



**Bath & West  
Community Energy**  
Generating local energy



# BWCE: Developing Local Supply

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# Getting Value from Using Our Electricity Locally

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We wanted to model whether surplus ('spill') electricity from two of our rooftop solar arrays could be used for an Energy Local supply club



A social enterprise, transforming the electricity market for local communities and small-scale renewable generation.



To support the establishment of thousands of local, not-for-profit Energy Local Clubs that allow local renewable generation to be used locally.

# We faced some 'selling' issues

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1. The total amount of surplus/spill solar electricity was limited
2. This would limit the club membership size
3. Some availability during the middle of the day
4. Main availability only in school summer holidays and weekends
5. Financial benefit was dependent upon significant shifting of demand
6. Tariff offers were very limited with more expensive baseline

# How did we address these issues?

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Focus group	Aim	How
First	To test understanding of the Energy Local concept using supply from two local schools	By circulating a cold-call advert
Second	To evaluate the impact of direct household benefits and indirect wider community benefits	By presenting the details of the local supply club offer
Third	To identify engaging messaging and effective marketing materials to inform our community engagement strategy	By selecting the key messages and how to promote them

# What did we learn from the first focus group?

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1. The group ‘thought’ the advert lacked key information on the:
  - a. role of existing electricity supplier
  - b. continuity of supply
  - c. price of electricity
  - d. amount of change/commitment required
  - e. impact on their house
  
2. The group ‘felt’ that the advert:
  - a. was interesting and exciting
  - b. but also confusing/untrustworthy/complex
  - c. lacked assurances
  - d. didn’t satisfy the question ‘why should I sign-up?’

# What did we learn from the second focus group?

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1. Direct benefits to the individual are paramount
2. Tariffs are key: club householders should make a bill saving
3. Individuals need to calculate their personal financial impact
4. Needs to be a better option than current supplier - customer service
5. Demand shifting isn't always convenient/possible
6. Hassle factor needs to be very low
7. Indirect benefits to the grid, future installations, generators are vague, hard to understand and not relevant
8. Wider benefits to the community/school not readily recognised

# Conclusions so far and next steps

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1. Setting-up a local supply club using existing roof-top spill is risky
2. More certainty in establishing a successful club from a dedicated supply
3. Focus group has shaped display at public information session
4. Third focus group to:
  - a. develop key messages to act as 'hooks'
  - b. select key information to stimulate interest to find out more
  - c. evaluate effective mechanisms to promote the message