

Evaluation of the Big Energy Shift

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Glossary

CLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
COI	Central Office of Information
DECC	Department for Energy and Climate Change
DETI	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Northern Ireland)
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
EEWG	Energy Engagement Working Group
EST	Energy Saving Trust

Executive summary

Engagement activities and context

Department for Energy and Climate Change, Northern Ireland Executive, Welsh Assembly Government and Sciencewise-ERC commissioned a public dialogue to find out how the government could encourage householders and communities to take up low carbon measures. The project was delivered by Ipsos MORI. Events were run between February and April 2009, with the final report completed at the end of June 2009.

Events were run with owner occupiers in nine areas: an urban, rural and off-grid area in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In each area there were two day-long meetings (Events 1 and 3) and in between these events participants took part in a range of different activities including interviewing their peers, visiting an exemplar building, completing a diary, or being interviewed by the project team in a filmed interview at their own home (Event 2). The first meeting in each area was attended by technical experts and the second meeting by experts on implementation of measures. After all the local events were complete, an event was held in London with a small number of householders from each area as well as policy makers and external stakeholders.

Evaluation aims and method

The project was evaluated to find out to what extent it had met DECC's objectives and the Sciencewise-ERC principles of good practice in public dialogue. The evaluation used a mixture of desk research, observation, questionnaires, and interviews. We heard from householders, policy makers, external stakeholders, the DECC project manager, and delivery team. In the report where we refer to 'stakeholders' this includes both policy makers and external stakeholders.

Findings: dialogue process

How clear and appropriate was the scope and purpose of the dialogue process?

- On the whole the dialogue addressed the interests of stakeholders. However, it was suggested that it would have been valuable to have looked in more detail at the incentives needed to win over householders.
- The scope was very clearly communicated; the purpose and the way results would be used a little less so.

How well was information provided?

- Information was generally provided in a way that was accessible and engaging. This was particularly the case for the energy technologies discussed in event 1 and media narratives in event 4.
- On some tasks, more time would have been helpful, given the amount of new information provided.

- Of the event 2 activities, site visits were seen as particularly enjoyable and informative.
- Householders visiting the website mainly did so out of curiosity about other participants, rather than to find answers to specific questions.

How well were discussions among participants facilitated?

- There was evidence of constructive, open, and enjoyable debate between householders at event 1 and event 3. However, not all facilitators used techniques effectively to draw in quieter participants, meaning that the full range of views was not always heard.
- Event 3 provided a very good opportunity for dialogue between stakeholders and householders; event 4 less so.
- Record keeping from discussions was sometimes problematic. Facilitators took notes as well as moderating discussions and differed in how and what they recorded. Particularly when groups were split into pairs or groups of three or four (e.g. for a fair proportion of event 3), some valuable discussion was not fully captured.

How well organised and supportive was the dialogue process?

- The facilitators created a relaxed and friendly atmosphere and developed a very good rapport with householders.
- The events were well structured, with plenty of breaks and a variety of tasks.
- There was a high level of engagement and almost all participants said they enjoyed taking part.

Finding: dialogue impacts

Did it influence knowledge about and attitudes towards the issues?

- Participants learnt a great deal and still remembered much of this when they were interviewed some months later. Attitudes also shifted. For instance many more held positive views about wind power by the end of the events.
- Stakeholders mentioned a number of findings that they had found interesting, surprising or useful. However, concerns were expressed about the credibility of the research due to the sample design. Some stakeholders questioned whether householders taking part in dialogues were typical and whether qualitative research should form the basis for decision making because of the relatively small sample (compared to a large scale survey). Both these questions have been raised in relation to other public dialogues. There were also doubts about whether findings from informed householders could be applied to those who had not been through a similar process.

Did it influence knowledge about and attitudes towards the use of public dialogue in informing policy and decision making?

- While some participants inevitably questioned whether the findings would be taken on board, there were aspects of the process that boosted trust, particularly ministers present at events.

- The positive response by the public was said to engender a more positive view of public dialogue at DECC, overcoming wariness from previous problematic dialogues.

Did it encourage broader participation in relation to public dialogue?

- On the whole, householders were keen to take part in future dialogues as a result of their positive experiences on the Big Energy Shift.
- Policy makers, external stakeholders, and the DECC project manager reported that the dialogue had resulted in stronger relationships amongst stakeholders.

Were outputs clearly communicated?

- The final report was accessible and policy-focused. There was very wide and effective communication of project findings to a large number of stakeholders, both within and outside DECC.
- The upbeat tone of the outputs was seen as important, contributing to a sense of efficacy at DECC.

Did it inform policy and decision making in a transparent way?

- There was exceptional communication with participants after the events ended, including sending out a letter to tell them how the findings from the project had fed into the development of the Low Carbon Communities Challenge.
- Within DECC the impacts on policy development were impressive. In particular, the project provided the basis for development for the Low Carbon Communities Challenge.
- Beyond DECC, the project had had little impact on decision making yet although stakeholders expected it to impact on industry, the third sector, and other government departments.

Findings: project objectives

Did it explore reactions to technologies, delivery agents, financing arrangements and information?

- The dialogue looked at a very wide range of technologies, using site visits as well as more standard approaches to providing information about them.
- It looked in detail at responses to a range of delivery agents and financing arrangements.
- While responses to information were not explored in detail, a number of useful findings emerged, particularly related to information needed to address misconceptions, low levels of awareness and benefits associated with technologies.

Did it explore barriers and levers to uptake and how government should overcome them?

- Barriers and levers to uptake were thoroughly explored. Facilitators prompted to hear about those which were less front of mind, such as the benefits of community schemes.

Did it explore the roles of individual action, collective action, and government intervention ?

- Through carefully structured information and skilful facilitation, Ipsos MORI enabled householders to go beyond their initial responses and have a sophisticated discussion about the roles of individuals, communities, and government.
- We question whether it is reasonable to state that majority of participants in every forum called for legislation because not all were asked to give their view on this issue.

Did it explore how views related to personal characteristics?

- The dialogue explored how responses related to a range of personal characteristics. These included sociodemographic factors such as age and income as well as attitudes such as trust in government and technology.
- Differences in how householders responded to implementation options were particularly thoroughly explored and reported.

Conclusions and lessons for good practice

Overall the dialogue worked well. The following points were particularly outstanding.

- Householders enjoyed taking part, despite the level of commitment needed to take part in three events. This was largely due to excellent rapport with the Ipsos MORI staff and well structured events.
- The dialogue had positive impacts on householders' attitudes such as their willingness to accept a wind turbine in their neighbourhood and the responsibility attributed to individuals and communities. They attributed such changes to site visits as well as discussions.
- The policy-focused report fed directly into a number of policy initiatives, including the Low Carbon Communities Challenge.
- The dialogue led to the creation of a strong network of stakeholders. This came about through DECC's project manager openly and pro-actively seeking input alongside the more traditional working group.
- Householders' trust that the dialogue would make a difference was boosted through the presence of government ministers at events and exceptional communication after events.

However, there were two main difficulties.

- During the householder events some discussions were more inclusive than others and discussions were not always recorded systematically.
- The final event, designed as a dialogue between householders and stakeholders, did not work as intended although it served other purposes. Informal dialogue with a small number of stakeholders at the earlier householder events was more effective.

There are five main lessons for future public dialogue projects.

- To ensure that the full range of views is heard and recorded, it is important to use techniques for making discussions inclusive and for recording them systematically.

- Householder engagement can be maintained throughout longer than standard public dialogue projects, provided they are well structured and facilitated.
- An effective model for direct dialogue between stakeholders and householders seems to involve informal discussions with a small number of stakeholders at householder events (as in event 3), rather than more formal meetings with larger numbers of stakeholders (as in event 4).
- Dialogue projects can act as an excellent opportunity for building stakeholder networks, provided that a variety of approaches to engagement are used, both formal and informal.
- Reports setting out a clear agenda for action help ensure that dialogue findings are translated into policy.

1 Introduction

Department for Energy and Climate Change, Northern Ireland Executive, Welsh Assembly Government, and Sciencewise-ERC commissioned a public dialogue to find out how the government could encourage householders and communities to take up low carbon measures. The project was delivered by Ipsos MORI in the first half of 2009.

As required of Sciencewise-ERC projects, an evaluation of the public dialogue was commissioned. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess to what extent the project objectives and the good practice principles for public dialogue were met, with a view to identifying lessons for future public dialogue projects.

Chapter 2 briefly summarises the activities and context of the public dialogue. Chapter 3 describes the aims of the evaluation and how it was carried out. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 report the evaluation findings: how the dialogue process worked (chapter 4), what impacts it had (chapter 5), and to what extent it addressed the project objectives (chapter 6). Chapter 7 presents the main conclusions and suggests lessons for good practice in public dialogue.

2 Activities and context of the public dialogue

2.1 Format and content of the dialogue

The public dialogue had four stages. Most householders took part in the first three events i.e. the process was longer than usual for a public dialogue. These are summarised in Figure 2.1¹.

Figure 2.1 Ipsos MORI's description of the stages in the public dialogue

Event 1 Full day event in the local area. Discussion about new low carbon and renewable technologies and energy efficiency ideas. Participants discussed which technologies or measures will work best for their homes and neighbourhoods.

Event 2 A 'disaggregated' event where different participants carried out different tasks. Some participants showed Ipsos MORI how they use energy in their homes and these interviews were filmed. Some participants visited low carbon exemplars, some interviewed neighbours, and some completed an energy diary reflecting on their homes and behaviour.

Event 3 Full day event in the local area. Discussion of the different options for supporting the Big Energy Shift. Participants discussed their opinions on the best course of action at the individual, community, regional and national level, the possible role of the government and the underlying principles and values of the approach that the government needs to adopt.

Event 4 Three participants from each of the nine areas attended a final event in London to discuss their recommendations with stakeholders and policy makers.

Event 2

Event 2 took a very different form from the other events. Participants were given a choice of completing four different activities.

- Diary
- Peer interview
- In-home interview
- Site visit

The first three activities were completed by participants in their own time between events 1 and 3. For the site visit, Ipsos MORI organised and accompanied participants on visits to local exemplars. These ranged from show homes incorporating numerous innovative technologies to a swimming pool heated using a biomass boiler.

¹ Ipsos MORI (June 2009) *The Big Energy Shift: Report from Citizens' Forums*.

Website

A website² was set up at the start of the first event 1 and added to throughout the project. Content included the following.

- Information about the aims and method of the dialogue, including some of the material used at event 1.
- Videos and messages from DECC ministers involved with the dialogue
- Questions generated by householders at the events which stakeholders answered on the website.
- Videos from in-home interviews and site visits.
- The project reports.

2.2 Input from stakeholders³

Development of material

The content and format of events were shaped with input from the Energy Engagement Working Group (EEWG), organised by COI and composed of policy makers and external stakeholders (see Table 2.1). They were asked for input on material for the dialogue with householders as well as the other projects that were taking place in parallel (see 2.6). Additional input was sought from EEWG members and other stakeholders by the DECC project manager.

Table 2.1 Members of EEWG

Policy makers	Other stakeholders
DETI ⁴ Welsh Assembly DECC x 3 Defra x 2 CLG x 2 DfT	Ashden Awards Business in the Community EEF ⁵ Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes Energy Retail Association Energy Saving Trust Environmental Industries Commission Global Action Plan Green Building Council Home Builders Federation Local Government Association National Energy Action Warm Zones SEEDA Renewable Energy Association Sustainable Development Commission
Total 10	Total 16

² www.bigenergyshift.org.uk

³ In the report where we refer to 'stakeholders' this includes both policy makers and external stakeholders.

⁴ Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment (Northern Ireland).

⁵ Formerly the Engineering Employers' Federation.

Event 1

Two technical experts (from University of Southampton, Action Renewables, and Centre for Alternative Technology) attended event 1 in each area to answer any questions that participants might have about the energy technologies under discussion. At a few of the events, a minister attended to introduce the day. For instance, Joan Ruddock introduced the Harrow event.

Event 3

Stakeholders with knowledge about implementation of low carbon measures attended event 3 in each area. One or more government officials attended each event. Energy Saving Trust and National Energy Action were asked to provide experts for the events. Other members of EEWG were invited to attend if they wished.

Table 2.2 Experts attending event 3 in all areas

Organisation	Number of events attended
DECC	5
DETI	3
Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes	1
EST	8
Green Building Council	1
NEA	5
Welsh Assembly	1

Table 2.3 Number of experts attending event 3 in each area

Area	Number of experts
Cockfield	3
Exeter	6
Harrow	4
Cardiff	3
Llandaniel	1
Llanidloes	3
Cookstown	2
Irvinestown	2
Lisburn	4
Total	26*

*Two experts each attended two events. All other experts each attended one event.

Event 4

As well as being attended by householders, policy makers and external stakeholders, the event was attended by two ministers (Joan Ruddock and Ed Milliband).

2.3 Participants

Areas

Events were run in nine areas, three in England, three in Wales, and three in Northern Ireland. In each country the areas were selected to include one urban, one rural, and one off-grid area.

Householders

Householders were recruited, from within a few streets of each other, to include the following.

- Men and women
- A range of ages
- A mix of ethnic backgrounds
- A mix of household types
- Living in a mix of housing types

All were owner occupiers.

For event 4, three householders from each area were selected to attend.

Event 1 and 3 were held on Saturdays. Event 2 site visits and event 4 were held on weekdays. Participants were given a cash incentive for attending (£70 at the end of event 1, £230 at the end of event 3 which included £90 for event 2 i.e. £300 in total). This is similar to other events of a similar length⁶. Having most of the incentive given at event 3 partly explains the excellent attendance at the later event. A cash incentive of £100 was given at the end of event 4.

Table 2.4 Number of householders taking part in events in each area

Area	Number of participants	
	Event 1	Event 3
Cockfield	30	30
Exeter	28	27
Harrow	29	29
Cardiff	28	26
Llandaniel	28	28
Llanidloes	25	23
Cookstown	30	30
Irvinestown	27	27
Lisburn	25	25
Total	250	245

26 householders attended event 4.

⁶ Such as the Sciencewise-funded dialogue on industrial biotechnology.

2.4 Timing

The project began in January 2009. Events 1 to 3 were run in February and March, and event 4 in April. The final report was produced at the end of June 2009 and circulated to stakeholders and householders in July 2009.

2.5 Costs

The amount of time devoted to the project by staff involved in running and advising on the project as well as stakeholders is estimated below. This is mainly based on feedback from a small number of interviewees.

- DECC project manager – 70% of her time from October 2008 until April 2009
- Sciencewise-ERC dialogue engagement specialist – 11 days total
- Devolved administrations – 4 weeks total (split between several staff)
- Stakeholders on EEWG – 1.5 to 4 days each (including time to attend events) x 23 stakeholders (excluding DECC project manager, DETI, and Welsh Assembly)
- Stakeholders only attending event 3 – 1 day each x 28 stakeholders
- Stakeholders only attending event 4 – 1 day each x 34 stakeholders (15 external stakeholders and 19 officials)

Costs for Ipsos MORI's work are not included as they are commercially sensitive. The evaluation cost £15k plus VAT.

