

Powering our Communities Fund Application Guidance

This document provides guidance on how to apply for the Electricity North West's 'Powering our Communities Fund'. We recommend reading this before completing the application form.

Aim of the fund

The aim of the fund is to ensure a just energy transition by enabling communities to take part in the development and delivery of community energy projects.

The *Powering our Communities Fund* has been developed in consultation with stakeholders who have told us that there is a need to support community level action on net-zero. They also told us that it is very important to them that the transition to net-zero is a "Just Transition" which means they want everyone to benefit and no-one to be "left behind" or miss out on the benefits net-zero will bring.

The fund aims to support activity that either directly delivers carbon savings and/or widespread community engagement or "seeds" activity that will deliver these outcomes. Seeding activity may involve overcoming a barrier, laying the foundations for a project, or initiating a piece of work that continues beyond this funding.

To capture any impacts the projects may have beyond the lifetime of the Powering our Communities Fund, we will contact all projects 12 months after their finish date to arrange an interview to update on any activity that has been delivered since the project ended

Who can apply?

Our fund is open to all our community, and we particularly welcome applications from minority ethnic groups or other groups that are often "seldom heard" or at risk of being left behind in the energy systems transition.

We also welcome projects in partnership with organisations such as local authorities and businesses as long as it is clear what control and benefit the local community has because of the project.

For details of previous fund winners please see the case studies on our [website](#).

How much funding is available?

Successful projects will be awarded between £5,000 and £15,000 and the project will need a bank account to accept the funding. In this round there is up to £100,000 available in total to support projects. Projects can request up to 100% funding.

Deadline for applications

The deadline for submissions is 5.00pm, Friday 26th July 2024.

Application Process

To apply please download the application form from our website.

www.enwl.co.uk/communityandlocalenergy

If you would like to discuss your project idea or ask for any advice on how to complete the application, one-to-one meetings are available on request. Please contact communityandlocalenergy@enwl.co.uk to request a meeting.

Completed application forms and supporting information should be submitted to communityandlocalenergy@enwl.co.uk.

Successful projects will be made aware of the outcome in September 2024.

Guidance for completing the application

The application form asks for information about the applicant and their organisation(s), the project, including what it will deliver and how the project meets the criteria.

What type of projects are you looking for?

For this round of funding, we are looking for projects that support the development of community energy and meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. Activity to seed the development of a community energy project
2. Activity to address a specific barrier that is holding back the development of a community energy project
3. Adopting a proven community energy approach or business model in a new community or situation.

The following table gives examples of projects that meet these criteria, but these are only suggestions. Please do not let them limit your imagination.

Criteria	Example project (these examples aim to spark your imagination. Applications do not need to be limited to these examples.)
1 Activity to seed the development of a community energy project.	E.g., engagement events or workshops to scope a project, feasibility funding for a new group or new project for an existing group, legal costs, or costs for technical expertise.

2 Activity to address a specific barrier holding back the development of community energy projects.	E.g., if you have a specific barrier preventing your project from proceeding, please describe it in the application form and how our funding might help overcome it.
3 Adopting a proven community energy approach or business model in a new community or situation.	E.g., peer support between groups, expansion of an existing project or producing feasibility study or research project.

Applications will be judged by an assessment panel against the following criteria:

- How well does it deliver against the fund's priorities?
- How well does the project contribute to a just transition through engagement with and benefit for the local community?
- Impact on carbon savings
- The social return on investment score

In addition to the above, you need to be able to demonstrate that you have a separate bank account under the name of your group with at least two unrelated signatories or that you have a charitable partner organisation willing to bank any grant awarded to your group.

Successful applicants will be required to agree to our Grant Funding Agreement and agree to submit a monitoring and evaluation form at the end of the project. The applicant must also agree to take part in a monitoring update interview 12 months after the project has finished, as well as participate in associated publicity.

The successful applicants will be expected to work with Electricity North West to promote the project through a case study, promotional materials and participation in events.

Electricity North West sees this as an opportunity to build ongoing relationships with organisations and explore further opportunities to provide support.

We will not fund:

- Projects that have already taken place or applications for retrospective funding
- Activities that would normally be funded from statutory sources
- Projects that are primarily for the advancement of religion or politics
- General appeals and contributions to large scale projects
- Applications from individuals or to support an individual
- Organisations raising funds to donate to other causes or charities
- General capital costs (they must be clearly linked to the delivery of the specific activity applied for)
- Existing activities
- Grid connections

What are we looking for in the application form? – Advice on how to apply

The word count is only a guide but please try not to exceed it by too much.

Section 1: Main contact person – We will use these details to communicate about the funding application.

Section 2: Organisation details – Please provide as much information as you can to enable us to do our due diligence.

Section 3: Your Project – The answers to these questions will be used to assess your project against the assessment criteria.

Section 3 Detailed guidance.

