

COMMUNITY ENERGY PATHWAYS ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

2025



FOREWORD

Community Energy Pathways' vision is for community energy to play a central role in the **Clean Power 2030 transition**. We support community energy organisations to grow and to work alongside local authorities and industry partners, so that together we can build a low-carbon, affordable energy system that works for our economy, our people and our planet.

We are entering a period of **real transformation in how communities interact with the energy system** — building local energy resilience, responding to the cost-of-living crisis and contributing meaningfully to national carbon reduction targets.

Our **first Annual Impact Report is both a celebration and a reflection**. It aims to inform and inspire; while recognising achievements we have been proud to be part of — none of which would have been possible without the commitment, passion and collaboration of those we work alongside. Since 2021, we have supported over **60 community energy groups across 15 areas, including Suffolk, Central Bedfordshire, Leicestershire, Essex, Kent, Surrey and**

Hampshire. In 2025 alone, our energy advice programmes reached more than **24,000 people**, supporting households to take practical action during a period of real challenge.

During 2025, we saw a growing number of communities across England stepping forward to get involved in community energy. At the same time, government momentum continued to build towards Clean Growth 2030, with the development of the **Local Power Plan and Warm Homes Plan**, and clear commitments to lower energy bills and support vulnerable households.

In September 2025, we were honoured to receive the **King's Award for Sustainable Development**. The King's Award is the most prestigious award for UK businesses, recognising excellence nationwide. Receiving this award reflects our outstanding work in sustainable development — promoting opportunity through social mobility, inspiring others and, above all, empowering communities.



Ollie Pendered, Executive Chair

“Community Energy Pathways and your partner organisations... demonstrated the potential of local and community energy to deliver meaningful financial and social returns when given the right support. It is clear that community energy is no longer a cottage industry... [but] is a growing force with the capacity to transform how we deliver Net Zero. Community energy will be a central pillar of GBE's work, and your experience and insight will be vital to shaping our approach.”

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Note from the CEO

2025 was a big year for CEP as we looked for new ways to support the sector. This report details our work – from energy planning and project scoping to advice networks and group creation – reaching further and deeper than ever before.

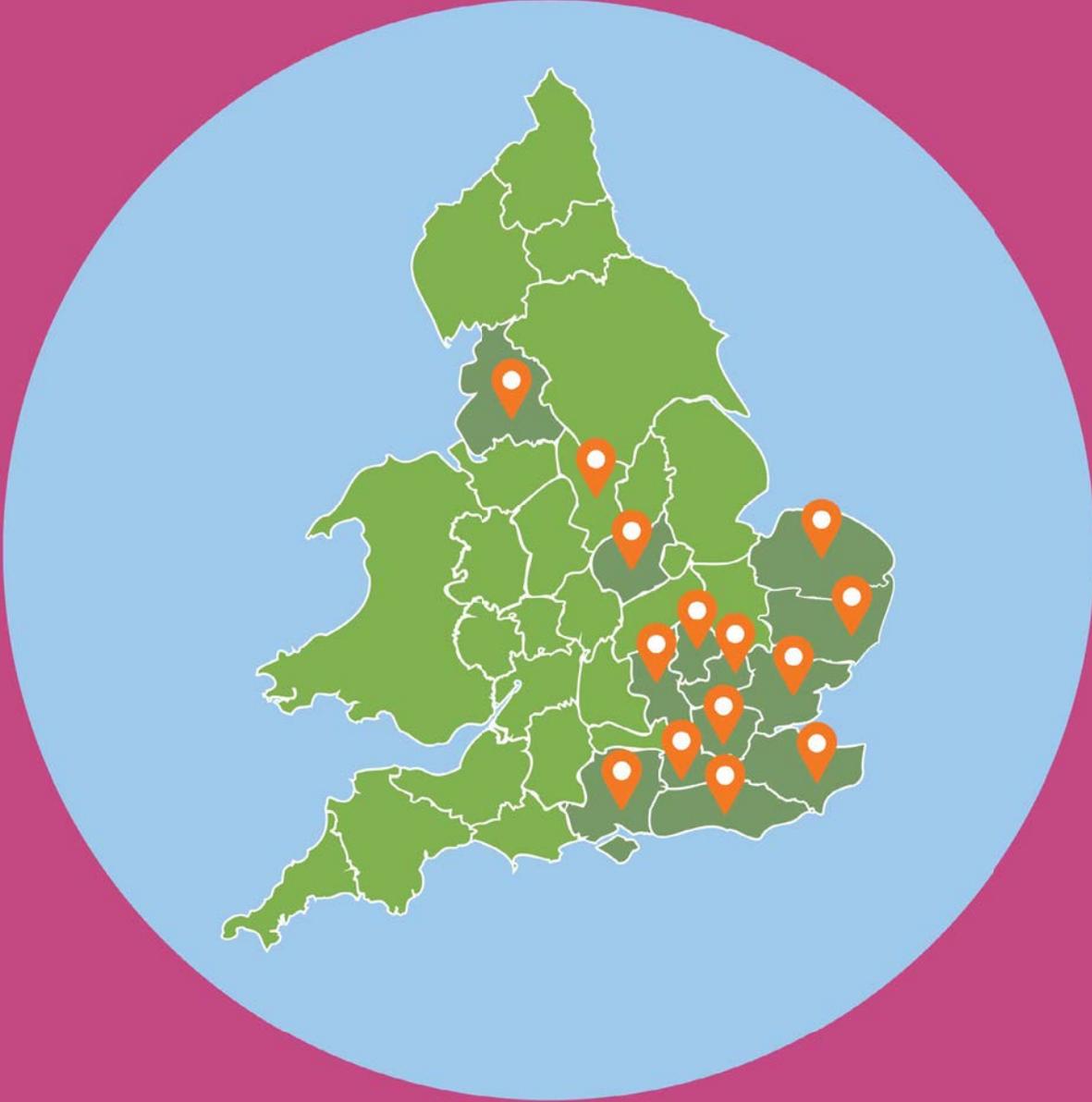
The CEP team and our network of partner organisations worked tirelessly to realise the change we all want to see. We have laid strong foundations for even greater impact in 2026.



