

Powering the growth of community energy

Community Energy Engagement Strategy update - 2020/21 Highlights



✓ **19** out of **26**
actions
completed

✓ **7** actions
on track to be
completed by
2023



Regional
Community
Energy Study
carried out



1,400+
hits on our new
community energy
webpage



7
groups supported through
the Community Partnering
Fund with a total of £50k

60+

people receive our
quarterly community
energy newsletters



14

representatives on our
new Community Energy
Stakeholder Panel



167

participants at our
online Community
Energy Forums

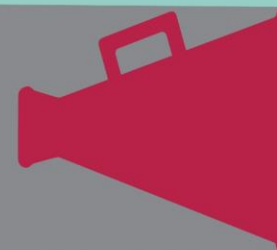


100,000

new customers
signed up to our
Priority Services
Membership

40+

direct, 1:1 conversations
with community energy
stakeholders



Feedback from community energy
groups shared with UK Parliament's
Environmental Audit Committee,
Ofgem and BEIS

Over **3,000** engagements with community energy stakeholders since early 2020

LISTEN We have continued to listen to communities through the ongoing engagement as outlined in the community energy engagement strategy 2020-2023

You said	Action/commitment	What we did	Date delivered and evidence
Listen to us	1. Interview community energy organisations in our licence areas.	We interviewed 17 community energy organisations across our licence areas via phone calls with Regen to gather information and plan engagement.	December 2019 Community Energy Engagement Strategy
	2. Further work to engage new and existing community energy organisations that we aren't aware of.	We have increased our mailing list nearly four-fold from 17 to over 60. We are continuously seeking to engage with more community energy organisations. In addition , we carried out a regional community energy study with Community Energy England (CEE). We also conducted research into how we can better focus community energy funding.	December 2020 Regional Community Energy Study

INFORM We kept communities up to date and informed about our activities as outlined in the community energy engagement strategy 2020-2023

You said	Action/commitment	What we did	Date delivered and evidence
<p>Tell us what Northern Powergrid want and how communities can help</p>	<p>3. Make a public statement about why we want to work with communities and how they can help.</p>	<p>We included these statements in our Community Energy Engagement Strategy.</p>	<p>April 2020</p> <p>Community Energy Engagement Strategy</p>
	<p>4. Speak about this at four internal and four external events regionally or nationally.</p>	<p>We spoke about our work to support community energy at four external events and at least six Northern Powergrid organised events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community energy workshop in Durham organised by Durham County Council & Durham Energy Institute on 27 Jan 2020; • Zero Carbon Yorkshire webinar on 12 Aug 2020; • CEE’s Community Energy Conference - Part Two on 29 Jun 2020; • CEE’s Local Area Energy Planning event on 3 Nov 2020; and • Three forums and three stakeholder panels organised by us. <p>In addition, we shared a press release about the launch of the strategy and five follow-up featured articles and blogs were published (Energygyst, Smart Energy International, Energy World, York Press, and Community Energy England website).</p>	<p>December 2020</p> <p>Community energy workshop in Durham</p> <p>Zero Carbon Yorkshire webinar</p> <p>CEE’s community energy conference</p> <p>CEE’s LAEP event</p> <p>Heat and Energy Efficiency forum</p> <p>Community Energy and a Green Recovery forum</p> <p>Net Zero Community Energy Webinar</p> <p>Community Energy Engagement Strategy press release</p>
<p>Keep us up to date via email</p>	<p>5. We will send out quarterly email updates tailored to community and local energy stakeholders.</p>	<p>Since April 2020, we send out four quarterly newsletters to community energy stakeholders, to keep them up to date on funding, events, our business planning and other relevant information. Our newsletters have had an open rate of 44% and click-through rate of 19%.</p>	<p>April 2020</p>
	<p>6. We will create a new community energy page on our website.</p>	<p>We created a community energy page on our website which has information, news, tools and resources for community energy stakeholders in our region.</p>	<p>May 2020</p> <p>Community energy webpage</p>

ENGAGE We have continued to listen to communities through the ongoing engagement as outlined in the community energy engagement strategy 2020-2023

You said	Action/commitment	What we did	Date delivered and evidence
We want a named person/point of contact for communities	7. Anda Baumerte, Sustainability Manager at Northern Powergrid, is the appointed community energy contact.	Details of our community energy contact, Anda Baumerte, and a dedicated community energy inbox for getting in touch with us feature on our new community energy webpage.	April 2020 Community energy webpage
We want to have conversations to find viable solutions, before filling in a form and spending money	8. We will have conversations with communities to find solutions and facilitate constructive conversations with our network engineers.	We've had these conversations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at breakout sessions of our community energy forums; • at community energy stakeholder panel meetings; • during monthly Customer Surgeries (at least three groups have attended Connections Surgeries); • by you contacting our engineers directly - their contact details are publicly available on our website; and • directly with more than 12 community energy stakeholders. 	On track Customer events and surgeries listed online
We want more face to face engagement	9. We will continue to participate in the wider energy system transformation debate.	We partnered or participated in four external community energy events – two regional and two national, building on our relationships with organisations across the sector, as mentioned under action 4.	On track Community energy workshop in Durham Zero Carbon Yorkshire webinar CEE's community energy conference CEE's LAEP event
	10. We will continue partnering and participating in regional energy and climate change event.	During the year, we engaged with more than 11,000 stakeholders to discuss regional climate action and our role in it, including a range of industry and community energy organisations. In addition , we have been attending regional events focused on decarbonisation and reaching net zero emissions target, e.g. workshops held by Local Enterprise Partnerships in our area, among others. We are also represented in and supporting the work of the North East England Climate Coalition and the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission.	On track

