SP Energy Networks

Community Energy Strategy 2025-26

SP Energy Networks

How to Use This Strategy Document

Purpose of this guide

This strategy outlines SPEN's commitments to supporting community energy through collaboration, innovation, and continuous improvement. It reflects on past achievements and sets out our forward-looking goals to help communities take control of their energy futures.
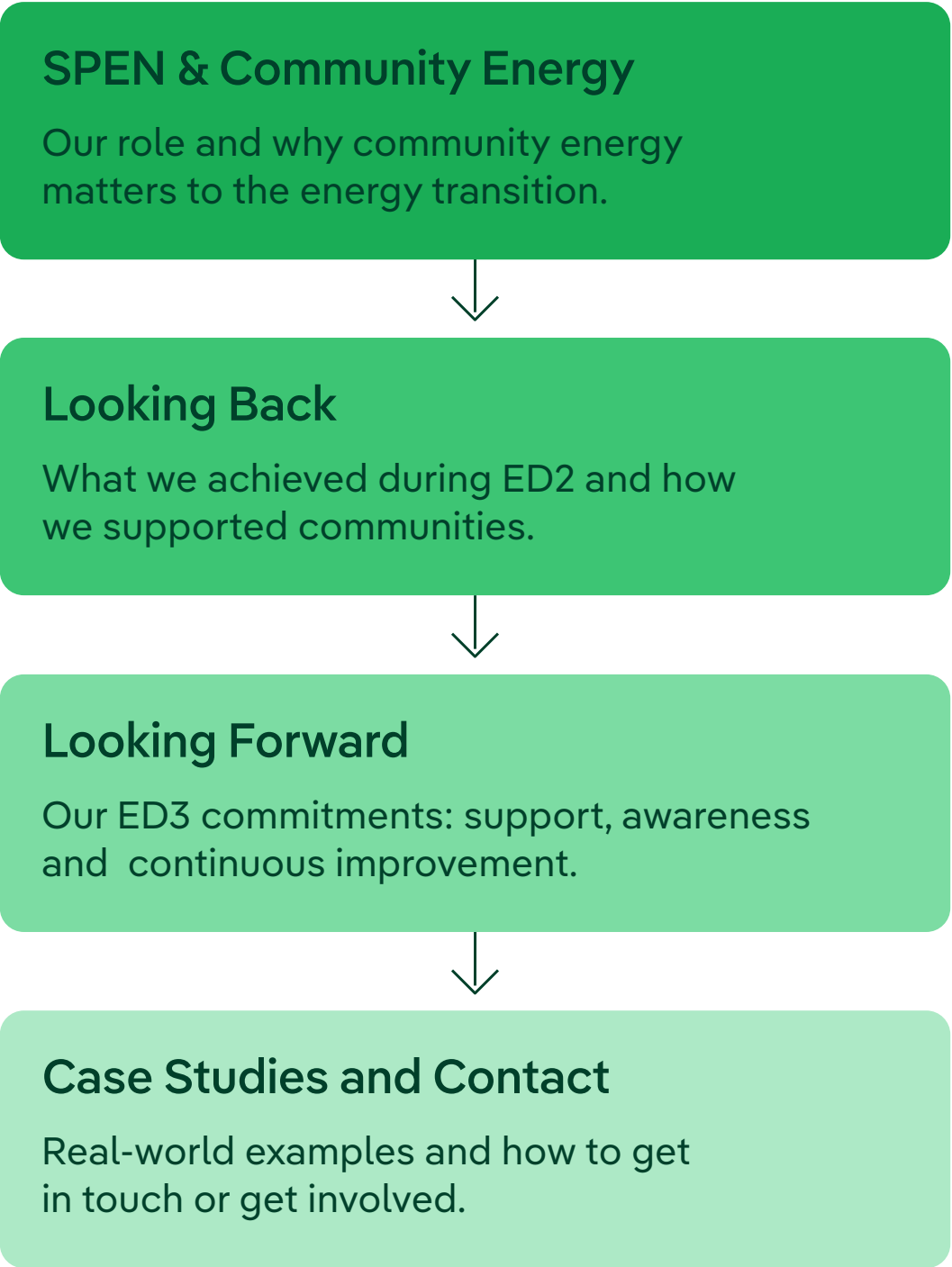

This guide is designed for:

Those actively involved in the Community Energy sector

Community groups and organisations developing or exploring energy projects

Local authorities and regional planners

Educational institutions and researchers

Policy makers and regulators

SPEN internal teams and partners

Individuals with an interest in finding out more about community energy

Commonly used terms throughout this document:

- **DNO (Distribution Network Operator)**
  A company licensed to distribute electricity across a defined area.

