

Lunchtime webinar: Seeing is Believing (North East and Yorkshire)

John Taylor, Head of Capacity Building & Strategic Development, Community Energy England

Understanding public procurement for community energy: Social value and community wealth building

Speakers:

- **Jim Owen**, Procurement Manager at Energy Systems Catapult
- **Dr Colin Nolden**, Non-executive Director at Community Energy Pathways

Seeing is Believing



- Funded by the **North East and Yorkshire Net Zero Hub**, delivered with CEE, Ashden, and CSE.
- Delivered to show the art of the possible for CE.
- Sharing inspiring stories in the region (involving tours / site visits, networking, events, match-making and community engagement).
- Connects CE organisations with LAs and other stakeholders in the area.



Today's collaboration



- This specific session is a collaboration between the **Seeing is Believing** project, Community Energy Pathways and Energy Systems Catapult.
- **Community Energy Pathways** work to enable local people and local authorities to scale up the community energy sector.
- **Energy Systems Catapult** is an independent innovation organisation that helps companies, governments and partners develop, test and scale clean energy solutions across the whole energy system.
- **Community Energy England** is the national network and representative body for community energy, with 330+ members across England. Join as a member if you aren't already!



Jim Owen



Procurement Manager, Energy Systems
Catapult



Procurement Best Practice

Jim Owen

Procurement Manager



Jim Owen MCIPS

Over 20 years experience in utility, public and commercial procurement.

National Grid – Category lead for various areas including
Plant hire (Cranes, JCBs etc)
Industrial gases
Tools and PPE
Security and anti terrorism of sites nationally

Energy Systems Catapult – Procurement Manager
Consultancy Services
Installation and Maintenance of home energy
systems

We work with
Innovate UK



Getting Procurement Right From Day One

Why procurement matters for community energy organisations

- Good procurement saves resources and builds trust with local authorities
- Demonstrates professionalism, transparency, and accountability
- Aligns your approach with public sector expectations

Think whole-life value

- Look beyond day-one price – consider total life cost and benefits
- Include maintenance, renewals, training, and support
- Reflect local authority focus on long-term value

Clarity on scope and outcomes

- Define what you'll deliver, when, and how success is measured
- Frame requirements around outcomes, not just activities or features
- Manage changes with a clear approval process

Evaluating suppliers and partners

- Use structured criteria: price/value, quality, delivery, risk, social value
- Ask for consistent, comparable information from suppliers
- Include experience with public bodies and community impact credentials

Key message:

- Be deliberate – clear scope, structure, and transparency underpin trusted procurement.



Due Diligence, Risk & Continuous Value

Smart and proportionate due diligence

- Check financial stability, track record, and insurance cover
- Clarify roles and liabilities in partnerships or consortia
- Councils expect clear governance and accountability

Compliance and good practice

- Align with standards: GDPR, H&S, sustainability, social value
- Have policies ready – it strengthens credibility with local authorities
- Show responsible handling of data and environmental impact

Contract foundations

- Capture scope, pricing, service levels, exit terms, and IP ownership
- Reflect fair terms and clear change control
- Reinforces confidence that you understand public procurement norms

Driving long-term value

- Consider total cost of ownership and scalability
- Explore shared savings or reinvestment models
- Track key KPIs: delivery, satisfaction, community outcomes

Key message:

- Strong due diligence and ongoing supplier management build trust and unlock repeat opportunities with councils.



Practical Next Steps

1. Build procurement awareness early

- Understand how local authorities buy goods and services
- Register on procurement portals (Contracts Finder, regional frameworks)
- Learn key terms: tenders, evaluation criteria, social value weighting

2. Strengthen your organisational readiness

- Have core policies ready: data protection, H&S, environment, equality
- Keep insurance and governance documents up to date
- Develop clear references and case studies demonstrating impact

3. Partner where it adds value

- Collaborate with experienced suppliers or social enterprises
- Define clear roles in consortia or joint bids
- Combine technical, community, and delivery strengths

4. Focus on social value and outcomes

- Translate community benefits into measurable outputs
- Show how your work supports local priorities (e.g. Net Zero, fuel poverty)
- Evidence results – it strengthens credibility in future bids