Esme Donghi, CEO

Community energy groups we support:

- BRIGHTON & HOVE**
Brighton Energy Co-op
BHESCo
- BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**
Buckinghamshire Community Energy
- CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE**
River Ivel Community Energy
Greensand Community Energy
Buzz Community Energy
- EAST SUSSEX**
Forest Row Energy
Energise Sussex Coast
Energise South Downs
OVESCo
OVCA
Lewes Climate Hub
- ESSEX**
Peacock Community Energy
Tendring Community Energy
Common Green
eMpower Maldon
- Derbyshire**
Derbyshire Dales
- HAMPSHIRE**
Lodden Community Energy
Calleva
Basingstoke
Test Source Community Energy
Energy Alton
WinACC
PeCAN
Energise South Downs
Dragonfly Power
Community Energy New Forest
New Forest Transition
- Hertfordshire**
GUCE
Green Heat Coop
- KENT**
Social Enterprise Kent
Ashford Volunteer Centre
CASP
- LANCASHIRE**
Rossendale Valley Energy
- Leicestershire**
Green Fox
Greener Futures
- LONDON**
SE1 Solar
Repowering London
SELCE
Greener and Cleaner
CREW Energy
Croydon Community Energy
- LUTON**
Luton Community Energy
- MAIDENHEAD**
MaidEnergy
- NORFOLK**
Norwich CIC
- SUFFOLK**
Suffolk Green Cluster
Bury St Edmunds
Community Energy
Deben Climate Centre
Sunrise Community Energy
Hadleigh Heat
Stour Power
- SURREY**
Surrey Muslim Association
Energy Action Redhill & Reigate
Surrey Climate Commission
Zero Carbon Guildford
Wey Valley Solar
- WEST SUSSEX**
Repower Balcombe
Ferry Farm



OUR WORK ACROSS ENGLAND

2025 AT GLANCE

206
volunteers involved

350MW
shared ownership
projects in
development

£11,000
average additional
funding secured by
community groups

106
generation
projects in the
pipeline

76
paid roles created

195
community energy
advice events
held

£3.8 Million
funding secured for the
sector

We've worked with
54
community energy
groups

We've worked with
40
councils

21,800
people supported with
energy advice

1042
home energy
advice visits
delivered

Over
£10 Million
in social value
created

POLICY AND SECTOR LEADERSHIP

CEP has had significant policy and parliamentary impact over the past year. We continue to shape the sector's national direction with seats on the DESNZ Community Energy Contact Group and the GSEnz East Regional Advisory Board. CEP's award-winning expertise, recognised by the King's Award for Enterprise for Sustainable Development 2025-2030, positions the organisation as a trusted capacity building consultant for local authorities, DNOs, government and the Net Zero Hubs.

This year, CEP was also a consultee for the development of the Local Authority Community Energy methodology, which we will develop further in a 2026 project. We also engaged in key government consultations including shared ownership, community benefit funds, and consumer-led flexibility. We convened impactful sessions with Ofgem, DESNZ and GB Energy, with two flagship visits in the summer to Lewes and Newhaven, alongside presenting at parliamentary events and briefings. By bringing community energy practitioners into roundtable conversations with these national decision makers, we are shaping the regulatory changes needed to further unlock the benefits of community energy.

SECTOR EVENTS



In January 2025, we hosted a national conference for the sector in London, alongside Community Energy London with support from UKPN and the GSEnzH.

OFGEM



On 17th July 2025, Ofgem Chair Mark McAllister visited Newhaven for the first ever community energy live broadcast to OFGEM'S 2.5k employees, followed by discussions with local community energy groups and collaboration talks.

GB ENERGY



On 16th July 2025, we welcomed Juergen Maier and Helen Seagrave from GB Energy to discuss how collaboration can scale up our work across the nation and how community energy can help to deliver GBE's clean energy goals.

OUR MODEL

The community energy movement serves a vital role in the transition to a democratised, decentralised, and decarbonised energy future. Yet, as the energy system evolves, communities face mounting challenges, from inconsistent funding opportunities to the administrative burden of working with large corporate partners. We believe that for the sector to flourish, it needs core funding and well-paid community outreach jobs. In this context, CEP exists to equip groups with the skills, resources, and partnerships they need to thrive.

CEP's work now extends far beyond the South East, reflecting both the demand for and the value of a community-led approach. Being shortlisted for the national Collaboration in Community Energy Award at the 2025 Community Energy England Awards highlights this momentum — but our real success lies in the partnerships we help to build across the sector.

Over the past year, CEP has strengthened its support for community organisations through four interconnected areas of work:

Capacity Building

We help community groups strengthen their skills and capability so they can deliver trusted, high quality local energy services.

Energy Advice

Our advice programmes support vulnerable households and provide community groups with vital income and visibility to grow their local presence.

Energy Planning

Through Parish Energy Planning, we help communities map and prepare for their energy future in line with local, regional, and national priorities.

Innovation

We're developing new models and tools, such as shared ownership and social value measurement, to expand what community energy can achieve.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Building the foundations for a thriving, resilient community energy sector remains at the heart of our mission.

This year's most transformative step was the growth of **Community Energy People**, a pioneering programme providing core funding to eleven community energy groups across England. For many, this enabled their first paid staff, a more diverse volunteer base, and investment in skills that unlock new delivery capacity. The impact is

already clear: groups are securing partnerships, leveraging additional funding, delivering more ambitious projects, and beginning to build a virtuous cycle of income, capability and community impact that supports long-term self-sufficiency.

We also concluded major multi-year programmes leaving durable legacies. In **Hampshire**, nine active groups continue the work we helped seed, with local leadership now firmly embedded and community owned solar on multiple sites.

Across **Essex, Suffolk, Leicestershire, the New Forest, Central Bedfordshire and Surrey**, we have deepened our work – providing tailored training, mentoring, and strategic support for growing numbers of increasingly ambitious community energy organisations.

New areas, such as **St Albans**, are now beginning their journey with us, demonstrating an ever-widening appetite for community-led energy action.

“Community Energy Pathways has been, and continues to be, a real force for good, providing crucial support to local authorities in the transition to low carbon energy and helping residents understand how they can be smarter with their energy use.”

Clr Peter Schwier, Climate Czar, Cabinet Member for Climate, Environment, Waste Reduction and Recycling

Step 1

Assessment & strategy

Step 2

Mobilisation

Step 3

Tools and training

Step 4

In-depth capacity building

Step 5

Review & improve

Capacity Building Projects 2025

Our work growing the community energy sector in new areas



28

new board members

386

new members

33

new paid roles

83

new volunteers



69

upcoming generation projects

8

projects off the ground



79

community energy events organised



19

energy advice projects



16

community energy groups supported



£11,000

value of match funding per group



Our participating groups across the UK.

ENERGY ADVICE

In the context of rising energy insecurity, our **advice programmes** are designed around the needs of those most affected. We understand that trust and local presence are often what enable people to seek and receive support. Community energy groups are becoming **key providers of frontline help**, strengthening the safety net for households and communities.

Our collaborative model brings structure, consistency and quality. Advisors and coordinators receive expert **training in fuel poverty, energy efficiency and low-carbon technologies, and learn from one another through peer forums and webinars**. This shared learning strengthens delivery, while programme funding enables groups to create local paid roles – **building skills, trust and visibility**.

This local grounding creates a multiplier effect. As their profile grows, many groups are securing additional funding to expand or tailor their support. Our strategic partnership with **UK Power Networks’ Leaving No One Behind** programme shows how local nuance can be combined with strategic scale. With **SGN**, we’ve focused on two historically underserved groups – care leavers and the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community, adapting our model to **ensure no one is left behind**.

