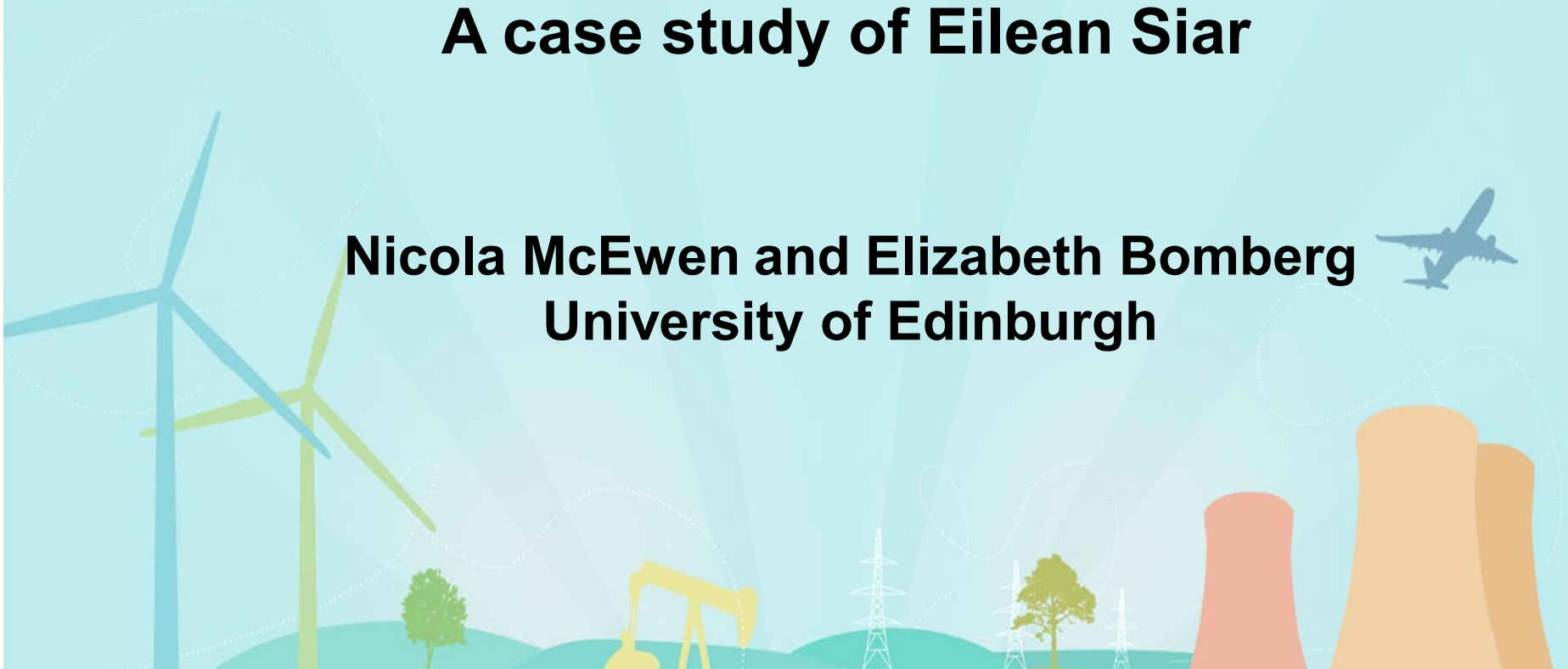




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***A community perspective on multi-level
governance and energy policy***
A case study of Eilean Siar