- **ED2 (Electricity Distribution Price Control 2)**
  Regulatory period from 2023–2028, setting investment and service standards for DNOs.

- **ED3**
  The next regulatory phase, building on ED2 to shape future community energy support and delivery.

Document flow and quick guide

Here's how the document flows – and what each section is here to help with:

SPEN & Community Energy
Our role and why community energy matters to the energy transition.

↓

Looking Back
What we achieved during ED2 and how we supported communities.

↓

Looking Forward
Our ED3 commitments: support, awareness and continuous improvement.

↓

Case Studies and Contact
Real-world examples and how to get in touch or get involved.

Contents

The Importance of Community Energy

Supporting community energy is a strategic investment in a fairer, greener future for all. It empowers local communities to generate and manage their own renewable energy, contributing directly to Net Zero goals. It supports economic resilience by keeping profits local, creates fairer access to energy and helps tackle fuel poverty.

Our Regulatory framework

We are regulated by Ofgem, the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets. Ofgem ensures that energy providers like us follow the rules set by the government to keep the energy market fair and efficient. They oversee our operations and make sure we deliver safe, reliable and affordable electricity to homes and businesses.

Who we are

SP Energy Networks (SPEN) is a Distribution Network Operator (DNO). SP Energy Networks keeps electricity flowing to homes and businesses through our network of overhead lines and underground cables.

In Scotland, SPEN manages the electricity distribution network in central and southern regions, including major cities such as Glasgow and Edinburgh, as well as rural areas like the Scottish Borders and Dumfries & Galloway. In England and Wales, SP Energy Networks operates under the SP Manweb license, covering North Wales, Merseyside, Cheshire, North Shropshire and Liverpool.

In 2025, Electricity Northwest (ENWL) became one of the four regulated electricity network businesses owned by SP Energy Networks in the UK. SP Electricity Northwest, as it's now known, operates the electricity distribution network across the Northwest of England. Its coverage includes Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Cumbria, as well as parts of Cheshire and Derbyshire.

Empowering Communities

SP Energy Networks' Community Energy Strategy for RIIO-ED2 (2023–2028) outlines a comprehensive plan to embed community energy into the heart of our operations. We are committed to building long-term partnerships, encouraging open dialogue and working together to overcome challenges to unlock the full potential of community energy. We aim to give community groups the support, resources and expertise they need to succeed. This includes helping them understand the energy system, accessing key information, capacity building and accessing technical help. We work together, valuing the unique strengths and local knowledge that community groups bring.

SP Electricity North West Community Energy Strategy

We already collaborate closely with SP ENW through the cross-Distribution Network Operating (DNO) working group, and as we move forward we will align our approaches, sharing learning and supporting communities across our regions with their community energy ambitions. SP ENW's Community and Local Energy Strategy sets out a clear commitment to helping communities reduce, manage, generate and purchase their own energy. Through initiatives such as their Powering Our Communities Fund, they have supported a wide range of local energy projects, empowering communities to take a more active role in the transition to Net Zero.

Leading the Transition

As the only network operator to serve communities across all three governments, we are helping to lead the UK's journey to Net Zero, understanding that community energy is key to helping local communities join this transition. As part of this, we continue to grow and strengthen our network operations across the UK.

Nicola Connelly
CEO, SP Energy Networks

SPEN & Community Energy

What is our role

We transport power on behalf of supply companies through a network of underground cables and overhead power lines to homes and businesses across Central & Southern Scotland, North and Mid Wales, Merseyside, Cheshire and North Shropshire.

Our role is more than just maintaining the network. The energy world is changing fast with new technology, policies, and the need for sustainable solutions. By supporting community energy, we help local groups take control of their energy, become stronger, cut carbon emissions, and gain social and economic benefits. We believe in a fair energy transition where everyone shares the benefits of clean energy.

