

# Community low carbon energy: overcoming obstacles

Energy conservation

Phil Webber

# Obstacles to energy conservation?

- Very poor “selling”
- Poor image
- Insulation not seen as a high status issue
- Dependence on market mechanisms where the market is almost completely controlled by 6 fossil fuel energy companies
- Dependence on (very variable) government grants – result market currently unstable
- Political & media football

# How not to do it

- Why would you *expect* Green Deal to work?
- The selling point is that it will pay for itself
- But if a customer isn't interested in the first place this simply does not work – also the product is not clear or visible
- Look at how all the things we don't really need are sold:
- Specific product (new toothpaste, car)
- Sold as a desirable status object (car) or to avoid a fear (painful teeth or bad smile)
- 0% interest offered – GD is at 7%
- Easier to sell much more expensive PV panels or new insulated wall cladding at £6-10,000 because it *looks* good.
- At least to the “able to pay”.
- But what about those who are not well off?

# Overcoming the obstacles

- Grants such as CERT did work but have now been replaced by ECO and Green Deal Loans
- Eg Kirklees Warm Zone project – 51,000 homes insulated
  - free scheme - 30% take-up; CO2 reduced by 15%
- Green Deal take up has been very poor resulting in several short-term Govt “fixes”
- Eg several GD incentive funds (££ ran out in 3 days)
- If we are to rely on grants/subsidies, the funding regime MUST give longer term certainty
- ECO funding was changed again in the Autumn statement

# What works now?

- Multi agency approaches finding possible customers who are “banked” ready for funding when it comes (this smoothes the funding troughs)
- Councils, housing associations, green investment funds, pension funds?
- Short term specific area projects of 6 months duration eg external wall insulation +
- Connecting park homes to mains gas or CHP
- Right now we can do larger homes for *free* with Cavity wall and loft insulation

# Understanding the market

- Able to pay – offer a good guaranteed deal with incentives and a short term offer
- Not well off – need grant support, home improvement loans – better than Green Deal, Health agencies interested
- Cross-subsidise from able to pay to social sectors
- Take a whole house approach – pay for GD assessment up front
- Strong E regulation – eg at purchase and sale
- Regulation is having major positive impact in rented sector

# The future?

- I think that the culture *is* gradually changing
- EPC ratings are a big help
- But climate change means that we must ramp up slow progress
- Biogas should be utilised much more
- Community generation schemes linked to waste streams
- Need a government that gets it. This sector is a fantastic one for creating useful jobs and saving money and emissions – we need to get off yet more short term fossil fuel exploitation licences
- We need some big exciting infrastructure projects – eg tidal lagoons, tidal race exploitation, carbon capture with industry using the carbon for new products such as graphenes