrics are often only considered as an afterthought to the early primary focus on project start-up and administration, resulting in little or no baseline data, and the need to gather data in retrospect.

Recommendations

- **R16** Agree and disseminate measures for communities to calculate their progress towards a low carbon future. This may well involve adopting a ‘gold, silver and bronze’ type standard. [KSB guidance, currently in prep, is designed to meet this need].
- **R17** Consult communities, in a series of one-day feedback sessions to establish critical areas such as targets and indicators of community change. These sessions would be aligned with other events to make best use of participants’ time.

6.5 Set 5: Leadership *(high priority)*

The issue

All new initiatives need leaders, but quality counts. Skilful leadership is often the crucial factor in community action. Fostering good leadership in community action is a key strategic priority. We need more of it. At a strategic level, government and business sector leadership can also make a huge difference to the success of the community sector in meeting its potential.

The evidence

Invariably, successful projects have good leaders. They have the confidence and skills to set direction, inspire, take risks, engage others, listen, adapt, and drive change. They also understand the context within which they work, and how to relate to those who exercise power and influence. Poor leadership – which can involve excessive strengths of zeal, inspiration, drive and impatience – is often a principal cause of failure.

But good leaders tend to emerge in many different ways, and adopt a variety of different styles. Often their emergence is hindered by the very idea of leadership which can deter those who lack the confidence or skills, or who dislike the implication of hierarchy. Communities may already have good leaders who are pre-occupied with other agendas, or have good people who are reluctant for a variety of reasons to take on a leadership role. Barriers include:

- A lack of skills and confidence, and
- Poor recognition of their legitimacy and transformational potential

Nurturing good leadership amongst volunteers is a subtle art. Peer-to-peer mentoring is a powerful device for sharing the learning and inspiration that comes from very direct personal experience, building the confidence of those who are starting out. It is a method particularly suited to volunteers whose motivations are values-led. Comments from leaders reflect a sense of isolation: *“Contact with other groups is both therapeutic and stimulating”*.

Analysis

There is a need for measures that nurture good leadership in climate action, both amongst existing community leaders and amongst those who have potential to take on this role. The vision is for community leaders not only to be **effective**, but also to be **widely recognised as effective and legitimate actors on climate change**.

These measures will need to:

- Address issues of recognition, as well as leadership qualities;
- Appeal to all types of potential leader (doers, entrepreneurs, organisers...);
- Be effective use of volunteers' time;
- Be free of costs to volunteers.

There is also a case for making centralised funding available to support the delivery of these measures by the community network itself, thus helping to consolidate and build the intrinsic authority and leadership of the movement.

Finally, this report has not examined the leadership and enabling role of public and private sector organisations as they affect community action, with special reference to the powerful roles of government agencies, energy suppliers and the planning system. We believe this is an area which deserves further study.

Recommendations

- **R18 Initiate a series of 'Climate Futures' events** hosted by communities to inspire, encourage, support and inform leading figures in the grassroots movement to promote lower-carbon living. They will initiate further activity, led by the participants that will advance the community climate action agenda. We suggest a trial of this type of event with a view to developing the approach and offering a series of regular events of this type in the future.
- **R19 Initiate an awards scheme** to encourage, support and recognise effective leaders (and leading communities) in community climate action as a basis for discussion and development with potential partners: a climate leadership award – or accolade, recognising a level of successful achievement. This could involve preparatory guidance, workshops, training, as well as continuing support for award-winners, including links to other leadership groupings in civil society.
- **R20 Review the wider pattern of leadership offered by public and private sectors**, to identify ways in which they could set the context for more effective community action.

7. Conclusion

We recommend this package of measures to be considered jointly by all interests involved. This would constitute a shared framework of support for community action, with the aim of:

- **Responding to the sets of barriers** identified in Section 6;
- **Offering solutions** consistent with the principles in Section 5;
- **Engaging the co-operation** of all parties concerned.

In this way, the huge potential of community action could be liberated in service to “the greatest challenge of our time”.

Simon Pepper and Alan Caldwell³
For ‘The Framework Group’, December 2010

‘The Framework Group’ comprised:

Simon Pepper (chairman), Alan Caldwell (facilitator), David Gunn (Climate Challenge Fund Manager), Hamid van Koten (North Howe Transition Town), Osbert Lancaster (Footprint), Rachel Nunn (Going Carbon Neutral Stirling), Eva Schonveld (Transition Scotland Support), George Tarvit (Sustainable Scotland Network), Alastair Tibbitt (Greener Leith), Morag Watson (WWF Scotland), Gary White (Agenda Carbon Ltd) & Shelagh Young (Sustainable Development Commission).