2.6 Policy context

The UK government is committed to major changes in the production and use of energy over the coming decades. This commitment has led to a number of policy and institutional changes, including the creation of a Department of Energy and Climate Change in 2008. In the past few years, reports by Stern (2007⁷) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have made a strong case for a substantial response to the threat of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In response, challenging policy targets have been set at UK and EU levels aiming for an 80% reduction by 2050 in comparison to 1990 levels (UK Committee on Climate Change, 2008⁸; EU Council of Ministers, 2008⁹). Meeting the targets will involve both an increase in the deployment of renewable energy sources, and an increase in energy conservation, whilst paying attention to other dimensions of energy policy such as maintaining energy security and tackling fuel poverty.

The public deliberative dialogue formed one part of a wider process of engagement undertaken by the UK Government as part of their preparations

⁷ Stern, N (2007) *Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change*. HM Treasury/ Cabinet Office, HMSO.

⁸ Committee on Climate Change (2008) *Building a low-carbon economy - The UK's contribution to tackling climate change: The First Report of the Committee on Climate Change*. CCC: HMSO.

⁹ EU Council Of Ministers (2008) *20 20 by 2020: Europe's climate change opportunity*, EU COM (2008) 30.

for publishing the Renewable Energy Strategy encompassing both electricity and heat, and energy saving, in July 2009. Alongside the public dialogue, engagement was undertaken by DECC with businesses via Business in the Community and the Small Business Consortium, and with the public sector (such as schools, hospitals, prisons, local and central government) via the Sustainable Development Commission. EEWG was involved in this engagement as well as the Big Energy Shift.

2.7 Media context

During the time period of the public dialogue, there was extensive media reporting of remarks attributed to two prominent UK politicians relevant to energy and climate change.

Firstly, in February 2009, the Environment Minister for Northern Ireland, Sammy Wilson banned the showing of TV advertisements in Northern Ireland that had been created by DECC, and were designed to warn householders of the effects of climate change. This created a media furore (e.g. Belfast Telegraph, 2009) in which the minister was condemned for his sceptical remarks about climate change, whilst he reacted angrily towards perceived interference by DECC in Northern Ireland affairs. The minister's remarks, and subsequent reporting, could have influenced public beliefs about climate change in Northern Ireland¹⁰.

In March 2009, the Secretary of State for Climate Change was reported as saying that public opposition to wind farms should become 'socially unacceptable', for example as unacceptable as driving without a seat belt (e.g. The Guardian, 2009¹¹). These remarks were widely reported in national and local newspapers and sometimes strongly criticised by wind farm campaigners and those with concerns regarding civil liberties, who complained that the right to oppose was an essential feature of a democratic political system and that erosion of such rights was a dangerous precedent. This reporting could have influenced public participants' views about the expectations of government, and about the feasibility of community based renewable energy schemes.

¹⁰ The Belfast Telegraph, *Environment Minister Sammy Wilson bans adverts warning of the effects of climate change*, February 9th 2009, Available at the following website: <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/local-national/environment--minister-sammy-wilson-bans-adverts-warning-of-the-effects-of-climate-change-14180104.html>

¹¹ The Guardian (2009) *Opposing wind farms should be socially taboo, says Ed Miliband*, 24th March. Available at the following website: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/mar/24/wind-farms-opposition-ed-miliband>

3 The evaluation

3.1 Aims

The evaluation aimed to address the following three broad questions.

- To what extent were Sciencewise’s principles¹² relating to the **processes** of public dialogue met?
- To what extent were Sciencewise’s principles¹³ relating to the **impacts** of public dialogue met?
- To what extent were DECC’s **objectives** for the dialogue met?

The detailed questions relating to these three broad questions are summarised in Table 3.1. Based on findings relating to these questions, the evaluation also considered lessons for good practice in public dialogue.

Table 3.1 Questions addressed by the evaluation

Broad question	Detailed questions
How well did the process work to enable effective dialogue? (Chapter 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How clear and appropriate was the scope and purpose of the dialogue? • How well was information provided? • How well were discussions among participants facilitated? • How well organised and supportive was the dialogue process?
What impacts did the process have? (Chapter 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did it influence knowledge about and attitudes towards the issues? • Did it influence knowledge about and attitudes towards the use of public dialogue in informing policy and decision making? • Did it encourage broader participation in relation to public dialogue? • Were the outputs clearly communicated? • Did it inform policy and decision making in a transparent way? <p>These questions apply to householders and stakeholders</p>
To what extent were the dialogue objectives met? (Chapter 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did it explore responses to a range of technologies, delivery agents, financing arrangements, and information? • Did it explore barriers and levers to uptake and how government should build on or overcome them? • Did it explore the roles of individual action, collective action, and government intervention? • Did it explore how views related to personal characteristics?

¹² Sciencewise (May 2008) *The Government’s Approach to Public Dialogue on Science and Technology*. Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

¹³ Ibid.

3.2 Method

There were four main components to the evaluation. They are summarised in Table 2.2 and described in more detail below.

Table 3.2 Summary of evaluation methods

Component	Details
3.2.1 Desk research	Examine: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material used during dialogue events • Reports sent to householders and stakeholders • Profile of external stakeholders and policy makers involved in the dialogue • Media coverage of energy and environmental issues during the duration of the dialogue
3.2.2 Observation	Observe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event 1 and 3 in two areas • Event 4 • EEWG final meeting
Feedback	Hear from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3.2.3 Householders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaires (to all participating householders) • Telephone interviews (with 21 selected householders) 3.2.4 Policy makers and external stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaires at event 4 (to all participants) • Telephone interviews (with 7 selected policy makers/ external stakeholders who were on EEWG and/or who attended event 1, 3 or 4) 3.2.5 DECC project manager and Ipsos MORI project director Telephone interview

3.2.1 Desk research

We examined the following.

- **Material used during dialogue events**, including agendas, handouts, presentations, and moderator topic guides.
- **Reports and other outputs** sent to stakeholders and householders.
- **Profile of external stakeholders and policy makers** involved in the dialogue, including who attended events and were on the EEWG.
- **Media coverage** during the engagement project to understand outside influences that might influence the project. We noted relevant high profile issues reported across the national media (see 2.7).

3.2.2 Observation

We observed events to see directly how the process worked and how it impacted on householders and stakeholders, using an observation protocol to ensure consistency between different observers in the team. We observed the following.

- **Event 1 and 3 in two areas** We chose two areas where we expected householders' experiences of the dialogue to differ, one urban area

(Harrow) and one rural area (Exeter). We observed events 1 and 3 in both areas.

- *Event 4*
- *EEWG final meeting*

3.2.3 Feedback from householders

We used questionnaires to collect feedback from all householders who attended events. Then we carried out telephone interviews to hear more in-depth views from a selection.

Questionnaire

Householders who attended the dialogue events were asked to fill in a questionnaire at four points.

- Beginning of event 1 (see results in Annex B)
- End of event 1 (see results in Annex C)
- End of event 3 (see results in Annex D)
- End of event 4 (see results in Annex E)

To ensure a good response rate, the questionnaires were kept short (two to four A4 pages) and were distributed and collected by the delivery team. The questionnaires built on those used in previous evaluations of dialogue projects so that findings could be compared¹⁴.

Telephone interviews

Telephone interviews were carried out in July 2009, about four months after the last event 3 had ended and a few weeks after householders had been sent the full report from the dialogue. Interviews lasted 10 to 30 minutes. 21 householders were interviewed. To hear a range of views, we interviewed at least two participants from each area, a mix of men and women, and a range of ages and educational levels (see Annex G). Interviews followed a topic guide (see Annex F) were digitally recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analysed thematically.

10 short telephone interviews lasting about 5 minutes were carried out with original interviewees in September 2009 a few weeks after householders had been sent letters about the Low Carbon Communities Challenge¹⁵.

¹⁴ We have referred to three other evaluations of public dialogues in this report. Warburton, D. (May 2008) *Final report on evaluation of Sustainable Development Commission's public and stakeholder engagement programme on tidal power*. Warburton, D. (November 2007) *Final report on evaluation of the HFEA consultation on hybrid and chimera embryos*. Rathouse, K. (June 2009) *Evaluation of BERR's public dialogue on perceptions of industrial biotechnology*.

¹⁵ We carried out five interviews in August 2009 when the letters were initially sent out but due to problems with the post the letters had to be resent and additional interviews carried out in September.

3.2.4 Feedback from policy makers and external stakeholders

Questionnaires

Policy makers and external stakeholders who attended event 4 were asked to fill in the same questionnaire as householders at the end of the event.

Telephone interviews

Telephone interviews were carried out starting in July 2009, a few weeks after stakeholders and policy makers had been sent the full report from the dialogue, and ending in October 2009. Interviews lasted about 20 to 30 minutes. Interviews were carried out with four policy makers from DECC and other departments and three external stakeholders (see Annex G). They were on the EEWG and/or had attended event 1, 3, or 4. Interviews followed a topic guide (see Annex F) were digitally recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analysed thematically.

3.2.5 Feedback from the DECC project manager and Ipsos MORI project director

Telephone interviews lasting 1 to 1.5 hours were carried out with the DECC project manager and the Ipsos MORI project director. They followed the topic guide in Annex F. Interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analysed thematically.

3.3 Key features of the evaluation

We took a number of steps to ensure that conclusions of the evaluation would be robust and useful.

- We used a mixture of methods, both quantitative and qualitative, and made sure we heard a range of views and perspectives.
- The questionnaires built on existing questionnaires to allow comparison with other dialogue projects and to build on good practice¹⁶.
- We started the evaluation early enough to get a proper baseline and interviewed policy makers as late as possible in order to assess the impacts as fully as possible.
- We kept thorough records throughout the evaluation so that there is a clear audit trail, should anyone wish to understand how we reached our conclusions.
- The evaluation was carried out independently of the commissioners and dialogue delivery team. DECC, Sciencewise-ERC, and Ipsos MORI provided briefing on the aims and methods of the dialogue at the start of the evaluation. They commented on evaluation questionnaires, interview topic guides, observation and desk research protocols. They will have an opportunity to comment on the draft evaluation report.

¹⁶ Warburton, D. (May 2008) Op cit. Warburton, D. (November 2007) Op cit.

4 Findings: dialogue process

4.1 How clear and appropriate was the scope and purpose of the dialogue?

Did the dialogue address the interests of householders and stakeholders?

Stakeholders generally appreciated the effort that was made to offer them a say in the project. Where they had less involvement than they would have liked, this tended to be because of time constraints. There were three routes through which they helped shape the dialogue to address their interests.

- **Working group** Stakeholders reported feeding their views into meetings and commenting by email and phone on project design, material, and reports. This approach worked fine for several of the interviewees.
- **One-to-one contact with DECC project manager** Where the *“classic civil servant”* approach of the working group did not appeal, a more proactive approach was welcomed.
“Harriet just thought outside the box and was so dynamic at going out and making contact with people, inviting help, inviting big ideas.”
(External stakeholder)
- **Attending event 3** Stakeholders attending event 3 said they valued being able to question householders directly about issues of interest to them (*“follow up some of their hunches – things that were bugging them at work”*). This was backed up by our observation where stakeholders asked in detail about implementation options, for instance, whether a visit from an energy advisor was seen as a good use of public funds or whether advice online was preferable; how much exactly householders would be willing to pay for technologies; and whether certain types of support from local authorities would really encourage communities to work together.

On the whole, stakeholders said that the project addressed their interests. It fed into several policies and strategies that were being developed at the time. Some aspects of the project even went beyond what was expected and were seen as *“creative”* and *“ambitious”*, for instance the different scenarios for communication discussed at event 4.

Inevitably, given the wide range of stakeholders with an interest in the issues that the dialogue covered, not all interests were addressed. While the project identified that *“consumers could be persuaded to implement these measures if the right incentives were in place”*, it was suggested that it could have gone further to understand more about the incentives that would work by:

- Exploring the appeal of certain incentives **in detail with consumers** ¹⁷.
- Exploring their feasibility **with the supply chain**.

Although the project was not designed in such a way that householders could influence the content of events, there is evidence that the events did address their interests.

¹⁷ This will in fact now be happening through the Low Carbon Communities Challenge.

- Householders **raised some issues before they were covered** at the events. For instance we observed the following.
 - In the introductory session of event 1, participants were asked to say what they would like to change about their homes. At this early stage, some participants already mentioned an interest in some of the technologies that would be discussed later in the event i.e. insulation, smart metering, and solar thermal.
 - While discussing the technologies in event 1, participants began asking questions that would be addressed during event 2 site visits (for example about looks and convenience of technologies) or during event 3 (for example about availability of grants and how communities could actually work together).
- On the questionnaires, almost all participants **agreed that they were able to discuss issues that concerned them** (95% at the end of event 1, 97% at the end of event 3) and half strongly agreed on this point (46% at the end of event 1, 48% at the end of event 3). This is higher than in other public dialogues, including a recent project in which householders' feedback at the first event was used to develop the content of the second event¹⁸. Perhaps the topic of the Big Energy Shift was simply of more interest than the arcane topics discussed in some other public dialogues. The value of information to participants personally is discussed further in 4.2.

Was the scope and purpose clearly communicated?

Moderators clearly conveyed the scope of the dialogue to householders by:

- Stating in the presentation at the start of the day and at the start of sessions what they hoped to find out from householders.
- Focusing prompts and probes on issues of interest.
- Letting householders stray off topic briefly (e.g. to discuss whether climate change is man made, whether utilities should be renationalised, or whether nuclear power would avoid the need for reduction in domestic energy consumption) but firmly bringing them back to the main issues.

The purpose of the event seemed to be less clearly communicated.

- That the events were intended to inform policy was explicitly mentioned twice during the main events: at the start of event 1 in the introductory video or talk by the minister; and at the end of event 3 when the lead facilitator explained how householders' feedback would be used ("*you may have wondered how we'll turn all this information into policy...*"). It was also clearly conveyed in event 4, due to remarks made by the ministers present (Joan Ruddock, Ed Milliband) who both stressed the necessity for government to listen to the views of citizens on this issue, to inform better policy making.
- The purpose was also implicit in some of the tasks. For instance in event 3, householders were asked to "put yourselves in the shoes of government and think about the action we should take to make sure the Big Energy

¹⁸ For instance the percentage of respondents who strongly agreed that they were able to discuss issues that concern them was:

Warburton, D. (May 2008) Op cit **32%**

Warburton, D. (November 2007) Op cit **35%**

Rathouse, K. (June 2009) Op cit **36%** at meeting one and **33%** at meeting two.

Shift actually happens” by coming up with their own package of measures for promoting low carbon technologies; in event 2 peer interviews, householders were asked to encourage their interviewee to do something similar.

- However, there were perhaps several missed opportunities to state the purpose of the dialogue. For instance, on material given to participants for event 2, the ultimate purpose was not made clear: ‘We’ll use this information, along with the views you have already expressed in event 1, to help us prepare our report on people’s attitudes to new low carbon technologies.’

While the vast majority said on the questionnaire that they understood how the results would be used (86% at the end of event 1, 91% at the end of event 3), only about a third felt strongly that this was the case (33% at the end of event 1, 36% at the end of event 3). While this is not particularly low compared to some other dialogue projects, there is room for improvement¹⁹.

