

**Community Energy London**  
**February Open Meeting**  
**27th February 2020**  
**6:00-8:15PM**  
**Committee Room 3, City Hall**



Present:

Hannah Short (CEL)  
Syed Ahmed (CEL)  
Rick Curtis (FlexLondon)  
Paul Hallas (SE24)  
Tristan Owen (SELCE)  
Sydney Charles (En10ergy)  
S. Mahmood (Transition Ilford)  
Martin Narraway (PUNL)  
Jason Pritchard (COLCE)  
Pamela Harling (Wolves Lane)  
Mike Smyth (Schools Energy Coop)  
Dermot Barnes (En10ergy)  
Ali Hirji (KSIMC London)  
Peter Daley (The HEET Project)  
Thiago Haberli (LSx)  
Elaine Trimble  
Michael Singer

## **Minutes**

6:00-6:10PM Welcome - Hannah Short, CEL Officer

6:10-6:50PM Rick Curtis - GLA Flex London

London to be the greenest of all global cities → If Sadiq gets re-elected → wants to increase target to 2030. 3 main levers: London Plan, London Environment strategy, manifesto commitments. To get to zero carbon we need to pull out all the stops .

Need for London grids to become smarter → Lot of analysis at the national level about the need for flexibility.

What is flexibility?

- ability to be able to store energy
- ability to shift energy use (demand side)
- interconnectors

All about shifting and storing

Building in flexibility across London is critical for the national system decarbonising

E.g. Electrification of peak and transport

FlexLondon supports projects to maximize flexibility

Phase 2 → Flexathon was run to work on 5-10 active projects

E.g. School solar project, school approached FlexLondon (brought by a third party)

→ aggregating solar PV across multiple sites

→ wasn't being used effectively e.g. no plan over the summer months when there wasn't much use. Introduced a software wrapper to connect all projects via a 'virtual power plant'.

→ Through FlexLondon, 3 different innovators came up with 3 different strategies to use that stored energy

How do we start to broach this discussion → at larger scale, need more SMART meters and data across the city for optimization. GLA trying to integrate the projects they are doing e.g. FlexLondon and other projects

#### Barriers

- Flexibility is a new concept → hard for people to wrap their heads around
- In certain instances there is value in doing this
- GIS mapping: are you aware of what is on your doorstep, and that other groups are doing similar things around you? EV charging points in your area etc. - could be ways to link up and thinking about flexing your demand → Check out the GIS mapping on the FlexLondon website
- If you start deploying flexibility on a really local level - could be improving air quality etc. Benefits are not monetizable
- Data: by seeing the data of where these assets sit - understanding what your energy loads are doing, having it in a shareable format
- FlexLondon is there as a third party to help improve data → also helps the city
- Local value case is variable
- Privacy issues

Repowering London running a demand-side response project → figuring out if there's a business case there

Grant funded at the moment

Are groups thinking about flexibility at all?

Social energy are also working with flexibility. Quite forward looking work - extra value.

Non-energy specialists skilling up and getting in there now

There should be Community energy representation on feed-in groups for energy

Opportunity for groups to apply with their projects open until the end of March

Description on website

6.50-7:20PM Paul Hallas (SE24) and Tristan Owen (SELCE) - ECO requirements and community energy

ECO = Environmental company obligation → changes every time

ECO3

£8billion

→ linked to means-tested benefits e.g. fuel poor

→ one exception is energy inefficient housing, which is not means tested → so good to identify these properties

- Few energy suppliers have an in-house energy efficiency contracting capability - they outsource
- Matching the available £640m to the people who qualify is the challenge

LA Flex/ EcoFlex

→ new offshoot of the eco funding

Given LA the ability to set criteria

→ the criteria have changed

- After a review it was felt that LA were being too generous
- ECO threshold was introduced
- How to identify these people who need the measures
- Funding from the GLA warmer homes scheme

Whole house approach → how to improve the energy efficiency of the property

Can't help with social housing - have to be an owner occupier of home

ECO 3 delivered much less than previous rounds → has now picked up

Low take up of ECO measures in London and Southeast

Questions to consider:

- Can ECO make a contribution to meeting climate emergency targets in our local communities?
- Given our communities are rooted and connected → is there a way to match?

What have SELCE done?

- Good relationship with Lewisham council - get funding from Lewisham Council
- SELCE supports and helps fuel poor residents across 5 SE boroughs to access ECO or other funded measures
- Identify people through energy cafes, home visits etc - what are the individual needs of these people
- Funding from investment in solar energy → local community share offers

There isn't a massive pot of gold in this for community energy → some will pay money for identifying opportunities for ECO projects - so community groups could help identify those → Community groups tend to build up relationships with people in the community, so can easily identify who needs help

How can CEL and members work with climate emergency action plans to come up with more ambitious things for retrofit:

- Home upgrade grants - starts this year, no official announcement yet
  - Social housing decarbonisation fund → in a year
1. How we can help councils be more ambitious
  2. How do you think community groups can make sure it's spent better

Very few people understand these rules - ultimate beneficiaries can't possibly understand

7:20-8:20PM General Meeting

### **Meeting with groups**

CEL has been meeting with groups to learn more about what challenges people are facing → met with En10ergy and BBBC so far.

