



Community Energy Wales Manifesto

Set targets for community energy in Wales

Scotland set a target for Community owned energy at 500MW which has seen a pro-active approach to Community Energy in Scotland and far greater take up of Community Energy. We need a similar target in Wales to drive Community Energy Forward in Wales.

We propose that a 100MW target should be introduced across Wales for the period 2016 – 2020. Minimum targets per Local Authority should be set to encourage a pro-active approach to Community Energy within the public sector.

Introduce the Right of Local Supply in Wales

The rules governing the UK's energy market, which assume highly centralised generation, distribution and supply, does not recognise local supply.

UK community energy can't take root without local supply. So long as people can only participate in community energy as investors, our sector will remain limited to being a minor player in electricity supply within Wales and the UK.

We propose:

- developing a local supply innovation fund across Wales for community scale generators to explore opportunities for local supply.
- Allow for a 'local balancing unit' as specified here¹. This would allow new local business models such as aggregators and junior suppliers to maximise the benefits of local supply and demand management, offering benefits to suppliers, network managers and system operators.

Ease planning process for community renewables

The planning system in Wales is a challenging environment for Community Energy projects. It is evident that some authorities are not permitting the consideration of the planning merits of social and economic benefits that would accrue to the relevant communities if community energy schemes were permitted to go ahead.

We propose:

- social and economic benefits of Community Energy schemes should be given material weighting in the planning process and this should take into account the long term impacts of these schemes.
- All Solar PV on buildings should be permitted development including greater than 50kW schemes.

Address the grid constraint issues

Distribution grid capacity is limiting development of renewable energy in Wales. The grid was designed in the middle of the last century to distribute electricity from fossil fuel generators near coalfields and ports to the rest of Wales. OFGEM rules have encouraged renewable developers to utilise this legacy grid to the full.

The grid is now full for renewable generation in many parts of Wales limiting both our ability to meet our renewable generation commitments and denying many parts of rural Wales the income and benefits that come from renewable energy generation.

We propose:

- in the short term strategic investment in grid infrastructure is undertaken as a matter of urgency to support continuing low carbon generation in rural Wales.
- in the long term we need to introduce a "right of first access" for community energy projects to the grid, whereby Distribution Network Operators are required to facilitate connection for community projects.

¹https://www.elxon.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Encouraging-local-energy-supply-through-a-local-balancing-unit_March2015.pdf



Support communities to develop renewable energy generation

Welsh Government works to establish a single point of contact for all of the various programmes that support community energy projects. This should be co-designed by community energy practitioners, build on what works, promote and utilise the existing skills and expertise within the sector and should be accountable to the Community Energy Projects it serves.

We propose:

- Welsh Government sets up a working group in partnership with CEW and work with Westminster to ensure the continuation of a stable financial support mechanism for community renewable energy schemes in Wales.
- Welsh Government, as part of its Green Growth Wales programme, supports the development of new financial instruments that can speed up access to finance in support of both the development and installation costs of community energy projects.

A Community Right to Buy for Wales and Renewable Energy Assets

There is huge potential for more productive use of underutilised land and buildings and community ownership, on a significant scale for community asset development, through renewable energy.

This could be achieved through asset transfer and disposal or acquisition of land, as part of a wider Community Right to Buy for Wales, in a similar way to Scotland, through the Scottish Land reform act 2003 and Scottish Community empowerment Act 2015.

We propose:

- a Community right to buy for Wales
- a commitment from public sector owners of buildings to offer public sector building roofs for PV to community groups where no meaningful progress has been made to develop the site in-house.