While some interviewees had a clear sense of the purpose of the dialogue, as the quotes below illustrate, others regarded the dialogue as primarily an educational rather than a political process, referring to the dialogue as a “course” or “conference”.

“The government were going to use the information to make recommendations as to whether things should be government directed or local community directed or whether they should encourage people by advertising. It was really directing what the government would do next.” (Householder, Harrow)

“[The presence of a minister] gave a sort of sense of importance to it. You sort of felt like you were really being consulted by the government and that they were taking it seriously – because she came for the first hour of the first session, but she had her representative there or there was somebody from her sort of team there for all of it. You were aware that what you were saying was being recorded and was going to be taken back.” (Householder, Harrow)

4.2 How well was information provided?

How accessible and engaging was the information?

On the whole participants found the information given during events 1 and 3 interesting. They gave a number of reasons, but the first two in the list below were particularly important.

- The information would be **of value to them personally**, helping them to save money on their bills or improve their homes.
“It was applicable to me – I was happy enough.” (Householder, Irvinestown)

¹⁹ For instance the percentage of respondents who strongly agreed/agreed that they were able to discuss issues that concern them was:

Warburton, D. (May 2008) Op cit **39%/42%**

Warburton, D. (November 2007) Op cit **25%/51%**

Rathouse, K. (June 2009) Op cit **53%/43%**

- “Different things that we could have in our house, that was a real eye catcher for me.”* (Householder, Harrow)
- Much of the information was **new** to them.
“It’s unbelievable what’s there – it opened my eyes to it.” (Householder, Irvinestown)
 - A **variety** of topics were covered.
“You weren’t just talking about the one thing the whole time – you were going from one thing to another.” (Householder, Cookstown)
 - Information was **discussed, not just presented**.
“More interesting than a lecture system.” (Householder, Llandaniel)
 - The Ipsos MORI team presented the information in **an engaging way**.
“These people could hold the public.” (Householder, Cockfield)

In interviews householders were also very positive about the booklets that they were given, recommending that these should be made more widely available because they are likely to be of interest to other people too. The media narratives provided in event 4 were also observed to be quite engaging.

Where participants were less interested, this tended to be because they felt that the information was **not relevant to them**.

“It wasn’t a total bore, and it wasn’t exactly riveting either, but that’s the subject matter they have to deal with. We all get excited when we know we can save money at the same time as saving energy, but with some of the more extreme measures, I think it’s difficult to get into that, really.”
(Householder, Exeter)

On the questionnaire, a very high proportion of participants agreed that they understood the information provided (95% at the end of event 1, 90% at the end of event 3). However, only a third agreed strongly agreed (34% at the end of event 1, 30% at the end of event 3). The level of understanding was similar to other public dialogues where more complex scientific issues were discussed²⁰. In interviews there were very mixed views about how easy the information was to understand. Our observation suggests that participants had particular difficulty with the posters of implementation options used in event 3, perhaps because they were sometimes left to make sense of them themselves, whereas facilitators talked them through the technologies posters used in event 1. The implementation options posters also contained more and varied information than the technologies posters.

Householders who found the information easy to understand explained that:

- The information was in **language** they could understand.
- There was the right **amount**.
- It was helpful to have information **presented visually** and well laid out.
“[The posters] were clear really and it was helpful to have things like that – it was nice to see them, be able to visualise.” (Householder, Harrow)

²⁰ For instance the percentage of respondents who strongly agreed/agreed that they understood the information provided was:

Warburton, D. (November 2007) Op cit **37%/47%**

Rathouse, K. (June 2009) Op cit **30%/60%** at meeting one and **33%/58%** at meeting two.

- "In big writing, well spaced and different colours."* (Householder, Lisburn)
- Written information was **backed up by explanations** from the Ipsos MORI team when needed.

Where householders found the information more difficult to understand, they explained that this was because it was **unfamiliar** to them and there was **not enough time** for them to absorb it (*"because it was such a new concept, it took a while to get my head round"*). The occasional participant felt that there was insufficient information for an informed discussion. For instance, when discussing implementation options, we observed that participants would have liked more information about the size of grants or loans that might be available.

How credible and authoritative was the information provided?

Participants sometimes **questioned the facts** that they were given. In particular, we observed that there were queries around financial savings associated with the technologies. Ipsos MORI handled this in an open way by:

- Asking the expert to work through a calculation.
- Acknowledging that *"there are loads of different figures"*.
- Explaining that they were just indicative.

To add credibility, **sources for facts and figures** were sometimes, though not always, given. For instance, the introductory presentation stated *"The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is clear that human activity is changing the world's climate"*; the handouts showing cost and CO₂ savings associated with different technologies explained *"These are all indicative figures from EST."*

It was observed that the Ipsos MORI team generally **stuck to facts and figures on the handouts** and emphasised that they were not experts on the technical issues under discussion. On the whole moderators seemed sufficiently well briefed. However, there was just the occasional comment that a moderator seemed not to understand an issue or that a concept was incorrectly explained (for instance a charge on the property).

The arrangement with the **technical experts** supporting the moderators seemed to work well. As a stakeholder put it:

"[Ipsos MORI] appeared to know the subject well enough and [the technical expert] obviously assisted for any tricky questions." (Policy maker)

Participants generally valued having the technical experts present because of the **specialist and insider knowledge** that they provided. They commented on their willingness to answer questions and ability to explain *"in laymen's terms"*. However, there was sometimes **confusion** among householders about precisely who the experts were or what they were there for. There was also the occasional comment that Ipsos MORI staff seemed to know more than the experts (*"didn't really need him"*).

Did the dialogue provide information from a range of perspectives?

While the written material used in the events did not attempt to provide information from a range of perspectives, this was more than compensated for by the technical experts and stakeholders.

- The **technical experts** expressed their own opinions about the technologies and mentioned where differences of opinion existed. For instance, in Harrow one of the scientists mentioned the debate around micro CHP. Householders appreciated their honesty.
"They were very good at answering people's questions and being quite sort of candid about it." (Householder, Exeter)
- The **stakeholders who attended event 3** understood that they were there to provide their own perspective. With a range of stakeholders attending, this meant that participants were exposed to a range of perspectives.

Generally in interviews and at the events we observed participants did not comment on whether information was provided to them from a range of perspectives. This suggests that they felt that the information was unbiased; in other public dialogues householders have been quick to pick up on any bias²¹. Findings from the questionnaire back this up with the majority of respondents (87% at the end of event 1, 89% at the end of event 3) seeing the information as unbiased, including a third agreeing strongly that it was (34% at the end of event 1 and event 3).

Did participants have the opportunity to question the experts?

There was plenty of opportunity for participants to question the experts. Ipsos MORI explicitly encouraged questions, for instance asking each syndicate group to collect questions for the experts to discuss in the plenary sessions.

While just a few participants in each group tended to ask the experts questions, they did make good use of them. For instance, in event 1 they asked questions about the context (e.g. whether ice caps have melted before, if everyone recycled how much longer limited fuel supplies would last) as well as the technologies (e.g. how long micro CHP would last, how much space would be needed for PV).

Some stakeholders who attended an event 3 even gave participants the opportunity to continue the dialogue afterwards. One gave participants his telephone number; another sent participants information that she thought would be of value to them.

How valuable was the website?

Householders who had looked at the website mainly did so out of **curiosity about participants** in their area or other areas, or about the website itself (*"what it was all about, how it was set up, who had contributed, what their contributions were"*). They only occasionally used it to seek information from the experts, for instance about buildings they had seen on a site visit. It

²¹ Rathouse, K. (June 2009) Op cit

therefore met some, but not all, of DECC's objectives. While householders did not *"share thinking"* on the website, it did *"make the dialogue feel big and exciting and like it was going on and that we cared."*

Householders **varied a great deal in how often** they looked at the website. Those who had not looked at the website at all generally professed themselves to be *"computer illiterate"* or did not have easy access to the internet. On the whole those who had looked at it did so just a few times. However, the most enthusiastic interviewee said that he looked at it most days while the events were going on and once a week for a month after they ended. None of the householders was still visiting the website at the time of the interviews. The clear message in interviews was that this was because it did not provide practical information, unlike the booklets from the events which some said they continued to refer to.

How valuable were the event 2 activities?

According to responses on the questionnaire, a similar number of participants attended a site visit (31%), completed a diary (28%), and carried out a peer interview (27%). A much smaller number had an in-home interview (11%).

The event 2 activities served two important functions.

- The *"iterative"* process enabled participants to give increasingly informed views about the technologies. The different event 2 activities were seen as **adding an extra dimension to the discussion** (*"there was the whole range of information coming back in the group"*).
- The event 2 activities were useful for **involving a broad range of participants** (*"not everyone is comfortable sitting in a room, talking about things and writing things – if you're a taxi driver, that's not your day job"*). According to the delivery team, taking part in activities between the events *"made [participants] much more lively, much more engaged"*. This is backed up by observation: householders were keen to discuss their experiences at the start of event 3 and perhaps there was not sufficient opportunity for all to do so (for instance from diaries and peer interviews).

Householders were more interested in some activities than others.

- They regarded **site visits as particularly informative and enjoyable** because they could see technologies in action and talk to people who were using them. They were interested in seeing how the technologies could be incorporated in their own homes (as in events 1 and 3). There was therefore less enthusiasm for visits that were not sufficiently relevant, such as a visit to a swimming pool.
- There were **very mixed views about the diaries**. There were participants who found completing the diary a frustrating exercise because of the dearth of information available from the sources they contacted (one of the learning points from the project), while others enjoyed discovering the wealth of information available on the internet.

There was some surprise among stakeholders that Ipsos MORI had managed to engage participants sufficiently so that they made the time to take part in the event 2s. Ipsos MORI explained how they managed to get most

participants to complete their diaries. 80 of the 82 participants who were given diaries completed them very well while two did not do as much as others. They attributed this success to the following factors

- The diary was based on tasks (such as going to the local library, calling up local authority, looking for information online) rather than just jotting down thoughts or observations.
- The diary was completed between two events so participants would be reporting back to people that they now knew i.e. other participants and the moderators. Ipsos MORI find that the response to diaries is usually less enthusiastic when they are completed as a pre-task, before participants are engaged at all in the dialogue process.
- The cash incentive for completing the diary certainly helped.

The timing of the site visit meant that some householders could not attend, sometimes to their disappointment, but had to opt for a different event 2 activity.

4.3 How well were discussions among participants facilitated?

Discussions among householders were the highlight of the day for some. They made the day more **interesting, helped them to understand** the information they had been given, and were **fun**. For instance, one participant explained how her experiences at the events differed from her expectations beforehand.

"I thought I'll maybe fall asleep or something, poor me, you know. But once you get into a conversation, they worked brilliantly. I really enjoyed sitting in the group talking, because we did get a little bit of a laugh and a carry on." (Householder, Lisburn)

The occasional participant **struggled with the tasks** used to focus some discussions, believing that they were supposed to come up with an answer.

"Sometimes I found we were under pressure to get answers – we were set things to study, and you had to find answers, and sometimes you just couldn't work out what was the right answer to give... It was obvious that there was a lot of thought went into what they were trying to put over to us, and trying to get our brains to decide what you would do in certain circumstances." (Householder, Cookstown)

Was there enough time for participants to explore views with others?

While four fifths of participants agreed on the questionnaires that there was enough time to fully discuss the issues (84% at the end of event 1, 81% at the end of event 3), only around a quarter to a third strongly agreed on this point (31% at the end of event 1, 27% at the end of event 3). Other dialogue projects have elicited both more and less favourable views on this point.²²

²² The percentage of respondents who strongly agreed/agreed that there was enough time to fully discuss the issues was:

Warburton, D. (May 2008) Op cit **47%/40%**

Warburton, D. (November 2007) Op cit **27%/49%**

Rathouse, K. (June 2009) Op cit **15%/55%** at meeting one and **4%/46%** at meeting two.

In the householder interviews, where participants would have liked **more time** for discussion in events 1 and 3 they explained that this was mainly needed for them to **digest a substantial amount of new information** and come to a considered view.

"You had to go over to poster number one and make comments. You couldn't spend a lot of time on it and for a lot of people it took a lot of time. You had to read it, you had to absorb what it was actually saying, you had to think about it a little bit, and then as a group make a decision. You weren't given enough time. You were given I think it was ten minutes on each thing and then you had to move again." (Householder, Cockfield)

"I think probably that on reflection you would go home and say 'oh god, I wish I'd have said something a little bit more about that'. But you don't really have enough time to formulate an opinion. Because you haven't really got enough knowledge of the opinion that you want to formulate and you haven't got enough time to formulate in the discussion. Afterwards you think 'ah I wish I'd have gone a bit further on that particular point.'" (Householder, Lisburn)

Insufficient time for small group discussions was also an issue in event 4. The schedule over-ran due to technical difficulties with presentation equipment and an **extended question and answer session** between the minister and participants. Whilst there was some interesting plenary discussion involving the minister and questions posed by householders, that took away from the scheduled small group discussions which were intended to look at media narratives around the Big Energy Shift.

Were all participants enabled to join in the discussion?

The degree to which all participants were encouraged to join in discussions **differed a great deal** between moderators. For instance, at an event 1 that we observed, at one extreme a facilitator effectively managed to engage almost everyone in her syndicate group in a discussion about technologies; at the other extreme only three participants in a syndicate group actively contributed to the discussion. Because events were only observed in two areas, it is not possible to say how widespread this difficulty was.

Feedback from the householder interviews was similarly mixed. There were participants who reported that the facilitators had **managed to engage most participants** (*"they encouraged everybody to participate rather than just one or two people who can perhaps talk for Britain"*). Facilitators made a point of asking everyone in the group for their views, keeping dominant participants in check, making clear that all views were welcome, and creating an atmosphere where people felt comfortable talking in front of others. At their best, both householders and stakeholders reported constructive, open and enjoyable discussion.

"The lads just told us 'if you've got a say on anything, just come out and say it' and we did." (Householder, Lisburn)

"I think that they made it very relaxing in that you felt relaxed enough to speak your mind. Even though you were in a room full of strangers, you

felt that you could give an opinion and everybody's opinion was valid. So the people who were running the event sort of allowed everybody to have a say and allowed you to feel that you could have a say. I think that was well done." (Householder, Harrow)

However, in other situations **a few participants were allowed to dominate** ("there was a few sat back and said very little but a couple of people talked for everybody"), and participants felt uncomfortable talking in front of others, particularly to express views that they felt were critical.

"Some people said at the end of it they were just getting into it because it takes a while to be able to speak out in a crowd, feel confident and not feel silly. I think there was a lot of things that they would have liked to have brought up – a lot of these houses in Cockfield are very very old, stone built houses, and a lot of this energy efficiency was about the newer modern home." (Householder, Cockfield)

In order to hear from the quieter participants, **syndicate groups were split** into groups of two or three but these discussions were not fully recorded. Other techniques for drawing in quieter participants in syndicate groups (e.g. going round the table to hear everyone's views) did not seem to be built into the events.

How well were discussions between householders and stakeholders facilitated?