<p>We want events specifically designed for us</p>	<p>11. Our community energy events will be participatory and include plenty of networking time and time for communities to talk to us about their specific projects and ideas. These events will focus on subjects that matter to communities and we will invite feedback face to face.</p>	<p>We held three online community energy forums in 2020, attended by 167 community energy representatives, tailored for participants at all stages of the community energy journey.</p> <p>We have developed and committed to an engagement programme and will continue to hold at least two events per year, shaped by feedback from community energy participants.</p> <p>In addition, we are holding two training sessions for community energy groups in 2021.</p>	<p>2020</p> <p>Event pages on Regen's website</p>
<p>Everyone we sign up to the PSR should receive a welcome pack, and you should know we made the referral</p>	<p>12. We will make sure every new person signed up to the Priority Services Register (PSR) receives a link to the online welcome pack, and look into new systems that could identify referral organisations.</p>	<p>We have ensured every new referral receives an online welcome pack.</p> <p>We recently reviewed all of the communications we send out to customers and brought it in line with our repositioning of the PSR as our Priority Services Membership. Following this, we sent out a revised digital copy of our welcome pack out to 700,000 customers.</p>	<p>March 2020</p> <p>Interactive welcome pack</p> <p>Printable version</p> <p>More information</p>

EMPOWER We want to empower and build the capacity of community energy organisations to participate in and contribute to our changing energy system, to make sure it is democratic and benefits those less able to engage as outlined in the community energy engagement strategy 2020-2023

You said	Action/commitment	What we did	Date delivered and evidence
<p>We need financial support for community energy and energy efficiency activities</p>	<p>13. We were the first DNO to have a Community Partnering Fund and we will continue to deliver this.</p>	<p>Community energy projects are within the fund scope, and we further amended the wording to state it more clearly. The first round of the Community Partnering Fund was re-directed to support our most vulnerable customers during the first lockdown, however the second round in 2020 proceeded as planned. In the second round, seven projects were supported with the total of £50,000.</p> <p>In addition, further improvements in support are being considered for 2021.</p>	<p>December 2020</p> <p>Community Partnering Fund page</p>
<p>We need financial support for fuel poverty outreach</p>	<p>14. We will consider paying a referral fee to community and local energy organisations who make referrals to the PSR and report our decision to communities via the newsletter.</p>	<p>We have completed an internal review of this. We are continuing to consider this and working out how we would be able to process this.</p> <p>In the meantime, we continue to provide support to our charity and voluntary organisation partners in other ways.</p>	<p>December 2020</p>
<p>We need resources for fuel poverty outreach</p>	<p>15. We will continue improving information and offering resources such as fridge magnets to help people know what to do in a power cut and how to save energy.</p>	<p>We have considered this. Our digital Priority Services Membership welcome pack contains information about what to do at a time of power cut as well as advice about energy efficiency. We have been investing in our services and in information and outreach campaigns and proactively seek to identify priority services customers.</p> <p>We have also been sharing additional branded resources when we are on site with customer service vehicles, attending areas experiencing power cuts or public information events e.g. for larger investment schemes in local areas.</p>	<p>December 2020</p>

<p>We need technical support</p>	<p>16. We are committed to explaining technical information to communities in plain English. We will explore how we can offer more technical support and resources to community energy organisations.</p>	<p>We encourage colleagues to use their volunteering day in skills-based opportunities across the region and ensure that we have a wide range of opportunities represented on our volunteering portal.</p> <p>Our engineers continue to provide technical support by having conversations with community energy organisations as part of their job. They have also joined the engagement sessions in our community energy forums.</p>	<p>December 2020</p>
<p>We would like training on how the network and our energy system works</p>	<p>17. We will endeavour to upskill and build the capacity of community energy organisations.</p>	<p>We've used our events, forums and meetings to deliver targeted training for communities, supplemented by resources on our website. Three forums and three community energy stakeholder panel sessions were delivered in 2020.</p> <p>In addition, two technical training sessions are being delivered in 2021.</p>	<p>December 2020</p> <p>Heat and Energy Efficiency forum</p> <p>Community Energy and a Green Recovery forum</p> <p>Net Zero Community Energy Webinar</p>
<p>Support us with energy efficiency activities to reduce demand</p>	<p>18. We will explore this theme with communities at our events during 2020 and collectively decide appropriate action.</p>	<p>We held an event on heat and energy efficiency on 29 September 2020 and we have continued to work with Green Doctor and Green Dragon. We will continue to explore these topics in 2021.</p> <p>In addition to our two community energy forums per year, we are planning more targeted training and support around energy efficiency.</p>	<p>September 2020</p> <p>Heat and Energy Efficiency forum</p>
<p>We need financial support to get new network connection</p>	<p>19. We will communicate the evidence we have received from communities as part of this research to Ofgem and BEIS.</p>	<p>Specific feedback on connections cost impact and interest in local supply shared during CEE and Ofgem event on 28 Jan 2021. We have summarised the feedback received from community energy groups to the UK Parliament's Environmental Audit Committee and BEIS, as outlined in action 25.</p> <p>In addition, our Regional CE study, our CE Page, and the need for additional support for community energy have been shared in external events (regional or national), where appropriate.</p>	<p>December 2020</p> <p>Community Energy England and Ofgem Information Sharing Event</p>

