

LCCC process evaluation, report 1: Application process

Final interim report, 24 January 2011

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Glossary

DECC	Department for Energy and Climate Change
DETI	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Northern Ireland)
LCCC	Low Carbon Communities Challenge

1 Introduction

1.1 Low Carbon Communities Challenge

The Low Carbon Communities Challenge (LCCC) is a two year research and delivery programme to provide financial and advisory support to 22 test-bed communities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The programme is funded by DECC, DETI, Welsh Assembly, and Sciencewise-ERC. The 22 communities were awarded funding through a competitive application process which is the focus of this report and is described briefly below.

The invitation for applications for the Low Carbon Communities Challenge was published on the DECC website on 28 September 2009. It was widely promoted through community networks, such as Low Carbon Communities Network, Transition Towns, and EST's Green Communities membership. The LCCC application process was split into two phases.

Phase 1 Applicants to Phase 1 of the LCCC, which would involve delivering measures by March 2010, were required to submit a completed application form by 27 November 2009. DECC received 56 applications for Phase 1 of the LCCC. These were assessed by the LCCC Working Group between 2-7 December. The top 14 scoring applicants were visited by DECC's contractor BRE who provided an onsite assessment. The 10 successful communities were announced on 21 December.

Phase 2 Applicants for Phase 2 of the LCCC, which would involve delivering measures between April 2010 – March 2011, were required to submit a completed application form by 30 December 2009. DECC received 239 applications for Phase 2, which were assessed by the LCCC Working Group between 8 – 11 January 2010. Again BRE provided an onsite assessment of the top 14 scoring applicants. The 12 successful communities were announced on 4 February 2010.

The LCCC was officially launched at an event in London on 8th February 2010. The 22 successful applicants were given a substantial amount of funding (approximately £500,000 each) mainly to install low carbon technologies by March 2010 (phase 1 communities) and March 2011 (phase 2 communities) although LCCC runs until March 2012. They have been encouraged to engage the wider community, and have been supported to do so by a team of Dialogue-by-Design's facilitators. A package of other types of advice has also been offered, such as technical advice from EST, to support delivery.

1.2 Evaluation of LCCC

In order to learn the lessons from the 22 communities, there is an evaluation programme with five main components.

- Feedback from the 22 communities, collected mainly through workshops with members of the local teams (run by Dialogue-by-Design).
- A quantitative survey of residents in the 22 communities (run by GFK NOP).

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- Qualitative research, mainly in-depth interviews with residents in the 22 communities who are involved in some way with the LCCC projects (run by GFK NOP).
- A programme of action research with LCCC communities eligible for advice and support on considering adopting a social enterprise model
- A process evaluation, of which this report is part.

1.3 The process evaluation

This report is part of a wider process evaluation of LCCC.

The process evaluation aims to address the following three broad questions.

(1) Process – delivery What aspects of LCCC worked well and less well in helping communities deliver community-led projects that combine installing technology and promoting behaviour change?

(2) Process – learning What aspects of LCCC worked well and less well in developing insights into effective community-led projects, and communicating them in a way that encourages them to be used?

(3) Impacts To what extent were DECC’s objectives for the dialogue met? How did the approaches used and the way they were implemented contribute to any successes or failures?

The process evaluation will hear from the following four groups of stakeholders.

- Unsuccessful applicants for LCCC
- 22 teams funded through LCCC
- Stakeholders with some direct involvement in LCCC, including policy makers, representatives of community organisations, the research community, and media
- Delivery team at DECC, Sciencewise and Dialogue-by Design

This report focuses mainly on unsuccessful applicants’ feedback about the LCCC application process. Feedback from the other three groups of stakeholders about the application process will be included in subsequent reports from the process evaluation, and comparisons will be made between the different stakeholder groups. For now, a little feedback from successful applicants is summarised very briefly in Annex F to allow some initial comparisons to be made.

1.4 Overview of the report

The report first describes the evaluation methodology (section 2). It then sets out findings about the applicants (section 3), the content of applications (section 4), the application process (section 5), the benefits and costs of applying (section 6), and suggestions for future support (section 7).

2 Evaluation methodology

2.1 Data sources

Three sources of data were used to gain insights into the LCCC application process.

- **A survey of unsuccessful applicants to the LCCC programme** This is described in detail below.
- **DECC's database of LCCC applicants** This contained basic information about the types of organisations that applied to LCCC as well as where they were located.
- **Data collected by Dialogue-by-Design from the 22 LCCC communities** This will be reported under separate cover. Because the main focus of this report is how the unsuccessful applicants found the LCCC application process, findings from the successful applicants are summarised very briefly in Annex F for comparison purposes.

2.2 Survey of unsuccessful applicants

The survey of unsuccessful LCCC applicants was intended to address the following three questions. It also collected a little information about their applications as this was not easily accessible from DECC's records.

- (1) How did unsuccessful applicants find the process of applying for LCCC funding?
- (2) What were the impacts of applying for LCCC funding?
- (3) What do they see as the priorities for future government support?

218 unsuccessful applicants to LCCC were asked to complete an online survey. The questionnaire was designed with input from DECC and Sciencewise to ensure that it addressed their interests. It consisted of 17 mainly closed questions on the following issues (see Annex A).

- **Their application** – what technologies and behaviour change methods they had planned to use
- **The applicants** – who had been involved in preparing the application
- **The application process** – how they had found the timetable, written material, informal feedback available while preparing their application, and formal feedback after the funding decision; what they had found most difficult; and how the application process could be improved for future programmes
- **The benefits of applying** – what benefits they had experienced as a result of applying
- **Future support** – what areas they would like advice and support on, and what they consider the priority for government

The survey was carried out in September and October 2010. A standard procedure for boosting response rate was followed. Unsuccessful applicants were contacted first by DECC to let them know that they would be asked to take part in the survey. They were then sent up to three requests to complete the survey by the evaluator, each about a week apart. 126 applicants completed the survey, and the response rate was 58% (see Annex B).

Frequency counts were run on responses to the closed questions (see Annex C). Where cell sizes were large enough (i.e. above 30), cross tabs were run on responses to the closed questions to compare local authority and third sector respondents (see Annex D). Responses on the open questions were analysed to identify themes. Quotes from the open questions are used in the report, shown in italics.

3 Findings: Who were the unsuccessful applicants?

3.1 Where were unsuccessful applicants based?

We analysed data from DECC's database of applicants to identify where unsuccessful applicants were based.

The **vast majority of unsuccessful applicants were in England** (184), with just 25 in Wales and 8 in Northern Ireland (Table 1).

Table 1 Country unsuccessful applicants were based in

All unsuccessful applicants

Country	Number of unsuccessful applicants
England	184
Wales	25
Northern Ireland	8
Scotland ¹	1
Total	218

Looking just at the applicants in England (Table 2), there was a good spread across Government Office Regions, with about 20 applicants from most regions². However, the **south east was over-represented** with about double this number of applicants (39) and the **north east and east midlands were under-represented** with about half this number (10 and 11 respectively).

Table 2 Government Office Region unsuccessful applicants were based in

All unsuccessful applicants in England

Government Office Region	Number of unsuccessful applicants
South East	39
London	25
North West	21
South West	21
Yorkshire and The Humber	19
West Midlands	19
East of England	19
East Midlands	11
North East	10
Total	184

¹ LCCC did not cover Scotland. Nevertheless one of the applicants was based in Scotland. Without information about their application, it is not possible to determine whether the applicant hoped to use LCCC funding in Scotland (which would not have been possible) or in England, Wales or Northern Ireland.

² Just a few applicants were national organisations, such as National Trust.

3.2 What types of organisations submitted unsuccessful applications?

We also analysed data from DECC’s database on unsuccessful applicants to identify what types of organisations had led on preparing applications (see Table 3).

Unsuccessful applications were **split almost equally** between **local authorities** (109 applications) and **third sector organisations** (98 applications). Just a handful were submitted by Local Strategic Partnerships. Although the numbers of local authorities and third sector organisations that submitted unsuccessful applications were almost equal, they reported rather different experiences of the application process (see 5.5).

