

The logo features the word "COOL" in a large, bold, black sans-serif font. The two 'O's are replaced by a pair of blue-tinted sunglasses with black frames and a dotted pattern around the edges. Below "COOL" is the word "Communities" in a bold, black sans-serif font, and "Winchester" in a bold, blue, italicized sans-serif font.

COOL
Communities
Winchester

Practical ways to tackle climate change

Pilot Project Evaluation Report

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Susie Phillips

Climate Action Coordinator

Winchester Action on Climate Change

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Executive Summary

Cool Communities is a behavioural change programme which has been adapted from a successful programme created in the US by David Gershon, an expert on this subject. It is based on small groups of people working together to reduce their carbon footprint, using a handbook that offers a menu of achievable changes in lifestyle, habits and community actions that would reduce people's use of energy and resources.

Winchester Action on Climate Change (WinACC) has adapted the handbook so that it is up-to-date and relevant for the UK population. In 2013 Winchester City Council commissioned WinACC to carry out a pilot project of the Cool Communities approach as a proof of concept in the Winchester District. Leaders were recruited in a variety of ways and 13 EcoGroups set up in and around the Winchester District between May 2013 and January 2014.

Carbon reduction and evaluation data were collected via leader and participant evaluation forms. Quantitative data was analysed to identify the top and average responses and qualitative data was analysed via pattern matching and then summarised into broad categories.

The average carbon emission reduction by the participant households was 1.5 tonnes. Of the 13 EcoGroups created, ten (49 participants) completed at least two meetings.

The conclusion is that the programme is worth pursuing, subject to these recommendations:

1. Recruitment from personal friends does not work as this is viewed as a primarily social event. Recruitment works best by direct face to face contact either by neighbours or people within membership organisations. Leaders must be willing to form groups from their own neighbourhood if possible; if not, from people with whom they are in a community of interest (such as a society).
2. Training for group leaders needs to be developed, focussing on the recruitment approach (including the script) and how to managed and monitor their group members.
3. Introductory meetings are essential to reduce participant drop out.
4. The leaders should have more proactive support while their EcoGroup is running.
5. The handbook needs to be less wordy, more user friendly, logical and visually appealing.

Introduction

Over a quarter of the UK's CO₂ emissions come from our homes, which are generally poorly insulated and inefficient in their use of energy. Other key elements of the carbon footprint of UK citizens – notably transport – account for well over a further quarter of the UK's overall carbon emissions. So helping people take practical steps to reduce their own emissions is clearly one of the key measures to achieve the carbon reductions mandated by the Climate Change Act 2008 and required to avoid dangerous climate change.

Winchester Action on Climate Change (WinACC) works to cut the carbon footprint of Winchester District, creating lower energy bills, healthier lifestyles and stronger communities. Made up from local residents, businesses and policy-makers, working together to tread more lightly on the planet, WinACC's priority for behaviour change is to roll out a programme which will reach people who are not already engaged and motivate them to cut their carbon footprint.

Having assessed existing training, programmes, materials and approaches to behaviour change, WinACC concluded that David Gershon of the Empowerment Institute had developed the approach with the greatest potential to reach out to more people and to be scaled up.

He has a systematic, well-honed recruitment system and a handbook "Low Carbon Diet" which, according to data from the US where it was developed, leads to high levels of participation and measureable reductions in household greenhouse gas emissions.

The programme consists of:

- Group meetings: a series of four meetings of five to eight people using a handbook to reduce their household carbon footprints by 2.5 tonnes within a short time of completing the programme. The programme covers all the key components of an individual/household carbon footprint: energy in the home; travel and transport; food and water; consumption and waste.
- Scaling up: to involve partner organisations across the relevant area with the capacity to deliver the programme at the scale necessary to reach 25% of the population of the city or region in question – i.e. to deliver the series of meetings hundreds or thousands of times.

David Gershon agreed that WinACC should produce the first UK version of the handbook, and pilot it here in Winchester District. WinACC volunteers "translated" the handbook into English, and updated the technological and scientific information about the carbon impact of various actions e.g. to include LED light bulbs.

Pilot programme overview

In 2013 Winchester City Council commissioned WinACC to run a pilot project for 100 households as a proof of concept. It is hoped that the results of the pilot will lead to further funding to roll out the programme to more communities in Winchester District and beyond.

The Cool Communities approach is based on research into what makes people most likely to change their behaviour - which is if they:

1. are invited to take part by people they respect, and/or by a trusted insider
2. feel part of a group of people with a common purpose
3. work out for themselves what they want to do
4. commit themselves to taking the specific actions they select
5. know that they will be asked if they have fulfilled their commitment.

The programme focuses on practical action. By making specific, targeted changes, people can significantly reduce their CO₂ emissions. The programme is fun and helps build solidarity; the most effective behaviour change techniques are those that involve people doing things together.

