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How to support community energy in your local authority area:

BACKGROUND INFORMATION PACK



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Introduction

Who are we?

The Carbon Trust's mission: To accelerate the move to a decarbonised future.

How? We advise companies, financial institutions, and public sector organisations on their Net Zero transition, supporting them on each step of their journey – from footprinting and risk analysis through to target setting, strategy, financing and implementation.

This background information on “How to support community energy in your local authority area” has been developed through the Net Zero Living Programme. The Net Zero Living programme is funded by Innovate UK and aims to help regional authorities and businesses accelerate the transition to Net Zero, across the UK and internationally.

This document

This document aims to help local authorities design a package of support to accelerate and scale-up community energy activities within their local authority area, by providing relevant background information.

The document provides information about what community energy is, the benefits that can arise from community energy, what is required for it to be successful and how local authorities can support community energy. Relevant case studies are included highlighting how particular projects/ initiatives have benefited from local authority support. This document is provided alongside a “How to support community energy in your local authority area: Process guidance” document, which provides a pathway for developing a community energy support programme by completing a series of steps.

What is community energy?

There is no fixed universal definition for community energy, but definitions often identify:

- a community's relationship with a project;
- who a "community" is; and
- what types of projects are included within the definition.

The definitions provided by the national community energy sector bodies can be a good starting point. Click the links to the right to visit their websites and discover their definitions.



[Community Energy England's definition](#)



[Community Energy Wales' definition](#)



[Community Energy Northern Ireland's definition](#)



[Community Energy Scotland's definition](#)

Types of community energy project - technology

- Community energy projects come in a variety of forms. They can be individual one-off technology installations or wider programmes or portfolios.
- Projects range in complexity and cost, but are all valuable to their local communities, e.g. through saving energy costs for community members, increasing the resilience of a community asset, providing local investment opportunities (through share offers), providing a steady income for community initiatives, providing volunteering and job opportunities, educating communities on wider issues, etc.
- Community energy projects can provide additional decarbonisation benefits by developing sites that would not otherwise be developed by the commercial sector (potentially due to their scale, location or technology type).

Single building low carbon heat

Community buying scheme

Solar farm / wind farm / hydro generator

Single building energy efficiency / solar PV

Low carbon transport

Multi-technology generation

Heat network

Energy efficiency advice

Battery storage

Multiple building energy efficiency or generation projects

Solar / wind farm joint venture with private sector

Electric Vehicle charging

Local benefits that can arise from community energy

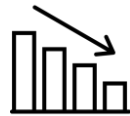
Community energy projects can give rise to many benefits, as evidenced in the [Community Energy State of the Sector 2024 report](#), developed by Community Energy England, Community Energy Scotland and Community Energy Wales.



Employment
796 employed in GB
in 2023*



Local investment
£6.4 million in local
investment
opportunities in GB
in 2023*



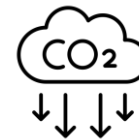
Reduction in costs for energy users
£4.4 million in bill
savings in GB in
2023*



Skills development
Volunteering and
shared learning
(3,719 volunteers in
GB in 2023*)



Community education
72 new energy
advice and energy
efficiency services
in GB in 2024*



Carbon reduction
165,980t CO2
saved in GB in
2023*



Increased social cohesion
69,500 members in
583 GB
organisations*

Key ingredients for delivering Community Energy Projects

Regardless of the type of project there are a handful of “key ingredients” which are required to ensure successful deployment of a community energy project.

Appetite	There needs to be appetite to pursue a project.
Project management	Somebody needs to drive the project. Existing organisations may have project management skills and experience which can be applied.
Community engagement	Somebody needs to define, shape, and lead community involvement. Existing community organisations are likely well-placed to do this. Guides are available online, refer to the useful links list at the end of this document.
Expert advice	Technical, legal, and financial advice is often required to successfully deliver a community energy project (consultancy organisations, other energy groups, and existing tools/guides provided by other organisations, can help).
Governance	Good practices need to be in put in place to avoid problems and manage issues. Established organisations may already have these in place. Best practice guides are available online, refer to the useful links list at the end of this document.
Funding	Funding for development and capital costs need to be sourced. Sources of funding are available, e.g. specific community energy funding, local area funding, wind farm community benefit funds, Lottery funding, the Energy Redress Scheme, etc.
An opportunity	A suitable project opportunity is required, this could be a potential site, need, funding, development, interest, etc.
Delivery resource	The project manager needs to be supported by a team to help deliver the project, including those supporting with administration, coordination, communications, and fundraising, alongside project specialists.

