

COMMUNITY-LED RESPONSES TO CLIMATE CHANGE A SCOPING STUDY

Prepared for:

The Big Lottery Fund

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April 2012



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Community-led Responses to Climate Change

Executive Summary

This report outlines a short scoping study for the Big Lottery Fund (BIG). It was commissioned to help understand how communities are engaged in responding to climate change, to identify some of the barriers groups may face in responding effectively and what their support needs might be. The study will help inform the work that BIG undertakes with partners under its “Sustainable and Resilient Communities” strategy.

The findings are based on a review of published sources, interviews (in late 2011) with 21 key stakeholders in community engagement and climate change projects, and an expert Delphi Group, where draft findings were discussed, held in late January 2012.

Study context

This study comes at a time of significant political change, and increasing budgetary pressures on many public and third sector initiatives, including those relating to climate change.

Indeed, “climate change” as a concept may not be the best way to engage people or to frame local activities. Most of the stakeholders we interviewed felt that climate change was a difficult basis for engaging people in behaviour change or collective action and that placing climate change action within the broader field of improving community resilience and sustainability might be more fruitful, especially if this enables actions to be more explicitly linked to more everyday concerns, like jobs, skills, food, injustice or wellbeing.

So far, the attention of both policy makers and communities themselves has been focused more on climate change mitigation (reducing the likely extent of climate change by limiting greenhouse gas emissions) than adaptation to climate change (acting to reduce the social and economic impact of climate change). Adaptation now seems to be timely, as some change is now regarded by most scientists as inevitable. In practice, it should however be noted that mitigation and adaptation activities can overlap; encouraging local community based food production, for example, can reduce carbon emissions from food miles (mitigation) whilst also helping to insulate communities to some extent from the increasing volatility of international

markets as a result of unpredictable and extreme weather patterns (adaptation).

To some extent the Government has taken a clear lead on planning for both climate change mitigation and adaptation at a national level. DEFRA will be consulting on its Adaptation Risk Assessment in 2012, as it works towards the National Adaptation Plan in 2013, and DECC has already published its Carbon Plan, aimed at significantly reducing our CO2 emissions. The Cabinet Office is also in the process of consulting with local partners on guidelines for partnerships working to improve resilience to the risk of civil emergencies, including climate change related ones like floods.

Non-governmental organisations are also active in the field. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, for example, is currently scoping the third phase of its climate change programme, and the NCVO is continuing to engage more user-based voluntary organisations in considering how climate will affect the needs of specific groups, such as older people, people with disabilities and people with mental health issues.

However, national debt and budget restrictions mean that public funding for climate change *action* will be limited, whilst the emerging policy of Localism places much more emphasis on adaptation and mitigation solutions at sub-national and ‘non-governmental’ levels.

In addition there was a strong feeling amongst many of the stakeholders interviewed for this study that:

1. Climate change is slipping down the list of priorities at both a national and local level. More than half of all English Local Authorities are reported to be significantly reducing their emphasis on it, for example.
2. The level of climate change mitigation (e.g. CO2 reduction) still falls well below that required and there is a pressing need to both widen and deepen community-led climate change responses.

In this context, there is clearly value in looking at current community-led responses to climate change and understanding how both the level of activity and the impact of activities can be extended.

Engagement in community-led activities

Some projects and activities have specifically focused on community engagement and mobilisation. The Transition Town movement, for example, and the Climate Action Group and Carbon Conversations programmes run by the charity COIN (the Climate

Outreach and Information Network), have had a dramatic impact in terms of galvanising responses to climate change in some communities. The arts have also played an important role in some cases, helping people to discuss issues that are sometimes emotionally difficult in a positive and supportive environment.

However, these engagement projects have tended to work best in terms of mobilising those who are more pre-disposed to concerns about climate change. A different (but not mutually exclusive) approach has been to focus on much more practical activities, mostly around issues relating to climate change mitigation. Specific climate change mitigation projects activities can perhaps be split into 3 broad categories, based primarily on the way they intend to reduce carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions:

1. Sustainable and efficient energy projects – projects aiming to develop renewable energy sources and reduce community consumption of energy and fuels, including through household fuel efficiencies and the development of more sustainable transport.
2. Localisation activities – projects aiming to reduce the need for goods and people to travel long distances and to increase the resilience of local communities to global economic shocks.
3. Commodity lifecycle activities – projects and activities looking to reduce embedded energy use by reducing the consumption of products (reusing and sharing things), reducing packaging, increasing recycling and exploring closed loop manufacturing systems.

A focus on specific activities can help engage those who are more action oriented and turned off by discussion groups and meetings. A specific activity focus can also help demonstrate ‘here and now’ benefits for community members in terms of things like generating income for the community, providing access to low cost good food, and providing opportunities to have fun and be sociable. This can help engage members of the community who may feel climate change is an issue but not the most pressing one for them personally.

Many of the case studies outlined in the report also highlight the importance of balancing a focus on key activists with the need to engage people more widely and to maintain commitment over time. They have attempted this in a number of ways. Some have set up formal membership schemes (with newsletters, local discounts and benefits for supporters for example),

some have developed networks of community champions or representatives within very local areas and some have held periodic large scale public events (that are both fun and worthwhile) to keep the community as a whole more involved. However, for some community projects, this balance between maintaining a core group who will drive forward activities and developing a wider sense of community ownership for the project remains a challenge.

There are few, if any, clear examples of community-led adaptation projects, although many mitigation activities will have implications for community adaptation. To some extent this may be because of a perceived focus on emergency planning which is seen as the responsibility of Local Authorities and Emergency services.

Future community-led adaptation responses perhaps need to think less about emergencies (although communities should clearly have a role in contributing to local agency plans) and more about supporting coping strategies for the consequences of climate change, particularly for vulnerable groups. Recent work by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation on ‘*Climate change, justice and vulnerability*’ has helped map which groups may be particularly vulnerable by age, health, income and strength of social networks for example.

Barriers and Enablers

Discussions with stakeholders identified some of the barriers and enablers to effective community-led responses to climate change and some of the persistent issues that may help explain why some communities are much less active than others. To some extent barriers and enablers are two sides of the same coin. Something that helps a community project to overcome a significant barrier is likely to also be a key enabler to its success. Indeed barriers, enablers and success factors can be grouped under similar headings, at least at a broad thematic level.

Several stakeholders suggest that **strategic alignment** with key partners, such as Local Authorities and the NHS can be a key success factor for a community initiative, enabling them to access a wider range of resources and to develop mutual benefits with other local projects. Conversely, without such alignment it can be very difficult to build up a sufficient head of steam or critical mass to encourage significant community action.

Good **leadership** plays a key enabler role in many projects. However, several people noted that this does not have to come from one person or one particular organisation. Leadership may involve an individual or

group of individuals with a clear sense of direction and readiness to take risks, people embedded in key organisations and having (or having access to) the right skills and experience. It was suggested, for example, that most successful renewable energy projects are run by people with previous experience of the energy sector.

Funding and resources are, unsurprisingly, key enablers of local action, and intermittent or poor funding was highlighted as one reason many initiatives ‘fizzle out’. While accessing project funding and grants can be difficult, there is a growing interest in new forms of community finance, investment and ownership models. There is a perceived need for more freely and widely available technical advice at a community level in these areas. Where community projects actually generate income, the situation can almost be turned on its head and local income generation can be used to support a wide range of further initiatives.

Networks and connections are also important enablers for many community projects, a common challenge is to bring environmental organisations together with non-environmental ones, while building social capital, particularly bridging and linking capital in a community is also important, particularly for disadvantaged communities. Some organisations, like the Transition Network and the Low Carbon Communities network are doing important work in this area. Nevertheless most stakeholders feel that there remains a need for better mechanisms to share experiences both within and across communities.

Being able to **demonstrate progress** is also important for climate change projects, where ultimately their impacts in terms of things like CO₂ emissions or reductions in fatalities during extreme weather events can seem academic or remote. Some research is underway to develop evaluation and impact measures further, particularly in terms of CO₂ reductions, and this needs to be encouraged.

Disadvantaged Communities

Recent work by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has highlighted even more strongly that people from disadvantaged groups and areas are amongst the most likely to be affected by climate change, even though they emit less CO₂ and use fewer resources than more affluent people and neighbourhoods.

There is also a strong *perception* amongst stakeholders that disadvantaged groups and areas are significantly under-represented in community-led responses to

climate change, although the quantitative evidence available for this is limited.

Stakeholders suggested that whilst more disadvantaged communities may face particular challenges in engaging with local responses to climate change these are not unique challenges. Rather, disadvantaged communities experience the barriers to community development activities more keenly.

In particular, people living in more deprived, usually urban communities will have what they consider to be more pressing concerns than “the environment”. Income deprived communities may also be especially resistant to “environmental” issues if these are perceived to be middle class, over technical, remote or “preachy”. Critically, they are also more likely to lack the resources – like money, time, skills, knowledge and networks – that make it easier to take action.

Our focus in this study was predominantly on geographical communities rather than communities of interest and thus focused more on income deprivation as a form of disadvantage than age, gender, ethnicity, disability or sexuality.

One or two stakeholders did, however, suggest in interview that other attributes may influence the motivations and behaviours of disadvantaged groups in terms of engaging in climate change action:

- Disadvantaged young people may be less engaged: A low sense of self-esteem and perceived value within the community can be a barrier to the engagement of disadvantaged young people in community-led projects.
- Some ethnic minority groups may be less engaged: A close relationship with green spaces, particularly during childhood, can have a significant effect on adult perceptions of ‘green issues’. However many ethnic minority communities live predominantly in urban areas and spend comparatively little time in the countryside.
- However, some first and second generation migrants may be easier to engage: It was suggested these migrants may be a relatively untapped group, given their first and close hand (e.g. through relatives) experiences of severe droughts, floods, hurricanes etc. in other areas of the world.

However, the potential importance of ‘lack of money’ as an explanation for a relative lack of engagement should not be underestimated. As one stakeholder noted, ‘Many of the responses to climate change require disposable income at the level of the

household'. By way of parallel, research into entrepreneurship amongst disadvantaged groups, for example, commonly finds that household income is one of the most significant factors in business start-up rates (most entrepreneurs use their own money to start a business).

Understanding Motivations & Behaviours

Individual and community motivations to engage with action related to climate change vary significantly for different places and different groups of people. Overall, our desk research and stakeholder interviews suggest that two sets of reasons are key:

1. **"Here and now"** issues, such as saving money (through energy efficiency), getting a job or a better job, or taking steps toward these through, say, advice or training. In the most challenging environments "here and now" issues can also include perceptions of injustice and discrimination.
2. **"Our future"** – thinking about how people want their place to be in future years – as a place to live, work and bring up children, for example – can also be very motivating. A shared story of a resilient and thriving place can be one that galvanises community engagement and action.

Neither of these is specifically 'environmental'. Indeed for some, environmental arguments seem remote, difficult to understand and full of jargon. Furthermore, when people feel they are being 'lectured' they can react negatively and they can feel threatened and/or overwhelmed by overly negative environmental messages.

In this context providing safe spaces where people can explore their concerns, enabling participation in community arts events, and providing opportunities for people to learn about nature and environmental issues can also motivate and change behaviour. Learning and empowerment work can also be very motivating: making young people feel that their views are valued, for example.

Considering climate change in isolation may also not be the most helpful way of supporting community responses. Rather, local collective approaches which build resilience and sustainability generally may be a more appropriate focus, especially if these are explicitly linked to what many people would see as their everyday concerns – issues like jobs, skills, food, injustice or wellbeing – and to building the kind of community they want to live in.

Third sector organisations nationally are also learning more about transforming shared values and

motivations into action and there may be opportunities for local groups to benefit from this work. The '*Pathways through Participation*' research project (funded by BIG and led by Involve, NCVO and IVR), for example, suggests that community groups need to try to understand and work with their members' many and varied motivations, their resources, their opportunities to participate and potential triggers for participation. Only when these four elements are in line do people commit to significant action. Research by WWF, Oxfam and others (*Common Cause*) also suggests that community organisations can work together to both appeal to and build on people's intrinsic values and motivations in a far more coherent way.

Recommendations

Supporting communities to engage with climate change should also recognise the wide range of local circumstances, challenges and opportunities present on the ground in each area – there is no "one best way" to develop community responses.

However, we recommend seven steps for BIG and its partners to consider in helping to meet community needs:

1. **Encourage community-led projects to explore how their activities can link to and align with local and national strategies and priorities.**

Stakeholders noted that community projects are more likely to be sustainable if they align strategically with local and national statutory bodies, partnerships and plans. This is not to say that community action should be dictated by statutory authorities, rather that potential links should not be ignored if they can lead to additional sources of funding, support and expertise. BIG and partners could encourage this by asking community bidders to demonstrate how they have considered the fit between their proposals and local strategic priorities, for example.

2. **Support the development of local leadership capacity and capabilities.** Some communities are failing to take action on climate change because they lack leadership capacity (people and time) or capabilities (knowledge and skills). Sometimes the capacity needed might be quite small, such as a Climate Action Group facilitator for a day a week for six months, for example. In other cases it may be more substantial. Support may be needed to develop leadership capabilities within the community or to bring in expertise from outside. Stakeholders suggested that a particular capability need may be around renewable energy generation and the energy market, for example. Building leadership capabilities in this key area could help

many more communities take advantage of renewable energy opportunities.

3. **Develop and promote a platform of support for local projects, building on existing resources and services.** The platform would reflect the different types of activities that groups get involved in, their stage of development, and a range of support needs ranging from professional support with facilitating community development activities through advice on legal structures, community finance and local share issues. The platform could be populated with many tools and services which already exist and are already funded, but there would also be gaps where a new service and funding solution would need to be found. There may also be a need to extend existing provision to reach more groups.
4. **Place greater emphasis on adaptation in supported activities.** Future community-led adaptation responses perhaps need to think less about emergencies (although communities should clearly have a role in contributing to local agency plans) and more about supporting coping strategies for the consequences of climate change, particularly for vulnerable groups. This might involve exploring how communities might best contribute to adaptation plans as well as what community-led projects focused specifically on adaptation might look like and be able to achieve. This should not mean that mitigation projects are not supported, rather that BIG could encourage all funding applicants to consider how projects can be relevant to climate change adaptation as well as mitigation, to ensure opportunities are not lost. This recognises that there is often overlap between adaptation and mitigation and that we should be careful not to undermine commitment to mitigation activities.
5. **Support networks and learning to spread good practice and engage more organisations in local activities.** Local community initiatives with more links to other groups and organisations are better placed to learn from others, and reflect the views and needs of others in their work. Our research suggests that there may be significant potential to increase links at both national and local level, building upon current work to increase the effectiveness of existing networks, to broaden membership beyond environmental organisations towards a wider range of voluntary and community organisations and to encourage more national networking and debating of issues and priorities. A key challenge for both funders and community groups is in identifying and highlighting situations that are most alike and where the

potential for cross-fertilisation might be strongest. Collating and classifying initial case study material could be a potential role for BIG, or one of its project or programme partners.

6. **Reflect local diversity more in funding decisions, accommodating a wide range of project activities which reflect very differing local circumstances.** There is no agreed 'one best way' for all communities to tackle climate change. It is not just a question of developing solutions in one place and then mainstreaming them somewhere else. Each community will be starting from a very different place and will have its own unique characteristics. Funding opportunities need to be specified in such a way that they can accommodate a wider range of project activities which are relevant to climate change. This would include both new groups and more established ones, disadvantaged and more prosperous communities, with a very local focus or over a much wider area. It should also be recognised that some projects may need a relatively long lead-in time before specific and tangible results can be delivered.
7. **Acknowledge the breadth of achievement of community-led projects and help them demonstrate progress.** Project "success" can sometimes be defined too narrowly by funding partners, either focusing on specific outputs, such as assessments undertaken or the number of solar panels installed, or quite narrow outcomes, such as carbon emission reductions in specific areas of activity. However, community-led projects often seek to deliver benefits and outcomes in a wide range of areas, including education, health, wellbeing, social care, climate change and economic development. If funders focus too strongly on the achievements of community-led projects in just one of these areas it can encourage perverse behaviours where such activities undermine rather than reinforce one another. An agreed balance of primary and secondary outcomes might be more appropriate based on closeness of fit with funder objectives. There is also need to continue to develop and refine tools to measure and demonstrate progress for community projects both in terms of mitigation and adaptation in order to help projects engage communities and maintain commitment.

It is suggested that these recommendations are taken forward with relevant stakeholders, including other funding bodies, but also those organisations who took part in this research (see Annex 2) and expressed a willingness to work with BIG beyond the lifetime of this project.

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1. Introduction

The Big Lottery Fund is reviewing its approach to facilitating community-led responses to the challenges posed by climate change, as part of BIG's key strategic theme, 'Sustainable and Resilient Communities'. This scoping study aims to understand better the kind of support that local communities – statutory bodies, the VCS, and businesses - need in order to develop collective responses which increase resilience and enhance sustainability by mitigating and adapting to climate change.

1.1 Research Approach

Emergent Research and Consulting Ltd were commissioned by BIG to consider the following aspects of community responses to climate change:

1. **How local communities have successfully engaged in mitigation and adaptation.**
 - Particularly those in disadvantaged areas? Are there any specific practical examples of engagement that can be drawn on and replicated? How has this engagement been evidenced?
2. **What are the barriers to community-led intervention, and how these can be overcome?**
3. **Which factors help UK communities respond effectively?**
 - In particular any factors that help with environmental challenges that are specific to the UK, for example flooding, heat waves, food poverty, water and energy security
4. **What influences people's motivation and behaviour?**
 - Particularly in terms of raising awareness and changing the behaviour of vulnerable groups, those who have not been affected by climate change, or those who are unconvinced of the threat.
5. **Areas where BIG could effectively intervene and support communities.**

The research took the form of a short scoping study based on desk research and interviews (mainly in late 2011) with people from key stakeholder organisations or recognised experts in the field. Initial findings were presented in a draft summary report, which was reviewed by a Delphi Group drawn from the experts who participated in interviews. After this, this final report was produced.

Emergent Research and Consulting Ltd would like to thank all people who took part in the research for the time and expertise that they brought to the project.

1.2 This Report

The report is divided into five further chapters:

- **Chapter 2** looks at the context to the study, considering first the conceptual scope for the study, then the national policy environment and the activities of national Non-Government Organisations. We then provide a brief summary of the implications for the Big Lottery Fund's work on climate change.

- In **Chapter 3** we consider how communities have been engaged in community-led responses to climate change, considering initial engagement of activists and broader community engagement in different types of climate change project.
- **Chapter 4** looks at the potential barriers to local action and the factors which can enable effective community-led responses, with a particular focus on the needs of disadvantaged communities.
- People's motivations and behaviour around climate change are reviewed in **Chapter 5**; how motivations and behaviours may vary between communities and how local projects and organisations can seek to influence and build upon common values, motivations and behaviours.
- **Chapter 6** revisits the five scoping study research questions before outlining some recommendations for BIG and its partners arising from the research and January's Delphi group workshop.

Annex 1 lists those who kindly supported the project by taking part in an interview and / or the Delphi discussion group, and Annex 2 provides further detail on the first recommendation made in Chapter 6.

2. Context

Summary

- Community adaptation to the effects of climate change has tended to receive less attention than mitigation, although in practice there is much overlap between mitigation and adaptation actions.
- Local collective approaches which build resilience and sustainability generally may be a more appropriate focus for funders than climate change in isolation, especially if these are explicitly linked to what many people would see as their everyday concerns – issues like jobs, skills, food, injustice or wellbeing.
- BIG is reviewing its activities at a time of significant public funding constraints and an increased emphasis on decentralised approaches through the policy of Localism. This suggests that communities addressing climate change need flexible and intelligent responses, reflecting what NESTA has called “Mass Localism”.
- DEFRA is consulting on its Adaptation Risk Assessment in 2012, and will produce a National Adaptation Plan in 2013. Further work on adaptation will be needed at sub-national levels. The Cabinet Office is developing guidelines for local civil emergency response. DECC has recently published its Carbon Plan, which opens up new possibilities for local action in areas like transport, district heating networks, agriculture and waste. Complementary but distinctive policies are in place in the Devolved Administrations.
- Non-governmental organisations are also active in the field, including the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (currently scoping the third phase of its climate change programme) and the NCVO (engaging more user-based voluntary organisations in adaptation-related activities).
- However, stakeholders interviewed for this study had a number of concerns about the current direction of policy:
 1. Climate change is slipping down the list of priorities at both a national and local level.
 2. The level of climate change mitigation (e.g. CO2 reduction) still falls well below that required and there is a pressing need to both widen and deepen community-led climate change responses.