Nicola McEwen and Elizabeth Bomberg
University of Edinburgh



Energy Policy in the UK

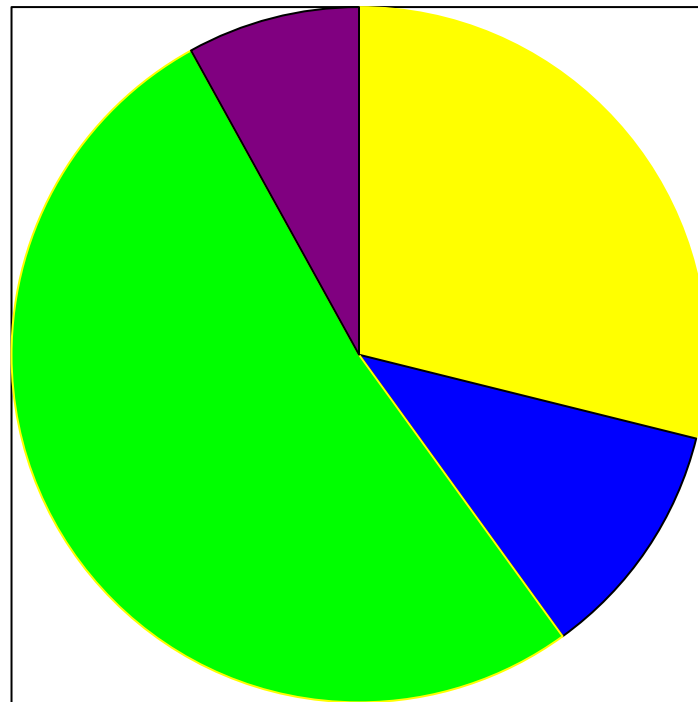
- **Reserved matter:**
 - generation, transmission, distribution, supply of electricity
 - ownership, exploration, exploitation of oil and gas
 - ownership, exploitation of coal, nuclear energy & nuclear installations.
- **Crown Estate:**
 - manages offshore sites
- **Revenue-raising & industry regulation**
 - So, power to incentivise large/small scale renewables, CCS, levy green taxes, electricity market, etc
- **Devolved competence**
 - Promotion of renewables/ energy efficiency
 - Economic development
 - Planning, land use
 - Transport; Housing
 - Waste management & environmental protection
 - Mandatory climate change targets
- **Executive power**
 - Power to grant/withhold consent for overhead transmission lines & construction of new generating stations above 50 MW capacity
 - Renewables obligation banding
- **Local Govt**
 - Planning authority for below 50MW

