GREENING WINGROVE CIC: COMMUNITY BUILDING RENEWABLE ENERGY FEASIBILITY STUDIES

OVERVIEW

Approximately 15,000 people live in the area, supported by a range of community services. The rising cost of energy is of growing concern for community organisations particularly as some Local Authority owned buildings are being transferred to community groups through asset transfer agreements. As a result, the full costs of running community buildings are becoming more evident to community groups.

Greening Wingrove Community Interest Company (CIC) wanted to be able support organisations in identifying ways of becoming more economically and environmentally sustainable by providing free renewable energy audits. The project would also help Greening Wingrove CIC investigate an income stream from renewable energy generation and therefore improving its own sustainability.

SOLUTION

The funding enabled the group to commission a consultant to carry out desk top assessments of the use of PV systems on seven community buildings, including one school. The consultant then discussed the findings of the studies with the community groups, investigated the different models of implementation and planned the next stages of development.

OUTCOMES

An information sheet was produced to raise awareness about the project with community organisations and discussions were held with organisations managing community buildings in the Wingrove Ward. A PV generation model for the area was developed by the consultant, ready for inputting the community building details.

For each of the buildings a report was produced explaining the Photovoltaic PV technology, describing the survey undertaken, estimating the potential for deploying PV on the building and the size of the system that should be used, predicting annual energy generation, explaining the costs and incentives and suggesting a possible way forward.

As the CIC was new to this area of work, the involvement of experts was invaluable for the group. The project developed an understanding of the complexities of community PV energy generation amongst Greening Wingrove CIC members and the managers of community buildings locally.

Changes to the Government policy on renewables and the significant reduction to the Feed-in Tariff (FIT) meant that all seven proposed would take over 20 years (the life of the tariff) to pay off. The consultant provided a technical appendix for each of the reports explaining in detail the new financial picture, and all schemes became unviable. The level of interest in the project has dropped off as a result.

OBJECTIVES

To explore the potential of developing renewable energy, in particular PV solar panels on community buildings in the Wingrove area of Newcastle, to help curb energy costs and promote greener energy alternatives.

This project's aim was to encourage community buildings to take the next step towards generating their own energy by removing the first hurdle of having to organise and fund pre-feasibility work.

CONTACT DETAILS

Project title:	Community building renewable energy feasibility studies
Group name:	Greening Wingrove CIC
Theme:	Reducing energy and generating energy
Area of benefit:	Wingrove Ward, Newcastle, Tyne & Wear
Date:	Dec 2014-Dec 2015
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