This chapter considers the context within which BIG is acting on climate change, as part of its wider strategic theme of Sustainable and Resilient Communities. First, we consider what is “in scope”, looking at what might be involved in terms of types of activity and the specific issues that BIG could seek to address. Then we look at other activities happening later in 2012 and beyond which will have a bearing on BIG’s plans. These include national policy, research and development activities of other organisations and networks, and implementation plans being rolled out.

2.1 Climate Change - What is in Scope?

Mitigation and adaptation

Most of the stakeholders we interviewed warned against separating climate change from a broader range of challenges that a community might face and many felt that “climate change” as a concept provides a difficult basis for engaging people in behaviour change or collective action (motivation and behaviour change is considered in greater detail in chapter 4). Policy and action specific to climate change typically focus on mitigation (how we can reduce our impact on the climate impact by, say, reducing the use of fossil fuels) on the one hand, and adaptation (how we deal with the consequences of climate change, by, say, devising strategies to cope with more regular flooding) on

the other. Our evidence suggests that, for a funder like BIG, considering climate change through the lens of mitigation and adaptation is useful and relevant, because:

- A lot more is known and has been done about mitigation. We know more about what the impact of specific actions (such as using a low emissions vehicle) will be. There has been a wealth of national and local policy initiatives focused on reducing carbon emissions, so we know more about what works and what does not.
- Adaptation, though, is a newer, less explored field, and our understanding of what exactly we need to do to cope with climate change is still emerging and will vary by locality and individual circumstances. Far fewer community-led approaches to adaptation have been developed and tested, and there is a shortage of good practice to draw on.

So, although mitigation and adaptation are interrelated “on the ground” – reducing fossil fuel use, for example, both reduces carbon emissions and is a strategy for avoiding fuel poverty - BIG support for climate change *may* want to weight any new funding support more towards adaptation.

Climate Change, Resilience and Sustainability

Our stakeholder interviews suggested that funding initiatives narrowly focused on “climate change” could fail to make necessary links to other relevant issues and activities, and be too narrow in scope to engage people “on the doorstep”, with the possible exception of people in places with recent experience of extreme weather events like flooding. Alternatively, with a wider focus on resilience or sustainability, communities can be engaged on issues that matter to them (which might include jobs, skills, injustice, food or well being) that lead or link to a more direct engagement with climate change. This can also apply to local stakeholders, such as Local Authorities, who may have concerns about local economic development or want actions relating to statutory duties relating to wellbeing, for example.

There is no single definition of resilience but it is usually taken to encompass the idea of flexibility and strength in being able to respond to shocks and traumas. DEFRA commonly use the International Panel on Climate Change definition;

Resilience is the ability of a social or ecological system to absorb disturbances while retaining the same basic structure and ways of functioning, the capacity for self-organisation, and the capacity to adapt to stress and change.

IPPC, 2007¹

CarnegieUK² sponsored a series of Resilience Community of Practice events (focus groups, workshops and interviews), which generated a number of notions of resilience, including that of “resilience as a muscle”:

That must be developed in advance and consistently exercised to be both strong enough to withstand severe challenges and flexible enough to handle a wide range of unpredictable forces.

CarnegieUK, *Exploring Community Resilience*, p 8³

¹ IPCC 2007 ‘Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability’. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. M.L. Parry, O.F. Canziani, J.P. Palutikof, P.J. van der Linden and C.E. Hanson, eds., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.

² CarnegieUK, August 2011, ‘Exploring Community Resilience - in times of rapid change’. Lead Author Nick Wilding. Paper published by Fiery Spirits Community of Practice and CarnegieUK Trust.

³ www.globalresiliency.net, cited in CarnegieUK, August 2011, Exploring Community Resilience op cit.

Communities with recent and perhaps traumatic experience of shocks can be among the most resilient, such as those affected by the Cumbrian floods in 2009, where the community had built networks and learnt from Foot and Mouth in 2001 and from previous floods in 2005. Resilience can be interpreted in ways which go beyond a community's readiness for dealing with civil emergencies to include, for example, economic resilience (which can be associated with localisation of the economy), social factors (building of social capital and community cohesion), developing a vibrant local cultural life, and protecting local ecological assets.

“Sustainability” or “sustainable development” are also complex terms and open to widely differing personal and political interpretations. Sustainable development has been described as involving a “dialogue of values” in which people and organisations with different beliefs, interests and motives pursue a variety of socially defined goals, including economic growth, cultural autonomy, physical welfare, spiritual meaning and biological conservation.

Different values can lead to radically different and opposing interpretations of what constitutes “sustainable development”. Some see an ever increasing emphasis on money, commodities and consumption in our society as driving unsustainable behaviour, for example, while others feel that the natural world needs to be drawn more fully into this sphere, through ecosystem services assessments which seek to place a monetary value on nature (eg: bees are estimated to be worth £440m to the UK) so that their value is not overlooked when making decision.⁴ Similarly, supporters of globalisation may suggest that sustainability and resilience to food shortages can be achieved by developing more efficient large scale farming capacity and improving the transparency of international markets enabling buyers to access a wider range of suppliers. Opponents of globalisation might suggest that sustainability and resilience will only be achieved by reducing food miles increasing self-sufficiency at a personal and community level through a re-localisation of food markets and a democratisation of food growing. The pursuit of sustainability, therefore, needs social processes to mediate this diversity of opinion and conflict.⁵

The potentially “politically charged” nature of resilience and sustainability can create challenges for Non-Departmental Public Bodies like BIG. However, the need to learn more about what actually works in developing community resilience; along with the likely need for a multiplicity of approaches reflecting local circumstances may suggest that BIG should not take a too prescriptive view of what a climate change project should look like.⁶

While the concepts of “resilience” and “sustainability” may have traction in policy, activist and professional circles and are useful in understanding the potential scope of projects, they are no more readily understood by the general public and we would not recommend that this kind of terminology is used explicitly in projects or communications.

Community-led Responses?

We are also aware that what constitutes a community is a contested concept. We are all members of multiple communities, some of which relate to where we live, some to where we work and others to the things we do or are interested in (Communities of Practice and Communities of Interest). The brief for this study was to focus on geographical communities at anything from a neighbourhood to a city-region scale. This has some logic for climate change projects; although we are each members of many communities, they often overlap geographically and provide local opportunities to make new connections and build local resilience.

⁴ ResPublica, December 2011, ‘Different Politics, Same Planet: Values Beyond Sustainable Development Beyond Left and Right’ Lead Author Boyle, D et al.

⁵ Ratner, B, 2004, ‘Sustainability as a Dialogue of Values: Challenges to the Sociology of Development’, *Sociological Inquiry*, Vol 74, No 1, pp 50-69.

⁶ ResPublica, December 2011, ‘Different Politics, Same Planet’ op cit

There is also a question as to what it means for a project to be community-led. How wide is the support from the geographical community the project is located in? To what extent is the project really locally owned? We have taken a fairly broad approach to this and included projects that are led by quite small groups of activists. How these people met and moved from mutual interests into action is clearly of interest to the study, as is consideration of projects that have sought to then engage more widely with their communities at different stages. We have also included projects run by existing organisations as long as they are locally owned and run on a not-for-profit basis.

2.2 National Policy Context

An overarching policy driver that will influence future community-led responses to climate change is the move towards greater “Localism”. In a time of significant cuts to public spending, Localism involves a fundamental reorientation of where power is located in national and local decision making, described by central Government as, “a fundamental shift of power from Westminster to people”, with greater decentralisation, engagement and the end of top-down government⁷. While the spirit of Localism may be broadly supportive of local initiatives on climate change and resilience, the emerging practice on the ground is less encouraging, with Local Authorities attaching less importance and resource to climate change response, given significant funding constraints⁸.

An early expression of Localism is the development of new approaches to Neighbourhood Planning, currently being tested in “front runner” neighbourhoods, although the relevance of this to climate change response is difficult to assess at this early stage. Some of our interviews also suggest that changes to the structure of Government departments and agencies mean that how policy will be delivered is not yet fully clear in bodies like the Environment Agency.

A final point relating to Localism is that it suggests the development of good practice is tailored heavily to local circumstances, rather than the development of a single approach which can be transferred wholesale to all parts of the country (see discussion of NESTA’s *Mass Localism* paper in Section 3.4).

Localism aside, the remaining national policy initiatives which should inform BIG’s activities are those led by the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC), the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), and the Cabinet Office.

DECC’s Carbon Plan

The December 2011 *Carbon Plan*⁹ sets out central Government’s approach to climate change mitigation towards 2050. Mitigation is presented largely as a technical exercise in developing and substituting low-carbon technologies for the current more carbon intensive ones. The Plan suggests that the main behavioural challenge relates to introducing new technologies:

This Plan shows that the UK can move to a sustainable low carbon economy without sacrificing living standards, but by investing in new cars, power stations and buildings. However, it will require the public to accept new infrastructure and changes to the way in which we heat homes, and be prepared to invest in energy efficiency that will save money over time.

DECC, *The Carbon Plan* (2011), p 12

⁷ Coalition Programme for Government, quoted in Scott, F, 2011, ‘Is Localism Delivering for Climate Change?’ Green Alliance, p2

⁸ Green Alliance, October 2011, ‘Is localism delivering for climate change? Emerging responses from local authorities, local enterprise partnerships and neighbourhood plans.’ Lead Author Faye Scott.

⁹ DECC, December 2011 ‘The Carbon Plan: Delivering Our Low Carbon Future’. Department for Energy and Climate Change

The Plan does also suggest areas where local collective action will be expected or encouraged, however, including:

- Demonstrating and deploying technologies to decarbonise power, buildings and road transport.
- The development of district heating networks (led by Local Authorities).
- Encouraging lower carbon travel choices, such as walking, cycling or public transport (with a national £560m Local Sustainable Transport Fund over the lifetime of the current parliament).
- Possible scope for communities to attract funding through the EU Emissions Trading System, if they can provide carbon reductions to offset aviation emissions, for example.

On energy generation, the aim is to double today's peak electricity capacity and Feed-in Tariffs with Contracts for Difference from 2014 that will encourage investment in all forms of low-carbon generation. This may suggest increased scope for community low/zero-carbon energy generation projects.

Actions on agriculture and forestry will be subject to reviews being conducted in 2012, and there may be scope for an increase in community-based approaches or more localised food supply chains. Opportunities for community action on waste reduction and increased recycling could be created through a new Waste Prevention Programme from 2013.

These local actions are highly relevant to the interests of Local Authorities and other public sector stakeholders, but also to community and voluntary groups, whether NGOs or social enterprises in areas like community energy initiatives, increased recycling and local food, for example.

DEFRA's National Adaptation Programme

Community responses will include actions and behaviours in response to new risks and challenges created by climate change. The national climate change Risk Assessment for DEFRA identifies over a hundred possible impacts divided into the categories of marine, biodiversity and ecosystem services, water, floods and coastal erosion, agriculture, forestry, health, built environment, energy, business/industry/services.¹⁰

Within these broad categories, specific impacts that local communities could face include, for example, increased risks from pests and diseases, major drought events, large-scale fire risks, water supply-demand deficit, different types of flooding, heat waves, extreme weather events, summer air pollution, various impacts on food production and forestry, and increased death rates and illness caused by temperatures and extreme weather.

The impact of climate change on infrastructure has also been considered in some detail by DEFRA in 2010 and 2011. A synthesis of research findings published in May 2011¹¹ highlighted the interconnected nature of infrastructure resilience, including that:

¹⁰ DEFRA, September 2010, 'UK 2012 Climate Change Risk Assessment: Online Feedback for Devolved Administrations Tier 2 Impacts'. Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

¹¹ DEFRA, May 2011, 'Climate Resilient Infrastructure: Preparing for a Changing Climate: Synthesis of the independent studies commissioned by the Government's Infrastructure & Adaptation Project'. Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

- There can be “cascade failures” (when the failure of one piece of infrastructure triggers that of another) and “regional convergence” when important infrastructure is concentrated in one place, meaning that an event there could have knock-on consequences elsewhere.
- Societal behaviour change can form part of the adaptation response, by, for example, reducing demand for certain services, like energy, while awareness needs to be raised of the need to invest in adaptation measures.
- There are critical dependencies: information and communications technologies (ICT), for example, are wholly dependent on the availability of energy, while every other form of major infrastructure is entirely dependent on ICT for its continued daily operation. ICT is global, so if, for example, infrastructure depends on data centres overseas, climate change risks in that place will also be relevant. ICT also relies on the availability of materials (like rare metals) where transport by air and sea could be disrupted.

Key stages in the process towards the National Adaptation Plan include submission of the National Risk Assessment to Parliament in January 2012 and consideration of the Risk Assessment by Government departments, with an open call to organisations around the country to submit their own evidence (what it means for them, what they are already doing, and actions they consider necessary for the future).

It is envisaged that the National Adaptation Plan that will follow in 2013 will include significant local variation within broader national and regional trends, with a key role for Local Authorities, but no certainty of any new money immediately available from the Centre for local actions. The Plan will then be reviewed every five years, when funding issues will also be considered.

The Cabinet Office’s Community Resilience and Recovery Activities

Operating from a very limited resource base, the Cabinet Office is working to develop local resilience in the face of the risk of civil emergencies, including those related to climate change (like floods) but also pandemics and civil disturbances. The approach taken aims to ensure that resilience is locally owned and not prescribed, whilst also recognising that the resources of central Government are very limited in large-scale emergencies. This approach also fits with the policy notion of localism. Practical resources have been developed which will be of interest to community responses to the challenges posed by climate change, including a community emergency planning toolkit¹² and community resources for people to help themselves or friends, family and neighbours, such as Get Ready for Winter¹³.

The Cabinet Office will have new research in early 2012 which provides case studies of good practice in developing community resilience. It is also developing “guiding principles” for better community resilience through a series of regional workshops during the period January to March 2012. This may identify areas where national legislation or action could aid local responses (eg: insurance issues and liabilities), identify areas where new national collaborative efforts could add value (eg: through the Emergency Planning College) or good practice shared by organisations that may not have traditionally been connected (eg: Transition Network and Salvation Army).

Devolved Administrations

In **Wales** the Government published its *Climate Change Strategy for Wales*, which included an *Adaptation Delivery Plan* and a *Delivery Plan for Emission Reduction* in October 2010¹⁴. In addition to

¹² <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/community-resilience> Accessed 10/1/12

¹³ http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/NI1/Newsroom/Features/DG_WP199639 Accessed 10/1/12

¹⁴ <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/climatechange/publications/strategy/?lang=en> Accessed 10/1/12

the policies and actions proposed in the Strategy, there are a number of policies currently in place across Wales to reduce emissions from a range of sources¹⁵:

- Decarbonising power: Energy Policy Statement (March 2010) outlines the aim to generate by 2025 more than twice the amount of electricity consumed today in Wales from renewables, primarily by offshore wind and marine (tidal range, tidal stream and wave) developments.
- Energy efficiency in buildings: there are a range of energy efficiency policies and schemes in place and the Welsh Government is seeking to achieve a zero-carbon buildings standard by 2011. Unlike for England, the 2011 ambition in Wales applies to all new buildings (residential and non-residential) from the outset.
- Renewable heat: the Welsh Government aims for virtually all Wales' local energy needs, including heat, to be met from low carbon electricity generation by 2050.
- Agriculture and land use: the aim is to reduce emissions from agriculture and land use through, for example, increased woodland creation and management of existing woodlands, and the 'Glastir' programme (which is targeted at supporting farmers to develop sustainable land management practices).
- Transport: a number of proposals are being considered, including investment in low carbon transport infrastructure, park and ride schemes and an inter-modal Freight Consolidation Centre.

In **Scotland** the Climate Change (Scotland) Act (2009)¹⁶ requires the reduction of emissions of all greenhouse gases by 80% in 2050, relative to 1990 levels. It goes further than the UK Climate Change Act as it commits to a 42% cut in emissions by 2020, regardless of whether the EU moves from its current target of a 20% reduction in emissions across the EU in 2020 to a 30% target¹⁷. It also includes international aviation and shipping in the emissions target for 2020 (currently excluded from UK carbon budgets).

The Scottish Act also differs from the UK provisions in that it:

- Requires annual targets on emission reductions are set for 2010 onwards. Under the Act, emissions must fall year on year from 2010, and by at least 3% per year after 2019.
- Sets a limit on the use of offset credits to meet the targets, stating that a minimum of 80% of the emission reduction effort must be made through domestic effort.

The Act requires Scottish Ministers to seek advice on various aspects of Scotland's climate change programme, including on the level of emission reduction targets, the appropriate use of credits in meeting targets, methods for accounting for international aviation and shipping within the target framework, and reports on progress towards meeting emission targets.

Northern Ireland's approach to reducing emissions is the target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25% on 1990 levels by 2025¹⁸. In November 2009 the [Northern Ireland Assembly's Environment Committee](#) reported on its inquiry into climate change. The inquiry had the remit of understanding the implications of climate change for Northern Ireland and to make recommendations on government policies, to mitigate the impacts of climate change, examine economic implications and identify suitable adaptation initiatives. The Committee's report agreed that Northern Ireland should

¹⁵ <http://www.theccc.org.uk/topics/uk-and-regions/wales/climate-change-policy>. Accessed 10/1/12

¹⁶ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/climatechange/scotlands-action/climatechangeact> Accessed 10/1/12

¹⁷ <http://www.theccc.org.uk/topics/uk-and-regions/scotland> Accessed 10/1/12

¹⁸ <http://www.theccc.org.uk/topics/uk-and-regions/northern-ireland> Accessed 10/1/12

make a fair and proportionate contribution to UK greenhouse gas emission targets and develop an implementation strategy to address both mitigation and adaptation.

In May 2010 the Northern Ireland Executive agreed to a proposal by the Minister of the Environment to establish a cross departmental working group on greenhouse gas emissions. The *Executive's Greenhouse Gas Action Plan* was agreed and published in February 2011, outlining how each department in the Executive would contribute towards meeting the 2025 emission reduction target.

2.3 Activities of Non-government Organisations

Alongside the many Government policy initiatives there is also a tremendous amount of research, and local and national initiatives related to climate change taking place led by non-government organisations. This should also be an essential point of reference for BIG and its partners. Here, we look at just some examples.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF)

The JRF has been active in climate change related research and community activities for some time, its focus being mainly on how climate change issues relate to social justice. In November 2011 they published research that mapped vulnerability to climate change by superimposing data on climate related risks (e.g. flooding) on data outlining different aspects of socio-economic disadvantage.¹⁹ They have also identified a general lack of community awareness and readiness in terms of adaptation. After two rounds of community projects, a final phase is currently being scoped. This may focus on the development and sharing of good practice relating to community adaptation. A new report on good practice in community adaptation to climate change will be published in March/April 2012.

National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)

NCVO is currently engaged in a project that will involve four cohorts of up to 16 non-environmental VCOs, with groups like older people, people with disabilities and people with mental health issues. There is also a project advisory group with climate change experts and statutory bodies. NCVO's work with non-environmental VCOs could be very valuable to local partnerships wanting to extend their reach into particular sections of the community. There may also be scope to extend this type of activity further into other non-environmental VCOs, given the organisation's 8,500-strong base of third sector organisations.