Stakeholders felt that event 3 offered an opportunity for a real dialogue between themselves and householders. Our observation backed this up. The delivery team felt that this "quite natural sort of discussion" was helped by the fact that there were usually just two or three stakeholders at each event, they were sometimes local, and they were often immersed in the issues in a practical way.

Stakeholders were less positive about the dialogue during event 4 and again our observation supported their views. While they felt the event had served a number of important purposes (see chapter 5), they commented that "not a lot new emerged" and the mix of householders and stakeholders had not worked well.

- The event had not got the best out of householders, with stakeholders dominating at some points.
"It did get kind of hijacked by professional speakers and lobbyists and I felt that was not quite the spirit of the event." (Policy maker)
- The small number of householders attending was a concern.
"Too personal to individual circumstances... We ended up with a handful of individuals who seemed to have an extraordinary influence over the outcome. I got a little bit nervous because they weren't necessarily half a dozen average people." (Policy maker)
- The event had also not got the best out of stakeholders and there was a feeling that discussions among stakeholders alone would have been achieved more.
"We had to really hold back and dumb down - we couldn't amongst ourselves have a fruitful dialogue." (External stakeholder)

"I was quite conscious of being careful of what I said and what I didn't say... I think many officials would be quite wary of it. You can't have a full and frank discussion, not with members of the public." (Policy maker)

However, in the event 4 questionnaire, in spite of the potentially difficult group dynamics, all participants felt that they had a chance to have their say (77% a lot and 23% somewhat). Almost all felt that they were listened to by others at their table (65% a lot and 30% somewhat).

How well were discussions recorded?

Recording was mainly carried out by the moderators.

- **During syndicate sessions** some moderators noted key points on flipcharts while others made notes on a note pad. Moderators differed in how detailed their notes were. The team were briefed in advance about what to record and were given a template to record into if they wanted.
- **During plenary sessions** flipcharts were used, but not consistently.
- **When syndicate groups were split into groups of two or three householders** the moderators moved between these small groups or the small groups between moderators standing beside posters. While Ipsos MORI explained that they made the decision not to intensively record all these discussions in order to give participants time for more informal discussion, this meant that some of the valuable discussion within these small groups was not recorded. This was unfortunate because these small group discussions presented an opportunity to hear from participants who had said little in syndicate sessions, and they accounted for about half of the discussion time during event 3.

At some events (e.g. event 1 in Harrow) there were several **note takers** though they were observed to **take notes sparingly**. There were also **digital recorders** on each table throughout the events. Recordings were **not transcribed** afterwards (a decision taken due to budgetary constraints), though Ipsos MORI explained that some were listened to by analysts. When more than one syndicate group was working in the same room, as was often the case, it is unlikely that recordings were of good quality.

The project director explained the analysis process.

- Within 12 hours of the end of an event, all moderators **wrote post-event summaries**, working through a series of questions and noting their impressions and best quotes.
- The core team **looked through moderator notes and notes from participants'** tasks during events 1, 2 and 3. Where notes were not entirely clear, they referred to digital recordings. They came up with initial findings.
- They then had a series of meetings with all moderators and note takers to **check their initial findings** with them.
- Finally the core team met again to draw the report structure together, **looking again at material** to flesh out the report.

There was recognition that the analysis process was subjective but a strong sense that it had captured participants' views. The robustness was said to come from the fact that the **analysis was group-based and consensual**.

"It's very pragmatic, it's not at all academic, a practical thing to get our client something that's food for thought. The evidence from a discussion group is not like counting the number of trees; it's always going to be interpretive and subjective, however many tapes you listen to. It's always going to be about the researcher drawing out what they see as the strongest stories. But I absolutely think we've got the essence of what participants wanted and we've represented accurately the complex feelings of householders about the issues. When you do qualitative analysis, it's not just one person going 'This is the answer – let's find a quote to fit it.' It's about developing those themes and going round the circle until everyone who's involved is comfortable." (Delivery team)

Householders were asked during interviews whether they felt **the report reflected what was said** during the events. They did, as the following quotes show, which suggests that Ipsos MORI did manage to capture the main points.

"I think it got the opinions and views of the people over, the people who were there." (Householder, Irvinestown)

4.4 How well organised and supportive was the dialogue process?

How was the structure and length of the events?

In the householder interviews, participants gave positive feedback about several aspects of the structure of events.

- The **variety of topics** covered.
- The mixture of working in **twos and threes, syndicate groups, and plenary** ("to pool what we'd done").
- The **pace** of the day ("they kept it flowing").
- The **breaks** built into the day ("you felt like you had enough time for teas and coffees and lunch").

Some interviewees found the day demanding ("long and back breaking") but still felt that they had been "taken good care of". Although we observed that energy and enthusiasm inevitably waned for some participants at some points during the long process, on the whole it seemed that interest was maintained. Householders and stakeholders who were interviewed echoed this view.

"Nobody got bored, everything kept flowing, people were engaged."
(External stakeholder)

"I think the way they ran it made people interested. And they kept the energy. It certainly wasn't meandering." (Policy maker)

How supportive was the process?

Almost all participants agreed that the events were enjoyable (98% at the end of event 1 and event 3), and the majority strongly agreed (53% at the

end of event 1 and 65% at the end of event 3). This **high level of enjoyment** is typical of public dialogue projects²³.

From our observation and the interviews, it was clear that the warmth of the facilitators and the **friendly atmosphere** they had created had an important part to play in participants' enjoyment. We observed that most of the facilitators established a very good rapport with householders. In interviews they were described, for instance, as "*all lovely fellers*" and "*really nice young people*". They had ensured that:

"It was very casual. The whole thing was very friendly. It wasn't like being in a classroom or at school again. It was very very relaxed the whole time." (Householder, Cookstown)

We observed that the introduction to the events was fairly quick and Ipsos MORI did not talk through the timetable in detail. However, this did not seem to be problematic. On the questionnaires, almost all participants (98%) said that the events were well organised. Interviewees tended to make the same point ("*well run, no hiccups*"). In terms of practical arrangements, the main negative comments centred around **venues**. In some areas it was said that there was not enough space for activities that involved moving around the room or that overcrowding meant that syndicate groups disrupted each other.

There was just the occasional mention of practicalities from stakeholders. For instance on the plus side, the briefing that was offered before events was mentioned favourably; on the minus side, having the events on weekends was problematic.

How diverse were participating householders?

Both householders and stakeholders commented on mix of ages and backgrounds taking part in the events.

"There were people with very large properties but also a single parent who just lives on absolute basic benefits and then in between you had every other kind of household." (External stakeholder)

This view is supported by the age and gender profiles of questionnaire respondents (Tables 4.1 and 4.2). Men and people aged over 65 were just a little under-represented which is not surprising given that they are in general harder to persuade to attend events of this type. There were fewer younger people than in the UK population probably because the dialogue only recruited home owners.

²³ The percentage of respondents who strongly agreed/agreed that they had enjoyed taking part was:

Warburton, D. (May 2008) Op cit **54%/40%**

Warburton, D. (November 2007) Op cit **60%/36%**

Rathouse, K. (June 2009) Op cit **53%/40%** at meeting one and **63%/33%** at meeting two.

Table 4.1 Gender of participating householders compared to UK population

	% of respondents	% in UK population ²⁴
Male	42	49
Female	58	51

Table 4.2 Age of participating householders compared to UK population

% of respondents		% in UK population ²⁵	
18 to 30	13	16 to 24	15
		25 to 34	16
31 to 40	26	35 to 44	19
41 to 50	29	45 to 54	16
51 to 64	24	55 to 64	15
65 and over	8	65 and over	20

It was suggested by the occasional interviewee that the events had attracted people who were particularly interested in environmental issues to start with. However, the dominant view was that the events had included householders varying in knowledge and attitudes to the environment.

"I think I heard a genuine range of opinions, from people who were sceptical to people who were what you would probably say are believers in the whole need to change." (Policy maker)

Again, results from the questionnaire support the view that the events managed to engage householders besides those with an interest in environmental issues or in active citizenship.

- More than one in ten (13%) admitted that the financial incentive was their main reason for attending.
- While participants were more likely than the general public to have voted in the last general election, one fifth (19%) had not done so (Table 4.3).

Table 4.3 Voting behaviour at the last general election of participating householders compared to UK population²⁶

	% of respondents	% in UK population
Voted	79	61
Did not vote	19	39
Missing	2	0

As well as being essential for the project, the good mix made some householders feel more at ease and made the events more interesting for them.

²⁴ Office for National Statistics (2009). *Social Trends, number 39*, page 3. Statistics for population aged 16 and over.

²⁵ Office for National Statistics (2009). *Social Trends, number 39*, page 3. Statistics for population aged 16 and over.

²⁶ <http://www.parliament.uk/commons/lib/research/rp2005/RP05-033.pdf>

4.5 Summary of findings

Evaluation question	Findings
How clear and appropriate was the scope and purpose of the dialogue?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the whole the dialogue addressed the interests of stakeholders. However, it was suggested that it would have been valuable to have looked in more detail at the incentives needed to win over householders. • The scope was very clearly communicated; the purpose and the way results would be used a little less so.
How well was information provided?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information was generally provided in a way that was accessible and engaging. This was particularly the case for the energy technologies discussed in event 1 and media narratives in event 4. • On some tasks, more time would have been helpful, given the amount of new information provided. • Of the event 2 activities, site visits were seen as particularly enjoyable and informative. • Householders visiting the website mainly did so out of curiosity about other participants, rather than to find answers to specific questions.
How well were discussions among participants facilitated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was evidence of constructive, open, and enjoyable debate between householders at event 1 and event 3. However, not all facilitators used techniques effectively to draw in quieter participants, meaning that the full range of views was not always heard. • Event 3 provided a very good opportunity for dialogue between stakeholders and householders; event 4 less so. • Record keeping was sometimes problematic. Discussions were mainly recorded through facilitators taking notes as well as moderating discussions and they differed in how and what they noted. Particularly when groups were split into pairs or groups of three or four (e.g. for a fair proportion of event 3), some valuable discussion was not fully captured.
How well organised and supportive was the dialogue process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The facilitators created a relaxed and friendly atmosphere and developed a very good rapport with householders. • The events were well structured, with plenty of breaks and a variety of tasks. • There was a high level of engagement and almost all participants said they enjoyed taking part.

5 Findings: dialogue impacts

5.1 Did it influence knowledge about and attitudes towards the issues?

5.1.1 Householders

The dialogue had an impressive impact on householders. This was evident from observation as well as householders' own feedback. By the end of event 3, all householders said on the questionnaire that they had learnt something they did not know before and nine tenths (89%) said that their attitudes had changed. This level of attitude change is remarkably high for a public dialogue project²⁷. Below we describe precisely what they had learnt and how their attitudes had changed.

Knowledge about energy technologies

In the interviews, householders said that they had found out about **technologies that they had not heard of before**. This was the case for participants with little knowledge as well as those who already knew quite a bit about renewable technologies. It was impressive how much interviewees remembered when interviewed four months after the last event 3.

"I was just amazed at some of the things that we were talking about – it opened my eyes – well some of the things I'd never heard of until we had this meeting." (Householder, Cardiff)

Findings from the questionnaires show just how much householders had learnt (see Table 5.1). At the start of event 1, only five of the energy technologies listed in the questionnaire were known to at least three quarters of respondents; by the end of event 3, all the technologies were known to at least three quarters of respondents.

Householders had also learnt the following.

- **How technologies worked.**
"We always thought you have to have a lot of sun [for solar panels] but apparently not. They still work even during the wintertime, obviously not as well as the summertime but they still seem to do the trick alright." (Householder, Cookstown)
- **Where to go should they want to find out more** about the technologies. The diary exercise had been useful in this regard for some but not all participants. The booklet participants were given at the events was said to be a useful resource that some interviewees still referred to.
- **What payment options and delivery methods** were under consideration, although these were not widely referred to in the householder interviews.

²⁷ The percentage of respondents who strongly agreed/agreed that attending the meeting had changed their views was:

Warburton, D. (May 2008) Op cit **30%/28%**

Warburton, D. (November 2007) Op cit **26%/29%**

Rathouse, K. (June 2009) Op cit **54%/46%** at the end of meeting two.

Table 5.1 Energy technologies that respondents had heard of

Technology	% of respondents who had heard of technology	
	Start of event 1	End of event 3
Wind turbine	97	96
Insulation (e.g. loft insulation)	97	96
Solar hot water panel	90	94
Solar panel for electricity	90	94
Heating controls	83	94
Hydro-electric system	65	89
Ground or air source heat pump	49	84
Combined heat and power	45	77
Smart meter	40	85
Biomass boiler	37	87
District heating	27	77

Attitudes towards technologies

The events **created interest** in the technologies, even among participants with little interest to start with.

“After the actual event, when you go past this kind of stuff, you think ‘oh yeah’. It was something that you’d probably go past and you wouldn’t even be interested in, those wind pipe things. But now you look because that’s something that we discussed. It is a bit more interesting because we know a bit more about it.” (Householder, Harrow)

The events **overcame concerns and increased the appeal** of some, but not all, of the technologies.

- The events tended to engender more positive attitudes towards wind power, with almost half of householders (45%) saying on the questionnaire at the end of event 3 they would welcome a turbine in their neighbourhood compared to less than one in ten (8%) at the start of event 1. Conversely, the number who would object to a wind turbine in their neighbourhood fell (from 41% at the start of event 1 to 29% at the end of event 3).
- Smart meters were not widely known at the start of event 1 and unsurprisingly only about one in ten householders (12%) wanted one in their home. By the end of event 3 this had increased to more than four in ten (43%). The number who did not want a smart meter barely changed.
- For other technologies that were not widely known to start with, increased knowledge led to an increase in the number of householders who did **and** did not want one in their home. This was the case for biomass boilers, ground and air sources heat pumps.

Discussions and site visits seemed to be particularly influential, as the following quotes illustrate.

“Basically it [won] people over. It’s all very well saying ‘we’ve got these technologies’ but lots of people will instantly say ‘no’ [because of] fear or panic or just not understanding. What came across to me in these

meetings is that initially people were resistant to these ideas, but after you'd spoke about the issues for a while then you came round to it."
(Householder, Harrow)

"The new technology homes that are at Watford [we had the] chance to visit them, go round and see some of these things in situ. This biomass boiler, I wasn't that keen on it when we discussed it but when we actually went round to see it, it didn't take up as much room as I thought it was going to and it made the whole house smell really nice, like a pine cottage. I was not that keen on it when we discussed it but afterwards I thought 'yeah that's something I actually could use in my home, I wouldn't mind having.'" (Householder, Harrow)

Attitudes towards responsibility

There was **very little change** in the number of householders who said on the questionnaire that **government should be responsible** for new technologies, with the vast majority thinking that government should take the lead. However, there was **a marked increase** by the end of event 3 in the number who thought that **individuals should be responsible** for technologies in the home (from 49% at start of event 1 to 70% at end of event 3) and that **communities should be responsible** for technologies in their area (from 47% at start of event 1 to 62% at end of event 3).

Table 5.2 Householders' views about who should take responsibility for putting technologies in place

Who should take responsibility	In home % of respondents		In neighbourhood % of respondents	
	Start of event 1	End of event 3	Start of event 1	End of event 3
Individuals	49	70	27	38
Community	45	58	47	62
Government	76	80	89	85

Knowledge about climate change and everyday actions

As well as learning about the technologies participants felt more informed about the following.