Table 3 Types of organisations that applied unsuccessfully to LCCC

All unsuccessful applicants

Type of organization	Number of unsuccessful applicants
Local authority	109
Legally constituted third sector organisation	98
Local Strategic Partnership	7
Not recorded	4
Total	218

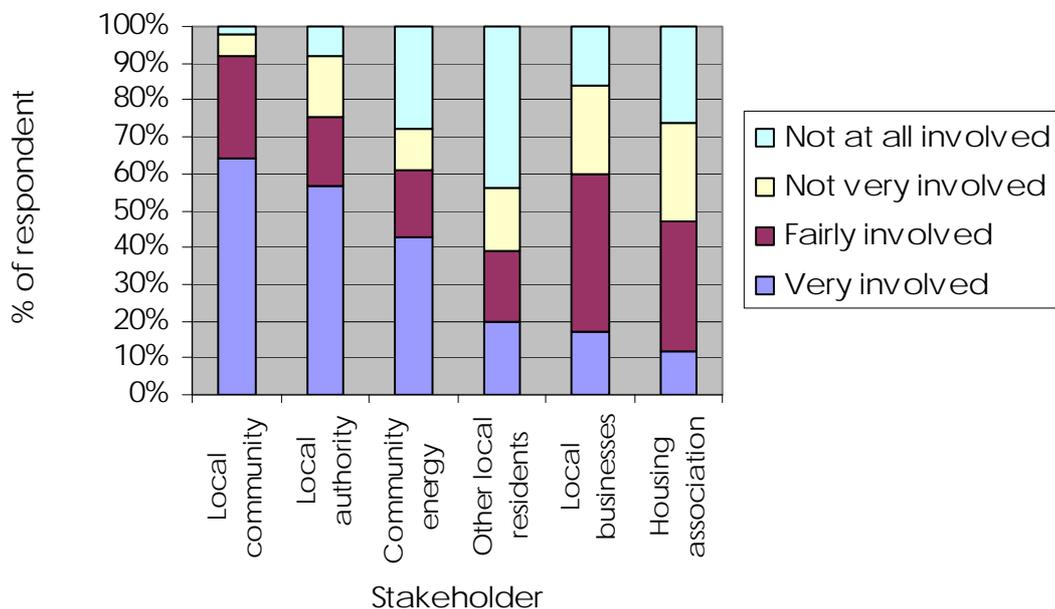
3.3 Who was involved in preparing unsuccessful applications?

According to responses on the survey, **communities played an important part** in preparing almost all the unsuccessful applications. They were very involved in almost two thirds (65%) and fairly involved in over a quarter more (28%). Respondents also reported **high levels of involvement from local authorities** (76% respondents said they were very or fairly involved) and **community energy specialists** (61% of respondents said they were very or fairly involved).

In contrast **only about a half** of respondents had done much in the way of **engaging local businesses**. Just 12% said that local businesses were very involved in preparing the application, and 35% said they were fairly involved.

Figure 1 Involvement of different stakeholders in preparing unsuccessful applications

All respondents (Base: 127)



From the comments on the questionnaire it was clear that the community and local authority had sometimes worked very closely together to prepare applications.

"The application was jointly written by a City Council climate change officer and myself, a member of the local community association."

"Steering group made up of members of our volunteer group (with very relevant skills, incl. energy consultant, housing assoc. member) and an officer of the local authority (joint app). Input from: local councillor, LA legal team, a community finance expert."

It was also clear that the types of local community groups that were involved were many and varied, ranging from groups with a strong interest in sustainability (such as Transition Town groups) to groups with a wider community role (such as Womens Institute).

A wide range of other stakeholders had been involved in the preparation of applications. Several respondents mentioned the following.

- RDAs and parish councils, councillors and an MP.
- Suppliers of products and services, from utility companies to local heating installers and PV contractors.
- Professional advisors and consultants, such as architects. Some provided very specialist advice on, for instance, restoring listed buildings.
- Schools, universities, colleges.
- Organisations that could help with funding, such as credit unions.

It is notable that several of the bids involved the types of organisations that were later included in the support team for successful communities, particularly energy advice organisations (for instance Thames Valley Energy, Marches Energy Agency, South East Wales Energy Advice Centre, Energy Action Devon).

When participants were given the opportunity at the end of the questionnaire to comment on LCCC in general, more than a fifth of respondents (22%) who answered the question had some **positive feedback** about LCCC. This feedback mainly focused on the "*concept*" of LCCC, in particular **the community involvement that was required**. Several respondents expressed a hope that funding programmes along these lines would be repeated and extended.

"In general these measures that support and promote the meeting of 'top down' and 'bottom up' action are to be welcomed."

"The LCCC is a good vehicle and helps to galvanise whole communities in a more focused way."

Summary of findings

- The vast majority of unsuccessful applicants were from organisations in England, with a small number in Wales and a very small number in Northern Ireland. There was a good spread across the Government Office Regions in England, although the south east was over-represented and the north east and east midlands were under-represented.
- Unsuccessful applicants were split almost equally between local authorities and third sector organisations.
- Respondents reported high levels of involvement with communities, local authorities, and community energy specialists in preparing applications. Local businesses were much less involved.

4 Findings: What technologies and engagement methods were included in applications?

4.1 What technologies and other approaches were respondents planning to use?

According to responses on the survey, the five most popular technologies and other measures to reduce carbon emissions were photovoltaics, loft insulation, cavity/solid wall insulation, in-home energy assessments, and smart meters or other forms of in-home energy monitoring (based on a list provided in the questionnaire). Each was included by more than half of respondents in their application (see Table 4). It is interesting to note that these measures cover three different approaches to reducing carbon emissions: installing energy generation technologies, installing energy conservation technologies, and promoting behaviour change through monitoring consumption.

Table 4 Technologies and other measures to reduce carbon emissions included in respondents' applications

All respondents (Base: 127)

Technology/other approach	% of respondents
Photovoltaics	57
Loft insulation	52
Cavity/solid wall insulation	51
Smart meters/in-home energy monitoring	48
In-home energy assessments	46
Whole house retrofits	36
Solar thermal	36
Ground or air source heat pump	25
Biomass boiler	24
Wind turbine	16
District heating	13
Hydro-electric system	11
Combined heat and power	9
Smart electricity grid	5
Other	28

Percentages sum to more than 100% as respondents could give more than one answer.

After **photovoltaics**, the most popular renewable technologies were **solar thermal** (36%), air and ground source **heat pumps** (25%), and **biomass boilers** (24%).

About a quarter of respondents included other measures to reduce carbon emissions in their applications, besides those listed in the questionnaire. Of these, about one in ten were to do with **energy in buildings** and a similar number were **transport-related measures** (see Table 5). In contrast, waste- and water-related measures were each mentioned by only one respondent.

Table 5 Other measures to reduce carbon emissions included in respondents' applications

All respondents (Base:127)

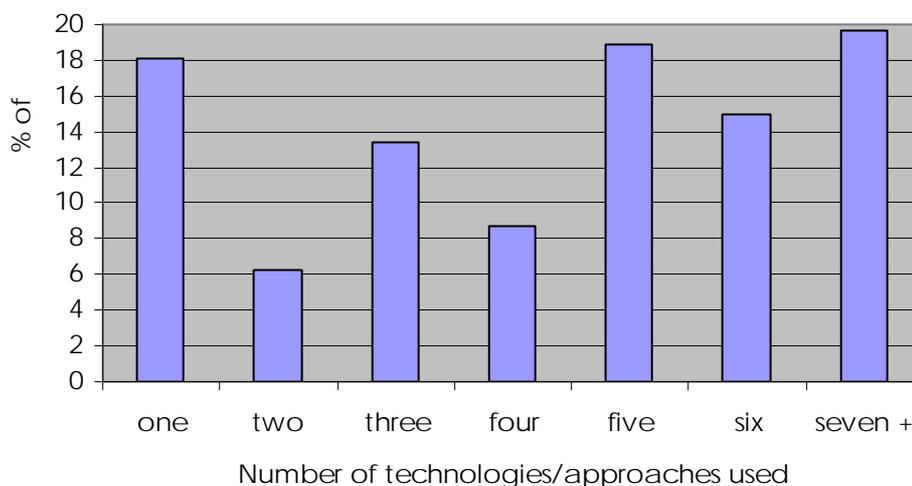
Measure	Examples	% of respondents
Energy in buildings	Central heating installation Secondary glazing to traditional cottages Building a new low carbon community centre Using thermal imaging cameras	10
Transport	Car clubs, including electric vehicle car clubs Public transport Green delivery of shopping from retail park Eco driving policy	8
Other	Anaerobic digester Affordable finance for fuel poor home owners Low energy street lighting Water saving measures Composting Home adaptation e.g. flood defence mechanisms	11

Percentages sum to more than 100% as respondents could give more than one answer.

