



# WPD Net Zero Communities Strategy

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April 2020

**WESTERN POWER  
DISTRIBUTION**   
*Serving the Midlands, South West and Wales*

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This strategy was produced for  
Western Power Distribution in  
partnership with Regen  
[www.regen.co.uk](http://www.regen.co.uk).



# Welcome

**Thank you to everyone that has engaged with us in the past seven years and given the feedback that forms the backbone of this strategy. As a distribution network operator, we are committed to accelerating net zero in communities across our four licence areas.**

We know that community energy organisations play a vital role in driving the net zero transition because they work from the ground up, as trusted intermediaries, bringing their friends, neighbours and wider communities with them. We will not be able to achieve a transition at the speed and scale necessary to meet net zero by 2050 without bringing people with us.

We know community energy organisations face multiple barriers, including the lack of viable business models, are time and resource poor and struggle to engage and stay informed about the complex and fast-moving changes in our energy system. We recognise that the playing field is not level, so we need to provide additional support to communities and local energy collaborators working on the climate emergency and local area energy plans, which will help us get to net zero. This is because they

are uniquely placed to act as a social conscience for our industry, holding us to account on ensuring our energy system is fair and does not leave behind the most vulnerable in our society.

This strategy sets out the work we have done in collaboration with community energy groups over the past seven years. We have focused on enabling groups to connect projects to the network and innovation in new business models. We have supported extensive networking, collaboration between groups and capacity building. We'd like to go further, which is why we have developed an action plan for the year ahead, and a longer-term set of commitments, to guide our work with community and local energy organisations.

We will review and update this strategy and action plan annually, so please

keep telling us what you think. This strategy is a working document that you can continue to influence through our events and online forums.

We also know there are community and local energy innovators that we haven't engaged yet, and we hope this strategy helps by setting out the tools and resources already available, as well as how to get involved. If you are already participating in our events, online or through our local area teams, thank you again.

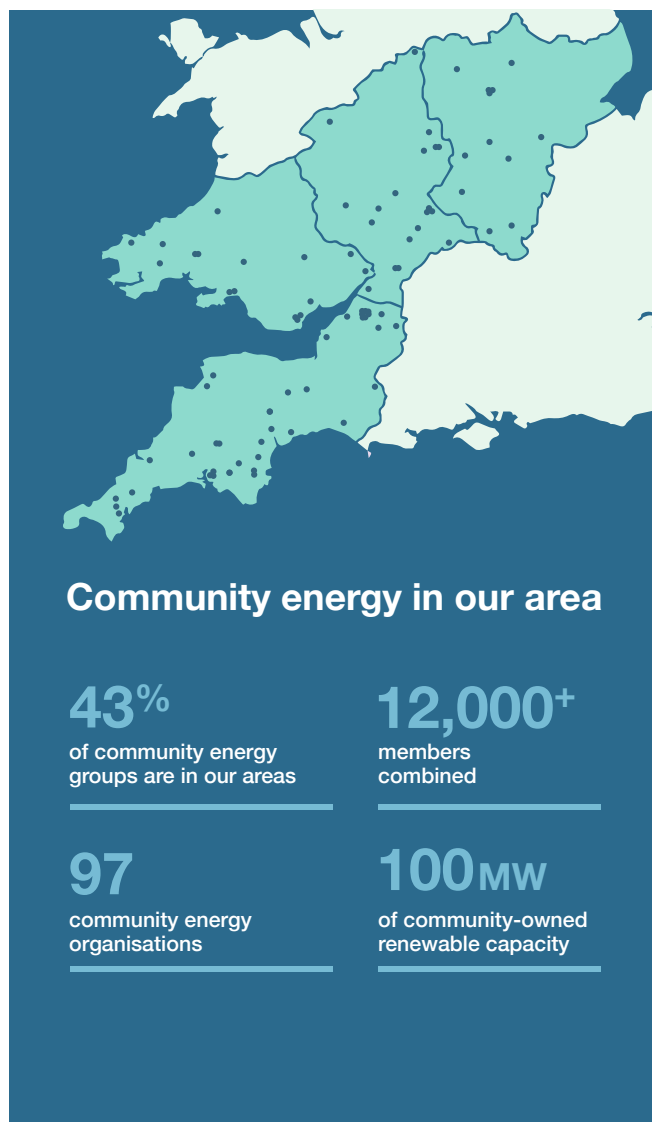
You are the early adopters, innovators and net zero heroes who will drive this massive transition in our energy system. It cannot be top-down because distributed renewable generation is local, and achieving a smarter and more flexible energy system requires all of us in homes and businesses across the country to be able to contribute.



