Workshop guide: community ownership and the energy transition

Rather than being intended as blueprints for the delivery of the workshop, the resources found in this guide are provided as examples, based on learning from the workshops delivered as part of the Oldham Energy Futures project. Delivery teams should draw inspiration from the resources below and found in the underlined supplementary guide: workshop elements in order to develop their own session plans and activities.

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This workshop builds knowledge of ownership and decision-making in relation to energy transition solutions. It has a specific focus on developing understanding of who shapes and owns the energy system at the neighbourhood level, what this means for people day-to-day, and how alternatively- owned solutions can contribute to the energy transition.

In this guide

- Workshop plan
- Session guides
- Optional session guide
- Additional learning resources
- Good practice case studies

Workshop plan

	9.45am	Registration
	10.05am	Opening
		• short welcome
		• housekeeping
		• check in with how people are feeling
		• reflection on the previous session
		• outline of today's workshop.
👥	10.20am	Session 1: the leaky bucket
	11.05am	Break
📦	11.15am	Session 2: why does ownership matter in the energy system?
	12.15pm	Lunch
⇄	1pm	Session 3: neighbourhood incubator – developing locally owned assets and services
⇄	2.10pm	Session 4: mechanisms for change
	2.30pm	Session 5: reflection

🚶 how this impacts me

👥 how this impacts the community

📦 building understanding

⇄ mechanisms for change

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Session 1: the leaky bucket

length	outcomes	data to gather
format	resources	tips
facilitator	content	examples of use

45 minutes

Interactive discussion

This activity will require more than one person to support facilitation. One of the facilitators should have an understanding of community wealth building and how wealth can leak from or be held in the local economy through different forms of ownership.
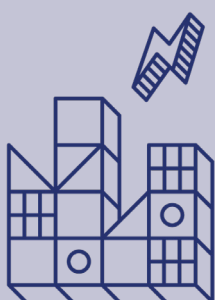
Following this session, participants will:
· understand how wealth leaks out of the local economy as a result of different ownership structures, with a focus on energy
· understand how these leaks could be plugged.

See the New Economics Foundation guide on the leaky bucket workshop (p43-48) for some ideas of the equipment you might need.

This session should be designed to be interactive and engaging for the group and to build an initial understanding of how wealth leaves the local economy and what type of actions could be taken to stop it. The session is based on the leaky bucket workshop developed by the New Economics Foundation (see page 43-48). This is a useful approach to building the group's understanding of the local economy and how wealth flows in and out of it due to ownership structures. It would be useful to ask the group to look at how they spend their money on energy to prompt discussion about how this money leaks or is retained locally and what that means for their neighbourhood. This session can be simplified to use as an opener for the overall subject of ownership and its impact on local flows of wealth. To achieve this, concentrate on "how the money leaks out" and keep "how to plug the leaks" shorter.

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Session 1:
the leaky bucket

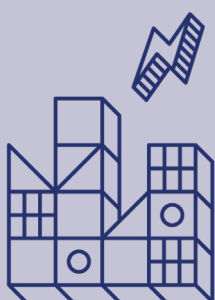|					
⏱	length	✓	outcomes	🗄	data to gather
📖	format	🔧	resources	💡	tips
👤	facilitator	☰	content	👤	examples of use

🗄 Record data on:
- areas where the group feels significant amounts of money may be leaking from the local economy, particularly where this relates to issues or potential solutions identified in previous sessions.

💡 Try adapting the session to a more energy-specific topic by identifying the holes in the bucket as energy bills, transport costs and supply chains to deliver energy efficiency works, for example.

👤 The New Economics Foundation handbook outlines how this session can be delivered, and also other useful tools it would be possible to adapt for the session.

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Session 2: why does ownership matter in the energy system?

length   outcomes   data to gather

format   resources   tips

facilitator   content   examples of use

60 minutes

Interactive presentation with conversation and short exercises

The facilitator for this session should have expertise in different forms of ownership and how ownership impacts people and places, if possible with pre-existing knowledge of the energy system.

Following this session, participants will:
- understand who owns and controls different components of the energy system
- understand where money spent on energy goes in relation to the ownership of different parts of the system
- understand how the energy system has developed and the role ownership plays in shaping the energy system today
- understand what these ownership structures mean for them as energy consumers, particularly in relation to the cost of energy and the decarbonisation of the energy system.
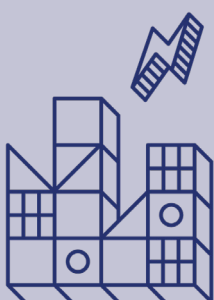
You will need:
- a projector/TV to connect to a laptop
- sound if videos or audio are included.