Local authority roles in supporting community energy



Local authority roles in supporting community energy

Local authorities can undertake a wide range of roles depending on the type, complexity and maturity of the energy project. The following provides a high-level overview of potential responsibilities they may assume. Further details including tailored approaches are available in the [Appendix](#).

Funding provision/investment

- Identifying and providing targeted funding solutions.
- Targeting the funding at the specific needs of the community, e.g. start-up and at-risk development funding, may be required where activity is limited, capital investment may be required where more advanced projects have developed.
- Facilitating access to third party funding, that may not be directly available to community groups.
- Funding can be provided as match funding, or as a single source, and in the form of a grant, loan or equity investment.

Opportunity provision

- Identifying a viable opportunity and reaching out to the community to excite them about developing it. This could include using council data to map and identify potential opportunity areas for community energy via Local Area Energy Planning processes and other similar mapping activities, including on public and commercial buildings.
- Opportunities could also include providing sites within the authority's estate for community energy generation projects, facilitating community energy advice provision to council housing tenants, supporting community organisations to be included on public sector procurement frameworks, acting as an electricity offtaker for community energy generation projects (directly via a private wire or indirectly via sleeving arrangements), etc.

Local authority roles in supporting community energy

Promotion & knowledge sharing

- Educating the community regarding the benefits that can arise from community energy projects, with real case studies.
- Facilitating knowledge sharing; identifying funding/project opportunities, sources of guidance/support, and peer-to-peer learning opportunities.
- Promoting projects under development and operational and supporting organisations' calls for action (e.g. regarding investment or recruitment of delivery resource).

Supportive policies and targets

- Integrating community energy into local authority policies and targets; creating a local environment where community energy is talked about and supported politically.

Coordination and advocacy

- Advocating for community energy locally and nationally.
- Advocating for existing local initiatives that are in development.
- Coordinating community energy project development within the local area by matching up organisations/projects in need, with relevant support.

Local authority roles in supporting community energy

Initiate and lead project establishment

- Identifying a project idea and reaching out to the community to help develop and deliver it.
- This could involve reaching out to existing community organisations to work in partnership or reaching out to specific individuals with the view of setting up a new organisation.
- This role works well where a local authority has:
 - identified a specific community energy project idea which they would like to see delivered;
 - initial start-up funding available for the project, and ideas regarding the sourcing of the remaining funding needs; and
 - suitably experienced resource that it could dedicate to the project.

Work in ongoing partnership

- Establishing an ongoing partnership model to deliver on a number of local authority community energy objectives.
- This role works well where a local authority has:
 - identified several specific community energy project ideas which they would like to see delivered;
 - initial development funding available for the project and has ideas regarding the sourcing of the remaining funding needs; and
 - a reasonable level of suitably experienced resource that it could dedicate to delivering projects on an ongoing basis.

Case studies

Local authority role examples: promotion & knowledge sharing, opportunity provision, funding provision/investment, project establishment and leadership, ongoing partnership working.

Swansea Community Energy & Enterprise Scheme (SCEES)

- SCEES is an award-winning solar PV cooperative managing ten solar arrays on nine schools and one care home.
- The cooperative is run by a board of volunteer directors and owned by cooperative members.
- Income is generated by the feed-in tariff and electricity payments.
- Profits fund projects focused on energy, skills and enterprise development in some of the poorest communities in Swansea.

Local authority involvement:

- Established by Swansea City and County Council in 2015, with council officer resource capacity dedicated to establishing the organisation, recruiting the board, and supporting the project development through to operation. At which point the council officer support provision ended.
- Council invested in the project as a cooperative member and helped to promote it.
- Ongoing council representation on the board.