Locality

Locality has 670 members and focuses especially on supporting the development of community assets and social enterprises. Some of its members are very large and several are involved in activities very relevant to community responses to climate change. Coin Street Community Builders, for example, has assets in excess of £30m. Another member organisation, a renewables project on Orkney, managed to get their project through the local planning process with no objections, a clear sign that very strong community support was achieved. Locality are interested in the income generating potential for communities of large scale social enterprises in activities like energy and recycling.

Green Alliance

Recent work by Green Alliance has included a study on the extent to which Localism is reflected by Local Authority activities relating to climate change (*Is Localism Delivering?*). Although especially

¹⁹ JRF, Nov 2011 'Climate change, justice and vulnerability'. Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Lead authors, S. Lindley, J. O'Neill, J. Kandeh, N. Lawson, R. Christian and M. O'Neill.

active on national policy issues, Green Alliance is also involved in work to understand better the potential for sustainable living in tower blocks (projects tend to focus on houses). It is also monitoring the development of Neighbourhood Planning, and is interested in understanding better the potential support requirements of local partnerships.

Transition Network

The Transition Network has been very active in developing local responses to peak oil, climate change and economic sustainability. This has produced a substantial body of good practice and expertise which has been shown to work in a wide range of local contexts, most recently captured in Rob Hopkins' *Transition Companion* book, and including projects like Transition Streets (energy saving) and REconomy (development of economic localisation strategies). A particular area of interest going forward is how Transition can become more mainstream and operate at more significant scale through the development of significant social enterprises active in fields like energy, food and other areas of the economy. This may suggest that Transition can make a significant contribution to local economic development strategies.

Involve

Involve exists to improve public engagement, and for climate change has done this through its work on "distributed dialogue", a mixed method approach to consultation that allows open feedback and both direct and mediated conversations with community groups. It is also working on a number of major relevant projects around the world, such as the Alberta Climate Dialogue and Geraldton 2029. The report *Pathways Through Participation* sets out a detailed model of how people engage in civil society and democracy and how this can be encouraged and sustained (see section 5.3). *Talking for a Change* presents key learning from the global deliberative process called World Wide Views on Climate Change.

National Children's Bureau

The NCB has for some time been involved in work to engage non-environmental VCOs more in climate change and been involved in promoting empowerment and advocacy for children and young people. It has developed a number of practical projects and tools, such as *One Step One World* and *Life Routes*, and contributed to the Department for Education's *Young London Leaders* project.

2.4 Implications for the Big Lottery Fund

This review of the scope of community climate change responses, policy drivers and the activities of non-governmental organisations suggests several implications for the activities of BIG. Firstly, as the need for communities to deal with the effects of climate change becomes more pressing and Government places great emphasis on addressing climate risks, a need to increase the focus on community adaptation seems inevitable. In practice, many local activities are relevant to both mitigation and adaptation.

Secondly, climate change is a complex issue that can be difficult to understand and come to terms with. As a result, dealing with climate change as a single issue in isolation can be problematic, and wider ranging approaches comprising notions of resilience and sustainability may be more appropriate. Our interviews suggest that there is probably particular value in focusing activities on what many people would see as their everyday concerns – issues like jobs, skills, food, injustice or wellbeing

Thirdly, the concept of Localism potentially resonates strongly with what we were told in interviews; that there is no agreed "one best way" for all communities to tackle climate change. It is not just a case of developing approaches in some places and "mainstreaming" them everywhere else. Each

community will be starting in a very different place and will have its own unique characteristics, while the types of response generated will vary significantly. A more tailored local approach can also help to increase community ownership, recognising the importance of framing the local conversation in the right way, by having the right people involved, and engaging people in an appropriate way, on their own terms.

Fourthly, that encouraging local communities to broadly align their activities with UK-wide, devolved administration and NGO plans and activities may help them to access funding and share resources and expertise with others, improving the sustainability and resilience of their own activities.

However, our interviews with stakeholders also reveal a growing concern that more attention needs to be paid to climate as an issue. Stakeholders had two specific concerns here:

- That climate change is slipping down the list of political priorities at both a national and local level (this also suggested by Green Alliance's research into Local Authority activities), and;
- That the level of climate change mitigation (e.g. CO2 reduction) still falls well below that required, and there is a pressing need to both widen and deepen community-led climate change responses.

The next chapter considers the wide range of local practice in community responses to climate change that is evident, drawing lessons for BIG and partners in terms of their activities to support local initiatives.

3. Engagement in Community-led Projects and Activities

Summary

- Some projects and activities have specifically focused on community engagement and mobilisation. The Transition Town movement and the Climate Action Group and Carbon Conversations programmes led by the charity COIN (Climate Outreach and Information Network), for example, have had a dramatic impact in terms of galvanising responses to climate change in some communities. The arts have also played an important role in some cases, helping people to discuss issues that are sometimes emotionally difficult in a positive and supportive environment.
- However, these engagement projects have tended to work best in terms of mobilising those who are more pre-disposed to concerns about climate change. A different (but not mutually exclusive) approach has been to focus on much more practical activities, mostly around issues relating to climate change mitigation.
- Specific climate change mitigation projects activities can perhaps be split into three broad categories, based primarily on the way they intend to reduce carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions:
 1. Renewable energy and energy efficiency activities – projects aiming to develop renewable energy sources and reduce community consumption of energy and fuels, including through household fuel efficiencies and the development of more sustainable transport.
 2. Localisation activities – projects aiming to reduce the need for goods and people to travel long distances and to increase the resilience of local communities to global economic shocks.
 3. Commodity lifecycle activities – projects and activities looking to reduce embedded energy use by reducing the consumption of products (reusing and sharing things), reducing packaging, increasing recycling and exploring closed loop systems.
- A focus on specific activities can help engage those who are more action oriented but more crucially, the activities can have attractions that go beyond climate change debates to ‘here and now’ benefits in terms of things like generating income for community redevelopment, providing access to low cost good food, and importantly providing opportunities to have fun and be sociable.
- Many of the case studies outlined highlight the importance of balancing the drive of key activists with the need to engage people more widely and maintain commitment over time. Projects have done this in a number of ways, including membership schemes and benefits, periodic large scale fun (and worthwhile) activities and through identifying and training community champions in different areas. For some, it still remains a challenge.
- There are few, if any, clear examples of community-led adaptation projects, although many mitigation activities will have implications for community adaptation. To some extent this may be because of a perceived focus on emergency planning which is seen as the responsibility of Local Authorities and Emergency services.
- Future community-led adaptation responses perhaps need to think less about emergencies (although communities should clearly have a role in contributing to local agency plans) and more about supporting coping strategies for the consequences of climate change, particularly for vulnerable groups.

This chapter draws on both the stakeholder interviews and a desk based literature review to highlight how communities have engaged in projects and activities to mitigate against and adapt to climate change. The examples highlighted are not intended to be shining exemplars of best practice. As we note in Section 3.4, every community is different and there is no single best way for them to tackle climate change. The relative lack of independent evaluation currently available would, in any case, make that impossible. Most have, however, been recommended to us by the stakeholders we interviewed and/or have won awards on a peer review basis. We feel they, at the very least, provide some good examples of how communities can be engaged in climate change action.

In Section 3.1 we explore the projects and activities that seek to engage communities with climate change and resilience issues and then support them in whatever form of action they choose to take. Section 3.2 outlines a variety of community-led climate change mitigation activities, whilst section 3.3 discusses the relative lack of corresponding adaptation projects. Finally, in Section 3.4, we sketch the beginnings of a framework for collating, sharing and exchanging project experiences in future.

3.1 Community Engagement

Some community projects see climate change action as a cognitive process that communities need to go through rather than a series of discrete activities. The Transition Network, for example, has developed a range of community planning and engagement tools to encourage and support the development of a critical mass of activity within the community (Case Study 1).



Case Study 1: The Transition Towns movement

The Transition movement was started in 2005/6 by Rob Hopkins and Naresh Giangrande using Totnes, Devon as a pilot. The idea was to start communities down a path that would ultimately lead to a wholesale change in the way they function and move to a more resilient and sustainable society and economy. Transition was originally designed as a 12 step process, although in recognition of the messy nature of real community development, these have become part of a set of optional tools:

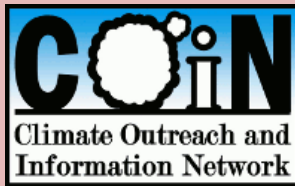
1. Setting up an initial (time bound) steering group
2. Awareness raising
3. Laying the foundations (partnership building with existing projects and activities)
4. A great 'unleashing' (public launch event)
5. Form working groups around different areas of activity (devolved responsibility)
6. Use 'open space' tools for generating ideas & problem solving
7. Develop visible practical manifestations of the project (demonstrate progress)
8. Facilitate the 'Great Reskilling' (help people to learn relevant skills)
9. Build a bridge to local government (access resources and skills and deepen impact)
10. Honour the elders (learning resilience lessons from the past)
11. Let the programme go where the people want
12. Create an Energy Descent Plan (to inspire a step up in activity)

Since 2006, the Transition network has piloted and developed an increasing range of tools for encouraging community engagement, planning and action. Whilst not all Transition initiatives are as active as Totnes, over 2,000 groups worldwide have registered with the Network (1,000 across the UK) and many prominent community-led projects and schemes are connected to the movement.

Sources:

1. Rob Hopkins 2011 'The Transition Companion: Making your community more resilient in uncertain times'.
2. <http://www.transitionnetwork.org/>
3. Stakeholder interviews

Similarly, the Climate Outreach and Information Network has developed a number of tools to get communities to think about Climate Change and plan whatever activities they feel would be suitable, including Climate Action Groups (Case Study 2) and Carbon Conversations (Case Study 3).



Case Study 2: Climate Action Groups (CAGs)

Climate Action Groups, developed and championed by COIN, the Climate Outreach and Information Network, normally take place over a six month period are a structure for people wanting to take decisive action on climate change locally. Each group starts with a 'Matchmaker' event, which is an 'open space' style facilitation technique to enable people to form groups around topics that specifically interest them. One Matchmaker event may lead to 5-6 Climate Action Groups. Each group then sets itself goals for a six month period.

The groups then meet regularly to plan actions and review progress. In 2008/9, an independent researcher evaluated a number of the groups as they developed. The evaluations suggested CAGs could be successful in changing behaviours and reducing carbon emissions but also highlighted problems in maintaining enthusiasm and commitment over the 6 months. These findings have influenced some redesign of the guidance materials.

Examples of previous groups include Sheffield Renewables, who initiated two school projects in their first six months, conducted an options review on a community hydropower scheme, held a public meeting attended by 60 people and gathered a supporter base of nearly 100 people.

The role of the matchmaker is quite a significant commitment (estimated at a least a day a week for 7 months) and small amounts of funding can help support this role. Guidance materials for this role are available from COIN.

Sources:

1. http://coinet.org.uk/projects/action_groups Accessed 7/2/12
2. <http://coinet.org.uk/sites/coinet.org.uk/files/Reading%20CAGs%20Evaluation%20Final.pdf>

Both the Transition movement and Climate Action Groups make use of a number of facilitation tools (such as 'Open Space' and 'World Café') for bringing people together and helping them agree on practical actions. 'Open space', for example, are events where attendees propose a number of initial issues for discussion and then split into self-selected groups to take them forward. If at any time a member of a sub-group feels the discussion is not for them they can move to a group they might find more interesting or inspiring. In this way people with similar interests and aims can come together into groups that may then work together for some time.

Carbon Conversations (Case Study 3, overleaf) is another engagement programme run by COIN that is specifically designed to deal with the emotional dimension of coming to terms with scale of climate change risks and impacts on a personal level, which can be distressing and provoke responses of fear and anger (See Section 5.3). The Carbon Conversations programme website nevertheless notes that it is aimed at the 44% of the population who are aware of and becoming concerned about climate change (The 'Positive Greens', Concerned Consumers and Waste watchers in DEFRA's pro-environmental behaviours segmentation model).²⁰ Dealing with less open sections of the population may be even more difficult.

²⁰²⁰ 2. DEFRA 2008 'A Framework for Pro-environmental Behaviours'. www.defra.gov.uk/publications/files/pb13574-behaviours-report-080110.pdf. Accessed 9/2/12. Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs



carbon conversations

Case Study 3: Carbon Conversations

Carbon conversations is a workshop project that attempts to provide a safe environment for people to discuss their fears and concerns about climate change and move towards positive engagement with the issue without feeling judged. Groups of 6-8 members meet with trained, volunteer facilitators in homes, community centres and workplaces. The programme involves six structured meetings over a period of months, including sessions on home energy, travel and transport, food and water, consumption and waste, an introductory session and a next steps session.

Whilst the programme is designed to be inclusive, it is focused on those interested enough to attend in the first place (attending typically costs participants £15-25). Carbon Conversations was initially developed by Ro Randall, a psychotherapist and piloted by Cambridge Carbon Footprint (where over 500 local people have been through the process) before being taken up by the Climate Outreach and Information Network (COIN) nationally. COIN provide training and support materials, the sessions can be run by any organisation. The project benefits from a cascade system; about 10% of participants go on to train as facilitators.

A detailed impact study was undertaken on one group highlighting significant carbon savings as a result. The programme is currently being assessed more widely as part of the Third Sector Research Centre's 'Low-carbon practices' research programme.

Sources:

1. <http://carbonconversations.org/> Accessed 7/2/12
2. Pam MacLean 2011 'The impact of a values based change method on the environmental impact of an organisation' MSc Dissertation. University of East London.
3. Third Sector Research Centre, May 2011 'Low-carbon practices: a third sector research agenda'. Working Paper 59. Lead Authors Milena Büchs, Graham Smith and Rebecca Edwards

The work of public participation specialists, Involve, highlights the value of structured deliberative processes which create public debate of complex issues. Involve propose that a "distributed dialogue" approach is needed to complex issues like climate change, enabling communities to work together towards solutions which go beyond those typically arrived at by "experts" and traditional policy making²¹. In its work with the National Consumer Council, Involve has also proposed nine principles of "deliberative public engagement" in public policy²².

National competitions for funding and recognition can also have important galvanising effects for some communities. Several of the projects identified in this chapter were finalists in the Low Carbon Communities Challenge and/or NESTA's Big Green Challenge. Indeed the Low Carbon Communities Challenge, for example, led to the creation of a number of community groups that have outlived the programme and the Low Carbon Communities Network has evolved to provide networking and support for communities more widely.

3.1.1 Engagement and the arts

Using art and creative techniques can also help people focus on positive activities whilst opening up discussion spaces for difficult and sometimes emotional topics (Case Studies 4 and 5, overleaf).

²¹ Involve, 2010, 'Talking for a Change: A Distributed Dialogue Approach to Complex Issues', Andersson, Burall and Fennell.

²² Involve and the National Consumer Council, 2008: 'Deliberative Public Engagement: Nine Principles', Warburton, Colbourne, Gavelin, Wilson and Noun.

Whilst, it is often difficult to find direct evidence of impact on attitudes and behaviours for these kinds of projects, People United (Case Study 5) has specifically focused on working with local Universities to evaluate the impact of its pilot work.



Case Study 4: Trashcatchers Carnival

The 2010 Trashcatchers Carnival in Tooting, London was an example of the creative arts being used to raise awareness of climate change and sustainability; a vibrant arts event that used recycling as a metaphor to try and build a shared vision of a low carbon future in a London Borough. Over 800 participants from local schools and community groups took part. The carnival was made almost entirely of rubbish including over 1 million plastic bottles and shopping bags, half a million crisp packets and half a tonne of other recycled materials. The act of creating the floats and displays over a period of six months prior to the carnival gave a space for people to think about and discuss the issues of waste, reuse, recycling and climate change in a positive and inclusive community setting.

Sources:

1. Rob Hopkins, 2011, The Transition Companion p.119
2. <http://trashcatchers.blogspot.com/> Accessed 6/2/12



Case Study 5: 'We All Do Good Things'

Whilst the impact of the arts on behaviour is sometimes unclear, People United has set out from the offset to measure and evaluate impact. The charity, set up in 2008 by Tom Andrews, seeks to encourage the kind of pro-social behaviour that it believes underlies many social and environmental goods, including community action on climate change.

In the 'We All Do Good Things' schools project, for example, People United worked with artists and three schools, two in Kent and one in Halifax. The key was that 'everyone' should be involved – all the students, all the staff (from the head teacher to the cleaner) and all the parents. People came up with their own ways to encourage kindness (from kindness tokens that you give to someone when you do them a good turn and ask them to pass it on, to standing by a road holding up banners with kind messages every day as people drive to work). The work was quantitatively evaluated by the University of Kent, who surveyed student attitudes before, during and after the project and compared these with control groups in other schools. The results show a consistent and statistically significant increase in pro-social responses, including attitudes towards caring for people not known to you personally.

Sources:

1. www.peopleunited.org.uk/OldSite/projects/documents/KindSchoolsPrimarySummary.pdf
2. Stakeholder interviews

3.2 Community-led Mitigation Activities

Other groups have focused on engaging people through generating interest in more specific action-oriented initiatives that have benefits and attractions beyond responding to climate change. Issues relating to climate change may then be introduced over time. This approach is clearly not mutually exclusive with the engagement exercises outlined in the previous section however. The initial engagement of a relatively small and committed group can be galvanised by such engagement and planning exercises which can then lead on to more specific climate change activities that engage with the wider public.

There are many different ways of trying to categorise and understand the 'who, what and why' and of community-led climate change activities. Here, we suggest a categorisation that is based on how they seek to reduce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions, namely:

1. **Renewable energy and energy efficiency activities** – projects aiming to develop renewable energy sources and reduce community consumption of energy and fuels, including through household fuel efficiencies and the development of more sustainable transport.
2. **Localisation activities** – projects aiming to reduce the need for goods and people to travel long distances and to increase the resilience of local communities to global economic shocks.
3. **Commodity lifecycle activities** – projects and activities looking to reduce embedded energy use by reducing the consumption of products (reusing and sharing things), reducing packaging, increasing recycling and exploring closed loop systems.

It is important to note that in practice, many community groups are engaged in activities that cut across these categories. Indeed, the range of activities could be considered key to improving community resilience and sustainability. Similarly, mitigating against climate change may only be one potential motivation for engagement in an activity that will reduce carbon emissions, it may be more about health, wellbeing or having fun.

It is also important to note that in so far as projects improve community resilience, they are also climate change mitigation projects. Local food production for example, can reduce a community's exposure to international food price rises when droughts occur in other regions.

3.2.1 Renewables and Energy Efficiency Projects

Some of the most high profile community-led climate change projects have been focused on producing sustainable (renewable) energy and reducing energy use in the home. These projects have been particularly encouraged by competitions like the Big Green Challenge and funding from DECC. All three of the projects outlined overleaf were Big Green Challenge finalists. From a community perspective, the particularly interesting things about two of the three case studies (Fintry Development Trust and Low Carbon West Oxford) is that energy generation activities have provided sufficient funding to allow significant investment in energy use reduction schemes. Raising money for the community has also been a key factor in widening community engagement with the scheme.

The case studies also show, however, that for the most part successful projects in this area tend to have the support of a small number of activists who are prepared to commit their time and energies for several years before schemes come to fruition. Our stakeholder interviews also suggested that a common factor may also be a local community member with prior experience of the energy industry and subsidies available.



Case Study 6: Fintry Development Trust

Fintry Development Trust negotiated a community share in a local windfarm, purchasing one of 14 wind turbines from the developers (Falck Renewables) on behalf of the community. The purchase was effectively financed by a 15 year loan from the developer, provided against future income from the turbine and encouraged by local goodwill towards the development itself. The turbine earned the community £140,000 in its first year, and earnings are expected to rise to over £400,000 once the loan is repaid. The Trust has used the money to support a range of local carbon reduction schemes, including a home insulation scheme, energy saving measures in local community buildings and micro-energy generation schemes at a domestic level.