“Community Energy Pathways have delivered a vital programme of community energy events and home visits on our behalf, creating spaces where residents can become energy champions, sharing knowledge, building confidence, and inspiring action around microgeneration technologies and energy efficiency. These events are more than just information sessions; they are catalysts for change, fostering peer-to-peer learning and empowering communities to take ownership of their energy futures”

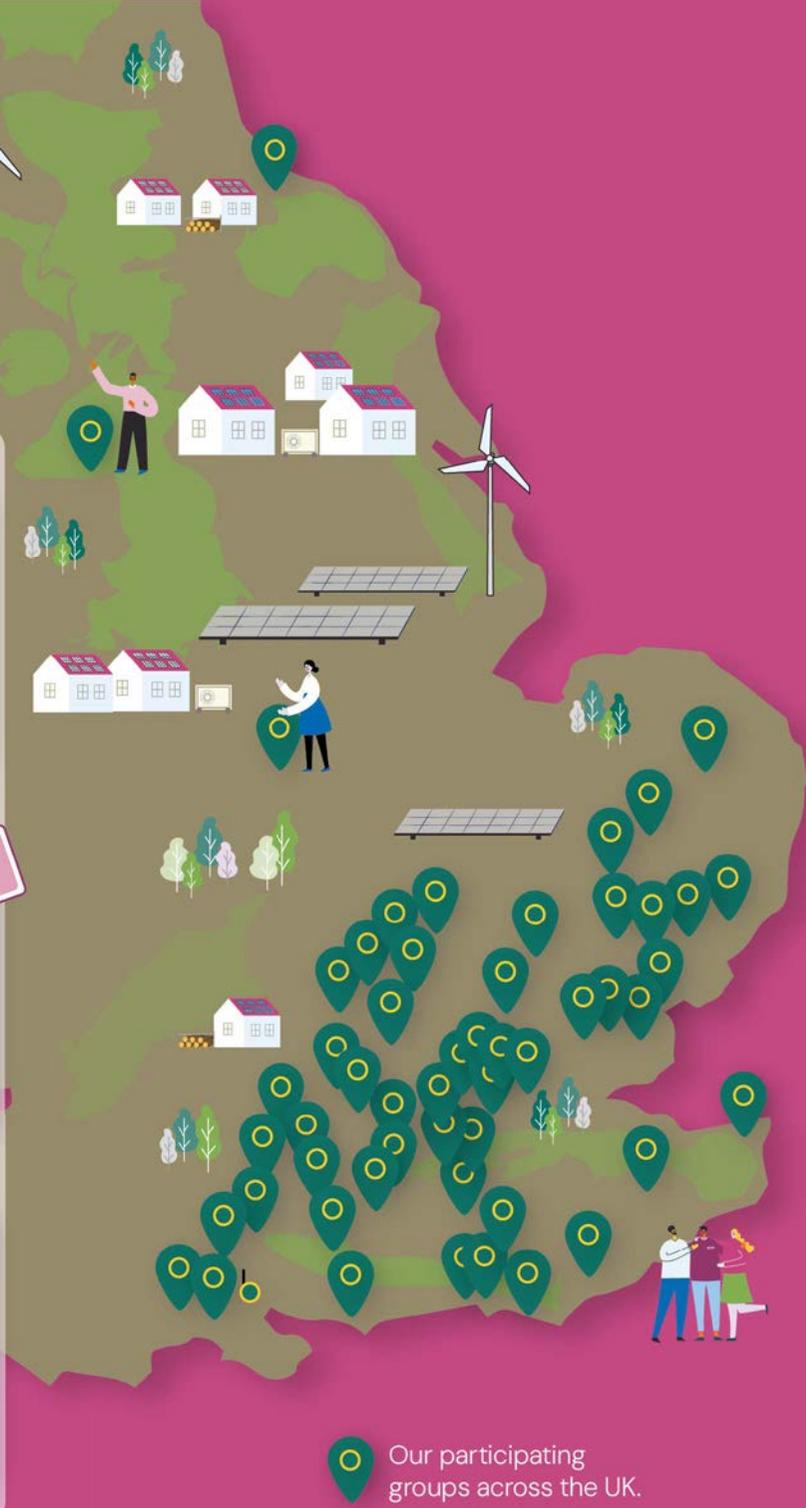
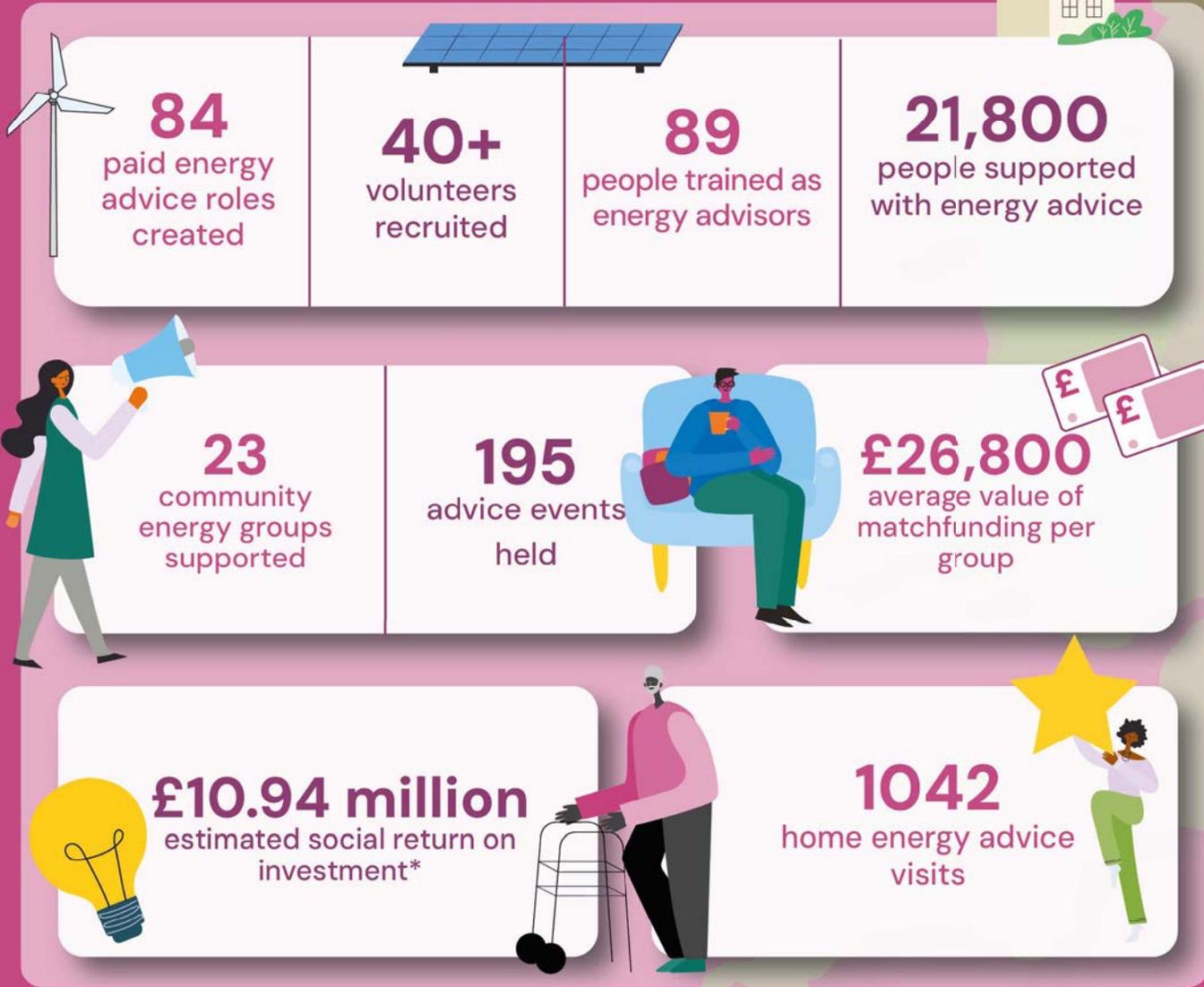
Matt White, Head of Customer Service and Innovation, UK Power Networks