Find out more here: [Swansea Community Energy & Enterprise Scheme](#)

Plymouth Energy Community (PEC) Renewables and Homes

- Plymouth Energy Community (PEC) is a charitable organisation, supported by two cooperatives: PEC Renewables and PEC Homes.
- PEC provides energy efficiency advice, develops/manages community owned renewable assets, and works with Plymouth Council to develop community-led, zero-carbon affordable homes (through PEC Homes).
- PEC Renewables manage Ernesettle 4.1 MW solar farm and are developing a second solar farm.

Local authority involvement:

- In 2013, Plymouth City Council worked with engaged local people to establish PEC to deliver energy projects, for and in partnership with the council.
- Council provided start-up finance and dedicated council resource.
- Council and PEC continue to partner on different initiatives, e.g. Future Fit, a retrofit advice service.

Find out more here: [Plymouth Energy Community \(PEC\)](#)

Case studies

Local authority/public sector role examples: opportunity provision, supportive policies/targets.

Egni Solar PV Cooperative

- Egni is a Solar PV cooperative initiated by community energy charity Awel Aman Tawe (established in 1998).
- Egni install solar PV on community/ public buildings in Wales, providing electricity at a reduced rate.
- The installations are financed by community shares.
- Income is generated by electricity sales.
- Surplus is channelled into Awel Aman Tawe's climate change education programme.

Local authority involvement:

- Multiple local authorities provide roof space for the installations and act as offtakers for the electricity.

Find out more here: [About Egni - Awel Aman Tawe](#)

Y Bryn Wind Farm

- Y Bryn Wind Farm is under development by a private developer, Coriolis Energy.
- 10% of the project was made available for community ownership via local individuals and community groups.
- ~£1M p.a. community benefit fund expected.
- Community ownership and community benefit fund are managed through a new community benefit society; 'Awel y Bryn Co-op'; managed by existing community group Awel Aman Tawe and two other voluntary organisations.
- Income is generated from electricity sales.

Public sector involvement:

- Public sector land manager encouraged community benefits within the lease competition.
- Welsh Government has a target for all energy projects in Wales to involve local ownership.

Find out more here: [Y Bryn Wind Farm](#)

Friends of Taff Bargoed Community Hydro

- Friends of Taff Bargoed are a group of volunteers who work to improve the Taff Bargoed Park in Merthyr Tydfil.
- They developed and manage a 100kW hydropower system in the park.
- One of the directors of the group has a technical background in renewable energy developments.
- Income is generated by feed-in tariff and electricity sales.
- Project surplus is used to support local clubs, societies and community groups in Taff Bargoed area.

Local authority involvement:

- One of two landowners providing a lease to the project is the local council.

Find out more here: [Taff Bargoed Hydro](#)

Case studies

Local authority role examples: promotion & knowledge sharing, coordination & advocacy, opportunity provision, project establishment and leadership.

Surrey Council Home Energy Advice Team

- The Surrey Council's Home Energy Advice Team (HEAT) is a county-wide in-person energy advice service, helping residents tackle energy efficiency at home. It is funded by the UK Government's Local Energy Advice Demonstrator (LEAD) competition.
- HEAT provides residents with free energy advice via trained community "Energy Champions". Where retrofit measures are identified, it signposts residents to appropriate funding programmes (e.g. the Home Upgrade Grant, or the Energy Company Obligation (ECO4)) and/or a retrofit assessor and trusted installers via the council and Furbnow's [Home Energy Improvement One-Stop Shop](#).
- [Over 900 households](#) have benefited from the scheme.
- [Over 100 Energy Champions](#) from community groups across Surrey have been trained through the project.

Local authority involvement:

- Surrey Council led the project and joined forces with over a dozen local community groups to help deliver advice.

