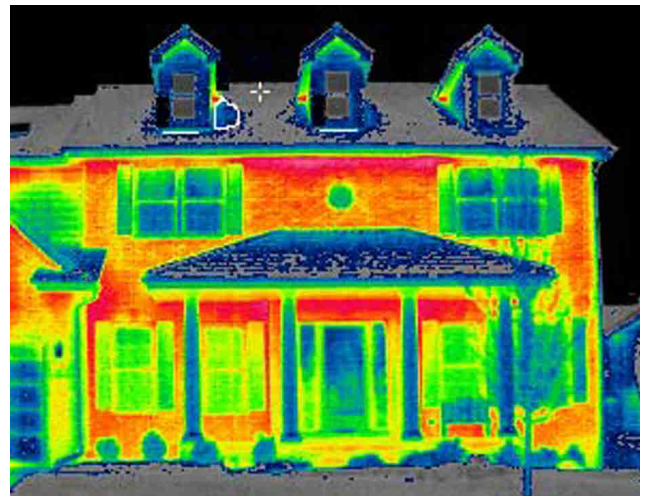


Communicating effectively with the centre-right about household energy-efficiency and renewable energy technologies



Project Team

Lead author: **Dr Adam Corner**, Research Director, Climate Outreach; Honorary Research Fellow in the School of Psychology, Cardiff University

Contributing authors: **George Marshall**, Director of Projects, Climate Outreach; **Jamie Clarke**, Executive Director, Climate Outreach

Editing and Production: **Olga Roberts**, Project Coordinator, Climate Outreach; **Tim Isaksson**, Research Intern, Climate Outreach; **Léane de Laigue**, Head of Communications & Training, Climate Outreach; **Gavin O'Donnell**, Communications Intern, Climate Outreach; **Elise de Laigue**, Designer, Explore Communications (www.explorecommunications.ca)

About Climate Outreach

[Climate Outreach](#) (formerly COIN) is a charity focused on building cross-societal acceptance of the need to tackle climate change. We have over 10 years of experience helping our partners to talk and think about climate change in ways that reflect their individual values, interests and ways of seeing the world. We work with a wide range of partners including central, regional and local governments, charities, business, faith organisations and youth groups.

The Old Music Hall, 106-108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JE, UK

+44 (0) 1865 403 334

info@climateoutreach.org

www.climateoutreach.org

 [@ClimateOutreach](https://twitter.com/ClimateOutreach)

 [Climate Outreach](https://www.facebook.com/ClimateOutreach)

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About Climate Outreach's Centre-right Programme

This is the most recent publication in Climate Outreach's centre-right programme. For further reading:



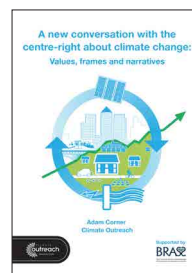
[How to talk climate change with the centre-right - An election guide](#)

April 2015



[A New Conversation on Climate Change with the European Centre-right](#)

January 2015



[A New Conversation with the Centre-right about Climate Change](#)

June 2013

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Executive Summary

With a continuing political polarisation around climate change and energy issues, there is an urgent need to reflect the views of centre-right citizens accurately and to build communications around their values. This report presents the findings of the first rigorous qualitative research in Britain to explore these attitudes in detail. Based on our findings, we recommend the following principles for holding a productive conversation with people of centre-right values:

1. Speak from a 'values up' rather than a 'numbers down' perspective.

Statistics on energy and climate change will not be taken at face value, especially if delivered by a source with low credibility. Instead, use the language identified below to ground conversations in conservative values.

2. Frame energy efficiency in terms of 'avoiding waste'.

Testing finds that this is a very effective framing and speaks more strongly to centre-right values than preventing 'fuel poverty'.

3. Use trusted communicators.

Because of the widespread distrust and cynicism towards individuals and organisations who promote renewable energy technologies and campaign on climate change, it is crucial that engagement with centre-right audiences happens through credible and authentic centre-right networks.

4. Rebuild trust in renewables.

Overcoming the deep-rooted opposition to large-scale wind energy will not be easy - and even solar farms do not have a good reputation. Rebuilding trust is crucial. This means being honest and straightforward about many landowners' motivations for supporting large-scale renewables (i.e. because it is a good business opportunity), and supporting genuine local decision-making around energy technologies (rather than superficial consultations). While this may initially be slower than 'forcing through' renewable energy sitings, the pay off in the longer term - a more robust level of trust in renewables - is a more important goal.

5. Focus on solar schemes at a community-level, sited on roofs and other 'unused' spaces.

There is less suspicion of schemes that generate profits

for local communities and there is widespread support for the 'feed-in tariff' for solar energy. Solar installations on greenfield sites are regarded as damaging the landscape.

6. Be moderate and balanced in describing the efficacy of renewable technologies.

'Big claims' about the transformational potential of large-scale wind and solar are distrusted and may backfire.

7. Make a clear distinction between younger and older centre-right audiences.

Scepticism about climate risks is much rarer among conservatives who are under 30. Communications about climate change should focus on this younger generation, who 'get' the problem but want it presented with distinctly centre-right language solutions.

Communication DO's and DON'Ts

DO	DON'T
✓ Use personal stories that resonate with the audience's key values	✗ Rely on big numbers - claims about the efficiency or profitability of renewable technologies may not be trusted
✓ Use narratives around 'balance', 'responsibility', 'common sense' and 'avoiding waste'	✗ Assume conventional 'environmental' language will work
✓ Talk about the health benefits - link leaky inefficient homes and dirty fossil fuels to poor health outcomes	✗ Assume that 'fuel poverty' is a universally accepted concept - people may defend living with inefficient houses as a measure of personal hardiness
✓ Be moderate and balanced when discussing renewable technologies	✗ Over-hype or exaggerate the likely benefits of renewable technologies - over-optimistic claims are likely to backfire
✓ Be honest and open about the challenges of transitioning to a low carbon economy	✗ Focus on the investment opportunities in renewable technologies - they are not yet viewed as a place for 'smart money'
✓ Use credible and authentic messengers	✗ Assume big corporations are well-regarded
✓ Rebuild trust by being straightforward about the motivations of the renewables industry: that it is a business opportunity (as the fossil fuel industry was before it)	✗ Rely on messengers who are perceived as having a vested interest in renewables
✓ Focus on local democracy and community-based renewable generation	✗ Assume any positive acceptance of renewable infrastructure, particularly large-scale wind farms
✓ Differentiate between younger and older centre-right audiences	✗ Antagonise older and probably more sceptical audiences by forcing the issue of climate change

Introduction

Climate Outreach undertook a process of targeted research in the UK to develop an evidence base of the frames and narratives that would resonate most strongly with centre-right audiences around renewables and energy efficiency. **This report summarises the work and makes a series of recommendations to**

be taken forward by those wishing to have a productive conversation with the wider British public.

