

**RTPI**

mediation of space · making of place

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8<sup>th</sup> May 2009

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Email response sent to: [cesp.consultation@decc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:cesp.consultation@decc.gsi.gov.uk)

Dear Ms Ephson,

#### **CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO COMMUNITY ENERGY SAVINGS PROGRAMME BY THE ROYAL TOWN PLANNING INSTITUTE**

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above consultation. The RTPI is a membership organisation representing over 22,000 spatial planners. It exists to advance the science and art of town planning for the benefit of the public.

The Institute is currently engaged in the review of its New Vision for Planning (2001) and the need to ensure that climate change is recognised as the fundamental driver behind sustainable development. The RTPI's consultation report to its members on the review of the New Vision for Planning proposes that the initial focus of the response to climate change should be on how to facilitate the movement towards more sustainable energy generation and use and on how to develop more sustainable forms of communities which are based on lower energy and de-carbonised systems of movement.

The RTPI welcomes the principle of this measure for the delivery of a programme of targeted 'whole-house' energy efficiency solutions on a geographically targeted basis and applauds the aim of tackling Climate Change and affordable energy together, combining objectives of environmental and social sustainability via this mechanism.

The RTPI acknowledges that CESP has been designed as pilot programme to deliver more intensive whole house proposals, which as a result of significantly higher per household costs will be targeted at a more limited number of homes than the CERT initiative. RTPI understands that the nature of the 'whole house packages' will be dependent on the circumstances of the properties to which they are delivered. However, the RTPI believes that, the provision of clarity regarding what a package will deliver in terms of minimum carbon emissions reductions, would be helpful.

The Institute also understands that the programme is seen as a 'bridge to the future' whose process will 'provide evidence that will feed into long-term national work in this vital area.' However, the Stern Report and other studies suggest that we have about 5 to 7 years to effect a significant downward trajectory in carbon emissions before natural environmental changes become too major or chaotic to allow them to be managed or reversed with the means we currently have at our disposal. It appears that the CESP programme will treat something like 0.4% of households in England and Wales. Consequently the RTPI wishes to state its strong desire to see CESP swiftly lead onto a more generously resourced and extensive programme of measures to address carbon emissions from the existing domestic building stock across the country. The Government has been bold and is taking the necessary actions to with respect to

new residential development and it needs a take a similarly far reaching approach to the existing building domestic building stock. The Governments needs to establish a clear strategy and timetable for the reduction of emissions from the existing domestic sector which ensures that all the funding and initiatives are brought together to maximum effect at the local level.

With regards to the 'Community Approach' outlined in the Consultation, the RTPI feels that there should be a stronger more clearly defined role for Local Authorities within CESP and their involvement should be a mandatory rather than optional component of the programme. The RTPI's position is that there is a need for distinct energy programmes to be coordinated and brought together in a strategic way for the future planning of the area. The role of the local authority and the Local Strategic Partnership in terms of the coordination of local energy infrastructure is very important and they should have a key role in coordinating the delivery of successors to CESP. The functions the consultation document identifies such as identifying potential areas for measures, targeting those households which could most benefit from CESP, tailoring projects to specific locations, community engagement, and identifying synergies with other initiatives, are very important.

It is vital that Local Authorities and LSPs are integrated into a partnership to ensure that measures are not implemented in isolation from the existing energy efficiency and low carbon initiatives within an area. The potential should be there for CESP monies to be directed to more ambitious projects, such as District Heating Schemes, on occasions when it is judged expedient that resources could be focussed on larger, more efficient, and lower cost solutions which serve the wider community. The consultation document notes the potential for CESP to contribute to District Heating whether this is in the form of 'new schemes from scratch,' or 'opportunities for assisting, expanding or improving projects that are already underway or, for whatever reason on hold.' The RTPI feels that there is a need to ensure that the resources of CESP should not be lost as a potential source of funding for District Heating as a result of the timescales for CESP programme delivery, when it is shown to represent an appropriate long-term measure for a community.

I trust the above comments are useful.

If you require any further assistance or would like to meet to discuss the RTPI's climate change policy work and the relationship between this and your strategy, please contact Luke Dickson, Planning Policy Officer on 0207 929 9494 or email [policy@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:policy@rtpi.org.uk).

Yours sincerely,



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