



# Community Energy in the North East, Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire

Regional Community Energy Study



# Foreword

**Everyone has a part to play in the response to the climate emergency: every person, organisation, and governing body. To achieve net zero carbon emissions, more action is needed nationally and, increasingly, locally.**

As the electricity distribution network for the North East, Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire, Northern Powergrid has a significant role to play in supporting our local community energy projects.

Many of us will think of community energy projects as solar panels in a field next to a tight-knit town. While it is true that these probably represent the majority of projects, it's fantastic to also see groups creating new business models with different low-carbon energy assets – including heat, energy efficiency, energy storage and even transport.

Community-led renewable energy projects in the UK own 265MW of electrical generation capacity, enough to supply over 100,000 homes with clean renewable energy every year, and more are expected in the coming years. In the area we serve, there are more than 20 community energy projects, and each of them is vital to combatting the climate crisis, but the benefits don't end there. They also deliver valuable social, environmental, and economic benefits, such as helping to alleviate fuel poverty. That is why we are committed to supporting both new and existing community projects to thrive. This document is part of that mission.

[Our vision](#) is for a smart, more flexible, and clean energy system, where a mix of sustainable generation provides electricity to meet the needs of our customers in a cost-effective way. In this world, the system works to efficiently utilise every unit of low-carbon energy and enable communities and individuals to provide power back to the grid, or take it from local, sustainable sources.

We are determined to help make this vision a reality for the people and businesses in our region and recognise that we already play a central role in enabling a low-carbon energy system by connecting projects to our network.

Our recently published [Community Energy Engagement Strategy](#) details exactly how we plan to foster the growth of more local low-carbon projects in the region we serve. This activity is also key to our business planning – to feed and deliver long-term improvements that have a positive impact on people's lives. Ultimately, by collaborating with and supporting our local communities, we can enable a net zero future for us all.



**Anda Baumerte**

Sustainability Manager and  
Community Energy Contact

**Northern Powergrid**



# About this document

**Community energy will play an ever-increasing role in the UK's path towards net zero carbon emissions. Low carbon energy generation and use are critical parts of this transition, and communities must be encouraged and supported to develop projects that can deliver benefits where they are most needed.**



## Knowledge

Improving our understanding of community energy in the North East, Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire is a critical first step in defining how we can work together to deliver local low carbon projects.



## Data

Alongside Community Energy England's national research, we are championing open access data for community energy practitioners and researchers throughout the UK.



## Support

This report will enable us to improve the support we provide community energy organisations and low carbon projects in our area.

## Community Energy in the North East, Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire

This report is the first in-depth analysis of community energy across the North East, Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire, covering both of our licence areas. We understand that to deliver support for community energy, we must first understand the activity taking place already. This research brings together survey responses from 20 community energy organisations to provide an up to date understanding of the benefits, challenges, motivations and emerging opportunities for communities across the regions we serve.

## Aims & Objectives

The report forms part of Northern Powergrid's continued commitment to supporting community energy and will inform further development of our [Community Energy Engagement Strategy](#). The research was conducted as part of Community Energy England's annual State of the Sector research project, focussing on England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It includes survey data from 20 community energy organisations based in our licence areas, gathered between January – March 2020. The survey, carried out by Edinburgh-based community energy consultancy Scene Connect, focussed on:

- Community energy activities throughout 2019
- Innovation in the face of changing policy
- The value of community energy
- Community motivations and challenges in 2019
- Funding and investment
- The future of the community energy sector into 2020 and beyond

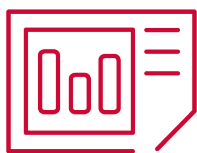


# Community energy and the low carbon transition

**This report follows the removal of the Feed-in Tariff (FiT) support scheme for electricity generation, which underpinned a number of community energy business models. As a result, the viability of small to medium scale electricity projects into 2020/21 is expected to be negatively affected.**

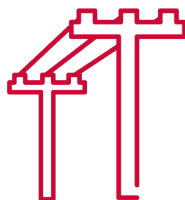
The FiT scheme was launched in 2010 to incentivise the installation, generation and use of low carbon electricity. Though popular and highly subscribed to, the FiT rates were significantly reduced in 2011 and 2015. In March 2019, the scheme was closed to new applicants.

Though there are several alternative support mechanisms – such as the Smart Export Guarantee (SEG) which came into force in January 2020 – there is currently no subsidy for small to medium scale, community electricity generation. This change is driving communities to explore new business models, ownership schemes and technologies in order to develop viable projects.



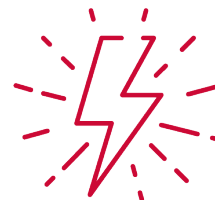
## Changing Policy

Changes to electricity and heat energy subsidies are expected to impact on the type and deployment of low carbon projects in 2020 and beyond.



## Network Transition

As the energy network becomes increasingly decentralised, decarbonised and digitalised, new opportunities are emerging for local low carbon developments<sup>1</sup>.



## New Delivery Models

Community energy can play a key role in defining new approaches to low carbon development and delivering positive impacts locally.

## Low Carbon Energy Transition

Dramatically decarbonising the UK's electricity systems, while electrifying transport and heating, will be key to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The role Northern Powergrid plays in facilitating and optimising this transition across its local energy system is critical.

We are already adapting to enable a smart, flexible, low-carbon energy system, while continuing to deliver a safe, reliable and affordable service to our eight million customers. Our transition from distribution network operator (DNO) to a more active role of distribution system operator (DSO) will require greater interaction and collaboration with communities we serve, locally-owned energy generation, and provision of new energy services.

The [Community Energy Engagement Strategy](#) we launched in May 2020 was a decisive first step defining the current and future contributions that communities can make towards the energy system transition in our licence areas. This report is another step on this journey. It provides us with more information on the community energy sector in our region and helps us to identify how we can best partner with communities to ensure that the benefits of the emerging energy system transition are felt by all our customers.