OUR MODEL



Energy Advice Projects 2025

Our work with local groups to support vulnerable people in their communities



*based on GDN and DNO Industry Standard Social Value Framework and associated Rulebooks

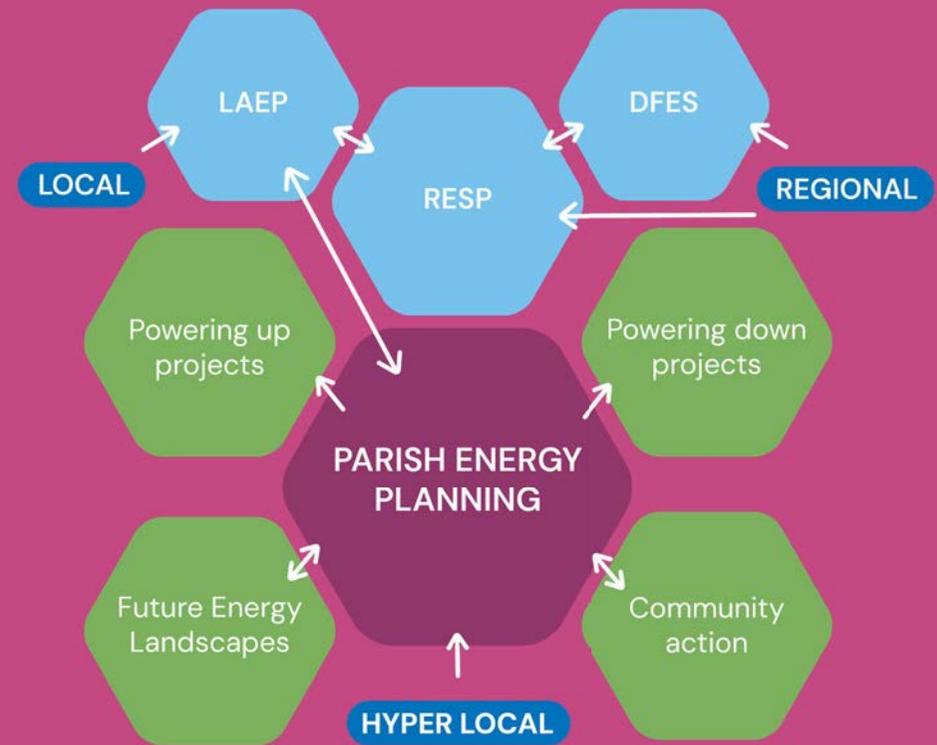
ENERGY PLANNING

Our work in hyper-local energy planning marks a significant evolution in CEP's support for communities. Building on the foundations of earlier innovation projects **CommuniHeat** and **CommuniPower**, we have developed a service that gives communities the tools to understand their energy futures and how to shape them. In 2025, we delivered **Parish Energy Plans (PEPs)** for two Test Valley parishes and we have five Sussex PEPs in development.

Parish-level planning fills a crucial gap between national frameworks and everyday lived experience. PEPs sit comfortably alongside **Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs)**, **Regional Energy Strategic Plans (RESPs)**, and **Distribution Future Energy Scenarios (DFES)** – using the same language and

datasets, but translating them into something meaningful for residents, and local decision makers. This makes the energy transition tangible and relevant, stimulating conversation and action in ways that higher level plans cannot.

Our PEPs identify opportunities for high impact action – from household level energy efficiency to community owned solar, from heat decarbonisation to micro-hydro and wind – while also equipping communities with the knowledge and confidence to pursue project development, including accessing funds. This level of planning helps activate local ambition and empowers individuals and communities to move at pace, while giving system operators clearer visibility of emerging demand, supporting a smoother energy transition.



“CEP consistently bridges the gap between strategic system planning and the lived experience of communities - an essential role in delivering fair and effective local energy transitions.”

Lynne McDonald, Head of Local Net Zero, UK Power Networks Distribution System Operator (DSO)

LOOKING AHEAD - INNOVATION

Innovation continues to drive Community Energy Pathways' mission to strengthen and scale the community energy sector. In 2025, our work focused on developing new models for community revenue and new opportunities for people to engage in the energy transition.

SHARED OWNERSHIP

In 2025, CEP worked across nine solar sites in England – totalling **350MW of capacity** – supporting local groups to acquire up to **10% ownership**. We worked with Thrive Renewables on a site in Essex, with Quintas Cleantech on six **49.9MW projects** progressing through planning, and with Luminous Energy on early-stage proposals in Surrey and Norfolk. Alongside project support, we began a collaboration with GB Energy, Energy Systems Catapult and legal firm Bird & Bird to develop legal templates to unlock shared ownership nationally.

SOCIAL VALUE

In parallel, we advanced work on social value, helping community energy organisations better evidence the benefits their work delivers. A trial using the Social Value Portal showed that eight groups generated over **£800,000 of measurable social value**, while also revealing the limitations of procurement-focused frameworks. To build a tool better suited to sector needs, CEP is now partnering with the University of Sheffield on a bespoke social value methodology.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Finally, we strengthened youth engagement through our partnership with Anglia Ruskin University's SHoKE programme. Student teams delivered rapid insights on supporting young volunteers and produced a **33-page report on maximising community energy's social impact**—contributions that are now shaping CEP's wider work.



LOOKING AHEAD - 2026 AND BEYOND

We want to see a future where community energy is central to delivering a fair, resilient net-zero transition – not optional, and not marginal. In 2026, progress will depend on decisive system change and strong sector leadership. This section sets out **what we want to see** from decision-makers, and **what we will do** to help communities deliver at scale.

WE WANT TO SEE ...

