



Department for
Energy Security
& Net Zero

Barriers to Community Energy Projects

Call for Evidence

Closing date: 30 June 2024



© Crown copyright 2024

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3 or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third-party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at: CommunityEnergyCfE@energysecurity.gov.uk

Foreword / Introduction

Community energy projects involve groups of people coming together to purchase, manage, generate, or reduce consumption of energy. This includes (but is not limited to), solar panels, wind farms, hydro power, rural heat networks, electric vehicle charging points, car clubs and fuel poverty alleviation schemes. Programmes are usually not-for-profit, and profits raised from projects are reinvested back into the communities which they power.

Government recognises that community groups play a role in our efforts to tackle climate change and following the passage of the Energy Act 2023 through Parliament, we are delivering on our commitment to consult on the barriers to community energy projects by launching this Call for Evidence. We have co-designed this consultation with the sector through the Community Energy Contact Group. By utilising the evidence and information from this consultation, Government will be better placed to understand the issues facing the sector.

As community energy is a mainly devolved issue, it is the responsibility of the Devolved Administrations to provide support to community energy groups, for example, through the Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme. This consultation is therefore focused on the barriers faced by community energy projects in England; however, we would welcome responses which give evidence of any UK wide barriers to the development of community energy schemes related to issues which are reserved to the UK government.

Contents

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Foreword / Introduction | 3 |
| General information | 5 |
| Call for Evidence details | 5 |
| How to respond | 6 |
| Confidentiality and data protection | 6 |
| Quality assurance | 6 |
| Call for Evidence questions | 7 |
| Introduction | 7 |
| Barriers | 7 |
| Regional differences | 7 |
| Suggested changes | 8 |
| Government support for the sector | 8 |
| The benefits of community energy | 8 |
| Wider system impacts | 9 |

General information

Call for Evidence details

Issued: 8 April 2024

Respond by: 30 June 2024

Enquiries to:

Local Net Zero Team
Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
2nd Floor
3-8 Whitehall Place
London
SW1A 2EG

Email: CommunityEnergyCfE@energysecurity.gov.uk

Call for Evidence reference: Barriers to Community Energy Projects

Audiences:

We welcome responses from anyone with an interest or involvement in the community energy sector who can give evidence relating to the barriers faced by community energy projects.

Territorial extent:

This consultation is seeking responses on the barriers to community energy projects in England only. We do, however, recognise there may be some issues which are reserved to the UK Government and we may receive responses which give evidence of the UK wide barriers to the development of community energy schemes.

How to respond

Your response will be most useful if it is framed in direct response to the questions posed, though further comments and evidence are also welcome.

We encourage respondents to email their responses. However, responses via letter will also be accepted.

Email to: CommunityEnergyCfE@energysecurity.gov.uk

Write to:

Local Net Zero Team
Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
2nd Floor
3-8 Whitehall Place
London
SW1A 2EG

Confidentiality and data protection

Information you provide in response to this call for evidence, including personal information, may be disclosed in accordance with UK legislation (the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004).

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential please tell us, but be aware that we cannot guarantee confidentiality in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not be regarded by us as a confidentiality request.

We will process your personal data in accordance with all applicable data protection laws. See our [privacy policy](#).

We will summarise all responses and publish this summary on [GOV.UK](#). The summary will include a list of names or organisations that responded, but not people's personal names, addresses or other contact details.

Quality assurance

If you have any complaints about the way this call for evidence has been conducted, please email: bru@energysecurity.gov.uk.

Call for Evidence questions

Introduction

To analyse and interpret the consultation responses most effectively, it is helpful for us to identify the type of stakeholders responding and their location within the UK.

1. **Which type of stakeholder is responding?**
 - a. **Community Energy Group**
 - b. **Non-Governmental Organisation**
 - c. **Private Company**
 - d. **Local Authority**
 - e. **Individual**
 - f. **Other**
2. **Where are you, or your organisation, responding from within UK?**

Barriers

Community energy groups have outlined that they face a variety of barriers to the development of energy schemes, some of which may have prevented the development of schemes altogether.

The government would therefore welcome evidence to understand the breadth and types of barriers facing the sector.

3. **What are the barriers, financial and non-financial, preventing the establishment, development, and scaling of community energy projects? Please include any relevant quantitative and qualitative evidence.**

Regional differences

Some community energy groups choose to take advantage of their local built environment. The government would welcome evidence in order to understand the regional variation of community energy projects as different areas may face different challenges, and there may be barriers which are specific to a particular region.

4. **Please indicate whether the community energy scheme(s) you typically work with are urban or rural?**
 - a. **Urban**
 - b. **Rural**

- 5. Are there any regional issues impeding community energy projects? Please include any relevant quantitative and qualitative evidence.**

Suggested changes

Community energy groups and others responding to this Call for Evidence will likely have a range of proposals to address the barriers in this Call for Evidence.

We would therefore like to understand your proposals to address the barriers facing the sector, and also why you think those proposals are the best way to go forward.

- 6. Where you have identified possible or actual barriers, do you have any proposals for how these might be reduced or removed, and why do you think the actions you propose would be effective and appropriate? Please include any relevant quantitative and qualitative evidence.**

Government support for the sector

Government recognises the role community groups play in our efforts to tackle climate change and offers a range of support to community energy projects. This includes the £10m Community Energy Fund (CEF), which enables both rural and urban communities across England to access grant funding to develop local renewable energy projects for investment. The CEF follows on from the Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) which successfully funded 208 projects to support rural communities to develop and benefit from renewable energy projects.

Further funding is available through UK-wide Growth Funding, such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Ofgem also supports community energy projects through the Industry Voluntary Redress Scheme.

By developing an understanding of the most effective support schemes, Government will be able to further understand the type of support which is most beneficial to the sector, and the barriers it faces.

- 7. Which existing or past government support mechanisms and policies have been most helpful in implementing community energy projects and why? Please include any relevant quantitative and qualitative evidence.**

The benefits of community energy

We would like to better understand the extent to which community energy projects contribute to making progress on net zero or support wider government goals.

- 8. Could you share any evidence, either quantitative or qualitative, demonstrating how community energy projects are supporting the delivery of the UK's national net zero targets and providing additional benefits (e.g., reducing fuel poverty and improving community well-being).**

Wider system impacts

- 9. Could you share any evidence, either quantitative or qualitative, of the wider system impacts (positive and negative) of community energy schemes and how any negative impacts can be mitigated.**

This document is available from: www.gov.uk/government/calls-for-evidence/barriers-to-community-energy-projects

If you need a version of this document in a more accessible format, please email alt.formats@energysecurity.gov.uk. Please tell us what format you need. It will help us if you say what assistive technology you use.