Fintry is a small village community of 2-300 houses 15 miles north of Glasgow. Fintry Development Trust was specifically formed by a group of local 'activists' with the aim of using the planned local windfarm development as a catalyst for engaging the community in tackling climate change.

Sources:

1. <http://www.fintrydt.org.uk/index.php?page=history>
2. 00:/, May 2011 'Compendium for the Civic Economy'. 00:/, NESTA and CABE



Case Study 7: Household Energy Services / Light Foot Enterprises

Household Energy Services (HES) is a programme on the Welsh borders using community volunteers to engage their neighbours and provide home and lifestyle carbon and energy use audits. The project has built and maintained a body of about 50 active volunteer surveyors, supported by an expert back office run by a local not for profit company, Light Foot Enterprises CIC.

A number of similar home energy audit schemes exist around the country. The unusual aspect of the HES scheme is that it works with existing community groups to train up volunteer surveyors. By being firmly rooted in the community the project has encouraged word of mouth recommendations that have had a significant effect on the local take-up of carbon saving measures. The project was a NESTA Big Green Challenge competition winner, receiving a prize of £300,000 for the community.

HES was initially set up by the Wasteless Society (local activists interested in recycling). The society had been established for 10 years and used its members to source initial volunteers.

Sources:

1. www.h-e-s.org/page/home/
2. 00:/ May 2011 'Compendium for the Civic Economy'. 00:/, NESTA and CABE
3. Centre for Sustainable Energy, May 2009 'Best Practice Review of Community Action on Climate Change'



Case Study 8: Low Carbon West Oxford

Three major floods in west Oxford between 2001 and 2007 galvanised the community into action. West Oxford Community Renewables (WOCR, an Industrial and Provident Society) was set-up by local activists to develop and produce renewable energy schemes for the benefit of the community. Surpluses from WOCR fund a wide range of carbon reduction and behaviour change projects through Low Carbon West Oxford (LCWO, a registered Charity), including sustainable transport, local food and household energy audit schemes.

LCWO note that in the early days a core of around six volunteers were responsible for driving the initiatives forward. Mostly women, some employed, some self-employed, some full time carers. Each also brought experience of leading other groups, including a school PTA, a Local Community Association and two local environmental groups. As the projects have grown, both LCWO and WOCR have taken on part-time paid members of staff to take on some of the administrative burden.

LCWO has about 270 active members and supporters. Anyone can become a member and it is free to do so. West Oxford is an area of around 1,600 households and 160 businesses. LCWO tries to engage the whole community by publishing a newsletter that is circulated to all households, holding regular drop-in sessions, holding talks at the school gates, and giving talks at other organisation's meetings.

Sources:

1. LCWO and WOCR 2010 'Low Carbon Living; Power to make it possible'
2. 3. Centre for Sustainable Energy, May 2009 'Best Practice Review of Community Action on Climate Change'

Low Carbon West Oxford's transport group have also developed a number of sustainable transport projects and activities, including car sharing initiatives, cycle path improvements and agreements with local public transport agencies to improve route planning and fuel efficiency. The group has also set up a local car club (Streetcar) which in its first year gained 170 members. At least 3 families are reported to have given up their own cars as a result and membership of the scheme is estimated to reduce participants overall car travel by 20%.

Across Oxford as a whole, Low Carbon Charter Oxford's work has also included working through the City Council to re-plan timetables across bus companies to reduce carbon emissions while maintaining frequent services.²³

However, in general, energy efficiency savings in terms of sustainable transport seem to be a less common component of community-led projects than household energy use reduction. However, the Big Lemon Bus Company (Case Study 9, overleaf) is perhaps an exception.

²³ <http://www.oxford.gov.uk/PageRender/decVanilla/LowCarbonOxford.htm> Accessed 14/2/12



Case Study 9: The Big Lemon Bus Company

The Big Lemon was formed as a social enterprise in 2007 by a group of friends in Brighton to provide friendly, affordable and sustainable public transport for communities. Its aims are to encourage people away from car use, improve health and wellbeing and reduce the impact of transport on the environment. On average occupancy, public transport is estimated to be produce 8 times less greenhouse gas emissions than travelling by car. The Big Lemon runs all its vehicles on 100% recycled waste cooking oil from local restaurants, the first bus company in the UK to do so. The business is a Community Interest Company (CIC) which invests its surpluses into growing the service.

The Big Lemon predominantly serves the campuses of the Universities of Brighton and Sussex. The company operates a Membership scheme whereby people buy season tickets that make it much cheaper to travel and give them opportunities to get involved with the way the service is planned and developed. It aims to be a fun and friendly company for both employees and customers. In the early days the service was very competitive on price (although other bus companies have drastically cut their fares) but it is hoping that its caring philosophy and membership scheme will enable it to continue to grow and develop.

Sources:

1. <http://www.thebiglemon.com/community/>
2. http://www.nef.org.uk/communities/documents/Local_United_Sustainable_Transport_Diffusion_Pack_Jan2011c.pdf

3.2.2 Localisation Activities

The second broad group of community-led carbon reduction activities can perhaps be considered under the broad heading of localisation and include local food networks (Case Study 10), local currencies (Case Study 11) and local supplier networks more generally. Localisation is viewed as a key element of many projects because it not only reduces the carbon costs of transporting people and goods, it also increases resilience by improving the range of goods and services available locally that are less vulnerable to international supply 'shocks'.

The localisation movement is not without its critics. The process of globalisation has run deep over the last 50 years and some believe localisation is a doomed attempt to turn back the clock. Globalisation and the process of international competition and specialisation have brought cost efficiencies and lower prices for many. Critics who nevertheless recognise the serious challenge of climate change typically argue that technological fixes (cleaner energy and the substitution of new raw materials for those becoming scarce) will enable a world of globally interdependent and specialised mass production and consumption to continue.

Others suggest that to some extent both arguments may be true, that we need to re-localise provision for our basic needs but that global markets for things like high-technology and pharmaceuticals are inevitable and technological fixes may help. The New Economics Foundation suggests there is a 'natural' hierarchy of complexity between different types of goods that implies a natural geographic scale for their production.²⁴ So fresh food should be local, whilst furniture may

²⁴ NEF 2009 'The Great Transition; A tale of how it turned out all right'. Spratt, Simms, Neitzert & Ryan-Collins, The New Economics Foundation.

be regional, bicycles and small machinery produced nationally, vehicles and electronics on a continental basis and pharmaceuticals on a global basis.



Case Study 10: Incredible Edible Todmorden

This dynamic community project started with guerrilla gardening, or ‘propaganda gardening’ as some participants call it, the planting of vegetables in vacant land, including road verges and roundabouts. This was primarily intended to raise the profile of the project aims (which is ultimately to make the Todmorden area ‘self-sufficient’ in food by 2018).

The project is as much about health and wellbeing as climate change mitigation. It was conceived by a group of interested activists, including Pam Warhurst, café owner and former leader of Calderdale Council. However, key elements of the approach have been openness, you can participate without joining anything, and a focus on practice rather than preaching.

“Our project is about finding the lowest common denominator, which is food, and then speaking in a language that everyone can understand. We don’t have strategies; we don’t have visiting speakers; we don’t have charters and documents. We just get on with things: this is all about action” P. Warhurst

Incredible Edible Todmorden uses existing community assets and did not initially require external funding. The project has nevertheless ‘grown’ significantly. There are over 25 raised beds in the town centre, an 8 acre shared use orchard and community polytunnel, vegetable beds in all the local schools (and a focus on local curriculums) and the senior school has a grant from BIG to become a food hub. The ‘Every Egg Matters’ campaign has developed a network of more than 50 local people and farms keeping chickens and willing to share or sell spare free range eggs.

The project is now supported by a not for profit company (Incredible Edible Todmorden CIC Ltd) with a local steering group. This employs two ‘food inspirers’, everything else is volunteers. Another company, Incredible Edible Ltd has also been set up to develop materials and help Incredible Edible projects set-up elsewhere (there is no copyright on the name, they just hope that people using share their values).

Sources:

1. <http://www.incredible-edible-todmorden.co.uk/resources/brochure-for-incredible-edible-todmorden>
2. 00:/, May 2011 ‘Compendium for the Civic Economy’. 00:/, NESTA and CABE/The Design Council
3. The Independent, 29/11/09 “Todmorden’s Good Life: Introducing Britain’s greenest town’ Moorhead, J.

Incredible Edible Todmorden is just one of many local food projects (see for example Transition Norwich²⁵ or Growing Communities in Hackney, London²⁶) but it is notable for its breadth and depth and the way it uses fun and imaginative activities to engage the community.

²⁵ <http://transitionnorwich.org/>

²⁶ <http://www.growingcommunities.org/>

There are also some examples of community project to promote local crafts and even sustainable construction using local timber and materials (see for example www.the-roundwood-timber-framing-co.ltd.uk).²⁷ However, community-led projects to localise manufacturing are a little few and far between compared with food. In part this may be due to the simple popularity of good food! It may also be that there is some doubt whether the number of 'activists' in a locality is sufficient to sustain localised production methods, particularly if the goods produced are more costly than free market competitors. In addition, public sector procurement cannot specify a requirement for local produced goods or services as this would be viewed as anti-competitive (although it can specify freshness and seasonality which can support local food production).

One of the hopes for the recent wave of local currencies (including the Lewes, Brixton and Stroud pounds) is that they will demonstrate the market for and encourage the development of localised production. These currencies are equivalent to sterling and where traders accept them can be spent pretty much in the same way. However, only traders within a certain area are encouraged to take the currency. They then need ways to spend it themselves (and will have to spend it within the locality).



Case Study 11: The Brixton Pound

The Brixton Pound is one of the most high profile local currencies in recent years. It is available in paper and electronic format (also known as Pay by Text). The paper version was launched in September 2009 and the electronic currency was launched with support from the New Economic Foundation in September 2011. Some 200 local businesses are currently accepting our B£ paper notes and some 50 are signed up to Pay by Text. Each B£ is worth £1 sterling. Its sterling backing is held at a local bank and B£s can be exchanged for sterling at issuing points.

The initiative was the idea of a small group of local enthusiasts but quickly grew after they recruited 800 people to its 1000 club of supporters who, before its launch, promised to buy and use the currency. They also engaged the support of Brixton's Town Centre Manager and a senior member of Brixton Council (the council has encouraged its 2,000 employees to back the scheme). They have also benefited from the support of nef, a charitable think and do tank, who seconded three part-time staff to the project to help plan and develop the currency.

Sources:

1. <http://brixtonpound.org/b-e-currency/about-be/>
2. Peter North, 2010 'Local Money: How to make it happen in your community'.

In his book, 'Local Money', Peter North notes that whilst currencies like the Brixton pound may provide a boost to existing local suppliers, many businesses have few such local suppliers available

²⁷ See also Prince's Foundation for the Built Environment, February 2010, 'Sustainable Supply Chains that Support Local Economic Development'.

to them. A key test of local currencies over the coming years will be whether they encourage new local entrants to the market. However, he also notes that one of the factors behind the relative success of the Brixton pound (around B£35,000 is currently in circulation) is that it has helped reinstate a sense of local pride in Brixton, for a community that is more used to seeing itself represented in a negative fashion with a focus on crime and poverty.

3.2.3 Commodity Lifecycles

Concern with energy wasted by the journeys that other products and commodities undertake to get to market (e.g. food miles) sometimes overlooks the energy that is embedded in a product's manufacture, packaging and storage. Even for food stuffs, these CO2 emissions can outweigh those relating to transport by more than 4 to 1.²⁸

A number of community-led projects are therefore exploring other ways to transform product manufacture and consumption along, including:

1. Encouraging people not to consume what they don't need (Reduce)
2. Sharing and reusing products on a community basis (Reuse)
3. Repairing products and sharing the skills to repair things (Repair)
4. Recycling as much material as possible (Recycle).



A number of transition and other community groups have developed networks to share tools and equipment, including through online sites like ecomodo²⁹, used by Low Carbon West Oxford, for example. How many people have expensive tools in their shed or garage that they use less than once a year?



Case Study 12: Bring and Fix

Bring and Fix is a concept for a new intergenerational fair created by Philippe Granger (Manager of Rushey Green Timebank) as part of a London Sustainable Development Commission project in 2011. During the fair, local people come together to share their skills and knowledge – to help each other and to have fun while doing so. It is an event where individuals 'fix' small things for each other, seek and provide advice, and come up with solutions.

Its aim is to build sustainable communities through recognisable events that can be repeated in one's locality or community on a regular basis. The project starts by recruiting potential volunteer 'lead fixers'. Anyone can get involved and bring what they know and can do for others, to repair and recycle instead of throwing away. The idea is catching on fast and communities as far afield as Canterbury and Exeter are already organising their own Bring and Fix events on similar line.

Sources:

1. <http://rgtb.org.uk/bringnfix/index.html>
2. <http://www.st-james.devon.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Bring-and-Fix-poster.pdf>

²⁸ LCWO and WOCC 2010 'Low Carbon Living; Power to make it possible'

²⁹ www.ecomodo.com

Bring and Fix (Case Study 12) is one innovative example of a community project to encourage people to repair rather than throw away that seems to have taken off quite quickly. The focus once again is on an event that is fun, sociable and delivers here and now benefits for attendees and this may explain how it has moved outside of its original London context in less than 12 months. Another reuse and 'upcycling' initiative is the Brixton Remakery, which is a co-working space that invites creators (individuals, social enterprises and businesses) to build new things from scrap as well as to fix things.³⁰

In the 1990s and early C21st there were a series of community-led recycling projects that sought to raise the profile of recycling. As Local Authorities in most areas have now introduced free recycling collections for household residents, such schemes are less prominent. However, communities like Bridport in Devon (Case Study 13) have continued to identify and seek to fill gaps in local recycling.



Case Study 13: Bridport TLC recycling project

Bridport TLC, in Dorset, is a Community Recycling Organisation, run entirely by volunteers, whose aims and activities are to support the local community, as well as local and national government directives, to reduce waste and CO2 emissions.

A committed band of around two dozen volunteers organise collections of recyclable waste for local small businesses for a small membership fee. Bridport TLC volunteers collect, sort and bale over 25 tons of recyclable material a month from local groups, schools & businesses. In addition, they collect vegetable oil from local restaurants and takeaways to transform into biodiesel, and advise local businesses on packaging and recycling. These activities have paid for the majority of the groups running costs to date.

The group have also opened an Arts and Crafts 'Scrapstore' on a local trading estate that sells art and craft materials recovered from business and household waste.

Sources:

1. www.bridport-tlc.org.uk/
2. www.realwestdorset.co.uk/wordpress/01/2010/bridport-urgent-plea-for-help-to-keep-award-winning-community-recycling-project-going/

Other examples include the East London Community Recycling Partnership³¹, a not for profit organisation set up in 2005 that collects kitchen, garden and dry recycled waste from estates in Hackney, and Brighton Community Compost Centre³², an example of a local social enterprise that was formed to undertake local garden and commercial clearances and convert green materials into organic compost which it resells to the community.

However, it is perhaps harder to sell recycling initiatives in terms of "here and now" benefits to community participants. The case studies we looked at in this area, tended to remain reliant on a relatively small number of activists.

³⁰ <http://remakery.posterous.com/pages/about> Accessed 14/2/12

³¹ <http://www.communitycompost.org/index.php/casestudies/66-elcrp> Accessed 9/2/12

³² <http://www.brighton-compost.coop/> Accessed 9/2/12

There is also a movement to consider whole product lifecycles more fully from the stage of product design to disposal. One way in which production could become more locally embedded is through the introduction of things like **'closed loop'** design. This is the concept that manufacturers should plan for what happens to their products over their entire lifecycle and also what happens to their own waste products during manufacture. One key element of the concept is to design processes where one businesses' waste can be the raw materials for another business.³³ Closed loop solutions can be focused on high or low technology. Where systems are more focused on the latter there may also be an opportunity to integrate economic localisation with closed loop design and production.

In Sweden, for example, the government funded agency Symbiocity works in local areas to develop collaborative "closed loop" systems for resource use and waste management. In the town of Enköping this involved a unique bio-cycle process that produces renewable energy via a system linking the municipal heating and sewage treatment networks with local farms, providing combined heat and power for all the town's 20,000 homes.³⁴ Cooperation between different partners is at the heart of the Enköping model. The municipality works closely with local farmers, who grow salix crops and use the ash left behind after biomass incineration as agricultural fertiliser.

3.3 Community-led Adaptation?

As we noted in Chapter 2, both policy and community-led activities have been more focused to date on climate mitigation than adaptation. This is not to say that the projects and activities described in the previous section do not have important adaptation consequences. Locally produced renewable energy and a localised food system are more likely to withstand global economic shocks caused by climate change and the depletion of non-renewable resources for example. Furthermore, many community projects involve elements of social capital building that may be a prerequisite to effective adaptation responses to climate change.

A number of localities *have* drawn up climate change adaptation plans over the last few years, although these have, almost exclusively, been led by Local Authorities rather than community groups in response to National Indicators. The requirement to measure and report performance against these indicators has since been dropped by the coalition government. Interest in the area has however been maintained to some extent by DEFRA's consultations and preparation for a National Adaptation Plan (Case Study 14, overleaf).

To some extent it is understandable that adaptation planning has been left to Local Authorities and their emergency service partners. Most people want a professionally-led response to an emergency like a flood or hurricane, even if community groups and organisations can play a vital role in supporting those plans.

However, by focusing on emergencies it is possible that the potential importance of community-led activities has been underestimated. Community-led adaptation projects could focus more on coping strategies, on reducing the consequences of climate change, through things like building 'cool' green spaces within the community, or arranging regular neighbourly visits to vulnerable people during adverse weather conditions for example. These do not need a 'plan' as such. The strength of community-led responses is often their ability to identify and then meet specific, localised needs.

³³ Ellen Macarthur Foundation, January 2012, 'Towards the Circular Economy: Economic and business rationale for an accelerated transition'.

³⁴ <http://www.symbiocity.se/en/Cases/Enkoping-Municipality/>



Case Study 14: Northwest Climate Change Partnership

As part of a DEFRA project, the North West Climate Change Partnership has developed an Adaptation Framework to assess the region's readiness to deal with unavoidable climate change. The framework was designed following an open consultation and contributions from 150 organisations and individuals. It identifies three main risks; flooding, drought and heat waves. For each it assesses readiness in terms of:

1. Understanding and planning
2. Reducing exposure
3. Reducing consequence

There are potential roles for local community groups, particularly in reducing exposure and consequence. However, the partnership is primarily of Local Authorities and emergency service partners and cannot really be said to be community-led.

Sources:

1. Environment Agency, March 2011, 'Adaptation for Sustainable Economic Growth: Final Summary Report – Adapting to unavoidable climate change in the northwest of England'.

Given that climate change mitigation and adaptation do overlap, one option for encouraging the development of community-led adaptation in future may be to ask all projects seeking funding to at least consider their potential in terms of both adaptation and mitigation as the planning stage.

3.4 Identifying and Sharing 'Good Practice' - a Postscript

A key challenge in the search for good practice examples is the relative paucity of independent evaluation or assessment. Even amongst the projects mentioned to us by stakeholders in interview, only a few have been formally evaluated. Some well-known projects that have been 'scaled up' to a national or multi-community level do not appear to have been fully evaluated at the pilot stage. For those seeking quantitative success measures in order to make significant investments this is a particular challenge:

The absence of consistent approaches to monitoring and reporting presents considerable difficulties in making comparisons between schemes and assessing the effectiveness of different approaches. More consistent and transparent monitoring and more rigorous evaluation of all area-based schemes is of critical importance to ensuring that the lessons from experience are learnt and can be applied to future schemes.

CAG Consultants in
'Review of area-based energy efficiency initiatives in Scotland' 2010

Even in terms of qualitative assessment, a lack of independent (or peer) review can mean that the perceived success of projects can be more a result of which community groups 'shout the loudest' or are the best at communications and publicity.