This report pays particular attention to the new technologies, innovative business models and community partnerships that are developing in response to the emerging post-subsidy landscape. These new approaches aim to boost the sustainability, viability and beneficial impacts of community energy projects.



# Community energy headlines

## Community and local energy organisations will play a key role in achieving net zero carbon emissions across Northern Powergrid's licence areas.

Community energy faces a challenging future in light of changes to the subsidy and support landscape for small to medium scale renewables. But the sector is showing growth and resilience as new opportunities emerge.

Across the North East, Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire in 2019, the community energy sector was found to:



Include 20 organisations focussed on delivering energy generation, storage, low carbon transport and energy efficiency projects.



Own 1.85 MW electricity generation capacity, capable of powering over 593 UK homes each year, as well as four communities working to deliver innovative energy storage projects.



Comprise seven communities working to deliver low carbon transport.



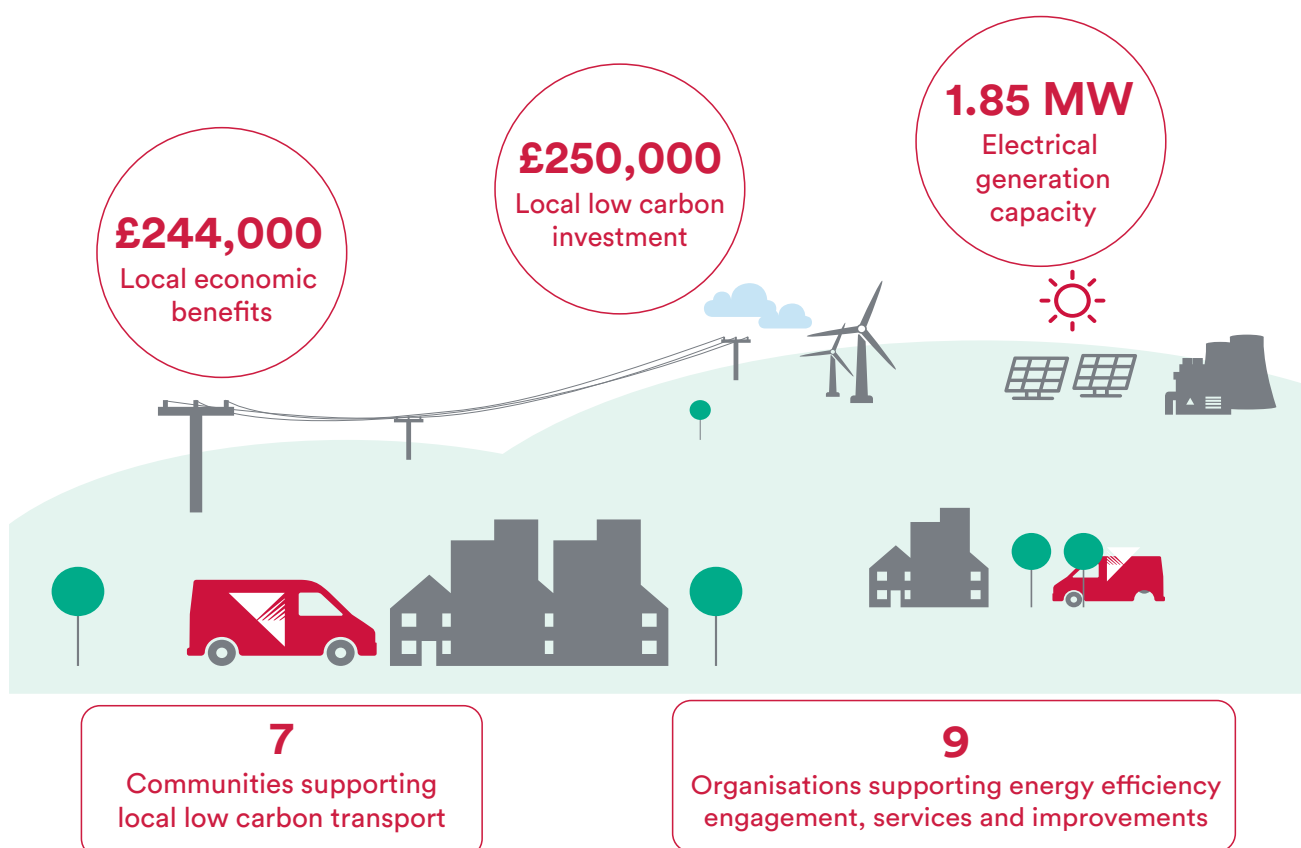
Have delivered energy efficiency engagement, services and improvements to 2,500 homeowners and businesses, valued at £400,000.



Have provided over £88,000 in local grants and achieved cost savings of £156,000 for homes, schools and businesses.



Have achieved diverse social and environmental impacts, including low carbon education and supporting local services, as well as reducing fuel poverty and energy costs for local people.