- **The context**, particularly energy security.
"I didn't realise that our electricity came from another country."
(Householder, Cardiff)
"At the beginning when the minister did the PowerPoint presentation it laid out exactly how long we've got left of our oil reserves and I don't think any of us realised that we didn't have that much left." (Householder, Harrow)
- How **energy is used**, and **can be conserved**, in the home.
"Learning about appropriate room temperatures for the house."
(Householder, Cockfield)

Although information about these issues is available elsewhere, interviewees explained that they took more notice of it or understood it better because it was explained rather than seen in, say, a leaflet. Even participants who

already understood the issues said that the events heightened their awareness of them.

"All this environmental information, you don't really listen to it to be honest with you – it took something like that to sort of waken me up to it."

(Householder, Lisburn)

"When you're forced to think about it over a period of time like that, for whole days at a time, it does bring it more to your mind." (Householder, Harrow)

Taking action

The events went beyond changing attitudes and knowledge, and actually encouraged some householders to take action. In particular interviewees reported making **small changes to the way they used energy** such as relying less on the tumble drier, encouraging the family to turn off the TV, turning down the wall thermostat for central heating, or changing light bulbs (*"the first thing I did after the first meeting was to come home and change all the light bulbs into the low energy light bulbs"*). Some householders had also got hold of, or tried to get hold of, energy monitors.

Larger scale changes to the home itself such as installing insulation or renewables were not feasible for many people, as interviewees pointed out. Nevertheless, there were participants who had, for instance, **checked existing insulation** or started looking into new technologies that might be suitable for when they refurbished their home. They also said that their new knowledge would make them think a little differently **when they next move home**.

"We did get a man to look at the insulation in the cavity - [the technical expert] said after a few years it deteriorates a wee bit." (Householder, Cookstown)

"I'm going to be moving in the next year or so and it certainly changed my view on what I might look for. I don't think that energy saving gizmos or the way that the place is built necessarily would have been a factor in my choice, but I think it would be now." (Householder, Harrow)

Some householders had **discussed what they had learnt** with family, friends, or colleagues.

"[I spoke to] friends, family, my work colleagues, because I come away after the very first visit and I was really really enthusiastic about it. I really was and I'm not just saying that!" (Householder, Cardiff)

5.1.2 Stakeholders

Stakeholders mentioned a number of findings from the dialogue report, or observations that they had made during events, that they had found **interesting, surprising, or useful**. In particular they highlighted the following.

- Householders' **emphasis on government's role**, including the need for regulation.
- The **strong resistance** among householders to installing new technologies but the **potential to overcome this** with appropriate support.

"[We tend to] think people are just dying to implement all this stuff, have holes drilled in their walls and people stomping around the house into the

loft. But the reality is a lot of people aren't. This exercise has shown that with the right information, maybe community support, people can be taken down the road to make the decision." (External stakeholder)

Where stakeholders said that the Big Energy Shift had **minimal influence** on their knowledge or attitudes, they gave a number of reasons (listed below). It is important to note that for each of the four points below, there were stakeholders who expressed opposing views.

- As in other public dialogues, there were **concerns about the sample**, particularly its small size and whether householders taking part in events such as these could be typical. This was a concern for the project as a whole, with stakeholders questioning whether qualitative evidence should form the basis for decision making. However, there was recognition that it would be extremely difficult to explore the issues covered in the Big Energy Shift through a large scale survey.

"One of the findings was that people essentially want regulation. I'm not sure that's a true reflection of the population because it's a small group. It's interesting but it doesn't really stack up with all the other kind of research out there. It's such a small group that everything would have to be corroborated with other robust evidence, quantitative evidence as well as this qualitative stuff. It was such a small group and although there were definitely sceptics there, I don't think the kind of people who give their time up like that to talk about the environment would do it if they hated talking about the environment. I don't think you get people who are completely anti it." (Policy maker)

In contrast, the credibility of the dialogue was thought to come partly from its large scale.

- The value of **hearing the views of informed householders** was questioned because policies would need to engage uninformed householders.
- It was said that most of the findings were **not new** but had already been covered in other research. In contrast, the Big Energy Shift was said to be a ground-breaking piece of work because projects in this area tend to look at a single technology or intervention, whereas the Big Energy Shift aimed to come up with a broad agenda for change.
- It was thought that one particular finding, that householders welcomed regulation, was **implausible** because it was at odds with previous research.

Attending event 1 or 3 **tended to boost stakeholders' trust** in the findings. However, attending event 4 had the opposite effect; the small number of householders at the event and the impression that they were not typical amplified concerns about the sample.

5.2 Did it influence knowledge about and attitudes towards the use of public dialogue in informing policy and decision making?

5.2.1 Householders

At the start of event 1, just one in twenty householders (6%) said on the questionnaire that they were very confident that what they said would make a difference to government policy, and about half (52%) were fairly confident. By the end of event 3, **confidence had risen somewhat** (19% were

very confident and 60% were fairly confident). The reasons behind householders' views became clear during interviews and are summarised in table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Reasons for beliefs about the impact of the Big Energy Shift on government policy

Reasons for believing the events will influence government policy	Reasons for believing the events will not influence government policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cost and effort involved in running the events means that <i>"they're bound to be guided by it to a certain extent"</i> • The presence of ministers at events, including event 4, reassured them that government was listening <i>"you do feel that you were actually sending a message directly to the Government and that it's being listened to"</i> • The Big Energy Shift relies on public buy-in so government has no choice but to listen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distrust in government generally was exacerbated by the <i>"expenses scandal"</i> • Announcement of policies unrelated to the Big Energy Shift report suggested that decisions were being taken without reference to findings from the dialogue • Minimal impact from consultations in the past

The **letter signed by Joan Ruddock** explaining about the Low Carbon Transition plan had an impressive impact on some participants, although others were more measured in their response, as the following two quotes from interviewees illustrate.

"I was delighted something good has come about because to be quite honest you sort of came away thinking this is probably a waste of money. So it's great to know that they're now taking action, they're doing something about it." (Householder, Lisburn)

"You get sent letters all the time and you don't know half the time. Things change. It could change by tomorrow. We've had lots of things in Cockfield which have just been dropped." (Householder, Cockfield)

On the questionnaire, almost all householders said that **consulting the public was important** (97% at the end of event 1, 98% at the end of event 3), including about three quarters who thought it was very important (74% at the end of event 1, 80% at the end of event 3). There was little change in views on this issue during the dialogue. In interviews, householders gave two main reasons for believing that consulting the public is important.

- There was a general sense that **government should listen** to the public but there were few opportunities for this to happen.
- For **energy policy in particular**, it was felt that there were important points that the government should take on board, namely that the technologies are unaffordable for most people without government funding, and that a one-size-fits-all approach will not work for people in unusual circumstances.

Where interviewees questioned the value of the events, in particular whether they were a good use of public funds, this was because they thought:

- The money would be **better spent on grants** than discussion.
- **Experts could advise better** than a public forum, although there was recognition that public opinion was needed on certain issues.

5.2.2 Stakeholders

Stakeholders differed in how much experience they had had before of public dialogue. Some had used it with varying success on various issues. Others acknowledged that in consultations they ordinarily heard from professional stakeholders, rather than householders or communities.

Stakeholders also **differed in the impressions** of public dialogue that they took away from the Big Energy Shift. On the plus side they mentioned the following.

- Some stakeholders who had not experienced public dialogue left with a **clearer view of how it can be used**.
"I just appreciate how useful it is because I haven't been involved in one before." (Policy maker)
"It has opened my eyes to the possibilities." (Policy maker)
- The **positive experience** with the dialogue was said to have been important within DECC, **restoring confidence** in the process. This was particularly valuable given that recent dialogues on related issues, such as nuclear power and the Energy White Paper, had been problematic.
- The **level of engagement** at events was said to be impressive compared to much public consultation, **demonstrating what could be achieved**.
"This was genuine engagement – the amount of noise in the room, the way people across the whole room would participate, absolutely no holding back. Giving up a whole Saturday – it's absolutely incredible!" (External stakeholder)

On the minus side they mentioned the following.

- Attending **event 4 was disappointing** for some and not a good showcase for public dialogue, as the quote below illustrates. It would probably have been better to present it as an opportunity for communicating the findings, rather than for dialogue between stakeholders and participants.
"I kind of felt frustrated on that day because what they did was they mixed up some experts with the public. And I'm not convinced that worked." (External stakeholder)
- The **methodological concerns** mentioned above (see 5.1.2) coloured participants' views about the value of public dialogue.

5.3 Did it encourage broader participation in relation to public dialogue?

5.3.1 Householders

On the whole, interviewees said they **would like to take part** in further public dialogue events if the opportunity arose. Their responses to the prospect ranged from *"if the opportunity came up again I wouldn't say no"* to *"it's*

something that I'd love to get involved in again". There seemed to be a number of reasons for their enthusiasm, in particular the following.

- For some householders, the appeal was **learning something new**, including what they could do to their homes.
"There's so much to learn – it's amazing." (Householder, Harrow)
"I would take part just to keep updated with new technology, what's out there, how I might be able to access it in the future and how it would affect my own property." (Householder, Cockfield)
- Some householders were keen to their say or **have some influence** over important matters.
"If it's something that's going to affect me or my family - anything." (Householder, Cockfield)
"I think most people there are public spirited." (Householder, Exeter)
- Some householders enjoyed doing something **outside their daily routine**, particularly meeting people, talking or listening to them. This was mentioned as a particular attraction, for instance, by an older woman who did not get out much and a full time mother who said she missed adult company.

The way that the events were run **overcame misgivings** that participants had beforehand and encouraged them to take part again in the future.

"That was my first time taking part in something like that, but it wouldn't be my last. I was impressed about the whole thing. I went 'this might not be too much fun', we were there six or seven hours. [But] each one of the days, it was very, very informative, you weren't bored, or anything like that. You got on with it, everybody was in the same team, everybody was motivated. It was a good day. When it was over, you went, 'oh, well, a bit more of that would do'. It was hours well spent. I enjoyed myself." (Householder, Irvinestown)

However, there were interviewees who **did not wish to take part** in further public dialogues or were uncertain whether they would be able to, mainly because of the **time involved** (*"I've done my bit and that's it", "it was quite a lot of Saturdays, and obviously that's quite a lot of family time when the children are off school"*).

The DECC project manager was keen that *"the dialogue is part of something bigger – the relationship with those households should be the beginning of something bigger, an ever expanding dialogue."* Householder contact details were therefore collected so that they could be **informed and hopefully involved in further developments**. The intention is that they will be invited to take part in the Low Carbon Transition Challenge *"so that they feel respect, feel part of phase two, invite them to the launch of it."*

5.3.2 Stakeholders

Looking at the list of stakeholders who were involved in EEWG (see 2.3), it is clear that the dialogue engaged a **wide range of external stakeholders**: third sector and industry, stakeholders with the householder perspective (for instance National Energy Action) and the supply chain perspective (for instance Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes). **Several government**

departments were also engaged (Defra, CLG and DfT) as well as DETI in Northern Ireland and Welsh Assembly. Beyond EEWG, the project manager explained that she was *“liaising with around fifty policy officials”*.

Involving stakeholders in the development of the project resulted in two main benefits.

- **Strong constructive relationships** (*“very useful allies”*) that were expected to continue and to prove valuable for the next steps. Both the project manager and stakeholders commented on this.
- An **openness within DECC** to involving external stakeholders, and an appreciation of this from the stakeholders.
“Just to have external members on [EEWG] was so radical whereas now I think everyone would be quite relaxed about it. Just by doing it, it was breaking ground.” (Policy maker)
“We liaised over email, fed her ideas and stuff. Harriet’s made me feel more warmly disposed to DECC I have to say, because we don’t always have the best experience of civil servants... In the working group I certainly didn’t feel any of that kind of dynamic discussion. It was not creative. It was sort of efficient, bing, bang, bosh.” (External stakeholder)

Policy makers and external stakeholders welcomed the opportunity to **attend events 3 and 4** because this provided an opportunity to:

- Hear the views of a **cross-section of the public**, rather than the householders they normally interact with.
“People who self select – either interested or terrifically hostile” (Policy maker)
- Show the **“human face” of government**.
“Government bodies sometimes have a bad name, people are very distant, you get put through to the answer machines and go round in circles before you find the right person. I tend to give out business cards that have contact numbers on them. I think it just helped show we were approachable, we’re doing things.” (Policy maker)
- **Explain to householders** what they are doing and the constraints they have to work within.
“We were trying to say we have a packet of money and we have schools to run, we have hospitals to run and so on. It’s all very well wanting this [energy technology] but realistically we are competing with other departments. So I think it was good to sort of point that out to people.” (Policy maker)
- Pick up on points which were not strongly communicated in a report, such as the **context to remarks**.

5.4 Were the outputs clearly communicated?

There were a number of outputs (listed below). From the point of view of the DECC project manager, the outputs were one of the main strengths of the project (*“very good communications - way exceeded my expectations”*).

- **Two reports** Both of which were designed to be read by a wide audience including both stakeholders and householders.
 - The first, a 20 page summary report, was timed to tie in with event 4. This worked well as participants at event 4 were aware of it and likely to read

it. However, there were stakeholders who only read this report, not the later one, not always realising that it was an interim report.

- The second, a more substantial 100 page report, was published some months later. It was posted to all householders and emailed to stakeholders. It was made accessible and engaging by using, for instance, quotes in speech bubbles; boxes for case studies, summaries and recommendations; graphs and figures. The report was policy-focused, with phased recommendations clearly set out (*"very very practical"*).

- **The website** This included film clips and findings.
- **Event 4** This was seen partly as a way to communicate findings, as well as being used to continue the dialogue. However, in terms of clarity of communication, the presentation of interim findings was vague about details and not very transparent in terms of analysis.

The outputs have had a very wide reach as the following examples show.

- The **final report has been widely circulated**. The DECC project manager sent it to 50 policy officials as well as external stakeholders on EEWG. Several of these contacts sent it on to their contacts. For instance, it was circulated internally at CLG and to stakeholders by UK Green Building Council and Energy Efficiency Partnership for Homes. It was also made available on the Big Energy Shift website.
- The findings have been communicated through **conferences and speeches**. For instance DECC's project manager gave a talk about the findings at the 2009 National Energy Action conference and at Civil Service Live; and several senior policy makers at DECC were briefed on it and it has been included in speeches.
- The film clips from the events and other visuals are being used by DECC and Sciencewise-ERC for various purposes.

5.4.1 Householder feedback

Receiving the report tended to be a **welcome surprise**.

"Well, I was glad to have the report so that I could read through what everybody thought of it, you know? Usually if you go to something like this here you never hear of it again." (Householder, Lisburn)

Only the occasional householder had read the full report in detail at the time of the interviews, a couple of weeks after it was sent. On the whole interviewees had skimmed it (*"just a quick scan"*) or had not yet looked at it, though some said they intended to give it more attention when they had time. **Views differed about the length** of the report. Some interviewees were pleased to see the full report (*"in the summary you don't get all the views and ideas"*). Others would have preferred a summary which would have been both *"a little more digestible"* and more environmentally friendly.