However, the identification and use of best or good practice models agencies looking to pilot, scale and replicate their activities can itself be considered problematic. In their discussion paper 'Mass

Localism', drawing on their experience of running the Big Green Challenge, the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) suggest that:³⁵

Scaling successful local solutions by mandating their adoption in other areas or showcasing them as best practice can undermine the local ownership, engagement and sustainability of solutions that make them effective in the first place, and erode communities' own motivation for action.

NESTA 2010a, 'Mass Localism' p29

The problem, they argue, is that traditional approaches to identifying good or best practice in community development are grounded in a deficit model of communities, where communities are almost defined by similarities in what they lack. Once you start to use an asset based model, where communities are encouraged to recognise what skills and assets they actually have and to use them more effectively, then specificity is often what counts:

Today's challenges that remain intractable are characterised by their complexity, and have two factors in common: uncertainty as to what works best on the ground; and the requirement for deep levels of personal commitment and collection action. There are limits to what constitutes 'best practice' and knowledge about what motivates people to change their behaviour.

NESTA 2010a 'Mass Localism' p19

Communities can, they suggest, develop and implement new approaches locally which can make them more effective, particularly if they are community-owned. Community ownership helps them to build on 'hidden assets', use existing social capital, raise awareness and demand for new approaches and invest back into the community in a way that builds capacity for action.

NESTA conclude that we have to change the type of intervention that is intended to support community action, relying less on scaling up 'best practice' models and creating more opportunities for communities to develop their own solutions and to learn from one another.

In our view, this does not mean that gathering and reviewing evidence on what appears to work well is not valuable but that the ultimate aim might be to bring communities together who may have things to learn from one another rather than to design a 'perfect' project to introduce across all communities.

More resources for creative and engaging approaches to project evaluation would be welcomed (not box ticking), as this has the potential to enhance the transformative potential of projects for the communities where they take place

Stakeholder interview

A key challenge for both funders and community groups is in identifying and highlighting situations that are *most* alike and where the potential for such cross-fertilisation might be strongest. Collating and classifying initial case study material could be a potential role for BIG, or one of its project or programme partners.

Another potential role might be in developing a mechanism for facilitating introductions between community groups. Given the overlaps in activity and outcomes between climate change and other

³⁵ NESTA 2010a 'Mass localism: A way to help small communities solve big social challenges'. Lead authors Laura Blunt and Michael Harris.

community projects, these potential facilitation roles might be more effective at a broader 'strong and resilient communities' level than specifically focused on climate change.

4. Barriers and Enablers

Summary

- To some extent barriers and enablers are two sides of the same coin. Something that helps a community project to overcome a significant barrier is likely to also be a key enabler to its success. Indeed barriers, enablers and success factors can be grouped under similar headings, at least at a broad thematic level.
- **Strategic alignment** with key partners, such as, for example, Local Authorities and the NHS can be a key success factor for a community initiative, enabling them to access a wider range of resources and to develop mutual benefits with other local projects. Conversely, without such alignment it can be very difficult to build up a sufficient head of steam or critical mass to encourage significant community action.
- Good **leadership** plays a key enabler role in many projects. Effective leadership may involve an individual *or group* of individuals with a clear sense of direction and readiness to take risks, having people embedded in key organisations and having (or having access to) the right skills and experience. It was suggested, for example, that most successful renewable energy projects are run by people with previous experience of the energy sector. Without this experience, other communities may not have the same opportunities.
- **Funding and resources** are, unsurprisingly, key enablers of local action, and intermittent or poor funding was highlighted as one reason many initiatives ‘fizzle out’. Where community projects actually generate income, this can be used to support a wide range of further community initiatives (both directly and in terms of enthusiasm and engagement). There is a perceived need for more freely and widely available technical advice at a community level on appropriate forms of legal structure and organisation, on methods of raising community finance and of developing and running social enterprises.
- **Networks and connections** are also important barriers and enablers for many community projects. A common challenge is to bring environmental organisations together with non-environmental ones, while building social capital, particularly bridging and linking capital in a community is also important, particularly for disadvantaged communities.
- Being able to **demonstrate progress** to the community itself is also important for climate change projects, where ultimately their impacts in terms of things like CO2 emissions or reductions in fatalities during extreme weather events can seem academic or remote. There is a need to continue to develop and refine tools to measure and demonstrate progress for community projects both in terms of mitigation and adaptation.
- Stakeholders suggested that whilst more disadvantaged communities may face particular challenges in engaging with local responses to climate change these are not unique challenges. Rather, disadvantaged communities experience the barriers to community development activities more keenly.
- In particular, people living in more deprived, usually urban communities will have what they consider to be more pressing concerns than “the environment”. Income deprived communities may also be especially resistant to “environmental” issues if these are perceived to be middle class, over technical, remote or “preachy”. Critically, they are also more likely to lack the resources – like money, time, skills, knowledge and networks – that make it easier to take action.

This chapter highlights some of the commonly cited barriers to community-led responses to climate change at a project level, drawing on our desk research and stakeholder interviews. A key reference for the section is the 2010 NESTA report on ‘Galvanising community-led responses to climate change’.³⁶ Whilst this focuses on just ten projects (the Big Green Challenge finalists), all with a

³⁶ NESTA 2010b, ‘Galvanising community-led responses to climate change’. Policy Paper of the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts.

specific focus on reducing energy use and/or introducing renewable energy generation, the report explores project barriers, enablers and success factors in some depth and our discussions with key stakeholders have confirmed the wider applicability of some of NESTA’s key findings.

4.1 Key Barriers and Enablers

To an extent barriers and enablers are two sides of the same coin. Something that helps a community project to overcome a significant barrier is likely to also be a key enabler to its success. Indeed barriers, enablers and success factors can be grouped under similar headings, at least at a broad thematic level. Figure 4.1 highlights five broad themes that have emerged from our literature review and discussions with stakeholders on good practice in community-led responses to climate change.

Figure 4.1: Barriers, enablers and success factors



Source: Emergent Research & Consulting Ltd

Strategic Alignment

A number of stakeholder interviews for this study suggested that alignment to the strategies and priorities of key local organisations, such as Local Authorities and Primary Care Trusts is an underlying success factor for many community-led climate change projects (and for community development projects more generally). Such alignment could have benefits in a variety of ways; in terms of publicity to help engagement, opportunities for additional funding, opportunities for collaboration between projects, access to the skills and support of local authority staff:

An enlightened Local Authority, switched on or strategically aligned to the issues can provide engaged local people with leverage and a network of support – something to hook into.

Stakeholder interview

Stakeholders also noted that the relative level of interest in climate change issues amongst different Local Authorities varied significantly. For some agencies it is perceived to be very low down the agenda. One survey of Local Authority officers in 2011 suggested that a quarter (25%) of Local Authorities are 'deprioritising climate change' in the context of less pressure from central government, and further 28% are narrowing their ambition, still working in areas like energy savings but not on wider environmental issues.³⁷ Worryingly, this 'retreat' is from a position where the strategic links between Local Authorities and community-led climate change action groups were often already weak.

If Big Green Challenge Finalists are typical, communities are not being involved on any scale by local authorities or energy companies in meeting their substantial carbon reduction commitments.

BrookLyndhurst 2010, Final Evaluation of the Big Green Challenge p3

The potential for mismatch between the needs of communities and the needs of project funding bodies was also mentioned by a number of stakeholders. Some felt that this misalignment is pervasive and highly damaging to the success of many community projects. The NESTA report highlights a variety of ways in which project funder priorities can have a negative impact upon community projects:³⁸

- **Narrowing the range of activities to match funder priorities** - communities often want wide ranging projects that may involve land use, transport and energy generation, for example, whilst funders commonly want a single focus on their main area of interest (e.g. domestic fuel efficiency).
- **Focusing on outputs rather than outcomes** – which can mean the overall goals of the activities are lost and the potential for innovation is overlooked (e.g. by focusing on the number of volunteer visits rather than carbon emissions saved).
- **Encouraging capital rather than revenue spending** - most funding opportunities are short term and do not want to finance activities that require continuous funding, yet community-led initiatives dependent on volunteers do need 'a professional administrative core to provide adequate on-going co-ordination and support.'
- **Undermining local participation by requiring accreditation** – community projects work best where people can do it themselves but government funders typically want accredited experts for any technical roles

Crucially, some stakeholders suggest that these impacts serve to reduce the sustainability and resilience of community projects and activities in the longer term. Where projects are allowed to develop multiple strands, they can be more effective in engaging people and in accessing different forms of finance and funding in future, for example.

We need to encourage projects that are themselves resilient and sustainable... and focus on 'multiple activities' and 'layered benefits' where mitigation against and adaptation to climate change are tools for change.

Stakeholder interview

³⁷ Green Alliance, October 2011, 'Is localism delivering for climate change? Emerging responses from local authorities, local enterprise partnerships and neighbourhood plans.' Lead Author Faye Scott.

³⁸ NESTA 2010b, 'Galvanising community-led responses to climate change.' pp15-16

But this can be a particular challenge for community projects that seek funding from central government and/or their representative agencies. DEFRA might be interested in a food or rural areas, for example, while DCLG is interested in communities, DECC in energy generation and carbon savings, BIS in skills and enterprise, DWP in employment schemes etc. Each Department (or delivery and funding body supported by a Department) will naturally seek to fund projects that maximise contributions to their own objectives.

Leadership & Engagement

Many stakeholders stressed the role of good leadership as an enabler to effective community responses to climate change. However, they also noted that it is important not to be too prescriptive about what constitutes good leadership arrangements. A recent CarnegieUK report suggests that a leader is “*someone (anyone) who steps forward to take initiative with the support of local people*” and distinguishes this from the traditional notion of a community ‘gatekeeper’.³⁹

The NESTA report ‘Galvanising community responses to climate change’ concluded that effective leadership need not necessarily be invested in one person but could be a small group of:⁴⁰

- **‘Catalytic individuals’** who have a clear sense of direction and preparedness to take some risks with an entrepreneurial approach
- **People who are ‘embedded’** in their community with strong links to a range of individuals and local organisations
- Individuals with some **relevant experience** of management derived from their day job
- People **capable of identifying and connecting with experts/professionals** who can provide them with appropriate support both within their communities and from outside organisations

A forthcoming Forum for the Future report highlights the on-going debate over whether leaders or co-ordinators can be ‘helicoptered in’ or need to be home-grown.⁴¹ The report focuses on two Low Carbon Village projects both of which involved the recruitment of external, paid project managers. The report acknowledges a need at the very least for project managers to plug into existing social networks. The project manager for one Low Carbon Village, for example, reflects that ‘The community talking to each other is very powerful and perhaps I could have relied on that a bit more’. Similarly, the project co-ordinator for the other Low Carbon Village notes that the take-up of energy meters was greatly increased when they adopted a strategy of ‘passing on the message’ between community members.

However, in the end it may come down to capacity, as one project manager suggested that ‘community leaders are a very valuable commodity but they are always overstretched’ and that ‘relatively few people can be described as ‘active’ in the community’. Other Low Carbon Village project participants noted that:

If things take too long people tend to lose interest. Don't try to rely on committees of volunteers, where people tend to drift away. (1)

³⁹ CarnegieUK, August 2011 ‘Exploring community resilience in times of rapid change: what is it? How are people building it? Why does it matter?’ Fiery Spirits Community of Practice. Lead author Nick Wilding.

⁴⁰ NESTA 2010b, ‘Galvanising community-led responses to climate change.’ Pp10-11

⁴¹ Forum for the Future (2012 forthcoming) ‘People & Places: stories from two Low Carbon Villages’. Forum for the Future, npower and the National Trust. Lead Author Roger East

People could make suggestions safe in the knowledge that there was someone there to implement them. (2)

Low Carbon Village community member (1) and stakeholder (2)
cited in 'People & Places', forthcoming

Our own discussions with stakeholder organisations also revealed that for some kind of projects (those involving energy generation, for example), community members or leaders with relevant technical expertise and/or market experience may be key enablers to many recent and current projects having got off the ground in the first place:

Many of the community groups who are involved in renewable energy have someone leading things who also works in, or has worked in, the energy sector; they understand it, they know where the funding is, they've effectively taken their work home with them. Things have to be simplified and more support is needed...

Stakeholder interview

For communities without this level of expertise, there may be a particular need for suitably experienced external project managers to be brought in or at the very least someone who has the time and resources to keep up to date:

Too often you see local pamphlets on things like feed-in tariffs that reproduce stuff that's already available nationally. Related to this there is a real need for funding to maintain at least one paid member of staff in a VCS organisation, a co-ordinator who keeps up with 'what is known'.

Stakeholder interview

Combining leadership and community engagement will perhaps always be a fine balancing act. Different members of the same geographical community can obviously have quite different ideas about the direction community action should take, whether particular open spaces should be used for local food production or sport and leisure activities, for example.

The political nature of public engagement on sustainability related issues is seldom acknowledged.

Stakeholder interview

To work in a way that is not 'top down' requires a significant level of facilitation and negotiation skills. Occasionally, group dynamics can become negative and destructive. The Transition Towns Network have developed specific training and support packages around negotiation and conflict resolution, that have already been used by around 2,500 people.

As part of the Big Society initiative, the Coalition Government announced a programme to train up to 5,000 community organisers (500 senior advisers), who could potentially play a key role in the supply of leadership within local communities (although they are expected to raise their own funds to cover their salary on a full or part-time basis).⁴² Two cohorts of community organisers have been through the training since March 2011.⁴³

A key learning point is the importance of allowing time to work with local people: a 'fly in, fly out' approach is not well received. Government funding often creates tensions in this respect

⁴² http://www.urbanforum.org.uk/files/briefings/2011_03_updated_briefing_community_organisers.pdf

⁴³ <http://locality.org.uk/projects/community-organisers/>

by being based on delivery of pre-specified outputs and creating time pressures to deliver them. Funders need to be educated about the shortcomings of this approach.

Stakeholder interview

Funding & Resources

Almost without exception, the stakeholders interviewed thought funding was a key enabler for community-led responses to climate change and lack of funding, or intermittent or inappropriate funding, was a significant barrier to action:

Local initiatives can go for a long time without funding – enthusiasm is perhaps the most important thing initially. But to reach ‘the next stage’, meaningful support is needed.

Stakeholder interview

Many noted that funding climate change projects has become more difficult over the last 2-3 years, as it has for many public and third sector activities. One or two stakeholders felt that a lack of consistent funding opportunities was a more of a barrier than lack of funding, though. The sources of potential funding, level of potential funding and funder priorities seem constantly to be changing:

You get better applications if the fund is there for a longer time and organisations know they have X number of opportunities to bid for it. You can then apply at the point the community is ready.

Stakeholder interview

There also needs to be a range of different types of funding opportunities available, for projects at the gap analysis stage or undertaking technical feasibility studies through to those who have piloted activities and what to scale up to some extent.

There could do with being a suite of programmes and opportunities that reflect where community groups are at and where they need to go next. At the moment there seems to be a bit of a ‘usual suspects’ feel to what is being funded.

Stakeholder interview

Renewable energy generation projects may have particular issues with funding, as the amounts needed to actually purchase and install equipment are very large by community development standards (commonly starting at five figure sums and working upwards). A range of innovative financial arrangements are being developed and used including green loan funds, credit unions, ethical investors, community bonds and share issues.⁴⁴ However, it remains open to question whether these methods are being developed quickly enough to benefit many communities:

Commercial contractors are aware of the value of community support for their schemes and are offering community groups money but this ‘contribution’ to community development is often peanuts compared with what the community could get if it set up its own enterprise.

Stakeholder interview

Indeed the opportunity presented by renewable energy schemes to generate quite significant income for the community can turn the issue of funding on its head. A number of co-operative and other community shared renewable energy schemes once operational are enabling communities to invest money into a wide range of further activities.

⁴⁴NESTA 2010b, ‘Galvanising community-led responses to climate change.’ Pp19.

Fintry Renewable Energy Enterprise, as we noted in Section 3.2, was set up by a community in rural Scotland to buy one of the 14 wind turbines being installed on a nearby windfarm. In the event the development company for the windfarm as a whole provided the finance for the community to buy the turbine. The community makes repayments from the money its turbine generates by feeding into the national grid.

The Trust receives upwards of £50,000 per year while the loan is repaid, and potentially over £400,000 once repaid. We've used the first part of this income to complete a major project insulating local homes... we've also funded energy-saving measures in the sports club and a new heating system in the village hall.

Gordon Cowton, Fintry Development Trust
cited on the DTA Scotland website⁴⁵

Conversely, for projects and programmes that don't involve renewable energy generation, scale may be a barrier to attracting funding and support. NESTA conclude for their Big Green Challenge Initiatives (which included examples of both types of project) that:

These communities are frequently working on activities that are on a scale that official centralised programmes wouldn't spot or wouldn't get involved in (because it is too resource intensive without volunteers) or wouldn't be good at (because centralised programmes are not responsive or trusted enough).

NESTA, 'Galvanising community-led responses to climate change' p9.

For some communities, the answer to inconsistent funding may be the development of social enterprises that provide marketable services, meet community needs and deliver climate change action. A key challenge is in bringing together those with experience and interests in business, climate change action and community development.

There is a real gap in bringing the green expertise and climate change action groups together with self-help and empowerment initiatives and enterprise and business into initiatives that can be sustainable, economically, social and environmentally. A smaller state is probably not reversible, no matter what political party is in charge.

Stakeholder interview

Networks and Connections

Indeed the lack of linkages between environmental groups and social support and community development groups in many localities was highlighted by a number of stakeholders as a potential barrier to success for community-led responses to climate change.

There may be something about the nature of local environmental and climate change interest groups; they can be quite insular and don't seem to connect well with other groups, such as those with social concerns (where there are often real links) or simply other groups.

Stakeholder interview

Others suggested that the strength of local networks and connections and the ability of projects to plug into them were key enablers of project success more generally. The concept of social capital is potentially useful here, a theory developed by Robert Putnam, building on the work of Pierre

⁴⁵ <http://www.dtascot.org.uk/content/what-is-a-development-trust/case-studies/fintry-development-trust> Accessed 7/1/12

Bourdieu and others, and used quite widely in recent years.⁴⁶ This suggests that there are three different types of networks and connections that local communities can have, i.e.:

Bonding capital – the links between close family and friends, strong and built on reciprocity and trust and a shared sense of belonging and identity.

Bridging capital – links with others ‘like us’, loose friendships, and colleagues, helps to build broader, more flexible identities and to share innovations across networks.

Linking capital – links with others with different levels of power and status. The ability of groups to access networks of power and resources beyond their immediate community.

Bonding capital is essential to the cohesive engagement of a community with an issue or a project. However, bridging capital may be vital in terms of raising aspirations and developing a sense of self efficacy, something that can be particularly important in disadvantaged communities (see Section 4.2).

Facilitated peer to peer learning is a critical activity for us and a key aspect to addressing aspirations and empowerment. If people think they can't do something – they won't.

Stakeholder interview

Bridging capital can also be important to sustaining activity:

Feeling isolated and out on a limb can be a further barrier to action... Regional network events are used in Transition to keep local groups energised.

Stakeholder interview

Whilst linking capital may be vital in accessing support needed.

There's an issue with the connections environmental VCS groups have, even to Local Authorities which may have VCS advisors that can help.

Stakeholder interview

To some extent this works both ways:

A lot of the work I have been involved in has been trying to get non-climate change related VCS organisations to think about the climate change effect of their own activities. It's not easy to make these connections; community organisations are often quite 'siloed'.

Stakeholder interview

Between 2008 and 2010, the Baring Foundation funded four pilot projects to help non-environmental voluntary organisations explore how the impacts of climate change would affect their primary charitable purposes. The final project report concluded that climate change will have a significant impact on many VCS organisations and that they need support in order to develop appropriate mitigation and adaptation plans and activities.⁴⁷ The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) is taking this work forward through its ‘Vulnerable People and Climate Change’ project, working with 16 organisations a year over the next four years.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ CarnegieUK, August 2011 ‘Exploring community resilience in times of rapid change: what is it? How are people building it? Why does it matter?’ Fiery Spirits Community of Practice. Lead author Nick Wilding.