The core of the research focused on a series of four 'narrative workshops' with centre-right citizens (two in rural and two in urban locations). During these workshops, participants discussed their values

and social views, their conservative identity, their views about energy and climate change and were presented with four 'narratives' about energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies. Each narrative was framed using different language, carefully designed to speak to different centre-right values (see p.15 for the full narratives).

Narrative 1

Avoiding Waste is Common Sense



Narrative 2

Health & Quality of Life

Narrative 3

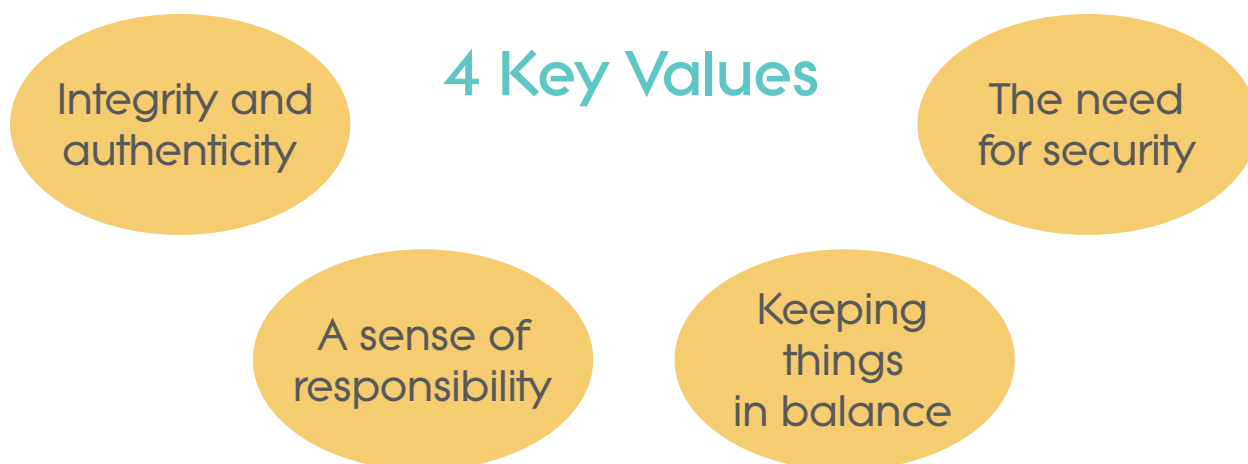
Great British Energy



Narrative 4

The Smart Money

Across all four groups, in both rural and urban locations, we observed an identifiable pattern of values and a consistent use of words and frames that define their distinct centre-right identity. These values provide the foundations on which to build effective communications around energy and climate change.



The centre-right voters we engaged generally endorsed the reality of climate change, but there was widespread agreement that it was an issue associated with the left of politics. Outright rejection of anthropogenic climate change was not common, and confined to older participants in rural locations, typically male.

There is however widespread cynicism among conservatives about renewable energy technologies, as well as some degree of scepticism about the nature and seriousness of human-induced climate change.

There was strong and consistent opposition to large-scale wind energy,

even among those participants who were concerned about climate change, and engaged with the sorts of energy policies needed to decarbonise the energy sector.

Younger participants did not express any scepticism about the risks of climate change, and in general were much better informed about climate risks and policies.

"Climate change has an image problem."

Conventional environmentalist images of global impacts do not relate well to the localised concerns of mainstream conservatives. (Corner et al, 2016)



Key Findings

There was strong **distrust of the data** contained in our narratives - around excess winter deaths from cold houses, and the level of investment in the renewables sector - as well as strong **cynicism about the motives of those who promote (or profit from) renewable energy technologies**. There was a widespread sense that energy and **climate change is an issue driven by left-wing political priorities** and prone to hype and exaggeration (i.e. not 'balanced').

None of the four narratives were endorsed word-for-word, but the narrative framed around the idea of **Avoiding Waste** was the

most positively received, and seemed to resonate best with core centre-right values around responsibility and 'common sense'. This narrative was focused on energy efficiency - a much less contentious issue than renewables.

The central idea in the narrative on **Health & Quality of Life**, of linking leaky homes and 'dirty' forms of fossil fuel energy to poor health outcomes, attracted mostly positive reactions. However, the language of fuel poverty and people 'deserving better' did not resonate well.

The idea in the **Great British Energy** narrative that local

democracy is (or should be) the backbone of Britain was strongly supported across all four groups. There is an opportunity to build trust around renewables through genuine local decision-making on community energy.

Easily the least favoured narrative was the **Smart Money** concept: the figures about investment in renewables were widely distrusted and dismissed, the notion that renewables were now 'mainstream' was viewed as misleading, and the focus on big corporations taking climate change seriously was not well-received.



Underline the benefits and opportunities for local communities when talking about renewable energy

Recommended Language (and why it works)

This recommended language is derived from the sections of the narratives that were responded to in a consistently positive way by participants in the discussion groups.

Start with centre-right values

No-one likes to see things go to waste: it's just common sense. You teach your kids that it is irresponsible to waste things - to finish their dinner and not throw away food, and to turn off the lights in rooms when they're not using them. But millions of us live in old houses filled with gaps and holes that are drafty in the winter - we're literally throwing energy away. That's why energy efficiency is so important: who can argue with the idea of doing more with less?