The handbook addresses each of the major components of someone's carbon footprint and offers a menu of actions that will reduce a carbon footprint. Participants review and select the actions that they prefer and that will deliver their reduction target. Members of the EcoGroup then support each other to achieve them.

To reach new people, recruitment is by personal invitation by neighbours and/or peers. This approach builds on the fact that most people are pleased to have an opportunity to get to know others with whom they have a loose connection. People who do not see themselves as environmentalists are still interested in getting involved.

WinACC's plan was recruit group leaders by wide publicity, word of mouth and setting up recruitment events. The aim was to set up groups from neighbourhoods with contrasting characteristics: city and rural, different socio-economic profiles, and different levels of previous climate change activity. We also used the approach in existing communities of relevant interest such as churches and societies –places where people have an on-going relationship with each other.

WinACC also ran a "climate café". 150 invitations were sent out to people in the WinACC's mailing list as well as posters and other publicity to invite the public. 55 people attended the event. Three leaders came forward and one EcoGroup of five was formed.

When a leader expressed an interest in leading an EcoGroup, they were invited to an informal meeting with other potential leaders to learn more about the handbook and the structure of the meetings. Once they had recruited their group, they could opt for the project manager to run the first meeting or just drop off the required number of handbooks.

The leader arranged the dates of subsequent meetings and ran them using the meeting guides provided in the handbook without further support.

Methodology

Sources of evidence

Summary of initial carbon footprints and reductions made and pledged

Before the first meeting of the EcoGroup, each leader was sent a spreadsheet for recording names and email addresses of participants. This also had space for each participant's carbon footprint, reductions made and pledges for the future. Leaders were encouraged to send the spreadsheet back to WinACC after the last meeting.

Participant evaluation forms

At the last meeting (or the end of the pilot period – whichever came first), the leaders asked each participant (including themselves) to fill out an evaluation form.

Group leaders feedback form

The leaders were asked about their experiences of running a group. The information was gathered from the group leaders either by face to face interview or over the phone. They sent in the completed leader forms and participant forms electronically or by post.

The data was a combination of quantitative data (rating their experiences on a scale of 1-5 or yes/no answers) or qualitative data (verbal or written responses to the open questions).

These findings were gathered into three spreadsheets:

- Leaders' feedback –leaders were asked to comment on their experience of forming and running a group
- Participants' feedback –participants (including leaders) were asked to comment on their experience of the programme
- Handbook feedback –participants (including leaders) were asked to comment generally or on specific items in the handbook that were good or need development.

Quantitative data was presented showing a summary of all results and the highest results highlighted.

Qualitative data was analysed using pattern matching (looking for common themes in answers to particular questions). These were presented in summary using the following definitions:

Majority	75% and over of the respondents
Most	50% - 74% of respondents
Some	25% - 49% of respondents
A few	Fewer than 25% of respondents

Results

Number of participants and groups

# of people who attended introductory meetings	19
# of introductory meetings carried out	3
# of people who attended leaders meetings	9
# of leaders meetings carried out	4
# of EcoGroups set up	13
# of participants recruited to EcoGroups	69
# of participants who completed the programme (at least two meetings by the time of the evaluation)	49
# of EcoGroups who did not complete (at least two meetings by the time of the evaluation)	3

Carbon footprint and reductions

Totals

	No. in EcoGroup	Initial carbon footprint	Total actual reduction	Total pledged reduction
EcoGroup 1	7	138	11.51	0.00
EcoGroup 2	5	200	0.30	4.83
EcoGroup 3	3	43	4.26	0.00
EcoGroup 4	6	361	8.45	3.2
EcoGroup 5	4	TBA		
EcoGroup 6	2	80	3.01	7.42
EcoGroup 7	4	52	7.23	14.46
EcoGroup 8	4	60	4.03	0.46
EcoGroup 9	3	45	6.41	2.65
EcoGroup 10	5	214	0.00	6.03
Totals		1195	45.25	39.03

Averages

	Average carbon footprint	Average actual reduction	Average pledged reduction
EcoGroup 1	19.80	1.64	0.00
EcoGroup 2	40.20	0.06	0.97
EcoGroup 3	14.40	1.42	0.00
EcoGroup 4	60.18	1.69	0.60
EcoGroup 5	TBA		
EcoGroup 6	39.88	1.51	3.71
EcoGroup 7	12.96	1.82	3.61
EcoGroup 8	20.20	1.34	0.22
EcoGroup 9	15.10	2.14	1.32
EcoGroup 10	42.86	0	1.20
Average	31.46	1.41	1.56

Note – we are still waiting for 12 more results from various EcoGroups so these figures may change slightly by the end of March 2014.

Participant feedback

23 participant evaluation forms were returned (not every question was answered).