The vast majority of respondents were planning to use two or more types of technology or other approaches (see Figure 2). Only about one fifth of respondents included just one type of technology in their application (18%). At the other end of the scale, almost the same number of respondents included seven or more types of technology or other approaches in their application (20%).

Figure 2 Number of technologies and other approaches to reducing carbon emissions included in respondents' applications

All respondents (Base: 127)

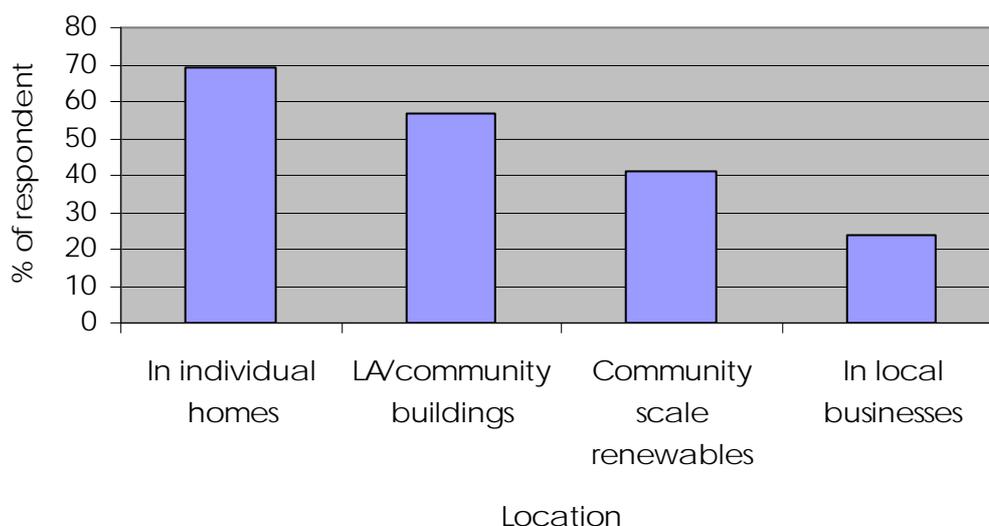


4.2 Where were respondents planning to install technologies?

Installing technologies in **individual homes** (69%) and **local authority or community buildings** (57%) were far more common than involving local businesses (24%) (see Figure 3). The proportion of projects proposing community-scale renewables (41%) was also substantial. Third sector respondents were much more likely to have proposed community scale renewables (51%) than local authority respondents (33%).

Figure 3 Where respondents planned to install technologies

All respondents (Base: 127)



4.3 What types of community engagement and behaviour change activities were respondents planning?

99% of respondents reported that they planned to use at least one method to engage the community or bring about behaviour change. This suggests that they had understood LCCC's combined aims of installing technology and engaging the community.

One-to-many methods, particularly giving presentations and distributing leaflets, were very popular engagement methods (see Table 6). Working with small groups or individuals was equally popular. Even the least favoured method, door knocking to give one-to-one advice, was reported by over half of respondents (50%).

Table 6 Engagement methods included in respondents' applications

All respondents (Base: 127)

Engagement method	% of respondents
Giving presentations at local events or meetings	87
Working intensively with small groups of community members	84
Distributing leaflets or other written material	77
Giving information through local newspapers and other media	68
Running stalls at local events or meetings	60
Door knocking to give one-to-one advice	50
Other	20

Percentages sum to more than 100% as respondents could give more than one answer.

A fifth of respondents (21%) mentioned engagement methods besides those we listed in the questionnaire. They mainly involved the following.

- Developing exemplar or demonstration buildings
- Building on existing community activities, such as working with village green groups
- Working with intermediaries, such as schools, housing associations, and PCTs.

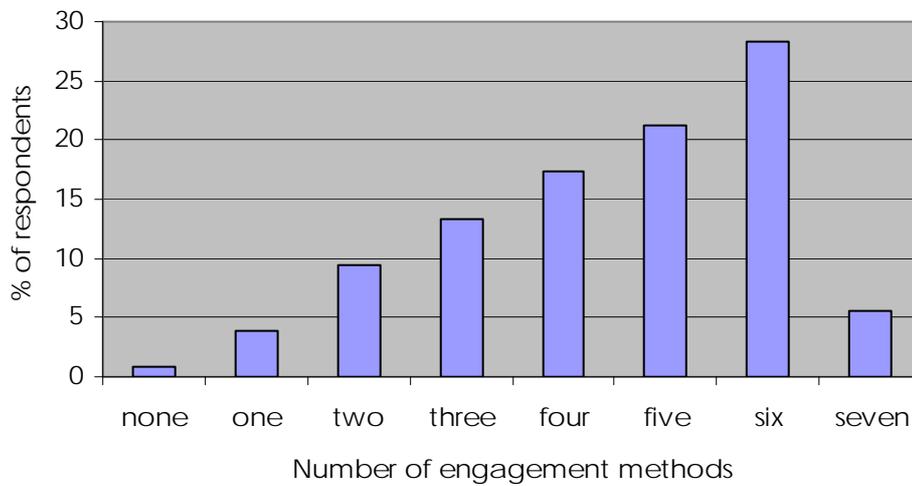
Some more unusual approaches were also mentioned, though each was mentioned by just one respondent. They included the following.

- Community electricity use graph on the village web site
- Competitions
- Providing a thermal photograph of the target house as a calling card
- Holding weekly "carbon fit club" events

Respondents tended to include a combination of engagement methods in their applications (see Figure 4). Only about one in twenty respondents (4%) had included just one method. More than half (55%) had included five or more methods.

Figure 4 Number of engagement methods included in respondents' applications

All respondents (Base: 127)



Summary of findings

- The five most popular technologies and other approaches for reducing carbon emissions, included by more than half of respondents in their applications, were photovoltaics, loft insulation, cavity/solid wall insulation, in home energy assessments, and smart meters or other forms of in home energy monitoring.
- More than two thirds of respondents planned to install technologies in individual homes and more than half in local authority or community buildings. Community scale renewables were proposed by two fifths of applicants. In contrast, less than a quarter planned to install technologies in local businesses.
- Almost all respondents (99%) reported that they planned to use at least one method to engage the community or bring about behaviour change.

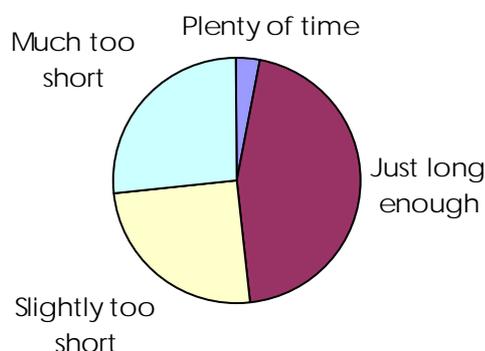
5 Findings: What were respondents' views about the application process?

5.1 How did respondents find the timetable for preparing their application?

About half of respondents (52%) reported that they had **not had enough time** to prepare their applications (Figure 5). Of these respondents, about half thought that the time available was slightly too short (25%) while the other half thought it was much too short (27%).

Figure 5 Views about the timetable for preparing applications

All respondents (Base: 127)



When asked what they had found **most difficult about the application process**, about **a quarter** of respondents who answered the question (29%) mentioned the short timescale. This was by far the most frequently mentioned problem, highlighting just how important it was. On a related point, about **one in ten** respondents also picked out the **time taken to complete the application** as the **most difficult aspect** of the application process.

Respondents explained why the tight timetable had been problematic.

- It took time to do a thorough job of **engaging a range of stakeholders**, including local authorities and members of the public.
- Putting together a **brand new project**, rather than building on an existing one or an idea that had been on the back burner, was time consuming. *"The whole exercise appeared to be rushed and to shunt public money out of door and see it spent within a financial year, rather than to look at what communities might need and how long it actually takes to establish partnerships and innovate."* *"Prioritising between options, so that we could construct a costed and convincing work programme within a short period of time wasn't easy."*
- Understanding and **completing the lengthy application form** took time, particularly for respondents from community groups who did not have a lot of experience of applying for funding. Respondents who were in this position therefore felt at a disadvantage.