The narrative that focused on avoiding waste as a frame for discussing energy efficiency received the best response - it follows from key centre-right values of responsibility, pragmatism, and common sense.

Environmental issues affect the air we breathe, and our quality of life.

Linking climate change to people's lives directly is important.

Just like the economy, a responsible, long-term energy policy demands a willingness to take decisions today for the good of tomorrow.

This was the only element in the 'Smart Money' narrative that resonated well.



Bad vs. better - the audience needs to know that the messenger's values align with theirs

Use personal stories and testimony, not 'big numbers' to talk about climate change

Recently I met a lady in Canada and she said that ice the size of the Empire State building is breaking away from a glacier near to where she lives and falling into the sea every single day. She said it's atrocious. It really melts your heart, you feel heartbroken when you see this.

(Male, Bradford)

I think we're experiencing more weather extremes like the floods a couple of years ago. They cost billions to fix and put a lot of people out of their homes. A lot of our land - good, fertile land for farming - is disappearing when we have these disasters, and there will be a loss of heritage coastlines as sea levels rise.

(Male, Richmond)



Don't force the issue

Even if you don't believe in climate change it's just a practicality. We know we have limited amounts of fossil fuels. We're going to need alternatives regardless of whether you believe in climate change or not.

(Young female, Barcombe)

At a minimum, reducing the risks of climate change is a very prudent course to take. If we are wrong and climate change is nothing to do with us, then there's not a lot of harm done. But if it's correct then it's important that we do what we can to correct it.

(Male, Barcombe)

The importance of balance and 'being prudent' in the face of risks was highlighted by participants.

Rely on the logic of energy efficiency and avoid the more contentious concept of 'fuel poverty'

If people have worked hard all their lives, they shouldn't have to spend their later years in cold, damp conditions caused by draughty, leaky homes.

Participants drew a distinction between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' fuel poor. Linking the need for insulated homes to 'hard work' can help to overcome this concern.

Focus on smaller-scale 'community-owned' renewables wherever possible

Perhaps we cannot be completely self-sufficient. But we can do a lot better at producing our own energy through community-owned solar and wind projects, with input from local people, and communities sharing in the profits. Local democracy is the backbone of Britain.

The idea of local democracy being the 'backbone' of Britain was strongly endorsed, although not everyone believed that energy decisions should be left up to local people.

Be honest and authentic when campaigning on large-scale renewables

Let's be honest here: this isn't about 'saving the planet', this is about knowing a good business opportunity when it presents itself.

Clean energy technologies are an opportunity to rebuild the British manufacturing base.

Centre-right audiences are highly attuned to hypocrisy - be honest, and straightforward about the different motives people have for supporting renewables, and focus on the opportunity to rebuild the British manufacturing base.



Background

One of the greatest obstacles for public engagement and government action on climate change has been the polarisation of attitudes around political worldviews in the English-speaking world. Although climate change originated in a politically neutral scientific discourse, since 2005 it has become increasingly polarised along political lines.

There is no inherent reason why climate change and the centre-right should be incompatible. However, there is a vacuum where a coherent and compelling conservative narrative on climate change should be.

The challenge, for climate change communicators of all political stripes, is to identify the ideas that will fire the imagination of citizens with centre-right values more effectively than climate-sceptic arguments do. But the scientific facts about climate change have not been presented in a way that meshes easily with a centre-right philosophy. The conversation with centre-right citizens about climate change has got off on the wrong foot. This means that opposition to climate change policies has become mixed up with a rejection of the science and the seriousness of the problem.

The unexpected election of a majority Conservative government in May 2015 wrong footed many climate campaigners who had invested their efforts in a very different outcome. While the government publicly endorses the agreement reached at the Paris COP, there is a sense that climate policies are not a priority for its core supporters. Energy industry stakeholders and climate campaigners alike are concerned about the longer term government commitment to this issue.

The need to develop a strategic and evidence-based approach to more effectively engaging centre-right citizens and politicians has only become more urgent. People with these values constitute a large proportion

of the British public, and politicians and campaigners who can speak well to their values hold considerable influence. Obtaining the support of the centre-right for urgent climate action is key to the transformation to a low carbon economy and the lack of engagement among this demographic remains a major barrier.

In June 2015, Climate Outreach carried out a process of targeted research using a narrative workshop format to explore the frames and narratives that resonate most strongly with people of centre-right values. The result is the first direct empirical evidence in the UK on how centre-right citizens engage with different language and framing on energy and climate change.



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Methodology

Literature review

Since 2012, Climate Outreach has published **three reports on engaging the centre-right around energy and climate change, at the UK and European level** (Corner, 2013; Marshall & Corner, 2015; Marshall et al, 2015). These are the most complete resources on engaging the British centre-right on energy and climate change currently available, and contain detailed analyses of the challenge involved, as well as suggested language, frames and narratives for more effective centre-right engagement.

To inform the design of the narrative workshops (described below), we thoroughly reviewed the material and references contained in these reports. We conducted a citation search for more recent research publications containing guidance on centre-right engagement and found none for the United Kingdom or Europe. We found some relevant material from the United States, for example EcoAmerica (2015). We evaluated their findings carefully in light of the large cultural differences between British and American conservatives. We include

some of the key sources in the References section at the end of the report.

In addition, **an analysis of the language in key speeches and announcements made by the Conservative government** on climate change was conducted in the three months following the May 2015 General Election (see Appendix 1).

Stakeholder interviews

We conducted a series of **informal interviews with six key voices on centre-right engagement with energy and climate change**. Some interviewees requested that they remain anonymous, but the following participants agreed to be identified:

The Right Honourable Lord Deben, **John Selwyn Gummer**

Ben Goldsmith, Founding Partner of WHEB Group, Chairman for the Conservative Environment Network (CEN)

Simon Roberts CBE, Chief Executive for the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE)

Notably, Lord Deben, Ben Goldsmith (and in addition, although not interviewed, Zac Goldsmith MP) offered their public support for the project

which was extremely useful in recruiting participants for the narrative workshops.