**Alison Sleightholm,  
Resources and External  
Affairs Director**

# Net Zero Communities Strategy summary

## How we've supported community energy since 2014



## What we plan to do next

### Support communities to get to net zero

- Collaborating on local energy planning
- Reporting on our carbon footprint
- Carbon reporting on services we buy
- Surgeries with connection teams
- More accessible data

### Ongoing engagement and collaboration

- Four events and two webinars a year
- Jargon buster
- Funding community innovation projects
- Work together to alleviate fuel poverty

### Remove barriers

- Consult communities on business plan
- Policy support



## Introduction

**Community and local energy organisations are important stakeholders to us at Western Power Distribution. We are committed to working proactively with you.**

We are one of the six Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) that deliver electricity to homes and businesses across Great Britain. Our network is the largest in the UK, operating from the Lincolnshire coast, across the Midlands, South Wales and the South West to the Isles of Scilly. We deliver electricity to over 7.9 million customers over a 55,000 square kilometre service area and we employ over 6,500 staff. Our four key business tasks are:

1

Operating our network assets to ensure we 'keep the lights on' for all of our customers

2

Maintaining the condition and therefore reliability of our assets

3

Fixing our assets should they get damaged or if they are faulty

4

Upgrading the existing network or building new ones to provide additional electricity supply or capacity to our customers

We are not a supplier. We do not buy and sell electricity, or directly bill customers. Our costs account for around 16% of an average annual domestic electricity bill that customers pay to their supplier.

This document is for community and local energy organisations to set out what we've already done, what we are doing now, our future plans and how you can get involved. It is based on engagement with community and local energy stakeholders in our area over the past seven years at over 40 events with 1,381 participants, and feedback from consultations and online engagement. The strategy helps us at WPD to record our work, plan for the future and set measures for success. We are a regulated monopoly so this strategy also helps Ofgem, our energy regulator, learn more about our collaborative work with communities in our licence area.

**We hope you find it useful.**



**Site visit to  
Castle Drogo  
December 2017**

## Vision, purpose and approach

**Our vision for community and local energy is for it to be a strong and resilient part of our energy sector, playing an important role in achieving net zero, and ensuring fairness so that the most vulnerable are not left behind.**

We want community and local energy groups to provide a link between us and our wider communities, to inform how we operate and co-create our future networks to be smarter and more flexible for a net zero future.

The purpose of this strategy is to make our engagement with community and local energy stakeholders the best it can be, and to have a positive impact, helping communities collaborate with us and other local stakeholders to achieve net zero by 2050 or earlier.

Our approach to engaging community and local energy stakeholders is long-term and strategic. We know that good engagement enables challenges, takes time and requires trust.

We've been working with community energy experts Regen since 2014, who've independently facilitated events and directed our ongoing engagement

programme to ensure it is appropriate and tailored to meet the needs of this unique stakeholder group.

We endeavour to ensure all our engagement with community and local energy organisations is responsive and makes a difference. We are committed to gathering feedback at each event, to listening and responding with specific actions. Our ongoing engagement has helped facilitate networking and collaboration, as well as build the knowledge and capacity of the sector by developing tools, resources and new ways of working. We will continue to make sure we are in listening mode, as we believe the best solutions will be bottom-up.

Our approach is best described as an ongoing conversation, which we have invited community and local energy stakeholders to join since 2014. If you have not already talked to us, it's never too late, and for those of you who have been engaging with us regularly, we thank you!



## Our engagement with community energy organisations since 2014

**Over the past seven years, we have delivered an extensive programme of community energy engagement, helping our regions to become the most active areas of community energy in England and Wales.**

Our engagement has been informed by feedback from community energy organisations every step of the way, to ensure we are delivering the support communities want, and providing value for our customers.

Through this, we've developed a constructive relationship with many community energy organisations, which is forward-looking and solutions-focussed.

You said...	We did...
<b>We want more face-to-face engagement with WPD</b>	Ran over 40 events for 1,381 community and local energy stakeholders since 2014 across our four licence areas, including three community energy feasts
<b>Show us community energy case studies we can learn from</b>	Hosted four site visits to leading local energy projects and invited community energy practitioners to present on their projects at our events
<b>We want more accessible information</b>	Produced eight animations, six case studies, four podcasts and three versions of our connection guide specifically for community energy groups, available on our community energy pages online
<b>Decarbonisation is our top priority</b>	Launched the 'Carbon Tracer' app to help you keep track of your community's carbon footprint, and delivered six innovation projects. For example the Sunshine Tariff, which explored ways to free up capacity on our network and enable more community renewable energy to connect
<b>We need help supporting vulnerable people in our communities</b>	Worked with 142 partner organisations to reach our most vulnerable customers and work with community groups as part of a fuel poverty consortium
<b>We want to do more innovation projects with WPD</b>	Developed six network innovation projects with communities to help you explore new business models and help us understand how to best decarbonise our network
<b>We want new flexibility markets to be accessible to communities</b>	Followed the recommendations of the Power to Participate project and improved our services



1.

## Engagement events

**Our participatory engagement events have been at the core of the work we've done to support community energy.**

They provide:

- Information on the latest developments in our changing energy system, such as connections, flexibility markets, support for vulnerable customers and innovation projects
- Sharing of learning between community groups about new business models and leading community energy projects
- Space for discussions so participants can ask questions, discuss innovative project ideas and give feedback to us on what support they need next
- Informal networking at our community energy feasts
- Immersive learning experiences through site visits.