2025-26 Update

This latest iteration of SP Energy Networks' Community Energy Strategy is an important step in our promise to create a fair and green energy future. Our journey has been one of learning, changing, and working together, driven by the shared goal of helping communities control their energy futures. This strategy shares what we have learned, recognising the changing energy world and the key role communities play in reaching Net Zero. We have worked to connect policy goals with real-life situations, understanding the unique challenges and opportunities faced by different communities across our licence areas.

Achieving Net Zero

Through our engagements across the community energy sector, we have gained valuable insights into the needs and ambitions of local groups and communities, allowing us to better support them. This strategy highlights key achievements and lessons from the past year, showing how we are working in alignment with national and regional Net Zero targets.

Ensuring a Just Transition

This strategy is an evolving plan that relies on working together, outlining our promises and priorities for the future. We are committed to building stronger partnerships, sharing knowledge, and pushing for policies that help grow a lively and inclusive community energy sector. By using the combined expertise and resources of SP Energy Networks and our community partners, we aim to speed up the move towards a strong, balanced and fair energy system.

In 2024, community-owned energy projects across SPEN's licence areas generated **64 GWh** of electricity – enough to power **23,700** UK households and save **13,440 tonnes** of CO_2 emissions.

SPT/SPD

SPM

Community Energy

What is Community Energy?

Community energy is a way of generating, owning, and managing energy that puts local communities at the centre. It allows communities to control their energy futures, making them stronger, cutting carbon emissions, and providing social and economic benefits. Unlike traditional energy models where people are just consumers, community energy encourages active participation and ownership.

What does it include?

Community energy includes many activities, such as creating and managing local renewable energy projects, improving energy efficiency, and offering energy advice. These projects are usually led by local groups like community trusts, cooperatives, and voluntary organizations, who care deeply about their communities. They often focus on social and environmental goals, ensuring the benefits of clean energy are shared fairly and reinvested locally.

Impact on Achieving Net Zero

Community-led projects can rapidly deploy renewable energy technologies and promote energy efficiency, contributing significantly to carbon reduction targets. Decentralised energy solutions increase the reliability of the energy supply, particularly in remote areas, reducing vulnerability to grid disruptions. Community energy projects provide opportunities for local ownership and control, fostering social cohesion and economic development, and ensuring that the benefits of the energy transition are shared equitably.

Common Community Energy Projects

Solar PV

Converts sunlight into electricity using solar panels.

- Can be easy to install.
- Provides clean, renewable energy.

Wind Turbine

Uses wind to turn turbines, generating electricity.

- Can generate power day and night.
- Utilises abundant wind source.

Micro-Hydro

Converts flowing water into electricity using turbines.

- Continual reliable energy source.
- Utilises abundant water source.

EV Charger

Uses electricity, often from renewable sources.

- Encourages electric vehicle use.
- Reduces fossil fuel dependence.
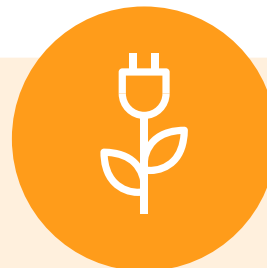
Local Energy Generation Energy Impact

Reduced Energy Costs

- Lowers local energy bills.
- Saves money for residents.

Increased Energy Security

- Less dependent on external sources.
- More resilient to energy supply disruptions.

Environmental Benefits

- Cuts Carbon Emissions.
- Promotes clean energy use.

Economic Development

- Creates local jobs.
- Upskills local community population.

Community Energy in our Licence Area

Community Energy and SPEN

To engage with the Community Energy stakeholders as effectively as possible, we work continually with three Community Energy Bodies: Community Energy England/Scotland/Wales to gather and analyse key sector data, ensuring our strategies are well-informed. By fostering open dialogue and building long-term partnerships, we aim to support the growth and success of community energy projects across our licence area.

State of the Sector Reports

We contribute to both the national and regional Community Energy State of the Sector Reports. These reports provide essential data and analysis on the scale and impact of community energy projects, informing policymakers, stakeholders, and community groups. By collaborating with Community Energy Wales and Community Energy Scotland, we ensure the reports offer a comprehensive and accurate picture of the community energy landscape.

Click here for 2024 STOTS Report.

