

# Rural Community Energy Fund

Deadline for applications 9th September 2019

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**The Rural Community Energy Fund (the Fund) is a £10 million programme that supports rural communities in England to develop renewable energy projects which provide economic and social benefits to the community.**

More than 150 communities have already used the Fund, through its first £15m round.

Some of the projects generate income from the local communities from selling energy back into the grid. For example, a project in Frome which included Frome Town Football Club installed over 200 kW of solar capacity - enough to power 2,000 light bulbs and save 333 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> - generated almost £70,000 for the local community by selling extra solar electricity back to the grid. See the Funded projects section at the end of this briefing paper for examples.

It is jointly funded by Defra and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

The deadline for applications is 9th September 2019.

## How the Fund works

The Fund provides up to £140,000 of funding for feasibility and pre-planning development work to help projects become investment ready. It provides support in two stages:

- Stage 1 provides a **feasibility grant** of up to £40,000 to pay for an initial investigation into the feasibility of a renewable energy project. A key part of the investigation undertaken by your chosen consultant<sup>1</sup> will be to provide a feasibility report, which should follow a prescribed format.
- Stage 2 provides a **development grant** of up to £100,000 to support planning applications and develop a robust business case so projects are investment ready.

However, before stage 1, a **pre-application questionnaire** must be completed to see if your community group is ready. The Fund will then contact you to let you know if your project is at a suitable stage to make a full application.

Please contact your local Strutt & Parker office for guidance notes.

## Who can apply?

The Fund is available to rural communities in England with:

- fewer than 10,000 residents<sup>2</sup>; which
- form a legal entity in order to receive public funds (such as a community interest company, industrial provident society such as a co-operative, parish council, registered social landlord, charity, development trust and faith group);
- demonstrate the support of the wider community;
- are planning a renewable energy project which will provide a legacy; and
- use a proven, commercially recognised renewable technology (accepted technologies are: anaerobic digestion (AD); AD (biogas) fuelled heat network; bio liquids/gas/fuels; biomass heat network; heat pumps; hydropower; solar (photo voltaic);

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<sup>1</sup> Communities should select their own consultants and experts, who may be vetted to ensure they have the appropriate skills and experience to undertake the work, qualifications, professional indemnity insurance of £1,000,000 or more, offer value for money, and have declared any pecuniary interest.

<sup>2</sup> Or more than 10,000 residents but within a local authority area which is classified by the Office of National Statistics as 'predominantly rural'.



solar (thermal); wind turbines; multi-technology approaches (energy efficiency, storage, grid services and demand management can be considered in bundled approaches on a case-by-case basis).

## Scale of the projects

The scale of the projects eligible for funding will vary according to technology type. In general terms, projects should:

- Require planning permission and significant pre-planning development;
- Generate energy for multiple buildings (or export the equivalent to the grid); and
- Single community buildings are eligible if they are exporting the equivalent back to the grid.

## Community benefit and support

Applicants must be planning a renewable energy project which provides a defined benefit to the community where the installation is based. Projects should be truly community led. Applicants must be able to demonstrate that a good level of community engagement has been carried out, that there is community support and explain what plans exist for ongoing community engagement.

## How to apply

The Fund is being run by [5 regional Local Energy Hubs](#):

North East Yorkshire and Humber <a href="mailto:rcef@teesvalley-ca.gov.uk">rcef@teesvalley-ca.gov.uk</a>	South West <a href="mailto:swenergyhub@westofengland-ca.gov.uk">swenergyhub@westofengland-ca.gov.uk</a>
North West <a href="mailto:team@localenergynw.org">team@localenergynw.org</a>	South East <a href="mailto:info@energyhub.org.uk">info@energyhub.org.uk</a>
Midlands - £1.8m budget <a href="mailto:michael.gallagher@nottinghamcity.gov.uk">michael.gallagher@nottinghamcity.gov.uk</a> <sup>3</sup>	

## Funded projects

<a href="http://shrewsburyhydro.co.uk/">http://shrewsburyhydro.co.uk/</a>	<a href="http://www.bicton.ac.uk/">http://www.bicton.ac.uk/</a>
<a href="http://avaloncommunityenergycoop.co.uk/">http://avaloncommunityenergycoop.co.uk/</a>	<a href="http://wigtonbaths.co.uk/renewable-energy/">http://wigtonbaths.co.uk/renewable-energy/</a>
<a href="http://www.calvert-trust.org.uk/exmoor/exmoor">http://www.calvert-trust.org.uk/exmoor/exmoor</a>	<a href="http://babenergy.co.uk/home/">http://babenergy.co.uk/home/</a>
<a href="http://farmeco.co.uk/">http://farmeco.co.uk/</a>	<a href="http://www.boreplace.org/">http://www.boreplace.org/</a>
<a href="http://freco.org/">http://freco.org/</a>	

### County Council (Somerset)

Solar panel installations at Frome Medical Practice and Frome Town FC have stripped 333 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> - the equivalent produced by 56 cars every year - out of the local air, as well as helping the practice and football club generate over £68,000 in extra revenue by selling energy back to the grid.

### Salisbury Community Energy (Wiltshire)

<sup>3</sup> Provided information 240619.



Funding has helped eight projects in the historic city ranging from:

- local school projects
- possible solar panel installations at the Salisbury Cathedral Cloisters
- a water wheel with timber paddles hydro project at the city's Mill in the maltings

#### **Avalon Community Energy (Somerset)**

Projects in Brookside and Evercreech are set to save 52 tonnes of CO2 emissions per year – with the profits used to establish a community benefit fund to help support local initiatives.

#### **Dane Valley Community Energy (Cheshire)**

Eaton Bank Academy in Congleton are harnessing the power of a roaring waterfall by using the funds to install hydropower generators on the Havannah Weir on the River Deane. Once installation is complete the project will generate 250MW a year - enough to power 80 houses. It will also generate almost £5,000 for local charities a year by selling extra electricity back to the grid.

#### **Alston Moor Community Energy (Cumbria)**

The Fund helped Alston Primary and Samuel Kings Secondary schools install 27 kW solar of panels. Over the next 20 years the project expects to bring £70,000 of profit to the school by selling energy back to the grid while saving over 150 tonnes of carbon.

#### **Wigton Baths Trust (Leicestershire)**

A local group from Wigton with a passion for fighting climate change have benefited from £20,000 from the Fund to carry out feasibility studies into the installation of solar panels at the site. They are supporting the installation of 40 solar panels on the local swimming pool which will be used to generate 10 kW of power for use on site or for export back to the grid for a profit. The extra revenue will help the facility get back on its feet after a recent closure.