

Towards an Energy Descent Plan for the Black Isle

Introduction

One of the key objectives of TBI, in line with other official transition groups, is to prepare an 'Energy Descent Plan'. The Transition Handbook has lots of advice as to how this might be approached. An example of an Energy Descent Plan is available online for Kinsale in Ireland.

In a nutshell, the approach recommended involves the creation of a 'vision' of the Black Isle in the future (say 2050) after the Great Transition. It then requires a process of 'backcasting' to articulate what needs to happen at each stage between now and then in order to get to the final destination.

This is clearly a big job. It is a process rather than a one-off task, it will never be finished and it will need to evolve as we go along. Nevertheless, engaging in the process will enable us to develop a shared vision of where we might be going!

I would like to propose to the group that we begin the process by holding an open community meeting to consider the issues, do some visioning and develop the process further. I have outlined some thoughts on how we might run such a meeting below.

Visioning Community Event

Event Objectives

- Introduce Peak Oil and Climate Change
- Identify specific problem areas arising for the Black Isle and group them into key topics
- Describe the existing situation for each topic
- Identify some possibilities for the future

Format of meeting

- One weekend day – probably Saturday? 10.00 – 16.00
- Audience – invite all members, put on web site and forum, welcome anyone else that turns up, invite councillors and community councillors. Aim for around 40 people
- Facilitators – in house?

Method

Introduction and scene setting

Around **1 hour**

Brief introduction and background to the session

Speaker or film used to set scene on peak oil and climate change - maybe show 'Peak Oil Imposed by Nature' (30 mins)

Facilitated full group discussion

Around 45 mins

Get people in informal grouping – in a semicircle around a large wall of white flip chart paper to identify specific problems and issues arising on the Black Isle as a result of peak oil and climate change. One person will act as a scribe to capture each point on a sticky label and put it on the board.

Three or four volunteers will then be asked to group these labels into topics under a key heading such as 'transport' on a single sheet of paper.

World Café style work session

2 hours

1 table for each topic. If 40 people present and there were 8 topics we could have 2 series of 4 tables with 5 people in each group. Each person would go to half of all the tables. (Ideal number would be about 6 in each group.)

Each group would need about 30 minutes on each table. 4 topics each would take around 2 hours.

For each topic the group would be asked to:

- a) pool knowledge about the existing situation on the Black Isle with regard to this topic. Identify areas where more research is needed
- b) do some visioning and develop ideas and possibilities for the future

40 mins

Each table leader would feed back results to the whole group - 5 mins / gp

Plenary Round Up and What Next

30 mins

Seek feedback on what has been achieved

Seek input on how the process should develop

Seek to form a new working group to develop process of work towards a vision and how to get there.

Get volunteers interested in working on specific topic areas

What next

If we agree that this is a good idea we'll need to firm up plans and work out if we can allocate any funding towards it. We'll also need to set up a small group to deliver the project.

Penny