COMMUNITY OWNED CLEAN POWER AT SCALE

Through..

accessible project finance and awareness programs that drive public participation and local decision-making, with public sector support to provide land and buildings for community energy projects through trusted legal and procurement channels.

A RESILIENT, PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY ENERGY SECTOR

Through...

long-term investment in skills and talent, business development funds and programmes, and support to access vacant shop front space in high streets, enabling community energy organisations to operate as trusted, delivery-ready partners over the long term.

FAIR MARKETS FOR LOCAL POWER

Through...

regulation that supports renewable energy to be used where it is generated, that mandates community benefits and shared ownership in commercial renewables, and prioritises community-owned projects in grid access and connection queues.

A JUST TRANSITION FOR THE MOST VULNERABLE

Through...

community-led delivery of energy advice, retrofit and local energy solutions that prioritise fuel-poor households and ensure the benefits of clean energy are shared fairly.

WE WILL ...

BRING MORE MONEY INTO THE HANDS OF COMMUNITIES

By...

designing and delivering funded programmes, with expert support, that are simple to access and focus on building long-term local capacity – not just short-term projects.

CREATE NEW ROUTES FOR COMMUNITIES TO SHAPE LOCAL ENERGY

By...

convening communities and supporting meaningful public participation in local energy planning and shared ownership, by turning national policy ambition into practical, community-led delivery.

REACH MORE PEOPLE WITH TRUSTED ENERGY SUPPORT

By...

expanding community-led energy advice, training local champions and working with partners to support households who are most at risk of being left behind.

SHOW THE FULL VALUE OF COMMUNITY ENERGY

By...

improving how the sector measures and communicates its social, economic and environmental impact, so community energy is recognised for what it truly delivers.

FUNDERS



COMMUNITY ENERGY PEOPLE

“Over the past year, the Community Energy People project has supported communities to use energy more efficiently and fairly, empowering local people to take meaningful climate action. This aligns with the National Lottery Climate Action Fund’s aim to inspire bold, long-lasting change towards environmental sustainability.”

Paula Nelson, Portfolio Manager, National Lottery Community Fund

The project is tackling a major capacity challenge in the community energy sector by creating **paid and volunteer roles across 11 partner groups**. By giving partners the freedom to choose which roles to recruit for, they’ve been able to fill vital core positions that other project-based funding doesn’t cover. This freedom has been key to the success of the project and has allowed our partners to grow and explore new ways of working which they otherwise would not have been able to.

The extra capacity has already led to some big wins. **Energise South Downs**, for example, employed a **communications manager and a project manager who helped deliver a share offer that raised £302,000 for three solar projects in just 10 days**.

New starter employees have gone on to work across a wide range of projects, from rooftop

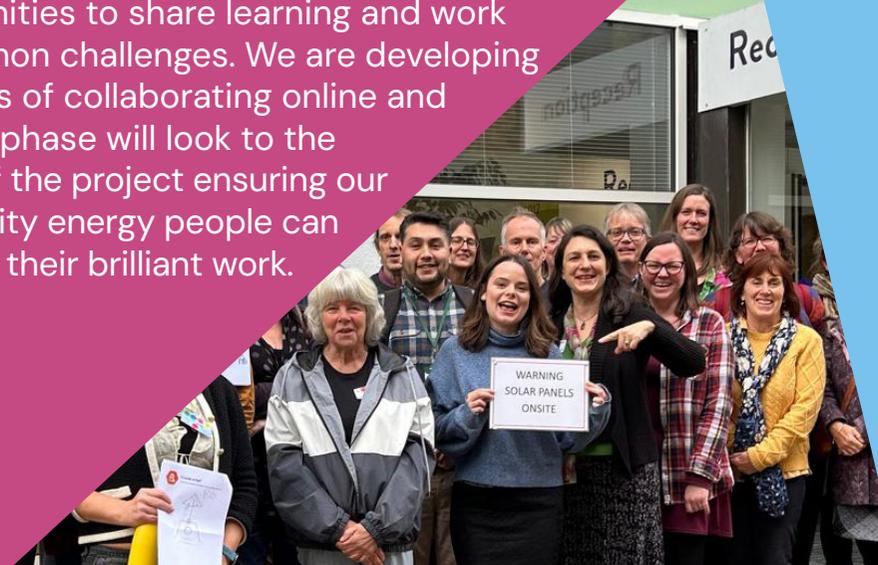
solar and district heating to retrofit, energy advice, and even a bid to supply community energy to Universal Studios!

63% of the new employees are women and 23% were previously unemployed.

With a focus on inclusion, the project has been a gateway for people from a range of backgrounds to get involved in community energy. Bringing everyone together has been a highlight of the project, providing opportunities to share learning and work on common challenges. We are developing new ways of collaborating online and the next phase will look to the legacy of the project ensuring our community energy people can continue their brilliant work.

“As a new organisation, the Community Energy People funding has given us vital stability and flexibility, helping us retain staff, adapt to changing needs, and attract further funding. This kind of support enables community organisations to achieve far more.”

Livvy Hanks, General Manager, Our Power



CASE STUDY

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE

At the start of the project, **Central Bedfordshire Council** (CBC) sought to catalyse local climate action and build community resilience from the ground up. The goal was to transform resident passion into a self-sustaining community energy sector.

Through our capacity building programme, we provided **frameworks and mentorship, and leveraged over £150,000 in funding**. The programme established Community Benefit Societies, trained founders, and guided the development of both 'powering up' (support for communities who want to develop their own renewable energy projects) and 'powering down' (energy champions who provide trusted energy advice) projects.

The initiative has successfully launched a thriving community energy ecosystem with a profound impact. The programme incubated three new start-up community energy businesses, employed four new employees and mobilised thirteen founding directors for the three community energy groups. The groups kicked off with energy advice delivery to hundreds of homes. There is now a **robust project pipeline set to deliver over 5MW of renewable energy**, including an innovative shared ownership solar farm project and a collaboration rooftop solar project involving a construction company and the public sector.

“Our partnership with Community Energy Pathways has been innovative and empowering for local residents. Since 2022, their expertise has helped embed community energy in our Sustainability Plan, supporting new Community Benefit Societies, training, energy advice for over 500 homes, and the development of more than 5MW of potential renewables. They've been an invaluable partner in building capacity and driving a low-carbon, community-led future.”

Sara Earl, Sustainability Manager



CASE STUDY

ESSEX

We have formed a collaborative relationship with **Essex County Council's** (ECC) Low Carbon Team to maximise our impact in the county.

The ECC team are developing a **schools' solar business as usual** (BAU) policy to enable community energy groups to deliver school projects and are liaising across ECC departments to remove any blockers on Council-owned sites. They are also supporting **Community Energy Colchester** on a district heat network feasibility study and assisting with Board Member recruitment.

