

Welsh Government - Smart Living

WSRID SBRI 1.0 Phase 1 – Challenge Competition Briefing

Event Transcript 13/09/24

Speakers:

Stefan Runge (Welsh Government Energy Service)
Ruth Tewungwa (Welsh Government Energy Service)
Gethin While (Welsh Government – Smart Living)
Paul Smith (Bridgend County Borough Council)
Amy Taylor (Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council)

About this material:

This material reflects proceedings at the WSRID SBRI 1.0 Phase 1 – Competition Briefing Event. Despite best endeavours to ensure accuracy, text based on this automated transcription may contain errors which could alter the intended meaning of any portion of the reported content.

Transcript:

Stefan Runge (Welsh Government Energy Service)

0:30

Good morning to all that have joined already.

0:32

We just give it a minute or two to allow people to join.

1:07

So I think we have stable numbers now.

1:09

I would make a start.

1:11

Hello, good morning.

1:12

Thanks for joining the briefing event for the upcoming or ongoing Smart Living WSRID challenge.

1:20

My name is Stefan Runge.

1:22

I'm part of the Welsh Government Energy Service support team that is helping the Smart Living team to run that competition and to host that briefing event today.

1:40

And there will be lots of interactions and collaborations hopefully over the next couple of months.

1:48

We decided to hold this event now online rather than in person, which is a bit of a shame.

1:57

But in terms of time scale and accessibility, we thought it is better to just have it very kind of slick and give everyone the chance to join rather than, you know, not to do it because of travel constraints or time constraints.

2:13

If there are any translation or any other requirements in terms of this this webinar or else please make use of the Q&A function of that of that Zoom webinar.

2:29

And we will be able to see all your questions and we will try to answer every everything that is coming up while we go.

2:37

If there's anything we are struggling with, we would follow up of course thereafter.

2:44

But without further ado, I think it's time now to introduce and hand over to Gethin While from Welsh government in Smart Living.

Gethin While (Welsh Government – Smart Living)

2:57

Hi, a good morning to you all, and thank you very much Stefan.

3:04

I'm Gethin While, I'm head of Smart Living, which is responsible for supporting all sorts of pre-market decarbonisation innovation activities and projects within the climate change and fuel poverty division of Welsh governments.

3:21

So it's great to have you all here with us today for this briefing meeting, which will be recorded.

3:28

As Stefan said, I'll go through the agenda with you now and give you a flavour of what Smart Living is doing and our goal as an initiative or scheme with the Welsh Government.

3:42

I'll then talk about WSRID, the whole system's research and innovation for decarbonisation challenge with you.

3:51

It's various phases, the timeline, to give you more than enough opportunity, I think to ask questions about the guidance and the application form, which if you haven't received is available on Sell2Wales.

4:03

And we should also be emailed directly to you.

4:06

But please note in the Q&A if that hasn't happened to dates.

4:11

We're also very privileged to have two sets of colleagues here on the call today from previous home systems SBRIs or Contracts for Innovation challenges that were financed by Smart living in the last two or three years.

4:31

Who will be able to share with you their experience of bidding for challenge funds and also running the various phases in two space sort of distinct places in Wales with very distinct themes.

4:43

So we shall introduce those shortly.

4:47

Please feel free to ask them questions in their segments as well.

4:50

And we will close with another good half hour's worth of space for questions from you and answers.

4:58

So please be fertile with your questions and please be cheeky.

5:03

And that's why I'm here for to answer them and to give you assurance about the way we could have run this particular competition and to give you space to ask anything that's relevant.

5:12

So on to the next slide, please, Stefan.

5:17

So for those of you who are not aware of what Smart Living is doing as an initiative, we've been active since 2015, but there's very strong focus on growing funding, thankfully to support early-stage pre-market investment in some tricky areas where decarbonisation isn't being supplied by the market.

5:41

Or certainly UK level initiatives were not fertile enough in Wales to support these sorts of necessary things where our own decarbonisation agenda, be there at regional, local level or pan Wales and to give people confidence to try and seek solutions which worked, you know, in their own contexts.

6:05

The mission of Smart Living has have come a long way since 2015 and the programme of government at that time, we've just gone through a major research endeavour with DG Cities consultants, which I'm sure several people on the call will have contributed to.

6:22

Looking at, you know, what expectations are of Smart living, how we can deliver better, the level of funding and how that sort of has to be pipelined more accurately and consistently over time.

6:38

We've had two major SBRI conducts for innovation programmes recently.

6:43

We'll bring the whole Systems one and also the hybrid one for hydrogen deployments.

6:50

That's pilots going on from this particular challenge, we're looking to a very consistent pipelined approach.

6:58

So what you see in just the guidance and application document this time round will be consistent over the short to medium term.

7:07

So hopefully that will give people more assurance in terms of the mission.

7:13

Just to repeat, you're looking at supporting innovation solutions that are needs-led and place-based.

7:20

We're looking for the development of concepts and designs that match the pathways that we support for whole system deployment across all sorts of sectors and vectors.

7:31

Looking at market failures, how we can help businesses to innovate and flourish and provide the solutions the public sector needs and linked to academia as well, which are really important and HEI centres of research.

7:46

And we also want to seek perhaps more integration and collegiality between first actors in the decarbonisation part of the net zero to 2050 route that we've mapped very clearly in first policy documents and see how these can provide robust solutions, albeit modular or sort of things which are kind of amenable to scaling up and distributing more effectively across Wales.

8:17

Next slide, please Stefan.

8:20

There we go.

8:20

So in terms of where we're sitting in terms of the policy context, the policy ecology, whatever's true of WSRID, it's also true smart living as a scheme. These are the load stones for everything that we support strategically, policy-wise and in relation to other programmes within government.

8:40

I didn't say that, you know, the innovation strategy is, is at the core of what we're doing and the headlines within that. Economic mission is also extremely important to support deployment over time.

8:55

I think, broadly speaking, you're looking at supporting green jobs, green skills and green tech through smart living as well as aspects of social justice, combating poverty related to aspects of the transition - fuel poverty being the major one.

9:13

I think which these policy documents detail and layout across, the time into 2050 in relative detail.

9:25

The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act of course is at the core as well as what we do and all the challenges involved in that.

9:34

Several of these projects are quite new, so you may want to kind of dig into them a bit more, particularly looking at warm homes.

9:44

Also, you know, I must also applaud the work that Ynni Cymru is doing in terms of mainstream approach to locally owned renewable energy use and generation.

9:54

One of the things that's very important for us is to seek to complement their work at wherever possible and supply innovation support to fill in their gaps as well.

10:06

They had an amazing seminar yesterday I gather for their own competition.

10:12

So you'll seek wherever possible to complement that work, be it in this year or the next financial year, especially from SLES as well, which is an aspect of the focus of WSRID.

10:27

Can you go to the next page please?