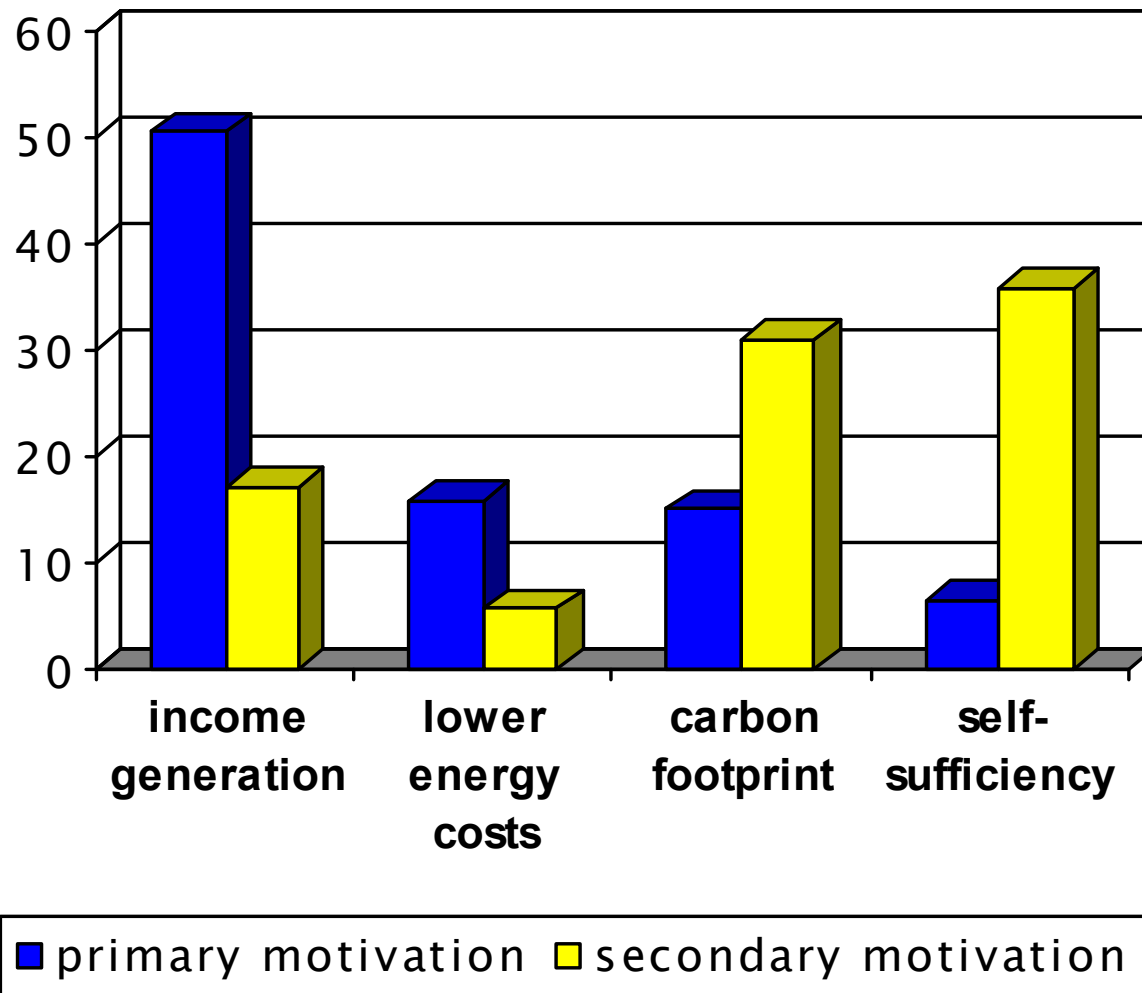
EnGAGE Scotland

- ❑ Focus: community action dedicated to generation of community-scale renewable energy, and/or or reducing energy consumption
- ❑ Unit of analysis = grassroots community group
 - non-governmental, non-professional, self-organising territorial community, often loosely structured
- identified active groups in Scotland and their key characteristics;
- examined motivations, opportunities and barriers to community energy action

(see *Energy Policy*, 2012, vol 51: 435-44)

Geography of community renewables



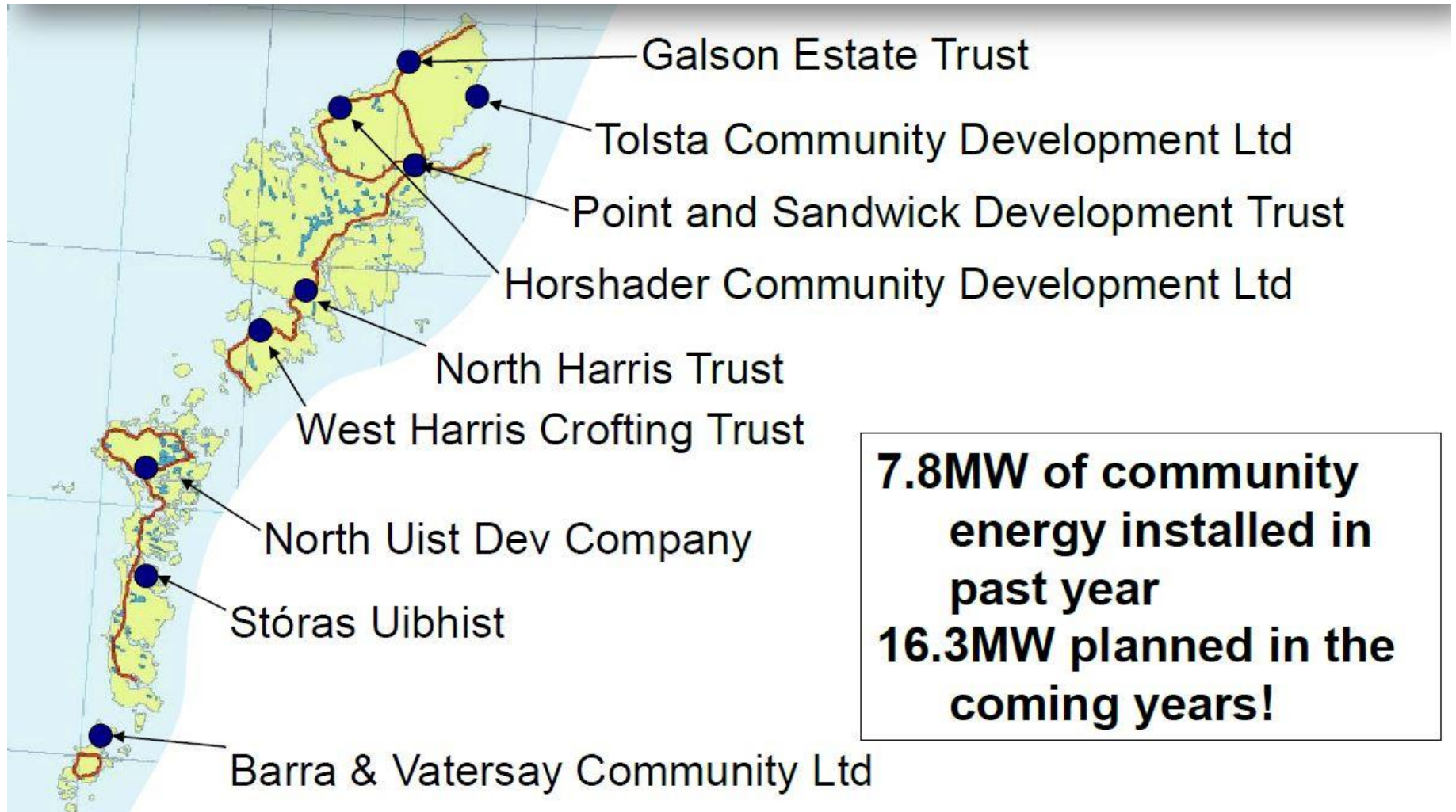


Energy in Eilean Siar

- 2003/04 . approx. 97% of the energy consumed was imported
- Local grid infrastructure operates at capacity - linked to national grid via a single 32kV line
- Highest level of fuel poverty in the UK:
 - Approx 60% spend more than 10% of their income on heating their home (CneS/TES)
- High transport fuel costs >
 - motor fuel duty discount for remote island communities

Community energy projects

(source: Community Energy Scotland)



7.8MW of community energy installed in past year
16.3MW planned in the coming years!

