

## Community Energy England and Community Energy Wales proudly present 2017 Local Authority Award Winner Oldham Council



*Oldham Council with Oldham Community Power outside one of the sites*

Oldham Council is one of the country's leading Co-operative Councils and as such has prioritised community energy as the best way to tackle carbon emissions in schools and community centres. The Council has supported both Saddleworth Community Hydro and Oldham Community Power to deliver successful schemes totaling over 250kW of solar and hydro capacity, including investment in share offers, officer time, and bridging loans to enable FiT deadlines to be met. Oldham Council sees community energy as a key element of its co-operative agenda, aiming to build community expertise and resilience through reduced energy bills and community ownership of energy generating resources, as well as upskilling community groups in the running of their own businesses. As such, community energy is a key pillar of Oldham's community asset transfer programme.

Oldham is one of the most deprived local authority areas nationally so the Council supporting its community energy groups to raise hundreds of thousands of pounds in community shares is a major achievement for local renewable energy ownership in the UK. One of the Council's key strategic aims is 'inclusive growth', one definition of which is the participation of residents and communities in the means of wealth generation. Community energy fits this definition perfectly and so is a key priority for Oldham Council.

Oldham Council leads for the Greater Manchester Combined Authority on community energy, secured funding from a DECC-funded innovation competition and from the EU for the COALESCCE (Community Owned and Led Energy for Security, Climate Change and Employment) project, which aims to boost the community energy sector both nationally and internationally. So far, around 80 unemployed people in Greater Manchester have received free energy efficiency and employability skills training via one of the companies interviewed under COALESCCE project, National Energy Training Services. Two of these went on to get Green Deal Assessor accreditation. The DECC-funded project enabled four community energy groups – Oldham Community Power, Bury Hydro, Carbon Co-op and Biomass Energy Co-op – to develop new and innovative business models and products, to

overcome key barriers in the community energy sector. Oldham Community Power used its funding to explore ways to engage low-income households in community shared ownership.

Oldham Council is also working with BEIS on a new national Community Energy Specialist apprenticeship standard, the first of its kind for the sector. The skills a Community Energy Specialist will acquire will enable the apprentice to gain employment in a wide range of organisations, including community energy organisations themselves, it is hoped that the initiative will help community energy groups to grow. For the development of the new apprenticeship standard, a working group comprising community energy organisations from all over the UK has been consulted at every stage of development.

Oldham Council both supports its local borough community energy groups and leads at a regional, national and international level to build capacity and innovation in the sector, working with a strong partnership of key organisations across the UK and Europe aiming to deliver long-term resilience and sustainability for community energy.



*Andy Hunt and Abdul Jabbar of Oldham Council with Patrick Alcorn of BEIS*

Community Energy England and Community Energy Wales teamed up to deliver the Community Energy Awards 2017 to honour the organisations and individuals that have done the most to advance the sector over the last year and to celebrate their achievements. The ceremony took place on 1<sup>st</sup> November At City Hall in London.

### **About Community Energy England**

Community Energy England (CEE) was established in 2014 to provide a voice for the community energy sector primarily in England. Membership totals over 200 organisations. The majority of the member organisations are from the community energy sector but the membership extends across a wide range of organisations which works with and supports the community energy sector.

Further details can be found on the CEE website [www.communityenergyengland.org](http://www.communityenergyengland.org)

### **About Community Energy Wales**

Community Energy Wales (CEW) wants to put sustainable energy schemes at the heart of communities in Wales. Communities can become stronger, more resilient, and self-reliant by generating their own energy, using it efficiently, and directing the net income to regenerate their communities. CEW help to bring about this change by inspiring, empowering, and influencing people, policies and practices across Wales. They bring together a network of practitioners who work with and within the communities of Wales to develop renewable energy generation and energy efficiency schemes.

Further details can be found on the CEW website [www.communityenergywales.org.uk](http://www.communityenergywales.org.uk)