- Some respondents were **volunteers, preparing the application in their free time**. Again respondents who were in this position felt at a disadvantage. *"We are, like so many of the groups you expect to take on this activity, a small community group of volunteers all of whom work full-time."*
- The timing, **just before Christmas**, made it even harder for respondents to find the time.

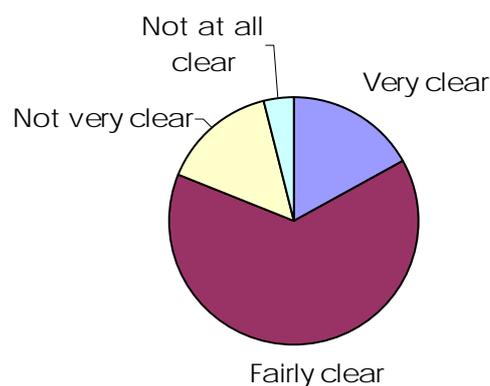
When asked to suggest how the application process could be improved for future funding programmes, the most common suggestion was that the **timetable should be extended**. This was suggested by about **a third of respondents** who answered the question (32%).

5.2 How did respondents find the written material about LCCC?

The **majority** of respondents (64%) thought that the written material explaining the purpose of the LCCC and how to apply for it was **fairly clear** (Figure 6). About a fifth went as far as saying that it was very clear (17%). However, about the same number found it unclear (19%).

Figure 6 Views about the written material for applicants

All respondents who answered the question (Base: 126)



When asked what they had found **most difficult about the application process**, about **one in six respondents** (17%) mentioned difficulties understanding the written guidance and/or application form. A few found the language unclear (*"not written in plain English"*, *"jargon"*) or said that the guidance as a whole was not coherent (*"appeared to have been assembled from different documents"*, *"requirements appeared to be in conflict from form to form"*). Some said that the material did not make clear exactly what DECC was looking for and therefore whether their application would be suitable. They were therefore annoyed to be told later that their application had not met the criteria.

When asked to make suggestions about how the application process could be improved for future funds, about a quarter of respondents who answered the question (22%) asked for **more clarity about aims, qualifying and assessment criteria**. A similar number (26%) suggested **other improvements** to

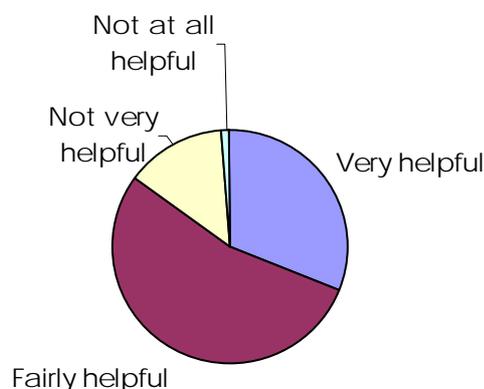
the information they were given, including less reliance on written material through the provision of workshops and opportunities to talk to DECC staff (see 5.3).

5.3 How helpful did respondents find informal discussions while preparing their applications?

More than half of respondents took the opportunity to discuss their application with someone at DECC, DETI or Welsh Assembly (60%). **One third** of them found this discussion **very helpful** (31%) while only 1% said it was not at all helpful (Figure 7).

Figure 7 Views about the informal discussions with DECC, DETI and Welsh Assembly

Respondents who had informal discussions (Base: 74)



Dealings with DECC were very occasionally commented on in general comments about LCCC at the end of the questionnaire. For instance, one said simply *"We like Harriet"* while another gave more detail:

"I had previously bid for EST innovations funding and found it extremely resource intensive and needlessly bureaucratic. The LCCC bidding was a breath of fresh air and although unsuccessful I found the whole process extremely efficient. In particular the response to queries was both rapid and comprehensive. Harriet Festing was excellent. I was amazed at how well managed and efficient the process was."

5.4 How helpful was the feedback respondents received after the funding decision?

Respondents were much less positive about the feedback they received explaining why their application had not been successful (Figure 8). Only 6% found it very helpful while **16%** did **not find it helpful at all**.

Figure 8 Views about feedback given after the funding decision

All respondents who answered the question (Base:125)



There were just a few comments about feedback on the open ended questions in the questionnaire. **Only 3%** of respondents who answered the question mentioned this as the **aspect of the application process that they found most difficult**. They described the feedback as *“spurious and incorrect”, “muddled, incoherent, inconsistent and unprofessional”*. Some also felt that it did not explain the shortcomings of their application so they could not understand why they had not been selected.

Although there were not many comments about feedback in the survey, its impact of on respondents should not be underestimated.

“We also felt that the feedback we finally received (after much pestering) was absolutely pathetic. It has pretty much put us off dealing with Big Govt again. I am only typing these words in the vain hope that someone may actually take notice and do things differently next time.”

However, there were also occasional positive comments.

“We recognised the validity of the feedback comments we received. This gave us ideas of what we had to work on before submitting other applications.”

5.5 Did respondents feel that the application process was fair?

On the open ended questions on the questionnaire, some respondents commented that **community groups were at a disadvantage** when applying to LCCC. This view is backed up by the different responses from local authority and third sector respondents about the clarity of written material (Figure 9) and amount of time available to prepare applications (Figure 10). More than two thirds of third sector respondents (69%) had discussed their application informally with the funders compared to just over half of local authority respondents (53%), again suggesting that they were less clear about what was required after reading the written material.

There were therefore suggestions that **community groups should be given additional support**, perhaps in the form of a mentor or expert to guide them through the process, or funding to be able to buy in the expertise that they needed.

Figure 9 Feedback about the written material for applicants

All LA and 3rd sector respondents who answered the question (Base: 120)

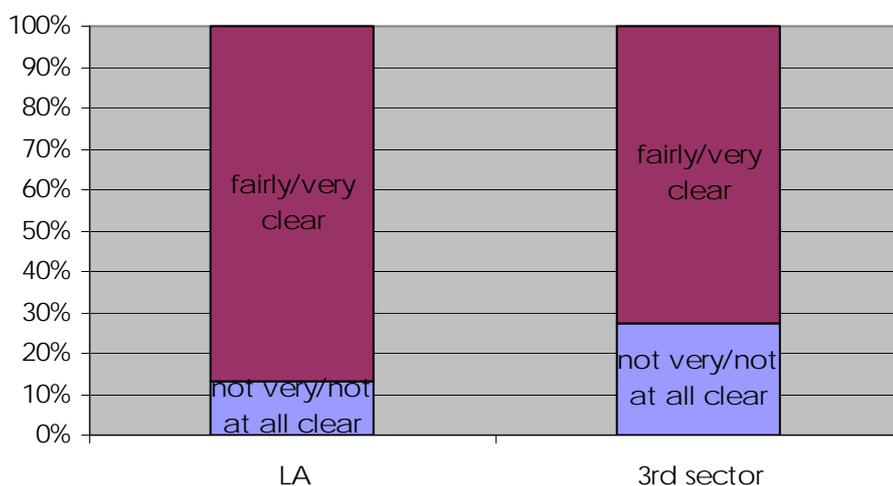
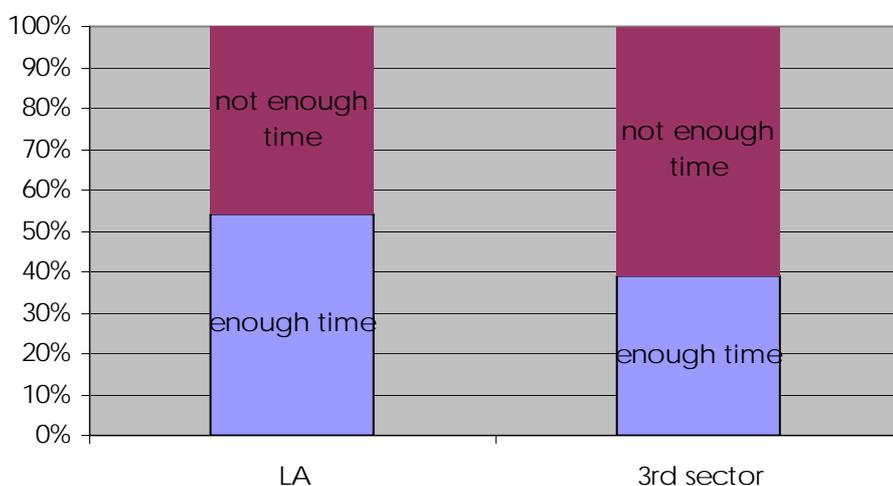


Figure 10 Feedback about the timetable for preparing applications

All LA and 3rd sector respondents who answered the question (Base: 121)



On the open ended questions on the questionnaire, some respondents also expressed the view that the **decisions themselves were unfair**. For instance, one respondent was told that their application had been rejected not on its own merits but instead because other similar projects had already been accepted. This caused considerable annoyance.