⁴⁷ Baring Foundation, June 2010 ‘An Unexamined Truth’. Lead Author Mathew Smerdon.

⁴⁸ NCVO, 2011 ‘Vulnerable people and Climate Change Project Plan’ available at www.ncvo-lol.org.uk/thebigresponse Accessed 7/1/12.

By focusing on organisations (and by extension all the people in them) you can have a big impact on the beneficiaries they serve. This creates a big 'multiplier effect', especially if those you work with also go beyond their own footprint.

Stakeholder interview

Helping community groups (both environmental and non-environmental) to develop their social capital and in particular building, bridging and linking social capital could also be a key role for organisations like BIG.

Demonstrating Progress

To mobilise local communities to act on climate change in a sustained way you need to be able to demonstrate progression and achievement. Indeed, any voluntary collective enterprise needs to have a sense of progress to maintain commitment. However, this is arguably a particularly important issue for climate change related projects. Firstly, intermediate outcomes from the projects (a reduction in carbon emissions, for example) may be invisible and/or abstract concepts to participants; secondly, the contribution of projects to the ultimate objective (particularly climate change mitigation) may be extremely small, and thirdly, the activities of others not involved in the project can negate (or be perceived to negate) the achievements of the community (such as the rise in fossil fuel use in Asia).

Carbon calculators, which measure likely reductions in the production of CO₂ as a result of different activities are therefore a potentially invaluable tool for climate change projects. However, they are not without their difficulties:

..the experience of carbon footprint methodologies was frequently frustrating because of their limited scope and inability to cover the full range of activities... CO₂ monitoring also placed a heavy burden on communities due to the lack of readily available alternative forms of information.

NESTA, 'Galvanising community-led responses to climate change' p9.

The two villages in the Low Carbon Villages report also reported that they failed to accurately measure their impact in terms of carbon/energy savings.⁴⁹ In part because the CO₂ calculators used were updated during the project, in part because there were too many assumptions in the underlying data (that it was difficult to hold constant before and after). However, some stakeholders feel that there can be an overemphasis (particularly by funders) on trying to develop perfect measures which are comparable across projects when project specific measures comparable over time may be more important:

What is more important is that the quantitative analysis should help people become more aware of the materiality of their actions. 'The more they get involved with metrics... the more people will learn, and understand, and want to take effective action. Which in the end is more important than collecting the data.

Research and evaluation specialist
cited in 'People & Places', forthcoming⁵⁰

I'm keen for all community climate change projects to try and measure carbon savings. DECC may be too focused on the precise amount but when you do try to measure it it helps give

⁴⁹ Forum for the Future (2012 forthcoming) 'People & Places: stories from two Low Carbon Villages'. Forum for the Future, npower and the National Trust. Lead Author Roger East

⁵⁰ Forum for the Future ibid

communities a sense of progress and combat the idea that what people are doing is pointless.

Stakeholder interview

Some stakeholders also mentioned the role that external recognition through awards, funding and publicity can have in developing this sense of progress and achievement in the absence of or in addition to concrete measures.

Progress measures for community-led climate change adaptation activities will also be difficult, given that the question of exactly what would have happened without action will always remain unanswered. There is no comparable benchmark to reduction in carbon emissions for adaptation measures. It may be that demonstrating progress for adaptation projects will need to focus on more immediate soft outcomes for communities, such as perceptions of community cohesiveness and personal wellbeing.

4.2 Disadvantaged Communities

One of the key questions for this study was how disadvantaged communities might be encouraged to engage in climate change mitigation and adaptation, given the increasing evidence that these communities might be the most adversely affected by climate change. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, for example, recently published a detailed analysis of vulnerability to extreme weather events that suggested the social dimensions of climate change have not been fully recognised.⁵¹

However, there is a perception that deprived and disadvantaged communities are not particularly well engaged with or served by community-led climate change projects.

Transition has perhaps been less active in some very disadvantaged areas, with groups in Moss Side and Liverpool being key exceptions. Local transition initiatives realistically need people with time to give, skills and practical experience of making things happen.

Stakeholder interview

NESTA also reported that the Big Green Challenge finalists did find it more difficult to reach out to more marginalised groups but that there were some successes. One example is the Global Generation Project:

For some of their 'Generators' who are sometimes from low income or ethnic minority backgrounds, being involved in gardening projects with high-profile businesses (such as the Guardian newspaper) was about improving their future job prospects as much as gardening, and this may have helped them get support from parents to be involved.

NESTA, 2011b, p11

The stakeholders we interviewed felt that the barriers to engaging more disadvantaged communities in climate change activities were not really any different from the barriers to engaging them in community development more generally.

Some stakeholders suggested that disadvantaged areas were more likely to be affected by the technical and remoteness of the debates and the perceived 'preachiness' of environmentalism (but these are issues for many non-engaged people). Many suggested that focusing on real (and predominantly financial) benefits is particularly key for engaging disadvantaged groups.

⁵¹ JRF, November 2011 'Climate change, justice and vulnerability'. Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Lead Authors, Sarah Lindley, John O'Neill, Joseph Kande, Nigel Lawson, Richard Christian and Martin O'Neill

Others suggested that disadvantaged communities were more likely to lack existing capacity to organise and encourage change. There was some suggestion that in terms of social capital, for example, that bridging capital (between similar communities) and linking capital (to different types of communities) might be particularly weak in more deprived areas.

One way of supporting them would be to 'seed' them by providing support and training to people with access to different groups in local areas.

Stakeholder interview

As we saw in the previous section, for urban deprived communities there may also be issues in terms of bonding capital with immediate neighbours, with young people reporting that they didn't feel valued and part of the community, for example. We also noted in Section 4 that connections with green spaces and green infrastructure more generally can be limited in urban deprived neighbourhoods, which can alter people's sense of connection with the environment. A sense of efficacy can also be harder to nurture in deprived areas, the feeling that you can make a difference and the experience of 'getting things done'.

Our focus in this study was predominantly on geographical communities, and therefore, through the lens of the housing market, more on income deprivation than other forms of disadvantage such as age, gender, ethnicity, disability or sexuality.

One or two stakeholders did, however, suggest in interview that other attributes may influence the motivations and behaviours of disadvantaged groups in terms of engaging in climate change action:

- Disadvantaged young people may be less engaged: A low sense of self-esteem and perceived value within the community can be a barrier to the engagement of disadvantaged young people in community-led projects.
- Some ethnic minority groups may be less engaged: A close relationship with green spaces, particularly during childhood, can have a significant effect on adult perceptions of 'green issues'. However many ethnic minority communities live predominantly in urban areas and spend comparatively little time in the countryside.
- However, some first and second generation migrants may be easier to engage: It was suggested these migrants may be a relatively untapped group, given their first and close hand (e.g. through relatives) experiences of severe droughts, floods, hurricanes etc. in other areas of the world.

However, the potential importance of 'lack of money' as an explanation for a relative lack of engagement should not be underestimated:

Many of the responses to climate change require disposable income at the level of the household.

Stakeholder interview

Previous research undertaken by this report's authors, for example, has shown that a key factor behind lower business start-up rates for women (and smaller businesses when they do start) is that most finance for starting businesses is provided by the entrepreneur not by banks or external investors, and that women on average have less disposable income.⁵²

⁵² SEEDA & Business Link 2009 'Spotlight on Women's Enterprise' South East Business Monitor Hot Topic Spotlight Report.

5. Understanding Motivation and Behaviour

Summary

- Motivations to engage with collective responses to climate change vary enormously by individual and also reflect the particular circumstances of a given area and its communities, so initiatives need to be tailored to local circumstances.
- Despite this great variety, there are two themes which can be especially effective at engaging people:
 1. **“Here and now”** issues, such as saving money (through energy efficiency), getting a job or a better job, or taking steps toward these through, say, advice or training. In the most challenging environments “here and now” issues can also include perceptions of injustice and discrimination.
 2. **“Our future”** – thinking about how people want their place to be in future years – as a place to live, work and bring up children, for example – can also be very motivating. A shared story of a resilient and thriving place can be one that galvanises community engagement and action.
- Neither of these is specifically ‘environmental’. Indeed for some, environmental arguments seem remote, difficult to understand and full of jargon. Furthermore, when people feel they are being ‘lectured’ they can react negatively and they can feel threatened and/or overwhelmed by overly negative environmental messages.
- In this context providing safe spaces where people can explore their concerns, enabling participation in community arts events, and providing opportunities for people to learn about nature and environmental issues can also motivate and change behaviour. Learning and empowerment work can also be very motivating: making young people feel that their views are valued, for example.
- Considering climate change in isolation may not be the most helpful way of supporting community responses. Rather, local collective approaches which build resilience and sustainability generally may be a more appropriate focus.
- Third sector organisations nationally are also learning more about transforming shared values and motivations into action and there may be opportunities for local groups to benefit from this work.
- The *‘Pathways through Participation’* research project (led by Involve) suggests that community groups need to try and understand and work with their members many and varied motivations, their resources, their opportunities to participate and potential triggers for participation. Only when these four elements are in line will people commit to significant action.
- Research by WWF, Oxfam and others (*Common Cause*) also suggests that community organisations can work together to both appeal to and build on people’s intrinsic values and motivations in a far more coherent way.

This chapter explores the issues of what might motivate people to engage in climate change as an issue, and change their behaviour in terms of taking action for more sustainable lifestyles or being part of community responses. While an exhaustive and critical review of this growing field is beyond the scope of this small study, our aim is to identify theory and practice which is well supported by evidence and so may be of practical use in working with communities.

We start with the issue of complexity: understanding people’s motivation to act can only be done in context, and this needs an understanding of places and the people who live in them. Next, we look at *what* engages people, what issues are most likely to encourage people to get involved. Then, we look at *how* people can be engaged by empowering them to take part and doing so effectively.

Finally, we consider the very specific motivator of people's direct experience, especially that of extreme weather events.

5.1 Local context

Motivations to engage with collective responses to climate change vary enormously and reflect the particular complex circumstances of a given area and its people:

For some people it's the threat of climate change itself. For other individuals and communities, such as those in rural areas, it could be more about fuel security and the threat of peak oil. Fuel poverty and energy can also be strong motivating factors in more disadvantaged communities.

Stakeholder interview

Demographics can also be a guide, and one interviewee suggested that the Index of Multiple Deprivation, for example, might be a useful tool in this respect in terms of targeting.

In general, rural prosperous communities seem to have more resources in the community to respond to major events, suggesting that there is probably a rural-urban split in terms of resilience.

Stakeholder interview

What constitutes a "community" is also open to interpretation, and the work of NCVO and partners with major voluntary organisations supporting specific groups of people, for example, highlights the potentially key role of communities of interest, such as those using services for, say, older people or people with a particular disability.

This complexity might be considered "distributed" in the sense that no two communities (however they are defined) are the same and will take different approaches to responding to the challenges of climate change. They will, therefore, need different types of support, even if good practice may be to some extent transferable between different communities. Given current policy drivers and the economic reality of there being less money, what may be needed is "mass localism" (see Section 3.1):

Mass localism depends on a different kind of support from government and a different approach to scale. Instead of assuming that the best solutions need to be determined, prescribed, driven or 'authorised' from the centre, policy makers should create more opportunities for communities to develop their own solutions and to learn from each other.

NESTA, *Mass Localism*, p 5⁵³

This NESTA paper goes on to suggest that mass localism reflects a broader trend of, "finding distributed answers to problems and delivering solutions with citizens. It represents a shift from mass production to distributed production" (NESTA, *Mass Localism*, p 6).

This suggests that individual and community motivations will vary significantly for different places and different groups of people, and that approaches to developing motivation will need to be tailored accordingly.

⁵³ NESTA, 2010, *Mass Localism: A way to help small communities solve big social challenges*. Lead Authors; Bunt, L and Harris, M.

5.2 What Engages People

As the earlier discussion of complexity suggests, there is no single motivator that local initiatives can tap into in developing their responses to climate change, a view which was borne out by the experience of the Big Green Challenge, where local specificity was found to be a key feature of effective projects⁵⁴. Within this broad diversity of possible things that might engage people, our interviews suggest that there are two broad sets of issues (not mutually exclusive) that engage people: the “here and now” and the future that people want for their place.

The “Here and Now”

On the first of these two broad approaches, many felt that climate change *per se* does not provide a good basis for engaging people. Environmental issues tend not to be towards the top of people’s priorities and climate change itself can be little understood or disputed. The British Social Attitudes Survey, for example, suggests that public support for tackling climate change has declined, and that people are now less likely to change their behaviour for the sake of the environment if this will cost them money, time or effort⁵⁵. Other polling evidence suggests that uncertainty, a lack of trust and scepticism on climate change remain high among the general public, and that views are now more polarised about whether climate change is a threat⁵⁶.

“Here and now” issues, “starting where people are”, or “engaging people where they are”, as some of our interviewees put it, can provide a good basis to engage people in their communities, even if the immediate focus is not on climate change or community resilience. This involves recognising the reality of people’s lives as revealed to them in their lived experience, which can be especially challenging in more deprived communities:

When people are living with debt and struggling with a family in cold, damp, mouldy conditions, climate change concerns are a long way off.

Stakeholder interview

Engaging people on issues of more immediate interest to them is much more likely to be successful. Saving money on fuel bills was identified by many as a reliable and practical driver of behaviour, although, enthusiasm can quickly wane if increased units costs lead to energy bills still being higher (what Green Alliance have called a “rebound effect”). This suggests that initiatives on fuel poverty, for example, would have a practical appeal to people in poorer neighbourhoods.

Starting with people’s desire to find a job or improve their earnings can also be of practical value in engaging people. If immediate access to jobs through community climate change initiatives is not possible, access to advice, support and skills can stimulate interest. Food, healthy diet and wellbeing can also be themes which motivate engagement, including for vulnerable communities and women, in the case of households where women mainly look after cooking and budgeting, for example.

“Here and now” issues which motivate engagement can be more overtly political in nature in some communities, and relate to injustice and unfairness experienced by people, highlighting potential linkages to empowerment and advocacy.

⁵⁴ NESTA, 2010, Mass Localism: A way to help small communities solve big social challenges, p 4. Lead authors Bunt, L and Harris, M

⁵⁵ http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2012/jan/05/climate-change-message?CMP=tw_t_gu

⁵⁶ Involve, 2011, Distributed Dialogue: the use of public engagement in tackling climate change Lead authors Burall, S, Prikken, I and Kattirtzi, M.

“Our Future”

Engaging people in thinking about the future of their place can also be motivating. Many “here and now” issues can emerge through such a process, as a community considers the challenges it faces and the kind of future people want. Allowing time for a community to identify its own issues and priorities can be important and lead to issues being identified that engage the community on its own terms, as is the case of one project that ended up focusing on fuel poverty and inequality:

The approach involved bringing people together to consider their neighbourhood, what they wanted from it, what they already have, and thinking about the future using scenarios and considering how they might be reached. This way of working means that you have to be honest about where the conversation might go, and let people think through where their solutions lie.

Stakeholder interview

Thinking about the future also works with specific groups of people, as indicated by work by NCVO and partners with service user groups:

Getting people to think about the future does engage people: older people and organisations for them, for example, do care about the future, as do young people and families with children. Our approach involves developing knowledge and understanding, based on beneficiaries’ actual lived experience and then encouraging them to consider what actions may be required.

Stakeholder interview

Working towards a clear vision of the future can also motivate people. Research in the US by Schellenberger and Nordhaus⁵⁷ argued that technical arguments for change and an “issue based” approach to environmental issues miss the more fundamental point that people need a positive vision to align themselves with, and that this can help bring forth the energy and ideas needed to solve sustainability problems:

A positive, transformative vision doesn’t just inspire, it also creates the cognitive space for assumptions to be challenged and new ideas to surface. And it helps to get everyone out of their “issue” boxes.

Schellenberger and Nordhaus, *The Death of Environmentalism*, p 31.

The positive value of a future oriented vision is also borne out by the experience of the Transition Network:

We often under-estimate the power of hope – what in Transition we called ‘engaged optimism. Getting started and making change in our lives is a hopeful activity that touches us deeply.

Hopkins, R, *The Transition Companion*, p 37

The Transition experience suggests that a shared vision, or story of place can be highly motivating:

Transition also highlights the value of helping people find a new story to tell about themselves and their place. This makes people feel part of something holistic in the story of the place where they live, and, flowing from that, something they can do in a supported way.

Stakeholder interview

⁵⁷ Schellenberger, M and Nordhaus, E, 2004, *The Death of Environmentalism: Global Warming Politics in a Post-Environmental World*: http://www.thebreakthrough.org/images/Death_of_Environmentalism.pdf

A number of interviews also mentioned the importance of “big politics” and policy in aiding motivation (as well as more practical support to work on the ground). Some interviewees were concerned that national politicians were failing to give communities a “big reason” to respond to the challenges of climate change by underplaying its importance and giving signals from the centre of a relative lack of commitment to it as an issue. A stronger and less ambiguous central policy lead would help local initiatives.

Another aspect of this policy dimension is that local actions will be much more effective if aligned with national policy, and vice versa. Local Authorities also have an important role to play in creating an environment which is conducive to citizen engagement by themselves being proactive on climate change and resilience.

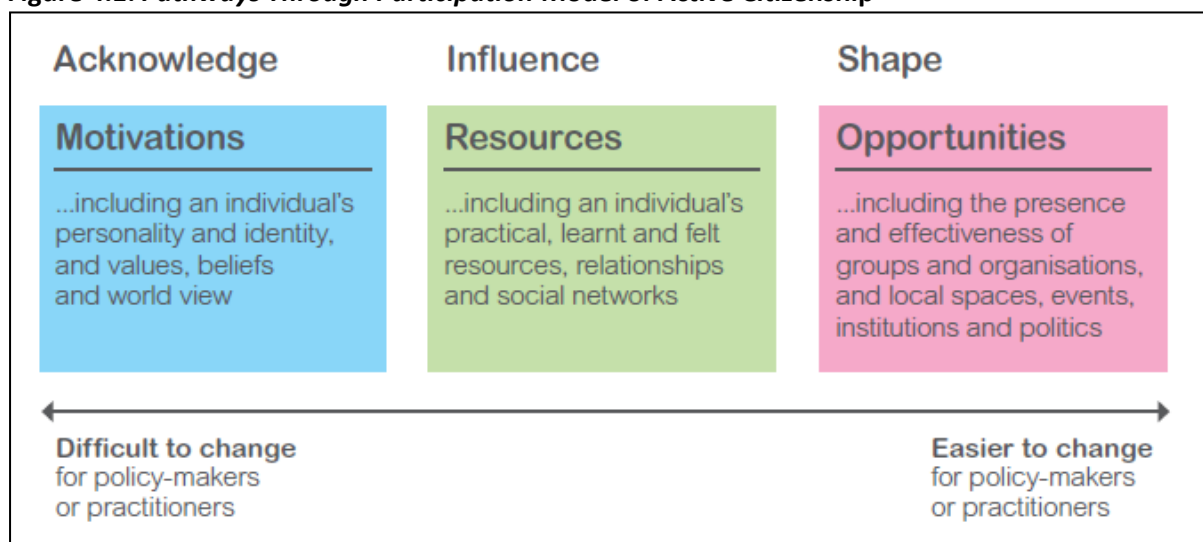
5.3 How People Are Best Engaged

The different ways in which people are engaged in local deliberation and action can also impact on motivation and behaviour. Here, we consider four aspects of this: what represents good practice in public engagement; the role that values can play in motivating people; the importance of awareness and learning; and the need for empowerment of communities and groups of people within them.

Engagement

Most interviewees had valuable experience of effective approaches to engaging people in local responses to the challenges posed by climate change and resilience. In addition to this collective expertise of stakeholders, a highly relevant and recent development is Involve/IVR/NCVO’s detailed research into public participation in civil society and democracy.

