Negotiating sustainability between the micro and the macro policy terrain: 

providing a political seedbed for behaviour change at the local level

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UNLOC: Understanding Local and Community Governance of Energy

Behaviour Change, Energy and Climate Change Conference 2011
Structure of the presentation:

1. Pathways to sustainability: barriers and drivers at multiple levels

2. The increasing focus on the meso level

3. Examples of successful meso led responses in the UK and elsewhere
What is the problem, where is the solution?

- Our society faces structural, wicked problems which cannot be solved with incremental changes.
- Increasing societal complexity forces us to think and act in a more innovative manner.
- System complexity requires new way of looking at the nature of our wicked problems.
- Societal complexity requires a new way of governance.

(Rotmans 2002)
Key themes around the transition to a more sustainable society

- Governance and governing mechanisms now a much broader phenomenon than the traditional relationship between state actors, political institutions and the authoritative allocation of resources.

- Sustainability involves coordinating, engaging and steering different political positions around policy objectives.

- Current institutional structures promote different levels of agency, efficacy and motivation across different levels of policy making.
Pathways to sustainability: the challenge of inter-organizational complexity

Sustainable development levels

Levels of Governance

- International
- Macro-Regional
- National
- Local
- Individual
## Theorising transition pathways

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The macro level</th>
<th>The meso level</th>
<th>The micro level</th>
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<tr>
<td>- International, regional and national policy framework</td>
<td>- Institutional organization</td>
<td>- Households</td>
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<td>- Political regime</td>
<td>- Local governance</td>
<td>- Individuals</td>
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<td>- The economy, trade and business influence</td>
<td>- Community</td>
<td>- Lifestyles</td>
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<td>- The organization of society</td>
<td>- Culture</td>
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<td>- Habits &amp; practices</td>
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The role of local government as an agent of social change

In policy circles there is a growing recognition that the interface between policy making and the public mediated through local government can provide a vital and practicable means through which to deliver energy and environmental targets at an individual, household and community level (Fudge and Peters, 2009)
The role of local government as an agent of social change

- Finance
- Knowledge provision
- Community energy
- Behaviour change
- Technology
- Planning
- Political space

LOCAL GOVERNMENT NICHE
The Woking CHP Energy Centre, UK
Working towards sustainability is part of Woking Borough Council's corporate commitment.
The Council has developed a series of policies and procedures that aim to move this agenda forward, based around sixteen sustainability themes:

1. Use of energy, water, minerals and materials.
2. Waste generation / sustainable waste management.
3. Pollution to air, land and water.
4. Factors that contribute to Climate Change.
5. Protection of and access to the natural environment.
6. Travel choices that do not rely on the car.
7. A strong, diverse and sustainable local economy.
8. Meet local needs locally.
10. Provision of appropriate and sustainable housing.
11. Personal safety and reduced fear of crime.
13. Access to cultural and leisure facilities.
15. Equal opportunities for the whole community.
16. Contribute to Woking's pride of place.
Freiburg – solar technology in action
The Freiburg Solar Region, Germany

“...creating sustainable regional development...”

- Long term development vision embraced since 1986
- Multiple benefits for both the environment and the local economy
- Commitment of a wide range of companies shows how solar energy can become an integral part of business philosophy within all economic sectors (i.e., inside and outside the solar industry)
- Demand for solar specialists opens promising perspectives for training
- Renewable energies add to the quality of an environmentally conscious tourism
- The success of the Freiburg solar policy based on two factors:
  1. Cooperative partners ranging from business to education, from architecture to finance and many more are allowed to gain their specific benefits and to contribute from their specific interests
  2. A broad discourse in society moves the solar issue beyond the specialist circles of energy planners
Freiburg

“Solar Capital” of Europe - in 2008:
- 10m kWh pa wind
- 8.6 mW solar pv
- 12,000 m² solar thermal

Vauban District
- New settlement (5000 pop, 600 jobs)
- Ecological transport
- All houses are low energy, 100+ are “energy+”
- Local Biofuel Woodchip CHP
- Cars are “designed out”, allowing playgrounds for children, community activities
- Institutionalized public participation
The City of Växjö, Sweden
The City of Växjö, Sweden

“The Greenest City in Europe”

- Växjö has decoupled: 50% growth and 30% decrease in CO2-emissions since 1993
- The goal: emissions per capita to be reduced by 50% until year 2010 and by 70% until the year 2025, compared to 1993
- Large share of biomass used for heating: in the heating sector, nearly 90% comes from renewable energy sources
- Transportation: decrease in emissions as a result of a bigger share of ‘environmental’ vehicles and more biofuel blended in petrol and diesel
- May 2006: politicians adopted a new steering document: Environmental Programme for the City of Växjö, which includes an Environmental Policy and three profile areas:
  - Living live; Our Nature; and Fossil Fuel Free Växjö
- ecoBUDGET, the environmental management system is steering and following up the goals in the Environmental Programme
Conclusion: what is successful political influence at the local level?

- Exercising leadership at the local level
- Steering innovation and technology
- Systematic policy learning
- Influencing consumer behaviour change
- Ensuring accountability and transparency
- Aligning disparate interests
- Envisioning long term sustainability goals