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Appendix 1: Main barriers faced by Community Groups

(From evidence supplied in process described in Section 4 of main report)

1 Guidance on managing a community project *“We took a long time figuring out how to go about organising a project.”*

THE PROBLEM: Community groups tend to approach their challenges by means of a process which they invent as they go along. The result is an enormous variety of processes, often involving much wasted effort on the part of the community and presenting a confused picture to those who are in a position to support them.

2 Contributing to sustainability *“We found that some of our actions on emissions were actually making things less sustainable in other areas.”*

THE PROBLEM: Climate change is the priority focus for much activity at present, but how should a community group relate this to the wider aspects of sustainability? How can they avoid the risk of unintended consequences for other aspects of the sustainability agenda?

3 Measures of success *“Carbon metrics are a nightmare. Everyone gives different advice, and we can’t compare with other groups who are using different metrics.”*

THE PROBLEM: Measuring progress towards carbon reduction and a sustainable future is currently very confused with numerous tools, techniques and indicators. This has downsides for many aspects of support, and for consistency of reporting, comparison, sharing of skills, etc.

4 Continuity funding *“What can we do when CCF runs out?”*

THE PROBLEM: Current funding patterns are overwhelmingly public-sector reliant and short term imposing serious constraints on sustained community action, without a shift to income generation from other sources.

5 Negotiating support from partners *“Getting help from partners is time consuming and frustrating.”*

THE PROBLEM: Community groups are often ill-equipped in resources and/or confidence to negotiate the support they require from partner organisations. The process of fundraising and partnership building can sap their energy and resources.

6 Getting help from umbrella bodies *“We are too small to have any clout.”*

THE PROBLEM: Individual community groups have little power, experience or leverage. This can exclude them from access to a variety of opportunities that require economies of scale and the application of collective assets – training, investment, influence, etc.

- 7 Clarifying roles of other parties** *“It took us ages to work out what we could expect from Local Authorities and other bodies; often they didn’t seem to know themselves.”*
- THE PROBLEM: Community groups currently have to explore the scope and quality of support which they can expect from a range of partners. But this is not easily tapped.
- 8 Encouraging a culture of partnership in delivering wider strategies** *“We are doing our bit, but local business, agencies and others don’t seem to be doing theirs. Aren’t we all in this together?”*
- THE PROBLEM: Community groups have often experienced a lack of partnership spirit in their dealings with local authorities, local businesses and others.
- 9 Consistent, compelling messaging** *“There’s a chaotic mix of messages out there.”*
- THE PROBLEM: Messaging is of mixed quality, sometimes reinforcing a consumption culture, sometimes using inappropriate shock or doom tactics, etc. There is no clearly shared vision regarding the aims or potential of community action; no single place where the scale of activity and its achievements can be observed; therefore no sense of critical mass – a key requirement in developing a feeling of growing momentum and strength.
- 10 Sharing experience** *“Contact with other groups is both therapeutic and stimulating.”*
- THE PROBLEM: Comparing notes with other groups can be highly motivating. Also, groups are often highly dependent on one or two lead individuals, who can feel isolated and subject to burn-out.
- 11 Meeting the information needs of groups** *“I wish we’d known...”*
- THE PROBLEM: many groups come to realise that there is a huge knowledge base that they haven’t tapped into effectively, and that it is difficult to keep up to date with changing policies, grants, targets, etc. The plethora of material is baffling.
- 12 Encouraging communities of interest** *“What about workplace groups, faith groups...”*
- THE PROBLEM: These can be powerful agents of change, but little provision is currently made for supporting them. This represents a huge loss of potential. In general, they may have less access to alternative income streams than geographical communities.
- 13 Providing easy reference updates** *“It’s so difficult to keep in touch with rules, policies, etc.”*
- THE PROBLEM: The activities of community groups are highly vulnerable to changes in policy and other aspects of the context within which they operate.

- 14 **Financial and other management advice** *“We’ve been held up by a lack of expertise in basic project management skills.”*
- 15 **How to deal with consultants** *“We weren’t satisfied with the paid help we received.”*
- 16 **Clearer guidance on the needs of funders** *“We could have done with more details of what was required, how and when.”*
- 17 **Specific support on specialist issues** *“We needed help navigating issues which we later found others had explored before.”*
- 18 **Linkage with 2020 groups etc** *“We feel disconnected from the big strategy.”*
- 19 **Accessing Technical Support** *“We have found it really difficult to access sound technical advice on reducing carbon emissions and developing project ideas.”*
- 20 **Dealing with conflicts and vested interests** *“We have bumped into barriers to our progress with land owners who don’t want to co-operate and anti-carbon reduction views within our community. How can we access help to resolve these conflicts?”*
- 21 **Understanding Scenarios to 2050** *“We are aware that government is involved in scenario planning to achieve their carbon reduction targets (and wider sustainability issues). How can we take part and learn from these scenario planning exercises?”*