Find out more here: [Home Energy Advice Team](#)

Brighton Energy Cooperative (BEC) EV Charger Network

- BEC's EV Charger Network started as a research project in 2019 funded by Power to Change Next Generation Community Energy Programme to install charge points at existing solar PV sites to understand if co-located community owned solar PV and EV charge points provide a viable business model.
- The project concluded that an economically viable combination of renewable energy & EV charging can be developed, if specific criteria are met.
- The cooperative have continued to grow the network since the research project completed.
- The group developed tools for assessing site suitability and forecasting revenues and template contracts that are available to other community groups.
- Income is generated from electricity sales.

Local authority involvement:

- [Brighton and Hove City Council supported the project](#) by providing information on preferred charge point locations and potential local EV demand.

Find out more here: [Electric Vehicle Charge Point Project](#)

Case studies

Local authority role examples: promotion and knowledge sharing, coordination and advocacy, supportive policies and targets, ongoing partnership working

Clyde Gateway Partnership

- Clyde Gateway (a limited company with charitable status) is an urban regeneration company driving inward investment and improvement for the people and communities across the east end of Glasgow and South Lanarkshire.
- Waste heat is used to supply heat to houses and businesses in the Dalmarnock area.
- The initial heat network was commissioned in 2021 and served 50 homes and Clyde Gateway's EastWorks offices, with plans to connect over 300 homes and commercial businesses in the future.

Local authority involvement:

- Clyde Gateway is a partnership of Glasgow City Council, South Lanarkshire Council and Scottish Enterprise (Scotland's national economic development agency), with financial backing from the Scottish Government. The heat network is one of several regeneration projects undertaken by Clyde Gateway.

Find out more here: [Clyde Gateway](#)



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Case studies

Local authority role examples: promotion & knowledge sharing, supportive policies and targets, coordination & advocacy, opportunity provision, funding provision/investment, project establishment & leadership, ongoing partnership working.

Suffolk: Creating the Greenest County

- “Creating the Greenest County” is an initiative in Suffolk, aiming to transform Suffolk into a net zero county, through range of projects:
- Community Match Funding – 50% match funding for community carbon reduction projects;
- Warm Homes Suffolk Loan – Interest-free energy efficiency loans for households;
- Sustainable Schools Network – Support for school climate action plans;
- Loft Insulation Offer – 50% discount for residents;
- Youth Climate Conference – Climate education for high school pupils;
- Net Zero Business Advisor Service and Carbon Charters – Support for businesses to cut emissions;
- Electric Car Clubs – Trial of all-electric shared vehicles;
- Keep the Heat – Heat-loss survey kits for community use; and
- Community Network – Support for 160+ local climate action groups.

Public sector involvement:

- Suffolk’s public sector has led this initiative but works in ongoing partnership with other organisations to deliver projects.

Find out more here: [Creating the Greenest County - Green Suffolk](#)

City of York’s Community Energy Activities

- The City of York Council has integrated community energy into its local policies and worked with community energy projects to progress towards the city's decarbonisation goals.
- They formally incorporated community energy into their [Local Area Energy Plan](#), promoting working with existing local schemes.
- [Solar for Schools](#) is a community benefit society, which has installed solar panels on York’s schools; using the systems and the revenues to provide clean energy education to the school pupils.
- York Community Energy is an independent, volunteer-run social enterprise working to address energy and climate issues in the York area. It provides home energy efficiency advice and develops community renewable energy generation projects.
- In addition to Solar for Schools, the Council have worked with York Community Energy, and other partners, to create a one-stop-shop for low carbon for retrofit in York: “[YorEnergy](#)”.

Public sector involvement:

- Leading the development of initiatives and partnering with others.

Find out more here: [York & North Yorkshire Local Area Energy Plan](#)

Case studies

Local authority role examples: Funding provision.