Question	Guidance
<p>21. Can you provide a description of your project? Please include the aim/objective or issue you are addressing; what activity will be undertaken and what outputs or outcomes you are anticipating.</p> <p><i>(300 words)</i></p>	<p>Try to use the structure suggested:</p> <p>Aim / objective of your project – what problem are you trying to solve or what is the end point you want to get to?</p> <p>What will the project deliver e.g. what will the funding be spent on?</p> <p>What will happen as a result, both within the period of the funding and beyond?</p>
<p>22. What outputs is your project likely to deliver?</p>	<p>This is where you can list the outputs your project will deliver both within the period of the project (direct) and because of the activity (indirect).</p> <p>Please try to calculate the carbon savings of any relevant activities, either direct or indirect.</p> <p>This is the information we will use to calculate the Social Return on Investment (SROI) for your project</p>

	<p>and to monitor projects throughout the delivery phase. (see below for details on SROI).</p> <p>Please also see below details on the Electricity North West Go Low Advice and Extra Care Register.</p> <p>Projects with engagement activities may be able to refer people to these services.</p>
<p>23. How is the local community involved in the project and how will they benefit from it? (300 words)</p>	<p>Who is your community? What are the characteristics of the community you are engaging?</p> <p>What mechanisms / tools will you use? How many people do you expect to engage with?</p>
<p>24. How does your project meet one or more of the criteria? (200 words)</p>	<p>Please clearly state which criteria you think your project meets and how it meets it.</p>

Go Low Advice

Electricity North West have launched a free low carbon advice service to support domestic customers at risk of being left behind on the journey to net zero. The newly launched project for domestic households, provides free impartial advice about solar panels, electric vehicles and chargers, heat pumps and smart meters as well as LED lighting. The advice will be tailored to each customer and could be about cost including grants, installation, connection to the network, myth busting etc. Our expert team will provide impartial advice to allow households to make a decision that is right for them. We need help raising awareness of this service, where you can, please include how your organisation could provide referrals to this service. Please contact communityandlocalenergy.co.uk if you would like more information.

Extra Care register

The Extra Care register is the new name for our priority services register. If you might struggle during a power cut, even for a few hours, our Extra Care team can lend a helping hand. There are over 300,000 eligible customers in our region who are not currently registered, where you can, please include how your organisation could help reduce this gap. To keep more customers safe before, during or after a power cut. For more information on our Extra Care register visit: www.enwl.co.uk/extracare

Social Return on Investment

One of the key criteria we will use to assess the applications is a measurement called Social Return on Investment (SROI). SROI indicates the value delivered (financial, carbon, and societal) relative to any costs incurred. For a project to get a higher SROI it will need to deliver an output that has a financial proxy associated with it and can be measured. A list of outputs that can currently be measured via a best practice industry social valuation tool and common proxy bank are provided below.

We recognise that there is valuable activity that is not easy to measure which is why we want to consider both activity that has happened during the project as well as afterwards as part of our assessment. For example, if your group wants funding for community engagement that will lead to share offer, these are project activities, some of which can be counted. However, these activities should lead on to an installation which will deliver carbon savings after the project but can also be counted by the SROI method. This is why we have asked for outputs that will be delivered both during the project and for up to one year following project completion. It is also why we have asked for a commitment for projects to take part in monitoring after the funding has ended.

We have listed below the outputs that we can use to calculate a projects SROI. If your project might deliver any of these activities, please include them in the outputs table (Qu22).

List of outputs that can be measured as part of a social return on investment (SROI) calculation:

- Carbon saved
- Energy savings from energy efficiency or installing renewable energy and increasing on site consumption
- Savings from using an electric vehicle
- Creating a permanent job
- Gaining a qualification
- Volunteering time
- Change in how people feel about their community – needs to be measured with a before and after survey.

Section 4 – Please provide as much information as you can so we are clear what the funding will be spent on and what other funds, if any, the project will use.

If you have any questions or issues whilst completing the application form, please contact us via communityandlocalenergy@enwl.co.uk

What do we mean by community and local energy?

Community energy means community-led projects or initiatives to reduce, manage, generate, or purchase energy. Community energy projects focus on engagement and benefits to their local area and communities.

Local energy encompasses community energy projects and includes activities by a wider set of local partners such as local authorities, housing associations, intermediary or advisory organisations and local businesses. Local energy projects may have a commercial aspect to their delivery but are also likely to benefit their local area and community.

Who is Electricity North West?

Electricity North West is the distribution network operator for the North West region of England which means we maintain and operate the overhead lines, underground cables, and associated infrastructure that transport electricity to your homes and businesses. As part of this we have a role to play in helping to improve the lives of our customers and communities. This includes helping to act on climate change and the transition to a net zero carbon future, improving the living conditions of our customers in the North West, and enabling everyone to better take advantage of changes taking place in the electricity industry.

What area does Electricity North West cover?

The majority of the project activity needs to be in Electricity North West's licence area which includes the following local authority areas:

Allerdale	Craven*	Pendle	Staffordshire Moorlands*
Barrow-in-Furness	Derbyshire Dales*	Preston	Stockport
Blackburn with Darwen	Eden	Ribble Valley	Tameside
Blackpool	Fylde	Richmondshire*	Trafford*
Bolton	High Peak	Rochdale	Warrington*
Burnley	Hyndburn	Rossendale	West Lancashire
Bury	Lancaster	Salford	Wigan
Carlisle	Manchester	Sefton*	Wyre
Cheshire East*	North Yorkshire*	South Lakeland	
Chorley	Northumberland*	South Ribble	
Copeland	Oldham	St. Helens*	

* Only part of this area is within our boundary. Please check before applying.

If you have any questions about the application process or assessment criteria, please contact us at communityandlocalenergy@enwl.co.uk.