Units of Energy Explained

Watt (W)	Megawatt (MW)	Gigawatt (GW)
Watt = smallest unit of energy measurement	**1 Thousand Watts**	**1 Million Watts**
5 Watts = Powers a small LED lightbulb	**1 Megawatt** = Powers about 300 homes	**1 Gigawatt** = Powers a large city or a nuclear plant output

Community Energy Generation:

Within our licence area we have:
- Total installed capacity of 20MW.
- Collective generation capacity output of 45.4GWh.
- Annual carbon emission savings through installed capacity of 12.213 Tonnes.

20MW
is enough energy to meet the annual energy consumption of nearly **65,000** people

45.4GWh
is enough energy to power over **150,000** electric vehicles for a year

12,213 tonnes
The equivalent carbon saving of planting **200,000** trees

Types of Community Energy Organisations

- Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation
- Company limited by Guarantee
- Community Interest Company
- Community Benefit Society
- Co-operative Society
- Unincorporated
- Other

Community Energy Groups	71
Active Volunteers	796
Members of Community Energy Organisations	10,434
Average Members per organisation	335
Full Time Employees	114

75%
of organisations relied entirely on the support of volunteers and members to operate

Advancing Community Energy Across the UK

SP Energy Networks' Role

Our Community Energy Team consists of our two regional Community Energy Managers across SP Distribution and SP Manweb. This teams' primary role is to help support, enable and empower communities to develop and deliver their own energy projects.

Policy Landscape

The recent publication of the UK Government's 'Local Power Plan' and 'Clean Energy 2030' initiative are pivotal in driving the transition to a sustainable and resilient energy system. These plans aim to empower local communities and accelerate the adoption of clean energy solutions.

UK Net-Zero Targets

The UK and its devolved nations have set ambitious Net Zero targets, with community energy playing a crucial role. These targets aim to reduce carbon emissions and promote sustainable energy practices.

GB Energy

The UK Government announced the creation of GB Energy in the summer of 2024 to help tackle energy insecurity and speed up the shift to renewable energy. With a budget of £8.3 billion, GB Energy aims to use wind and solar power to produce a significant amount of clean energy.

Role

- Act as the primary liaison between SPEN and community energy stakeholders.
- Advocate for community needs within SPEN's planning and decision-making.
- Facilitate knowledge sharing and capacity building.

Local Power Plan

- £400m a year in low interest loans for CE.
- £600m a year grants to Local Authorities.
- Focus on collaboration with CE Groups from local government and local authorities.

Community and Local Energy

- UK Government: 8GW by 2030.
- Scottish Government: 2GW by 2030.
- Welsh Government: 1.5GW by 2035.

Principles, Aims and Purpose

- Energy Independence: Reducing reliance on fossil fuels and foreign energy sources.
- Economic Growth: Creating jobs and boosting local economies through clean energy projects.
- Public Ownership: Ensuring the UK public benefit from national resources.

Support

- Guidance on learning resources, partnerships, and project development.
- Access to tools, templates, and case studies.
- Hosting engagement events and workshops tailored to community groups.

Clean Power 2030

- Achieve 100% Clean Power by 2030.
- Upgrades and improvements to the grid.
- Partnership with CE Groups to achieve local renewable energy projects.

Community Energy Bodies

- Local Power Plan: £400m a year in low interest loans.
- CARES: £9m supporting local renewable and energy efficiency projects.
- Capital Grant Funding: £10m for the development of smart local energy systems (integration of local energy generation, storage or infrastructure).

Supporting Community Energy

- £5m Community Fund across England.
- £4.85m Community and Renewable Energy Fund in Scotland.
- £2.8m in funding focussed on rooftop solar and Community energy in Wales.

Community Energy Barriers

What we have Learned from our Stakeholders

In 2024, we asked the representative community energy bodies – Community Energy England, Community Energy Scotland, Community Energy Wales and selected grassroots community groups in our licence areas across the UK, to review and feed into the barriers affecting the sector.
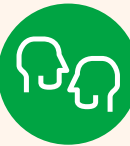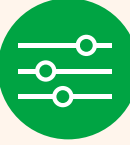

Key barriers identified by our community stakeholders

- Grid constraints/connecting to the grid
- Sourcing correct DNO contacts
- Lack of funding support (capital and revenue)
- Highly technical development process
- Difficulty of establishing viable financial models
- Lack of community confidence & capacity to act
- Lack of knowledge on what is possible on local networks
- Difficulty in assessing viability of non-firm connections
- Limited knowledge of how DNOs can support community groups
- Lack of availability of network monitoring data or proactive information on optimal grid locations for local supply
- Difficulty identifying the best grid locations for the development of distribution level flexibility services
- Low level of understanding/capacity in community groups of the need and possibilities linked to 'flexibility' and Distribution System Operator development

How we responded

Over the course of 2024/25 we have been working to meet the needs of stakeholders following the feedback received around barriers to community energy project growth.