Community Energy Pathways

- Community Energy Pathways, formerly Community Energy South is a clear example of where, on the ground capacity building is having a demonstrable impact. Bringing together communities and local authorities.
- Community Energy Pathways was established in 2012 as a support organisation to capacity build new and existing community energy groups. Operating mainly across the Southeast, East of England and the Midlands, Community Energy Pathways provides intensive on the ground support to over 50 community energy groups including funding, governance, training and skills development both in local generation and energy advice programmes.
- In 2024 alone, thanks to its strategic funding partnership with UK Power Networks, Community Energy Pathways was able to back energy advice programmes worth over £1m to 20 groups who employed and trained 80 front line energy advice champions. Their Sussex supported groups are now generating 24.6 MW raising £8.63m of community investment and reach over 10,000 homes with energy advice every year.
- Community Energy Pathways estimate that they deploy at least 30 working days of dedicated, localised consultancy time with each group they support: they believe that working locally, hand in glove with community energy groups and with local authorities and stakeholders is necessary to complement any national support service.
- In 2025, Community Energy Pathways was awarded the King's Award for Enterprise and Sustainable Development.

Local authority involvement:

- The organisation is currently working with 17 local authorities and their communities.
- Through engagement with Community Energy Pathways, the local authority becomes part of the Community Energy Pathways network, and benefits from national capacity building and funding activities.

Find out more here: [Community Energy Pathways](#)

Case studies

Local authority role examples: Funding provision.

West of England Mayoral Combined Authority's (WECA) Community Energy Funding Provision

- WECA won [Community Energy England's Supportive Local Authority award](#) in 2024, for its focused action on community-led renewable energy projects, reinforced by collaborative engagement and substantial funding.
- [WECA's website](#) signposts users to guides and resources for community energy, including details of funding, and other organisations supporting community energy projects.
- The WECA [Local Energy Scheme](#) funds renewable energy projects across the West of England, aiming to boost community-owned low-carbon assets, reduce energy costs, generate local income, create jobs and training opportunities, and support biodiversity and nature recovery.
- The Local Energy Scheme has had three funding rounds: the first two provided capital funding, and the third focused on development funding.
- Initial funding came from the European Regional Development Fund, current funding is from the West of England Recovery Fund and Green Recovery Fund.
- Notable projects include £500,000 to Ambition Community Energy CIC for a 4.2 MW wind turbine on Bristol City Council land, wholly community owned.
- WECA also managed the [West of England Rural Fund](#) (UK Shared Prosperity Fund), offering £10k–£40k grants for community asset improvements focusing on energy reduction and biodiversity.

Public sector involvement:

- Leading and managing the Local Energy Scheme and Rural Fund, providing substantial funding and strategic support for community-led renewable energy projects.

Find out more here: [Local Energy Scheme - Combined Authority](#)

Case studies

Local authority role examples: Funding provision.

Glasgow's Community Renewable Energy Framework and People Make Glasgow Communities Renewable Programme

- Glasgow Council's Community Renewable Energy Framework sets out the support available to Glasgow energy communities pursuing community-led renewable energy projects and specifies the eligibility and policy requirements for applying for "The People Make Glasgow Communities Renewable" programme.
- "The People Make Glasgow Communities Renewable" programme provides the opportunity for "a Glasgow Renewable Energy Community to apply for the lease of a designated site for a community-led renewable energy project". The programme provides a Community Renewable Energy Opportunity Map, which identifies available sites and their characteristics. These sites consist of council owned vacant and derelict land sites suitable for renewable energy. If this scheme is successful, the council will run another phase exploring the use of council-owned roof space.
- In addition to facilitating access to the land for a renewable energy project, the council will provide planning guidance and, where feasible, purchase the power generated by the projects in an adjacent council-owned property.
- Within the renewable energy framework, as well as identifying the support provided by Glasgow City Council, the document signposts communities to the support provided by the nationwide Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES) delivered by Local Energy Scotland, and funding sources that are available.

Local authority involvement:

- Providing access to land, planning support, and guidance to enable community-led renewable energy projects on council-owned sites.

Find out more here: [Glasgow's Community Renewable Energy Framework](#)

Case studies

Local authority role examples: promotion & knowledge sharing, supportive policies and targets, coordination & advocacy, opportunity provision, funding provision/investment, project establishment & leadership, ongoing partnership working.