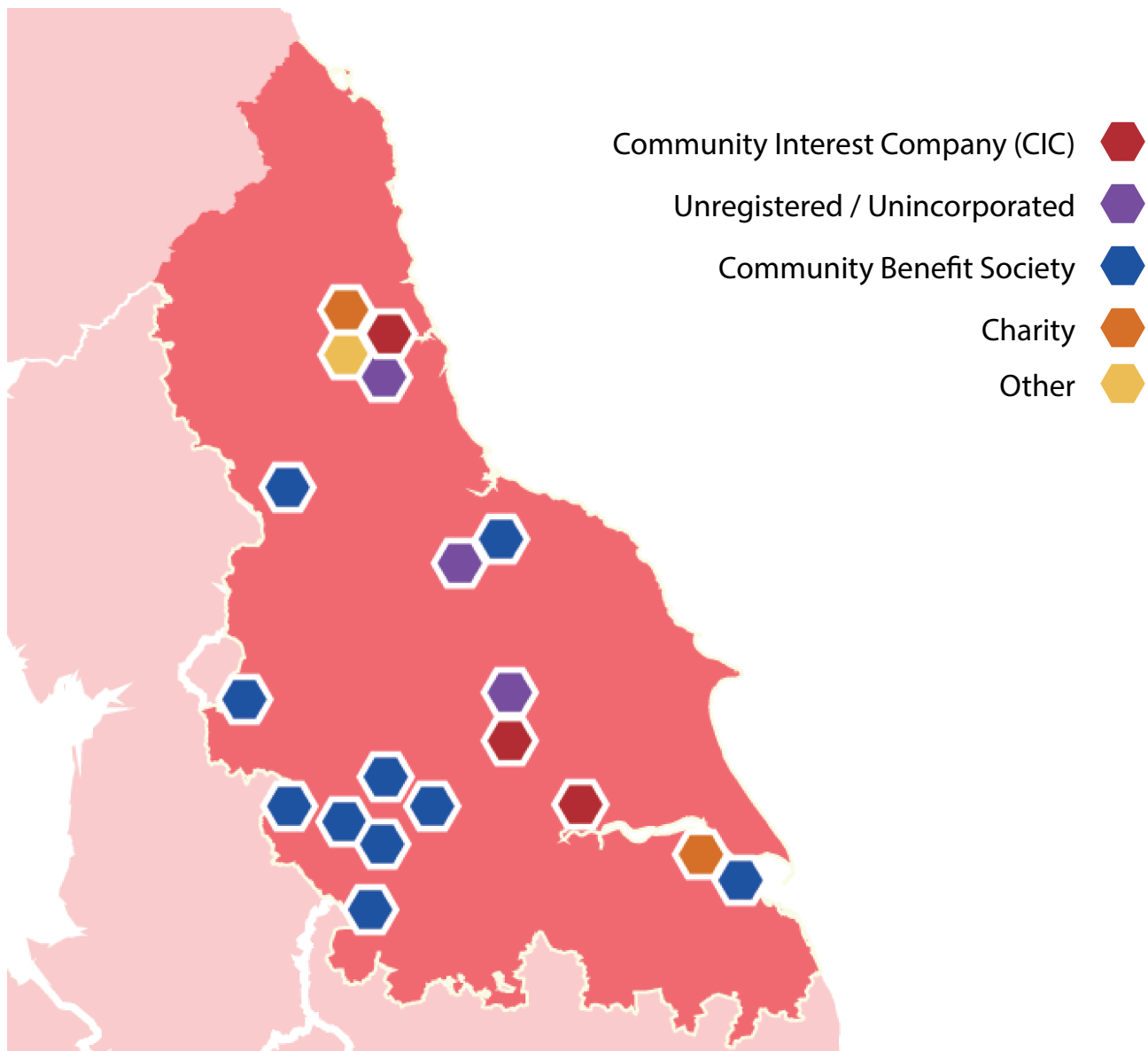
# Community energy in our region

**Within this report, community energy includes all community-led and owned approaches to low carbon development and comprises electricity and heat generation, energy storage, low carbon transport and energy efficiency projects and initiatives.**

In 2019, 20 community organisations across the North East, Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire were found to be working on low carbon projects. Organisations were clustered around the cities of Leeds, Sheffield and Newcastle, with several more rural communities also represented.

Across these 20 organisations, the sector employed 15 full-time equivalent staff and reaching over 4,300 community members, including homeowners, businesses and charities, via mailing lists and events.

Since 2016, the Community Energy England's annual national State of the Sector research has seen significantly lower community energy activity in Northern Powergrid's region than in other parts of the country, both in terms of organisation numbers and numbers of new low carbon projects. This report brings together the most up to date information about the work of low carbon communities in our licence areas and their dedication to developing new low carbon projects and catalysing support and collaboration in future.