Cross Team Collaboration
Working internally to highlight the importance of CE within our business.

CE Connections Guide
Development of CE specific Connections support Document (Hyperlink TBC)

Flexibility Support Document
Development of CE specific Flexibility support Document

Community Energy Case Studies
Development of case studies highlighting successful projects

Capacity Building Workshops
Focussed on raising communities knowledge of: CE Technologies, Connection Process, Innovation and Funding.

Community Energy Webpage
Developed our CE webpage to have a range of resources and support documents to upskill and enable community energy groups.

Community Energy: SPEN Supporting Teams

To deliver meaningful support to community energy groups, SPEN relies on a network of internal teams who each play a vital role in helping projects succeed. While the Community Energy Team is the main point of contact, these supporting teams provide the technical, strategic, and operational expertise that makes real progress possible.

By showcasing these teams, we want to:

Demonstrate transparency around how support is delivered

Help community groups understand who does what

Encourage early engagement with the right people at the right time

Our teams within SPEN supporting Community Energy:

Community Energy Team

Flexibility Team

Shares opportunities for local participation in energy services.

Connections Team

Guides communities through the grid connection process.

Strategic Optimisation Team

Aligns SPEN's planning with local energy and climate goals.
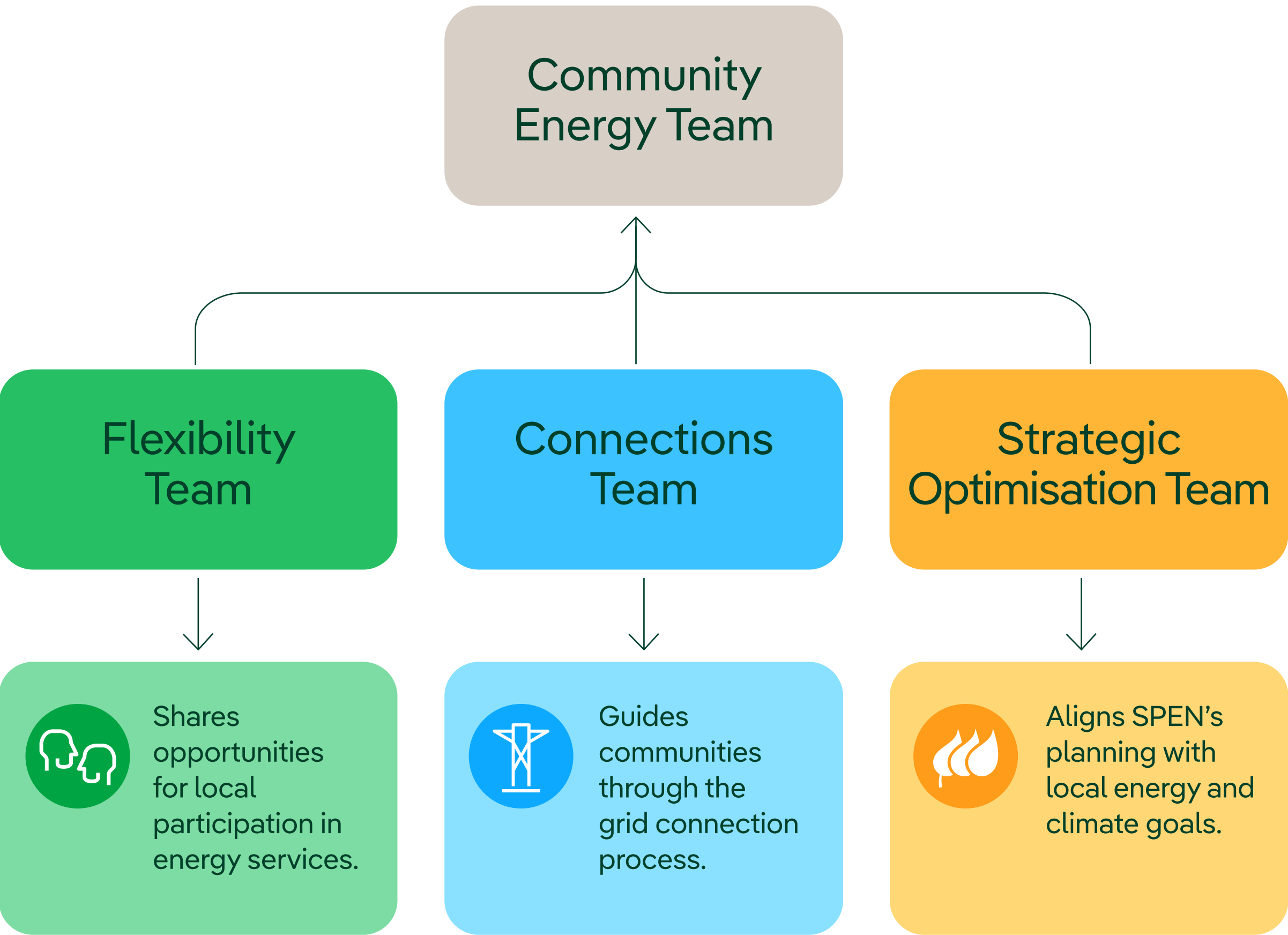
Our teams work together to **guide**, **connect**, and **empower communities** to deliver successful energy projects.