In partnership with ECC we are supporting various groups, including **Peacock**

Community Energy and Tendring Community Energy, and are working on shared-ownership opportunities. ECC have also developed the **Essex Community Energy Capability Fund**, providing seed funding for new groups.

We have helped several new groups to register as community benefit societies and we are supporting active groups – **eMpower, Tendring CE, Icarus Energy, and Peacock CE** – to progress project development and funding applications. After several years in Essex we are preparing to leave a sustainable and thriving community energy sector.



Community Energy Pathways has played a pivotal role in establishing and expanding the community energy sector in Essex. Through their dedicated support and expertise, the initiative has enabled the transition from no established groups in 2020, to a growing network of incorporated community energy organisations across the county, fostering local collaboration and sustainable development. In partnership with CEP, we have successfully built the foundations for the CE sector in Essex.

Energy and Low Carbon team at ECC

CASE STUDY

LOCAL ENERGY ADVICE DEMONSTRATOR

In partnership with **OVESCO**, LEAD delivered energy advice to over **6,000 people in four districts across Sussex and Essex**.

In Sussex, **OVESCO** built on previous energy advice projects and events – including their Eco-Extravaganza and their Eco Open Homes – to grow their advice services and reach **1,500 people**.

In Essex, **Community Energy Pathways** worked with a variety of community groups and organisations and successfully trained a large team who delivered energy-efficiency advice across the districts of Tendring, Uttlesford and Maldon.

Having Energy Champions on the ground is essential for meaningful **community engagement, practical advice, and encouraging uptake of energy-saving measures**. While it requires effort to establish, with the right people and adequate funding it gains momentum. The team developed for this project became highly motivated and increasingly proactive.

Through this work, we gained a clear understanding of the personality types and skills needed for successful part-time

Energy Champions. The project provided flexible employment, purpose and new skills for those who joined the team. **We employed 3 Energy Champion Co-ordinators** who managed an in-house team of **15 Champions**. We subsequently secured additional funding to employ **3 Co-ordinators and 8 Champions**.

We also trained volunteers to carry out thermal imaging surveys. They then worked with our Energy Champions to provide home visits in their communities.

As a result of this project, strong relationships were formed with staff and volunteers who have since formed three new community energy groups. With future funding, these groups are likely to have the capacity to run an effective, independent energy-efficiency advice service.

“Hello Keith,
Thank you... It was so good to have all my concerns addressed in a highly informative manner and without bias. I really appreciate your advice and time - I have given a fully merited 10/10 rating and will 100% recommend the service.”

Advice beneficiary



CASE STUDY

LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

Our energy advice collaboration with UKPN on the **Leaving No One Behind** (LNB) project has only grown stronger throughout 2025. In a year in which consumers have continued to struggle with the cost of energy and a lack of clear direction on how to reduce their energy use, our network of community Energy Champions has been there to support them.

In **2025, our service reached our 20,000th advice client**, with advice given to community members at food banks, repair cafes, school fairs, village halls and in their own homes.

Our service has received an average **96% customer satisfaction rating**, showing how vital and well received our champions' work is. To keep our champions' knowledge at the cutting edge, the LNB network has come together throughout the year to learn from experts on everything from home improvement grants to smart local energy systems.

As well as providing vital support to vulnerable people, this project has allowed our delivery partners to grow their local

presence, gain confidence, and become integral community organisations. It has also created local, skilled jobs in a growing sector. This project's continued success is down to our network of advice partners: **BHESCo, OVESCo, Energise Sussex Coast, Social Enterprise Kent, CREW, SELCE, Repowering London, SE1 solar, GUCE, Greener and Cleaner, Surrey Climate Commission, Greensand, RICE, BUZZ, Hadleigh HEAT, Deben Climate Centre, Buckinghamshire Community Energy, Our Power, and Community Energy Colchester.**

“We’ve expanded access to vital energy advice in trusted local spaces, breaking down barriers for residents. Strong community partnerships and CEP’s expert support ensure tailored, reliable guidance that truly meets people’s needs.”

Chinazo, CREW Energy

‘The team members knew what they were talking about. They spoke with confidence, and were informing us about genuinely useful support and products’

Customer review



CASE STUDY

LEICESTERSHIRE

Over the past 12 months, we have played a central role in accelerating the growth of community energy across Leicestershire through the **GreenerFuture Leicestershire project**. Working in partnership with **Leicestershire County Council** and **Green Fox Community Energy**, we delivered a tailored capacity-building programme designed to turn local interest into practical action.

The programme trained and supported residents to become energy champions and to develop community energy groups and projects, bringing people together through a collaborative countywide forum. More than **170 hours of training** and one-to-one support were delivered, covering governance, incorporation, energy advice, renewable generation, communications, and local energy planning.

This hands-on support enabled seven community businesses to develop robust project plans and access **£140k** of Get Ready Community Energy funding, allowing them to move rapidly into delivery. Working alongside Green Fox Community Energy, we also identified and assessed the viability of over **40 sites** for community-owned

renewable generation. This work has created a strong project pipeline, with nearly 16MW of potential electricity generation identified.

Securing investment was a core project objective. In total, nearly **£850k** was secured for community energy project and business development across Leicestershire, including two years of core costs and professional mentoring through CEP's Community Energy People programme. This support will help retain skills, sustain employment, and ensure community energy remains a vital part of Leicestershire's net zero journey.

The project's impact has been recognised nationally, with Leicestershire County Council winning the Community Energy England Award for Supportive Local Authority in November 2025.

“Before this programme, we had enthusiasm but no clear route forward. The support we received around governance, funding and project planning gave us the confidence to move from an idea to a funded project. Being part of the countywide forum has also made a huge difference — we're no longer working in isolation.”

Community energy champion, Leicestershire

“LCC has been a standout supporter of community energy, working closely with Green Fox Community Energy and CEP to grow local capacity, set up new groups, and embed community energy across the county.”

Community Energy England Awards judges' citation, Supportive Local Authority Award, November 2025

CASE STUDY

NEW FOREST

We have supported energy activities in the **New Forest since 2023** working closely with the District Council and more recently, with the **New Forest National Park Authority** and other stakeholders including the local Business Partnership.

Shared Prosperity funding was secured to fund the HEAT project to **train 56 local people** in thermal imaging and basic energy advice plus **23 people in Level 2/3/4 courses**. **19 community facilities** were supported with in-depth discussions about reducing their heat loss and energy usage. The funding was also spent with neighbouring community energy group Energise South Downs to gather residents in workshops to discuss what they felt was needed for local energy supply, security and efficiency. We took this a step further by assessing large energy opportunities presented by the

emerging Local Plan and integrating data from the **local District Network Operator SSEN**. This has revealed opportunities that will be appraised over the next year.

To enable energy generation projects we created **Community Energy New Forest**, a society of **5 professionals** eager to create power generating projects. We supported this new group to bid to the **GB Energy Community Fund** for startup costs for a **200kWp solar project at the much-loved Brockenhurst College**. If awarded, it provides an opportunity for local people to invest, and college learners to become part of a planned follow-on project looking at green careers and understanding the technical strands of creating an energy generation project.