Summary of findings

- About half of respondents felt that they had not had enough time to prepare their applications, and half of these felt that the time available was *much* too short. Third sector organisations in particular felt short of time. There were requests for the timetable to be extended for future funding programmes.
- The majority of respondents thought that the written material explaining the purpose of LCCC and how to apply for it was clear. However a fifth did not find it clear and again third sector organisations were particularly likely to express this view. There were requests for more clarity about aims, qualifying and assessment criteria, as well as less reliance on written material through the provision of workshops and more opportunities to talk to DECC staff.
- Informal discussions while preparing applications were viewed very positively, with the vast majority of respondents who had had informal discussions saying they were helpful. In contrast the majority of respondents found the feedback they received after the funding decision unhelpful.

6 Findings: What were the perceived benefits of applying?

6.1 In what ways did respondents benefit from applying to LCCC?

In the survey, three quarters of respondents reported that they experienced at least some benefit from applying to LCCC. Based on a list of potential benefits included in the questionnaire, about half said they had **made new contacts** (47%); a similar number had **started thinking about new ideas** that they had not considered before (50%); and about a quarter had **learnt something new** (28%).

About a quarter of respondents (24%) mentioned other benefits that they had experienced besides those we listed in the questionnaire. They mainly fell into the following three categories.

- Preparing the application helped them to **build relationships**.

"We gained a lot of goodwill from other groups who appreciated our effort in applying."

"It strengthened collaboration between parties that knew each other quite well but never made the time to work together. But this hasn't lasted."

"The council realised how committed the community are to these issues. It also made different council departments have to speak to each other."

- It encouraged **more rigorous or more strategic thinking**.

"Pulled together a more comprehensive area based approach bringing in transportation ideas etc."

"We captured our carbon reduction ideas in a useful format."

- It **raised awareness of or interest in** the issues and opportunities.

"Strengthened local resolve and shared vision."

"It raised the issue politically and demonstrated how a small amount of funding could go along way."

However, **a quarter** of respondents (25%) reported that they had not experienced any benefits at all from applying to LCCC. There was almost no difference between local authority and third sector respondents on this issue.

6.2 What were the costs of applying to LCCC according to respondents?

Although we did not specifically ask respondents about the negative impacts of applying, they mentioned them when replying to the open ended questions on the questionnaire.

They repeatedly mentioned the **time needed to put the application together**. This had put some respondents under considerable amounts of pressure (*"lack of sleep!"*) or distracted them from delivery of other projects. They were particularly annoyed if they felt that their time had been wasted because, for instance, the criteria had not been clear.

Several other negative impacts of applying to LCCC were mentioned. Respondents reported feeling **disappointed** and demoralised, and **disillusioned with government**. They occasionally mentioned **damage to reputation** because stakeholders had been involved and hopes built up only to be let down when their application was not successful. The **lack of contact from DECC** and minimal feedback afterwards added insult to injury, making some respondents feel that their **effort had not been recognised**.

At its most extreme, some respondents said that the time taken and the disappointment with the outcome were so great that they had been put off applying for similar funds in future.

"The sheer amount of effort and time required to put in a high standard of application."

"For us a disappointing waste of time and we would not want to repeat it."

"We are a group of volunteers who have set up a community group and whilst we have lots of relevant skills, we do not have a lot of time. We have full time jobs and families. The number of forms was huge and there was much repetition. We didn't win but about 10 of us spent a HUGE amount of voluntary time. We did learn a lot [of things] in the process, one of them possibly being to seriously consider if it is worthwhile applying for this type of funding."

When suggesting improvements for future funds, about one fifth of respondents (19%) put forward ideas to avoid time being wasted. Suggestions included the following.

- **Smaller amounts of funding given to more projects.**

"Spread the money across more groups and projects. We could have done a LOT with funding between £20-50K."

- **A two stage process**, or perhaps giving at least some funding to all applicants that were visited.

"A short list of potential projects should be formed before communities put such a large amount of effort into developing an application. Having hundreds of applicants for such a few to be awarded seems like such a massive waste of time for so many. Although we recognise that going through the process is not a waste of time, it would have been much better to have a clearer understanding of the chance of success. A two

staged process would help to remove the need for hundreds of communities to be left disappointed."

- **Tighter criteria** more clearly conveyed beforehand.

"Narrow the application criteria to discourage futile applications."

Summary of findings

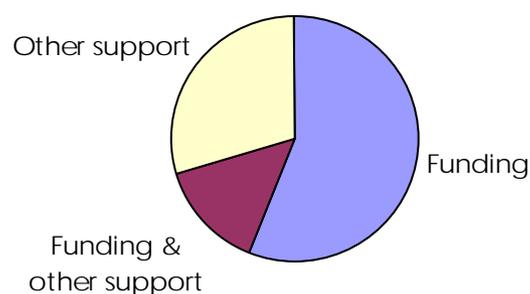
- Three quarters of respondents gained some benefit from applying to LCCC, mainly making new contacts or starting to think about new ideas.
- On the other hand, many respondents mentioned the costs of applying, particularly the time needed to prepare the application and the disappointment experienced when it was unsuccessful. The lack of contact with DECC and minimal feedback afterwards made some applicants feel that their efforts had not been recognised. There were even respondents who had been put off applying to government funding programmes in the future.
- There were several suggestions about ways to avoid time being wasted in future. They included tighter criteria more clearly conveyed during the application process; a two stage process; and smaller amounts of funding given to more organisations.

7 Findings: What were respondent's thoughts about future support?

7.1 What should government to do support respondents in promoting low carbon technologies and lifestyles?

Respondents were asked an open ended question about how government should support organisations such as theirs. About three quarters (70%) made suggestions to do with funding compared to about two fifths (44%) who requested other types of support. Respondents' emphasis on funding may have had something to do with the context of the question i.e. in a questionnaire about a government funding programme. Their suggestions about funding are discussed in 7.3 and suggestions about other types of support in 7.4.

Figure 11 Type of requests for government support
Respondents who made suggestions (Base: 112)



7.2 Who should government support to promote low carbon technologies and lifestyles?

Respondents made suggestions about where government effort should be focused, including what types of organisations should be assisted. It was said that government should **recognise the role of various stakeholders** (local authorities, third sector organisations, grassroots movements, and community groups) and support them in delivering low carbon projects. This would link in with the current interest in Big Society. However, one respondent introduced a **note of caution** by advising that government should in fact "*lower expectations of what community groups can actually do without better practical support from the government.*"

When commenting on the organisations that should receive funding, equal numbers of respondents asked for more support **for local authorities and for communities**. They suggested that funding communities directly would

ensure that projects actually met their priorities, while funding local authorities would negate the need for much of the monitoring and auditing often associated with government funding because they could just be trusted to get on with spending it.

7.3 What should future government funding for low carbon technologies and lifestyles look like?

Some respondents simply asked for **more funding** or at least funding maintained at the current level (*“More funding, more funding, more funding”, “Guarantee funding despite being bankrupt”*). There were also more detailed suggestions about **what funding should be like and what it should support**, summarised in Table 7 and discussed in detail below.

Table 7 Suggestions about what government funding should look like
Respondents who made comments (Base:112)

Type of suggestion	% of respondents
More funding or funding maintained at current level	16
Improve application process	13
Suggestions about duration or scale of funding	10
Use different models e.g. loans rather than grants	6
Focus on particular types of organisations	15
Focus on particular types of activities	19
Suggestion relating to FITs and/or RHI	14

Percentages sum to more than 100% as respondents could give more than one answer.

Echoing comments made elsewhere in the questionnaire, respondents asked for **improvements to the application process** for government funding. They requested a simpler, clearer process with less time pressure and more support for inexperienced applicants.

There were requests for both **larger-scale longer term** funding, and for **smaller grants to more projects**.

