

Councils and Community Energy

Josef Davies-Coates, Heat & Retrofit Coordinator
j.davies-coates@communityenergyengland.org



Overview

- An introduction to Community Energy England
- Why councils should support community energy
- How councils can support community energy
- Some specific examples
- More resources

An introduction to Community Energy England

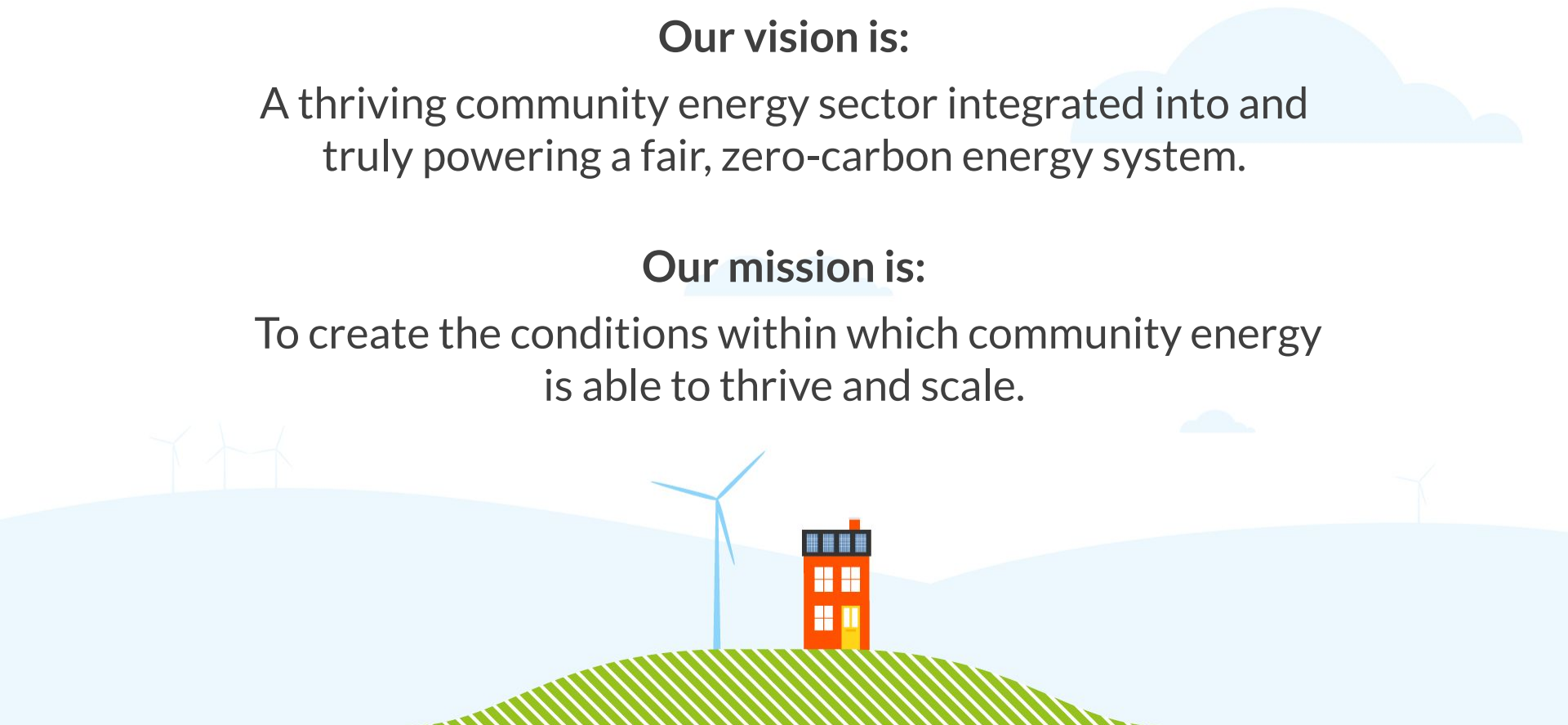
Community Energy England

Our vision is:

A thriving community energy sector integrated into and truly powering a fair, zero-carbon energy system.

Our mission is:

To create the conditions within which community energy is able to thrive and scale.



Community Energy England

310+ member organisations
from across community, public,
private and third sectors