	Friend	Neighbour	Work	Local Society	Other
How do you know the leader?	12	2	5	2	6

	Face to face	Telephone	Email	Other
How were you invited to join?	16	0	4	3

	2	3	4
How many meetings did you attend?	2	12	9

	1/5	2/5	3/5	4/5	5/5
How easy was it to use the carbon calculator?	0	0	5	10	7

	Yes	No	Don't know
Was your carbon footprint what you expected?	12	9	1
Have you reduced your carbon footprint since joining the EcoGroup?	18	3	1

	1/5	2/5	3/5	4/5	5/5
How likely are you to cut your footprint in the future?	2	2	9	2	6
How likely are you to tell others about Cool Communities	1	4	9	7	5

Summary of open questions

What do you think is the best way to get people to join an EcoGroup?	<p>Most people felt face to face was the best way of being invited even though some leaders had emailed first.</p> <p>Some people felt that approaching pre-existing groups is best (either social or work).</p> <p>Overall people felt that it should be a social occasion and not too formal.</p>
What did you like about the meetings?	<p>Over half the participants said they found the meetings fun and many found them informative.</p> <p>Other reasons were: a chance to discuss environmental issues; a chance to find out what other people are doing; and that it was an informal sociable meeting.</p>
What did you not like about the meetings?	<p>Most people did not reply or replied “nothing”.</p> <p>Other replies were that the handbook was confusing and the format of the agendas was confusing and too formal.</p>
How do you think we could improve the meeting format?	<p>A few people wanted simplification of the meeting structure and the handbook. A few people wanted to see more emphasis on the goal-setting part of the programme. A few people wanted fewer meetings and one wanted more.</p>
Positive comments about the handbook	<p>The large majority of people found the handbook easy to read and well laid out. Some people said that it was informative and a few said it was clear and contained some useful tips.</p>
Areas identified for improvement in the handbook	<p>Some people felt that the layout and order of the handbook needed to be better, saying it was confusing and hard to find the information.</p> <p>Some people felt that the information was too wordy and needed to be cut down</p> <p>Some people felt that the information lack clarity in some places and needed to be better explained.</p> <p>A few people felt that the graphics and visual representation of the information could be better.</p>
Which areas of your daily life have you found it easiest to make changes to?	<p>Most people identified energy as the area they found easiest to cut down (meaning electrical items in their homes) and lifestyle choices and habits (such as washing bodies and clothes). Other areas mentioned were travel, food, heating and recycling.</p>
Which areas of your daily life have you	<p>Most people identified travel as the area hardest to reduce, citing work and children’s activities. Other areas mentioned were heating,</p>

found most difficult to change?	energy and replacing white goods in the home.
Other benefits you have found by being an EcoGroup?	The answers were broad: the benefits of working in a group, understanding other people's point of view, understanding how you can make a difference to the environment and save money, and permission to talk about the environment and saving money.
Other comments	<p>Some people felt that more of it should be online to save paper and make data collection easier.</p> <p>A few people commented that the programme is very complex and hard going at the moment and only already "green" people would bother to do it.</p> <p>Overall the feeling was that it needed to be made more attractive to the non-converts by making it simpler and more appealing.</p>

Leader feedback

Eight leader evaluation forms were returned (not every question was answered).

Why did you decide to lead an EcoGroup?	<p>Some leaders were trying it out for a larger organisation (e.g. the Women's Institute, the Diocese, and Transition Southampton).</p> <p>The other half already had an interest in climate related matters and wanted to try out the programme as a method of engaging their friends or neighbours.</p>
How did you recruit people to your group?	<p>2 were part of an existing group (church; WI)</p> <p>2 put notes through neighbours' doors and followed up with a personal invitation</p> <p>2 emailed friends and followed up with a personal invitation</p> <p>1 invited members of the extended family</p> <p>1 recruited by telephone</p>
Was this the best way to recruit people or do you think you would do it differently now?	<p>1 leader felt that families are the best people to invite as they have the most need of savings and use the most energy.</p> <p>Those that emailed felt that this was a good way because the invitee had a chance to think about it and look at links before responding.</p> <p>The notes through neighbour's door's and follow up seemed to work very well.</p> <p>Some sort of written invitation was recommended.</p>
What was good about the group?	Overall all the groups had a positive experience. Fun and sociability was mentioned often. Leaders were pleased about how positive participants were and how quickly they got into discussion and shared