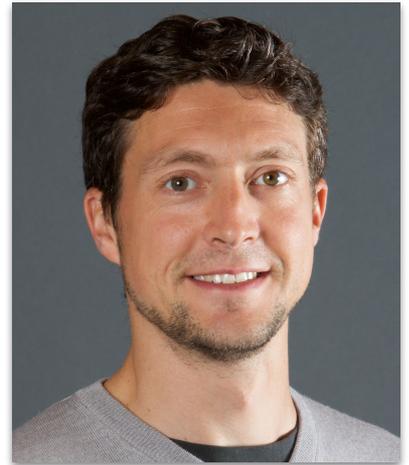
“Preparation and professional practice creates confidence – they turn community ambition into credible, fundable delivery partners for the public sector”. WMCA



Dr Colin Nolden



- Non-executive director of Community Energy Pathways.
- Senior Research Fellow at the Energy Institute, Sheffield University Management School.
- Specialist Adviser of the Energy Security and Net Zero Committee (ESNZ).



Understanding Public Procurement for Community Energy: Social Value and Community Wealth Building

Procurement, social value, and community energy

Colin Nolden, University of Sheffield

26/02/2026

In collaboration with  **COMMUNITY ENERGY
PATHWAYS**

Procuring social value in net zero



and regularly report on success. We will further consider ways to maximise the uptake of SMEs, Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSEs) and microbusinesses in upcoming schemes; alongside considering the potential to stimulate additional outcomes through use

of relevant aspects of the government's social value model. We will work with the taskforce to ensure the design of future procurement and grant funding schemes support the transition to high-quality, low-carbon jobs and are designed to support organisations of all sizes.

Public procurement, including local authorities, housing associations, schools, universities, healthcare, roads and rail, is responsible for around **one-third of infrastructure investment and building work**

According to the Warm Homes Plan, procurement, and **social value as a key element of procurement, will be used to create high-quality, low-carbon jobs across organisations of all sizes**

Indirect procurement

“The key strength of the [social value] framework we’ve got is that actually we are able to [hold suppliers to account].... We use approximate financial values as part of our mechanisms... This is what we get associated with compensation payments for non-delivery” (#10)

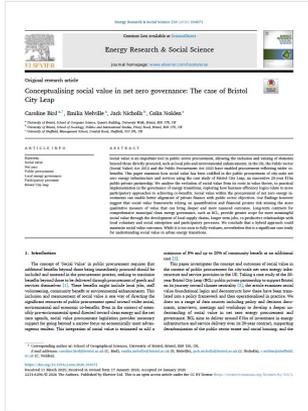
“Effectively, to put together the program in a smart way that effectively it’s like if the smaller projects or lower return projects were delivering more social value you then set a social value requirement that meant you had to do the nice fat juicy project but also the social value projects in order to hit your metric and you can see that the private sector understands that, they would see that that’s a legitimate ask. If the

In very large-scale contracts (+£500m), **less profitable projects can be included in the portfolio of work** if they deliver more social value than more profitable projects as long as **social value outcomes are contracted accordingly**

With the scale and depth of energy infrastructure agreements increasing, this provides **opportunities for the community energy sector to be formally recognised as a socially valuable element of delivery**



Indirect procurement



	Value	% of total SV	Achievements in 2023
Total social value commitment to be verified through the SV Portal	£61m		
Made up of:			
Local contracts	£50m	82%	£3m
Of which MSME	£7m	11.5%	
Other reportable commitments			
a minimum of 410 Bristolians employed on BCL projects			102 jobs
Payment of at least real living wage			
Community outreach programme [which] will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> encouraging young and/or unemployed people into gainful jobs through mentoring support, schools / college visits and engagement, including highlighting opportunities for quality employment in the “green economy work placements over 700 weeks of apprenticeships. 		Over 50 weeks of placements and work experience	
Volunteer hours			350 hours
‘Additional social value commitments’			
Financially quantified ‘additional’ social value – made up of:	£5.1m		
Community benefit fund (non-energy projects) – linked to heat sales, estimated value over lifetime of partnership (20 years)	£2.8m		(in 2025)
Community energy fund (total over first 5 years)	£1.5m		launched
R&D Innovation fund (total over first 5 years)	£0.5m		(in 2024)
Support to other local organisations for first 5 years (BGCP/CAF - £30k/year), Action Net Zero (£30k/year), Grassroots Communities (£6.5k/year), an educational space (£5k/year), CSE Energy advice line (£20k/yr)	£0.45m		Yes, but unquantified

Bristol City Leap has a contracted value of £424m (> £500m in the latest business plan), of which 14.4% (£61m of the original value) is for social value. Community benefit amounts to 8.3% of this commitment, or 1.2% of the originally contracted amount.

