

120 down. 28,505 to go.

Reducing Suffolk SME carbon emissions through Low Carbon Champions CIC

INTRODUCTION

This working paper underpins the launch of Low Carbon Champions Community Interest Company (LCC) in July 2014. It has been circulated to all possibly interested parties with a request for input, comments and support.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

LCC has evolved from the Suffolk Low Carbon Champions project which ran between 2010 and 2012. When this ended, a pilot programme – Low Carbon Deviants – was run during 2013 to see whether a lower cost, more grounded approach (using the Positive Deviance Initiative) would work and be more sustainable (see www.lowcarbonchampions.org for details). Activities included Carbon Audit, Action Plan, Remote Mentoring and possible accreditation through the Suffolk Carbon Charter or World Land Trust Carbon Balancing schemes.

Results were sufficiently encouraging to create a separate Community Interest Company to develop the idea further in 2014 and beyond. The challenge is great. Out of the 28,625 organisations in Suffolk with fewer than 20 employees (Suffolk Observatory 2013) just 120 are holders of the Suffolk Carbon Charter, our local community accreditation. Some larger companies will be registered to other environmental standards and some smaller organisations may be actively managing their carbon emissions outside of the Charter but the scale of the challenge remains daunting.

WHAT LCC WILL OFFER

The LCC approach can be summarised in three words: Measure, Reduce, Offset. Helping micro and small organisations achieve this involves:

Step	Tools	Services	Accreditation
MEASURE	Carbon Audit	Support	Peer Review
REDUCE	Action Plan	Learning	Suffolk Carbon Charter
OFFSET	Carbon Balance	Funding	Carbon Balanced Business

Carbon Audit. Measuring current carbon emissions needs to be simple yet accurate if accreditation is involved. This project will review the latest online carbon audit options, report on 'best of breed' and how can they be verified (if needed).

Action Plan. Helping organisations create, deliver and revise action plans is our biggest challenge and it will again help if we can make it FUN. Can we link suggested actions to audits and does it matter about % reduction? How do we maintain momentum? Moving evaluation from three years to annual to real time appeals. Building and maintaining a resource of typical actions will be vital.

Support. Helping organisations decide which steps to take will probably be the responsibility of online agents and supporting material. On-premise presence will be limited due to resources. We need to write agent (Greencoat) job descriptions and recruit accordingly. Their skills, learning needs and levels of Kudos also need defining. Likewise how we can incentivise and use current Carbon Champions and Charter Holders at Gold or lower levels?

Learning. Justifying any move to the low carbon economy will be needed for some types of organisation e.g. Tin Men. Hopefully we can find what Green Light Trust did and use earlier material to create an online resource library. This will then be maintained by Greencoats and Champions for both internal and external use.

Grant Funding. There is often financial support available for sustainable business practice and part of the LCC service will be to help SMEs identify, apply and secure funding wherever possible. This is a constantly moving feast but a buffet that's worth grazing at if eligible.

Carbon Balancing. This will hopefully be offered through the Carbon Balancing service provided by World Land Trust. We need to agree how this will work for high volume / low value agreements. How can we make it cost effective yet trustworthy? Other options may need considering both overseas and in the UK.

Peer Review. This will be vital to enable the scaling up of activity with limited resources. How can we ensure consistency? Developing our own brand of peer review is another option (Low-Di-Low?).

Suffolk Carbon Charter. Smaller organisations find the Carbon Charter somewhat cumbersome but the format of this is being reviewed. Larger ones are more likely to complete the process.

Carbon Balanced Business. Companies that chose to offset will gain the WLT accreditation providing they have accurately measured their emissions via a WLT audit or similar.

Richard Parker, 17 June 2014