“CEP have been our expert advisors for over a year now and we have found their advice to be invaluable. Their team is fast, efficient and thoughtful and they have helped us enormously as we struggle through the complexities of technology, local authorities, Government policies, planning and finance. They provide us with advice; they share best practice from around the UK and correct us when we go down a rabbit hole. It is no exaggeration to say that we would be floundering without them.”

Mark Cullen, Director of Community Energy New Forest, November 2025

“It started with the work of CEP, and today we are delighted to see Community Energy New Forest well underway with its first solar PV project... supporting and facilitating this effort is critical to making clean energy at the community level in the New Forest a reality.”

Steve Garner, Climate and Sustainability Lead, New Forest District Council

CASE STUDY

PARISH ENERGY PLANNING

Our **Parish Energy Planning projects** (PEPs) take a new approach to inspiring communities to take control of their energy futures. In collaboration with **Test Valley Borough Council, Lewes District Council, Mid-Sussex District Council and Horsham District Council**, we are producing roadmaps to decarbonisation for **7 communities across the South Coast: Broughton, Houghton (Test Valley), Rodmell, Plumpton, Seaford (Lewes), Hassocks (mid-Sussex), and Henfield (Horsham).**

Our PEPs fill the gap between grass-root community action and the top-down, technical solutions which are normally favoured in energy planning processes. Using a combination of **community engagement, data processing and partner collaboration,**

these PEPs are designed to discover what is possible and desirable for a community. We then go on to provide a roadmap for group formulation, project design and securing funding opportunities.

PEPs condense the expertise of our capacity building and technical teams into an **accessible, cost-effective package** that provides a clear roadmap for community action.

2026 will be a big year for the PEP project as we explore new funding streams and partnerships and look to train delivery partners to develop clusters of PEPs in their own communities.

“Horsham District Council are really pleased to be working with Community Energy Pathways, funding this hyper-local energy plan trial for a Parish in the Horsham district. Community Energy Pathways bring a wealth of experience to the table, and we believe this really supports our climate action and energy planning work with communities in helping decarbonise the Horsham district.”

Horsham Council

“I used to be against solar farms but this has really changed my opinion”

PEP talk attendee



CASE STUDY

SOUTHERN GAS NETWORK

Our collaboration with **SGN** has enabled the development of targeted advice services across the Southeast. Each aspect of this project provides energy advice to hard-to-reach communities who struggle to gain access to, or actively avoid, advice services.

Our **care leavers training programme** was co-designed with young adults transitioning out of local authority care; this is a group that often lacks support to understand how their heating systems work, avoid falling into energy debt and how to access help. We have facilitated workshops to support over **60 care leavers** with developing the skills they need to live independently.

From this work, we have also trained **two care leavers to become paid energy champions** focusing on supporting other care leavers. In **2026** we plan to build on this and help care

leavers to access long term green jobs and enter the community energy sector.

Our Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) outreach programme, led by **Social Enterprise Kent (SEK)**, focuses on a community that faces systemic exclusion from access to essential services, contributing to serious long-term health impacts. Working with local councils and community leaders, SEK has built trust and delivered vital support, including fuel vouchers and warm packs.

In addition, **Energise Sussex Coast (ESC)** has established a complex casework phone line, funded through this partnership, to provide in-depth support for vulnerable customers. Buckinghamshire Community Energy has led our Carbon Monoxide and Priority Service Register advice service to support vulnerable people within their community.

“CEP helps households facing fuel poverty, with local networks ensuring vulnerable groups like care leavers and Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller communities get practical guidance to stay safe, warm, and reduce energy costs.”

Janet Duggan, SGN

“You have done for us in two hours what nobody has done in two years”

Client feedback



CASE STUDY

SHARED OWNERSHIP

Shared ownership is becoming a key route for communities to gain a meaningful stake in the UK's clean-energy transition. In **2025** we have helped to bridge the gap between commercial developers and local groups, ensuring communities are prepared to participate, protected within investment structures, and able to benefit from long-term revenue.

In 2025, we supported shared ownership opportunities across **nine solar sites in England – around 350MW of capacity** – offering local communities the potential to acquire up to a **10% share**. Our work spans three developer partnerships at different stages: With **Thrive Renewables**, a joint venture is progressing on the energised **10MW Little Dunmow solar farm in Essex**, where a new Community Benefit Society (**Peacock Energy**) has been formed to manage the community stake. With **Quintas Cleantech**, we are supporting **six 49.9MW sites in Hampshire, Suffolk, Bedfordshire, Kent and Cambridgeshire** as they move through planning, designing CBS structures that can hold the minority stake and manage associated community benefit funds.

Early-stage work with **Luminous Energy** is exploring similar models for proposed sites in Surrey and Norfolk.

Across all projects, our focus is on creating robust joint ventures with strong minority protections, preparing communities for every stage – from early engagement and public consultation to investment structuring, CBS governance and share raises.

To help scale the model nationally, we are also collaborating with **Energy Systems Catapult** and **Bird & Bird** to develop accessible legal templates for shared ownership, co-designed with communities and developers to unlock more opportunities for local benefit.



CASE STUDY

STUDENTS AT THE HEART OF KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

This year, we partnered with **Anglia Ruskin University (ARU)** as part of their **Students at the Heart of Knowledge Exchange (SHoKE)** programme. SHoKE matches teams of volunteer student researchers with civic society organisations to research and recommend solutions to challenges these organisations face. The student research teams come from a range of academic and personal backgrounds and often meet for the first time as part of the challenge.

We first approached ARU to get involved in their **Impact 24 challenge** in May. In just 24 hours, the team produced evidenced based recommendations on how community energy groups can best support young volunteers. These recommendations directly informed training on volunteer development as part of the Community Energy People project.

Following this, the SHoKE team asked if CEP would be interested in participating in their longer **Student Consult project**. In October, we were partnered with a team of five student researchers who worked with us over four weeks to research how CE groups can maximise their social impact. We met weekly with the team to steer their research,

which resulted in a **33-page report** that draws insight from across the sector and beyond. This research comes at a key time and will feed into our wider work creating a methodology to enable CE groups to better capture the social value they create.

All the research outputs are open source, and **we'd like to thank our student researcher teams for their enthusiasm, hard work, and expertise.**



CASE STUDY

SOCIAL VALUE

Over the past year, we have been exploring how the **social value** created by community energy can be better captured and communicated, particularly as local authorities place greater emphasis on social value through procurement.

Social value includes outcomes that are central to community energy but often difficult to evidence, such as **improved well-being, skills development, local employment and increased spending within local economies**. To help community energy groups compete more effectively for local authority contracts, align with DNO consumer vulnerability requirements, and increase visibility in energy policymaking, we have been trialling the **Social Value Portal (SVP)**. The pilot involved **eight community energy groups supported through the Community Energy People project, alongside established organisations in Sussex**.