Direct procurement

Contract

Regional Capacity Building - Community Energy

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority

UK7: Contract details notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

Notice identifier: 2025/S 000-078931

Procurement identifier (OCID): ocds-h6vhtk-056616 ([view related notices](#))

Published 2 December 2025, 1:43pm

The Authority is seeking to award a Contract to a supplier with relevant expertise to deliver a programme of work that will build capacity between local authorities and community energy groups across the Greater South East



Community energy organisations like Community Energy Pathways are being procured to deliver programmes of work, such as capacity building, by local and combined authorities. The procurement specifications increasingly require the need to demonstrate social value outcomes, such as Community Energy Pathways' contract with Suffolk County Council

Direct procurement



To support the procurement of community energy organisations and the social value they deliver, we are undertaking research among 11 community energy groups which are members of Community Energy Pathways' **Community Energy People project**. Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, this project seeks to create 33 paid jobs and 100 volunteer roles



We are capturing the transaction costs involved in:

- **Determining the appropriate scale and depth of social value measurement (variables, metrics)**
- **Gathering, cleaning, and processing data to facilitate social value measurement**
- **Calculating and verifying social value data**

Indirect procurement

Bristol City Council: Social Value measures for contracts

Bristol City Council's policy is to secure additional economic, social and environmental benefits for Bristol (BS1-16 postcodes) alongside delivery of contracts the council procures (whenever possible). These additional benefits are referred to as "Social Value".

The Social Value Measures that potential suppliers may be asked for when the council is procuring a contract are set out below. Potential suppliers may be asked for commitments against some, none or all of the measures below, depending on the Council's assessment of how relevant/realistic each measure is to the particular contract. Each measure included in a particular tender process is allocated its own dedicated weighting (marks), and the size of commitment required from bidders to secure all of the available points will be made clear in the submission template for that particular contract. If a bidder decides they do not wish to make an offer against a particular social value measure this will simply mean the bidder wouldn't gain the relevant marks. The measures below are there by included in tenders in a relevant and proportionate way. Note: on rare occasions the council may ask for social value not listed below.

Potential suppliers will be provided with a **contract-specific submission template** to make their social value offer as part of the tender pack or contract negotiations. This spreadsheet and table below is therefore only provided as an indication of the kinds of social value the council may ask for and must **NOT** be used by bidders to submit a social value offer.

Theme	Outcome	Reference	Measure: LOCAL is defined as BS1-16 post codes	Guidance	Scoring (% weighting)	Unit
Social	Community support	BT1	Investment (money) into a LOCAL community project or Voluntary, Community or Social Enterprise Organisation via Bristol Impact Fund (BIF), to EPIC OR value of equipment/materials donated via Can Do Bristol (CDB)	Investment can either be given as cash to the Bristol Impact Fund (BIF) which funds community organisations benefiting people living in Bristol (BS1-16), to EPIC a charity who provide access to hobbies and opportunities for Bristol's care-experienced children and young people or as value of equipment/materials donated to fulfil requests from local community organisations made via the Can Do Bristol (CDB) website. This measure can be delivered remotely. Note that you will have a positive impact on communities within Bristol and you will be provided with promotional materials to communicate this internally and externally.	2	£ of money directly invested
		BT2	Hours of expert support donated to a LOCAL Voluntary, Community or Social Enterprise Organisation, facilitated by the Quartet Community Foundation OR via Can Do Bristol (CDB)	The individual(s) delivering the support must be considered an expert in their field by means of having a professional qualification or accreditation. After contract award: Quartet Community Foundation can offer support to help match your offer with the needs of a community organisation benefiting people living in Bristol (BS1-16) OR you can use the Can Do Bristol (CDB) website to Offer expert support or respond to an Ask and provide expert support. This measure can be delivered remotely or in person if the type of support necessitates this (e.g. site visits). Note that your professional expertise will have a positive impact on VCSEs within Bristol and you will be provided with promotional materials to communicate this internally and	2	Hours of expert time