Keen to meet with other groups → if you're part of a group and CEL hasn't been in touch, please message as we'd love to meet with you.

### **Local Authority Climate Emergency Action Plan**

CEL is pursuing a campaign to help ensure climate emergency action plans include support for community energy.

So far Hounslow has got their consultation out, which is open until 30th March - we recommend all Hounslow-based residents engage with this consultation and include community energy. Please get in touch with CEL if you'd like more support with this.

There have also been requests from Harrow, Merton, and Wandsworth for info about council community energy, and CEL is going to go and see Wandsworth and Richmond councils next week to discuss community energy.

There is a Southwark public event on March 21st, and other council events - we encourage community energy groups to go along and bring up the need for council community energy funds and support.

Please keep CEL in the loop if you hear of other council climate emergency action plans or events taking place.

### **Funding Situation**

CEL is rapidly running out of funding, which is only set to last until early-mid April. We have several funding applications out there, but it is proving challenging to secure funding given our low annual turnover.

Please let us know if you see of any funds that seem appropriate. We are also exploring sponsorship and other options to secure funds.

Suggestions from attendees: Coop, Greggs, community funds

We are exploring a paid membership scheme as a way to raise funds and demonstrate to funders that we are serious about trying to develop financial sustainability.

### **CEL membership proposal**

Paid membership proposal - at present our membership scheme is free, but we are looking at introducing a membership and supporters scheme for a range of categories. We have been inspired by Community Energy England membership scheme.

Attendee feedback: Be more ambitious and ask corporates for more

Attendee suggestion:

Could offer other services and charge

- Low carbon buy-in group - put info out there with advantages vetted → commission fee
- Joint procurement/ trusted traders
- Coming through us as a trusted signpost for who to work with → like a trade association, do the vetting
- Income stream for CEL
- Lot of these companies already being used → corporate sponsor

## **Crowdfunding**

We are also looking at launching a crowdfunder, as a different way for individuals to pay into and support the organisation separate from the membership scheme.

We need to list some rewards to incentivise people to pledge funds.

Attendee suggestion:

Tour of parliament

Tour of Guildhall

Visit solar scheme

Free energy advice

Attendee feedback:

- Worth a try
- Be ambitious, ask for more
- There is a risk of crowdfunding fatigue, so ask for enough for the next six months and outline what we will do
- Reduce text
- Bigger amount
- Focus on climate emergency action plans
- Make it a call to action - got to do it now!!!
- Have a unified message across schemes

## **Accountant**

CEL needs to get our accounts audited, but we can't afford an accountant. Does anyone know of a pro bono accountant who may be supportive?

→ Jason Pritchard

## **CEL Mayoral manifesto asks**

Drafting what to send to London Mayoral candidates:

- A new round of the London Community Energy Fund (LCEF) of £1m, providing both feasibility and capital funding for community energy projects
- Identifying sites which could host community energy projects – both GLA assets (TfL) and through the Mayor's convening power to liaise with other London landlords, property developers, public sector organisations
- London Power to explore opportunities for Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) with community energy – and also signposting customers to their local community energy projects

- Integration of community energy in other GLA programmes – housing/non domestic buildings retrofit, decentralised energy, fuel poverty, housing, planning, smart data, etc.
- Support for paid young trainees/apprenticeships in community energy groups – building capacity for community energy and providing skills for London’s future climate-focussed workforce
- Lobbying both national government and London boroughs to develop community energy programmes.

## **Events coming up in 2020**

Draft of events:

These topics have been selected on the back of suggestions by individual CEL members

### March

Retrofit Accelerator for Homes scheme

London Power?

### April

Workshop: How councils can launch community energy funds?

### May

Prospects for Community Energy scheme PPAs (Power Purchase Agreements)

Workshop: How to effectively fundraise through community share offers

### June

CEL Annual Conference - Community Energy and Council Climate Action

### July

London Climate Action Week

Community Energy Fortnight - Community Energy and Council Climate Action

Possible future topics: Hearing from Leo Murray at POSSIBLE/Riding Sunbeams, Power Paired from Becca Lawson at Forum for the Future, Andre Pinho on Co-Energy community share offer platform, Abundance, Solar Together, Potential joint procurement opportunities

## **AOB**

- Team London is a place where groups can sign up for volunteers
- Are we doing anything during COP26? It would be good to communicate some of the good work of community energy

### **Next meeting:**

**March 26th, 6-8PM, Committee Room 1 City Hall**

Ben Coombes presenting on Retrofit Accelerator for Homes scheme

and

James Hardy presenting on London Power