	<p>experiences and ideas. One group mentioned a feeling of being empowered to make changes.</p>
<p>What challenges did you encounter?</p>	<p>2 groups found that they struggled to find actions that they could do as they had done many things already or did not have the money to do them right now.</p> <p>3 groups found that when participants dropped out, it was demoralising for the others and it was hard to deal with people missing meetings.</p> <p>Some leaders talk about nerves and not wanting to appear bossy. This led to them not using the meeting guides.</p> <p>Other comments were that sometimes it was difficult to stop people talking and keep them on track; and that they got through the content too quickly</p>
<p>Did anything unexpected happen?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many people found they were already doing many of the actions. • A lady and her daughter used the handbook for the basis of a school assembly. • A participant wants to run an EcoGroup at his work. • EcoGroups with ten participants is too big • Meetings were too frequent to see much change in energy bills.
<p>What would you have done differently?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not run the group before Christmas. • Vary the location of the meetings. • Share the responsibility of the leadership either in the group or with buddy. • Don't invite friends as it was hard to control the meetings • Have energy monitors to borrow.
<p>How did you find the layout of the handbook (as a leader)?</p>	<p>In general the leaders felt that the structure and layout of the handbook needs some work. Suggestions were</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the section number match the meeting numbers. • Put the agenda for each meeting next to the relevant section. • Simplify the carbon reduction grid – it is hard to understand and use. • The introduction needs to be bullet pointed or simplified. • Section 2 needs some actions that people can achieve in a month. • The agendas are good but need to be more flexible.

<p>Are there improvements you could suggest that might have helped you as a leader?</p>	<p>Further suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size of the handbook and number of words needs to be reduced as it is off putting. • Extend the actions for people further along the green journey. Section 3 is very wordy and needs to be easier to apply.
<p>Did you have any issues with the carbon calculator?</p>	<p>REAP petite is easy to use but does have some issues. The biggest was that leaders and participants did not spot the difference between the individual and the household calculations. A few groups only found that they had been looking at the wrong figures after they had reported their losses.</p> <p>REAP petite recommends food actions which are not mentioned in the handbook.</p> <p>Pledges in REAP petite caused confusion with the pledges in the handbook.</p> <p>The grid in the handbook also caused confusion because it was showing the carbon footprint for a '2-person household' but it does not state that anywhere.</p>
<p>What other materials could have helped you?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A case study or example reduction grid is required. • A column in the recording grid for actions you have already done. • Invitation card to invite people to the introductory meeting. • Meeting guides as a separate document. • A document explaining the reason why people do the programme and their motivations. • Introductory activities and ice breakers. • FAQs for leaders – to answer questions about China etc. • Spreadsheet or online calculator for the mileage stuff.
<p>Other comments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is too much for the uninitiated – it needs to be simplified. • There should be a focus on money saving. • The handbook is boring and intimidating. • It opened up conversations that would not have been had otherwise.

EcoGroups that did not start

- After a very enthusiastic beginning, one leader failed to set up the second meeting.

- A WI group did not make it to the second meeting due to a change in personal circumstances of the leader.
- The student group did not continue after the first meeting because they could not see the relevance to their circumstances. They felt the handbook was aimed at families and people who own houses.

EcoGroups waiting to start

Eight leaders are ready to start an EcoGroup but are waiting for the results of the pilot and the next revision of the handbook before starting.

Unexpected outcomes

Women's Institute

We were invited to speak at the Hampshire Federation of Women's Institute (WI) science lunch in October 2013 on what can be done to combat climate change. The talk focused on Cool Communities and invited interested members to form an EcoGroup. Through this contact, two groups were formed.

They reported that this is not a good programme for them. The members of the groups could not find much that they could do as they tend to be more mature single ladies who have grown up in the post war years and believe they already practice energy saving living.

We are engaging with the WI in other ways, as it is keen to work with us.

Diocese Environmental Group

The Winchester Diocese Environmental Group advises the Bishop of Winchester on environmental matters, and is concerned with reducing the environmental impact of church members and church buildings across the Diocese. They are keen to create a programme that has God at its heart and can be used in a church "house group" setting. They formed an EcoGroup and encouraged a house group in Rownhams to try the programme as well.

In addition the vicar of St Barnabas (a large parish in Winchester) is willing to incorporate Cool Communities into their Art of Neighbouring initiative in autumn 2014.

Sparsholt College

The principal of Sparsholt College, a large agricultural college near Winchester, is keen to introduce the concept of EcoGroups to his students. They range in age from 16 to 19 and many mature students.

Two possible formats have been suggested:

1. A tutorial programme for students who live at home. This could be carried out over six weeks. Students will be encouraged to go home and work out the carbon footprint of their homes and then influence their families to reduce the value. This could be offered as an intra- or inter-tutorial competition
2. A "save energy" competition between the boarding houses at the college.

Analysis and discussion

Publicity

We publicised the programme through local press, our website, e-newsletter and social media and through Climate Cafe. All the leaders were recruited by direct face to face contact (one through the Climate Café) or through an organisation that we had approached.

Climate café

We adapted this recruitment event from the Global Warming Café described in David Gershon's book *Social Change 2.0*. The elements were the same but condensed to 90 minutes. It generated a good deal of discussion and a lot of interest in the programme.