In addition to these individual interviews, a wider group of stakeholders (including representatives of the Energy Bill Revolution, E3G and Green Alliance) were invited to comment on a 'longlist' of narratives and materials to be tested in the narrative workshops.

Narrative workshops with centre-right members of the public

A set of four discussion groups were conducted in September 2015, using the **established Climate Outreach 'narrative workshop' method** which we have used successfully to inform the national Climate Coalition campaign on climate change 'For The Love Of' (Corner & Roberts, 2014a) and identify more effective ways of engaging young people on climate change (Corner & Roberts, 2014b).

Two of the workshops were held in rural locations (Barcombe and Leominster), and two were held in urban locations (Richmond and Bradford). This was to ensure a mix of centre-right participants in the research,

and to allow us to identify any obvious differences between rural and urban conservatives.

45 people participated in the research in total, in groups of between 9-13 people. 60% of participants were male. 65% were 55 or older, 22% aged between 25-54 and 13% were 18-24 years old. Ethnicity-wise, 30 of the participants were white, 5 were Asian and 1 was black. Socio-economic backgrounds were mixed; several participants were elected local councillors or held other local positions of political office in the Conservative Party. Where appropriate, a £30 honorarium was given to each participant on completion of the discussion group.

Following the narrative workshop methodology, the **first half of each discussion followed a 'funnel' design from an open, general conversation about participants values and views**

on social issues, through more focused conversation about energy and climate change, and into a discussion of climate change and political conservatism specifically. The **second half of each workshop was dedicated to the exploration and discussion of a set of four narratives**, designed specially for the project.

The narratives (see p. 15) were short pieces of written text that used different language (drawn from centre-right sources) to describe climate change, and policies that could be employed to address it. Narrative approaches are increasingly viewed as a promising way of deepening public engagement on energy and climate change. They allow careful attention to be paid to the words and phrases that members of the public respond to and provide a vehicle for building on core values that underpin engagement with climate change and sustainability.

A questionnaire administered on recruitment allowed other useful demographic information to be collected. As expected, all participants indicated (on a 10 point scale from 'Left' to 'Right') that they perceived themselves as being on the right of the political spectrum. In response to questions measuring aspects of political worldview and values, there was a trend towards known indicators of political conservatism (e.g. disagreement with a statement that wealth should be distributed more equally). However, responses tended to be quite close to the 'mid-point' of the scales used, suggesting that the groups were indeed centre-right. In addition, we asked participants to select what they considered to be the three most important values to them from a list of 12 (see Appendix 2 for full details of the recruitment questionnaire).



Four Narratives on Energy and Climate Change

We designed and then tested four narratives about energy and climate change, each centred around a different concept (i.e. framed around a particular idea). Each narrative was presented to participants individually - in some groups the facilitator read out the text, in others people read them on their own. Red and green pens were provided so participants could identify particular words or phrases that they liked (green pen) or disliked (red pen) as part of the process of responding to them. Each narrative was approximately the same length.

Avoiding Waste is Common Sense



TARGET

Energy efficiency

KEY CONCEPTS

Avoiding waste is common sense; wasting is un-conservative; conserving is conservative; avoiding waste is something we can all agree on; a good upbringing tells you not to waste things; it's stupid not to save energy; everyone supports it; there is a social norm around not wasting; who would argue with doing more with less.

NARRATIVE

No-one likes to see things go to waste: it's just common sense. If you bring your kids up well, you teach them that it is irresponsible to waste things - to finish their dinner and not throw away food, and to turn off lights in rooms when they are not using them.

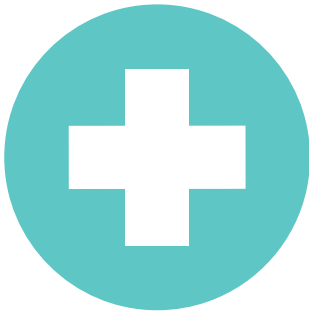
But millions of us live in old houses filled with gaps and holes that are draughty in the winter - we're literally throwing energy away. Insulating them means we get warmer homes that are cosier, more comfortable to live in and better for our health.

That's what energy efficiency is about: who can argue with the idea of doing more with less? Conserving energy is a conservative thing to do.

It is lovely if you live in a neighbourhood where there is hardly any litter. More and more people are composting their food waste, and almost everything the council pick up from people's houses is recycled. It feels like we are really getting somewhere with packaging and recycling. So then it doesn't make sense when you see offices across the city with their lights on, wasting electricity. It's no better than fly tipping, wasting energy when you don't need to.

It's our energy - so it's only fair that we should all use it responsibly, and not waste it for no good reason.

Health & Quality of Life



TARGET

Energy efficiency
& Renewables

KEY CONCEPTS

Quality of life; living a better life for less; health and well-being; having pride in your home; making the links to climate change, renewables and energy efficiency; deserving better.

NARRATIVE

Any sensible person can't help but be troubled by the condition of the pavements, vandalism and crime, litter and the cleanliness of the air we breathe. These are all environmental issues that affect our quality of life, and climate change is exactly the same. The winter floods in 2013/14 destroyed billions of pounds of property. Homes that people had worked hard and saved for all their lives were ruined. Taking practical steps to keep these threats at bay is a sensible response.

Doctors and the British Medical Association tell us that unchecked climate change will increase asthma, heatstroke and allergies, with serious impacts on the health of the youngest and oldest people. Using cleaner forms of energy such as solar and wind power to control our carbon emissions will reduce air and water pollution. And cleaner air saves lives.

Poorly insulated homes are making life miserable for elderly people who have worked hard all their lives, and don't deserve to spend their later years in cold or damp conditions. Every winter 10,000 people die in the UK because they live in a cold home - that's more than die from drugs, car accidents or alcohol-related diseases.

So getting to grips with our leaky houses is really about improving our quality of life - and saving the lives of people who deserve better.

Great British Energy



TARGET

Renewables

KEY CONCEPTS

Local democracy; localism; fairness; transparency and openness; taking a balanced approach; rebalancing the debate; making local voices heard; a community 'right to beauty'; building an energy system; self-sufficiency and homegrown British energy.