Our latest round of four **'Communities and the Smart Energy Revolution'** events were held in March 2020, to help our community and local energy stakeholders understand new flexibility market, gather feedback on the barriers they are facing which prevent participation in a smart and flexible energy system, and what we can do to support them.

**“ Western Power Distribution is great at engagement and this is helped by Regen and these fantastic events. ”**

Participant at our **'Community energy: the next generation'** event in Plymouth in 2018

**“ Communities will have a key role in engaging people in our future smart energy system. ”**

Participant at our **'Future of Local Energy'** event in Exeter in 2019

**“ WPD has a social responsibility to decarbonise. ”**

Participant at our **'Local energy, a flexible future'** event in Stafford in 2019

**“ It's great to come to these events and keep up to date with what's going on. ”**

Participant at our Leicester **'Communities and the smart energy revolution'** event in March in 2020



**Workshop discussion at 'Flexibility markets for beginners' in Birmingham, July 2018**



**'The Future of Local Energy' in Exeter, March 2019**

# Our events supporting community energy

2014 – 2020



**Note:** To align with our business plan and our submissions to Ofgem, we run engagement events April – April, so this is how we've counted them here.

## Guides

**Community energy representatives have told us that they want information that's easy to find and more accessible, so we've teamed up with other organisations to produce:**

Three editions of our **Connecting Community Energy guide** with Regen, a 'how to' for any local energy group looking to develop their own renewable energy project and get connected to our network

The **Rough Guide to Engaging Communities in Energy Network Innovation** (2017), exploring how DNOs should involve communities in network innovation, and the **Electricity Network Innovation Guide for Communities 2018**, with practical advice for community energy groups who want to get involved in projects, published by the Energy Networks Association and Regen in collaboration with all DNOs

A guide on **Community-Based Network Innovation**, with the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE), containing information on what's involved in doing a community innovation project with us.

### Communities consultation

In 2018, we ran a **consultation for communities on the future of our electricity network** to find out what is important to you. We had 46 responses from community energy representatives, showing us clearly that communities want to participate in our energy network as it changes, particularly to facilitate decarbonisation.

You said that you wanted us to:	So we've committed to:
Engage early, give longer lead times for projects, help you access our technical expertise and knowledge and continue with face-to-face interaction	Continuing and further developing our community energy engagement programme with face-to-face events
Use plain English and avoid jargon	Ensuring that community energy groups can participate in WPD's annual stakeholder roadshows
Prioritise decarbonisation	Making carbon data available on our website through the Carbon Tracer app
Inform government and Ofgem of the views and feedback from local and community energy stakeholders	Passing the feedback received through this consultation to Ofgem
Support communities to understand the business model for flexibility and publicise the tools we have developed to signpost flexibility needs	Making flexibility requirement data available on our website and setting no minimum entry threshold so that smaller-scale players are not excluded  Offering our own product which will include the required metering to ensure that customers are paid for the services they deliver



## Resources on our website

We revamped the community energy section of our website in 2019 based on feedback from community energy representatives, so it now contains a definition of what community energy is.

### The website includes:

- Our **community energy guides**
- **Case studies**
- **Community energy podcasts**
- **Animations** on new energy concepts
- Upcoming **events**, and presentations and blogs from previous events
- **Community energy FAQs**
- A **Community Energy Engagement Hub**, where you can give us feedback on our future business plan
- **Podcasts** featuring conversations with community energy organisations in our region
- **Links to further useful information for communities** such as our network maps, Carbon Tracer app and the Flexible Power website, as well as to community support organisations, Community Energy England (CEE) and Community Energy Wales (CEW).

### Animations:

Our community energy animations introduce concepts such as:

The energy transition

The shift to Distribution System Operator

The impacts of electric vehicles on the system

The role of local flexibility

The benefits of electricity storage

Demand side response

Local supply

Alternative connections

“It's a great improvement and I'm very happy about the way WPD has engaged with communities on this.”

Feedback from our community website updates, November 2019



Our communities' website workshop in Bristol July 2019

## Resources on our website

### We've worked with trusted intermediaries in the heart of communities to support our vulnerable customers through:

- A network of over 100 organisations who help customers sign up to our Priority Service Register (PSR) via our website or app, equipping them with tools which map and identify consumer vulnerability and fuel poverty
- A fuel poverty consortium with community energy organisations
- **Community Energy Vulnerable Customers Packs** to support community organisations in fuel poverty work and reaching vulnerable customers
- Our **Social Indicator map**, developed with CSE, to identify areas with the highest concentrations of vulnerable customers and help organisations such as community energy groups support the most vulnerable in our society.

To support vulnerable customers in 2019/2020 we:

- Proactively contacted one million of our customers to make sure we know who needs extra support
- Supported 18,652 fuel poor customers across our licence areas, to help them manage their energy demand through **our Power up Schemes**.
- Built on our core consumer vulnerability strategy by adding a new pillar, "leave no vulnerable customer behind in a smart future".

