THE GREENHOUSE

Consumers of energy should also be the owners of the energy they use. In order to tackle climate change, it is critical that the energy market is restructured to give people and their communities control over their own energy security. Across Europe there are now hundreds of co-operatives and social enterprises that are not only delivering clean, low-carbon energy but also employment and fuel poverty alleviation.

After more than two decades we are still waiting for the local authority to promote and support community renewable energy projects. Instead we have to point to the success of Germany, where nearly half of the country's renewable energy capacity is owned by individuals, community groups and private developers (this is a country where renewables accounted for a sizeable 31% of electricity generation in the first half of 2014).

The truly impressive thing about Germany is that they are dismantling one system to create a new one. But there is a country that has an even more impressive track record. Wind power provided 41% of Denmark's electricity consumption in the first half of 2014, and 62% in January 2015 alone.

This incredible progress is in a large part down to the fact that between 70% and 80% of the country's wind turbines are under some form of community ownership. This is a result of Denmark's 'Right to Invest' legislation that requires developers to offer 20% ownership of large wind projects to local communities.

REFURBISHING THE CITY CENTRE EQUIPPING THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Micro-generation in the form of solar hot water and electricity generation, along with ground and air source heat pumps, micro-wind turbines and biomass combined heat and power must be integrated alongside the use of more established 'traditional' systems. Indeed it is essential to use local materials such as lime-hemp, aerated clay block, recycled concrete, recycled paper, wool and cork in imaginative ways to increase the thermal mass of existing buildings.

"The mantra that change is out of character with the building or landscape is part of a suicide pact being clung to by those who continue to deny climate change or who will not accept that the end of oil, and the major waste of fossil fuels must end within less than a decade. Planning must embrace renewable energy technologies."