Figure 4.1: Pathways Through Participation Model of Active Citizenship



Source: NCVO/IVR/Involve, 2011, ‘Pathways Through Participation’, Brodie et al., p 74

*Pathways Through Participation*⁵⁸ (see Figure 4.1 above) was based upon detailed qualitative research with large numbers of people in three different community settings and identified people’s main *motivations* when considering participating in their community. These include personality, identity, values, beliefs and world view. A person’s *resources* also influence engagement. These can be practical, learnt, felt, relationships and social networks. Finally, people need *opportunities* to engage, in the form of groups and organisations being present and effective, and the availability of

⁵⁸ NCVO/IVR/Involve, 2011, ‘Pathways Through Participation’, Brodie et al.

local spaces, events, institutions and politics. These three factors combine with a *trigger* (such as an emotional reaction, a personal life event or an external influence) to bring about participation.

This model suggests that barriers to participation would include things like a lack of community spaces (where people feel ownership) for people to meet, network and so forth. Continued participation would depend on the quality of one's experience, including relationships, conflicts, processes, the feeling that activity is having an impact and the degree of support from relevant stakeholders.

The Pathways model also supports the idea of engaging people "where they are" (see above) in terms of issues of direct interest to them that relate to their everyday lives, but also perhaps thinking about how it affects their immediate interests and longer term future through, for example, a shared vision of the future and the resources that will be needed to achieve it.

Involve's work suggests that dialogue through public engagement processes can play a key role in shaping motivation and subsequent action in local communities, in contrast to approaches which target behaviour change by individuals:

The evidence from these 'small scale' public engagement processes shows that public engagement can make significant changes to attitude and behaviour. Nudge, shove or communication alone won't work. Tackling climate change requires behaviour change and action at multiple levels of society.

Burall, S et al (2011), *Distributed Dialogue*, Involve, p 6.

While underlining the value of getting right the initial engagement of people in local processes and facilitating local dialogues appropriately, the *Pathways* model also highlights the need to go beyond changing attitudes to ensure there are adequate resources (of all types), opportunities to act and sufficient "triggers" that provoke a decision to act, for people's motivation to last and projects to prosper.

Involve's experience also highlights a choice that local initiatives face. On the one hand, they can "go where the energy is", with people and places self-selecting into a change process. This has the benefit of creating what the Transition Network has called a do-ocracy, with people able to follow their passions and use their skills in a variety of roles and activities. Under this approach, climate change and resilience related initiatives would "bubble up" from below.

On the other hand, this may also suggest a need to *elicit* engagement where it does not emerge of its own accord, with key first steps being to map relevant stakeholders and community groups, uncover their motivations and facilitate discussion and action on the back of that. Those faced with these tasks in places where little interest has emerged of its own accord are likely to have significant support needs.

The community engagement process can be time consuming, especially in more deprived communities, and should involve identification and engagement of community groups over an extended period of time:

Deprived areas need more time, more intensive support, trust building and awareness raising, suggesting the need for an intensive, regular or intensive process, not a sporadic one. Activities should not involve "reinventing the wheel", but work through existing community networks, such as primary schools, parent and toddler groups, garden groups, sports clubs

and youth groups. You need resources to engage the right people on the ground – beyond the “usual suspects”.

Stakeholder interview

Key activist individuals within a community play an important role in shaping the views and behaviour of others:

They will be the ones who take on roles like snow wardens and flood wardens, and inform and engage others in the process. Local Authorities are also well placed and trusted to approach communities on issues of resilience.

Stakeholder interview

Motivation is increased and action made easier when people are afforded opportunities to act. This can depend in the first instance on there being sufficient “soft infrastructure” in the form of social capital, community spaces where people are comfortable to come together and well-resourced voluntary and community organisations. People also need opportunities to take small steps that it is easy for them to take in responding to climate change and the challenges of resilience, including the acquisition of new skills and improved access to work or better work, whether individually or for the community as a whole.

Values

Research by WWF, Oxfam and others suggests that values – how they are encouraged and how they in turn create a more favourable climate for pro-social and pro-environmental behaviour – also play a key role in motivation and behaviour. *Common Cause*⁵⁹ considers what shapes human attitudes and behaviour on issues, including climate change, that are the subject of NGO campaigns and activities. While focused particularly on campaigning, the research is also extremely relevant to grant giving bodies like BIG working to effect change through funded projects.

The research distinguishes between issues where it is clearly in people’s self-interest to act (such as an unpopular development in their neighbourhood) on the one hand, and “bigger-than-self” problems, which, although they may be intractable and worsening, less directly threaten an individual’s interest, on the other. As a result, an individual’s “return” on changing behaviour in terms of car use, for example, is difficult to immediately identify. There is an apparent symmetry when this approach is applied to climate change adaptation and mitigation: while adaptation actions appeal to people’s rational self-interest, committing to mitigation actions yields no obvious self-interested benefit (although it might be possible to identify these, eg: less car use and more walking or cycling brings health benefits). Engaging people in these “bigger-than-self” issues is important not just in terms of changes to individuals’ behaviour, but also by creating demand for changes to business practices, products and services, and for political action by governments.

Common Cause identifies emotion, rather than evidence, as playing the key role in shaping people’s behaviour, and emotion itself is shaped by dominant cultural values:

It seems that individuals are often predisposed to reject information when accepting it would challenge their identity and values...information (for example, about the scale of the challenge climate change presents) may simply serve to harden resistance to accepting new government policies or adopting new private-sphere behaviours.

Crompton (2010), *Common Cause*, p9

⁵⁹ COIN, CPRE, Friends of the Earth, Oxfam and WWF, 2010, ‘Common Cause: The Case for Working with our Cultural Values’. Lead Author Crompton, T.

A key challenge, therefore, for those working to bring about individual and social change on climate issues is to reinforce “intrinsic” (rather than extrinsic) values and encourage a much wider adoption of these “bigger than self” attitudes and behaviours. Even when extrinsic values can be used to motivate a change in behaviour, people are more likely to “lapse” back into old ways, more consistent with more unhelpful extrinsic values. Values can be culturally strengthened or weakened: “repeated activation” can reinforce or undermine both sets of values through exposure to peers, the media, education or experiences of public policies. Values themselves are shaped by three pairs of “deep frames”, more fundamental belief structures which relate to whether people are fundamentally self-interested or focus more on the common interest; view authority as a “strict father” or “nurturant parent”; or are drawn to “elite governance” or “participative democracy”.

Actions – including those with funding support from BIG - taken by organisations will therefore have *cognitive* impacts, as well as the more obvious material impacts: how you do things is as important as what you do, when it comes to effecting change. With this in mind, *Common Cause* proposes eight principles that civil society organisations should consider adopting when working for change (summarised in Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2: Common Cause Principles for Civil Society Organisations

<p>1: Be transparent and participatory, and demand the same standard from others. Starting with civil society organisations themselves, all organisations should openly scrutinise the values that their activities promote, draw public attention to these, and outline the justification for working to strengthen these values.</p>
<p>2: Ensure that communications and campaigns embody the values that they seek to promote. The public <i>experience</i> of a communication or campaign should serve to convey and reinforce the deep frames necessary for systemic engagement with social and environmental challenges, irrespective of whether or not the campaign itself is formally ‘successful’ in terms of the material changes it is seeking to create.</p>
<p>3: Be prepared to work for systemic change Strengthening particular frames involves an ongoing learning process. This requires sustained effort – maintained at all times through communications and campaigns that are consistent and transparent in their aims.</p>
<p>4: Build new coalitions. An understanding of the importance of values and frames points to the possibility of coalitions of civil society organisations, possibly with very divergent policy interests, coming together to campaign jointly on specific drivers of unhelpful deep frames that serve to frustrate each of their separate (and possibly disparate) campaign aims.</p>
<p>5: Understand the full impact of policy. People’s <i>experience</i> of living with particular <i>policies</i> can have a profound impact on their values, and their appetite for new policies. Civil society organisations should advocate policies that serve to promote helpful deep frames – even when these policies are developed in areas far removed from the issues on which a particular civil society organisation focuses.</p>
<p>6: Manage trade-offs where these are unavoidable Often, those deep frames that are most productively deployed in pursuit of a specific set of issue specific campaign objectives will be the <i>same</i> frames which will come to motivate more systemic change. But sometimes the most effective tactics in motivating a specific change will be in tension with a strategy aimed at achieving more systemic change. There are several factors that should be considered in deciding on the best campaign approaches when such tensions arise.</p>
<p>7. Tailor the message to the audience. Audience segmentation is important in order to communicate with different audiences, to help strengthen helpful deep frames and associated values. But this is a very different use of segmentation techniques from that made by strategies that advocate tailoring communications in order to appeal to <i>whatever</i> dominant values an audience segment may express.</p>
<p>8: Make it fun and dare to dream. Compelling communication approaches and inspiring new visions are needed – and campaigners must draw on the expertise of people with a gift for such communication. But the drive for creativity must not be allowed to distract from the importance of appealing to helpful values!</p>

Source: *Common Cause: The Case for Working with our Cultural Values*, Crompton, T, COIN, CPRE, Friends of the Earth, Oxfam and WWF, 2010, page 76

The approach devised in *Common Cause* has been informed by a number of small-scale controlled experiments, which seem to confirm the importance of fostering intrinsic values. It is also now

beginning to shape the collective and individual strategies of NGOs and offers potentially very valuable insights to shape the development of local initiatives.

Awareness and Learning

Desk research and interviews also provided an indication of the importance of increasing awareness and learning as part of successful engagement processes which stimulate action on the ground. There is growing evidence, for example, of the importance of what some people call “galvanising experiences”.

The most important of these by far is personal and direct experience of extreme weather events or other effects attributable to global warming. A forthcoming case study of good practice on adaptation by JRF, for example, will highlight the effectiveness of the Gairloch and Loch Ewe Community-led Climate Change Adaptation Partnership in the Scottish Highlands and Islands (JRF publication forthcoming in March/ April 2012). This approach (which involved individual actions, a toolkit and workshops) could be replicable elsewhere, but the area has its own particular characteristics, not least its isolated nature and demonstrated vulnerability to extreme weather.

Experiences of extreme weather and the civil emergencies they provoke can provide harsh introductions to the practicalities of adaptation:

Direct experience of an extreme event can galvanise the community to be ready to play its role in recovery. At Tolbar near Doncaster, before the 2007 floods, there was no experience of extreme weather events. When the floods hit, people were passive in their response, effectively waiting for someone to help, when the scale of the event made this impossible.

Stakeholder interview

Galvanising events can, though, also take the form of community arts projects and creative strategies which allow people to participate in transformative collective experiences:

Tipping Point commissioned works from all art forms and undertook experiments with different approaches, including large-scale events which developed emotion and interaction, such as “As the World Tipped”, with scale and wonder.

Stakeholder interview

Trashcatchers, for example, was a community created carnival in Tooting. It aimed to create intentional change by celebrating the Earth, celebrating community and imagining the future. The project built understanding of the issues around peak oil through, for example, workshops in primary schools and then went on to develop the carnival, effectively “rehearsing” the community for change in the process, following the Brechtian idea that those most transformed by art are those who make it.

Empowerment

Engaging people in ways which empower people to participate can mean making clear that their views are genuinely valued, as demonstrated by work by NCB in encouraging children and young people to act on climate change:

The young people we have worked with have told us that how valued they feel within the community influences their ability to get involved in their community and global issues such as climate change and environmental action. This is a particular issue for the disadvantaged.

Stakeholder interview

Particularly in more deprived urban areas attitudes to the environment have been found to reflect a lack of connection to nature, so providing opportunities for young people, for example, to gain access to the countryside can be invaluable, while also having associated wellbeing benefits for those involved:

A focus on connecting to the natural world would be helpful with urban disadvantaged groups. Many deprived areas are remote from green resources and infrastructure. This may have more impact than telling people what climate change is. Research suggests that the kind of connections we have to the natural world as a child strongly influence our attitudes towards it as an adult

Stakeholder interview

Some of Capacity Global's work suggests that simply creating time and space for people to come together on their own terms in a place where they feel comfortable can build confidence and willingness to explore shared challenges and how people might respond to them.

Empowering people to act on climate change can also involve helping them to address the complex emotional challenges it throws up:

People are broadly aware of the issues and the motivations for inaction can be complex psychological ones involving emotions like guilt, fear and anxiety. People can feel powerless and trapped and therefore turn away from getting involved.

Stakeholder interview

The experience of Cambridge Carbon Footprint is that these anxieties can be lessened by creating safe contexts where people feel comfortable exploring their concerns. Community research and more formal learning also proved effective at increasing understanding of the issues and engagement in action. Such constructive and supportive opportunities to learn and reflect contrast strongly with less supportive approaches to engaging sometimes taken by "environmentalists":

People who lecture others on green issues can be a disincentive to engagement. Preachiness and proselytising can be significant barriers to action.

Stakeholder interview

A more convivial, sociable and fun approach to engaging people appears to be much more empowering for many, based on the experience of the Transition Network, which has found that people value making new social connections and creating new ones with people from the place where they live.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

This final chapter revisits the five key research questions set out in the initial brief for the study before exploring a number of potential actions for BIG and partners to consider in response to community needs and the issues identified in the research. Our recommendations were developed in draft form and then critiqued through an expert Delphi Group of community development and climate change action specialists (see Annex 1). What is presented here is based on the conclusions we drew from that process, which included a wide ranging discussion of the issues and challenges facing both communities and community-led climate change projects.

6.1 Conclusions

The brief for this scoping study outlined five main questions for exploration.

Q1. How have local communities been engaged in community-led mitigation and adaptation?

As we noted in Chapter 2, communities have been much more widely engaged in climate change mitigation activities and projects than those focusing specifically on adaptation. This may be because the effects of climate change have not yet been felt that keenly in the UK, or it could be because discussions of adaptation have focused on responses to civil emergencies, where local communities might quite reasonably expect the emergency services and statutory authorities to take the lead.

There has, however, been a wealth of climate change mitigation projects and activities in recent years for future initiatives to draw on. Some projects and activities have focused quite strongly on initial engagement, action planning and mobilisation within communities. For them, tackling climate change is a process of transformation at an individual and community level that can lead to a wide range of different activities; from renewable energy generation through local food production to campaigns to mend, reuse and share tools more widely (see Section 3.2). Such mobilisation initiatives include Climate Action Groups, Carbon Conversations and the Transition Towns movements. These initiatives follow a (sometimes evolving) format that other communities around the country can use. They also include a number of more specific facilitation tools, like 'open space' and 'world café' to help move people from initial interest to action.

Whilst these engagement and mobilisation focused activities can lead to quite large groups of committed activists working together, it is probably true to say that i) the groups mostly consist of people who were more positively predisposed to the issue of climate change in the first place and ii) that they are less likely to be in disadvantaged communities. This is an issue for climate change mitigation because as many people as possible need to be involved, particularly in countries like the UK which have very high energy consumption levels. Whilst disadvantaged communities might have lower than average consumption levels within the UK, they are more likely to be adversely affected by climate change and unable to adapt effectively.

However, we saw in Section 3.3 that some projects have widened their community engagement over time by focusing on much more specific mitigation activities, often emphasising more immediate social and economic benefits to participants and communities than climate change mitigation or adaptation. These attractions might range from bringing money into the community to help with regeneration (renewable energy schemes), through providing access to low cost, fresh food with perceived health and wellbeing benefits to getting a beneficial service for free (getting your bike fixed at a Bring and Fix event, for example). Many of these activities are replicable, at least in terms of broad approach. Stakeholders have also suggested that, despite recent changes to Feed in Tariffs,

there remain significant untapped opportunities for community-owned energy production in particular.⁶⁰

The focus on the practical in itself is attractive to some people and the opportunities to meet new people in a positive and caring environment and to have fun are also prominent in most projects that manage to go beyond the committed activist stage. A number of projects have also used membership schemes to build up engagement prior to public launch (e.g. Brixton pound and the Big Lemon bus company), offering members who provide commitment and/or funding, special benefits and more personal communications.

The two strategies, generic initial engagement and engagement through specific mitigation activities are of course not mutually exclusive. A number of Transition Towns and Climate Action Groups have gone on to develop very specific initiatives that have continued to engage new people.

Although more specific initiatives are more likely to engage some people less predisposed to climate change, stakeholders still suggested that for the most part the level of engagement in disadvantaged communities tends to be lower for these initiatives. In Chapter 4 we noted that these communities and their residents are more likely to experience a number of the key barriers to action for community-led projects.

In Section 3.5 we suggested that evidence of both engagement and outcomes is patchy at best. Many projects have not been evaluated (or the evaluations are not publicly available) and even when evaluations are available the focus is more often on 'success' in terms of outputs (numbers of events, tonnes of recycling etc) or estimated outcomes (CO2 reduction) than how the community was engaged, and how inclusive or extensive that engagement was.

Q2 & Q3. What are the barriers to community-led intervention, and how can these be overcome? Which factors help UK communities respond effectively?

To some extent barriers and enablers are two sides of the same coin. Something that helps a community project to overcome a significant barrier is likely to also be a key enabler to its success. From our interviews with stakeholders we suggested in Chapter 4 that barriers, enablers and success factors can be grouped under similar broad headings, which are: strategic alignment, leadership and engagement, funding and resources, networks and connections, and demonstrating progress.

Several stakeholders suggest that **strategic alignment** with key partners, such as, for example, Local Authorities and the NHS can be a key success factor for a community initiative, enabling them to access a wider range of resources and to develop mutual benefits with other local projects. Conversely, without such alignment it can be very difficult to build up a sufficient head of steam or critical mass to encourage significant community action. Not having core capacity (e.g. a full or part-time member of staff) to stay abreast of partner and policy developments was felt to be a significant barrier to the success of some community projects.

Good **leadership** plays a key enabler role in many projects. However, several people noted that this does not have to come from one person or one particular organisation. Leadership may involve an individual or group of individuals with a clear sense of direction and readiness to take risks, people embedded in key organisations and having (or having access to) the right skills and experience. A lack of access to the right skills and experience was felt to be a significant barrier for some communities.

⁶⁰ See also ResPublica, February 2012, 'Re-energising Our Communities: Transforming the energy market through local energy production'. Green Paper by Julian C, and Dobson, J

Funding and resources are, unsurprisingly, key enablers of local action, and intermittent or poor funding was highlighted as one reason many initiatives ‘fizzle out’. While accessing third party project funding can be difficult, there is a growing interest in new forms of community finance and ownership models. There is a perceived need for more freely and widely available technical advice at a community level on appropriate forms of legal structure and organisation, on methods of raising community finance and of developing and running social enterprises.

Networks and connections are also important enablers for many community projects, and a common challenge is to bring environmental organisations together with non-environmental ones, while building social capital, particularly bridging and linking capital in a community is also important, particularly for disadvantaged communities. Some organisations, like the Transition Network and the Low Carbon Communities network are doing important work in this area. Nevertheless, most stakeholders feel that there remains a need for better mechanisms to share experiences both within and across communities.

Being able to **demonstrate progress** is also important for climate change projects, where ultimately their impacts in terms of things like CO₂ emissions or reductions in fatalities during extreme weather events can seem academic or remote. Research is underway to develop evaluation and impact measures further, particularly in terms of CO₂ reductions. However, many projects currently experience difficulties in providing measures that are consistent enough to allow progress to be tracked and/or comparisons between projects to be made. There is no comparable benchmark to reduction in carbon emissions for adaptation measures. It may be that demonstrating progress for adaptation projects will need to focus on more immediate soft outcomes for communities, such as perceptions of community cohesiveness and personal wellbeing.

We did not find that there were unique barriers or enablers at a broad level that helped engage communities at risk from different climate change impacts (flooding, fuel poverty etc) other than the motivational effect on engagement that previous experience of those impacts can have. In Chapter 5 we noted, for example, that ‘here and now’ benefits can be a strong draw for those experiencing fuel or food poverty, and that experience of emergencies can have a ‘galvanising effect’ on emergency response and adaptation planning.