10:29

Next slide. We're talking about the whole system's approach which allows the core of WSRID.

10:36

I'm sure you're all familiar with these principles, you know, fostering innovation, public sector bodies and their partners, connecting system actors together, creating knowledge, creating collaborative platforms between a whole host of stakeholders, be they industrial, governmental or public bodies.

10:57

Identifying where there are funding and resource gaps, be they within Wales or what's UK level.

11:05

Providing greater clarity to the stakeholders in what our priorities are across the systems and also looking at how we can increase productivity and reduce environmental impacts of engineered systems.

11:20

So I'm sure you all know all these already.

11:25

The next slide please.

11:31

If you have read the guidance for the competition, this is sort of the big red button I think in the middle of it.

11:39

The kind of the congruity of the WSRID offer with the local area energy plans and regional energy strategies, which are all kind of coming together in the last 2-3 months in various stages of acceptance by local government bodies and within other public sector partner organisations.

12:02

There are 6 themes that we've identified to carbonisations of homes, transfers, infrastructure, service, rectification, modes of travel and integrated networks, renewable generation, onshore and forms of ownership and benefits industrial clusters and have been given to X capacity to the electricity network.

12:36

Several of these perhaps aren't so significant in the context of WSRID given the modest funds that we have, but still, it can make a difference here.

12:45

So you don't have to cover all of these bases in your applications for funding as potential challenge owners.

12:55

Next, please. In terms of what a challenge is, challenge-led innovation.

13:02

Equally, I'm sure there's several people on this call.

13:05

We're quite knowledgeable and have experience in this area.

13:09

There are case studies online which we provided both for the hydrogen and the whole systems demonstrators we've funded since 2021.

13:22

I would encourage you to take a look at the case studies.

13:29

We will have the three of them.

13:31

One is not presented today, but two of the others will.

13:34

So after 11 o'clock you'll get it the horse's mouth and you know what they entails and what the outputs were and any kind of highlights and low lights involved.

13:45

We use the Innovate UK module formerly known as SBRI, now known as Contracts for Innovation.

13:55

We still haven't got to, to, to grips with which we're supposed to use.

14:01

It's a bit kind of vague.

14:02

So we're still going with both.

14:05

But if you check out the website, which is in the, the guidance, it will show you the wholesale list of conditions and definitions of the SBRI Council innovation.

14:16

And it's, it's replete with FAQs which will give you some further orientation.

14:21

But essentially it's a way of purchasing social development for public sector bodies that is perhaps more flexible than commercial procurement.

14:32

It allows you to sort of share the risk with private sector experts and suppliers.

14:43

It's also a way of getting on state funding rules through perhaps having transparent competitive procurements That's, you know, is under the terms of the UK Substitute Control Act 2020, which supplants some of the European legislation that was applied in this area.

15:01

But it's a flexible tool, but basically to get the knowledge you need to deliver on policy and targets.

15:11

So, yeah, as I said, it is an opportunity to test and trial and reduce risk in the places you're at with your first communities of business or sort of citizen groups who seek to get involved in you, which you need to involve to meet your strategy targets or to other goals.

15:36

Can you go to the next slide, last slide please.

15:39

So in terms of the phase and typically the three phases for WSRID, first phase is feasibility, second will be demonstrated prototyping and the third phase is commercialization.

15:54

In terms of WSRID, we have funding for phase one and phase two.

16:00

In this current state of the competition, we're looking to support 5 challenges to give them funding to go out and identify project suppliers who can deliver on the themes that they submitted to us.

16:18

We have a pot of half a million for the initial phase for the challenge owners, approximately 100,000 pounds for each challenge.

16:31

The way that the successful challenge owner procures the suppliers is fairly flexible.

16:42

We would recommend not going down to 25,000 for four projects necessarily unless you have very strong knowledge of the deliverability and expertise.

16:57

But you know, we'd be quite open to different combinations of procurement once the challenge has been awarded and discussions on that matter once you've procured.

17:10

We would seek to run the full feasibility phase one for three months, ideally January, February and March of the next calendar year to report at the end of March with some overlap for the final report completion and preparation of applications for the next stage of funding which is on the following slide to this.

17:39

Thank you.

17:42

The next phase would last 12 months.

17:46

We would acquire about two to three months to hold a competition for the successful five challenge owners.

17:56

We are likely to roll over the following financial year if necessary.

18:01

Experience from the previous pilots and whole system schemes suggested that a longer period for delivery, delivery was required.

18:10

So this is something that we're considering at the moment in great detail.

18:14

In terms of the budget that we have for 2025/2026, the previous model for the whole systems pilot WBRID, each of these challenge owners was allocated £500,000 for their phase twos for the demonstrators and prototyping work and we would seek to have something similar to that.

18:42

We are however open to bids which would bring in other funding from different programmes across Welsh Government to other resources.

18:54

So it wouldn't necessarily always be 100% intervention rates, but that will be made clear in the guidance.

18:59

We certainly will have a pot to fund at least three of the challenge owners into the next phase and probably more than that.

19:10

So I just want to assure you that will take place.

19:13

The problem the size a bit vague is basically it's two months from date of contract of award that we wish things to start at the latest.

19:23

So that would be sort of May, June of the next financial year.

19:27

But as I said, we are looking to roll over.

19:29

So we get a full 12 months run for the Phase 2. Next please.

19:40

So for this particular competition phase, this is roughly the timeline we'll be doing the briefing with you guys today.

19:52

It's a tight turn around for bids for challenging this.

19:58

I wouldn't if I would not find the detail in the application form too disheartening.

20:05

I think a lot of the work behind delivering on the first phase occurs after procurement has occurred for the supply supplies and experts.

20:19

You know, after we've awarded, we're very keen on getting strong challenge themes, strong teams, you know, assurance from public sector partners that they feel they can deliver.

20:31

It's quite a small cohort of eligible public bodies for this scheme.

20:37

So you've already passed a degree of eligibility testing for that very reason.

20:44

As long-term partners with government, there's a very tight window so that we'll allow you minimum of two months to procure contractors.

20:54

And as I said, the various ways and means of you know, using that 100K envelope per challenge to get the right contractor to deliver ad quality so that you're well prepared for the second phase.

21:09

So as some of these days might change, but we're hoping to get most things delivered for feasibility by the end of March. Next please.

21:25

And I think, I think we're ready for questions and, and can fit back.

21:32

I think I've kind of accelerated through everything.

21:36

So perhaps we should pause now and ask, ask some questions and just looking and see what's in the Q&A.

Ruth Tewungwa (Welsh Government Energy Service)

21:47

So we, we don't have any questions in in the in our chat or in our Q&A window yet.

21:57

So please make use of that function and ask anything.