During the Coronavirus crisis, we launched the £500,000 **In This Together - Community Matters Fund** to support communities affected by the outbreak in our region, helping local organisations deliver vital support and services directly to vulnerable people.

#### Key outputs we've delivered:



#### Source:

WPD Stakeholder engagement and consumer vulnerability submission to Ofgem 2018-19

## Resources on our website

**We're committed to working with community organisations to better understand and remove the barriers they face in providing flexibility services to us.**

Flexible Power is our service to buy flexibility for our network, and it could be a new revenue stream for communities with existing generation and storage assets. As a part of the Power to Participate project, Regen identified 13 barriers preventing communities from participating in flexibility markets. We have resolved some of these through our engagement events and information on the [Flexible Power website](#), and we're continuing to address barriers by:

- Periodically reviewing Flexible Power documents for clarity and conciseness
- Improving baselining with Future Flex
- Externally testing marketing material for accessibility
- Reviewing liability clauses with Flexible Power, changed to be capped and mutual
- Metering requirements are deliberately open to asset or settlement boundary metering to give participants options as well as for alignment with wider industry metering changes.

We're also working on our [Presumed Open Data](#) project, and the Energy Networks Association [Open Networks](#) project to help reduce barriers. We are committed to continually improving our flexibility work.





## Community innovation projects

To help community and local energy organisations develop new business models, and to help us understand how we might best manage a decarbonised and decentralised electricity system, we've partnered with communities on several network innovation projects.

### We aim to:

- Be ambitious in scope, while setting realistic timeframes for rolling out the project
- Make use of existing community organisations, structures and knowledge to understand the target audience and local impacts
- Proactively work with partners who are known and trusted in the local community
- Leave a lasting, positive impact on the host community and share the learning of the trial as widely as possible.

### Data to support decarbonisation

As well as our OpenLV innovation trial providing communities with local data on the carbon intensity of their electricity, with the help of the Carbon Trust we have also launched the **Carbon Tracer app** on our website. The Carbon Tracer allows anyone in our region to see the generation mix of electricity at their postcode, giving a breakdown of energy sources and advice on whether or not it's a good time to do high-energy jobs around the house.



## Community innovation projects



### OpenLV

Opening up local electricity substation data to communities to help them understand the network and plan low carbon projects.

Seven community groups took part, getting data from their local substations through a web application, to show local electricity use, generation, substation temperature, voltage level and carbon intensity of electricity.

Communities set up graphs to show information to residents, used the data to explore the potential for community DSR in Bath, and taught 7-to-10 year-olds about carbon emissions and electricity use in Tavistock.



### Smart Energy Isles

An EU-funded project based on the Isles of Scilly, aiming to build and operate a renewable energy microgrid.

Our parallel, Smart Energy Isles project will help to increase the amount of renewable energy on the Isles of Scilly by enhancing an Active Network Management zone, so that generation can be better managed and allow local flexibility to offset generation curtailment.

This would free up capacity on our network to enable more renewable generation to connect.



### SoLa Bristol

Exploring the impacts of high densities of low carbon technologies on our network and helping customers manage their electricity load. Solar panels, energy storage, and DC circuits were trialled in homes to test their impacts and cost-effectiveness, with participants trialling a Time of Use Tariff (TOUT).

#### Lessons include:

- Individual customer load profiles vary considerably to industry-used profiles, which can drastically affect the benefits of a domestic battery
- One size does not fit all, and it's important to understand how a customer uses their energy and battery
- TOUT's will be crucial to the development of domestic energy storage.



### Future flex

This second-generation flexibility markets project aims to improve market design for smaller-scale and domestic customers, by better understanding the barriers in the process and increasing participation.

This innovation project will make network flexibility services more accessible to homes and communities, such as groups of households with smart EV chargers, domestic electricity storage or smart, hybrid heating.

Communities have given feedback on what they want to see from flexibility markets in future, for example, that they are not technology agnostic so that low carbon generation with storage can be prioritised.



### Cornwall Local Energy Market

An EU-funded project led by Centrica to create a local energy market and test flexible demand, generation and storage across homes and businesses.

We contributed to this project through the Visibility Plugs and Sockets project, exploring the potential for DNOs to purchase flexibility through a third party. We wanted to reach different customers, that might not engage via our own Flexible Power platform, to better understand what sort of flexibility services we could buy from new customers, including domestic energy users. This project should improve our ability to provide flexibility services to domestic customers in the future.



### Sunshine Tariff

A demand side response (DSR) trial in Cornwall, encouraging people to shift their electricity use to sunnier times of day with a cheaper daytime tariff, using clean energy from local solar farms. The project aimed to resolve network capacity issues in the area to enable more community energy to connect. The local community group **WREN** recruited 61 participants.

#### Lessons include:

- Financial incentives are not enough, it's easier to engage articulate people
- Switching took a lot longer than expected
- The trial period of months wasn't long enough
- Relying on behaviour change isn't enough
- Automation is necessary for large electrical loads.