The process highlighted significant challenges. The SVP requires robust data that small, often volunteer-led organisations can struggle to collect, and its focus on “additionality” means that core activities

such as renewable energy generation and energy advice are not fully captured. To address this, we worked with CAG Consultants to develop a simple tool that enables groups to input key data, which we then process and upload centrally. Despite these limitations, the pilot showed that the **eight participating groups generated over £800,000 of recognised social value during the 2024/25 financial year**.

Looking ahead, we have concluded that a more bespoke approach is needed. We will be working with the University of Sheffield to develop a new social value measurement system aligned with DNO and fuel poverty frameworks, enabling community energy groups to evidence the full value of their everyday work.

CASE STUDY

ST ALBANS

We began the project by mapping stakeholders to understand existing community energy activity and identify potential partners in St Albans. While there were no active community energy projects in the district, there had been historic interest, and activity elsewhere in Hertfordshire remained limited, with **Grand Union Community Energy** (GUCE) the only group delivering projects in the county.

An initial workshop with **St Albans City & District Council** (SADC) officers in May created a constructive space to explore the challenges of decarbonising the Council's wider estate and to build shared understanding of how community energy could play a future role. While early conversations were exploratory, they helped establish a foundation for continued engagement.

To broaden participation, we **co-hosted a public webinar** with SADC in June, introducing community energy to local residents and community groups. The session set out the national and regional context and featured a practical case study from GUCE, demonstrating how community energy

operated in a Hertfordshire setting. This led to several follow-up conversations with interested residents.

The project concluded with **two positive green shoots**: a meeting with **eight local people**, including two councillors; the project also **identified emerging local leadership**, with individuals stepping forward to convene further meetings and grow local interest.

In addition, the **Hertfordshire Community Energy Conference**, organised by GUCE and Green Heat Co-op, provided inspiration and reassurance to both officers and members, helping to build confidence that community energy could form part of St Albans' net zero journey.

“Community Energy Pathways support was instrumental in engaging local residents and building momentum. Thanks to their guidance, we've seen the community come together with enthusiasm and purpose around the idea of forming a community energy group. We're grateful for their dedication and the positive impact they've had on our journey.”

Tony Elkington

“Community Energy Pathways played a pivotal role in helping our Council better understand the potential of community energy. They have a wealth of expertise and their warm, engaging delivery made it easy for both Council and community members to get involved.”

Candice Luper

CASE STUDY

SUFFOLK

The **Suffolk Climate Change Partnership (SCCP)** faced the challenge of building a resilient community energy sector from scratch in a region dominated by rural communities and volunteer-led initiatives. Key barriers include **limited volunteer capacity, complex project development processes, and intense competition for suitable renewable energy sites.**

Over a **three-year partnership**, through our comprehensive capacity building, we provided structured mentorship, **eight masterclasses** covering technical and legal aspects, and brokered crucial funding through a dedicated Development Fund. SCCP supported events and communications, while we facilitated a **bi-monthly practitioners' forum** to foster collaboration across the emerging sector.

The programme successfully built a thriving community energy network with significant measurable outcomes:

- **Four** new community energy enterprises established, driven by **16** dedicated founders

- **£130,000** secured in direct project funding, plus an **£80,000** National Lottery grant
- **Three** new part-time staff roles created to ensure long-term capacity
- Major project pipeline developed, including **10%** shared ownership in two solar farms

“Community Energy Pathways has been instrumental in helping us engage local communities and build capacity for community energy projects. Their expertise and collaborative approach have empowered residents to take an active role in shaping sustainable energy solutions. Thanks to their support, we’ve seen increased awareness, stronger partnerships, and real progress towards energy resilience”

Emma Dixon, Suffolk Climate Change Partnership Manager

“We are grateful to CEP for finding us, schooling us, making us aware of funding and appropriate projects, and above all for having faith in us.

Eamonn O’Nolan

“They provided funding through the LNOB and Community Energy People projects which enabled us to create five jobs, and our energy champion team is fast becoming known as the go-to people for free and unbiased energy advice.”

Eamonn O’Nolan

CASE STUDY

SURREY

We have supported **seven groups in Surrey** to deliver energy saving activities, by providing support to secure grant funding and arranging training for energy efficiency advice for households. In total we have leveraged the investment made by the Council to **multiply the income to the county's community energy sector eight-fold**.

More recently, **Zero Carbon Guildford** have been making great strides employing three part time people through our Community Energy People project – helping them do more of the activities they know they need to do.

Our latest success has been in forming **Surrey Community Energy (SCE)** – a new Society for the whole county, committed to energy generation projects. We were delighted to work with SCE to submit an application to the **Great British Energy Community Fund** at the end of 2025. This funding will pay for planning permission and legal and investment fees to bring their new solar project to life.

In 2026, we are hopeful that an additional rooftop solar project with **Guildford College** will be developed allowing us to engage the learners in the technicalities of the project and wider green career options.

“The continued growth of community-led energy groups supporting residents in reducing bills, keeping their homes cosy and free of damp and mould has been catalysed by CEP, in turn creating training and job opportunities, and reducing residential emissions to tackle climate change through local projects.”

Ben McCallan (Greener Futures Engagement Lead at Surrey County Council, founder and inaugural Chair of Zero Carbon Guildford & Director of Surrey Community Energy

“I can't overstate how helpful Nicola's guidance has been for us at Surrey Community Energy. From advising on the right mix of skills in our directors, right up to applying for grants from GB Energy, guiding us through the process of incorporation & developing projects”

David Griffiths, Surrey Community Energy



CASE STUDY

ABOUT COMMUNITY ENERGY PATHWAYS

Community Energy Pathways is a **multi-award winning** organisation and a pioneer in the UK community energy sector. We have been advising and supporting communities to transition to a low-carbon and sustainable future since 2013. Through tailored programmes, we help communities develop skills, providing expertise in training, mentoring and relationship building, enabling everyone to play a part.

“It was a real pleasure to meet everyone at Community Energy Pathways and to present them with their richly deserved King’s Award for Enterprise for Sustainable Development. Colleagues, guests, and allies came together from across the country and joined a joyful celebration of all that Community Energy Pathways has achieved in this county and further afield to build energy resilience, empower local communities, and help the most vulnerable.”

Lord-Lieutenant of East Sussex

“Our visit to Community Energy Pathways in July 2025 gave Ofgem a valuable opportunity to see firsthand how local, community-led energy projects are helping to shape the transition to clean power. Delivering Clean Power 2030 is not only about major infrastructure; it also relies on the commitment and innovation of communities across the country. Community Energy Pathways shows how residents can come together to generate local power and deliver real social and energy benefits. We were particularly pleased to livestream part of the visit to colleagues across Ofgem, enabling staff to hear directly from Community Energy Champions and see how their work supports the communities we serve.”

Mark McAllister, Chair of Ofgem