Stefan Runge (Welsh Government Energy Service)

22:01

I could just put in a question which would interest me if I was an applicant: is there need to have a consortium ready for the application and does that all need to be defined who the applicant would work with and what kind of organisation and who is eligible to apply in the 1st place?

Gethin While (Welsh Government – Smart Living)

22:30

We trailed the competition for two weeks before it opened in various channels seeking to inform the supply community within Wales or across the UK and other places of the expertise that would be suitable for the delivery, delivery of whichever challenge is awarded.

22:58

So it's a broad knowledge, we hope amongst the private sector suppliers of what is available.

23:07

It also includes HEIs, for example, we didn't in this instance.

23:13

We decided not to invite HEIs as leads, leads for the challenges, but we would expect as per the previous pilots programmes, which you'll see if you look at the case studies you supplied, that consortia have ATI experts embedded within them.

23:36

Certainly if you have consultants in-house currently, you know, part of your core team, if you want to add them, that'd be great.

23:44

You know, we're sensitising the market really to be ready for when you go to procure after we've all the challenges.

23:52

There may be other SBRI Contracts for Innovation programmes you engage in at the moment where there's added value that that's kind of can add to the quality of your challenge application without going against the guidelines for not going to regurgitating previous projects that didn't kind of eventuate, which is something that is quite stringently noted in all of the Contracts for Innovation guidance.

24:25

So, yeah, we're putting out feelers because many people in this area that have previous experience, they understand the policy environments and you know, we're seeking to reinforce business competence in this area in Wales.

24:47

Coming back to the policy environment that I explained earlier, you know, we want to green growth as well as decarbonisation as priorities.

Ruth Tewungwa (Welsh Government Energy Service)

25:02

We've got some questions coming in Gethin in the Q&A.

25:07

The first question is, can we get a bit more of an understanding about the geographical scope of a challenge?

25:14

So are we talking about 1 village or a whole region or something in between?

Gethin While (Welsh Government – Smart Living)

25:19

We sort of we're open to suggestions really.

25:23

If you look at the case studies previously, we worked with Ambition North Wales for, for net zero Park Farm project.

25:32

So that covered all of the North Wales region and that's had kind of a core institution at Coleg Llysfasi, Coleg Cambria, where the suppliers were across North Wales including Anglesey for example.

25:46

Some of the other projects were based in local authorities and they also particular types of land use or business activity within those local authorities, so quite localised.

25:58

So we're quite happy to have a con spectrum of types of place in that situation.

26:07

Obviously you have hotspots, SLES will always be you know local really.

26:14

So we're open minded as to where the supplies might be or whether there might be more than one, one or two potential trial sites, which are kind of widely divergent.

26:27

We're open to, you know, 2 local authorities coming or three coming together, not necessarily through the growth body approach.

26:37

You don't have to be in particular growth body area to deals area if that's a kind of logistical or an asset-based application where things will work better.

26:47

We're going to be quite happy for those two to come in.

26:53

Thanks.

Ruth Tewungwa (Welsh Government Energy Service)

26:53

We've got another a few questions around the timelines and resource.

27:01

So someone's asking about availability of internal resource might be an issue or a concern for delivering phase one.

27:08

If they were to go ahead and put forward an application as a challenge owner, what sort of support would be available from Welsh Government and WGES Welsh Government Energy Service to support the phase one?

Gethin While (Welsh Government – Smart Living)

27:21

Yeah, certainly we've got, you know, our staff will be there with you all the way.

27:28

The Welsh Government Energy Service are going to support all of the successful challenge owners, advising them on those aspects of, you know, the work with the suppliers.

27:41

So that's a given.

27:42

I think the other thing that we can help you with is that the product Programme Board for Smart Living has been revamped.

27:50

So in all of the areas that are significant for the local area energy plans, we've got external sponsors on our board.

27:58

So they will also be available to kind of to scrutinise aspects of the development of the offer and how you can pin down your suppliers.

28:13

These are things that we'll do energetically.

28:15

As I said, it's a very tight window, but I'm also lucky in my bit of Welsh Government.

28:20

I've had more staffing than previously.

28:22

So you know, there's, there's quite a number of parties at the table to support challenge owners once we've awarded.

Ruth Tewungwa (Welsh Government Energy Service)

28:34

There's a couple of questions about criteria and eligibility. Someone's asking about going back to one of the earliest slides and talking through the criteria, but more for the challenges, if that's possible.

28:52

If we could just talk a bit more through what we're looking for in the challenges.

Gethin While (Welsh Government – Smart Living)

28:56

So essentially, as I said, we're looking at the LAEPs.

29:00

Some aspects of the LAEPs are already receiving support from other bits of Welsh Government.

29:06

Public transport for example, is a case in point, but areas which are, you know, perhaps more covered by the smart living function, which is not so industrial and is not so transport focused will be the areas to put your focus.

29:26

Certainly there's a lot of interest in notification housing.

29:31

You know, hydrogen is thrown out of the cart.

29:33

Either we came to an end, we're coming to the end of the hybrid support scheme where it wasn't led by local authority partners as previously it was led by private companies and some higher education institutions as well.

29:50

That's still running in parallel with WSRID.

29:54

So the second demonstrator phase of hybrid will be running in parallel till the end of this financial year.

30:01

But we're happy to entertain hydrogen deployment projects as well.

30:06

You know, as I said this, there's a number of focus areas which you've got poor infrastructure as per the LAEPs, you know, poor grid connections.

30:18

Essentially you're filling in the gaps where there's no mainstream solution.

30:22

And the one thing that is important is that we're not just also providing cash flow and sort of an innovation labour, which is in reality just adding to mainstream funding from Welsh Government to a pre-existing programme, which isn't really our kind of our goal.

30:46

We've got a couple more questions, one about the eligibility of different public sector bodies.

30:54

So maybe if we could just re go over the types of organisations that are eligible.

31:01

So as I said, there's three eligible categories in the guidance, local authorities in Wales, NHS Wales health Trusts and project was in particular and also the regional growth bodies, so which there are four.

31:23

So that's about it really.

31:27

But higher education institutions, partners of long standing have expertise are welcome to come in as consult chair for the supplier phase after we want to the challenges.

31:43

Thanks.

Ruth Tewungwa (Welsh Government Energy Service)

31:44

And there are a couple more questions about going back maybe a bit to the timelines and procurement of the contractors.

31:57

There's some concern around organisations have been quite a rigid procurement process and government structure on commercial contracts.

32:07

So I wonder if you just talk a bit more about what organisations have done in terms of the timeline.

Gethin While (Welsh Government – Smart Living)

32:18

The one thing I would say is that if you read through the constant innovation guidance on you know, how you procure these Research Services, they're not your and we've had this issue with our own commercial procurement service in Welsh Government.

32:35

They're not very au fait with how the SBRI kinds of innovation works, but we can provide you in sample contracts and further guidance for your procurement.

32:46

But you don't have to do the full 2-month procurement for a spree.