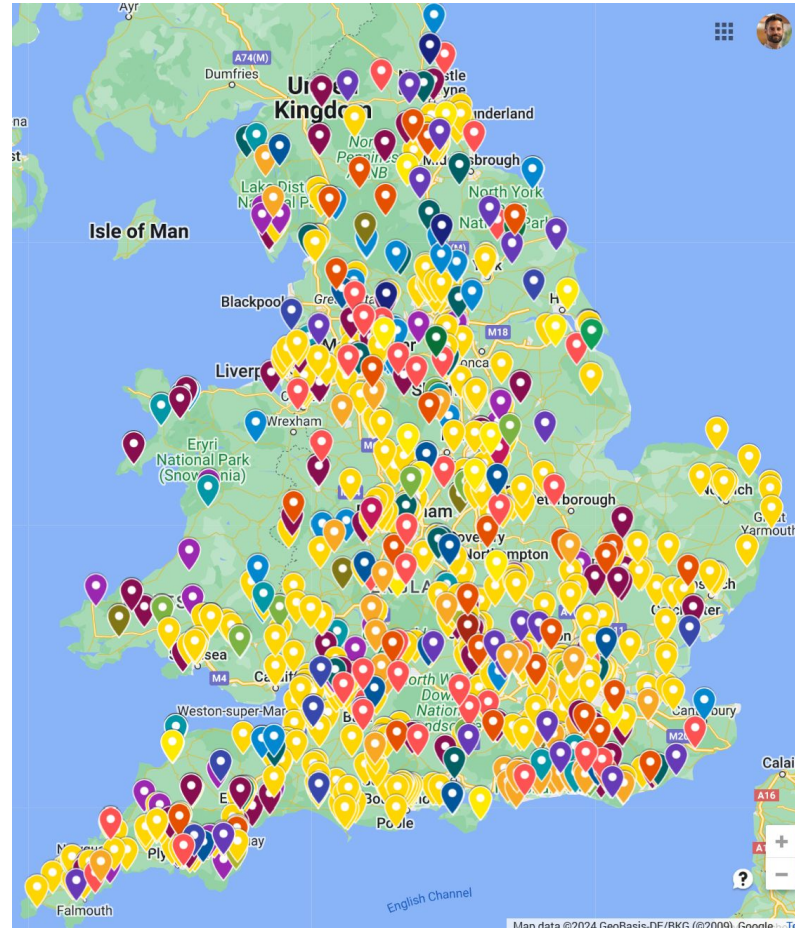
Our members



Our partners



Community energy is a movement!



Why councils should support community energy

Why councils should support community energy

“Supporting the local development of community energy projects has positive impacts on equality, social cohesion and economic opportunity”

[LGA sustainability briefing: community energy](#)

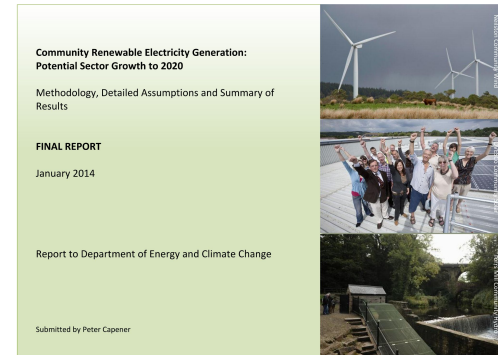
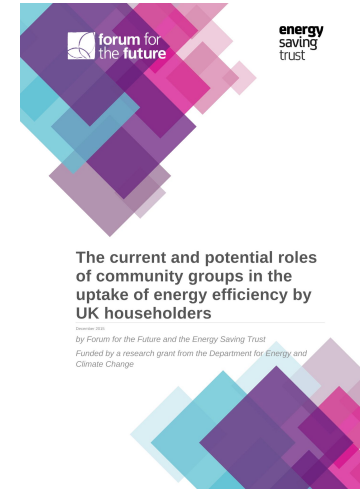
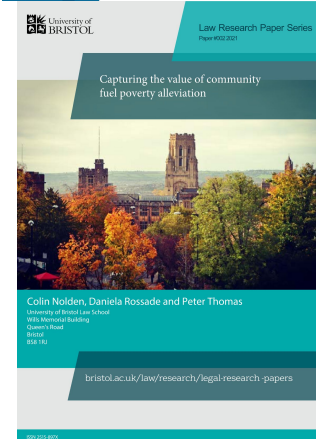
“Advantages of community energy projects over private-sector projects are that they allow local wealth-building, support local employment, improve engagement with local residents by being locally owned and led, and often operate on a not-for-profit basis, with any excess being reinvested back into the communities they power”

[Navigating the Net Zero Energy Transition](#)
[UK100, UK Power Networks DSO](#)



Why councils should support community energy

- Trusted, local intermediary and advocate: 4-5 times better at engaging the public than commercial players.
- Brings 12-13 times the social benefit of commercial projects
- Fuel poverty work 10:1 social return on investment
- Community owned wind farms deliver 34 times more financial returns to local communities



How councils can support community energy

How councils can support community energy

- Identify community energy organisations in your local authority area.
- Allocate sites to community energy organisations for renewable energy generation, storage, or both.
- Consider directly investing in new community energy projects to produce a future financial return.
- State a preference for community ownership of renewable energy projects in your Local Plan renewable energy policies.
- Purchase power from community energy organisations' generation projects via Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs).
- Commit to being an "off-taker of last resort."
- Offer seed-funding grants and loans for new projects.
- Run a "community energy summit" for your area.
- Develop collaboration agreements with community energy organisations.