There were **mixed views** among householders **about the value** of the report. On the one hand, interviewees welcomed seeing *"what actually came out of what we did"* or finding out what had been said at other events around the country. On the other hand, they felt the report was of no use to them, either because it went over their heads or because it did not tell them anything

practical that they could act on, unlike the booklets they had previously been given.

5.4.2 Stakeholder feedback

There were similarly **mixed views about the value** final report among stakeholders. At one extreme, an external stakeholder described it as a *“definitive document”* and encouraged his extensive network of contacts to read it. At the other extreme, a policy maker did not welcome the accessible style, commenting that it was *“quote heavy but conclusion light”*.

The tone of the outputs, as well as the content, was seen as very important. For instance the **positive tone** of the first report was said to be very influential.

“That had huge influence because suddenly everyone thought ‘Aha, [the public] are all behind us.’ It had a very big influence on special advisors and senior officials, a sort of subtle ‘We can do this.’ The message was if you talk to people actually they’re behind you. The research was just saying ‘people are behind you.’” (Policy maker)

5.5 Did it inform policy and decision making in a transparent way?

This section looks at how the Big Energy Shift informed policy and decision making. Household views about its influence on policy and decision making are discussed in 5.2.1.

Views differed about the extent to which findings had influenced policy at DECC. On the one hand it was said that without the dialogue *“we wouldn’t know where to start”*. On the other hand it was said that the findings have informed the development of a number of policies at DECC that were **already in the pipeline** beforehand. Either way, learning from public dialogue in this way was seen as crucial to DECC.

“DECC is now at the forefront of what is essentially a total revolution. Pretty much everything will have to change over a period of time and if we’re going to do that then sensibly we need to know to what extent we can bring the public with us. We can’t just do it ourselves. The public are part of it.” (Policy maker)

The findings are reported to have fed into the following policies, as have the credibility and partnerships developed during Big Energy Shift.

- Trials of **pay-as-you-save**.
- The roll out of **smart meters**.
- The **Renewable Energy Strategy**, particularly public engagement around large-scale renewables and the ‘green challenge’.
- The **Heat and Energy Saving Strategy**, particularly the case for pilots and learning on the ground.
- DECC’s **public sector announcement** because the findings from the householder dialogue were used to argue the need for a strong set of announcements.
- The Low Carbon Transition Plan, particularly the **Low Carbon Communities Challenge Fund**. This initiative built directly on recommendations in the report and came about in response to calls from householders for local

exemplars and an interest in community-level solutions that emerged during the process.

DECC has ensured that both stakeholders and householders have been kept **informed of developments**.

- **Event 4** was seen as a way of getting across the message about DECC's commitment to take action.
"Politically quite a good move to show how government is behind this and serious - good government PR." (External stakeholder)
- A **letter was sent to all householders** who took part, signed by Joan Ruddock, to tell them that the Low Carbon Communities Challenge²⁸ was going ahead *"as a direct result of your contribution to the Big Energy Shift. We are grateful for your help."* The impacts of this are discussed further in 5.2.1.
- External stakeholders and policy makers who contributed to the Big Energy Shift have been informed of developments since then **by the DECC project manager**. This was welcomed.

Beyond DECC, only the occasional interviewee could point to impacts that had already occurred as a result of the Big Energy Shift. While there were some stakeholders who felt that it would not influence them, it was **expected to have an impact** on industry, the third sector, and other government departments as the following examples illustrate.

- A NGO intends to adjust the way that they work, having found out from the Big Energy Shift that simply offering technology at no cost is not enough to motivate householders to take it up.
"I have thought for a while that if you could find a method of ensuring that there was nil immediate cost to the householder, that that would make people do stuff. Clearly that is not the case. We need to do more." (External stakeholder)
- The supply chain had begun to refer to the report when considering *"what an offer for consumers should look like"*.
- Even policy makers with doubts about methodology (see 5.1) thought the findings would inform policy making though they would not be the sole basis for decision making.

²⁸ At the time called the "Green Villages, Towns and Cities Challenge"

5.6 Summary of findings

Evaluation question	Findings
Did it influence knowledge about and attitudes towards the issues?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants learnt a great deal and still remembered much of this when they were interviewed some months later. Attitudes also shifted. For instance many more held positive views about wind power by the end of the events. • Stakeholders mentioned a number of findings that they had found interesting, surprising or useful. However, concerns were expressed about the credibility of the research due to the sample design. Some stakeholders questioned whether householders taking part in dialogues were typical and whether qualitative research should form the basis for decision making because of the relatively small sample (compared to a large scale survey). Both these questions have been raised in relation to other public dialogues. There were also doubts about whether findings from informed householders could be applied to those who had not been through a similar process.
Did it influence knowledge about and attitudes towards the use of public dialogue in informing policy and decision making?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While some participants inevitably questioned whether the findings would be taken on board, there were aspects of the process that boosted trust, particularly ministers present at events. • The positive response by the public was said to engender a more positive view of public dialogue at DECC, overcoming wariness from previous problematic dialogues.
Did it encourage broader participation in relation to public dialogue?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the whole, householders were keen to take part in future dialogues as a result of their positive experiences on the Big Energy Shift. • Policy makers, external stakeholders, and the DECC project manager reported that the dialogue had resulted in stronger relationships amongst stakeholders.
Were the outputs clearly communicated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The final report was accessible and policy-focused. There was very wide and effective communication of project findings to a large number of stakeholders, both within and outside DECC. • The upbeat tone of the outputs was seen as important, contributing to a sense of efficacy at DECC.
Did it inform policy and decision making in a transparent way?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was exceptional communication with participants after the events ended, including sending out a letter to tell them how the findings from the project had fed into the development of the Low Carbon Communities Challenge. • Within DECC the impacts on policy development were impressive. In particular, the project provided the basis for development for the Low Carbon Communities Challenge. • Beyond DECC, the project had had little impact on decision making yet although stakeholders expected it to impact on industry, the third sector, and other government departments.

6 Findings: project objectives

6.1 Did it explore responses to a range of technologies, delivery agents, financing arrangements, and information?

Technologies

Event 1 explored responses to technologies in detail. It covered a **wide range of technologies**: for individual homes and communities; inexpensive (e.g. real time electricity displays) and high cost (e.g. biomass boiler); mainstream (e.g. heating controls) and novel (e.g. ground and air source heat pumps); for reducing consumption (e.g. insulation) and generating energy. It was very useful to consider this wide range of technologies but ambitious to expect to discuss 20 technologies in detail in less than two hours and we observed that this was not always possible. Event 2 site visits added a valuable **extra dimension** to the dialogue, with participants experiencing technologies first hand and in some cases hearing from people who were living with them (see 4.2).

The report included the following.

- **Feedback about each technology** in turn, describing what was appealing and off putting, and making recommendations about where it might be most welcome and what would be needed to promote take up.
- A useful summary of **which technologies were most appealing** and why. With this knowledge, Ipsos MORI were in a position to recommend the wide scale roll out of smart meters.

Delivery agents and financing arrangements

Event 3 focused on exploring responses to implementation options, including delivery agents and financing arrangements. As mentioned in chapter 4, householders sometimes found discussion of the implementation options **challenging**. An important conclusion in the report was that householders sometimes found financing arrangements **overly complex**.

A number of **different financing arrangements** were presented. Responses to these different arrangements were discussed in detail to understand why they did or did not appeal. The discussions explored for instance, the relative appeal of grants and loans, different ways of repaying loans (pay-as-you-save or a second charge), and what levels financial incentives should be set at.

Likewise a number of **different delivery agents** were mentioned, including energy suppliers, local authorities, retailers, and energy advisors. The discussion explored who would be trusted to give advice on, install, and maintain the technologies.

The report gave a summary of **what types of financing arrangements were most appealing** and why, as well as **feedback about each** implementation option.

Information

During events 1 and 3, information received less attention than technologies, delivery agents, and financing arrangements. However, while discussing the other issues a number of findings emerged which have clear implications for information needed to boost take up of technologies. These included:

- **Misconceptions** that need to be addressed, such as the noise associated with air source heat pumps.
- Areas where **awareness is low** and needs to be raised, for instance about underfloor heating.
- Information that is needed **to demonstrate the benefits** of technologies, in particular concrete information on cost savings.

As a stakeholder commented, it was also valuable to see how participants seemed to take on board for the first time during events information that was readily available elsewhere.

“The video, the initial presentation was quite interesting, because participants actually seemed quite shocked at the information they were being given. Yet obviously all that information had been in the public domain already. My assumption was that it was the mode of delivery i.e. from a more trusted source. They had a cabinet minister speaking directly – it was through a video, but you definitely got the sense that it was addressing the group. So I suppose a newspaper with climate change scare headlines doesn't necessarily carry the same effect as Ed Milliband and a presentation. It gave me an idea of how delivery methods actually will change the impact of what's being said – it was quite clear that this message may as well have been quite a new message on the seriousness of climate change and the figures.” (Policy maker)

Responses to information were addressed more directly in other parts of the dialogue.

- **Event 2 diaries** Householders were first asked where they would look for information and were then asked to actually try to find information from various sources.
- **Event 4** Householders and stakeholders were shown three broad approaches to communicating about the Big Energy Shift and asked for their feedback. This task went beyond the more obvious focus on sources and content of communications to consider the tone as well. It was seen by stakeholders as an interesting and “*creative*” approach. However, because this discussion took place at event 4 with just a small number of householders and with stakeholders also contributing their views, the findings were perhaps less valuable than if the task had been incorporated into the regional events.

6.2 Did it explore barriers and levers to uptake and how government should build on or overcome them?

Barriers and levers to uptake were thoroughly explored. For instance, when discussing technologies householders were observed to mention a range of concerns with little prompting from facilitators such as cost, aesthetics,

disruption, privacy, reliability, durability, and social norms. The topic guide reminded facilitators to prompt on certain barriers and levers, for instance the benefits of collective action.

Barriers and levers were also thoroughly reported. Importantly the report highlighted a few less obvious barriers and levers, such as social norms.

The findings about barriers and levers led to clear recommendations. For instance, householders' concern about aesthetics translated into a recommendation that businesses should be assisted to design technology which is aesthetically pleasing.

6.3 Did it explore the roles of individual action, collective action, and government intervention?

Householders were enabled to have **sophisticated discussions** about the roles of individual action, collective action and government intervention. How this was achieved is discussed below. These discussions formed the basis for the following.

- A set of recommendations for government **encompassing several different types of interventions**. These included giving warning now about legislation that will follow later, leading the way by using renewables in exemplar public buildings, and offering financial and practical support for individual and collective action.
- A clear idea of how government's role **relates to individual action**, such as funding innovative pilot schemes for early adopter individuals, and **to collective action**, for instance the need for government to take the first step to initiate collective action.

Collective action

As highlighted in the report, householders' initial response to communities working together was generally not favourable (*"It would never happen in Harrow!"*). However, at event 3 the Ipsos MORI team **went beyond this initial response** to find out how collective action could be enabled and what about it might actually appeal. Some householders reported in interviews that their views on the role of community action had changed, showing how their thinking on this issue had developed.

"I've thought much more about how responsibility would be divided amongst individuals, communities and central government initiative... I think probably I've come to realise that there are certain community based options and that some of them could be sponsored by more local government." (Householder, Exeter)

"I think I'm going to be much more open to community projects, because your fears have been allayed a bit at those meetings. Because to begin with when we were talking about the community projects people were very anti them. Well I think it's worry isn't it, people just aren't sure how they work, but since we really got to grips with the technology and spoke about it, we began to think actually that it would be a good idea. So I think I'd be much more open to those community projects than I might have been otherwise." (Householder, Harrow)

Ipsos MORI achieved this by:

- Presenting several different community-based technologies and implementation options, such as Home Energy Clubs, Low Carbon Zones, and communities signing up to green energy. We observed that these different options got householders **thinking in a concrete way** about the barriers and benefits, rather than rejecting the general idea of collective action.
- Both facilitators and stakeholders **probed to find out what would make collective action feasible**. They asked generally about barriers and motivators (*“What would have encouraged you to accept a wind farm in the school?”*) as well as asking for feedback on specific suggestions (*“What about someone in a local authority doing the admin?”*).

Government intervention

Discussions about the role for government are sometimes hampered by householders lacking awareness of what types of intervention are possible or what impacts they might have on the public. Ipsos MORI overcame these potential difficulties in event 3 in two ways.

- Reminding householders about the **variety of ways that government could intervene**, such as information, financial incentives, legislation, aimed directly at the public or via business. As well as listing them, they gave examples in an engaging presentation about how life has changed over the last thirty to forty years.
- Emphasising the **impacts of government intervention** on the public i.e. that legislation is not always popular and that the costs of financial incentives are ultimately borne by the public.

The report states that *“In every forum the majority of participants called for legislation.”* We question whether this statement is justified given that **not all participants were asked to express an opinion** through, for instance, voting. We are particularly concerned about this statement given the difficulties with inclusive discussions (see 4.3).

6.4 Did it explore how views related to personal characteristics?

When discussing technologies and implementation options, householders talked about why they were or were not suitable to their circumstances. Moderators sometimes probed to explore in more detail how views related to personal characteristics. For instance a moderator asked a householder to explain why she thought ground source heat pump would not suit her circumstances (*“you would need to dig up the garden”*) and where she thought it would be suitable (*“So what sort of property **would** you need?”*). As with inclusive discussion (see 4.3), some moderators were more skilful than others at exploring differences in views during syndicate group discussions.

The report described in detail who each **implementation option** is most and least likely to suit. It considered socio-demographic characteristics like age and income, as well as attitudes, such as financial confidence, willingness to take risks, and trust in technology and government. There were fewer

mentions in the report about the types of people that certain types of **technologies** are most likely to appeal to. For instance, biomass boilers are most likely to be considered by households who are replacing an existing boiler, have spacious homes, and in off grid areas because they currently need to work at generating heat in their homes.

6.5 Summary of findings

Evaluation question	Findings
Did it explore responses to a range of technologies, delivery agents, financing arrangements, and information?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dialogue looked at a very wide range of technologies, using site visits as well as more standard approaches to providing information about them. • It looked in detail at responses to a range of delivery agents and financing arrangements. • While responses to information were not explored in detail, a number of useful findings emerged, particularly related to information needed to address misconceptions, low levels of awareness, and benefits associated with technologies.
Did it explore barriers and levers to uptake and how government should build on or overcome them?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers and levers to uptake were thoroughly explored. Facilitators prompted to hear about those which were less front of mind, such as the benefits of community schemes.
Did it explore the roles of individual action, collective action, and government intervention?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through carefully structured information and skilful facilitation, Ipsos MORI enabled householders to go beyond their initial responses and have a sophisticated discussion about the roles of individuals, communities, and government. • We question whether it is reasonable to state that majority of participants in every forum called for legislation because not all were asked to give their view on this issue.
Did it explore how views related to personal characteristics?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The dialogue explored how responses related to a range of personal characteristics. These included sociodemographic factors such as age and income as well as attitudes such as trust in government and technology. • Differences in how householders responded to implementation options were particularly thoroughly explored and reported.