It would be worth running more of these events to stimulate the beginning of EcoGroups in an area.

Training leaders

Following the experience of running a pre-pilot EcoGroup, we realised that group leaders need insight into how to run a group and the pitfalls to avoid. In addition, it would be useful to give potential leaders the chance to find out more about the programme and decide if they wanted to take part. None of the leaders had been to an EcoGroup meeting before, so some explanation of how it works was useful.

We therefore held leader meetings in a coffee shop or at home. They lasted for about an hour, gave an opportunity to understand the structure of the meetings, the handbook and the reporting process and allowed the leaders to ask questions.

Leader training definitely needs further development. Many of the leaders they did not use the meeting agendas and followed a very relaxed approach to the material. As a consequence they did not reach the material in the section 3 and very likely they did not cover all of the material in the previous sections. This might also explain why there was confusion about reporting actual losses and pledged losses.

We would welcome David Gershon's input on how he trains his leaders to follow the material and prepare them for leading an EcoGroup.

Recruitment

None of the leaders used the script recommended in the handbook to recruit participants, although some used elements from it. Through conversations with David Gershon, we are convinced that this is the key to successful recruitment. The wording of the script needs to be tested to ensure it is effective in this country.

The ten EcoGroups that completed at least two meetings were recruited from very different groups of people. The most successful at carbon reduction were not friendship groups but were recruited from a common organisation or a geographic locality.

There did not seem to be one means of recruitment that was more successful than another. Emailing or dropping a note through a door and following up with a visit or phone call was the approach preferred by most leaders.

Introductory meetings

We had been reluctant to run or recommend introductory meetings because we feared that five meetings would be too much for participants and leaders. The importance of the introductory meeting was not clear until later in the pilot. This meeting allows people to “try before they buy”, to hear about the programme without committing themselves. The two groups that had an introductory meeting were the groups that already met, and there was no drop out from those groups.

Running an introductory meeting may have prevented:

1. The dropout from some groups
2. The failure to progress to the second meeting.

EcoGroups – managing and monitoring

The evaluation of the EcoGroups and discussion with the leaders shows that leaders would have benefited from more regular contact with the project manager to help them keep their groups on track and to answer worries or questions .

According to the handbook, one of the key factors of success for an EcoGroup participant is contact from their leader between the meetings. It was clear from discussion with the leaders that this did not happen regularly. This would explain the variation in the reductions made by the EcoGroups.

In the future, the project manager needs to contact the Group leaders regularly (once a week or every two weeks) and remind them to contact their own members between meetings. This system needs to be carefully planned not to be an unwieldy overhead on the programme.

Handbook

There have been many positive comments about the information in the handbook. People liked the clear layout and found it easy to understand.

The main criticisms were the size of the book, the quantity of words to read, and the structure and layout.

Size

There were a number of comments about the paper used to produce the handbook and many people suggested that the information could be made available online. The size of the book also put people off as it looks like a training manual from college or work.

Words

“Too wordy” was a criticism that came up quite often. It has been suggested that we reduce the amount and level of the descriptions and avoid jargon so that it is more appealing to the average person on the street.

The introduction particularly needs reduced wording and restructuring; leaders found it difficult to summarise during the first meeting so ignored it.

Structure and layout

This drew the most criticism as participants and leaders alike said that the information is difficult to find and at times not logical.

One suggestion was to tie up the sections with the meeting numbers, i.e. section one relates to meeting one, section two relates to meeting two etc. This is worth considering if the book is going to be used as a meeting guide. It might also be a good idea to place the meeting agendas in the relevant sections.

It was very clear that people want to see more colour and interest in the handbook – perhaps adopting a more magazine style with short chunks of information and pictures.

Other materials

A leaders' pack with examples and guidance is needed. The leaders identified some materials that would have helped them:

- Online information and tools they could refer people to work out their carbon savings.
- A case study or example carbon reduction grid to get people started.
- A film was suggested to add a different dimension to the meetings.
- Answers to frequently asked questions.
- Invitation cards to introductory meetings - to be left with people who have been invited face to face.

Conclusions and recommendations

The Cool Communities EcoGroup structure has been reasonably successful for 10 groups in the pilot programme, although the dropout rate was higher than hoped and the average carbon reduction lower. The groups achieved a combined actual loss of 45 tonnes and a pledged loss of 39 tonnes. This gives an average loss of 1.5 tonne per household which completed at least two meetings.

Further development and testing of materials is needed to refine the Cool Communities approach in the District.