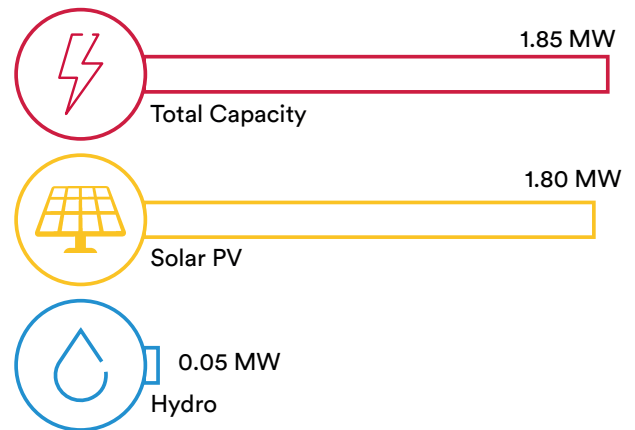




# Electricity generation

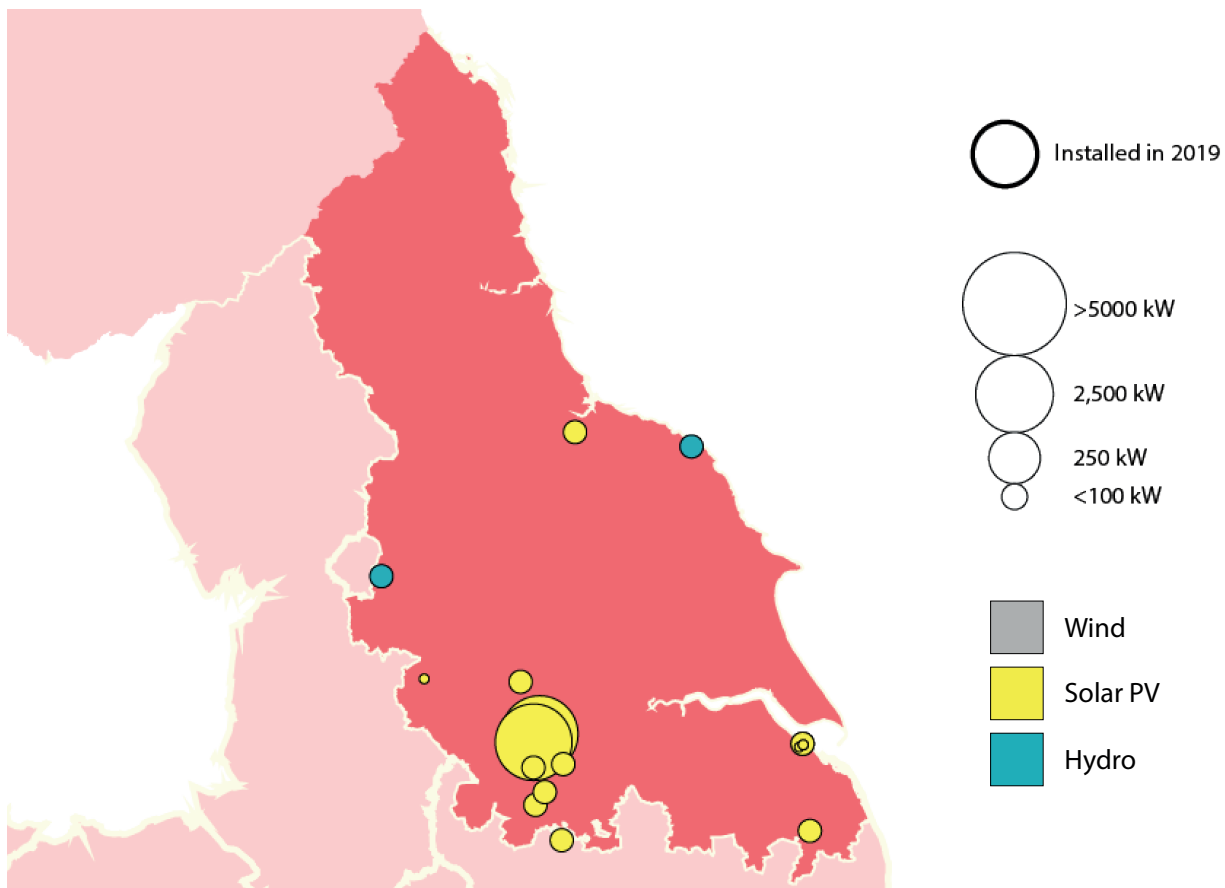
Community-owned low carbon generation includes solar, wind and hydroelectric generation projects. Organisations in our licence areas own just 0.7% of all community-owned electricity generation capacity across in the UK, with projects are generally focussed predominately local rooftop solar PV and other <100kW small-scale generation.

In 2019, 13 community energy organisations were found to be involved in electricity generation projects. Though no new installed capacity was identified in 2019, communities were found to own a total of 1.85MW of electricity generation capacity, including 5 solar PV sites (1.8MW) and one micro hydro site (50kW). Electricity generation in 2019 totalled 1.78GWh, equivalent to the energy demand of 593 UK homes and saving nearly 500 tonnes of carbon emissions.<sup>2</sup>



The largest generator in our licence area is Energise Barnsley, which has 321 separate solar PV installations, totalling 1.5MW, on council-owned housing throughout Barnsley. The project is an example of how community-led energy can thrive through partnerships, providing improvements to publicly-owned housing stock as well as energy cost reductions to residents. Northern Powergrid provided £250,000 for the installation of energy storage systems in properties owned by Barnsley Council and managed by Berneslai Homes as part of this community energy project.

Eight community organisations were found to be planning electricity generation activities in 2020. This includes 1.4MW of new solar PV, notably planned without support from the recently closed FiT scheme. One organisation reported three solar PV projects pre-registered under the FiT and planned for installation in early 2020, alongside a further medium-scale installation on a local high school. All planned schemes were rooftop solar PV, although several organisations noted problems with securing suitable sites and partners to deliver their solar projects.





## Heat generation

Community-owned heat projects are less common than electricity projects in the UK, totalling just 2.1MW across England, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2019. This is due to the need to distribute heat locally, requiring sufficient local demand, customer buy-in and with high infrastructure costs. This is particularly true of larger projects, such as heat networks. There are currently no active community-owned low carbon heat generation projects in Northern Powergrid's region. Five community organisations stated that they are developing heating projects, although all projects are still at the stage of feasibility assessment. This includes working towards community-owned heating in partnership with the local authority in West Yorkshire and another organisation planning installation of a low carbon heat project at an off-gas-grid site in North East Lincolnshire.

## Energy storage

As storage costs continue to fall and new opportunities arise to use energy locally and provide network services in the future, communities are increasingly investigating storage as an option for future growth. Often energy storage is installed alongside electricity generation to reduce grid reliance and provide a more reliable source of power.

In 2019, five community energy organisations in the North East, Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire were involved in energy storage projects, all using electrical storage systems. At present, only 5kWh of energy storage has been successfully installed, trialled alongside a domestic air-source heat pump. One organisation reported progressing a 7MWh grid-scale battery to the planning stage before struggling to make the business model work.



**Energise Barnsley**

Two organisations with planned energy storage projects stated an interest in offering grid flexibility services. These services potentially could offer use of the community-owned battery systems for grid balancing, via charging and discharging the battery at times when energy is available or in short supply. Through this system, communities unlock additional revenue streams for low carbon projects while supporting the stability and effective functioning of the local energy network.

In 2020, three community organisations stated that they intend to investigate energy storage options, including a solar PV and storage system feasibility study, funded by the Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) in West Yorkshire, and a feasibility study into an entirely off-grid, multiple technology site.

## Low carbon transport

Community projects are not just about low carbon energy assets – innovative organisations are increasingly investigating routes into low carbon transport. Transport is the UK's largest emitter of greenhouse gases, so there is a huge opportunity for communities to make an impact in the drive towards the UK's 2050 net zero target.

The implementation of charging points, to accelerate the increasing deployment of electric vehicles (EVs) and reduce barriers to their use, has been of particular interest to communities. Similar to energy storage, low carbon transport projects can offer a wealth of local environmental, economic and social benefits while providing new income streams and services via grid integration.