Direct procurement

Community Energy Social Value



Total Social Value Generated 2024/2025

£1,055,635

- £998,205.48** through local employment
- £2834.23** through employment of disabled people
- £4,176.95** through reduced unemployment
- £4,538.49** through upskilling
- £45,880.30** through community support

Value generated by:

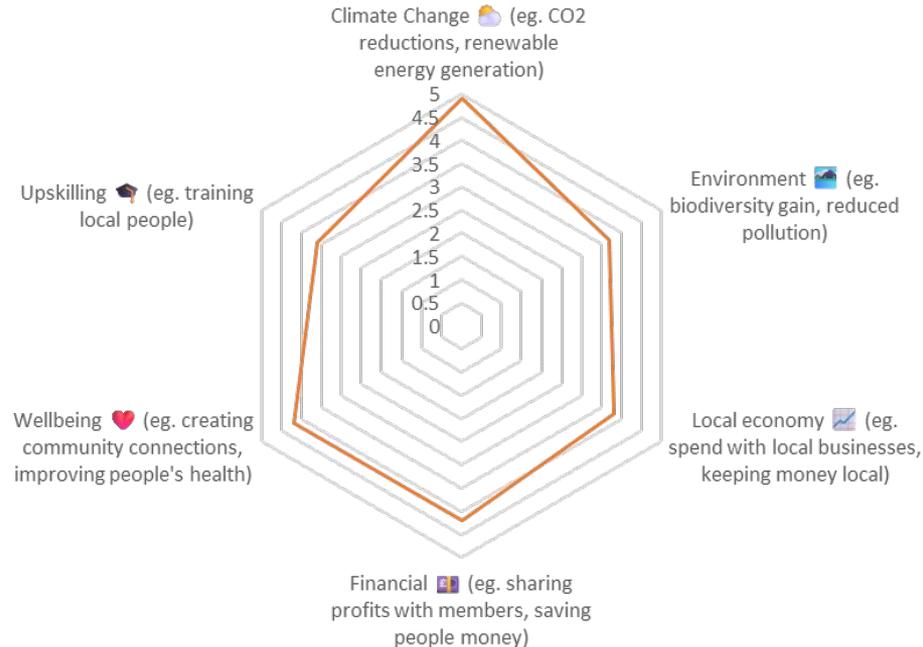


Figures verified by 



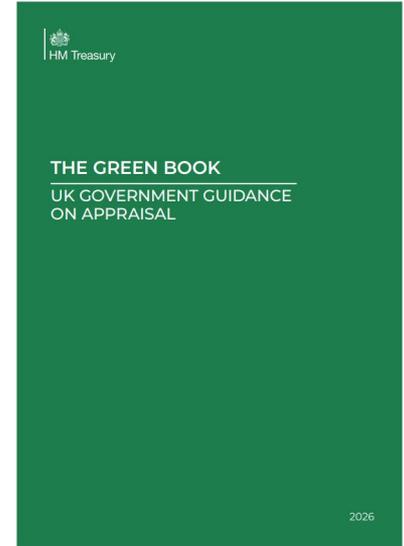
What is valuable from a community energy perspective?

Thinking about the value your group creates, how important to you is each type of value outcome?



Value, benefit, wealth building

	Community benefit	Additional social value	Embedded social value
Value	Monetary value OR cost reduction	Proxy derived monetary value	Proxy derived social return on investment
Legislation and policy	Infrastructure Act 2015, Clean power mission	Procurement Act 2023, National Procurement Policy Statement	RIIO-2 DNO and upcoming RIIO-3 GDN regulation
Entities	Energy infrastructure, generation, and storage developers (including community energy organisations)	Procuring authorities (local authorities, central government, Network Rail etc.)	DNOs, GDNs, National Energy Action
Oversight	DESNZ	Cabinet Office	Ofgem



References

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Thanks for your attention!

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Any questions for our
speakers?



Upcoming Seeing is Believing events



- Newcastle 4 March 10am-4pm: In-person networking event.
- Webinar 12 March, 12:30-13:30: de-risking community energy.
- Online event, 18 March, 10:30-15:30
- Online match-making: 26 March, 12:00-13:00

We will email all the event links afterwards

Feedback

Please take a couple of minutes to give us your feedback...

And thank you for coming!

