

A Blueprint for How Business Can Support Communities to Cut Energy Bills

Appendix: Get started in your community

Checklist

Keen and wondering where to start? Here's a list of questions to get you started. This is aimed at community groups but will be useful for business and other potential partners too.

1. Your building - start here:

- Do you know where your building is losing heat and what it'd cost to fix it? Or where you could add renewables like solar? Consider getting an energy audit or thermal imaging survey. Your council might be able to help.
- Look for suitable funding for the energy upgrades you wish to make. Your council may be able to advise on local schemes. Also look for capital upgrade funding specific to your sector e.g. sports clubs. Some cheaper measures might be worth investing in if they've a quick payback period.

See the [signpost section below](#) for help with funding and support.

2. Have you got the right team to collaborate with?

- Do you know who's running home energy upgrade or fuel poverty projects in your area? Get in touch with your council to find out. Then speak to these organisations to see how you might work together or what you could learn about energy efficiency.
- Do you know which big businesses operate near you? A few good places to look: your local Business Improvement District (if you have one), the council or combined authority, the local chamber of commerce, and organisations like Business in the Community (BITC), In Kind Direct or Locality. It's also worth watching out for big employers in your area and any firms that have won large council contracts - construction companies in particular, as they'll usually have social value commitments baked into those contracts that they're actively looking to spend.
- Which local businesses could you approach to support you with freebies like vouchers or prizes?
- Are you clear on roles and responsibilities about what each partner brings?

3. Coordinator – have you got the right person?

- Is there someone already embedded, trusted and known in the community? Do they have the people skills and confidence to ask directly?

- Have you budgeted for their time properly (so you're not just relying on goodwill)? Or if voluntary, make sure they're not overburdened and the project can link to existing events or communications to save time.

4. Being curious about your audience:

- What's the easiest starting audience who already show up to your community hub? Who else could benefit, and what do you know about their homes, language, tenure and needs? Look at your ward level data to find home and demographic data.
- What motivates each group e.g. bill savings, comfort, family, fun?
- What assumptions might you be making that are worth checking? Speak to people to understand their barriers and motivators.
- What extra hand-holding might your audience need to make DIY changes at home and who could help support them?

5. Making it visual and fun (think cameras, cricket and curry!)

- What existing hooks or events could you link the project to? How could you make it engaging, fun or quirky and most of all community-focused?
- Apply the EAST model, make it Easy, Attractive, Social and Timely.

Timings:

- What's the natural season or hook for your community? Energy works best to talk about in winter and for thermal cameras this is essential when there's a difference of 10 degrees between a heated building and the outside temperature.
- Check out the guide on project length with the bronze/ silver/ gold level options below, to decide what you're aiming for.

6. Clear communications – keeping it accessible:

- What resource have you got to create communications? Consider the bronze, silver, gold options below.
- Is your copy jargon-free and human-centred, focusing on stories about real people? And how could comms support conversation, not replace it?
- How could you use the Bradford project's communications templates to save time? See the links [below to communications resources](#).

What things cost

Wondering what to budget? Below is a rough guide to the main costs (using bronze, silver and gold examples) from a lighter-touch pilot through to a longer, more ambitious programme. Treat these as ballpark figures to help you get started; actual

costs will depend on the size of your building, the scope and scale of your project and what your partners bring to the table.

Staff and coordinator time sits outside these numbers. We can't overstate how important dedicated staff time is. Someone has to plan the events, run the comms, manage the camera loans and keep the whole thing moving (and potentially measure your impact, too!). This will need more resources than the community coordinator role below.

This isn't the bit to skimp on. It's the bit that makes everything else work. You'll want to budget that separately, shaped by what you can pay in and what you can unlock through volunteer capacity or partner time.