1. Recruitment of leaders for EcoGroups should be carried out by word of mouth or direct approach. The Climate Café was useful for recruiting interest and leaders, and should be tested further.
2. Leaders need to have training before they run an EcoGroup to ensure successful outcomes from the group. This needs to be further developed from the one-hour informal training being offered currently.
3. The recruitment script needs to be tested to perfect the wording for UK participants, then its use strictly controlled.
4. Neighbours and/or members who come from the same organisation make a more effective EcoGroup. Introductory meetings have not been used effectively in the pilot. They may well prove to be an essential part of the programme to minimise participant drop out which is bad for group morale.
5. EcoGroup leaders need to be supported and coached during the process to encourage them to keep in touch with their own members between meetings; to answer queries and to follow the meeting agendas. This was not done very effectively in the pilot.
6. The handbook needs to be improved to reduce the number of words and jargon, simplify the structure and make it more visually appealing.
7. A number of other materials should be developed to help leaders run EcoGroups more effectively.

Appendix 1: background of Cool Communities



Room 163 Main Building
University of Winchester
Sparkford Road
Winchester SO22 4NR
01962 827083
winacc@winacc.org.uk

Charity no. 1126993

Winchester City Council Commission

Proposal from Winchester Action on Climate Change

Cool Communities behaviour change programme pilot

Summary: Winchester City Council is invited to commission a pilot of a programme to support climate change behaviour change across Winchester District.

1) Background Information

1.1 Introduction

This proposal is in the context of Winchester City Council's new approach to the commissioning of services, projects and programmes.

1.2 The Policy Context

The Winchester District Community Strategy (2010 to 2020) sets out three overarching outcome areas in which the Council and its partner agencies are committed to delivering real change for local people. These are: Active Communities, Economic Prosperity and a High Quality Environment.

For the period 2010 to 2013 there are five specific priorities:

- helping people living in Winnall to have a good quality of life
- helping people living in Stanmore have a good quality of life
- supporting older people
- increasing access to services
- reducing the District's carbon footprint

This proposal is designed to support the delivery of reducing the District's carbon footprint and it is hoped that it will support people in Winnall and/or Stanmore to improve the quality of their life.

The section on the High Quality Environment Change Plan in the 2012/13 'Change Plan', designed to identify and track progress of the delivery of specific actions and programmes in support of these outcomes, refers to the need to "increase behavioural change amongst partners, businesses and householders" (page 57). The WDSP Climate Change Programme includes a workstream on community engagement and behaviour change, and the Board has long planned to commission work on behaviour change/community engagement.

1.3 The Context

Over a quarter of the UK's CO₂ emissions come from our homes, which are generally poorly insulated and inefficient in their use of energy. Other key elements of the carbon footprint of UK citizens – notably transport – account for well over a further quarter of the UK's overall carbon emissions. So helping people take practical steps to reduce these and the other emissions that together comprise an individual's carbon footprint is clearly one of the key areas where action is needed if we are to achieve the carbon reductions mandated by the Climate Change Act 2008 and required to avoid dangerous climate change.

Since 2008, Winchester Action on Climate Change has been active in supporting and encouraging behaviour change among the population of the District. We have:

- Run three training courses to create "low carbon champions"
- Supported the development and activities of some twelve local climate change groups across the District from Alresford to Whiteley
- Provided a regular newsletter 25 times a year to almost 1500 subscribers
- Run 10-15 events a year attracting audiences of up to 140 on a wide range of topics from how to improve home insulation to our vision of a sustainable Winchester
- Sustained active volunteer groups on such topics as climate science, transport and the built environment.

WinACC priority for behaviour change work now is to pilot a programme which we believe will reach people who are not already engaged, and motivate them to cut their carbon footprint. The launch of the Green Deal makes this a particularly good time for such a programme, because Green Deal publicity will create awareness that will encourage participation in the programme, and households which participate in the programme can use Green Deal resources to help them implement changes.

2) The proposal

1.1 Outcome

Overall, WinACC seeks to achieve the following outcome: *Someone from at least 10% of Winchester District households has undertaken a programme which creates a change in their behaviour leading to lower emissions of greenhouse gases.*

This current proposal is to pilot and evaluate the methodology of a programme to achieve this outcome. With evidence that the programme succeeds, we expect to be able to raise funding to extend it more widely within the District and wider.

1.2 The programme

Having undertaken an evaluation and assessment of existing training, programmes and materials and of various approaches to behaviour change, WinACC has concluded that David Gershon of the Empowerment Institute has developed the most successful approach to engaging people and leading to real change.

He has a systematic, well-honed recruitment system and a handbook “Low Carbon Diet” which, according to data from the US where it was developed, leads to high levels of participation and measureable reductions in household greenhouse gas emissions.

The programme consists of two key building blocks:-

- Group meetings – a series of 4 meetings of 6 to 8 people using a handbook to reduce their household carbon footprints by 25% within a short time of completing the programme. The programme covers all the key components of an individual’s/household’s carbon footprint: energy in the home; travel and transport; food and water; and consumption and waste.
- Scaling up: to involve partner organisations across the relevant area with the capacity to deliver the programme at the scale necessary to reach 25% of the

population of the city or region in question – i.e. to deliver the series of meetings hundreds or thousands of times.