Community Energy: SPEN Supporting Teams

Connections Team

The Connections team aims to help people and organisations get their energy projects connected to the electricity network safely and efficiently.

1. Planning Your Project

- Define your energy goals – e.g. solar, wind, battery storage, or heat networks.

- Engage your community – ensure local support and involvement.

- Check feasibility – consider location, land access, funding, and permissions.

Tip
Further information

Use SPEN's Community Energy website for guides and case studies.

2. Understanding the Grid

- Check local grid capacity – find out if the network can handle your project.

- Explore connection options – standard or flexible connections.

- Speak to SPEN early – they can help you understand what's possible.

Tip
Further information

Use the SPEN Connections Portal to check capacity and start your application.

3. Applying for a Connection

- Submit a connection request – with technical details and site plans.

- Review the offer from SPEN – including costs and timelines.

- Accept and prepare for installation – once you're ready to proceed.

Tip
Further information

Download SPEN's Guide to Connecting Community Energy Projects for a step-by-step walkthrough.

Community Energy: SPEN Supporting Teams

Flexibility Team

The Flexibility Team aims to help the electricity network work more efficiently by encouraging people and communities to use energy in smarter ways — like using less power at busy times or storing energy for later.

Role

- Find ways for local organisations, businesses, and community projects to support the grid by being flexible with how and when they use or generate electricity.

- Make sure communities can take part in these new energy services and benefit from them.

Support

- Help communities join local flexibility schemes.

- Provide tools and advice to understand when and how to shift energy use.

- Share updates on local flexibility opportunities and how to get involved.

Strategic Optimisation Team

The Strategic Optimisation Team are focussed on SPEN's long-term plans for the electricity network match up with what local councils and regions are planning — especially around climate goals and new developments.

Role

- Work closely with councils and regional partners to understand future energy needs.

- Help plan where upgrades to the electricity network are needed to support things like new housing, electric transport, or local energy projects.

Support

- Support local energy plans and climate strategies.

- Make sure community energy is considered in wider regional planning.

- Help identify areas where the network needs investment to support local goals.

Stakeholder Led Improvements

Reflecting on Our Journey

Over the past year, SP Energy Networks have made significant strides in supporting the community energy sector. Our dedicated team, enhanced online resources, and direct communication channels have empowered local groups to overcome technical and logistical challenges. Throughout the implementation of our strategy we have strived to make sure we are meeting the needs of those involved in the community energy sector. Through this journey we have engaged with a number of individuals, groups and organisations and collated the feedback we have received. We have also captured valuable data through the State of the Sector Reports, which has informed our support strategies and helped us tailor our resources to meet the specific needs of community groups.

Supporting our Stakeholders

You also told us we should focus on support in the key areas shown on the right.

What We Learned & How We're Adapting

Based on feedback from stakeholders and our own reflections, we've identified key areas for improvement. In 2025–26, we will adapt our approach by:

• Enhancing digital accessibility through a redesigned CE webpage.