## Community energy in our areas

**Our regions are home to nearly 100 community and local energy organisations, which makes it the most active area of community energy in England and Wales.**

**To us, community energy is:**

The delivery of community-led renewable energy, energy demand reduction and energy supply projects with the underlying objective of addressing climate change, whether these projects are wholly owned and/or controlled by communities or through partnership with commercial or public partners. These projects deliver collective social, environmental and economic benefits to the local community such as fuel poverty alleviation, energy engagement and education, and community funds from renewable energy projects.

There are more community energy organisations in our four licence areas than any other area in England and Wales; the 97 groups equate to 43% of the sector. These organisations own over 100 MW of installed capacity, mostly solar PV with some hydropower, wind and batteries. Most of these organisations have under ten volunteers and usually no full-time staff. These organisations are generating locally owned clean energy, using profits to alleviate fuel poverty, delivering energy education activities, and helping people save money on their energy bills.<sup>1</sup>

**Community energy organisations provide value beyond the amount of megawatt-hours (MWh) they generate, as they are:**

- Trusted by their local communities to work in their best interests and have local knowledge of the large demand customers, potential sites or new projects and what types of project could be successful in their communities
- Able to build local networks, reach vulnerable customers, engage the wider public and bring people together to deliver projects and raise awareness of energy issues in their local area
- Uniquely placed to educate and encourage behaviour change, such as demand reduction or time-shifting and the uptake of new tariffs
- Skilled at bringing together investment and funding from a range of sources, including private capital and community shares
- Able to communicate complex energy issues to non-experts
- Collaborating with local authorities on climate emergencies, and working with local stakeholders to deliver net zero roadmaps and **Local Area Energy Plans**.

Community energy organisations in our area have told us they face multiple barriers including the lack of viable business models, funding, finding sites with a grid connection, and they are time- and resource-poor. Because they are largely voluntary, they struggle to engage in policy and keep up to speed with changes in our energy system. We have seen a decline in the number of organisations participating in our events, and applications for new connections since the removal of the Feed-in Tariff.

We've also witnessed the staying power of community energy organisations who are determined to deliver community energy projects because they are motivated by social and environmental values, rather than profit. They want a fairer energy system that doesn't leave the vulnerable behind, and a network that enables new community-owned generation to connect.

In the past year we have seen an increase in climate action groups and local authorities engaging with us, as a result of climate emergency declarations. These new local energy stakeholders are working towards carbon reduction plans that will include new low carbon energy infrastructure and we want to support them alongside existing community energy organisations.

<sup>1</sup> From Community Energy England's 2019 State of the Sector report. Exact numbers unavailable as Wales isn't broken down into regions.