NARRATIVE

No one really wants to live next door to a wind turbine. But ask yourself this: would you rather live next door to a wind turbine or a fracking well?

Local democracy is the backbone of Britain, so decisions about energy technologies should be taken by local communities. We have to make the right choices to preserve the landscape and countryside of Britain for our children and grandchildren, as well as the millions of people who live and work in the countryside right now.

Over the years, we have cleaned up our rivers, banished smog from our cities, and protected our forests. But climate change poses even greater dangers: more frequent and extreme flooding causing damage to our homes and livelihoods, disruption to seasonal changes, and the wildlife which depends on them.

Perhaps we cannot be completely self-sufficient, but we can do a lot better at producing our own energy, through community-owned solar and wind projects. We need to learn from places like Germany that are way out in front on this. They've got hundreds of small energy enterprises where people share in the profits and have a real sense of pride, ownership and responsibility.

There's no reason we couldn't do the same. Clean energy technologies are a golden opportunity to rebuild our manufacturing base - Great British Energy that will provide jobs for thousands, represent a sound investment in the future, and ensure that we leave a strong legacy for future generations.

The Smart Money



TARGET

Renewables &
Energy efficiency

KEY CONCEPTS

An investment opportunity; not getting left behind by a change that is inevitable; divestment; renewables are mainstream not alternative.

NARRATIVE

Sometimes people talk about wind or solar as 'alternative' technologies. But they're not any more: they are very much part of the mainstream. Investment in clean energy has exploded - more than \$1,462 billion since the start of 2010, and the world is adding more capacity in renewable power each year than coal, gas and oil combined. The price of renewables is falling dramatically: the smart money is in the clean energy sector.

That's why calls for 'divestment' and taking money out of the fossil fuel industry have struck a chord. We shouldn't demonise a sector that has done so much for billions of people's living standards, but we need to recognise that the future lies in renewable technologies like solar and wind, not in the fossil fuels of the 20th century.

The short-term costs associated with creating a lean, green economy will deliver long-term benefits for everyone. Insulating properties now (and making them more efficient) will cut down the amount of wasted energy, and put money in people's pockets. It's good business-sense, which is why more and more big businesses 'get it'.

Ikea, Unilever, Marks & Spencers are all taking climate change and sustainability very, very seriously - because it is a serious issue. Just like a sound investment strategy, a responsible, long-term energy policy demands a willingness to take decisions today for the good of tomorrow. And a reliable, resilient energy system will power the economy.

Main Learnings from the Narrative Workshops

Centre-right values and social views: the context for engaging on climate change

In our recruitment survey, the three most popular values were **'being responsible'**, **'family security'** and **'freedom'**. In addition to these, discussion in the narrative workshops pointed to other key values - **integrity, loyalty, being 'straightforward' and authenticity** - that were consistently identified as important among participants.

Discussion of participants' values and wider social views is a crucial first step in the narrative workshops, and helps to ground and contextualise the views expressed later about energy and climate change. For example, one participant in the Leominster group, when asked to identify a trait or characteristic they admired, said:

“*Educating parents to teach children that when you want something and you get it that you need to treasure it and look after it otherwise what's the point?*”

This strongly echoes the central concept in one of the four tested narratives (avoiding waste is common sense), and gives a powerful

(unprompted) steer that language around waste might be an effective way of engaging this audience. Another participant in Leominster defined being conservative in the following way:

“*Keeping and respecting what we do have and keeping society and everything going. It's not about what we can have now and take, take, take. It's about the next generation and conserving it and keeping the balance.*”

In fact, several other participants (across multiple groups) also identified the notion of **'keeping a balance'** as something that was important to them - in general, but also in the context of climate and energy policies. This value has previously been identified in Climate Outreach's work with faith groups as an important lens through which people of faith think about the relationship between humans and the natural world (Marshall, 2015).



Views on energy and climate change

There were some important differences between the four groups in terms of scepticism about climate change. In

Leominster, there was a vocal minority of strongly sceptical participants, as this extract from the transcript shows:



"When I said in the pub I was coming to a climate change discussion there were six of us standing at the bar..."



"...and they all laughed!" (general laughter from the group)



"They were all significant climate change deniers and I have a lot of sympathy with that position."

While not representative of the majority of the participants across the groups, it is important to note that the notion of being concerned about climate change may be considered a joke, or socially scorned in some centre-right networks.

For some on the centre-right, publicly supporting a climate change or energy campaign overtly associated with a 'green NGO' could be a source of social embarrassment.

The Richmond group (as might be expected given that their constituency MP, Zac Goldsmith, is a prominent

environmentalist), were by far the best informed about climate change, and no sceptical views were expressed. In general, **scepticism was concentrated in the two rural groups, but seemed to be more closely determined by the age of participants rather than the rural/urban distinction.** The rural groups had a greater proportion of retired or older members, but the younger participants in these rural groups tended to challenge sceptical views about the science. This supports Climate Outreach's previous work with young people (Corner & Roberts, 2014b). In response to a series

of comments from older participants doubting the role of humans in causing climate change, two younger group members responded in this way:

“

I know there are some scientists that don't believe that climate change has been caused by climate change but if you ask the scientific community today, the vast majority would say that it is." (Young male, Barcombe)

“

It's as proven as you can be in science" (Young female, Barcombe)



Climate change was largely identified as an issue of the left, and there was widespread agreement that it has an 'image problem':

“ I blame the media. The media have dumbbed it down in a way. They've made it all about Greenpeace and things like that and not everybody has those values and a lot of people just aren't concerned about it.” (Female, Bradford)

“ I think it's got a bad press. If you read the press generally it's not being sold to the public... how important it is. Derogatory things have come into it and the general public are not enthusiastic about getting behind climate change” (Female, Richmond)

“ Because the argument has been hijacked by the green lobby and an agenda to reduce economic growth, generally right-wingers perceive the whole issue as being a threat to everyone's standard of living and everyone's wary rather than looking at the arguments objectively. There is now an emotional reaction that if it's coming from that quarter then it's untrustworthy.” (Male, Barcombe)

However, among the younger participants at least, there was a **clear**

awareness that there was a need for a more prominent conservative perspective on climate change, and that having such a perspective was a question of credibility:

“ It's almost seen as a given that any party who has aspirations to be in government or part of the government believes in climate change. I think they think that we are using our fossil fuels far too quickly and quite frankly if everyone in this room was at Number 10 and happy to say 'I don't think climate change is an issue and I don't think we should be moving forward with any ways of tackling it' then I'd be very surprised.” (Young male, Barcombe)

In every group, there was some discussion of the role that bigger emitters (in particular India and China) played - and whether the UK's contribution was significant enough to matter. However, while there was some agreement with the idea that the UK's emissions were simply “a pinprick”

relative to global emissions, the discussion in each group acknowledged the UK's historical responsibility for carbon emissions. In the Richmond group, it was suggested that while the UK contribution to climate change was relatively small, it could still demonstrate leadership elsewhere:

“ I think we're forerunners. We are a mouthpiece for climate change. We've gone a long way towards getting America back on the right road...When I think of these big climate change conferences we've had... we had a huge amount of influence on them” (Female, Richmond)

“ I think we're more capable of adapting to floods and surges than say the Philippines or Bangladesh. What we can do is invest in our river system and flood defences. That's knowledge and information we can share around the world” (Male, Richmond)



Views about renewable energy technologies - specifically wind farms in rural areas, but also large scale solar farms, and to some extent wind turbines in general - were strongly negative. They were disliked, seen as marginal, 'alternative', ineffective, unreliable and not yet ready to be depended on for secure energy. Even in the strongly pro-climate change Richmond group (where participants acknowledged the need to decarbonise the energy sector), wind turbines were viewed with a mixture of suspicion and disdain. In other groups they were often dismissed altogether, and in strong, passionate terms. As even a young, low-carbon advocate in Barcombe put it:

“*I think wind turbines have given renewable energy a pretty bad name... you all just said why they are no good and not fit for purpose*” (Young female, Barcombe)

Opposition to large-scale wind and solar developments was driven by a number of concerns: the aesthetics of the technologies; their placement in inappropriate rural locations; their impact on the landscape and wildlife (particularly birds); their inefficiency; and, consistently, the fact that people (in particular farmers) were seen to be making an unreasonable amount of money from them (while ordinary people paid higher energy bills to subsidise

them). **This was a strong, powerful and widely shared narrative about large-scale wind developments and is a major challenge for engaging this group more positively on this issue.**

While an entrepreneurial spirit and the pursuit of profitable business ventures are very much part of a centre-right ideology, the tension with wind farms (and renewable energy in general) seems to be **a perceived conflict between the motivations of supporters of renewable energy (i.e. to make money from them) and their publicly stated positions (i.e. that it is for the good of the environment)**. It is this conflict and perceived hypocrisy rather than the concept of making a profit per se that seems to drive the strong opposition to wind farms we observed in all four groups.

A consistent theme which emerged from the group discussions was the importance of credibility and authenticity - these qualities were perceived to be lacking in advocates of renewable energy technologies and climate change campaigners more generally. Big institutions - governments, businesses, and lobbyists for renewable energy - were all seen as being untrustworthy. Furthermore, there was significant cynicism about the efficacy of low-carbon energy technologies, and a general view that many environmental initiatives were simply 'for show' or

driven by a desire to appear morally superior.

On a more positive note, **there was very little active support for fossil fuels**, although some more sceptical participants suggested that coal-fired power stations had been closed too early, compromising energy security. However - and reinforcing the importance of the idea of 'balance' for the centre-right - there was a general view that the right approach to the energy mix was to include a mixed portfolio of options:

“*The other thing that is worrying me is that you lump oil and coal and gas in one pile and solar and wind in the other. You haven't actually looked at tidal or some of the other green technologies. We haven't looked at carbon capture and storage. There is no nuclear here (in the narratives) which obviously has big problems but... it worries me that we are taking things to extremes and not being asked to look at the range of options.*” (Male, Barcombe)

Finally, the antagonism towards renewable energy technologies did not extend to energy efficiency: as the following section shows, conserving energy through better insulation was something that most participants endorsed as wholly consistent with a conservative worldview.



Narrative 1 - Avoiding Waste is Common Sense

This was consistently the most popular narrative. It tapped into several core centre-right values - being responsible and the importance of common sense - and the idea that it is irresponsible to waste things (from food, to resources, to energy) resonated strongly. In part, the strength of Narrative 1 derived from the fact that, unprompted, several participants (in different groups) had used very similar language themselves in describing their views earlier in the

discussion groups. Of all the narratives, it seemed to provide the closest fit with a centre-right worldview, and even among participants sceptical about climate change, the logic of avoiding waste was not rejected:

“There’s not much there I would argue about. I’m of a certain generation. My mother’s generation wouldn’t waste anything and I wouldn’t want to see things wasted” (Male, Barcombe)

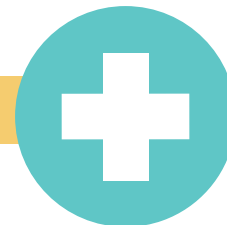
It also seemed to transcend the sense of ‘political correctness’ that plagues the issue of climate change for many on the centre-right:

“Beyond this [climate change] is the real principle at stake here about how flagrantly we are using the Earth’s resources in this appalling way and not considering future generations... allowing them to inherit these problems...we don’t need to use as much as we do” (Female, Barcombe)



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While the narrative was well-received, certain elements were challenged. Participants in Bradford felt that it would not work well in inner city neighbourhoods where littering and fly-tipping is a constant problem, and that living in a ‘lovely neighbourhood’ where there is hardly any litter would not connect in poorer communities. It was widely refuted that we are ‘getting somewhere’ with packaging and recycling (many felt this did not ring true), and it was felt that parents should not be made to feel guilty for ‘not bringing their children up properly’. The responsibility for educating children about avoiding waste was seen as wider than that (with an important role for schools).