How councils can support community energy

“Start the conversation, with the right people in the room, look for common interests, look for win-win, start something, make sure you arrange the next meeting at the first meeting, and look at what as a Local Authority you can offer that will unlock this amazing resource of energy”

Duncan Law, Head of Policy and Advocacy, Community Energy England

“Be persistent and be there and create long term support that is not going to end soon, finding the funding, finding the resources to be persistent and be there for them because you will see the results”

Luciana de Almeida, Energy and Low Carbon Project Development Officer, Essex County Council

Both quotes from CEE's [Local authority Webinar - how to effectively work with community energy groups](#)

**Some specific
examples**

Exeter County Council



Essex County Council

Community Energy Awards 2024 Finalist (and 2023 Winner)

- Supported 25+ community energy & climate groups with funding and mentoring.
- Helped launch Basildon 20-30, likely the UK's first youth-led energy group.
- Raised £500k in grants and funded projects like the £40k Littlebury Energy Project.
- Hosted a network to share expertise and dedicated a full-time officer for support.
- Integrated energy initiatives into the £250m Climate Action Plan for long-term impact.
- Goal of creating a network of community energy neighbourhoods in each one of the 12 Districts in Essex by 2035, supported by [Community Energy South Pathways](#)

City of York Council



City of York Council: Community Energy Awards 2024 Finalist

- Integrated community energy into the Local Area Energy Plan and Climate Change Strategy.
- Partnered with [York Community Energy](#) (YCE) to develop community solar projects on council properties.
- Supported schools to install solar panels through [Solar for Schools](#) initiatives.
- Invited YCE to co-lead a [£3.5 million Innovate UK project](#) to develop a retrofit 'One-Stop-Shop' to decarbonise housing.

Torbay Council



Torbay Council: Community Energy Awards 2024 Finalist

- Partnered with [ECO²E](#) to shape Net Zero and climate action plans.
- Focused on energy efficiency for 63,000 homes, prioritising vulnerable groups.
- Secured funding for energy advice and retrofit programmes.
- Trained staff to deliver integrated energy advice.
- Facilitated cross-sector collaboration via the Torbay Climate Partnership.

West of England Combined Authority (WECA)



West of England Combined Authority: Community Energy Awards 2024 Finalist

- £2.7 million in grants to 12 community energy projects
- Developing a Community Energy Strategy a vision to establish the West of England as a national Community Energy Hub
- Funds to help de-risk feasibility, pilot new business models, and capital for energy generation projects.
- Launching a Community Energy Open Data Portal: practical tools for project planning & execution & to showcase the impact & benefits of community energy
- Actively engages with [Bristol Energy Cooperative](#), [Bristol Energy Network](#), and [Bath & West Community Energy](#), to support their projects.

Cambridgeshire County Council



Cambridgeshire County Council

- Alongside the significant grant funding provided by HNIP and HNDU, Cambridgeshire County Council made a strategic investment in the [Swaffham Prior Heat Network](#), delivering reliable, renewable heat from 2022.
- Community ([Swaffham Prior Community Land Trust](#)) initiated the project and accessed Rural Community Energy Fund for a [feasibility study](#).
- Community sold the idea to their neighbours and helped recruit customers
- Council provided land for the energy centre
- Private wire electricity supply from a council solar farm

Rossendale Borough Council



Rossendale Borough Council:

- Lead partner in [UKRI Innovate UK](#) project [Net Zero Terrace Streets \(NZTS\)](#)
- Supply chain and skills mapping
- Policy analysis
- Guide for LAs
- Stakeholder engagement including Private Rental Sector
- Facilitating and supporting demonstrator homes

More resources

More resources

Local authority Webinar - how to effectively work with community energy groups - April 2023



Councils and Community Energy: Delivering impactful climate action - March 2022



More resources

Further reading:

- [Community Energy Awards Finalists 2024 Case Studies](#)
- [Navigating the Net Zero Energy Transition](#) - UK100 - September 2024
- [LGA sustainability briefing: community energy](#) - LGA - July 2024
- [Community Energy Awards Finalists 2023 Case Studies](#)
- [Setting up a Local Authority Community Energy Fund](#) - Islington, CEL - Jan 2023
- [Community Energy Awards Finalists 2022 Case Studies](#)
- [Cities and Community Energy](#) - CEL, CEE, MCS Foundation - September 2021
- [Transforming energy: The Power of Local](#) - Bristol Energy Network - Mar 2020
- [Community Energy: A Local Authority Perspective](#) - CEE - 2018
- [Introductory guide: Community Energy for Local Authorities](#) - Pure Leapfrog - 2014



More resources

Special mention:



COMMUNITY ENERGY
PATHWAYS

Community Energy South's [Community Energy Pathways](https://communityenergysouth.org/pathways/) supports Local Authorities and businesses to scale up the community energy sector in their area. They combine community engagement, mentoring and business development with building regional community energy capacity. <https://communityenergysouth.org/pathways/>

How CEE can support you

How To section on our website

► bit.ly/CEE-How-To

Connect, learn and be inspired at our events

► bit.ly/CEE-Events

Promote your community share offers and events

► bit.ly/CEE-Share-Offers

► bit.ly/CEE-Submit-Event

Online Practitioners Forum (Loomio)

► bit.ly/CEE-Loomio

Browse funding opportunities

► bit.ly/CEE-Funding



Putting people at the heart of the energy system

Find out more at:

communityenergyengland.org

 @Comm1NRG

 YouTube ^{GB} bit.ly/CEE-YT

Please join us:
▶ bit.ly/Join-CE

