



# Community Energy Pathways Programme Outline October 2024

**Community Energy South is a multi-award-winning organisation** that is actively supporting communities throughout the UK to play a leading role in the net zero transition. Starting out in 2013, we have grown from a hub based in the south-east and are now working across the UK.

Our vision is for every District, Borough or Unitary Authority to benefit from a community energy organisation that can provide professional net zero services including renewable energy, energy efficiency and retrofit project development. We believe that enabling and growing the community energy sector is fundamental to making the net zero transition happen and that without this, net zero is not possible.

We are currently working in multiple areas in the UK including Suffolk, Central Bedfordshire, Leicestershire, Essex, Surrey and Hampshire. Through our capacity building work, we have supported 48 community energy groups in 15 areas since 2021. Our energy advice programmes will this year reach 24,000 local residents.

## **Our structured capacity building programme**

We develop and bring to life a community energy strategy by working through a structured step by step 'Pathways' programme that includes community engagement, training, skills development mentoring, business planning, governance and fundraising support. We facilitate the development of a local community energy network, bringing together existing skills and knowledge of community groups, councils and local experts, facilitating the development of a regional capacity building hub.

## **Outcomes of the programme**

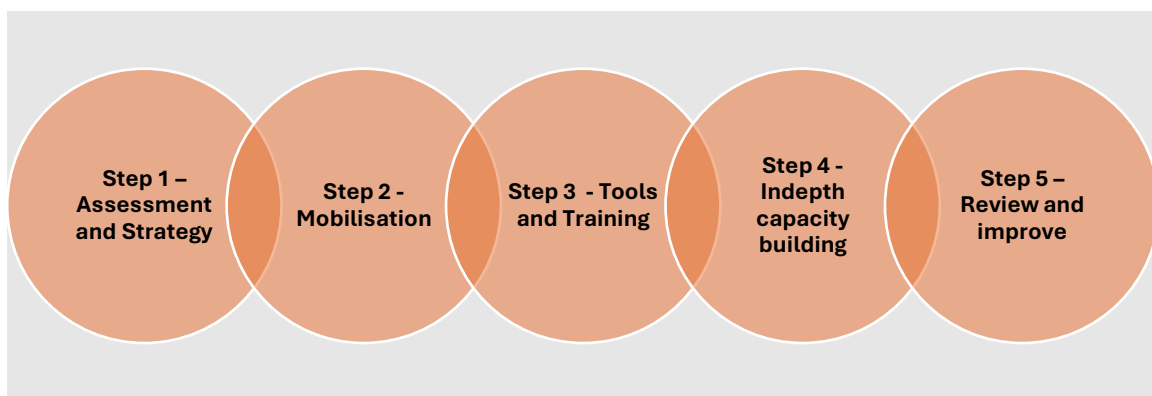
The pathways programme focuses on the development of the following outcomes:

- Establishment of a bespoke regional community energy strategy that guides the development of the sector over 5-10 years.
- The creation of either a single county/district wide and/or a set of smaller community energy groups in your area, guided by the community energy strategy.
- Kickstart mobilisation planned activity for community energy groups and a regional hub.
- A training and skills development programme that will allow communities to develop 'powering down' and 'powering up' projects.
- Provision of resources and tools to build community energy knowledge and skills.

- Development of business plans for community energy groups and the allocation of a mentor to support their delivery.
- Identification of opportunities for local renewables projects and technical support for them to be developed.
- Leveraging additional funding to develop in-depth projects such as:
  - The development of a multi-channel ‘hub and spokes’ energy efficiency advice capability across the area.
  - A network of trained energy champions who can dispense advice at a local level.

### **The Pathways Process**

The five step Pathways Process is shown below. Based on the outcome of Step 1 where we develop the forward strategy, a bespoke programme is produced to meet our project outcomes, based on the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges in an area. Our capacity building programmes are then delivered over 2-3 years. Due to the nature of community energy projects and businesses support over several years is usually required.



### **Step 1 – Assessment and Strategy**

Our first step is to undertake an assessment process to inform the development of a community energy strategy in your region. As part of this step, we will review:

- Local Authority Net Zero targets and strategies, to ensure plans to develop community energy in a region are aligned with them as a key enabler of achieving them.
- Existing community energy groups and projects in your area so that we can formulate recommendations and support programmes to develop them.
- Key stakeholders and partners within the LA and further afield, to understand their existing and potential involvement in any community energy programme.
- Potential community energy project opportunities.
- Funding opportunities that can be leveraged to build on core project outcomes.

We undertake a review of the LA to understand motivations, expectations and budgetary constraints. As part of this, we will engage with a number of key functions across the council including climate / environment, estates, legal and procurement to assess:

- Appetite and potential for developing community energy projects on your assets
- Any organisational barriers to the development of community energy
- How any community energy programme links with existing council workstreams and programmes.

At the end of this step, we will present an analysis of our findings, including a SWOT analysis, and an implementation plan for the development of a community energy sector in your area. This will include:

- Key strategic approaches for development of the sector within the LA boundary.
- Recommendations on requirements for training and mentoring.
- Outreach and engagement plans.
- Identification of key project opportunities, covering both ‘powering up’ and powering down’.
- Recommendations for involvement across the LA that is appropriate to the Council’s capacity.

## **Step 2 - Mobilisation**

We undertake focused mobilisation activities, guided by our community energy strategy to empower existing groups to grow, increase our engagement and to coordinate the development of community energy projects in the region as a whole. This will include:

- Implementing engagement plans to reach communities and individuals with key engagement messages.
- Light touch support plans for existing groups.
- Facilitation of a regional network or hub.
- Developing partnerships and opportunities for projects to develop.