Torbay Council Climate Partnership

- Torbay Council is working towards a carbon-neutral future by collaborating with community energy organisations and other partners through the [Torbay Climate Partnership](#).
- The partnership's "[A Greener Way for our Bay](#)", provides an action plan to reduce carbon emissions and prepare for a changing climate.
- Many of the overarching proposals of the plan support community energy, with one stating "*Ensure the community is at the heart of local action*".
- In partnership with Exeter Community Energy (ECOE), the council launched the [Community Energy Champion](#) scheme, training volunteers to provide household energy advice and develop skills.
- Torbay Council is a partner in the [Energy Saving Devon](#) initiative, which works with community energy groups to coordinate and facilitate free energy saving advice and support.
- The council promote other organisations' activities on their [website](#).

Local authority involvement:

- Supports community climate initiatives by partnering with and promoting local energy groups.

Find out more: [Torbay Climate Partnership - Torbay Council](#)

Edinburgh's Community Climate Fund

- In 2023, the City of Edinburgh Council launched a [£140k Edinburgh Community Climate Fund](#) to help communities to develop ideas and projects aimed at making Edinburgh a greener city.
- The fund provided up to £20,000 per project with funding allocated based on a public vote.
- Projects funded by the programme include:
 - [Edinburgh Building Retrofit and Improvement Collective](#): who promote community engagement via retrofit roadshows, provision of online advice and forums, and other activities; and
 - [Cosy Homes and Cargo Bikes](#): a project delivered jointly by Porty Community Energy and Edinburgh Tool Library, that aimed to promote energy efficiency and sustainable transport within the community.

Local authority involvement:

- Launched, funded, and facilitated the programme, enabling community-led climate projects through public voting.

Find out more here: [Citizen Participation](#)

Useful sources of information, tools, and guidance

Community energy sector bodies (member details, guidance documents, tools, case studies, funding sources, etc.):

[Community Energy England](#) (includes specific information and resources targeted at local authorities), [Community Energy Wales](#), [Community Energy Scotland](#), [Community Energy NI](#)

Government community energy support (including advice, tools, guidance, case studies, and funding):

[Welsh Government Energy Service](#) (for public sector and community groups), [Local Energy Scotland](#), [North East & Yorkshire Net Zero Hub](#), [North West Net Zero Hub](#), [Midlands Net Zero Hub](#), [South West Net Zero Hub](#), [Greater South East Net Zero Hub](#)

National third sector networks (member details, guidance documents, tools, events etc.)

[NICVA](#) (Northern Ireland), [NAVCA](#) (England), [SCVO](#) (Scotland), [WCVA](#) (Wales)

Tools & guidance:

[Centre for Sustainable Energy: Resources](#), [Energy Saving Trust: Energy tools and calculators](#), [Co-operatives UK: What is good governance?](#), [Impact: Community carbon calculator](#), [National Energy Action \(NEA\)](#), [Severn Wye Energy Agency](#)

Funding:

[The National Lottery Community Fund](#), [Energy redress scheme](#), [UK Government: Find a grant tool](#), [Welsh Government Business Wales: Finance locator](#), [Scottish Government: Business funding or advice search](#), [Northern Irish Government: Grant finder](#)

Appendix

Local authority roles in supporting community energy

- Identifying and providing targeted funding solutions.
- Targeting the funding at the specific needs of the community, e.g. start-up and at-risk development funding, may be required where activity is limited, capital investment may be required where more advanced projects have developed.
- Facilitating access to third party funding, that may not be directly available to community groups.
- Funding can be provided as match funding, or as a single source, and in the form of a grant, loan or equity investment.

Approaches can be tailored to authority resource and capacity:

Where funding availability is limited, third party funding that the local authority could help facilitate access to can be researched and identified.

Where internal funding is available it could be secured for use for community energy. The funding could be tailored to local needs, and other funding availability. For example, it could be used to provide a local match funding scheme, targeted at a specific project that is at the advanced stages of development, or could be used for a project that the authority is leading themselves.

Appetite, delivery resource:

Provision of funding can help to increase a project's momentum and credibility. This can help increase appetite for its implementation and attract delivery resource.