**North Powergrid EV**

In 2019, seven community energy organisations were involved in low carbon transport projects in our area. These organisations were found to be planning community-wide charging installations, developing shared EV car-sharing schemes and low carbon mobility planning. One community organisation reported operating an electric minibus, providing electrified transport to wider community, sports and social groups.

While no communities are currently involved in offering grid services via low carbon transport – such as vehicle to grid (V2G) systems – all seven organisations reported that they are investigating V2G as a possible income stream as part of future low carbon transport projects.



# Energy efficiency

Community energy organisations are also increasingly turning to energy efficiency to make a difference. Improving energy efficiency can be achieved through various methods, including community engagement and awareness-raising on low carbon energy use, providing energy efficiency services – such as energy audits or thermal imaging – and making actual physical improvements and upgrades to building stock within the community. Community energy organisations also often provide funding via donations, grants and loans for local energy efficiency improvements.

In 2019, nine communities were involved in energy efficiency projects in our licence area. Of these communities, seven offer engagement services, five provide energy efficiency services, six deliver physical improvements and two have provided funding for local homes and businesses. During 2019, these organisations engaged 2,500 individuals and 55 businesses. They also provided 2,500 services and delivered 2,530 separate improvements with a total value of £400,000.

Most notably, Groundwork Yorkshire – a charity focussed on energy use and fuel poverty reduction – is providing significant improvements through education, energy efficiency services and upgrades. Through one-to-one visits, the organisation saves householders an average of £270 a year – and some up to £750 – via energy switching, basic efficiency measures and providing grant support.





## Grimsby Community Energy

[Grimsby Community Energy](#) is a community-owned energy organisation that has installed 100kW of community-owned solar PV since 2015. It has installed systems at local charity shops to reduce electricity costs and deliver significant carbon emission reductions. The organisation works to tackle the high energy prices faced by local people and create a connection between renewable energy projects and the community.

Grimsby Community Energy also work alongside My Green Investment, with funding from Northern Powergrid, to deliver their Energy Heroes programme for Year 5 students. Using the themes of energy generation and climate change they support local children with maths and science skills, while increasing awareness of the importance of renewable energy.



## Positive Activities

[Positive Activities](#) is a charity based in Grimsby that provides the local community with sporting and creative activities, integrated with sustainable energy services.

The charity is now exploring ways to develop and integrate several types of renewable energy generation with battery storage on their 15-acre site, to be owned and managed by the community in 2020. They also own a 16-seater electric minibus, which was donated to shuttle visitors to the site, and are collaborating with the local authority to encourage the use of bikes, public transport and EVs to access their facilities. The charity provides education to the community through on-site workshops and encourages more involvement with local people to improve environmental awareness and behaviour change.



## Otley Energy

[Otley Energy](#) is a community benefit society, set up by Otley 2030. It is a community group working with Otley Town Council and Leeds City Council to develop the town's climate and sustainability plan. They have partnered with the Solar for Schools social impact business to initially install up to 350kW of solar PV rooftop arrays across five buildings in the local area and to deliver environmental education.

Solar for Schools supported the project with a £250,000 investment. The scheme sources funding to ensure no investment is required from schools. Otley Energy has the option to raise the money through Community Shares to purchase the solar arrays. Over time this would transfer ownership from Solar for Schools to the community.





# Funding and finance

**The North East, Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire regions were found to have received the lowest community energy funding and investment across the UK in 2019. This is attributed to the comparatively low number of active community energy organisations in the region, as well as low levels of project deployment in 2019 – particularly large capital-intensive projects such as energy generation.**

## Funding

Community energy organisations have previously pointed to a lack of early-stage funding as a major challenge to project development. Communities in our region reported receiving just £8,000 in funding in 2019, with seven organisations receiving no funding in the 2018/19 financial year. Three organisations are in the process of applying for funding from the Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) to develop feasibility studies in 2020.

The £13.5m RCEF is being delivered by the Tees Valley Combined Authority (TVCA) across the North East, Yorkshire and the Humber region. Launched as part of the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Local Energy Hubs scheme, the RCEF supports rural communities with fewer than 10,000 residents with grants of up to £40,000 for low carbon project feasibility and £100,000 for commercialisation.

## Finance

Similar to project funding, minimal investment was reported in our licence areas in 2019. This reflects the low deployment of new generation projects in the region, where most notable investment often occurs. The only organisation to report significant investment raised in 2020 was Otley Energy in West Yorkshire. The organisation raised £250,000 via a community bond offer, aiming to provide returns of 5% to investors through the installation of solar PV schemes on local schools.

Communities highlighted the need for partnerships to secure their projects and, in turn, to secure investment to take them to the next stage. The number of ongoing feasibility studies reported by organisations in the North East, Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire suggests that there will be a need for improved support and investment in 2020, with respondents noting that they are already engaging with local authorities and community funding bodies towards realising their low carbon projects.





# Valuing community energy

The value of community energy can be defined in a number of ways, including direct economic contributions to local areas, people and businesses, as well as through more indirect avenues, such as cost savings and job creation. Community energy has well-documented social and environmental value, supporting local services, improving low carbon awareness and offering education initiatives.



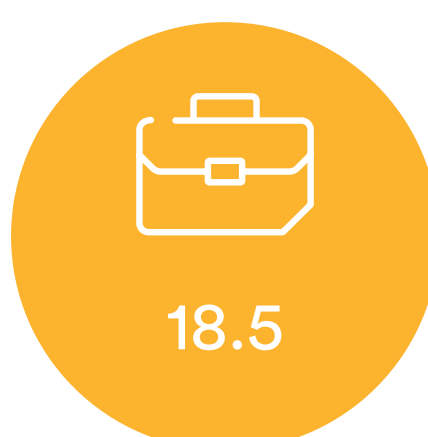
Community  
Benefit Fund Value



Cost Savings



Grants



Jobs Supported



# Economic impact

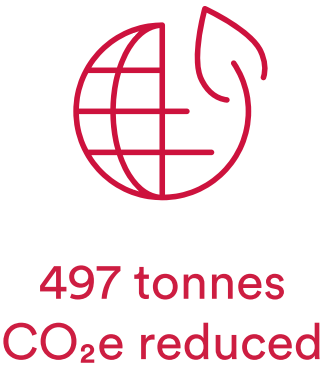
Community energy organisations often contribute economically through community benefit funds – funding pots specifically ringfenced for local community development. In 2019, four organisations reported a community benefit value of £8,200, with a further £88,000 in grant funding provided to local people and initiatives in 2019.