“Provide a more long term approach to area based funding bids- linked with wider regeneration initiatives. One-offs are more of a problem.”

“For an organisation such as ours a grant of £20,000 or even £10,000 would make a very significant difference. We have no shortage of professional and technical advice. The one thing we seriously lack is money... Very many more communities are ready and waiting to make a real difference in their areas, but they all need at least some access to funding.”

There was some interest in **different funding models** instead of grants, such as *“loans paid via FITs.”* There were a number of comments about Feed In Tariffs (FITs) and Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI), with respondents mainly asking for the government to **keep these schemes** and to remove the uncertainty around them. They also suggested that these schemes should be publicised more and that the *“FITs versus grants farce”* should be sorted out.

Suggestions about the **types of activities** that should be funded were many and varied. There was a particular interest in funding for pilot projects. There were also several requests for funding for energy efficiency projects and retrofits, including projects aimed specifically at hard to treat homes.

7.4 How should government support low carbon technologies and lifestyles besides providing funding?

Respondents felt that their task would be easier if the government made their own position on low carbon technologies clear and promoted them to the public. They also requested three types **practical support from government besides funding** (see Table 8): more accessible technical expertise, more opportunities to learn and share information, and resolution to planning and legal difficulties. The first two requests are discussed in more detail below.

Table 8 Suggestions for support from government besides funding

Respondents who made comments (Base:112)

Type of suggestion		% of respondents
Practical support from govt	Make technical expertise more accessible	12
	Facilitate learning and information sharing	6
	Address planning and legal difficulties	6
Wider role for govt	Promote low carbon technologies and lifestyles to the public	5
	Make government's position on low carbon technologies clear	3

Percentages sum to more than 100% as respondents could give more than one answer.

Respondents felt in need of clear trustworthy advice about whether a project was **feasible** in the first place, and if so, **which technologies** to select, how much they would **cost**, and what **benefits** they would have.

"It would be useful to have a team of experts who could look at a site on one visit and make an informed guess as to likely suitability of a site for a project. If the site looks good, [they] carry out all the feasibility work."

"Good quality and definitive advice on the availability and access to proven technologies."

They asked for **consistent advice from a single source**. This applied to both one-to-one advice and advice from websites. Searching for information from multiple sources was time consuming. It was also said that different sources sometimes gave differing advice.

"Provide a one-stop shop rather than lots of different agencies all with slightly different messages."

“Have one web site which details the type of low carbon technologies that are available for all kinds of buildings, companies which provide installations, and local specialists who can help develop schemes.”

Respondents also asked for government to **facilitate learning and information sharing**. This is just what LCCC is intended to do, so it is encouraging that at least some respondents considered that it is an important role for government. Requests ranged from running a trial on DIY home energy improvements to requiring local authorities to keep databases of energy improvements in their area, and from providing progress updates on the successful LCCC projects to setting up a network so that communities can learn directly from each other. Interest in learning from LCCC is discussed further in 7.6.

7.5 What issues would respondents like support and advice on?

Respondents were asked to choose from a list of issues on which advice could be provided. Again funding emerged as their top priority. Advice on **accessing funding** was requested by more than two thirds of respondents (70%), far more than requested advice on any other issue. There was also a very high level of interest in advice on **engaging private investors** (48%). The level of interest in these two issues was very similar among local authority and third sector respondents.

Respondents were just as interested in advice on **technologies** (31%) as they were in advice on ‘**people issues**’ i.e. behaviour change (32%) and engaging communities (30%). However, it is interesting to note that on the open ended question about government support there were no requests at all for advice on behaviour change or community engagement (see 7.4).

While almost a third of respondents asked for advice on **legal matters** (31%), just half this number asked for advice on **planning regulations** (17%).

Table 9 Issues on which support and advice would be welcome

Issue	% of respondents		
	LA	3 rd sector	All respondents
Accessing funding	69	69	70
Engaging private investors	50	45	48
Behaviour change	37	24	32
Specific low carbon technologies	33	26	31
Legal matters	23	39	31
Engaging communities	39	16	30
Organisational structure	21	24	21
Project management	19	20	18
Engaging local authorities	10	24	17
Planning regulations	16	18	17
Other	11	16	14
Base	70	51	127

Percentages sum to more than 100% as respondents could give more than one answer.

There was moderate interest in advice on **organisational structure** (21%), and very little difference between local authority and third sector applicants on this issue. It is not clear whether this is because respondents were not keen to change their organisational structure or whether they already have access to all the advice they require.

There was less demand for advice on **engaging local authorities** (17%). This is not surprising given that about half the applications were submitted by local authorities (see 3.2) and that most respondents reported that local authorities had been involved in preparing the application (see 3.3).

7.6 Were respondents keen to learn from LCCC?

More than one in ten respondents (13%) who answered the general question at the end of the questionnaire commented on how they or others could learn from LCCC. This suggests that LCCC is seen as more than just a delivery programme.

On the plus side:

- There was an **appetite to learn from LCCC**. Several comments encouraged DECC to publicise the successful projects more.

"I think it resulted in many exciting projects. I will be keen to see how they get on."

"We need more publicity of this programme and visibility of the successful projects; projects in general - in the general media as well as government channels."

"There should be regular newsflashes about progress, successes and failures of those successful projects. A project digest, ideally to be accessed online would be most interesting and helpful."

- Some respondents believed that LCCC had already **had an influence on policy makers or that it would do so**.

"The LCCC applications are a wonderful source of information about what is happening around Britain's local communities which I really hope will be used to justify future investment by government."

"I think the LCCC initiative was brilliant. I hope that it showed to all concerned at DECC that there are a great many communities ready to make a real difference to the country's carbon consumption. Together we can really make a change."

On the minus side:

- There was some **disappointment** from respondents that they had **not been kept informed** about progress on LCCC so far.

"We were promised news about how the whole programme is going (i.e. those projects that were funded) but have heard nothing."

- Just one respondent expressed **doubts about how much could in fact be learnt** from LCCC.

"Far too large sums [were] given to a small number of organisations. [This] has created a two tier landscape of low carbon communities with winners of LCCC as an exclusive elite club. Therefore results cannot be replicated and learning [is] significantly diminished."

7.7 Were respondents keen to have ongoing engagement with DECC?

Besides being kept informed about LCCC, respondents requests for **ongoing contact with DECC were mainly around funding**. Several respondents asked whether there would be further rounds of LCCC. There were also a couple of requests for advice about other funding sources ("*[We] would like to know how we can use the Green Deal in our community*"). Ongoing advice and contact would go some way to making disappointed applicants feel that they are getting something in return for their efforts.

"LCCC was done too hurriedly, too impersonally and discriminated against genuine community-led applications and favoured local authority-led bids instead. We would like to engage with you and get your support (proper advice even if there's no funding left) rather than simply feel used which is what we feel now."

Summary of findings

- When thinking about future support to help promote low carbon technologies and lifestyles, there was a strong emphasis on the need for funding. There were requests for government to make more funding available as well as suggestions about what funding should look like (e.g. smaller grants for more communities; loans not just grants). Many respondents also asked for advice and support on accessing funding, including from private investors.
- Respondents would also like advice and support on legal matters, technical matters, and community engagement/behaviour change. There was less demand for advice on organisational structure, planning matters, or engaging local authorities.
- It was suggested that government should facilitate learning and information sharing. Some respondents were keen to learn from LCCC, as well as expecting that it could influence policy makers.
- It would be appreciated if DECC can find some way of keeping in touch with unsuccessful applicants, including keeping them informed of progress in the successful LCCC communities, and of future funding opportunities.

8 Conclusions

8.1 Process

What worked well Respondents liked the concept of LCCC, particularly the community focus. The programme succeeded in attracting applications from across England, and from both local authorities and third sector organisations. Applications included a wide range of technologies and almost all included some behaviour change or public engagement. During the application process, the opportunity to discuss applications informally with the team at DECC, DETI, and Welsh Assembly was well received.

What worked less well There were few applicants from Wales and very few from Northern Ireland. There were low levels of involvement from local businesses in preparing applications. Certain aspects of the application process were problematic, particularly the tight timescale, lack of clarity about scoring criteria, and feedback about funding decisions. Although community groups had been keen to apply, they felt at a disadvantage because they lacked the necessary time and expertise.