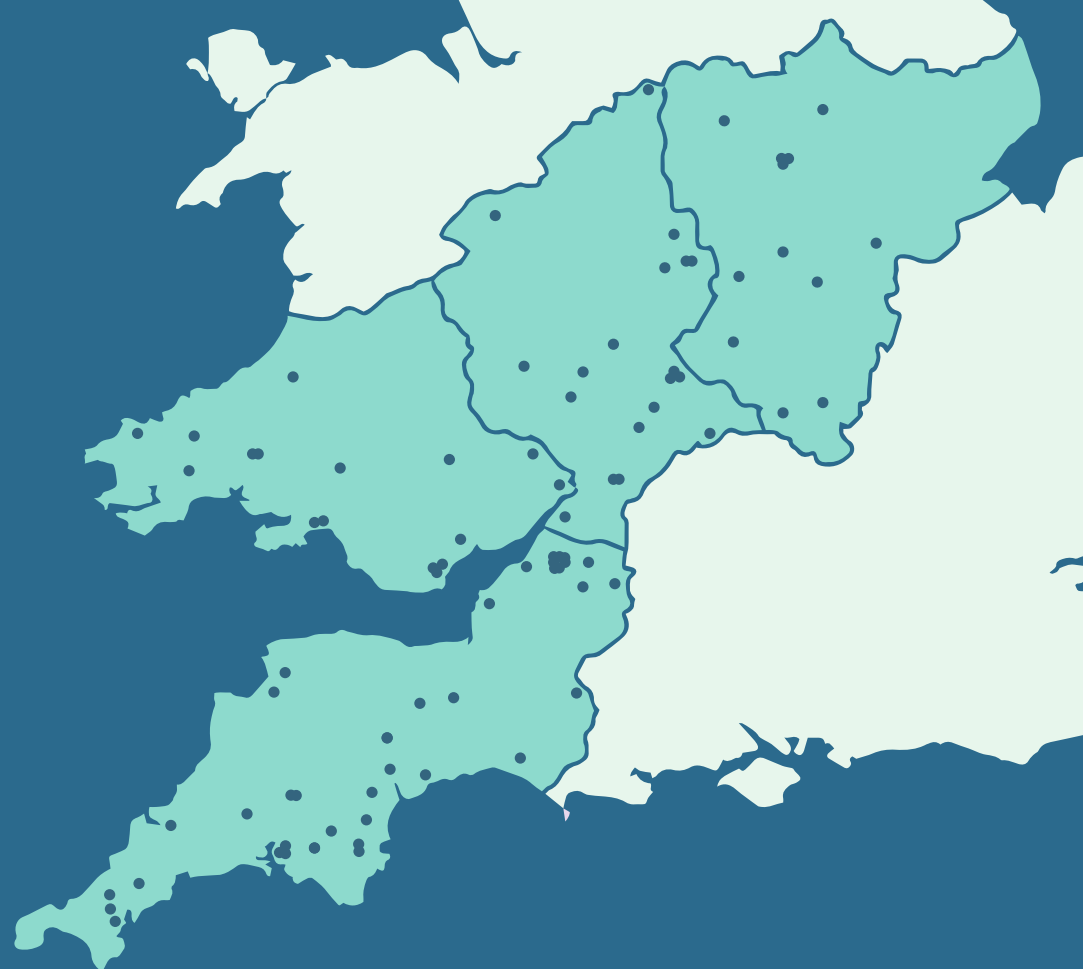


**43%** of community energy groups are in our four licence areas

**97** community energy groups

**12,000<sup>+</sup>** members combined

These organisations are generating locally owned clean energy, using profits to alleviate fuel poverty, and helping people save money on their energy bills



**100MW**  
of community-owned  
renewable electricity  
capacity



**250<sup>+</sup>**  
events in 2018  
with around  
10,000 attendees



**£500k**  
in development  
funding raised  
in 2018



**£26 Million**  
secured in project  
investment  
in 2018



**£400k approx.**  
worth of Community  
Benefit Funds  
spent in 2018

These figures are from Community Energy England's 2019 State of the Sector report, for England and Wales, and Regen's data sets.

## Examples of community energy in our regions

Burnham and Weston CIC	Plymouth Energy Community (PEC)	Awel Aman Tawe	Green Fox Community Energy	Southern Staffordshire Community Energy (SSCE)	Bristol Energy Cooperative
<p>A 9.3 MW <b>Communities for Renewables</b> solar farm will provide the local community with £1.2 million over the next 25 years.</p> <p>The group has spent £25,000 on a fuel poverty service that received over 200 enquires, delivered 15 engagement sessions, supported 60 people, and made 25 home visits, saving households over £50,000.</p> <p>They set up a £40,000 <b>Corona Crisis Fund</b> to support vulnerable people, demonstrating how locally owned energy makes communities more resilient.</p>	<p>PEC owns 33 solar arrays which have generated 21,418 MWh of clean electricity and saved 15,204 tonnes of carbon. The income helps PEC's extensive fuel poverty work.</p> <p>Between 2013 and 2019 they helped 21,042 households, conducted 2,474 one-to-one home visits, saved £544,616 for schools and community organisations and in total saved £1,492,092 for households through their home energy service, worth on average £400 a year to residents.</p>	<p>Awel Aman Tawe are a community energy organisation in South Wales who have set up community-owned wind and solar co-operatives, <b>Awel Co-op</b> and <b>Egni Co-op</b>.</p> <p>Their arts and climate change programme has engaged over 2000 people in exploring global warming. Awel Co-op have created three jobs, and own a 4.7 MW wind turbine with a community fund of £3m, equivalent of £638k per MW. In comparison, The best commercial wind farms have community funds of around £150k per MW.</p>	<p>Leicester's community energy co-operative has the largest community-owned renewable heat project in the UK, a 2 MW biomass boiler providing renewable heat for a local secondary school.</p> <p>This saves 500 tonnes of CO2 per year and helps to pay for energy efficiency measures in other nearby schools, demonstrating the local benefits and partnerships which community energy delivers.</p>	<p>SSCE has installed eight solar PV systems on hospitals throughout the Midlands, helping them to save money and using the income to provide energy advice to patients suffering poor health due to fuel poverty.</p> <p>They reduced the number of readmissions to the Royal Stoke University Hospital by 13.5%, saving them £400,000 while providing enough solar power for 10,645 MRI scans a year.</p>	<p>Bristol Energy Cooperative's two solar farms and multiple rooftop solar sites generate 9,105 MWh annually, enough to power around 2,200 homes. Every year income from these sites is redistributed to local community projects taking action on climate change and fuel poverty.</p> <p>In 2020 they teamed up with Low Carbon Gordano, awarding £40,000 in grants to 20 local projects.</p>

## What we plan to do next to support community energy

**We know that localities have a key role to play in achieving our net zero goals. We are committed to working closely with local authorities and local communities to support their climate and energy plans, and the following action plan sets out how we intend to do this.**

The specific actions in this plan are based on the past seven years of feedback we have gathered from engaging community energy organisations in our licence areas.

This feedback has been collated by Regen in reports from 40 events, where we held interactive workshops and asked participants how they wanted us to support them, and from online surveys and interviews as part of our 2018 [consultation with communities on the future of our electricity network](#).

This action plan covers our whole licence area and we will keep the communities pages on our website up to date with our deliverables.

Through our ongoing engagement we will continue gathering feedback, particularly on the longer-term actions in this strategy, and seek to build these into our business plan for the next price control (RIIO-ED2<sup>2</sup>) which determines what we can spend in future, as regulated by Ofgem.