Further to this direct economic benefit, community energy organisations delivered £156,000 in cost savings in their local areas. This was most often through reduced energy bills enabled by solar PV installations on local homes and businesses. The community energy sector in the North East, Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire has also created 3.5 full time equivalent jobs, alongside the 15 full time staff directly employed by community energy organisations

# Social impact

The 20 community low carbon energy organisations in Northern Powergrid’s region were found to have a significant positive social impact. Communities stated a central focus on delivering education initiatives and raising awareness, particularly through delivering school events, school site visits and offering energy advice to local people. Further to this, organisations were found to support local service provision, such as food banks and charity organisations, reducing the cost burden on local authorities and charity organisations.

A focus on protecting and supporting vulnerable people was highlighted by several organisations, such as fuel poverty reductions through energy switching and energy efficiency measures. Lastly, asset purchases were considered important by three organisations, including the development of community halls and working clubs.



# Environmental impact

Community energy is contributing to the UK Government’s 2050 net zero carbon emissions target. In 2019, community energy low-carbon generation in the North East, Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire saved 497 tonnes of carbon emissions. Further reductions were also achieved through behaviour change as a result of education initiatives and energy efficiency improvements.

Community energy can have a positive impact on the local environment through supporting and funding recycling efforts, conservation activities and maintenance and improvements of green space.



# Regional challenges

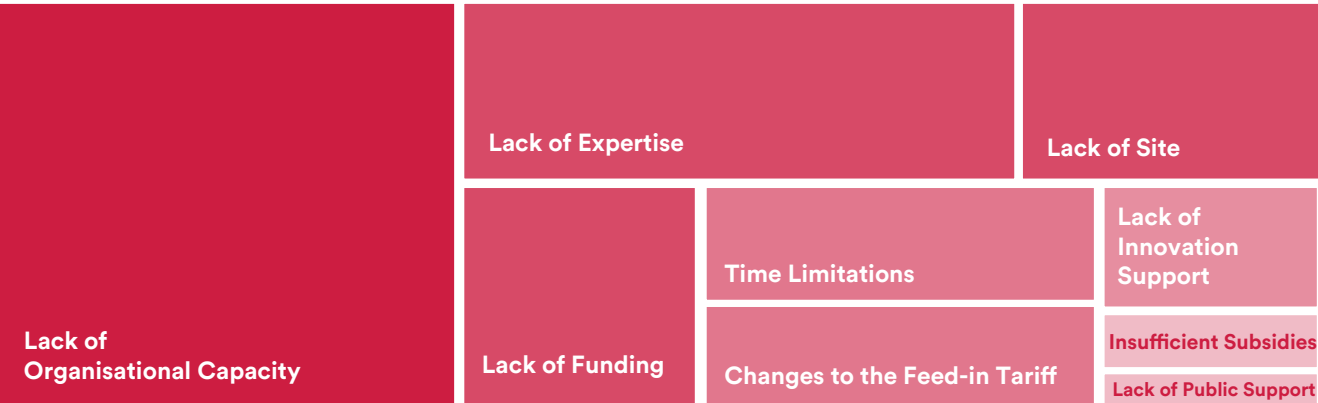
The challenges facing community energy in our area differ from those facing the wider sector. While communities throughout the UK stated that changing policy was the greatest barrier to their work, organisations in our area were often lacking the capacity, expertise and funding to deliver on their energy ambitions.

## Barriers

Communities in Northern Powergrid’s region found the greatest barriers to their work to be organisational capacity and a lack of expertise. This is in contrast to national trends<sup>3</sup> highlighting poor subsidy support and the recent closure of the FiT scheme. These broader sectoral issues show that communities need more support, funding and information to achieve the local impacts they are seeking to deliver. Greater early-stage funding plays a large role in this, particularly where communities can use funding to support core costs, such as staff time. The development of energy projects is a challenging process, requiring large amounts of time and money to do appropriately, effectively and at scale.

Secondary to these barriers, community organisations noted a lack of suitable sites as a key challenge for project development and deployment. This barrier can often be overcome through partnerships, for instance by linking up existing local knowledge and relationships with asset owners for mutual benefit. This includes local authorities, educational institutions, SMEs, and commercial and industry stakeholders.

Barriers reported by community energy organisations in our area

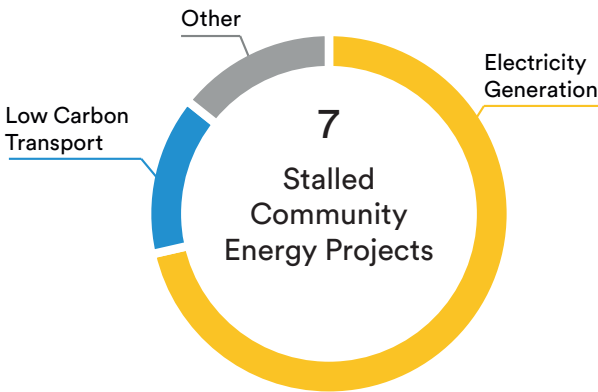


## Stalled projects

Due to the barriers mentioned above, seven stalled projects were identified in Northern Powergrid’s licence areas. This includes five electricity generation projects, one low carbon transport project and one combined heat and power (CHP) project.