WinACC has succeeded in securing agreement with David Gershon to produce the first UK version of this handbook, and to pilot it here in Winchester District. WinACC volunteers have “translated” the handbook into English, and updated the technological and scientific information about the carbon impact of various actions eg to include LED light bulbs.

WinACC now seeks funding to produce illustrations appropriate to the UK, print a small run of 100 copies of the handbook, and project-manage a pilot involving 100 households in Winchester District between now and the end of 2013; this approximately 15 groups.

1.3 The approach

The Gershon approach is based on research into what makes people most likely to change their behaviour - which is if they:

- are invited to take part by people they respect, look up to, and/or by a trusted insider
- feel part of a group of people with a common purpose
- work out for themselves what they want to do
- commit themselves to taking the specific action
- know that they will be asked if they have fulfilled their commitment

The programme does not dwell on the science of climate change. Instead, it assumes the science is agreed, and focuses on practical action. We are a major part of the problem, so we can also be a major part of the solution. By making specific, targeted changes, people can significantly reduce their CO₂ emissions.

The programme is fun. It brings participants closer to their neighbours and friends, and associates the progress each participant makes with enjoying the fruits of a shared endeavour. The Cool Communities proposal addresses the challenge of getting people on the right track by bringing them together with others in an enjoyable, sociable and non-confrontational way to agree the steps they want to take. This process itself then familiarises them with the practicalities of carbon reduction, and its whys and wherefores.

The programme helps build people’s sense of solidarity. As noted by John Thøgersen, Professor in Economic Psychology at the Aarhus School of Business and Social Sciences: quoted in an article by Anna Simpson called “Winning the Persuasion Game dated 10 May 2011: “What matters is what other people do.

We're social animals, and we learn the right way to act by observing others ... some of the most effective behaviour change techniques are those that involve people doing things together.”

1.4 The handbook

The handbook addresses each of the major components of an individual's carbon footprint and offers a selection of actions that will reduce a carbon footprint. Participants review and select the actions that they prefer and that will deliver their reduction target. The group then supports each other to achieve them.

By providing an opportunity to consider the issues, the programme enables participants to get to grips with what is needed to reduce carbon emissions. The interaction in a group setting provides the motivation for participants to do the things that will help reduce their carbon footprints that otherwise tend never rise to the top of “to do” lists. Participants get the chance to talk things through, exchange updates on how it's going, and ask for help if they are finding it tough.

The handbook focuses on the positive not the negative, showing how significant carbon reductions can be made without huge financial cost although they need the commitment of time and effort (meetings of the group are particularly helpful here in providing support and deadlines for action).

The handbook promotes pro-environmental values and norms - emphasising environmental reasons for action and recognising that people want to create a better future for their children but are often not clear where to begin, which are the important actions to take, or how much difference they will make.

1.5 Recruitment

To reach new people, recruitment is by personal invitation by peers. For example, someone approaches their neighbours by knocking on their doors and saying:

“Hi, I am your neighbour from up the street. I would like to invite you to my home to hear about a new programme sponsored by (city's name). Its purpose is to help us better conserve our environment's natural resources for the sake of our children, to get to know each other better as neighbours, and make our neighbourhood a healthier and safer place to live. The meeting is at (location, date, time). Can you make it?”

This approach builds on the fact that most people are pleased to have an opportunity to do get to know others with whom they have a loose connection. In the US programme on which this is modelled, the approach recruits between 25% and 45% of the households in a neighbourhood who are approached. WinACC has piloted this

recruitment method in its Greener Travel project. In Winchester District, the approach recruits about 20% of those invited. It also works better when people are invited by those who they perceive as “social leaders” whose homes they have visited before.

People who do not see themselves first and foremost as environmentalists are still interested in getting involved.

Because this approach focuses on just one meeting to hear more, people have a chance to check who would be in the group, and to get a feel for what the programme is about before agreeing to take part.

WinACC plans to pilot the model in neighbourhoods with contrasting characteristics: city and rural, different socio-economic profiles, different levels of previous climate change activity. It depends on finding someone within a community who will invite people to the meetings; WinACC has contacts in both Winnall and Stanmore and hopes to identify someone who is willing to be the host in one or both neighbourhood.

We will also use the approach in existing communities of relevant interest such as churches, schools and societies – all places where people also have an on-going relationship with each other.

1.6 Replication

Group leaders do not need to have any special training or skills. The handbook includes scripts and instructions for team leaders, so that they have everything they need to run the meetings successfully. This is the key characteristic that enables the programme to be scaled up to reach the number of people needed to achieve significant carbon reductions. The handbook devotes much of the final meeting to taking participants through the steps they can take to spread the programme out to others in the community, the workplace, local schools, etc.