<sup>2</sup> This stands for Revenue = Incentives + Innovation + Outputs for electricity distribution. RIIO-ED1 was the first round of price control methodology set by our energy regulator Ofgem. The RIIO-ED1 price control sets the outputs that we need to deliver for consumers, and the revenues we are allowed to collect, for the eight-year period from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2023. We are developing our next business plan now for RIIO-ED2, which will run from 1 April 2023, for five years until 31 March 2027.



You said...



Decarbonisation  
is our top priority

We will...	When by?	Deliverable/measure...
Develop a Net Zero Communities' Strategy, setting out our approach to community energy engagement, a definition of community energy, and commitments in this action plan. We'll work with our community engagement partners Regen to collate, review and update that strategy annually	Apr 2020	Completion of Strategy and Action Plan. Review action plan in March 2021 to track progress against deliverables, and update with feedback collected during the year
Raise awareness of our business carbon footprint (BCF) which we report on annually in our <b>Environment and Innovation Report</b> . Since 2014/15 our annual BCF (including losses) has reduced by 46% or 923,775 tCO <sub>2</sub> e, the approximate equivalent of heating 342,000 UK households. Our current business plan (RIIO-ED1) BCF reduction target is 5%	Annually	BCF reported on at each of our events for communities and gather feedback via an awareness rating. Measure annually to track improvement
Start carbon reporting on services we buy and explore ways of recognising low carbon services in our procurement processes, starting with flexibility services. Following on from our Future Flex project, we are taking steps to understand the carbon intensity of the flexibility services we buy. We will then start looking at how we value this in our procurement process. We will keep BEIS and Ofgem informed to ensure our actions are in line with the policy direction	Sep 2020	Carbon reporting on flexibility services we procure in our next <b>Environment and Innovation Report</b>
Make a clear statement on the links between carbon/net zero and communities in our next business plan (RIIO-ED2). We will consult communities on what the statement should be via an online survey and at our events	Dec 2020	A statement prepared for inclusion in our ED2 business plan
Collaborate with communities and local authorities working on local area energy plans. Share our future energy scenarios modelling via decarbonisation surgeries to provide organisations with information, data and support as requested	Mar 2021	Number of surgeries requested
Provide guidance on how we can undertake anticipatory investment to ensure the network is not a barrier to meeting the objectives set in local area energy plans for low carbon technologies (to be produced following publication of Ofgem's guidance on anticipatory investment)	Dec 2020	Guide published



## You said...



**Improve the connections process to help new community owned generation to connect**

We will...	When by?	Deliverable/measure...
Ensure our teams dealing with connection requests work proactively to support all community energy organisations to get grid connections. They will be trained on community energy and will signpost to the support and guidance available on our website	Dec 2020	Training material produced, and number of network planners trained
Deliver community energy surgeries with our local connections teams that will offer greater levels of support/handholding for low-resourced groups. Surgeries will be publicised on the communities pages on our website, and bookable online	Mar 2021	Surgeries delivered within the specified timescale: Following a request for a meeting, it will be arranged within three days and carried out within three weeks
Provide community energy organisations with a short, jargon- free brief on the options being considered for reforming network access and invite them to respond through an online survey. We will input the views of community stakeholders into Ofgem's Significant Code Review of network access rights	Sep 2020	Brief and online survey published, we'll track number of responses and report back to stakeholders who engaged
Track 1) community renewable energy generation and flexibility assets connected to our network, and 2) the number of community energy organisations in our licence area who engage with us via events and webinars	Annually	Annual report against the baseline set out in this strategy

## You said...



Work with us on more innovation projects on smart local energy systems that help us develop new business models



Help us access data to develop smart local energy system projects

We will...	When by?	Deliverable/measure...
Support communities to learn about, engage in and partner on new innovation projects. We will collate existing case studies and add new case studies to our website, talk about these at events, and develop a process of referrals for suitably innovative projects from the community energy connections surgeries and events. These must be aligned to our innovation strategy priorities on the decarbonisation of heat and transport, and maximising the value of data	Dec 2020	Publicise new case studies as they arise.  Develop a process for innovation referrals and publicise at events and surgeries
Make consumer vulnerability a greater focus in our <b>Innovation Strategy</b>	Jul 2020	Make consumer vulnerability a key theme in the revised strategy
Launch a specific Network Innovation Allowance (NIA) funding call for community energy groups who have innovation project ideas, on the innovation portal on our website. Work with Regen to promote the call to communities and support the ideas coming forward that meet NIA criteria	Nov 2020	At least eight communities responding to the NIA call
Carry out a data openness assessment and develop use cases on a variety of our datasets that are relevant to communities, as part of our <b>Presumed Open Data (POD)</b> project. We will then simplify access arrangements for public and shared data	Sep 2020	Use cases and simplified access arrangements published on the communities' pages on our website
Make local substation data available through the roll out of <b>Open LV</b> to enable a smarter, more flexible energy system and new low carbon projects. Interested communities should complete an <b>expression of interest form</b> on CSE's website. OpenLV is developing a SIMPLE guide to assist community groups with access to "M2 Collation App" that provides data to communities	Sep 2020	Eight communities with substation data from Open LV, and guide published