Project management, expert advice, governance:

Funding may be structured to enable organisations to buy-in certain skills and advice and provide the start-up funding needed to legally establish an organisation.

Community engagement:

Local authority funding support can increase a project's credibility and support community engagement.

Funding:

This role aims to directly provide the key ingredient of funding.

An opportunity:

Funding has the potential to unlock certain project opportunities.

Local authority roles in supporting community energy

- Identifying a viable opportunity and reaching out to the community to excite them about developing it. This could include using council data to map and identify potential opportunity areas for community energy via Local Area Energy Planning processes and other similar mapping activities, including on public and commercial buildings.
- Opportunities could also include providing sites within the authority's estate for community energy generation projects, facilitating community energy advice provision to council housing tenants, supporting community organisations to be included on public sector procurement frameworks, acting as an electricity offtaker for community energy generation projects (directly via a private wire or indirectly via sleeving arrangements), etc.

Approaches can be tailored to authority resource and capacity:

The nature of the opportunity identified will depend on the authority's capacity/appetite to take on wider roles.

Where resource is limited, the authority could act as an electricity offtaker, provide council owned buildings for community owned solar PV projects, or highlight opportunities for community energy projects to be involved in public sector procurement frameworks.

Where there is more resource, opportunities which require more collaborative working could be considered.

Appetite, delivery resource:

Identification of a viable opportunity can create appetite for a project and support with attracting and retaining delivery resource.

Project management, expert advice, governance:

In providing a suitable project opportunity, the local authority could look to ensure the recipient organisation, puts in place suitable roles and governance procedures.

Community engagement:

A council's project involvement, even in a minor way can increase project credibility, supporting community engagement.

Funding:

In providing an opportunity to the community the local authority could look to reduce the recipient organisation's funding requirements to make the project viable, e.g. provide sites for energy generation on a cost-free basis.

An opportunity:

This role aims to directly provide the key ingredient of an opportunity to enable the development of a community energy project.

Local authority roles in supporting community energy

- Educating the community regarding the benefits that can arise from community energy projects, with real case studies.
- Facilitating knowledge sharing; identifying funding/project opportunities, sources of guidance/support, and peer-to-peer learning opportunities.
- Promoting projects under development and operational and supporting organisations' calls for action (e.g. regarding investment or recruitment of delivery resource).

Approaches can be tailored to authority resource and capacity:

Where resource and capacity is limited, information gathered by key third party organisations (e.g. national community energy sector bodies) can be signposted to.

Where more resource is available time can be spent researching local examples, creating opportunities for direct peer-to-peer knowledge exchange, and using a variety of media to signpost information and events. Tailoring direct engagement to target audiences can be more effective than generic communication. Building relationships with existing community energy organisations promotes their activities and supports their aims.

Appetite:

Communication of benefits can develop appetite and enthusiasm.

Project management:

Development of project management skills can be supported through peer-to-peer learning and guidance.

Community engagement:

Promotion activities directly support community engagement, which can also be informed by others' approaches and guidance.

Expert advice:

Expert guidance documents can support development activities.

Governance:

Governance guidance and template policies can encourage good governance procedures.

Funding:

Signposting to relevant funding sources can ensure opportunities are realised. Share offer promotion can lead to investment.

An opportunity:

Signposting to project opportunities, and case studies / guidance can help identify an opportunity.

Delivery resource:

Promotion activities can help to support recruitment of delivery resource for specific projects.

Local authority roles in supporting community energy

- Integrating community energy into local authority policies and targets; creating a local environment where community energy is talked about and supported politically.

Approaches can be tailored to authority resource and capacity:

Where resource is limited, establishing a political statement of support for community energy can be focused on. Developing a community energy definition can help with drafting a statement of support. The statement should be widely publicised within and outside of the authority, through existing communications channels.

Where more resource is available the authority's policy landscape can be mapped out to identify where community energy should be integrated (e.g. planning, economic growth, etc.). The focus should be on developing an environment of support, which can encourage others to be enthusiastic about community energy. This could help encourage landowners and commercial developers to support community energy through provision of sites, funding, and shared development opportunities.