32:53

One month is the minimum required unless the guidance has changed.

32:59

So as I said, you're procuring research and innovation services, it's not a kind of a typical procurement process.

33:09

We can bring in experts to support you on this from Welsh Government innovation after this meeting.

33:17

But you know, that's essentially how I know people are often constrained by internal procurement ceilings, hence the fact that in the past people are going for 25K projects so they could turn things around with departures.

33:30

We would rather have perhaps higher budget projects which we're capable of delivering at the second phase.

33:38

But expenses do vary and the contractors, from my experience, would often seek to deliver at a lower value with the prospect of having sufficient expertise to be successful for the phase two funding, which is quite generous.

Ruth Tewungwa (Welsh Government Energy Service)

33:59

We've got a few more questions still coming in.

34:03

This one may be a bit harder to answer, I'm not sure, but this might be something that has happened previously with applicants where a proposed project depends on the realisation of another element.

34:17

So completion of another construction project, how would we fit that in with the timelines within the SBRI process?

Gethin While (Welsh Government – Smart Living)

34:26

Is this for the first phase or the second phase? I think this is for the first phase, OK.

34:34

It's if it's the pre-feasibility work we need to know the, if it's a major infrastructure thing that would enable you know we need detail on the application on that.

34:46

In terms of the technology readiness levels, which perhaps I need to reiterate, we were looking at 3 to 4 for phase one, and then for the second phase between 4 and 7, possibly 9.

35:03

I think the commercialization potential of these WSRID projects is something that means the hammer home, the scalability, the reproducibility, these are all kind of critical things.

35:17

Then these are lessons learnt received from the previous pilots work that we've done.

35:24

I think also there's a more conducive environment as well, which relates to how these contexts of innovation are being termed Innovate UK.

35:33

We'll be publishing I think sometime in October, further guidance and how it differs from the previous SBRI environment framework.

35:44

And I think that from what I gather at the moment, the essentials are feasibility SBRI Contracts for Innovation within Wales that conforms to all of the norms of the framework.

35:58

You will have added support from Innovate UK for seeking innovation investment funds in other contexts in another UK level programmes.

36:08

But we see the particulars of that I can't really discuss in general if it's a pre-feasibility activity.

Ruth Tewungwa (Welsh Government Energy Service)

36:16

So we've got a question around collaboration for innovative solutions.

36:28

So if an organisation wanted to collaborate with academics or other organisations, are there any recommendations or will there be any support for where the best place will be to look for this suitable research?

Gethin While (Welsh Government – Smart Living)

36:44

Yeah, we will once, once you contract with the challenge owner, we will engage with you at that level.

36:52

If you're looking for particular centres of research excellence, WG Innovation works very closely with Smart living on these things.

37:00

It's a particular expertise you need or it's a certificate of an element of your consortium that needs some introduction.

37:11

Once contracted, experts can join a particular supplier consortium, They're not necessarily always closed.

37:19

The contracts for the SBRI's allow for deviations and exchange of contractors or subcontractors as well.

37:30

So this is a bit more flexibility than might appear in the guidance.

Ruth Tewungwa (Welsh Government Energy Service)

37:37

We've got a question around maybe how the challenges should be phrased.

37:45

So we've got an example here about if we're looking at hydrogen, would a challenge, would a suitable challenge be this place doesn't have hydrogen and this is something that could be explored or should a challenge be more broad and look at how would we increase energy security in this place?

38:03

So I think this is just a question around how to how to phrase that application.

Gethin While (Welsh Government – Smart Living)

38:08

Yeah, Well, this is a good example I would say.

38:12

You know, this is not necessarily about blue sky technologies.

38:19

This is about kind of combining other existing technologies more efficiently to achieve a decarbonisation innovation.

38:27

We need to mainstream.

38:28

That's what it's all about.

38:30

So there's a lot happening in the industrial context for hydrogen, for fuel replacement or fuel mixing, and perhaps there's less happening in other places, agriculture, rural communities where hydrogen could have a major impact.

38:48

So I think it is hydrogen in this place, what difference it would make and similar places rather than talking kind of more broadly about, you know, inventing something totally new where there's no compatibles.

39:05

And given the kind of huge CapEx for many hydrogen projects and there are a lot of many variables in terms of state subsidies and quite a difference and all sorts of things where they will actually follow through at the end.

39:21

So we take those things into consideration.

39:28

But we'd be very open minded on, on hydrogen projects as some of us have been supported through hybrid are very, very specific to particular places and that there's a pan-Wales reach.

39:40

So we can be broad minded on that.

Ruth Tewungwa (Welsh Government Energy Service)

39:46

We've got a question about whether there are any clauses or whether this is kind of a central part of the programme that the funding will be distributed evenly across Wales and how, how will we addressing that.

Gethin While (Welsh Government – Smart Living)

40:01

We don't have a kind of a quota system that's you're asking.

40:05

However, we seek regional balance because each of the Welsh regions and the growth bodies have unique decarbonisation profiles, different.

40:18

Aspects of use of renewables, developed renewables storage distribution mechanism.

40:23

So I think things would come out of the woodwork because of that.

40:28

And the whole idea behind the speed is to create reproducible successful models for mainstreaming.

40:36

So a plurality of contexts and some demonstrated work would be able to achieve our goals most efficiently rather than focusing on a particular area which is already dense in assets or as I said, you're not particularly focused on having an artificial balance.

40:59

But the way that things work in Wales in terms of these aspects of, you know, our new energy systems, I think they would already be quite a diversity of, of places within the set of applications we receive.

41:13

And they'll be considered equally obviously on their on their merits.

41:18

Still got a few more questions coming in.

41:22

This one's a bit more logistical around is there any budget in the funding that's awarded for local authority officer time to deal with procurement and project management if in terms of the application for this doing application, we wouldn't be preventing that obviously.

41:48

But I know that with some of the previous of often there's a contribution in kind.

41:57

I'm sure one of the case studies on the call today will explain that within the especially in the second phase where there was a lot more bonus on, on pressure on local authority officers that some of that support was brought in.

42:16

Within that kind of like the envelope of half a million that was supplied as well as the direct fees going to the contractors.

42:25

So that's something that we would entertain in the second phase.

42:29

In the first perhaps it wouldn't be quite as burdensome, burdensome managing a couple of projects, 3 projects we don't think for feasibility level work, but certainly we'd entertain in the second phase.

42:45

Thanks.

Ruth Tewungwa (Welsh Government Energy Service)

42:46

There's another question about whether there are any kind of essential partners to have within the delivery team of some challenges.

42:57

So this is specifically asking about if a project encompasses grid flexibility, for example, would it be essential to have the DNO on the delivery team and would they be eligible for any funding or project support as part of that if they were within like one of the supplier consortia?