1.7 Project management

WinACC will supplement this commission from other resources so that the project management can be carried out by someone who is based in the WinACC office and who is the main contact with local communities. Although this takes longer to get started, this approach should deliver considerable added value throughout 2013.

The project manager will be accountable to WinACC’s Director and through her to the trustees. WinACC’s Learning Steering Group, chaired by WinACC Vice-chair Angela Sealy, will act as the Project Board.

1.8 Timetable

Dec: recruitment advertising; initial publicity for hosts; cartoons commissioned

Jan: project manager appointed; 30 handbooks printed; marketing continues, discussions start with first hosts.

Feb: recruitment to first groups; marketing continues, discussions continue with prospective hosts.

March: first 2 groups under way, facilitated by project manager.

April: another 2 groups under way, facilitated by project manager.

May: handbook amended in light of experience and 70 printed; new hosts recruit participants for next groups.

June/July: 5 groups under way, facilitated by previous participants.

August: mid-way report; **Sept/Oct:** 5 groups under way, facilitated by previous participants.

Nov/Dec: 1-5 more groups as needed to meet target 100 households; evaluation report.

1.9 Monitoring and evaluation

WinACC will report to WCC against the deliverables outlined in 1.8 as required – we suggest through the 8-weekly meetings of the Climate Change Programme Board.

The timescale does not permit long-term evaluation of the impact of the pilot on the carbon footprint of participants. So the evaluation will include the following:

1. Quantitative data on the numbers approach, numbers attending first meeting, numbers completing the programme, numbers offering to host the programme with another group
2. Quantitative data on the carbon-setting actions that each participant committed themselves to, and an estimate of the impact on the carbon footprint of their household
3. Qualitative feedback from participants showing how they perceived the programme and its impact on their attitudes and behaviour.
4. An assessment of whether the programme could be run without printing handbooks – for example, by use of Kindle.

1.10 Cost

With a commission for £8000, WinACC will publish the handbook and manage a pilot aimed at reaching 100 households.

Chris Holloway
Winchester Action on Climate Change
23 November 2012

Appendix 2: forms used for data collection

Cool Communities evaluation

Thank you for taking part in the Cool Communities Winchester pilot. Please help us learn from this pilot by giving us your views.

Invitation to the team	
How do you know the leader of the Eco-team?	Friend Neighbour Work colleague Local society..... Other.....
How were you invited to join?	Face to face Telephone Email Other.....
How many meetings did you attend?	1 2 3 4
What do you think is the best way to get people to join an Eco-team?	
Eco-team meetings	
What did you like about the meetings?	
What did you not like about the meetings?	
What Improvement should we make to the meetings?	
Cool Communities Handbook	
What did you like about the layout of the handbook?	
What could we improve in the layout of the handbook?	
What did you like about the content of the handbook?	
What could we improve in the content in the handbook? <i>(Were there perhaps topics that you would have liked more information on?)</i>	

Your carbon footprint	
How easy was it to use REAP-Petite (the website used to calculate your carbon footprint)?	Hard 1.....2.....3.....4.....5 Easy
Was your carbon footprint what you expected?	Yes / No Comment
Have you reduced your carbon footprint since you joined the Eco-team?	Yes / No Comment
How much carbon have you saved over the programme)	How much have you pledged to do in the future?
Are you likely to cut your footprint more in the future?	Not likely 1.....2.....3.....4.....5 Likely
Which areas of your daily life have you found it easiest to make changes to?	
Which areas of your daily life have you found it most difficult to make changes to?	
Are there other benefits you have found by being part of Cool Communities?	
How likely are you to tell other people about Cool Communities?	Not likely 1.....2.....3.....4.....5 Likely

Please tell us anything else that could help us improve Cool Communities

Thank you for your feedback.

Name	Email address
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We send out regular e-newsletters with information about events and activities in the areas. If you would like to receive this newsletter please tick the box.

We promise not to misuse your details. Please see our privacy policy on the website winacc.org.uk

Cool Communities team leader feedback

About you	
Name	
Date of the first meeting	
Number of participants	
Total Carbon reduced (and pledged)	
Why did you decide to lead an EcoGroup?	
<i>Had you been part of an EcoGroup before you ran your own group? Yes / <u>No</u> (underline your choice)</i>	
Recruitment	
How did you recruit people to your group?	
Was this the best way to recruit people or do you think you would do it differently now?	
Running the group	
What was good about the team?	
What challenges did you encounter?	
Did anything unexpected happen?	

What would you have done differently?	
Handbook and materials	
How did you find the layout of the handbook (as a leader)?	
Are there improvements you could suggest that might have helped you as a leader?	
Did you have any issues with the Carbon calculator?	
What other materials could have helped you?	
Other comments	
The future	
What advice would you give other new EcoGroup leaders?	
Would you be interested in running another EcoGroup?	