## **Step 3 - Tools and training**

We provide interested individuals and community groups with tools and training so that they can learn about developing projects and community energy organisations.

In year 1 we provide tools and training to support people to develop their understanding of community energy and to start community energy projects. In subsequent years we provide more in-depth tools and training to support capacity building.

Tools and training that we provide throughout the programme include:

- How to start a community energy organisation.
- Project development guides – powering up and powering down.

- Business planning training and templates.
- Funding guidance and briefings.
- Site finding and pre-feasibility assessments.
- Advanced tool for practitioners including guidance and training on undertaking share offers and securing Power Purchase Agreements.

#### **Step 4 – In-depth capacity building**

We will provide in-depth capacity building support targeted at developing local groups and projects whilst also establishing a regional hub that can maximise on opportunities and develop projects at a regional scale.

Mentors are allocated to community groups to assist with the development of business and project plans and we work alongside these groups to assist them to put them in place. The business plans include the development of a project pipeline in their area and assistance to secure funding to deliver project activity.

The regional hub is established and facilitated by CES with the following broad remit, that is further defined by the outcomes of the community energy strategy:

- Representing local community energy groups and/or unincorporated ‘local voices’ that rely on limited volunteer capacity.
- Establishing a route to bring in paid member/s of staff.
- Identifying and developing projects that can operate at scale in the region.
- Establishing routes to secure long term revenue for the region, potentially becoming established as an incorporated body.

As part of the in-depth capacity building stage, we ringfence project funds for local ‘on the ground’ delivery which could include paid work for existing community energy groups to develop their organisation and/or for a community energy business and project development member of staff that is based in the region where we operate. We set criteria for operation of the fund and administer its dissemination.

#### **Step 5 – Review and Improve**

We will undertake a review process mid-way in the contract to help improve our work in the next phase of the project.

#### **Additional support - enabling communities to transition to Net Zero**

Based on our strategy and assessment we can provide a range of additional tailored programmes that enable communities to build the skills, capability and capacity which allow them to work alongside Local Authorities to develop a thriving community energy ecosystem. These include:

- Support for the development of powering up (renewables) and powering down (energy efficiency) projects
- Energy champions training
- New models for shared ownership of renewables assets
- Community decarbonisation planning
- Climate literacy training for Councils, businesses and households

## Fees and costs

It is anticipated that the programme will be delivered over 2-3 years. Table 1 below shows the key outputs of each stage and fees based on a day rate of £675 + VAT. Invoices are issued monthly in advance.

**Table 1 – Pathways programme core outputs and fees**

Task	Output summary	Fees
Step 1 - Assessment and Strategy	Community Energy Strategy and Implementation Plan.	£22,250
Step 2 – Mobilisation	Planned programme of mobilisation activities to support the development of community groups and region wide projects.	£16,875
Step 3 – Tools and training	Tools and training programme, informed by regional strategy.	£15,000
Step 4 – In-depth capacity building	Business and project plans for groups and support for their implementation.	£50,656
	Facilitation and development of a regional hub and regional projects.	
	Identification of wider funds and funding bids to support continuity of work.	
	Start-up funds ringfenced	£28,000
Step 5 - Review and improve	Review process and report mid-way in the contract to help improve our work for the remainder of the project.	£3,375
Project Management	We will undertake monthly meetings, manage and monitor progress through a project management system.	£16,200
<b>Total</b>		<b>£152,356 + VAT</b>

Table 2 illustrates additional services whose objectives are:

- To develop an energy efficiency advice hub that will signpost to specialist retrofit assessments and measures
- To train energy champions
- To develop a detailed carbonisation plans in five communities
- To provide climate literacy training
- To develop a shared ownership strategy for community renewables

**Table 2 – Additional services**

Theme	Output	Areas	Indicative costs
Energy efficiency hub ('Powering down')	Establishment of a network of trained energy champions and community led climate and energy hubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership building with local partners convened by CES</li> <li>• Skills / training programme for energy champions including training materials</li> <li>• Volunteer expenses</li> <li>• Comms and marketing</li> <li>• Volunteer coordination and ongoing volunteer support</li> </ul>	<p>£65,000</p> <p>Excludes any building or IT costs</p>
Decarbonisation planning	Development of decarbonisation plans for five rural parishes	<p>Stage 1 covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community engagement</li> <li>• Communication materials</li> <li>• GIS mapping</li> <li>• IT tools including digital twin analysis of housing stock</li> <li>• Supply chain engagement</li> <li>• Skills and training for energy champions</li> </ul>	£75,000

Climate Literacy Training	Certified by Carbon Literacy project  Undertaken for New Forest, Wealden Councils	One day course tailored for community energy groups and aimed at residents, councils, social enterprises and businesses.	POA
Shared ownership	Develop strategy for community ownership or partial ownership of solar, wind and other renewables	CES has developed new models for shared ownership on solar projects in England <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement strategies</li> <li>• Financing</li> <li>• Community ownership and governance</li> </ul>	£5,000

For any questions please contact:

Ollie Pendered, CEO – [ollie.pendered@communityenergysouth.org](mailto:ollie.pendered@communityenergysouth.org)

Laura Wilson, Head of Capacity Building – [laura.wilson@communityenergysouth.org](mailto:laura.wilson@communityenergysouth.org)