## You said...



**Continue  
engaging with  
us early, and  
supporting us  
to build our  
knowledge**

We will...	When by?	Deliverable/measure...
Deliver new 'net zero communities festivals' where communities and local authorities can get together, learn from each other, hear the latest from us and collaborate to develop new ideas. We will deliver four festivals (one in each licence area) and two webinars (more knowledge-transfer focussed) every year	Mar 2021	Four festivals and two webinars delivered. Record of ongoing consultation/feedback loop
Ensure stakeholders are made aware of who to contact at WPD, and the guides, case studies, animations, podcasts and all other tools we have developed specifically for community energy organisations available on our website. We will do a promotional campaign with community engagement partners to build awareness of the existing resources and bookable slots with our local connections teams	Sep 2020	Record and report on the number of slots booked by community energy organisations with local connections teams, and number of opens/click-throughs to resources on our website
Continue developing resources for community energy organisations with a new Jargon Buster for community energy innovation, which will translate technical language and acronyms into plain English, developed as part of the <b>Future Flex</b> NIA project. Update our guidance on connecting community energy	Jun 2020	Publication of Jargon Buster on the communities pages on our website. Update published to connecting community energy guide
Develop a beginner's guide to the electricity network for community and local energy organisations, that outlines typical customer journeys for community energy and interaction points with us as network operators. Released in weekly instalments on the communities pages on our website	Dec 2020	Guide published
Make flexibility markets more accessible to domestic customers and communities, ensuring our approach to flexibility is in line with Regen's Power to Participate specification to help community energy groups engage. Continue providing training on emerging flexibility markets at our events	Mar 2021	Published response to Regen's Power to Participate specification

## You said...



**We need funding and resources to support zero-carbon communities**



**Continue helping us address fuel poverty in our communities**

### We will...

### When by?

### Deliverable/measure...

Consult communities and other stakeholder groups on what should be funded and how much should be allocated in the 2023-28 price control period. Allocate additional money in our RIIO-ED2 business plan to facilitate community engagement, training and funding of core costs of community energy organisations. Include funding for community groups that are taking action to reduce the carbon impact of their communities through energy generation and efficiency projects, and projects that address fuel poverty

Mar 2021

Pounds allocated for communities in RIIO-ED2 business plan

Review approach to PSR referral fees to see if there are ways of extending our work with community energy groups. Hold a workshop with community energy representatives already accessing PSR referral fees to help us review our process

Sep 2020

Workshop held with community energy representatives

Collaborate with community energy organisations already supporting vulnerable people to identify innovative ways to ensure they don't get left behind in the energy transition. This is one of the two key areas that will be funded through the NIA and we want communities to play a key role in working out what this could look like

Mar 2021

At least one new innovation project is identified with a community partner that explores how to ensure vulnerable people are not left behind in the transition



## You said...



### Involve us in strategic decision making



### Amplify our voice with BEIS and Ofgem

We will...	When by?	Deliverable/measure...
Ensure community energy organisations have the opportunity to co-create our business plan along with other stakeholders, via consultation events on our next business plan	Mar 2021	At least 20 community energy stakeholders participating in RIIO-ED2 business plan events
Carry out a specific consultation exercise on our draft business plan with community energy stakeholders. We will send a short jargon free explanation of our draft commitments in RIIO-ED2 to community energy organisations, inviting comment and using feedback to update our draft business plan	Mar 2021	Community energy feedback to be included in business plan submission
Provide feedback we receive from all our engagement with communities to BEIS and Ofgem, and work with them to remove barriers to community and local energy. To achieve this, we will work with BEIS and Ofgem to ensure that any regulatory barriers to reaching net zero by 2050 are properly recognised and resolved	Mar 2021	The community and local energy agenda will be fully recognised in our RIIO-ED2 business plan

## How you can continue to influence our plans

**As ever, we are inviting you to tell us what you think, have your say and influence how we update this plan in future, so please get in touch and share your views.**

This strategy and action plan are based on feedback gathered from community energy organisations we have been engaging with over the past seven years. It has been a chance for us to set out what we have done already, think about what we do next and make commitments to take action.

We plan to update and review this strategy every year so that it becomes a live and working documentation of our activity. We see this as a point in time and we know there is always room for improvement. For us, good engagement takes time and we are here for the long term. This is an ongoing conversation and our next annual update will be based on your feedback this year, so please get in touch and continue the conversation with us.

## How to get in touch

You can respond to the plan and continue giving feedback to us at our events, and online via the **'Join our community energy conversation'** link on our **community energy web pages**.

## Questions we have for you:

Are there any gaps in this strategy and action plan?

What else would you like us to do to support community energy in future?

How satisfied are you with our engagement so far, on a scale of 1-10?  
(1 = not at all satisfied, 10 = completely satisfied)

What score would you give the action plan in this strategy,  
on a scale of 1-10? (1 = very poor, 10 = excellent)