<p>We need technical support to get new network connections</p>	<p>20. We will have conversations with communities to find solutions and facilitate constructive conversations with our network engineers.</p>	<p>Community energy groups have attended at least three connections surgeries during 2020 and have had around 40 informal conversations with Northern Powergrid colleagues. At least three groups have applied for a connection.</p> <p>In addition, we have developed and published a community energy factsheet outlining connections-related FAQs.</p>	<p>On track</p> <p>Community energy factsheet</p>
	<p>21. We have developed a visual map of our network in a desktop app which includes a design tool, useful for EV installation and as a low voltage design tool. Designed for connections, it can help in the pre planning and project design stage.</p>	<p>Our award-winning AutoDesign tool is a free to use, self-service tool which reflects the low-voltage network capacity (green, amber, red) and designs a new connection in minutes. It also gives an indicative low voltage connection cost estimate for a new connection. Run-through of this tool has been included in community energy forums.</p>	<p>November 2020</p> <p>Link to AutoDesign tool on community energy webpage</p>
<p>We'd like more community energy innovation projects that help us develop new business models at scale</p>	<p>22. We will continue to offer support to communities with innovative project ideas that haven't been done before.</p>	<p>We have one community energy innovation project - Boston Spa Energy Efficiency Trial (BEET) - in progress. We held an innovation festival, where we shared information about this project, among other innovation trials we are running. Groups with new innovative ideas can contact us by using the community energy inbox to discuss these on an ongoing basis.</p>	<p>On track</p> <p>Boston Spa Energy Efficiency Trial</p>
<p>Support us long term to address climate change</p>	<p>23. We have funded Energy Heroes climate change education programme for many years and will continue to, we will also engage more with this programme offering professional development support and volunteer resource via corporate social responsibility resources.</p> <p>24. We will consider integrating a social and environmental weighting when procuring flexibility services.</p>	<p>We have continued to fund the Energy Heroes programme in 2020 and have also committed to funding it in 2021 and 2022. 4,500 children have been involved, with calculated energy savings of 24,000 MWh and calculated carbon savings of 6,700 tCO₂e.</p> <p>In addition, we have continued to deliver our Community Partnering Fund.</p> <p>The market for customer-led flexibility is developing in our region and as of 2020 we had not procured any flexibility. We continue to work to identify the best approach to customer-led flexibility through expressions of interest and engagement with potential flexibility providers. We are working with the industry via the Energy Networks Association to develop a common and transparent approach for all DNOs making decisions on flexibility procurement, including an associated cost-benefit assessment tool to address feedback from stakeholders that it should go further in the areas of carbon assessment and optionality valuation.</p>	<p>2021</p> <p>Energy Heroes information</p> <p>On track</p> <p>Search launched for flexibility service providers</p> <p>Environment report page 20</p> <p>More information</p>

ADVOCATE We recognise communities don't have the capacity and time to lobby, we want to amplify their voice as outlined in the community energy engagement strategy 2020-2023

You said	Action/commitment	What we did	Date delivered
<p>Help us have a voice with government and Ofgem</p>	<p>25. We will use our industry position to feedback to BEIS and Ofgem what community energy organisations say they need to thrive.</p>	<p>The engagement with community energy stakeholders and their feedback has been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - shared directly with different teams at BEIS; - shared with Ofgem directly and by including it in a range of annual reports, e.g. our Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability submission; and - documented as part of our RIIO-ED2 process. It will inform our business plan submission to Ofgem. <p>In addition, we provided evidence to UK Parliament's Environmental Audit Committee in writing (responding to their inquiry into community energy and summarising the feedback we had received from CE stakeholders) and also took part in their oral evidence session on 14 Apr 2021. We will continue to advocate for community energy organisations.</p>	<p>On track</p> <p>Community energy voices included in <u>Environmental Audit Committee witness response</u></p>
<p>Include communities in your business planning</p>	<p>26. We will inform communities of how they can engage in our RIIO ED-2 business planning process.</p>	<p>We set up a community energy stakeholder panel with a representative group from across the region, comprised of 14 panellists, 12 of them community energy organisations and two support organisations, to help guide our work around community energy and decarbonisation, give us feedback and hold us to account.</p> <p>In addition, we have advertised our RIIO-ED2 consultations and events via our newsletter and community energy forums, and several community energy groups have already taken part in our ED2 events during 2020. We will continue to signpost relevant engagement opportunities through these and other channels throughout 2021.</p>	<p>2020</p>