Appetite:

Communication through political messaging can help to raise the profile of community energy and in turn appetite for it.

Project management:

Shared ownership projects with the commercial sector, may be encouraged through policy, and provide opportunities for developing project management skills.

Community engagement, expert advice, delivery resource:

Heightened awareness of community energy through policy can support overall community engagement, may encourage local experts to support community energy through provision of expert advice, and may lead to increased interest amongst the community in being involved in delivery.

Governance:

Defining community energy through policy, has the potential to encourage good governance procedures.

Funding:

Policies that encourage commercial developers to provide community funding may improve the local funding environment.

An opportunity:

Supportive policy may ensure more opportunities are considered feasible.

Local authority roles in supporting community energy

- Advocating for community energy locally and nationally.
- Advocating for existing local initiatives that are in development.
- Coordinating community energy project development within the local area by matching up organisations/projects in need, with relevant support.

Approaches can be tailored to authority resource and capacity:

Where resource is limited, a local authority's platform can be used to advocate for community energy locally and signpost third parties offering support to specific organisations in need. This could include putting commercial energy developers interested in shared ownership/ provision of community benefit funds in touch with relevant community organisations.

Where more resource is available, local and national activity can be more actively engaged with, to proactively identify opportunities to coordinate efforts to maximise success. Advocacy efforts can be scaled up to the national level with regard to key sector challenges and support provision.

Appetite:

Coordination and advocacy can help increase a project's momentum and increase appetite for the project.

Project management:

Coordinating groups to work together or with other sources of support can help to ensure skills and advice required for a project are sourced.

Community engagement:

Local authorities advocating for specific projects can directly support community engagement.

Funding:

Coordinating organisation activities with funding sources can enable a project to succeed (e.g. coordinating energy efficiency advisory activities, with availability of relevant funding (e.g. ECO4 funding) could lead to implementation of energy efficiency measures).

An opportunity, delivery resource:

Coordinating activities from different sources can transform a project idea into a viable opportunity and ensure there is sufficient delivery resource for a project to progress.

Advocating for community energy at the regional and national scale can contribute to all of the key ingredients, by increasing supportive policy, recognition and resourcing for community energy.

Local authority roles in supporting community energy

- Identifying a project idea and reaching out to the community to help develop and deliver it.
- This could involve reaching out to existing community organisations to work in partnership or reaching out to specific individuals with the view of setting up a new organisation.
- This role works well where a local authority has:
 - identified a specific community energy project idea which they would like to see delivered;
 - initial start-up funding available for the project, and ideas regarding the sourcing of the remaining funding needs; and
 - suitably experienced resource that it could dedicate to the project.

This role looks to provide or source all the key ingredients in the short-term, but to work with and upskill the local community to possess at least some of these ingredients over the longer term.

Approaches can be tailored to authority resource and capacity:

Where resource and capacity is limited, this role should focus on project ideas that existing organisations are likely to be able to help to develop and deliver.

Where more resource is available this role can be more ambitious, setting up a larger project, and establishing a new organisation, which looks to recruit community members to join it

Local authority roles in supporting community energy

- Establishing an ongoing partnership model to deliver on a number of local authority community energy objectives.
- This role works well where a local authority has:
 - identified several specific community energy project ideas which they would like to see delivered;
 - initial development funding available for the project and has ideas regarding the sourcing of the remaining funding needs; and
 - a reasonable level of suitably experienced resource that it could dedicate to delivering projects on an ongoing basis.

Approaches can be tailored to the context of the local area:

This role, by its nature, requires significant ongoing resource commitment from the authority. The shape it takes may depend on the status of community energy in the local area.

Where there are a large number of community energy organisations, then direct working between the local authority and community groups could be appropriate.

Where there is limited community energy activity it may be more appropriate for the local authority to set up a new organisation and recruit individuals from the community to help support its delivery.

This role looks to provide or source all the key ingredients on an ongoing basis but continue to work with the community and other organisations to increase scale and impact.



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