Gethin While (Welsh Government – Smart Living)

43:18

You know, in some instances they match WWU has matched some of the previous pieces we've done in power added work packages which have kind of have completed outside of the funding envelope that we provided.

43:33

We'd entertain that.

43:34

But equally, if they're part of the consortium and seek fees, you know, for their expertise, we wouldn't rule that out.

43:43

So I think that's a yes really.

Ruth Tewungwa (Welsh Government Energy Service)

43:45

And we've got a question about maybe this is something that we'll touch in the second-half with the case studies.

43:55

But someone's asked.

43:57

Having read the case studies, it was hard to understand what the challenge they submitted was.

44:03

It was just the solution that they found.

44:05

So will there be any opportunity to see previous applications and the challenges that they submitted rather than just the findings?

Gethin While (Welsh Government – Smart Living)

44:15

Well, the challenges were they're not in the public domain really those funding application documents, we have gone through them looking at how they would apply for the new set of application forms.

44:36

I must stress that what you see on the case studies are the demonstrators phase twos.

44:41

That's where most of the onus is.

44:43

The previous work from the first phase isn't detailed massively in those case studies, though we will be certainly on the hydrogen side really publishing all of the first phase ones of those in the next couple of months.

45:03

So yeah, I kind of I can, I can see where you're coming from, but are you the people on the call are available for conversation show outside of the situation and but we can't supply you with private funding submission documents if you were to anonymize them still perhaps wouldn't if you're typical to anonymize them given the weather Wales works.

45:27

So we probably can't do that.

Ruth Tewungwa (Welsh Government Energy Service)

45:34

I think we've still got time for a few more questions before we have a break.

45:40

Another question around resourcing and time scales.

45:45

So given the resource challenges and the tight time scales to deliver phase one, is there any flexibility for phase one completion to go into the next financial year or is 31st of March is a strict cut off?

Gethin While (Welsh Government – Smart Living)

46:02

I don't think it's a totally strict cut off.

46:04

We would expect final reports delivered then.

46:08

I know in some of the previous projects there was data collection that you know, for seasonality reasons and others kind of overhang and there was also extra consultant inputs which required refining as a result of the programme board's feedback and when the fund report was submitted.

46:30

So there's a, there's a clearance.

46:33

We've got a month afterwards I think to kind of finalise every detail on the final report.

46:39

But the funding would have to conclude at the end of March. The deliverables could be refined for a short period thereafter we'd be under there'll be quite a lot of pressure I think to have everything processed and considered ready for the next competition.

47:01

So we get at least nine months of delivery in the next financial year, but and we will entertain a rollover into 26/27.

47:19

Just waiting to see if any more questions come in.

47:33

If I could add one element get into but has been set to application examples.

47:41

I think you would all agree that if smart living would provide past example applications that would take away maybe some of the creativity around ideas and how the competition is being approached.

47:56

I mean that is what we are most interested in finding some new innovation, innovative kind of approaches and there is no template for that.

48:06

I would have thought to get into share that view.

48:09

The other thing that I would have to notice when we did the pilot versions, the previous you know whole-systems pilots, there were no LAEPs in place.

48:18

A lot of these kind of frameworks for decarbonisation at local level haven't been developed or published at that point or adopted.

48:27

So we didn't really have much to compliment.

48:30

And there was a lot more preliminary work done with smaller scale projects pre-feasibility for those in distinct sort of zones in Wales.

48:40

And it wasn't so pan-Wales as WSRID will be over time as a kind of a longer term pipeline for this sort of innovative decarb support.

48:51

So as I said, they may not be that useful given that they came out of different contexts and lower levels of resourcing initially for smart living before things really start going on the whole systems SBRI front.

Stefan Runge (Welsh Government Energy Service)

49:18

Yeah, I think we could probably have a break at that moment in time if there are any further questions or more detailed kind of application specific inquiries, the e-mail where the link for that webinar has been shared is your point of contact.

49:42

Basically you can always ask more specific questions while you proceed with your application.

49:52

And yeah, we want to give previous participants a chance to talk about their projects, but we thought it would be good to probably have kind of five-minute comfort break.

Gethin While (Welsh Government – Smart Living)

50:15

We have some really kind of interesting cases being presented by colleagues from Bridgend County Borough Council and also Brian Mcguin to County Borough Council, which I think, you know, it's beyond the text and the documents.

50:29

And they can give you an idea of, of how, how to get a challenge off the ground and how they can sort it in detail.

50:36

So please hang on for that and enjoy your comfort break.

BREAK

Gethin While (Welsh Government – Smart Living)

56:27

Welcome back.

56:31

So it gives me a pleasure to introduce 2 sets of colleagues.

56:34

They worked very closely on the WBRID project and hopefully in future.

56:40

So firstly, I'd like to introduce Paul Smith as a Decarbonisation Programme Manager at Bridgend County Borough Council to talk through for 15 minutes the Internet of the WSRID whole systems projects supported with Bridgend, both phase one and phase two.

57:01

Over to you Paul.

Paul Smith (Bridgend County Borough Council)

57:02

Thanks, Gethin.

57:05

Morning everybody.

57:07

I'm going to refocus on the kind of the latter stage of phase three of the projects.

57:14

We had two earlier phases to develop the feasibility to a deliverable proposition.

57:21

But I wasn't that Bridgend when all of that was carried out.

57:24

There aren't many people here that were still involved in the that were involved in the delivery that are still here.

57:29

So I can't really comment on the administration of an SBRI project, but what I can talk about is, is about the outcomes and the activity that's followed on.

57:44

So if we go on to the next slide, please.

57:48

So the challenge that we set is there, and I think defining the challenge looks to be a really key step in the SBRI process.

57:57

So to make sure that you're asking the right question for providers to try and answer, which then should result in good contractors getting involved.

58:06

And importantly, it's contractors that can work somewhat flexibly as the solutions emerge. In the Bridgend case, I'm not going to read out each of those points on the challenge, but one of the themes that emerged from the local area energy plan and the result of action plan was around the creation of, of a local energy market.

58:27

So we commissioned this work to understand what that actually means and how it could look.

58:31

And importantly under this SBRI work, it was what was what was deliverable.

58:37

Now at, at the time, using the, the existing licencing and regulation, there was a parallel piece of work which was looking at designing the high level architecture of what our ideal future energy market could look like.

58:52

And that identified how regulation then would need to change to achieve that.

58:56

But this was very much looking at what was what's deliverable in the here and now.

59:03

Go on to the next slide, please.

59:08

This just quickly shows the integration of the projects that we had, each addressing a different element of the of the local energy system.

59:20

So one project built on earlier work looking at a managing level.

59:27

So it used a digital twin to explore scenarios where a managed micro-grid system could be used to control conventional heat pumps, hybrid heat pumps, which were connected to the network.