The Oldham Energy Futures team covered the following topics in our session:
- how money spent on energy is being used – bills are increasing, so where is this money going and what does that mean for the energy transition?
- how the energy sector in the UK developed – it may be useful

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Session 2: why does ownership matter in the energy system?

length	outcomes	data to gather
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- in this section to talk about the municipal beginnings of the UK energy system and use examples of how this worked in the locality, alongside giving examples of how co-operative ownership within the energy system developed
- the current state of the energy sector in the UK – this should include the privatisation and centralisation of the energy system, and the limitations of what can be shaped by a group at the local level. It may be helpful to compare this to the energy system in another country and the way the energy system has changed there
- the solutions that can shape the energy system in a way that delivers for local people – this should include information about the models of ownership and governance used for community- and municipally-owned projects and organisations relating to the energy transition, the diversity of the size and activities delivered by these organisations, and some examples of groups across the UK or Europe.

If the group has already heard about community energy business models in the renewable energy generation workshop, focus on using this as an introduction to the different governance structures which sit behind community ownership.

Include examples like co-operatives that deliver energy services (like Carbon Co-op), community-owned transport solutions (like Derwent Valley Car Club) and the other services delivered by community energy groups (like energy efficiency services).

Highlight what community-owned and municipally-owned initiatives can deliver for local people in terms of economic and social outcomes.

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Session 2: why does ownership matter in the energy system?

length   outcomes   data to gather

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Address the question "how can these forms of ownership impact this neighbourhood in terms of jobs, wealth and reinvestment?" The presentation could touch on approaches to local economic development like community wealth building, and explore how energy transition can deliver for the community beyond community ownership (through council social value requirements to deliver employment, for example).

Make sure the information is directly relatable to the group members. Ensure there is space for discussion following the presentation, including around the topic of what the group would want to see as a result of energy transition interventions in their neighbourhood (e.g. jobs, training, new businesses).

Record data on:
- ideas and thoughts from the group in relation to the sort of solutions they would want to see in their area
- the different types of ownership they feel would be relevant
- the economic benefits they would want to see as a result of these solutions.

If possible, design this session with limited screen time, as participants may struggle to stay focused for a full hour. Using images or interactive elements would be beneficial.

Time should be factored in for discussion with the neighbourhood group so that they can ask further questions of the expert in the room. Make sure to take note of any opportunities or potential solutions.

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Session 2: why does ownership matter in the energy system?

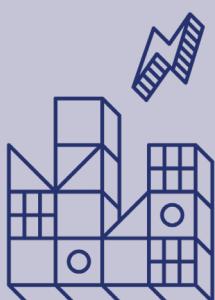|		
length	outcomes	data to gather
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There are many examples of community ownership in the energy sector, but it would be beneficial to highlight where there are opportunities for community ownership as the energy system changes.

These are some videos which can be used to highlight where there are opportunities the group could take inspiration from:
- how is the energy system changing?
- community-led approaches to retrofit - retrofit business models in the fuel poor sector
- community-led approaches to retrofit - business models for able to pay
- what is community energy? by Kate Gilmartin, Local Energy Hub North West, recorded as part of Oldham Energy Futures.

These are some resources and useful sources of information about the history of the energy system in the UK:
- energy timeline slides from Oldham Energy Futures – a place-specific way of talking about how the energy system developed and changed over time
- a talk by REScoop summarising the history of community owned history
- academic article exploring the development of the energy system in the UK with a particular focus on community ownership.

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Session 3: neighbourhood incubator – developing locally owned assets and services

⏱	length	☑	outcomes	🗄	data to gather
📖	format	🔧	resources	💡	tips
🧍	facilitator	☰	content	🧑‍🏫	examples of use

Minimum 70 minutes

Interactive discussion

The facilitator for this session should have expertise in different forms of ownership and how ownership impacts people and places, if possible with pre-existing knowledge of the energy system.

Following this session, participants will:
- have identified opportunities for community ownership of local energy solutions
- feel connected to other members of the group.

You will need:
- three tables
- print-outs of relevant best practice examples
- issues, needs and opportunities cards for each energy theme
- ideas and solutions cards for each energy theme.

Break the group into three with a group dedicated to each theme: sustainable transport, energy efficiency in the home and renewable energy generation. Set up a group per table.

At each table, share two good practice examples with the group. These should be about services or assets in community- or public-civic-ownership. It may be useful to ask the group to break in half and get each group to explore one example each then report back

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Session 3: neighbourhood incubator – developing locally owned assets and services

length   outcomes   data to gather

format   resources   tips

facilitator   content   examples of use

with their thoughts. Also refer back to any examples referenced in the previous session.

