

# Durham University-Durham Energy Institute – QES Internship 2019

## **Turning the climate corner: Learning from failure**

The need to transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy has never been clearer. It seems that most people now agree that this is urgent, yet progress is painfully slow. How can we explain this? While much energy goes into reporting and sharing ‘good practice’, we also need to know more about why projects don’t happen, so we can attend to the causes of failure.

This project entails an investigation into the failure of two radical renewable energy proposals in County Durham, in NE England. Installing renewable energy infrastructure can lead to significant reductions in energy bills, which in turn can enable local authorities to offer services more widely to those in need. The case study relates to the refurbishment of a council leisure and health centre, where a proposal to use minewater-groundsource heat was rejected, despite the alternative being more expensive and less renewable.

The project will involve using ethnographic (mixed, qualitative) methods to explore the socio-technical networks that guide public investment in energy interventions for the good of all.

The researcher will need to understand the basic technologies in question and acquire an overview of the relevant structures of public investment (full guidance will be given), and conduct interviews with selected interviewees. The output from the project will be a report that explains why the case study projects failed, and include proposals for how failure might be avoided in the future.

Project supervisor: Prof Simone Abram (with Prof Jon Gluyas)

Project host department: Anthropology, in association with the Durham Energy Institute.

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