Given the resources of this quite small scoping study and the diverse nature of climate change projects, we were also unable to comprehensively audit barriers and enablers at a more activity specific level. However, one or two more specific examples did present themselves from the case studies and stakeholder interviews. It was suggested, for example, that most successful renewable energy projects are run by people with previous experience of the energy sector. Without this experience, other communities may not have the same opportunities. Conversely where renewable energy projects actually generate income for their community, this can be used to support engagement in a wide range of further community-led social and environmental initiatives.

Similarly stakeholders suggested that whilst more disadvantaged communities may face particular challenges in engaging with local responses to climate change these are not unique challenges. Rather, disadvantaged communities experience the same barriers to community development activities but feel them more keenly. In particular, people living in more deprived, usually urban, communities will have what they consider to be more pressing concerns than “the environment”. Income deprived communities may also be especially resistant to “environmental” issues if these are perceived to be middle class, over technical, remote or “preachy”. Critically, they are also more likely to lack the resources – like money, time, skills, knowledge and networks – that make it easier to take action.

Our focus in this study was predominantly on geographical communities, and therefore, through the lens of the housing market, more on income deprivation than other forms of disadvantage such as age, gender, ethnicity, disability or sexuality. One or two stakeholders did, however, suggest in interview that other attributes may influence the motivations and behaviours of disadvantaged groups in terms of engaging in climate change action. The urban nature of many ethnic minority communities, for example, may pose challenges for engagement when a close relationship with green spaces, particularly during childhood, can have a significant effect on adult perceptions of 'green issues'.

However, the potential importance of 'lack of money' as an explanation for a relative lack of engagement should not be underestimated. As one stakeholder noted, 'Many of the responses to climate change require disposable income at the level of the household'. By way of parallel, research into entrepreneurship amongst disadvantaged groups, for example, commonly finds that household income is one of the most significant factors in business start-up rates (most entrepreneurs use their own money to start a business).

Q4. What influences people's motivation and behaviour?

Individual and community motivations to engage with action related to climate change vary significantly for different places and different groups of people. Overall, our desk research and stakeholder interviews suggest that two sets of reasons are key:

1. **"Here and now"** issues, such as saving money (through energy efficiency), getting a job or a better job, or taking steps toward these through, say, advice or training. In the most challenging environments "here and now" issues can also include perceptions of injustice and discrimination.
2. **"Our future"** – thinking about how people want their place to be in future years – as a place to live, work and bring up children, for example – can also be very motivating. A shared story of a resilient and thriving place can be one that galvanises community engagement and action.

Neither of these is specifically 'environmental'. Indeed for some, environmental arguments seem remote, difficult to understand and full of jargon. Furthermore, when people feel they are being 'lectured' they can react negatively and they can feel threatened or overwhelmed by overly negative environmental messages. In this context providing safe spaces where people can explore their concerns, enabling participation in community arts events, and providing opportunities for people to learn about nature and environmental issues can also motivate and change behaviour. Learning and empowerment work can also be very motivating: making young people feel that their views are valued, for example.

Considering climate change in isolation may also not be the most helpful way of supporting community responses. Rather, local collective approaches which build resilience and sustainability generally may be a more appropriate focus, especially if these are explicitly linked to what many people would see as their everyday concerns – issues like jobs, skills, food, injustice or wellbeing and to building the kind of community they want to live in.

Stakeholders suggested that some disadvantaged and vulnerable groups (and particularly those on very low incomes) are much less likely to be persuaded by environmental arguments. It was noted how climate change can seem low down the list of priorities when you are trying to raise a family in a damp apartment on an inner city estate. It is unlikely to be a coincidence that polling shows environmental issues have slipped down the list of popular concerns as the national and

international economic situation has worsened. Once engaged in a project, however, people *may* then be open to learning about climate change issues, the difference they are already making and what else they can do, over time.

However, most of the strategies for community engagement we note in this report are unlikely to be effective with outright climate change sceptics. The '*Pathways through Participation*' research project (led by Involve) suggests that only when community members have many and varied motivations, their resources, their opportunities to participate and potential triggers for participation are in line will people commit to significant action. However, research by WWF, Oxfam and others (*Common Cause*) suggests that community organisations can work together to both appeal to and build on people's intrinsic values and motivations in a far more coherent way and make such alignment more likely. This could have a long term impact on more sceptical audiences and local organisations may have a potential role in helping to develop common cause style work.

As a number of JRF studies have shown, low income groups tend to consume fewer resources and be responsible for fewer carbon emissions than more affluent sections of society, it could be argued that it is less important to engage them in climate change mitigation than it is in adaptation activities (where they may be more likely than average to be exposed to adverse effects). This is too simplistic an analysis but, given that adaptation specific measures have received little attention in community-led projects so far, the potential difficulties of engaging disadvantaged groups may become more of an issue over time.

Q5. What are the areas where BIG could effectively intervene and support communities?

It has not been possible in this relatively brief scoping study to *comprehensively* map the potential support needs of community-led climate change adaptation and mitigation projects across the UK. Not only is the range of activities very wide (as we saw in Chapter 3), each situation is different in terms of the challenges faced and opportunities available. Initiatives will vary in terms of their maturity, scale, and inclusion and engagement. What is appropriate will also vary by location, especially when the differing policy contexts in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are considered. As a result, there is no "one size fits all" funding solution to addressing community needs (see Section 3.5).

It is also important not to focus resources on particular types of community or situation, because being able to deliver a significant impact on climate change needs the involvement of *all* communities, whatever their "stage of development" or other attributes. Community renewable energy provides a good illustration of this: our research suggests that existing small scale projects might be able to "scale up" with professional support to arrive at the right technological specification and become investor ready. However, stakeholders felt that it was important that smaller projects continue to be encouraged and given time to grow in order to create a "pipeline" of projects that will become ready to scale up over time. They also felt there was value in small, new projects learning about and being inspired by the achievements of larger more established ones.

Good funding decisions will require a strong and nuanced understanding of the wide range of local circumstances, and a willingness to be flexible in terms of what is funded and when, as each local community finds its own way forward towards a more sustainable and resilient future.

We have, however, identified a number of broader potential recommendations for the Big Lottery Fund and its partners, which are outlined below.

6.2 Framing the Challenge

Before outlining those recommendations, it is worth considering *how* the challenge of climate change is best framed at community level. Our research suggests that referring exclusively to “climate change” in policy, programmes and projects is problematic in a number of ways:

- **Communication is a problem:** “climate change” as a notion is perceived by non-specialists to be complex, technical and, for a growing portion of the population, open to challenge. In common with other words like “eco”, “green” and “emissions”, the words “climate change” do not easily engage people, and can be seen as the preserve of “environmentalists”. When “climate change” as a concept is better understood, it can also provoke in individuals strong emotional reactions (such as shame and guilt) and increase the difficulties of communicating with those yet to take on board its implications.
- **Climate change as an issue does not resonate strongly with the day-to-day concerns of the average person.** In fact, polling evidence suggests that public concern about climate change and environmental issues is waning in the face of other challenges. While there is a case for fostering pro-environmental and pro-social values generally in work to change people’s behaviour relating to climate change, we also found that more immediate “here and now” issues (like getting a job or a better job, or saving money on bills) attract people more readily. People also respond to opportunities to consider the future of “our place”, for people to engage more with each other, and develop a story which culminates in a positive future for its residents.
- It is slightly blinkered to consider climate change in isolation, when it **forms part of a broader range of issues that communities need to face in order to survive or thrive.** BIG’s Sustainable and Resilient Communities strategy is well named in this context because climate change is just one of the many challenges faced by all communities, especially the most deprived. Our research suggests that more resilient communities are more cohesive and have better stocks of “social capital”, and that community development *per se* is an essential ingredient of successful local climate-related initiatives. Similarly, climate change responses dovetail with other local priorities, including addressing social justice issues (including fuel and food poverty), improving economic and social resilience (eg: by localising investment and employment), and improving or co-developing services (such as care and support services for older people or valuing more the views of children and young people in community decision making). For some, the challenge of climate change is compounded by other crises, such as “peak oil” or the economic crisis.

So, seen from the “bottom up”, climate change is one of the many challenges that communities face, (if it is recognised as an immediate challenge at all) and community responses to it are best understood and framed within the broader set of issues that each place faces.

6.3 Recommendations

Our recommendations are focused on seven steps for BIG and its partners to consider in helping to meet community needs relating to climate change, resilience and sustainability. We suggest that these recommendations are taken forward with relevant stakeholders, including other funding bodies, but also those organisations that took part in this research (see Annex 2) and expressed a willingness to continue exploring issues of resilience, sustainability and climate change with BIG beyond the life of this project.

Recommendation 1: Encourage community-led projects to link to local and national strategies and priorities.

Stakeholders noted that community projects are more likely to be sustainable if they align strategically with local and national statutory bodies, partnerships and plans. Such linkages have enabled some projects to draw on expertise within Local Authorities, for example, or to apply for funding from a variety of sources (improving the sustainability and resilience of their own activities). It can also help community groups to be more aware of each other and provide opportunities for sharing learning and developing joint or interlinked projects and activities.

This is not to say that community action should be dictated by statutory authorities, rather that potential links should not be ignored if they can lead to additional sources of funding, support and expertise. BIG and partners could encourage this by asking community bidders to demonstrate how they have considered the fit between their proposals and local strategic priorities, for example.

Recommendation 2: Support the development of local leadership capacity and capabilities.

Some communities are failing to take action on climate change because they lack leadership capacity (people and time) or capabilities (knowledge and skills). Communities and community projects need leaders with sufficient time to build networks and keep abreast of the developments of partners and other communities as well as galvanise support and encourage action within their communities. Sometimes there are quite small, specific capacity needs, such as a Climate Action Group facilitator for a day a week for six months, for example. In other cases it may be more substantial. Whilst there is sometimes a preference for 'home grown' leadership (where the focus for support might be on developing capabilities and skills), some stakeholders note that bringing in people from outside the community can also be effective, providing they are given time to build their network and develop appropriate relationships within and across communities.

Some stakeholders suggested that a particular capability need for many communities may be around renewable energy generation and the energy market. One noted that the most effective community energy projects were being driven by local people who had previously worked in the energy industry. Stakeholders felt that building leadership capacity or capabilities in this key area could help many more communities take advantage of the sizable opportunities that remain to develop community renewable energy that can bring money into communities and act as a catalyst for wider changes in behaviour.

Recommendation 3: Develop and promote a platform of support for local projects

This brief scoping study has uncovered a number of support needs for local groups seeking to address climate change, as well as a range of existing tools, training, resources and support available. We recommend that BIG works with partners to undertake a more comprehensive gap analysis of the support available and to define a shared platform of support – a set of tools, resources, training opportunities and expertise – that can assist local groups in their development and delivery of projects.

The platform would reflect the different types of activities that groups get involved in, their stage of development, and a range of support needs ranging from professional support with facilitating community development activities, for example, to technical advice on legal structures, community finance, preparing community renewables projects for local share issues etc. The platform could be populated with many tools and services which already exist and are already funded, but there would also be gaps where a new service and funding solution would need to be found. There could also be a need to extend existing provision to reach more groups. Annex 2 of this report provides some initial ideas on what could be included in the platform and who might provide it.

Recommendation 4: Place greater emphasis on adaptation in future supported activities

This might involve exploring how communities might best contribute to adaptation plans as well as what community-led projects focused specifically on adaptation might look like and be able to achieve. This should not mean that mitigation projects are not supported, rather that BIG could encourage all funding applicants to consider how projects can be relevant to climate change adaptation as well as mitigation, to ensure opportunities are not lost. This recognises that there is often overlap between adaptation and mitigation and that we should be careful not to undermine commitment to mitigation activities. There is always a possibility that people might pay less attention to polluting less and change their lifestyles, for example. On the other hand, under-emphasising the need to adapt to climate change fails to help communities to come to terms with real and present threats to their collective and individual wellbeing.

The relative lack of focus on adaptation to date means that there is not much of a consensus about what community-led responses to climate change specifically focused on adaptation might actually involve. One stakeholder suggested that agreeing a shared definition should be an early priority for BIG and its partners. Supported activities might include those relating to grassroots aspects of civil emergency response, as well as aspects of activities which more generally help to build social capital and develop local support networks and services. Our case study evidence suggests that there may be a number of aspects to local adaptation activities, including, for example, understanding and planning, reducing exposure, and reducing consequence.

The nature of community adaptation responses can also be explored further in the context of the emerging set of activities by central Government and sub-national bodies, many of which will unfold over during 2012 and into 2013. This includes DEFRA's work towards a National Adaptation Plan, which will increase awareness of key climate risks and raise questions about local responses. The Cabinet Office is also taking forward its work on civil emergency response during 2012, with new research being published and guiding principles being established in consultation with local partners to inform local emergency planning. 2012 could therefore be ripe for a new community focus on adaptation to climate change, informed by the early examples of community adaptation good practice that have emerged relatively recently (see Chapter 3).

Recommendation 5: Support cross-community networks and learning

Local community initiatives with more links to other groups and organisations are better placed to learn from others, and reflect the views and needs of others in their work. Our research suggests that there may be significant potential to increase links at national and local level, building upon existing work to increase the effectiveness of existing networks, to broaden membership beyond environmental organisations towards more into a wider range of voluntary and community organisations and to encourage more national networking and debating of issues and priorities.

A national Resilience Networking Group (or similar) could create new opportunities for learning and sharing of information and ideas, enable new connections to be made on the ground, and possibly act as a sounding board for Government departments. It would have the effect of helping to disseminate good practice and widening the number of organisations involved in resilience work on the ground. This work could be supported through existing mechanisms such as, for example, the Climate Change Action Alliance (CCAA) or by building upon the third sector groups currently convened by NCVO.

A key challenge for both funders and community groups is in identifying and highlighting situations that are *most* alike and where the potential for such cross-fertilisation might be strongest. Collating

and classifying initial case study material could be a potential role for BIG, or one of its project or programme partners.

Recommendation 6: Better reflect local diversity in funding decisions

Funding opportunities need to be specified in such a way that they can accommodate a wider range of project activities which are relevant to climate change, reflecting the very different circumstances faced in each locality. This would include both new groups and more established ones, disadvantaged and more prosperous communities, with a very local focus or over a much wider area. It would be recognised that some projects may need a relatively long lead-in time before specific and tangible results can be delivered.

Such an approach would help funders deliver a greater impact overall, by supporting groups in the “kitchen table phase”; helping these to evolve into new activities with greater sophistication; and culminating in large-scale activities with significant economic, social and environmental outcomes. This might imply different programmes for communities at different stages and for different types of climate change actions. However, Delphi group members were keen to stress that programmes should not separate different types of communities or projects unnecessarily because it limits the opportunities for cross-fertilisation between projects and the ability of the achievements of one community to inspire and lead others.

Recommendation 7: Acknowledge the breadth of achievements of community-led projects and help them demonstrate progress.

Project “success” can sometimes be defined too narrowly by funding partners, either focusing on specific outputs, such as assessments undertaken or the number of solar panels installed, or quite narrow outcomes, such as carbon emission reductions in specific areas of activity. However, community-led projects often seek to deliver benefits and outcomes in a wide range of areas, including education, health, wellbeing, social care, climate change and economic development. If funders focus too strongly on the achievements of community-led projects in just one of these areas it can encourage perverse behaviours where such activities undermine rather than reinforce one another. An agreed balance of primary and secondary outcomes might be more appropriate based on closeness of fit with funder objectives.

Both funders and local groups would benefit from measures that provide local projects with the flexibility they need to work effectively, while also making possible a robust assessment of the extent to which a project has been “successful”. This may be especially important in more deprived communities, where what may be needed is a presence on the ground, building trust and connections between people, gradually developing an approach to building resilience which works for that particular community.

There is also need to continue to develop and refine tools to measure and demonstrate progress for community projects both in terms of mitigation and adaptation in order to help projects engage communities and maintain commitment. This might allow for the monitoring of intermediate outcomes which are indicative of longer term goals, or a longer term approach to monitoring, allowing eventual outcomes to be captured at an appropriate time in the future. Other innovations might include recourse to “horizontal assessment” of the success of projects by peers and stakeholders. This will be especially important in those communities where strengthening social capital or starting small conversations about the issues that people face is an essential precursor to more specific climate change projects.

Annex 1: Contributors

We wish to thank the following people for their support by taking part in interviews and/or attending the Delphi Group held at Plough Place on 26 January 2012. Those marked with an asterisk also very kindly attended the Delphi Group meeting held at BIG's London office on 26 January 2012.

Maria Adebawale, Capacity Global

Tom Andrews, People United*

Graham Ayling, Energy Saving Trust*

Simon Burall, Involve*

Jo Butcher, National Children's Bureau (NCB)*

Steve Clare, Locality*

Tom Crompton, World Wildlife Fund (and leader of the Common Cause project)*

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Angela McSherry, Tipping Point

Lucy Neal, Arts Consultant (and Tipping Point associate)*

Meg Patel, Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

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Ro Randall, Consultant and developer of Carbon Conversations*

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Josh Stott, Joseph Rowntree Foundation*

Mark Walton, Community Development Foundation*

Fiona Ward, REconomy (Transition Network)

The Delphi Group was also attended by Sarah Cheshire, Elaine Warner and Sally Thomas of BIG.

The researchers also attended the Low Carbon Communities Network conference in Oxford on 14 January 2012, and the preview of the film, *In Transition 2.0* hosted by Transition Tooting on 2 February 2012.

Annex 2: Platform of Support for Local Projects

Support Need	Nature of Support Required
Navigating different support services	Support with navigating and making best use of existing tools, support, training and advice for local initiatives.
Moral support and encouragement	Could form part of a funding contract management process, be provided by a consultant or done through mentoring or “buddying” arrangements.
Engagement activities	<p>Training and technical support with facilitating community engagement on climate change and resilience.</p> <p>Promote Cabinet Office’s Guiding Principles and tools for local resilience to civil emergencies.</p> <p>Extend NCVO-led work with non-environmental VCOs into new communities – spatial and in terms of clients and service users.</p>
“Soft” infrastructure	<p>Support for community and project development work: extended people resource on the ground. Development of more spaces for people and organisations to network locally. Generally support connectedness and social capital.</p> <p>Use or shape Big Local Trust funding activities for community development. May be especially useful for low value support in pioneer initiatives.</p>
Conflict resolution	Training and support on handling conflicts (eg: personal and local political). Build on existing practice in the Transition Network and Involve.
Keeping the momentum going	Training and support on sustaining activities locally (not “running out of steam”) as initiatives mature. Build on existing Transition Network training and support.
Accessing resources, funding, monitoring and evaluation	<p>Training and technical support to help bid for funding and handle reporting requirements. Includes knowledge and confidence about accessing local public and private resources more widely (eg land use). Note longer term funding opportunities allow organisations to bid when best for them (in terms of their development).</p> <p>Support with evaluation and monitoring (making it more developmental and formative and less onerous). Possibly include “horizontal assessment” of how well a project is performing. More proactive monitoring of projects, and ensuring that local projects are genuinely involving a very wide range of groups and are sustainable.</p>
Technical and professional expertise	Training and technical support (and professional fees) for community groups wanting to develop renewable energy/ local sustainability initiatives (note practice reviewed by Centre for Sustainable Energy).
Scaling up	Training and technical support in scaling up local initiatives, eg: establishing and growing social enterprises and developing more sustainable livelihoods and jobs.
Toolkits	Includes extended use of NCB materials and toolkits. Supported use of future scenarios toolkits for schools and community leaders developed by Involve for DECC.
Empowerment work	Build capacity of local VCOs and different groups in the population (eg: young people) to engage in local service planning and resilience work.
Support with creative activities	Advice on community arts events and activities, eg: for “galvanising” a community or celebrating relevant things. Build on practice developed in the global south by Oxfam and Global Vision. Disseminate new resources, like <i>Playing for Time</i> (Transition Network, forthcoming).