59:38

And then how much it's possible to reduce peak demand through coordination between the homes while still maintaining thermal comfort for the occupants, essentially optimising the local energy system to maximise value and inform a business model.

59:58

And then we had two similar projects looking at different technologies.

1:00:02

So they were looking at deploying technologies in in homes.

1:00:08

So there were, there were solar PV batteries and a home management system and home energy management system under 1 project.

1:00:14

So dealing with the electrical demand and a solar ventilation project under another which looked at.

1:00:22

Reducing the heat demand and improving air quality and ultimately these two combined into a single value proposition.

1:00:29

Then with each technology improving the appeal of that particular offer and having physical installations as these latitude projects did was a great benefit because it demonstrated credibility and showed that the contractors will do what they say they were going to do.

1:00:47

It used local supply chains.

1:00:52

An example of that is the scaffolder that was in the village where this was done actually did the work and it allowed us to test the real world impacts of this kind of activity.

1:01:08

So the image on the screen shows how what level that that fits in where that local energy market was establishing so under the national infrastructure.

1:01:22

And as it turned out and quite a quite a focused way on in home installations.

1:01:33

If we go on to the next slide then please.

1:01:37

Yeah.

1:01:37

So this ultimately it led to this new project, the South Connelly Net Zero village, which led to the creation of a new local enterprise, a new local social enterprise or community energy group and a much wider project.

1:01:55

That's kind of the sort of follow on from that SBRI work is that we have a project that's actively developing community-owned wind and solar that will feed into green hydrogen production.

1:02:07

And then also integrating the, the existing PV and battery storage within homes, bringing new PV and battery online under a kind of a management system, a software platform that that manages that the trading and the local use of the energy.

1:02:30

And it's really interesting how this this turned out.

1:02:33

I think so going from that initial challenge statement or set of challenge points to essentially answering the question of how to decarbonise a place using a true whole system approach.

1:02:45

So we've got a geographically discrete village where these technologies are being applied to see just how far you can decarbonize somewhere by doing that, but also bringing the

bringing the community along and the community has readily accepted the concept and engaged with the development.

1:03:04

And I don't think this would be impossible without the long-running engagement and credible delivery of installations that we achieved under the SBRI project.

1:03:14

And that's really important in this kind of project or any project where, where you're going to be asking residents to make a significant change to how they interact with the energy market and go beyond just having their direct debit, and which they don't need to think about unless it gets really expensive or something stops working.

1:03:30

That's most people's relationship with energy.

1:03:33

I think the benefit for the authority from this whole process seems to be that we now have an innovative - and I think is genuinely innovative - innovative community LED project within our area that addresses some of the things that were identified in our local area energy plan.

1:03:52

And whilst we've facilitated it, it's been largely led by the private sector and now third sector.

1:04:01

So I think it reinforces the point of getting good suppliers on board and then working with them in a flexible way.

1:04:10

And I'll just finish off I guess by saying that the, I think the, the SBRI process has provided kind of a funded framework to the work from the initial idea through to delivery.

1:04:25

And that seems to have been a really good way of, of delivering innovation which can be scary and can be quite tricky to get to work in a public sector organisation.

1:04:39

But through, through this project, through the framework that the, that the SBRI approach presents and provides, we've managed to do that in a really positively I think.

1:04:54

I know you gave me 15 minutes in total.

1:04:56

I know there's some questions in that, but I'm, I'm done there Gethin.

Gethin While (Welsh Government – Smart Living)

1:05:01

Thanks, Paul.

1:05:01

I think we'll go on to Amy and then both of you can answer the questions in the Q&A afterwards, if that's OK.

1:05:10

It might need time to type them in.

1:05:12

So thank you so much for that, Paul.

1:05:14

It seems always good to know the full bigger picture.

1:05:19

Next, I'd like to introduce everybody to Amy Taylor, who was team manager for regeneration in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council.

1:05:32

So over to you, Amy.

Amy Taylor (Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council)

1:05:53

Sorry, Gethin.

1:05:54

I got thrown out.

1:05:56

I am here now.

1:05:57

Welcome back in.

1:05:59

Don't know what's going on.

1:06:00

Perhaps he doesn't want me to speak right.

1:06:06

OK, so just to just cover perhaps some of where the questions have been arising.

1:06:13

I suppose really in terms of how, how do you frame a challenge?

1:06:16

I'm slightly different to Paul.

1:06:18

I've I have the scars from the very beginning, right the way through to now.

1:06:22

So when it comes to the questions around how you know what is the scope, what is the challenge, I think the only thing I would say as a public sector local authority officer is that it's a very different way of doing projects and doing procurement. You go into this not trying to define what you're looking for.

1:06:47

And in terms of your scope, you try to keep it as high level as you can, but giving an indication of what you're trying to look for.

1:06:56

So I know that sounds quite cryptic, but essentially what we did in Blaenau Gwent was - we'd worked with the Smart Living programme from the very beginning – we looked at our energy system, and we essentially were looking at the challenges around which we could potentially deploy energy, but it might not be in the right place.

1:07:26

How do we get it to where it needs to be?

1:07:28

We looked at the various groupings, we called them platforms, which were looking at the sort of sectors of buildings and we divided them up into the public sector, social and private housing.

1:07:42

We had those separately and then we had the industrial and commercial element. When we were going through this process at the time, there was a lot of work going on around sort of the Arbed schemes and the housing related decarbonisation schemes, there was already work going on around public sector such as refit and, and other programmes.

1:08:03

So we felt that for us the, the one area that perhaps did need a little bit of focus - and we hadn't seen a lot on when we started the journey - was industrial and commercial.

1:08:14

So we did some work initially looking at what that that means in, in within Blaenau Gwent and looked at what industrial and commercial properties and premises we had within the borough.

1:08:26

We found that just even in a small area like Blaenau Gwent, we had 25 different types of business parks, all differing in their size and, and offering and also different ages.

1:08:44

So some of them were like brand new, some of them were 60 years old.

1:08:48

They all had their own different challenges and then mixed ownership.

1:08:52

So we took that and focused on sort of a number of them and profiled them in a little bit more detail to look at things such as their energy consumption, what are their potentials for the simple renewable technologies such as PV, LED lighting potentials and then how they currently buy their energy.

1:09:18

So we went through that process and did, that was sort of our initial bit of research before we went into the challenge and we got to the point where we found that they were challenges on all of those areas.

1:09:31

So what we did in terms of framing our challenge was that we said we wanted to look at developing an energy offering for industrial and commercial that helped them achieve net zero outcomes.

1:09:46

And that was what the scope of our challenge was.

1:09:49

So we didn't even then define whether we wanted it to be a technology, we wanted it to be a piece of software.

1:09:55

We, we didn't define any of that at all.

1:09:59

And know people have raised questions around the challenging time scales.

1:10:04

Just to give you a feel of when we were in the first round of this, we did our phase one in seven weeks.