8.2 Impacts

Positive impacts Many respondents gained some benefits from applying, particularly making new contacts or thinking about new ideas. LCCC was seen as a programme that respondents themselves could learn from and that had the potential to influence policy makers.

Negative impacts Many respondents voiced their disappointment about the outcome, particularly given the amount of work they had to put in. It was therefore suggested that tighter criteria more clearly conveyed during the application process, a two stage process, and smaller amounts of funding given to more organisations would be worth considering for future programmes.

8.3 Future support

What support would be welcome Many respondents asked for more funding to be made available and for advice to be provided on accessing funding, including from private investors. They also requested funding to be structured differently (e.g. smaller sums to more organisations) and the application process to be more straightforward and less onerous. They would like advice and support on legal matters, technical matters, and behaviour change/community engagement. They would also like to stay in touch with DECC, be kept informed of progress on the LCCC programme, and have the opportunity to learn from LCCC.

What support would be less welcome There was less demand for advice on organisational structure, planning matters, or engaging local authorities.

Annex A Questionnaire

Thank you for filling in this questionnaire. Your feedback is very much appreciated. It will help DECC and Sciencewise to understand more about applicants and their experiences of applying to the Low Carbon Communities Challenge. Ultimately it will inform future support for promoting low carbon technologies and lifestyles.

Your answers will be completely confidential and will be reported to DECC and Sciencewise only as summaries in which no names will be mentioned.

If you have any questions about this questionnaire, please contact Kathryn Rathouse on 01727 838405 or kathryn@krsrc.co.uk.

For each question, please tick the box that best describes you or write in the information requested. If you were involved in more than one application, please think about the one that you were most involved in.

Your application

To start with, please could you tell us a little about what you applied to do with funding from the Low Carbon Communities Challenge.

Q1. Which of the following technologies and other approaches were you planning to use? *PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY*

- a. In home energy assessments
- b. Smart meters / in home energy monitoring
- c. Whole house retrofits
- d. Loft insulation
- e. Cavity / solid wall insulation
- f. Solar thermal
- g. Photovoltaics
- h. Ground or air source heat pump
- i. Biomass boiler
- j. Combined heat and power
- k. Wind turbine
- l. Hydro-electric system
- m. District heating
- n. Smart electricity grid
- o. Other (please write in)

Q2. Where were you planning to install the technologies? *PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY*

- In individual homes
- In local businesses
- In local authority or community buildings, including schools
- Community scale renewable technology, serving a number of buildings

Q3. Which of the following community engagement or behaviour change activities, if any, were you planning to carry out as part of your project?

- Distributing leaflets or other written material
- Giving information through local newspapers and other media
- Door knocking to give one-to-one advice
- Giving presentations at local events or meetings
- Running stalls at local events or meetings
- Working intensively with small groups of community members
- Other (please write in)

Q4. When preparing your application, how involved were each of the following? *PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ON EACH LINE*

Very involved/Fairly involved/Not very involved/Not at all involved

- Local authority
- Local community group
- Other local residents
- Local businesses
- Community energy specialist
- Housing association

Q5. Who else, if anyone, was involved in preparing your application? *PLEASE WRITE IN*

The application process

We would like to hear how you found the process of applying to the Low Carbon Communities Challenge, both what worked well and what worked less well.

Q6. How did you find the timetable for preparing your application? *PLEASE TICK ONE BOX*

- Plenty of time
- Just long enough
- Slightly too short
- Much too short

Q7. How did you find the written material which explained the purpose of the Low Carbon Communities Challenge and how to apply for it? *PLEASE TICK ONE BOX*

- Very clear
- Fairly clear
- Not very clear
- Not at all clear

Q8. While you were preparing your application, did you (or anyone on your team) discuss it informally with anyone at DECC, DETI or Welsh Assembly?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX

Yes

No

IF YES

Q9. How helpful was this discussion for preparing your application?

- Very helpful
- Fairly helpful
- Not very helpful
- Not at all helpful

Q10. How helpful was the feedback you received after the funding decision, explaining why your application was not successful? *PLEASE TICK ONE BOX*

- Very helpful
- Fairly helpful
- Not very helpful
- Not at all helpful

Q11. What was the most difficult part of the application process for your organisation? *PLEASE WRITE IN*

Q12. How could the application process be improved for future funds? *PLEASE WRITE IN*

Benefits of applying

We realise that applicants to the Low Carbon Communities Challenge put in a great deal of time and effort to prepare their applications. Even though your application was not successful, we are interested to hear what, if anything, your organisation gained from applying.

Q13. In which of the following ways, if any, did your organisation benefit from applying to the Low Carbon Communities Challenge? *PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY*

- a. We made contacts with people or organisations that we had not worked with before
- b. We learnt about something we did not know before
- c. We starting thinking about ideas we had not considered before
- d. We experienced other benefits (please specify)

Future support

We would like to find out what support and advice organisations such as yours need to promote low carbon technologies and lifestyles.

Q14. What one thing could government do to support organisations such as yours in promoting low carbon technologies and lifestyles? *PLEASE WRITE IN*

Now please think about the support you would like from all sources, not just government.

Q15. Which of the following issues, if any, would your organisation like support and advice on? *PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY*

- Planning regulations
- Legal matters
- Specific low carbon technologies
- Behaviour change
- Engaging communities
- Engaging local authorities
- Engaging private investors
- Accessing funding
- Project management
- Organisational structure (such as advice about setting up a social enterprise)
- Other (please write in)

Your comments

Q16. If you have any comments about the Low Carbon Communities Challenge or government support more generally, please write them in below. *PLEASE WRITE IN*

Finally

We would like to find out a little more about the views of people who applied to the Low Carbon Communities Challenge, in order to help inform government support in the future. We will be carrying out short telephone interviews, lasting no more than ½ hour, with a selection of applicants.

Q17. Would you be happy to take part in a telephone interview?

- Yes
- No

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

Annex B Response rate

Table B1 Breakdown of response rate

Total number of contacts on database³	291	100%	
Number of duplicates and triplicates removed ⁴	51	17%	
Number of successful applicants	22	8%	
Number of eligible contacts	218	75%	100%
Refusal	77		35%
Non-contact ⁵	14		6%
Questionnaires completed	127		58%

³ 54 applications in phase 1 and 237 applications in phase 2.

⁴ 40 applicants submitted two applications: 38 applicants submitted an application in phase 1 and another in phase 2, and 2 applications submitted two applications in phase 2. Four applicants were successful on resubmission. 5 applicants submitted three applications: 2 applicants submitted an application in phase 1 and two applications in phase 2, and 2 applicants submitted three applications in phase 2.

⁵ Non-contacts were undeliverable or bounced emails (8 applicants), applicants who had left their job (3 applicants), applicants who were away for the full duration of the survey (3 applicants).

Annex C Frequency tables

Table C1. Technologies and other approaches that respondents included in their application

All respondents (Base: 127)

Technology/approach	% of respondents
In home energy assessments	46
Smart meters/in home energy monitoring	48
Whole house retrofits	36
Loft insulation	52
Cavity / solid wall insulation	51
Solar thermal	36
Photovoltaics	57
Ground or air source heat pump	25
Biomass boiler	24
Combined heat and power	9
Wind turbine	16
Hydro-electric system	11
District heating	13
Smart electricity grid	5
Other	28

Percentages sum to more than 100% as respondents could give more than one answer.

Table C2. Where respondents were planning to install technologies

All respondents (Base: 127)

Location	% of respondents
In individual homes	69
In local businesses	24
In local authority or community buildings, including schools	57
Community scale renewable technology, serving a number of buildings	41

Percentages sum to more than 100% as respondents could give more than one answer.

Table C3. Behaviour change methods that respondents included in their applications

All respondents (Base: 127)

Behaviour change method	% of respondents
Distributing leaflets or other written material	77
Giving information through local newspapers & other media	68
Door knocking to give one-to-one advice	50
Giving presentations at local events or meetings	87
Running stalls at local events or meetings	60
Working intensively with small groups of community members	84
Other	20

Percentages sum to more than 100% as respondents could give more than one answer.