7 Conclusions and lessons for good practice

As required of Sciencewise-ERC projects, this evaluation of the Big Energy Shift aimed to assess to what extent the project objectives and the good practice principles for public dialogue were met, with a view to identifying lessons for future public dialogue projects.

7.1 What worked well

There were several highly positive aspects to the way the public dialogue was devised and delivered. From the evidence collected, it is clear that most householders enjoyed the various events that they participated in, which were an opportunity to learn something new, step outside of their normal routines, and have their say. Householders had an excellent rapport with Ipsos MORI staff. They found the materials presented to be informative and engaging, and they found the site visits particularly rewarding. Aspects of the process of engagement designed by Ipsos MORI were perceived by stakeholders to be both ambitious and creative, distinguishing this dialogue from others.

As regards impacts, our evaluation indicates that the public dialogue produced several positive outcomes. For householders, it led to increased knowledge about less well known technologies such as hydro-electric systems, heat pumps, combined heat and power plants, smart meters, biomass boilers and district heating systems. It also had positive impacts upon householders' attitudes. For example, willingness to accept a wind turbine in the neighbourhood and to install a smart meter in the home rose markedly between event 1 and event 3. Moreover, the dialogue positively impacted upon perceptions of responsibility regarding change to energy systems. Whilst levels of responsibility attributed to government did not change, responsibility attributed to communities rose moderately and to individuals rose markedly.

Some householders understandably had doubts regarding the impact of the dialogue upon policy-making. However, the evaluation suggests that householder participants generally came away from the process feeling like they had participated in an initiative that was valuable, either for themselves or the greater good, and one they would be prepared to take part in again. Some participants concluded that the initiative *had* to be significant, given the scale of the dialogue process, the personal attendance of ministers at events, and exceptional communication after the events about impacts on policy.

For DECC, the dialogue resulted in several positive outcomes. It confirmed the willingness of citizens to accept and play a part in step changes in energy production and consumption; the practical policy-focused report fed directly into a number of policy initiatives. The dialogue also led to the creation of new and stronger networks with stakeholders that participated in the EEWG or were involved through less formal one-to-one contact. It also bolstered faith in the use of deliberative engagement with citizens. On the whole stakeholders found the findings informative, particularly regarding the views of

householders towards government responsibility for action, and the willingness of householders to accept and practice change, given a sufficiently supportive economic and community context.

7.2 What worked less well

Our analysis suggests that the quality of discussion moderation and note taking varied. Some observed discussions were more inclusive than others, and we have concerns that potentially valuable contributions from quieter participants were sometimes missed. We also have concerns that discussions were not always recorded systematically. Some householders made negative comments about the amount of time they were allowed to absorb novel information during group sessions, and about the venues being sometimes too small for the tasks or for several syndicate groups to work alongside each other.

Stakeholders expressed concern about event 4, specifically regarding the depth of discussion permitted during the day, and the representativeness of the householders present. This and more general concerns about methodology also led to concerns about the project outputs, particularly whether the findings were sufficiently novel, credible, or useful.

Event 4 was perceived to have been problematic in other ways too. It was a challenging goal to bring all actors together in a single event, ostensibly on an equal footing. The more informal dialogue at event 3 seemed a more effective model for co-creation between stakeholders and householders.

7.3 Lesson for good practice

There are five main lessons for future public dialogue projects.

- To ensure that the full range of views is heard and recorded, it is important to use techniques for making discussions inclusive and for recording them systematically.
- Householder engagement can be maintained throughout longer than standard public dialogue projects, provided they are well structured and facilitated.
- An effective model for direct dialogue between stakeholders and householders seems to involve informal discussions with a small number of stakeholders at householder events (as in event 3), rather than more formal meetings with larger numbers of stakeholders (as in event 4).
- Dialogue projects can act as an excellent opportunity for building stakeholder networks, provided that a variety of approaches to engagement are used, both formal and informal.
- Reports setting out a clear agenda for action help ensure that dialogue findings are translated into policy.

Annex A Timing of activities at events 1, 3, and 4

This annex summarises information from Ipsos MORI's discussion guides. Timings on the discussion guides were not always followed exactly.

Event 1

Timing	Activities
10.00-10.40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions to the day, team, clients and experts; housekeeping; flow of project over and today's timings (Presentation, plenary) • My house/my neighbourhood (Discussion, pairs then feed back, plenary)
10.40-11.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are we here to talk about today and over the next few weeks (Presentation, plenary) • Ed Miliband film (Presentation, plenary) • Discussion (Plenary)
11.00-12.45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal views on the presentation (Discussion, syndicate) • New technology (Discussion, syndicate) • Collected questions to experts (Discussion, plenary) • News technologies (Discussion, syndicate) • Collected questions to experts (Discussion, plenary)
12.45-1.30	Lunch
1.30-2.15	Reduce the amount of carbon this house uses (Discussion, syndicate)
2.15-2.40	Different views of the groups (Groups present back then discussion, plenary)
2.40-3.05	Short break
3.05-3.30	All ideas from today (Summing up then discussion, plenary)
3.30-4.00	Planning for event 2

Event 3

Timing	Activities
10.00-10.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions to the day, team, clients and experts; housekeeping; flow of project over and today's timings (Presentation, plenary) • Thoughts since last time (Discussion, plenary) • Role of government (Presentation, plenary)
10.30-11.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insights since event 1 (Film of participant interviews then discussion, plenary) • Feedback from diaries, site visits, peer interviews (Discussion, syndicate) • Revisiting technologies – thoughts since last time (Discussion, syndicate)
11.15-12.30	Individual options (Looking at posters/discussion, pairs then discussion, syndicate)
12.30-1.15	Lunch
1.15-1.25	Summarising options (Discussion, plenary)
1.25-2.30	Community options (Looking at posters/discussion, pairs then discussion, syndicate)
2.30-2.45	Summarising options (Discussion, plenary)
2.45-3.10	Short break
3.10-3.40	Stakeholders and householders co-create 'My perfect process' (Discussion, syndicates split into two teams)
3.40-4.00	Summary (Discussion, plenary)
4.00-4.05	Closing session

Event 4

Timing	Activities
10.15-10.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions, objectives, and welcome from Minister (Presentations, plenary)
10.30-10.50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants introduce themselves (Discussion, syndicate)
10.50-11.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Themes from forums (Film, plenary) • Emerging findings (Presentation, plenary) • Introduction to 'Three Worlds' (Presentation, plenary)
11.15-11.30	Reactions to emerging findings (Discussion, syndicate)
11.30-11.50	Ed Milliband address (Plenary)
11.50-12.15	How to make the shift happen: World One (Discussion, syndicate)
12.15-1.10	Lunch
1.10-1.35	How to make the shift happen: World Two (Discussion, syndicate)
1.35-2.00	How to make the shift happen: World Three (Discussion, syndicate)
2.00-.2.25	Taking the best parts from all three worlds and drawing together into best solution (Discussion, syndicate)
2.25-2.40	Break
2.40-3.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups feed back (Discussion, plenary) • Final thanks (Presentation, plenary)

Annex B Results from start of event 1 questionnaire

The response rate on the questionnaires was 95%. 237 questionnaires were completed.

	No. (%) of respondents		
	Female	Male	Missing
Q1. Are you male or female?	137 (58)	100 (42)	0 (0)

	No. (%) of respondents					
	18 to 30	31 to 40	41 to 50	51 to 64	65 or older	Missing
Q2. How old are you?	30 (13)	62 (26)	69 (29)	56 (24)	19 (8)	1 (0)

Q3. Which of the following qualifications do you have?	No. (%) of respondents
O levels, CSEs, GCSEs, NVQ 1, School Certificate or similar	169 (71)
A levels, AS levels, NVQ 2 or 3, Higher School Certificate, Advanced Senior Certificate or similar	110 (46)
BA, BSc, MA, MSc, PhD, PGCE, NVQ 4 or 5 or similar	54 (23)
Other qualification	57 (24)
Missing	12 (5)

	No. (%) of respondents		
	Yes	No	Missing
Q4. Did you vote at the last general election?	187 (79)	46 (19)	4 (2)

	No. (%) of respondents				
	Very at home	Fairly at home	Not very at home	Not at all at home	Missing
Q5. How much do you feel at home in the area where you live?	171 (72)	58 (24)	3 (1)	0 (0)	5 (2)

Q6. What was the main reason that you decided to take part in the Big Energy Shift?

Responses	No. (%) of respondents	Examples
Financial incentive	31 (13)	"£300! At a time when gas and electricity bills are due", "Inquisitive as to what it is about- also the financial incentive was a big swaying point"
General interest or curiosity	42 (18)	"Invited, never done this before, interest, money", "To broaden outlook", "Curious"
Interest in topic (not specified)	22 (9)	"To find out more about it"
Interest in/concern for environment	27 (11)	"Worried about the energy problem and want to know as much as possible about rectifying it", "Interest in environment"
Interest in energy	14 (6)	"To learn more about energy", "To hear new ideas about energy shift"
Interest in technologies	9 (4)	"Interested in new technology", "To learn about greener living and the products available"
Interest in saving energy	49 (21)	"Gain more knowledge re energy conservation",
Interest in saving money	27 (11)	"To find out if I really can save money", "To gain ideas that may help me save money in the home"
Interest in what government is doing	3 (1)	"To see what is being planned by government", "Learn about government's approach to energy saving - what can be done"
Opportunity to express views/have an impact	21 (9)	"I think it's a start and I want to be part of it at the beginning", "partly to put my views forward about a subject that effects everyone"
Miscellaneous	18 (8)	
Missing	17 (7)	

	No. (%) of respondents				
	Very confident	Fairly confident	Not very confident	Not at all confident	Missing
Q7. How confident are you that what members of the public say in the Big Energy Shift events will make a difference to future UK energy policy?	15 (6)	123 (52)	88 (37)	6 (3)	5 (2)

	No. (%) of respondents				
	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not at all important	Missing
Q8. How important do you think it is that government asks members of the public what they think about energy issues?	175 (74)	53 (22)	5 (2)	1 (0)	3 (1)

Q9. Have you heard of any of the following technologies?

	No. (%) of respondents		
	Heard of it	Not heard of it	Missing
Wind turbine	231 (97)	4 (2)	2 (1)
Insulation (e.g. loft insulation)	229 (97)	2 (1)	6 (3)
Biomass boiler	87 (37)	120 (51)	30 (13)
Smart meter	94 (40)	106 (45)	37 (16)
Combined heat and power	107 (45)	95 (40)	35 (15)
District heating	64 (27)	135 (57)	38 (16)
Heating controls	196 (83)	20 (8)	21 (9)
Solar hot water panel	213 (90)	12 (5)	12 (5)
Ground or air source heat pump	116 (49)	92 (39)	29 (12)
Solar panel for electricity	213 (90)	16 (7)	8 (3)
Hydro-electric system	153 (65)	60 (25)	24 (10)

Q10. If you have heard of any of the technologies listed above...

Technology	No. (%) of respondents	
	a. Which technologies would you like for your home	b. Which technologies would you not like for your home
Wind turbine	30 (13)	79 (33)
Insulation	57 (24)	4 (2)
Biomass boiler	9 (4)	20 (8)
Smart meter	29 (12)	5 (2)
Combined heat and power	8 (3)	6 (3)
District heating	5 (2)	13 (5)
Heating controls	22 (9)	0 (0)
Solar hot water panel	89 (38)	3 (1)
Ground or air source heat pump	30 (13)	7 (3)
Solar panel for electricity	65 (27)	3 (1)
Hydro-electric system	9 (4)	15 (6)
Solar panels	51 (22)	4 (2)
Other technology	3 (1)	0 (0)
Would consider all	0 (0)	11 (5)
Don't know	3 (1)	24 (10)
Mentioned factors to do with suitability	12 (5)	8 (3)
Other comment	5 (2)	11 (5)

Q10. If you have heard of any of the technologies listed above...

Technology	No. (%) of respondents	
	a. Which technologies would you like for the area where you live	b. Which technologies would you not like for the area where you live
Wind turbine	18 (8)	98 (41)
Insulation	14 (6)	6 (3)
Biomass boiler	10 (4)	5 (2)
Smart meter	8 (3)	4 (2)
Combined heat and power	7 (3)	3 (1)
District heating	25 (11)	17 (7)
Heating controls	7 (3)	1 (0)
Solar hot water panel	18 (8)	2 (1)
Ground or air source heat pump	14 (6)	8 (3)
Solar panel for electricity	24 (10)	3 (1)
Hydro-electric system	31 (13)	18 (8)
Solar panels	33 (14)	10 (4)
Other technology	4 (2)	2 (1)
Would consider all	5 (2)	21 (9)
Don't know	13 (5)	27 (11)
Mentioned factors to do with suitability	7 (3)	9 (4)
Other comment	4 (2)	5 (2)

Q11. If technologies like these could be put in place in your home, who do you think should be responsible for making this happen?

	No. (%) of respondents		
	Yes	No	Missing
Individuals like me	117 (49)	26 (11)	94 (40)
Groups of people like me and my neighbours	107 (45)	32 (14)	98 (41)
Government	181 (76)	15 (6)	41 (17)

Q12. If technologies like these could be put in the area where you live, who do you think should be responsible for making this happen?

	No. (%) of respondents		
	Yes	No	Missing
Individuals like me	64 (27)	45 (19)	128 (54)
Groups of people like me and my neighbours	111 (47)	21 (9)	105 (44)
Government	210 (89)	4 (2)	23 (10)

	No. (%) of respondents					
	Very worried	Fairly worried	Not very worried	Not at all worried	Don't know	Missing
Q13. How worried do you feel personally about climate change?	44 (19)	147 (62)	33 (14)	6 (3)	3 (1)	4 (2)

	No. (%) of respondents					
	Very worried	Fairly worried	Not very worried	Not at all worried	Don't know	Missing
Q14. How worried do you feel personally about relying on imported gas and oil?	74 (31)	124 (52)	23 (10)	6 (3)	4 (2)	6 (3)

Annex C Results from end of event 1 questionnaire

The response rate on the questionnaires was 90%. 224 questionnaires were completed.

Q1. How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the event?

	No. (%) of respondents					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Missing
a. There was enough time to fully discuss the issues	70 (31)	118 (53)	26 (12)	8 (4)	0 (0)	2 (1)
b. The information provided was unbiased	76 (34)	118 (53)	15 (7)	3 (1)	1 (0)	11 (5)
c. I understood the information provided	77 (34)	136 (61)	9 (4)	2 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)
d. I understood the purpose of the event	106 (47)	112 (50)	6 (3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
e. I understood how the results of the event will be used	73 (33)	119 (53)	25 (11)	4 (2)	0 (0)	3 (1)
f. Attending this meeting has changed my views	78 (35)	81 (36)	45 (20)	15 (7)	0 (0)	5 (2)
g. I learnt something I did not know before	114 (51)	102 (46)	6 (3)	1 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)
h. I enjoyed taking part	119 (53)	100 (45)	4 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)
i. I was able to discuss the issues that concern me	103 (46)	110 (49)	10 (4)	1 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
j. The event was well organised	125 (56)	93 (42)	3 (1)	1 (0)	0 (0)	2 (1)

Q2. What were the best/most successful aspects of the event?