Projects were found to have stalled due to a variety of issues, including a lack of support from project partners or due to partners withdrawing during the development process, as well as challenges resulting from high grid connect costs and planning delays.

While the community energy sector, and energy sector in general, is changing, the main levers of support – through funding, knowledge sharing and collaboration – remain the same.



<sup>3</sup>[Community Energy England - State of the Sector 2020](#)



# Supporting community energy

Despite community organisations frequently being shown to be operating at the forefront of the low carbon sector through technological and business model innovations, greater support is still required.

Early adopters and organisations with significant assets are increasingly involved in developing new approaches to local energy development (e.g. peer-to-peer trading) and delivery (e.g. solar schools business models). For smaller organisations, difficulties in attaining funding and developing the capacity and expertise to deliver successful projects is still a significant challenge.

One example of community energy innovation in our area is York Community Energy’s involvement in the Carbon Cooperative-led OpenDSR project. This project seeks to develop a technical system for automated demand side response of EV chargers, electric heating systems and smart appliances, based on existing commercially available open source technologies.



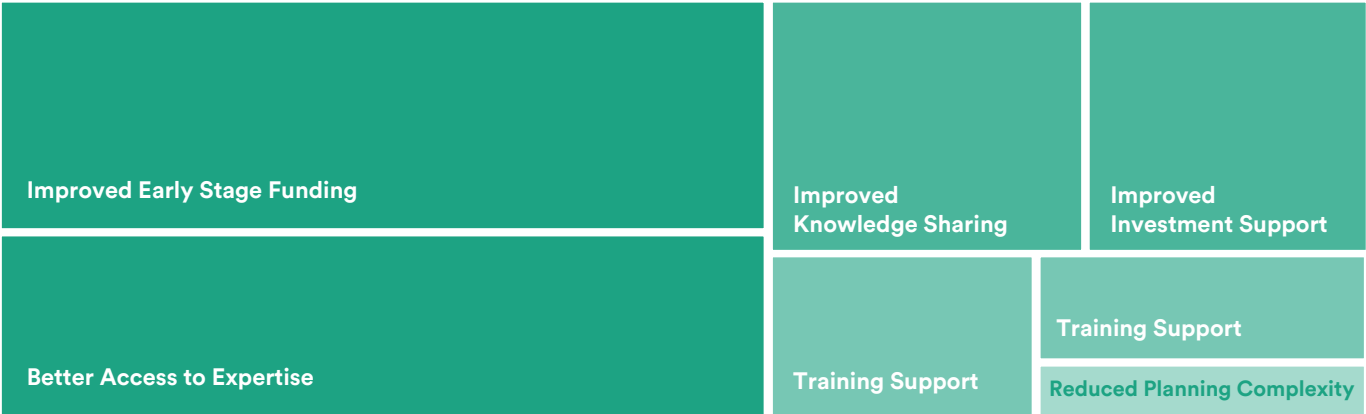
Moor House Wind Farm

## Support required

Community organisations stated that funding – in particular, early-stage and core funding – would be the greatest help toward their low carbon ambitions. This was focussed on providing both budget for dedicated project development staff as well as for outside expertise, including technical, business and legal consultants. Supporting this professionalisation, via funding and expertise-sharing, would help community organisations to operate on a similar level to larger commercial developers, dedicating requisite resources to develop at scale and delivering greater local positive impacts as a result.

This increase in organisational capacity would also enable community organisations to better engage with potential partners and investors, securing the sites and investment which are stated by respondents as difficult to access. Alongside improved funding, stakeholders in the low carbon sector – such as DNOs, including Northern Powergrid – should be actively engaging with communities to develop partnership projects and to provide enabling support, such as workshops and knowledge-sharing resources. This will provide community organisations with a less complex and manageable route through the project development process, enabling the delivery of low carbon projects of great mutual benefit.

### Support requested by community energy organisations in our area





# Looking ahead

**The UK energy system is undergoing a rapid and radical change towards becoming more decentralised, distributed, and digitalised. Sectoral changes may be presenting challenges in the short term to community low carbon development, but there are also many emerging opportunities, particularly in relation to involvement with our evolving energy networks.**

While the community energy sector across our region has grown at a slower pace in comparison to the rest of the UK, there are a number of new and exciting community-led low carbon projects developing. Supporting these ideas, as well as the established community energy organisations in our area, is essential to ensuring that each organisation is capable of overcoming the numerous barriers identified within this report and is able to maximise the available opportunities emerging from the low carbon transition.

The RCEF will play a vital role for many communities in our area, as evidenced by the number of new RCEF-supported feasibility studies and projects being developed in 2020. In 2019, the North East Local Energy Hub awarded over £500,000 to develop low carbon projects across 17 community organisations in North East Yorkshire and The Humber area. Further support for communities in more urban areas, including through funding and capacity building, could help provide more equitable access to opportunities for community energy organisations.

Lastly, stakeholder partnership will be a key component of community energy sector success in 2020. Community organisations across the country highlighted the importance of engagement and collaborative projects with key stakeholders in the sector, most notably with local authorities, DNOs and commercial developers.<sup>4</sup>

## Activating Community Engagement

Activating Community Engagement (ACE) is our award-winning innovation project delivered in partnership with Newcastle University and start-up SME GenGame. It is an example of how communities can be connected to support the low-carbon energy transition without having to invest in energy generation assets. The project was the first ever trial to show how mobile gaming could incentivise households to reduce their electricity consumption at times of high demand.

### What is ACE?

The ACE project sought to understand whether domestic customers could be incentivised to be flexible and make small changes to when and how they used electricity. Participants signed up to play GenGame and were sent alerts asking them to turn off household appliances during certain periods of the day, usually in the morning and early evening when demand for electricity is at highest. The project provided important learning for Northern Powergrid on gamification and domestic demand side response solutions.

### What is GenGame?

The game saw more than 2,000 customers compete for cash prizes by turning off washing machines, televisions, lights and other home appliances and devices at periods of high demand. Players received an alert saying "It's GenGame time" and the more they reduced their consumption the more points they would earn, increasing their chance to win cash prizes.