Table C4. Level of involvement of different stakeholders in preparing the application

All respondents (Base: 127)

Stakeholder	% of respondents			
	Very involved	Fairly involved	Not very involved	Not at all involved
Local authority	57	19	17	8
Local community group	65	28	6	2
Other local residents	17	43	24	16
Local businesses	12	35	27	26
Community energy specialist	43	18	11	28
Housing association	20	19	17	44

Missing data has been recoded as "not at all involved"

Table C5. Feedback about the timetable for preparing applications

All respondents (Base: 127)

Feedback	% of respondents
Plenty of time	3
Just long enough	45
Slightly too short	25
Much too short	27
Total	100

Table C6. Feedback about the written material for applicants

All respondents who answered the question (Base: 126)

Feedback	% of respondents
Very clear	17
Fairly clear	64
Not very clear	15
Not at all clear	4
Total	100

Table C7. Informal discussions with DECC, DETI and Welsh Assembly during bid preparation

All respondents (Base: 127)

	% of respondents
Had discussion	40
Did not have discussion	60
Total	100

Table C8. Feedback about the informal discussions with DECC, DETI and Welsh Assembly

Respondents who had informal discussions (Base: 74)

Feedback	% of respondents
Very helpful	31
Fairly helpful	54
Not very helpful	14
Not at all helpful	1
Total	100

Table C9. Feedback about feedback given after the funding decision

All respondents who answered the question (Base:125)

Feedback	% of respondents
Very helpful	6
Fairly helpful	35
Not very helpful	42
Not at all helpful	16
Total	100

Table C10 Suggestions about how the application process could be improved for future funds

Respondents who made suggestions (Base: 99)

Suggestion	% of respondents
Changes to scope and criteria	12
More clarity about aims and criteria	22
Other improvements to information	26
Longer time frame	32
Other improvements to process	17
Improvements to forms	12
Avoiding wasted resources	18
Other	16

Percentages sum to more than 100% as respondents could give more than one answer.

Table C11. Benefits of applying to LCCC

All respondents (Base:127)

Benefit	% of respondents
Made contacts	47
Learnt something new	28
Started thinking about new ideas	50
Experienced other benefits	24

Percentages sum to more than 100% as respondents could give more than one answer.

Table C12 Suggestions for support from government

Respondents who made suggestions (Base:118)

Suggestion	% of respondents
Funding only	56
Other support only	14
Both funding and other support	30

Table C13. Issues on which support and advice would be welcome

All respondents (Base:127)

Issue	% of respondents
Planning regulations	17
Legal matters	31
Specific low carbon technologies	31
Behaviour change	32
Engaging communities	30
Engaging local authorities	17
Engaging private investors	48
Accessing funding	70
Project management	18
Organisational structure	21
Other	14

Percentages sum to more than 100% as respondents could give more than one answer.

Table C14 Feedback about LCCC and government support generally

Respondents who made comments (Base: 68)

Type of suggestion		% of respondents
Feedback about govt support	Funding	22
	Other support	19
	Requests for ongoing contact	12
Feedback about LCCC	Praise for LCCC	28
	Criticism of LCCC	38
	Learning from LCCC	13

Percentages sum to more than 100% as respondents could give more than one answer.

Annex D Comparing responses from local authority led respondents and third sector respondents

Table D1. Where respondents were planning to install technologies

All LA and 3rd sector respondents

Location	% of respondents	
	Local authority	Third sector
In individual homes	73	65
In local businesses	15	12
In local authority or community buildings, including schools	57	53
Community scale renewable technology, serving a number of buildings	33	51
<i>Base</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>51</i>

Percentages sum to more than 100% as respondents could give more than one answer.

Table D2. Behaviour change methods that respondents included in their applications

All LA and 3rd sector respondents

Behaviour change method	% of respondents	
	Local authority	Third sector
Distributing leaflets or other written material	83	71
Giving information through local newspapers and other media	69	65
Door knocking to give one-to-one advice	54	49
Giving presentations at local events or meetings	87	86
Running stalls at local events or meetings	60	59
Working intensively with small groups of community members	80	90
<i>Base</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>51</i>

Percentages sum to more than 100% as respondents could give more than one answer.

Table D3. Level of involvement of different stakeholders in preparing the application*All LA and 3rd sector respondents*

Stakeholder	% of respondents			
	Local authority		Third sector	
	Very/fairly involved	Not very/not at all involved	Very/fairly involved	Not very/not at all involved
Local authority	89	11	61	39
Local community group	89	11	96	4
Other local residents	49	51	76	24
Local businesses	39	61	57	43
Community energy specialist	56	44	69	31
Housing association	40	60	41	59

*Missing data has been recoded as "not at all involved"***Table D4. Feedback about the timetable for preparing applications***All LA and 3rd sector respondents*

Feedback	% of respondents	
	Local authority	Third sector
Enough time	54	39
Not enough time	46	61
Total	100	100
<i>Base</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>51</i>

Table D5. Feedback about the written material for applicants*All LA and 3rd sector respondents who answered the question*

Feedback	% of respondents	
	Local authority	Third sector
Not very/not at all clear	13	27
Fairly/very clear	86	73
Total	100	100
<i>Base</i>	<i>69</i>	<i>51</i>

Table D6. Informal discussions with DECC, DETI and Welsh Assembly during bid preparation*All LA and 3rd sector respondents*

	% of respondents	
	Local authority	Third sector
Did not have discussion	47	31
Had discussion	53	69
Total	100	100
<i>Base</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>51</i>

Table D7. Feedback about feedback given after the funding decision

All LA and 3rd sector respondents who answered the question

Feedback	% of respondents	
	Local authority	Third sector
Not very/not at all helpful	55	68
Very/fairly helpful	45	32
Total	100	100
<i>Base</i>	<i>69</i>	<i>50</i>

Table D8. Benefits of applying to LCCC

All LA and 3rd sector respondents

Benefit	% of respondents	
	Local authority	Third sector
Experienced any benefits	73	75
Did not experience any benefits	27	25
Total	100	100
<i>Base</i>	<i>69</i>	<i>50</i>

Table D9. Issues on which support and advice would be welcome

All LA and 3rd sector respondents

Issue	% of respondents	
	Local authority	Third sector
Planning regulations	16	18
Legal matters	23	39
Specific low carbon technologies	33	26
Behaviour change	37	24
Engaging communities	39	16
Engaging local authorities	10	24
Engaging private investors	50	45
Accessing funding	69	69
Project management	19	20
Organisational structure	21	24
Other	11	16
<i>Base</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>51</i>

Percentages sum to more than 100% as respondents could give more than one answer.

Annex E Feedback from successful applicants

Some of the feedback from the LCCC communities collected by Dialogue-by-Design echoed feedback from the unsuccessful applicants collected through the survey. In particular, they had similar views about the application timetable and lack of clarity in the written material. However, they had rather different feedback about the amount of work needed to complete the application. Their feedback on these issues is described below.

The **timetable** for the application was mentioned as a major challenge. A longer timetable was suggested for future (*"at least 6 months to allow organisations to take the necessary steps to ensure viability of the project"*). The short timescale had a number of implications.

- They could not consult as widely as they would have liked, with knock on effects now that projects are up and running, such as *"people saying 'we never heard about the project.'"*

"To deliver the bid on time, a small group of people made the decisions and then the bid had to be written by one person... Therefore a lot of final decisions were made by the bid writer with limited input from the rest of the group."

- Advanced communities were at an advantage.

"We would have been unable to apply if we had not already had projects in the advanced stages of development."

- Funding opportunities and equipment could not be fully researched.

"We have found weaknesses in the reliability of some of the equipment. Ideally we would have trialled the equipment first. The timetable was compressed however, with only two months from tender to submission."

Lack of clarity around information and advice on some issues was also occasionally mentioned. For instance:

"Cooperative Development Group came in and gave us free legal advice during the bid writing stage. We didn't really know whether a coop would be allowed if we won the money."

However, successful applicants **did not seem to find the amount of work overly burdensome**. This perhaps reflects the fact that the successful communities had experience of applying for similar funding programmes in the past, or that the amount of work seemed acceptable when the outcome was successful.

"In completing significant funding applications, we would expect to provide this level of detail. Some additional information was required for this scheme around location, legal structure and governance"

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arrangements but generally the application process was not too onerous and was appropriate to the scale of the award."

"It was substantial but not as bad as ERDF funding applications or the NESTA Big Green Challenge."

Further feedback from the LCCC communities on the application process, and their experience of the whole programme, will be included in the final evaluation report as well as reports on the programme.

Acknowledgements

I would very much like to thank the respondents who took the time and trouble to complete the survey and give us their feedback about the application process.