Responses	No. (%) of respondents	Examples
Information provided/opportunity to learn	156 (70)	"More than half the topics I had not heard of before, so learnt a lot", "Learning how I can reduce carbon footprint"
Discussions	74 (33)	"Discussions with fellow neighbours", "Pooling ideas"
Opportunity to have a say/influence policy	6 (3)	"Finding out that what we think is really considered by the powers that be", "The attendance of the minister and department- it feels as though our options may be listened to by the people that can change things."
Structure and organisation	14 (6)	"Well looked after", "Wonderful lunch"
General positive feedback	9 (4)	
Missing/answer not clear	7 (3)	

Q3. What were the worst/least successful aspects of the event?

Responses	No. (%) of respondents	Examples
Information provided	50 (22)	"Least successful being the task regarding the flat scenario as not applicable to anyone in the group & confusion about it", "Not enough info on wind turbines", "No mention of payback period for various technologies"
Discussions	2 (1)	"Very noisy discussions"
Structure & organisation	40 (18)	"Could have done with break during morning", "Bit disorganised", "Difficulty hearing what contributors were saying due to venue"
Nothing	43 (19)	
Missing/answer not clear	14 (6)	

Annex D Results from end of event 3 questionnaire

The response rate on the questionnaires was 93%. 229 questionnaires were completed.

Q1. Since the first Big Energy Shift event two weeks ago, which of the following have you taken part in?

	No. (%) of respondents
Making a visit to see energy technologies	72 (31)
Being interviewed about energy in your home	25 (11)
Interviewing your own family and friends about energy	61 (27)
Completing a diary	63 (28)
Missing	8 (4)

Q2. How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the event?

	No. (%) of respondents					
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Missing
a. There was enough time to fully discuss the issues	62 (27)	123 (54)	20 (9)	23 (10)	0 (0)	1 (0)
b. The information provided was unbiased	77 (34)	127 (55)	19 (8)	2 (1)	0 (0)	4 (2)
c. I understood the information provided	68 (30)	138 (60)	19 (8)	2 (1)	0 (0)	2 (1)
d. I understood the purpose of the event	129 (56)	97 (42)	2 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)
e. I understood how the results of the event will be used	82 (36)	126 (55)	18 (8)	2 (1)	0 (0)	1 (0)
f. Attending this meeting has changed my views	112 (49)	91 (40)	18 (8)	7 (3)	0 (0)	1 (0)
g. I learnt something I did not know before	142 (62)	84 (37)	1 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)
h. I enjoyed taking part	149 (65)	75 (33)	3 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (1)
i. I was able to discuss the issues that concern me	111 (48)	111 (48)	6 (3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)
j. The event was well organised	145 (63)	79 (34)	3 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (1)

Q3. What were the best/most successful aspects of the event?

Responses	No. (%) of respondents	Examples
Information provided/opportunity to learn	132 (58)	"Learning something new", "I found out quite a lot that I did not know and found it very interesting", "Understanding options available locally"
Site visits	23 (10)	"I enjoyed all the sessions but particularly the visit to see the new technologies", "Actually seeing the different types of alternative energy we can use"
Discussions	70 (31)	"It was useful to hear other peoples ideas/experiences", "The good debate"
Opportunity to have a say/influence policy	13 (6)	"Feeling that my views and opinions have significance and impact on change for the future", "Giving my own views", "Possibly helping to affect government policy"
Structure and organisation	7 (3)	"The leaders were professional and looked after us and made us welcome"
General positive feedback	9 (4)	"I think the whole thing has been successful"
Missing/answer not clear	7 (3)	

Q4. What were the worst/least successful aspects of the event?

Responses	No. (%) of respondents	Examples
Information provided	34 (15)	"Too many ideas - hard to take all in", "Some vague information regarding the community initiatives"
Discussions	4 (2)	"People not agreeing", "People talking while others were speaking"
Event 2	1 (0)	"Home visit - I thought it would be a look around my house and advise on points to address (similar to an audit)"
Structure & organisation	49 (21)	"Lack of time - it felt a bit rushed", "Echoy room - bad acoustics", "It was a very long day, hard to keep interested"
Nothing	42 (18)	
Missing/answer not clear	26 (11)	

Q5. Have you heard of any of the following technologies?

	No. (%) of respondents		
	Heard of it	Not heard of it	Missing
Wind turbine	220 (96)	1 (0)	8 (3)
Insulation (e.g. loft insulation)	220 (96)	0 (0)	9 (4)
Biomass boiler	200 (87)	19 (8)	10 (4)
Smart meter	195 (85)	22 (10)	12 (5)
Combined heat and power	176 (77)	39 (17)	14 (6)
District heating	177 (77)	34 (15)	18 (8)
Heating controls	216 (94)	2 (1)	11 (5)
Solar hot water panel	216 (94)	4 (2)	9 (4)
Ground or air source heat pump	193 (84)	22 (10)	14 (6)
Solar panel for electricity	215 (94)	2 (1)	12 (5)
Hydro-electric system	203 (89)	14 (6)	12 (5)

Q6. If you have heard of any of the technologies listed above...

Technology	No. (%) of respondents	
	a. Which technologies would you like for your home	b. Which technologies would you not like for your home
Wind turbine	15 (7)	66 (29)
Insulation	72 (31)	5 (2)
Biomass boiler	41 (18)	59 (26)
Smart meter	98 (43)	7 (3)
Combined heat and power	14 (6)	2 (1)
District heating	10 (4)	7 (3)
Heating controls	26 (11)	2 (1)
Solar hot water panel	63 (28)	4 (2)
Ground or air source heat pump	59 (26)	44 (19)
Solar panel for electricity	50 (22)	4 (2)
Hydro-electric system	10 (4)	17 (7)
Solar panels	39 (17)	9 (4)
Other technology	3 (1)	2 (1)
Would consider all	0 (0)	11 (5)
Don't know	0 (0)	4 (2)
Mentioned factors to do with suitability	4 (2)	18 (8)
Other comment	3 (1)	1 (0)

Q6. If you have heard of any of the technologies listed above...

Technology	No. (%) of respondents	
	a. Which technologies would you like for the area where you live	b. Which technologies would you not like for the area where you live
Wind turbine	102 (45)	67 (29)
Insulation	4 (2)	0 (0)
Biomass boiler	85 (37)	18 (8)
Smart meter	7 (3)	3 (1)
Combined heat and power	11 (5)	1 (0)
District heating	31 (14)	9 (4)
Heating controls	0 (0)	0 (0)
Solar hot water panel	1 (0)	0 (0)
Ground or air source heat pump	22 (10)	11 (5)
Solar panel for electricity	5 (2)	1 (0)
Hydro-electric system	42 (18)	14 (6)
Solar panels	12 (5)	5 (2)
Other technology	3 (1)	7 (3)
Would consider all	3 (1)	17 (7)
Don't know	3 (1)	12 (5)
Mentioned factors to do with suitability	3 (1)	6 (3)
Other comment	3 (1)	4 (2)

Q7. If technologies like these could be put in place in your home, who do you think should be responsible for making this happen?

	No. (%) of respondents		
	Yes	No	Missing
Individuals like me	160 (70)	5 (2)	64 (28)
Groups of people like me and my neighbours	133 (58)	16 (7)	80 (35)
Government	183 (80)	10 (4)	36 (16)

Q8. If technologies like these could be put in the area where you live, who do you think should be responsible for making this happen?

	No. (%) of respondents		
	Yes	No	Missing
Individuals like me	86 (38)	34 (15)	109 (48)
Groups of people like me and my neighbours	141 (62)	13 (6)	75 (33)
Government	195 (85)	1 (0)	33 (14)

	No. (%) of respondents				
	Very confident	Fairly confident	Not very confident	Not at all confident	Missing
Q9. How confident are you that what members of the public say in the Big Energy Shift events will make a difference to future UK energy policy?	43 (19)	138 (60)	42 (18)	1 (0)	5 (2)

	No. (%) of respondents				
	Very important	Fairly important	Not very important	Not at all important	Missing
Q10. How important do you think it is that government asks members of the public what they think about energy issues?	183 (80)	40 (17)	3 (1)	0 (0)	3 (1)

Annex E Results from end of event 4 questionnaire

The response rate on the questionnaires was 72% overall. 26 householders (100% of householders) and 17 stakeholders (50% of stakeholders) responded. In the tables below, responses are given for householders (H), stakeholders (S), and all respondents (A).

	No. (%) of respondents				
	Very well	Fairly well	Not very well	Not at all well	Missing
Q3. How well were the views of the citizens' forum you were involved in represented by Ipsos MORI in the presentation at the start of the day? FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC INVOLVED IN THE CITIZENS FORUMS ONLY	18 (69)	7 (27)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (4)

		No. (%) of respondents				
		A lot	Somewhat	A little	Not at all	Missing
Q5. To what extent did you have a chance to have your say in the discussions at your table?	H	22 (85)	4 (15)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
	S	11 (65)	6 (35)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
	A	33 (77)	10 (23)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Q6 To what extent do you think that other people at your table listened to your views?	H	19 (73)	6 (23)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (4)
	S	9 (53)	7 (41)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (6)
	A	28 (65)	13 (30)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (5)
Q7 To what extent have the findings so far from the Big Energy Shift citizens forums changed your views?	H	11 (42)	13 (50)	0 (0)	2 (8)	0 (0)
	S	0 (0)	9 (53)	6 (35)	1 (6)	1 (6)
	A	11 (26)	22 (51)	6 (14)	3 (7)	1 (2)

		No. (%) of respondents				
		Definitely	Possibly	Probably not	Definitely not	Missing
Q9. Will you do anything differently as a result of the findings so far from the Big Energy Shift citizens forums?	H	14 (54)	9 (35)	3 (12)	0 (0)	0 (0)
	S	5 (29)	7 (41)	3 (18)	0 (0)	2 (12)
	A	19 (44)	16 (37)	6 (14)	0 (0)	2 (5)

		No. (%) of respondents				
		Very confident	Fairly confident	Not very confident	Not at all confident	Missing
Q11. How confident are you that the Big Energy Shift citizens forums will make a difference to future UK energy policy?	H	9 (35)	16 (62)	1 (4)	0 (0)	0 (0)
	S	2 (12)	11 (65)	3 (18)	0 (0)	1 (6)
	A	11 (26)	27 (63)	4 (9)	0 (0)	1 (2)

		No. (%) of respondents				
		Very useful	Fairly useful	Not very useful	Not at all useful	Missing
Q13. How useful do you think citizen forums are for helping to shape Government's plans?	H	17 (65)	8 (31)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (4)
	S	8 (47)	6 (35)	2 (12)	0 (0)	1 (6)
	A	25 (58)	14 (33)	2 (5)	0 (0)	2 (5)

		No. (%) of respondents			
		No, my views have not changed	Yes, I now think citizens forums are more useful than I did before	Yes, I now think citizens forums are less useful than I did before	Missing
Q14. Has the Big Energy Shift changed your views about how useful citizens forums are for helping to shape Government's plans?	H	0 (0)	25 (96)	0 (0)	1 (4)
	S	7 (41)	7 (41)	0 (0)	3 (18)
	A	7 (16)	32 (74)	0 (0)	4 (9)

Annex F Topic guides for interviews

Topic guide for householder interviews (½ hour by phone)

Background (2 minutes)

- Why they got involved
- How interested they were in energy technologies beforehand

Process (15 minutes)

- How they found the events
- How they found site visit/interview in home/peer interview/diary between the two events
- What they thought about having a website
 - Whether they used it
 - Why/why not
 - IF TIME What would have encouraged them to use it
- How they found the summary report – whether it captured
 - Their views
 - IF TIME The views of the whole group

Impacts (15 minutes)

- Whether the events have changed their views about the way we heat and power our homes and communities in the future – why/why not and in what way
- Whether they have done anything differently as a result of taking part – why/why not and what
- Whether they think the events will make a difference to what the government does – why/why not and in what way/how much difference
- IF TIME How interested they are in staying involved/continuing to give views to government

Lessons for future (2 minutes)

- Messages for people organising events like this in future

Topic guide for policy maker & external stakeholder interviews (½ hour by phone)

Points underlined are key issues to cover if interviewees have less than ½ hour for the interview

Background (5 minutes)

- What their role was in the Big Energy Shift citizens dialogue
- Whether they had been involved in public dialogue before – IF YES:
 - How had they been involved
 - How useful had they found them compared to the Big Energy Shift?

Process (10 minutes)

IF THEY ATTENDED THE EVENTS WITH HOUSEHOLDERS

- Why they went along
- How they found the events– what worked well and less well
- How much time they put in

IF THEY WERE ON EEWG

- Why they got involved
- How they found the EEWG – what worked well and less well
- How much time they put in

- How they found the report

Impacts (15 minutes)

- What they got out of it/took away from it
- Whether it has changed their views about how to make the Big Energy Shift happen – why/why not and in what way
- Whether it has/will have an impact on what their organisation does – why/why not and in what way
- Whether it has changed their views about public dialogue – why/why not and in what way

Lessons for future (2 minutes)

- Whether they would use/suggest/back the use of public dialogue again in the future – in what context

Topic guide for delivery team and project manager interview (60-90 minutes by phone)

Background (5-10 minutes)

- What their role was on the project
- Whether they had worked on similar projects before
 - On energy technologies/policy
 - Large scale public dialogue projects

Process (30 minutes)

- What aspects they thought worked well and less well
- How the innovative and unusual aspects worked
 - Event 2
 - Website
- Discuss aspects that evaluators saw as particularly successful and potentially problematic
 - Involvement of policy makers/external stakeholders in event 3
 - Event 4
 - Recording and analysis of discussions
- How they found practicalities
 - Working arrangement with COI & DECC
 - Amount of time available
- Whether there was anything unexpected about the project

Impacts (30 minutes)

- What impacts they are aware of
- How well the dialogue met DECC's objectives – run through each
- How well the dialogue met Sciencewise's principles – run through each

Lessons for future (5-10 minutes)

- Messages for teams running projects like this in the future
- Messages for organisations commissioning projects like this in the future

Annex G Interviewee characteristics

Householders

Characteristic	Number of interviewees	
	Target	Achieved
Area		
Cardiff	2	2
Cockfield	2	2
Cookstown	2	2
Exeter	2	2
Harrow	2	4
Irvinestown	2	2
Lisburn	2	3
Llandaniel	2	2
Llandidloes	2	2
Sex		
Male	8-10	9
Female	8-10	12
Age		
18 to 30	5-7	2
31 to 40		4
41 to 50	5-7	5
51 to 64	5-7	7
65 or older		3
Educational level		
None	5-7	5
Up to O level/equivalent		5
Up to A level/equivalent	5-7	7
Up to degree or over	5-7	4
Total	18-20	21

Stakeholders

Characteristic	Number of interviewees	
	Target	Achieved
Position		
Policy maker (from DECC and other departments)	3	4
External stakeholder (representing and working with industry and consumers)	3	3
Role on Big Energy Shift*		
EEWG member	At least 3	5
Attended event 1 or 3	At least 3	4
Attended event 4	At least 3	5
	6	7

*Please note that some interviewees were EEWG members and attended event 3 or event 4