This narrative received a mixed response. On the one hand, the central idea of linking leaky homes and 'dirty' forms of fossil fuel energy to worse health outcomes attracted mostly positive reactions:

“As a care manager I've been into plenty of homes where especially the elderly who own their own homes haven't had the money to do them up and keep them up and don't have any heating and it is one of the main factors to why they're dying. It may be exacerbated by an illness they've got but it does help to cause it” (Female, Leominster)

Research, especially from the US, has found that sceptical audiences will engage more willingly with climate change when it is presented in a health framing (Myers, T. et al, 2012). There was some acknowledgment that bringing climate change closer to people's everyday lives through issues such as 'the air we breathe' was a viable strategy for making it more understandable:

“Being able to link climate change immediately with your life is quite key. It allows people to relate to the changes and how they can impact your life... I think being able to link climate change to helping older and younger people is good” (Male, Richmond)

However, especially among some of the older participants, there was doubt that air pollution was still a significant issue, with some remembering first hand the much worse conditions in the first half of the 20th century. And some (older) participants dismissed the idea that the elderly were particularly vulnerable, preferring to see cold houses as a proof of the traditional virtue of hardiness:

“Officially I'm elderly and I live in an old and draughty home and I've worked hard all my life and I'm not miserable” (Male, Leominster)

This provides further evidence that age is an important factor to consider when engaging centre-right audiences, and also speaks to the consistent underlying theme of climate change campaigns lacking credibility and authenticity. Crucially, it also suggests that the concept of 'fuel poverty' is not uncritically accepted among this audience. In two of the four groups this

narrative was identified as sounding especially unsuitable for centre-right audiences:

“Talking about people that deserve better is typical left language” (Female, Barcombe)

Another way in which the credibility of this narrative was challenged was doubting that the statistic on excess winter deaths was true. This was partly because the source of the figures was unacknowledged (and so attributed to climate change campaigners even though the source was the Office for National Statistics), and partly because of the mention of the British Medical Association, to which many participants attributed politicised motives.

There was also consistent rejection of the idea that social issues (such as vandalism and crime) should be associated with environmental issues and climate change.





One key concept in this narrative - that local democracy is (or should be) the backbone of Britain - was strongly supported across all four groups. However, whilst there was broad support for involving local communities more actively in decision-making about energy infrastructure, there was also a sense across the groups that energy policy was something that needed to be driven by national decision making:

“Well that’s a really powerful argument isn’t it, to say ‘well if you, as a local community, don’t want this form of energy then what do you want? It’s in your hands’. And we actually find that quite hard don’t we but I think it’s going to be a very important thing for us in this coming century” (Female, Richmond)

“The conflict is between the energy company and the local people. Most people would prefer not to have it. You have to overcome that and make the process of the dispute meaningful. It’s like people who protest about new houses on the green belt because they’re going to lose their view and often forget that when their houses were built it blocked the view of people behind them.” (Male, Leominster)

The slightly tongue-in-cheek question in the opening line of the narrative - whether people would prefer to live next door to a wind turbine or a fracking well - was roundly rejected as a legitimate choice, with (unexpectedly) several participants stridently answering that they would prefer to live near a fracking well. This goes against what has been found in nationally representative polling¹, where even among Conservative and UKIP voters, there is a preference for living close to a wind turbine rather than a fracking well.

“People need to consider local concerns as there will be opposition to all energy projects. I think shale gas and wind farm concerns are almost one and the same. It’s not the source of energy that is being produced, it’s the disruption and the risks to housing for those local people” (Male, Richmond)

Opinion on the notion that the UK could learn from Germany’s example was split. While several participants agreed that saving time and

money by learning from pioneering nations was a good thing, some challenged the idea that the German and British governance structures are similar enough to draw that conclusion.

Overall, this narrative suffered because of the general distrust of large-scale wind and solar projects, although the notion of rebuilding the UK’s manufacturing base was well-received. Moving away from large-scale renewables, however, the concept of local communities sharing in the profits of smaller, community-owned energy projects was popular:

“There is one serious point in this paper, that if you do have these community-based renewable schemes - and there aren’t any in this country... I think there are in Scotland - if you’re going to have new schemes, then ensure some of the money goes to the community. If you’re going to do this, this should be the model” (Male, Barcombe)



¹ <http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/sep/04/people-prefer-living-near-wind-turbines-to-fracking-wells-survey>



This was consistently the least favoured narrative.

This finding has important implications for communicators using pro-business arguments for renewables.

Most of the groups expressed doubts about the true motivations of big business.

While the idea that decarbonising made 'good business sense' was positively received, the inclusion of corporations (Ikea, Unilever, M&S) in the narrative was unpopular. These organisations were not seen as particularly trusted messengers and there was a consistent sense that they were primarily motivated by their public reputation and profits (and, on the same principle, that government supported renewables in order to increase its revenue). For some participants the very term "smart money" suggested "self-interested fat cats" and the feeling that "I'll end up paying more for it".

"These companies will take it seriously up to a point but they are enormously greedy... it's all to make money" (Female, Leominster)

"There is a commercial angle to this. We are sponsored to think that way because governments make money out of it" (Male, Bradford)

As we found with the 'big numbers' in Narrative 2 (regarding extra winter deaths from cold homes), **the figures in this narrative were repeatedly challenged and doubted**, in particular the idea that renewables are now a 'smart investment'. This reinforces the importance of winning centre-right support from a 'values-up' rather than 'numbers down' approach.

The figures in fact came from an article by a prominent conservative, Ben Caldecott. However, because the source

was not referenced, the figures were automatically assumed to come from an unreliable source such as a solar panel company or a campaigning organisation.

"Where does this \$14 million come from, what's the source. It's rubbish. It cannot be taken seriously, it's bad research... It's written to be shiny and eye-catching" (Male, Leominster)

Cost was a frequent frame throughout all the discussions.

Some participants argued that the real costs of renewables were underestimated and then passed on to energy consumers. Because the pro-business narrative did not address these concerns, it appeared for many to reinforce that suspicion further.