1:10:13

So we did our phase one in a very, very quick process.

1:10:17

We did it with five suppliers.

1:10:19

So just I'm trying to address some of the questions as I go through it.

1:10:24

So sorry if it does sort of jump around and take a little bit of time, but I'm trying to give you what the journey of the challenge process.

1:10:33

We had done pre-commercial procurement within Blaenau Gwent previously.

1:10:39

But what I would say in terms of getting your procurement teams on board, bring them along on the journey, invite them along on the process.

1:10:46

We got our procurement team comfortable with how pre-commercial procurement works, how it's different to standard procurement.

1:10:55

You're not going out with a specific specification that defines we want X and then if you don't bid against X you're not going to get forward.

1:11:04

We've basically said send your ideas in, we will then maybe want to work with you in terms of defining that.

1:11:13

And that is a very different way of procuring and doing things to what public sector traditionally does.

1:11:21

If anybody has done the Infuse programme which was led by City Region and obviously Monmouthshire Council, that is the type of approach that that this essentially does.

1:11:34

So I know Gethin talked about SBRI, but what you would have done is through the Infuse programme would be similar.

1:11:40

So we went out to the market.

1:11:45

We did a briefing event, opened up, did a webinar with the market and basically said to them, this is our challenge, this is what we're looking for.

1:11:53

We had a quite a number of applications, some which were single organisation, some which were consortia.

1:12:02

Again, going back to one of the questions, Wales and West Utilities were one part of the consortia that we had.

1:12:08

So they were able to form part of the consortium and obviously generate funding support to enable them to participate in the in the development of the solutions.

1:12:20

So we went through the various sort of pre-feasibility discussions with them.

1:12:26

We basically showed them the business park, showed them that our challenge is how can we support our businesses in terms of energy and that's all realms of energy security, all the way through.

1:12:38

And we took 4 suppliers through to phase one and we went through like I said, that seven-week process with those four suppliers, each of them considered the challenge and proposed various options.

1:12:55

And they went right the way through from you need to deploy certain technologies, others were you need to trade energy differently, you need to look at energy storage.

1:13:07

They were in a vast range of different options that came forward.

1:13:12

So we went through the pre-feasibility process, they prepared reports.

1:13:23

We then had to present those outcomes to Welsh Government at the end of stage 1 and that was where Welsh Government then considered whether what we had a pre-feasibility was suitable to go forward then into a phase two demonstration phase.

1:13:39

So there was a panel of people from Welsh Government and other and other bodies that was basically a sort of a critical friend independent review to see how we ran the process and what we intended to do if we were awarded a second phase.

1:13:56

So we secured the funding for the second phase, invited then the four companies to submit proposals.

1:14:02

They all submitted proposals for Phase 2.

1:14:05

So we didn't lose any interest and we through that process then selected two companies to go forward into a phase two demonstration phase. Two quite different ones.

1:14:18

One was looking at more of a platform and the trade trading of energy and how and using energy differently and also looking at micro grids.

1:14:32

The second option then was looking at energy storage more as a service.

1:14:37

And when they when they talked about that, what we have found is obviously with energy storage it's a significant cost.

1:14:44

What they were trying to do was off rather than an energy storage upfront capital payment, they wanted it to be more of a revenue cost to the business that would then be paid for over a period of time and that it would then trade with the market.

1:15:00

So when the business didn't need energy, it would sell energy back at peak times to the grid, etcetera.

1:15:07

So all of those were served still very high level, still didn't really know if they were, you know going to be something that would work and solve what we said was our challenge and went forward then into the demonstration phase.

1:15:25

What quickly became apparent just on the energy trading one was that where we had businesses that we felt had significant energy usage and energy, energy demands in the sort of the grand scheme of things, their energy demands were still were quite low.

1:15:43

So the trading potential and the ability to sort of get the efficiencies and get the cost savings that would really give the business benefit was really challenging.

1:15:55

So we ended up going down the road that really micro grids were going to be the way forward for those businesses.

1:16:03

And So what we did was we installed some sensors within some businesses where we were monitoring the machinery on where it shouldn't be on.

1:16:14

So we were supporting them around deficiencies, but we also did a model with one particular business went in, did a micro grid sort of proposal for them.

1:16:27

And the company then went through the investment process and invested a lot of the technology that was proposed as part of the micro grid.

1:16:36

So we didn't fund that element, but we had supported that business in that proposal.

1:16:41

So although it didn't sort of transpire that what we originally intended, it still gave the business the option.

1:16:49

So that that was one thing that came forward.

1:16:52

On the energy storage as a service side, what we found with the demonstration was that it wasn't big enough.

1:17:04

The battery that was installed was quite small, I believe, I think it was under 500 kilowatts.

1:17:12

And it was determined through the work that we did that essentially to make something like that work well, you'd need more like a MW in terms of the storage from the battery and be able to trade.

1:17:28

Also in amongst all of this, we had COVID.

1:17:34

And also energy prices were going significantly higher.

1:17:38

So some of the trade in potential where you would have had the trade in potential of drawing from the grid to charged the battery when energy prices were lower and then selling when they were higher actually was diminished because the prices were just naturally higher and the gap differential was different.

1:17:57

So what we did after all of this, we obviously drew the conclusions from this process.

1:18:05

And one of the main conclusions was that that micro grid supporting businesses around deploying energy, either specifically for a business or working together is really the way forward.

1:18:17

So we're currently working on options around deploying renewables around our industrial estates, going back to more of some of the traditional, but also, you know, looking forward to potentially trade in some of the energy then where there is excess in the future.

1:18:38

So I'm happy to answer any questions that you have today, both around how we did the process, but then also, around the sort of the challenge LED approach, because it is quite different.

1:18:53

I will admit that.

1:18:56

And just going back to one of the questions around funding, at the time that we did this challenge, the Welsh Government didn't fund any officer time.

1:19:04

So that was something that as a council we put into it because we felt this was really important priority and it was challenging in terms of resources.

1:19:15

But it did once we had the support of Welsh Government and moved through the process.

1:19:20

We supported with the innovation team as well.

1:19:23

We did get through the process.

1:19:26

A lot of it falls on the suppliers.

1:19:29

It's just more around the checking in.

1:19:31

The initial bit is around sort of the meeting the suppliers and explaining your problems and explaining the challenge.

1:19:39

The work then goes to the suppliers and it's checking in with them then and making sure that you're on the right direction and making sure that they're not going off on tangents that are not aligned to what you're looking for.

1:19:55

So sorry if I've jumped around, I obviously didn't prepare slides for this, but it's hopefully giving you a little bit of an understanding of what we did.

Gethin While (Welsh Government – Smart Living)

1:20:03

Thank you, Amy, better than death by PowerPoint, I can assure you.

1:20:06

Sorry, no, I'm really grateful both you and Paul have gone to the heart of the challenge entails what pre-commercial procurement can do.