### Final reports and findings

Average household daytime consumption is currently around 0.5kW but charging a typical EV can require 7 - 10kW. The three-year ACE project has generated valuable insights into how to incentivise consumer behaviour change at a time when energy companies are planning how best to manage demand from rapid take-up of EVs and other low carbon technologies.



<sup>4</sup>[\*Community Energy England - State of the Sector 2020\*](#)



# Working with Northern Powergrid

**The path to net zero carbon emissions requires everyone to act. We are committed to collaborating with community energy projects to enable their success. By working together, we can accelerate the low carbon transition.**

## Community Engagement Strategy

Northern Powergrid's [Community Energy Engagement Strategy](#) draws on months of engagement with community energy stakeholders that are working to tackle the climate emergency. The document sets out 26 actions we will implement to proactively collaborate with these stakeholders, helping to amplify their voice, increase opportunities to engage with us, and ultimately enable more community energy organisations to thrive in the region. These actions include:



Produce a quarterly newsletter for communities, keeping them up to date on funding, events and online resources.



Develop a new community energy website signposting events, guides and information. This action has already been completed – see [the new website here](#).



Continue one-to-one engagement to understand and develop collaborative approaches to low carbon development.



Deliver two community energy events each year, focussed on carbon reduction, emerging business models and facilitating networking and capacity building.



Communicate the views of community energy groups in our region to the government and our regulator, Ofgem.



Include community energy organisations in the business planning process to make sure their views are taken into account.

We intend to engage and support community energy organisations to continue growing and delivering even greater economic, social and environmental change by taking a number of actions to listen to, inform, advocate for, and empower these groups.

We want to test, refine and perfect these ideas over the next three years as we prepare our business plan for 2023 - 2028, known as the RIIO-ED2 price control period. During this time, we invite further engagement on these issues from community energy stakeholders across our region and the UK more widely. For further updates and engagement opportunities, community energy organisations are encouraged to sign up to our quarterly newsletter, by emailing [communityenergy@northernpowergrid.com](mailto:communityenergy@northernpowergrid.com) or visiting [northernpowergrid.com/community-energy](https://northernpowergrid.com/community-energy)



## Community Energy Innovation

Now, more than ever, we understand the challenges and opportunities arising in the community energy sector. We are therefore encouraging and supporting community-led innovation projects throughout our region, including through newly-engaged community organisations and through existing partnerships.

Alongside Energize Barnsley, Berneslai Homes and battery manufacturer Moixa, we have conducted a ground-breaking [two-year distributed storage and solar study](#) into how smart home batteries can increase electricity network capacity, enable more homes to install solar panels and deliver financial benefits for customers.

## Community Partnering Fund

In 2015, Northern Powergrid was the first UK DNO to set up a fund for community energy projects. The financed projects have reached more than 5,000 people with grants ranging from £1,000 to £10,000 per community project. Since 2018, the Community Partnering Fund has been managed in partnership with Northern Gas Networks allowing community groups to bid for a range of energy related community projects. Recognising the extraordinary situation we are in due to the global pandemic in 2020, we have repurposed the fund to help vulnerable customers in our region.



Whitby Esk Community Hydro



**Northern Powergrid**  
Lloyds Court  
78 Grey Street  
Newcastle Upon Tyne  
NE1 6AF



[communityenergy@northernpowergrid.com](mailto:communityenergy@northernpowergrid.com)



[@Northpowergrid](https://twitter.com/Northpowergrid)



+44 (0) 800 011 3332

## Community Energy Membership

Community Energy England and Community Energy Wales are not-for-profit organisations which represent and support the community energy sector across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.



We do this through increasing public awareness of the activities and value of community energy organisations in England and Wales, building capacity within the sector, and advocating for policies to enable the sector to grow at both regional and national levels.

Consider joining CEE to help make your voice stronger. Membership of CEE is inclusive and is open to any organisation that is committed to the development of the community energy sector.

[www.communityenergyengland.org/pages/join-us](http://www.communityenergyengland.org/pages/join-us)



## Authors

Lead Author – **Sandy Robinson (Scene)**

Contributing Author – **Dominic Stephen (Scene)**

Editor – **Anda Baumerte (Northern Powergrid)**

## Copyright

Copyright © 2020 Northern Powergrid. All rights reserved. This strategy was produced for Northern Powergrid in partnership with Scene Connect. No part of this document may be reproduced or published in any way (including online) without prior permission from Northern Powergrid.

## Publishing Details

Community Energy in the North East 2020 uses data collected between January – May 2020 for Community Energy England's Community Energy – State of the Sector 2020 report relating to community energy in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

An open-access anonymised database of all non sensitive data is available on request from Community Energy England. Please email [survey@communityenergyengland.org](mailto:survey@communityenergyengland.org) to request access. Northern Powergrid and Community Energy England and the State of the Sector project adheres to GDPR (2018) regulations.

## Northern Powergrid

Northern Powergrid is the DNO responsible for the network that takes electricity from power stations and smaller generators to eight million customers across 3.9 million homes and businesses in the North East, Yorkshire and northern Lincolnshire. We are here 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year to make sure that the electricity you need gets to you safely, whenever and wherever you need it.



## Community Energy England

Community Energy England (CEE) is a not for profit organisation that represents and supports the community energy sector. CEE was established by the sector to provide a voice for community energy and to put people at the heart of the energy system by helping to create the conditions within which community energy can flourish.



## Scene

Scene is a social enterprise focussed on strengthening communities through consultancy, research and development of ICT products and services. Scene conducts consultancy and research in the UK community-led low carbon sector, as well as developing innovative energy access solutions in India and across sub-Saharan Africa.







Northern Powergrid

[www.northernpowergrid.com](http://www.northernpowergrid.com)



Community Energy England

[www.communityenergyengland.org](http://www.communityenergyengland.org)



Scene

[www.scene.community](http://www.scene.community)