Renewable Energy Projects



Self-Government Goals

'(Self-government is) what all this is about.... I've been here so long and seen schools close, plants close, declining children, business and employment, people shipping out of the island and its hell... I hope the people who are producing lots of money with community energy will go and buy the land and that will open up further opportunity. It's just seeing things that have failed and thinking what do you want out of your own community'

North Harris Trust spokesperson

Local level & local government

- Local authority planning process
- Financial Support & Incentives:
 - Community Renewable Support Fund (CRSF)
 - £750k over 5 years (up to £50k/50%)
- Land ownership and local communities
- Interpersonal relationships and trust

“I think the council always looked on community projects as being something that was okay...”

Community representative,
Horsham CDT

Local level constraints

- Protracted consultation period
 - Wide range of statutory consultees, inc:
 - SNH, MoD, Scottish Water, Historic Scotland, H&I Airports, SEPA, Environmental Health, etc
- Lack of expertise and capacity in local government
- Lack of available finance in government and competing priorities
- Negotiating lease with local landowner/common grazings committees
- Contested nature of community

“the lack of very concise clear guidance from government [on assessment criteria is] one of the main problems we are facing”

CnES planner

Scottish Level and Scottish Government

- Ambitious renewable energy/electricity programme:
 - 2020 . 100% electricity demand from renewables
 - 500MW community and locally-owned renewables by 2020 - to ensure *all Scottish communities share in the rich rewards of our next energy revolution.*
- Climate Challenge Fund/Community and Renewable Energy (Loans) Scheme (CARES)
- Investment in Support/Broker Network . through Community Energy Scotland; Energy Savings Trust, etc. in a *daily dialogue* with Scottish Govt.
- Additional support from other regional, national and EU bodies:
 - HIE; Big Lottery; Leader
 - *Outer Hebrides Community Energy Fund* > £259,985 grant scheme (up to £30k) for energy efficiency/feasibility studies

Policy Constraints - Scotland

- Big targets need big investors
 - 500MW target = 3% of 2020 target
- Planning:
 - Hurdles seem bigger from a community perspective
 - Regulations impose blind to community benefit
- Key policy levers not in SG hands:
 - transmission charging; FiT, grid infrastructure, etc
 - lobbying & IGR not always effective

There's a limited amount of land available for development... a local authority should be in a position to say, well which of these is going to arrive at the maximum local economic impact. They can't do that at the moment... under planning regulations+

Community representative, Point & Sandwick Devt Trust

"it is clear that the UK Government has not listened to the demands of developers or the Scottish Government on (island strike prices)... the UK Government continues to ignore their own research which points to the need for different levels of support across the three main island groups."

Fergus Ewing, Scottish Energy Minister

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UK Level and UK Government

- Key policy drivers set at Westminster, inc. market incentives:
 - Feed-in-Tariff < 5MW
 - ROCs > FiTs contract for difference
- Grid connection negotiated with electricity network operator
 - SSE in North of Scotland
 - National Grid
- UK regulator:
 - determines permissible levels of investment in grid



“Isles’ inter-connector project under threat”

“There is this huge target and there is us fighting to get good connection from SSE at the bottom and it is just not joined up...”

North Harris Trust Spokesperson

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Policy constraints – UK

- Transmission charging regime impedes large investment > delays to investment in grid & interconnection
- Poor grid infrastructure due to lack of investment > limits capacity/export potential
- Uncertainty over FiTs
 - Changes in rules after grants awarded
 - Uncertainty and changes in tariff levels
- Market-based policy decisions inappropriate for north west highlands and islands

“communities have been disadvantaged... because we are now on a level playing field with commercial”

Horshader spokesperson

“By cutting strike prices and threatening ROCs... and with Feed in Tariff rates reducing... many community renewable energy projects just can't proceed”

Community Energy Scotland

Western Isles receives its first community-owned wind turbine!

1 August 2012



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The logo for the UK Energy Research Centre (UKERC), with 'UK' in blue and 'ERC' in green.

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