1:20:17

And the flexibility to allows the sort of frank conversations you can have with suppliers and how you can flex and be agile.

1:20:27

It's a very dynamic space, decarbonisation and the energy markets, and the sort of industrial

tenants who also want to engage with decarbonisation and needs that you provided and the expertise.

1:20:42

It's so useful.

1:20:44

Thank you so much.

1:20:46

I'm just saying imagine there was several questions.

1:20:49

Ruth, can you share any questions that have come in for Paul and Amy and also myself possibly.

Ruth Tewungwa (Welsh Government Energy Service)

1:20:58

We've got one question which was during Paul's presentation, it was asking about the scale of investment that, that that project cost.

Paul Smith (Bridgend County Borough Council)

1:21:13

So I think there was across all the phases of SBRI, there was 800K that went into that and there's been further 25K for a follow on offer for the next kind of stage of feasibility for that.

1:21:30

That South Connelly local energy market project, which has come from the Shared Prosperity fund.

1:21:37

It's probably worth saying as well that the contractor put in a fair bit of pro bono time off the back of the SBRI project.

1:21:47

I think recognising it was a community scheme and that there was real potential there.

1:21:51

So that there's kind of some non grant-funded work that's been put in as well.

Gethin While (Welsh Government – Smart Living)

1:22:00

Thanks, Paul.

1:22:02

Any questions for Amy, Ruth, just waiting for any more questions.

Ruth Tewungwa (Welsh Government Energy Service)

1:22:07

If anyone's got questions, just pop them in the Q&A and then Amy or Paul can answer

Gethin While (Welsh Government – Smart Living)

1:22:20

I think my reflection is looking at your bids for the challenge, as Amy's underlined, is that we want a really strong theme that's addressing, the best kind of policy context that we described.

1:22:33

But it's all about decarbonisation, doing it efficiently and taking everybody with us.

1:22:39

I think that's this whole sort of thrust of this particular Contracts for Innovation programme and that this will be a model

1:22:51

It will be the mainstream approach for how we support decarbonisation innovation going forward, having had two testing pilots in the last three years.

1:23:00

So it's really beneficial to have the fruits of people's experience shared today and there'll be more of that going forward that people can lock into.

Amy Taylor (Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council)

1:23:12

I would add to what I said earlier as well.

1:23:17

I think for some local authority officers, you traditionally procure a service and you're looking for something specific.

1:23:26

I think with this one, it's about going into it with a very open mind and also not trying to answer the question for the contractor.

1:23:35

I think that's the important thing.

1:23:37

And it's something I've always do where you're going through the process and you say, oh well what about this and what about this?

1:23:43

And sometimes it's almost like trying to hold back and letting the contractor and the suppliers come forward with the solutions.

1:23:52

And as you said, one really good point is a lot of this technology is not going to be new.

1:23:57

What is going to be new about is it is how it connects together, and how it performs differently by connecting it together.

1:24:05

And I think that is where it's about going along on the journey and being really open.

1:24:12

And you might move and you might need to shift and you might go into it at the start with, oh, we think we're going to end up with a hydrogen solution as an example.

1:24:21

But actually you may end up with an electric solution at the end that is totally different.

1:24:27

So I think you need to go into it with a very open mind and a willingness to have that dialogue, have that shift and be really open.

1:24:37

The solution will be what it will be.

Gethin While (Welsh Government – Smart Living)

1:24:40

Yeah, that's really true.

1:24:41

It's putting things together that's previously combined efficiently and, you know, with a little bit of insight.

1:24:58

So just coming back, I think if people are running out of juice or if you need to think a bit more about what they want to ask, if you can put some stuff in the chat, e-mail colleagues at the energy service, Stefan and Ruth.

1:25:15

They will process them for us and we will come back to you with clear answers.

1:25:21

If they're complicated, we can ask for more input from other bits of Welsh Government, certainly early next week, the latest two weeks and a bit to go for the deadline.

1:25:32

And this particular session has been recorded.

1:25:35

So that will also go out to everyone participating as a link and we'll post it on the external website as well so you can take a look at it.

1:25:44

And we'll share the presentation as well so we can maximise the number of people who can see this potential contractors and suppliers as well as potential challenge owners.

1:25:59

So there we go.

1:26:00

Thank you.

1:26:01

Sorry my neighbour is running up and down outside.

1:26:03

So I just have to apologise.

1:26:05

I think they're having a good time.

1:26:08

Anything else Stefan or Ruth, do we have any more questions?

Ruth Tewungwa (Welsh Government Energy Service)

1:26:16

No, there's, there's one more question just come in which it would be good to catch Amy and Paul's feedback on having - this is coming from Gareth - Having run a number of SBRI's, his reflection is that projects with a smaller innovative step tend to be more successful than those that focus on deep innovation.

1:26:38

So is that a view that Amy and Paul you share?

1:26:43

How do you feel about the technology readiness levels of projects and their success?

Amy Taylor (Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council)

1:26:49

For me, I think it goes back to the point that we just had from Gethin just now.

1:26:58

I think what you'll have is the individual technologies, their readiness level will be fairly advanced.

1:27:04

I think one might be different about it is actually the readiness level of IT as a joined approach of technologies.

1:27:11

But I would tend to agree with what Gethin has said, something that you know, you go in completely, we were inventing something is a much bigger step than something that is bringing things together.

1:27:23

So but also sometimes that needs to happen.

1:27:27

I think we also need to recognise that sometimes you do need that.

1:27:30

But my experience that I've had has been that it's better when it's that sort of smaller incremental approach.

Paul Smith (Bridgend County Borough Council)

1:27:39

Yeah, I think that's reflected in the South Cornelly project as well.

1:27:43

If you look at the elements of it, it was installing PV, which is very established. Home battery systems, again, an established commercial technology.

1:27:57

I'm trying some home energy management systems and the innovation in that was bringing it together as a system with a view to it evolving into a market.

1:28:09

But the development of that kind of market is always going to be a long pathway.

1:28:16

And this is the first step on it for people.

1:28:18

As I said in the presentation, you can't just land a new market on people and expect them to engage.

1:28:26

There's no substitute for time in a community for that kind of engagement.

1:28:32

And that was the innovation in this.

1:28:35

It's how you get people to engage in that kind of process, you know, moving on to change how they engage with energy.

Ruth Tewungwa (Welsh Government Energy Service)

1:28:49

Thanks both.

1:28:51

If there are no other questions then Gethin, I'll hand back to you.

Gethin While (Welsh Government – Smart Living)

1:29:03

Thank you all for taking part today.

1:29:05

As I said, please be fertile with all of your questions.

1:29:09

We'll answer you as soon as possible.

1:29:11

And well, good luck with the formulation of your funding proposals, which we see at the end of the month.

1:29:21

Thank you very much to all of you.