Then ask the group for ideas for a community-owned asset or service relevant to their theme that they would like to develop further. This session can be connected to data identified earlier. If the leaky bucket exercise has been used, refer back and identify solutions to plug the gaps which could be owned by the community.

Discuss the issues and solutions identified in earlier workshops and ask participants to discuss which issues are the most pressing and where a solution would lend itself to be a community-owned asset or service. When the group has settled on an idea, support them to develop it further. Using questions can be useful to prompt this development. For example:
- what is the challenge/problem this solves?
- who are the beneficiaries and how do they benefit?
- what are the key activities?
- how is it keeping money from leaking out of the economy?
- how can we make sure it is community-owned?
- does it have a particular location? (have a map close by)
- does a similar service already exist locally?
  - can we learn from that?
  - can we connect with it?
- is this a new organisation or could it be hosted by an existing one?
- what kind of resources does it need?
- how could it generate income?
- would there be job opportunities?

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Session 3: neighbourhood incubator – developing locally owned assets and services

	length		outcomes		data to gather
	format		resources		tips
	facilitator		content		examples of use

Then work with the group to give the idea a title and create an elevator pitch.

In the last 10-15 min of the session, bring the groups back together and have them pitch their idea to the other participants.

Record data on:
· ideas and solutions generated by the group. This is particularly important if the CLEP process has a focus on catalysing action, as the ideas generated in this session are those the group may be likely to develop through the imagining workshops and/or take on as community action projects. Detailing these ideas in the Community-led Energy Action Plan will also be important.

Make the session light and creative. This is about the process of co-creation and exploring the art of the possible. Support the participants to work with a sense of plenty and be ambitious.
It may be useful to stick together two sheets of flipchart paper and draw out a simple template (like a social enterprise business canvas model) to document the ideas.

It may also be useful to bring a set of images so people can create a collage representing the idea.

If relevant, it may also be useful to open the conversation out to other forms of ownership such as municipal ownership to extend ideas beyond what they as a group can deliver.

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Optional session: insights from an advanced community-owned initiative or organisation

length   outcomes   data to gather

format   resources   tips

facilitator   content   examples of use

60 minutes

Interactive discussion

The facilitator for this session should be a relatable expert who can talk about a community-owned organisation or project they are involved in which is doing work which relates to the energy transition. This does not have to be a community energy project, it could be a community business which raises income and also works towards environmental principles, for example.

Following this session, participants will:
- have insights into what is possible from the community level
- have more knowledge about how to deliver a community-led project/create a community-owned organisation which can help to deliver the energy transition
- feel more confident in taking forward a similar project/ organisation to that described.
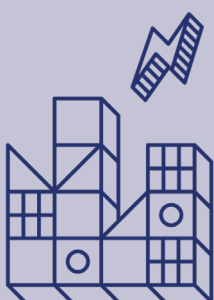
You will need:
- if not in the physical location of the project or organisation being discussed, make sure there are images to share with the group either through a presentation or to pass around the group.

The expert should deliver a presentation/talk outlining:
- what the project/organisation is
- how it came about

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Optional session: insights from an advanced community-owned initiative or organisation

⏱ length	📋 outcomes	🗄 data to gather
📖 format	🔧 resources	💡 tips
👤 facilitator	☰ content	🧑 examples of use

☰
- how it works with local people
- how it generates benefits for the local economy
- how it relates to the energy transition or climate change
- any key information about enablers/barriers to establishing the project/organisation.

Factor in time for discussion with the community so that they can ask further questions.

🗄
Record data on:
- any opportunities or potential ideas for exploration which emerge from the conversation.

💡
If there is sufficient resource it may be beneficial to do a site visit in combination with this workshop.

If this is a site visit make sure this is done in a way that combines it with movement around the site, giving the group an opportunity to see how the organisation operates.

🧑
This blog relates the Oldham Energy Futures project visit to Squash in Liverpool.

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Additional learning resources

- A short illustrated history of UK energy system
- How is the energy system changing?
- What is community wealth building?

Good practice case studies

Sources with multiple examples of alternative forms of ownership:
- CLES and Carbon Co-op's a just transition through community wealth building toolkit
- mPOWER's best practice guides.
- CLES.

Examples used during Oldham Energy Futures:
- public ownership: Ghent municipality renovation one-stop-shop
- community ownership: Plymouth Energy Community
- community ownership: Oldham Community Power.

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