Area	Bronze	Silver	Gold
STAGE 1			
Capital upgrades	Small upgrades e.g. DIY draught proofing £300 or changing lightbulbs	Basic insulation e.g. loft insulation £2,000-£5,000	Insulation plus renewables – e.g. solar and battery or heat pump plus insulation £25k to £35k or more
Collaboration	Scope local retrofit / fuel poverty partners to refer people to - £0 Find a local business willing to offer a small number of incentives - £20/ahead or one to two larger prizes for a competition	Scope local retrofit / fuel poverty partners to refer people to or more actively partner with - £0 Find a business willing to offer some incentives - £20-£50/ahead or some larger prizes for a competition	Scope local retrofit / fuel poverty partners to potentially partner with - £0 or cost directly Find a business willing to offer household incentives to make home energy upgrades
STAGE 2			
Audience size	30	50	100
Camera	One thermal imaging cameras e.g. FLIR C5 c. £650/each	Two thermal imaging cameras e.g. FLIR C5 c. £650/each	Three thermal imaging cameras e.g. FLIR C5 c. £650/each
Coordinator	Existing community member could be volunteer run if keen but aim for minimum number of hours e.g. 10/month to establish at £20/hour*	Existing community member could be volunteer run if keen but aim for minimum number of hours e.g. 20 hrs/month to establish at £18/hour	Existing community member could be volunteer run if keen but aim for minimum number of hours e.g. 25 hrs/month to establish at £15/hour

Comms	Light touch: way to describe the project, key image or name. Keep social media posts limited to one core call to action and how to take part. Adapt the Thermal Detectives guide. £0 direct costs	Bronze plus, some social media activity and printing of case studies and how to sign up - £500	Silver plus more regular social media activity or seasonal comms and printing of case studies and how to sign up - £1,000
Events	Piggyback existing events with a fun element linked to your community. Or one event like curry night or draught excluder workshop	Run two project specific events e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draught excluder workshop free** to £500 - Curry night £500 for food*** 	Silver plus additional events to maintain momentum – assume £2,000 budget
Timescale	1-3 months	4-6 months	7-10 months or ongoing
Potential cost range	£3,000 to £5,000	£10,000 to £15,000	£25,000 to £40,000

*Hourly rate of a coordinator will vary hugely depending upon scope of the role, length of a contract, organisation hiring and factors like London weighting

** For Thermal Detectives we managed to keep draught excluder workshop costs down by partnering with Leeds Beckett university fashion students who ran the workshop for free in return for impact data.

***Food event costs could potentially be gifted by a local business.

Signposting funding and additional support

Knowledge and support

- [Centre for Sustainable Energy](#) has lots of guidance on community engagement
- [National Energy Action](#) is a national charity working to end fuel poverty
- [Community Energy England](#) has lots of useful guides and support for communities starting to think about energy especially around communities owning, managing or benefitting from energy generation, energy efficiency measures or demand reduction. See also [Community Energy Scotland](#) if in Scotland, [Community Energy Wales](#) if in Wales, or [Community Energy Northern Ireland](#) if in Northern Ireland.

- [Energy Saving Trust](#) is a good resource for household energy advice, including savings
- [Snugg](#) – an online tool to help residents check for grants, find trusted traders and work out the best way to pay for energy upgrades
- [Which?](#) Guides to making your home more energy saving
- [Visit a Heat Pump](#) is a useful site to find local heat pump owners willing to open their home for people to visit them
- [National Retrofit Hub](#) for all things energy upgrades, especially their housing archetype examples showing what changes different house types can make
- [Home Energy Scotland](#) offers free, impartial advice for households in Scotland, as well as support for [community groups](#).

Funding and in-kind resources:

- [‘Funding energy improvements in community buildings’](#), Centre for Sustainable Energy
- [Community Energy England](#) lists funding opportunities that may cover both capital upgrades and community engagement, in England
- [In Kind Direct](#): Charity linking manufacturers and retailers to support communities at scale, through providing products to keep clean, safe and well.
- [Locality](#): Charity providing advice and resources to help communities thrive.
- [Community Climate Fund](#) with Business in the Community – helping 25 places by 2030 establish community-led climate action
- **See the Thermal Detectives communications templates** for you to edit on Canva with your own partner logos - or take inspiration from. They include:
 - Two example social media cards to encourage resident to borrow a camera: [Social media card 1](#), [Social Media card 2](#)
 - [A guide to using a thermal imaging camera](#) (based on Flir model C5) to spot heat loss
 - [A guide to how to make small DIY fixes](#) like fitting draught proofing around doors and windows to keep the heat in borrowing cameras.

Thank you

If you'd like to know more about Thermal Detectives or speak to Hubbub or our partners about this blueprint, please get in touch at: hello@hubbub.org.uk.



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