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Welsh Government

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Smart Living – Local Energy

Shaping the Framework

Response to report and recommendations from
AD Research & Analysis and Centre for
Sustainable Energy (CSE)

Smart Living Workshops

Introduction

Smart Living originated from “Energy Wales: A Low Carbon Transition Programme” as a long-term innovation, research and development theme. This was supplemented with the Minister for Energy Science and Transport’s Statement 20 April 2015 and will be further informed by Green Growth Wales: Local Energy priorities of the Minister for Natural Resources June 2015

Research identifies the importance of innovation in shaping the future and the importance of facilitating the right environment for innovation to become a reality. Developing Smart Living will facilitate key innovation and novel demonstrators in energy and resources that will help to shape and embed successful activities into future smarter activities. This will involve using new technologies, systems and processes to transform homes, businesses, communities and local networks to resolve issues and provide multiple benefits.

Smart Living activities will contribute to Welsh Government Innovation Strategy, Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Energy Efficiency Strategy, Climate Change and Sector Strategies.

Approach

During 2014, desk research and discussions were held with Local Authorities and other key stakeholders to contribute to Welsh Government thinking on what Smart Living should be, what scope it should cover and what role should Welsh Government play in this initiative.

Our thoughts were set out for independent analysis and discussion by AD Research & Analysis and the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) which culminated in two workshops held in Cardiff and Wrexham in February 2015 to inform development of the Smart Living theme. The workshops were focused on core potential stakeholders to help forge ownership and test potential principles, proposed scope and help shape the framework that is needed to help guide activity in this area.

Over 85 people and 35 organisations were represented at the event and a final report was issued which reflected the outcome of the workshops to which this document sets out our response. The workshop report can be found on the website <http://adranda.co.uk/workshops/>

Recommendations

The Report made three key recommendations:

- **A Smart Living Framework**

To set out the Government’s vision of the kind of Smart Living that it would like to see and will encourage. This will mostly be expressed as a set of principles and processes, recognising that Smart Living will be different in each place where it is achieved. Such a Framework document would answer the core questions expressed in the workshops

- **Establish a Technical Group**

To provide innovative and technical advice, make connections and access resources for Smart Living. This recommendation responds to the emergent nature of Smart Living and the necessity for co-production of a range of stakeholders as no one organisation holds all the answers.

- **A Smart Living Demonstrator Roadmap**

It is important that Smart Living reports on progress and points the way ahead for activities. This rolling report or tool would demonstrate progress and impacts achieved to-date, respond to calls for co-ordination across Smart Living activities occurring in different places across Wales and begin to answer questions about what Smart Living will look like in the future.

Welsh Government accepts the recommendations as steps needed to ensure that Smart Living provides relevant structure and guidance for key stakeholders as well as ensure ongoing interaction and input via the Technical Group to continue to shape its emergent characteristics.

Smart Living Framework

The report recommends Welsh Government provide a framework which addresses key questions and closely reflects conclusions reached by the workshop participants covering rationale for Welsh Government involvement, potential roles played by Welsh Government and suggests adopting a coherent picture of Smart Living to be built from the principles and definitions suggested by participants.

As part of the framework a revised set of criteria is proposed to inform potential projects considered to fall within the Smart Living theme. It was recommended the criteria be subject to internal discussion and agreement due to the cross departmental nature of potential activities.

Welsh Government agrees the proposed sections provide a coherent structure for the Smart Living framework and covers key questions and conclusions reached from the workshop discussions.

The set of criteria for demonstrators will be discussed internally by the Smart Living Project Board which covers a wide cross section of Departments including social, economic and environmental interests

Smart Living Technical Group

The report recommends setting up a technical group to provide challenge and support to Welsh Government to help carry the Smart Living agenda forward. Suggested membership included academics, energy companies, network operators, local authorities, businesses, consultants and think tanks, community and energy groups, health and social care and regeneration influencers.

The report was clear that the proposed group should be action orientated and not simply add an additional layer of governance. Suggestions for its role include helping to identify priority demonstrator areas, provide an external input to thinking on proposals, help with design and development issues that demonstrators may face, pinpoint and where possible draw in alternative sources of finance as well as utilising their own networks for communication and dissemination of Smart Living activities.

Welsh Government acknowledges the importance of Smart Living retaining an innovative edge. It notes the importance of an action orientated rather than governance role for the group. Achieving the right balance and membership of the group will be critical to ensure the relevant challenge and support is provided for Smart Living. Welsh Government will consider the best way of achieving this and what constitutional basis the Group should take

Smart Living Demonstrator mapping

The report recommended establishing a revolving Smart Living map which provides details of emerging demonstrators, the cross departmental interests, the variety of potential stakeholders and the matrix of funding investments involved to build credible innovative and novel proposals. This would help to inform pipeline development and disseminate information on progress being made with current demonstrators.

Of a descriptive and tabular nature the document should be annually updated and describe the context, stages of demonstrator activity from pipeline to delivery over a sufficient timespan. Activities should reflect Smart Living principles/criteria to show progress being made against the Smart Living Framework and signal priorities to be worked on.

Welsh Government agrees the need to provide details of Smart Living demonstrators to report on delivery of the Smart Living Framework as well as identifying continuing gaps to be worked on for pipeline development. It should also signal to a wide range of partners the potential for demonstrations in Wales and how such activity fits within current and future policies.