"We're all getting conned and why should old people be (...) paying more on their electricity energy bills in order to have other people make a load of money?" (Male, Barcombe)

Finally, the strongly financial framing of this narrative was identified as being more suited for a business audience than a public one:

"All this feels like an intellectual essay rather than instructions on how I can change my behaviour" (Female, Richmond)



Appendix 1

DECC climate-related statements: May 2015–Sept. 2015

This appendix contains an analysis of language and frames used in five Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) statements made in the three months following the May 2015 General Election. These include a blog and a speech (delivered at Aviva's 2015 conference, 'Climate Change: The Financial Implications') by Amber Rudd MP, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, as well as three DECC blogs. Phrases in bold are key frames and narratives which are direct quotes from the original transcripts and texts.

Amber Rudd finished her speech at the 2015 Aviva insurance conference saying that climate action makes '**cold economic sense**'. This frame is quite versatile as it can relate to business, finances on a national scale and the finances of individuals, and, arguably, it is a topic that the majority of people have a great interest in. So much so that we see the phrase '**keeping the bills of hardworking people as low as possible**' featured in practically every statement.

Here, climate change is an **economic risk**, one that **left unchecked** is one of the **greatest long-term** economic risks to this country. The phrase '**unchecked climate change**' appears prominently and fits within the frame of '**controlling change**'. Given that the frames used by the Conservative Party in the lead up to the election heavily featured the state of the economy, it is unsurprising that a similar tone is continued here. Partnered with a controlled and considered approach, we see '**ambition as conditions allow**'.

Similarly, in Rudd's speech on shale gas, she emphasises how fracking is **good** for our energy security and how it will be **vital** for economic growth.

Climate action is justified as being **protective** of our **prosperity** (and even fracking could be patriotic as it is a **home grown energy** that boosts local economies, increases energy security and reduces demand for imports). Climate

change action is **pro-growth** and it is down to the **private sector to lead the transformation that we need**. The vision for the economy is referred to as being 'clean' or '**low-carbon**' and provisional **figures** are quoted as proof that economic growth and a reduction in carbon emissions is possible.

Changes to the Levy Control Framework are framed as **monitoring the costs** of a **clean economy**. A **breach** of the levy cap is a **burden shouldered by the public**, and by **controlling the costs** we are **pacing ourselves** for what is a **long-term transformation**.

The phrase '**long-term**' also features regularly, and is used as a justification for tempering measures. The idea of '**not moving too quickly**' – as it could '**drive the bills of hardworking people too high**' – is justification for having a more 'measured' approach to actions. This language around forward motion (without moving too quickly) ensures that we use **cutting edge technology** to replace an **outdated system** in order to meet our **needs**; i.e. being responsibly ambitious at fulfilling national needs.

When discussing fracking, it is only referred to as '**development of shale gas**' or '**natural gas**'. Gas is an energy form people are quite familiar with, so moving language away from the new term 'fracking' helps to demonstrate that there's nothing new about this energy form. Reference to the debate about the North

Sea and the UK's high safety and environmental protection standards, again, demonstrates that this is not a new form of debate. Tapping into something that the Nation can be proud of and familiar with makes it difficult for counterarguments to seem positive as they would seemingly have to deny past successes.

In the speech about climate action, Rudd also seeks to dismiss the suspicion that climate action is anti-conservative by mentioning that it was **Margaret Thatcher**, the epitome of British Conservatism, who first raised climate change as an international issue that needed to be addressed. This again helps to build confidence that the stance is one that has been held for a long time and that can be trusted to hold conservative values at heart.

Main frames used: Economic and energy security demonstrating logical deductions; Controlled, responsible and measured response instilling confidence; Decisions to meet needs.

Key words and phrases used: Controlling costs, long-term transformation, unchecked climate change, protection, prosperity, monitoring costs, economic threat, non-negotiable, viable actions, economic growth, is good for, clean energy, low-carbon economy, fulfilling needs, energy security, bringing costs down, pacing ourselves, ambition, building on the record of experience, benefit hardworking people, home grown energy.

Appendix 2

Participant Recruitment Questionnaire for Narrative Workshops - Sept. 2015

About you

1. Name & Email Address

Name

Email Address

2. What is your gender?

☐

Female

☐

Male

3. Please indicate your age:

☐

18 to 24

☐

25 to 34

☐

35 to 44

☐

45 to 54

☐

55 to 64

☐

65 to 74

☐

75 or older

4. Current occupation? (This will remain confidential)

5. What is your ethnicity? (Please select all that apply)

☐

WHITE - British, English, Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish, Irish

☐

MIXED - White & Black Caribbean, White & Black African, White & Asian

☐

ASIAN - Asian, Asian British, Asian Scottish, Asian Welsh, Asian Northern Irish

☐

BLACK - Black, Black British, Black Scottish, Black Welsh, Black Northern Irish

☐

CHINESE - Chinese, Chinese British, Chinese Scottish, Chinese Welsh, Chinese Northern Irish

☐

Do not wish to answer

☐

Other - Please specify:

6. People in our society often disagree about how far to let individuals go in making decisions for themselves. How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of these statements?

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
The government interferes far too much in our everyday lives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The government should do more to advance society's goals, even if that means limiting the freedom and choices of individuals.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. People in our society often disagree about issues of equality and discrimination.

How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of these statements?

	Strongly disagree	Moderately disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Moderately agree	Strongly agree
We have gone too far in pushing equal rights in this country.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our society would be better off if the distribution of wealth was more equal.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. In politics people sometimes talk of "left" and "right".

Using the scale below, where would you place yourself on the political spectrum?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Left									Right

Principles

9. Please select the THREE MOST important guiding principles for your life (from the choices available in the list):

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family security | <input type="checkbox"/> Protecting the environment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoying life | <input type="checkbox"/> Being responsible |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social justice | <input type="checkbox"/> A sense of belonging |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-discipline | <input type="checkbox"/> A world of beauty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Freedom | <input type="checkbox"/> Social order |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Respect for tradition | |

10. Please select the THREE LEAST important guiding principles for your life (from the choices available in the list):

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Freedom | <input type="checkbox"/> A world of beauty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social order | <input type="checkbox"/> Family security |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Protecting the environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoying life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Being responsible | <input type="checkbox"/> Respect for tradition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A sense of belonging | <input type="checkbox"/> Social justice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-discipline | |

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