• Expanding youth engagement to build future capacity.

• Improving data transparency via GIS mapping and reporting.

• Strengthening feedback loops to ensure our strategy remains responsive.

Collaboration

What you said:
There needs to be engagement and collaboration with local authorities, other utilities and trusted energy affiliated groups.

How we responded

• SP Energy Networks currently chair the quarterly Community Energy DNO working group with a focus on current activity and preparation for ED3.

• Work with our strategic optimisation team to ensure our engagements with local authorities are aligned.

• Worked with EST to create a suite of CE workshops focussed on topics highlighted by our stakeholders.

Prioritisation

What you said:
There needs to be assurances that Community Energy matters – showing clear evidence of how it is managed within SPEN.

How we responded

• Community Energy is continually promoted across our SPEN social media accounts.

• Our Community Energy activity features regularly in the monthly executive team meetings.

• Our Community Energy team work in collaboration with several departments including: Connections, Flexibility and Strategic Optimisation.

• SPEN continue to reserve spend to support the community energy sector through sponsorships and support initiatives.

Awareness & Upskilling

What you said:
SPEN should be educating people about community energy, why it is important and how it can work for communities.

How we responded

• Worked in collaboration with CE groups in our area to develop interactive case studies highlighting the benefits, barriers and opportunities available through CE projects.

• Sponsored the 2025 Community Energy Fortnight campaign to further elevate and highlight the benefits of CE projects.

• Developed a bespoke Community Energy: Youth Engagement programme to highlight the benefits and opportunities of CE energy to young adults.

Engagement

What you said:
To be successful in their Community Energy aspirations, SPEN needs to build strong relationships with key stakeholders and local communities – enabling management of expectations.

How we responded

• Worked in collaboration with the Climate Action Hubs to help enhance awareness of the role of DNOs in connecting CE projects.

• Work with the Community Energy England/Scotland/Wales to facilitate joint projects and support.

• Sponsored/Participated in CE Eng/Scot/Wales conferences to provide DNO specific support at each event.

Support

Community Energy Strategy 2024/25

Over the past year, SPEN has made significant strides in advancing our community energy strategy, focusing on strengthening our engagement, supporting existing projects, raising awareness, and driving continuous improvement. Last year's focus was aimed at three distinct pillar:

Support
Empowering local groups to overcome technical and logistical challenges.

Awareness
Highlighting community energy benefits and inspiring broader participation.

Continuous Improvement
We learn from experience and feedback to improve our support. By refining tools and engagement, we help community groups succeed.

Support

Support is a crucial focus within our Community Energy Strategy because it aims to directly address the needs of the community energy sector and the individuals involved within it. We want to continue to empower local groups to overcome technical and logistical challenges, fostering the growth of community energy projects.

This support is essential for helping communities navigate the complexities of energy projects, ensuring they have the knowledge and resources needed to succeed. Over the past year, we have been committed to enhancing the resilience and sustainability of the community energy sector, ultimately contributing to a fair and inclusive energy transition.

What we have achieved

Established a dedicated team to support community energy projects and groups.

Created a dedicated website section with info and support for community groups.

Created a direct contact mailbox for community groups.

Captured data within the State of the Sector Reports to understand and support community group challenges.

Developed guides for community groups based on feedback.

Informed community groups about self-service tools and resources.

Supported innovative community energy projects.

Capacity building workshop programme based on stakeholder feedback topics.

Capacity Building Workshops:

As part of our support commitments set out last year, we produced three bespoke community energy workshops aimed at three key areas that were highlighted to us through stakeholder engagement.
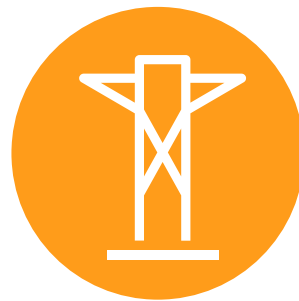
Technology

Technologies used within Community Energy Projects.

Innovation & Funding

Innovation and funding avenues available within the Community Energy Sector.

Connection Process

Overview of the connection journey process when connecting a community energy project.

Support Guides

As part of our support commitments set out last year, we produced three bespoke community energy guides aimed at three key areas that were highlighted to us through stakeholder engagement.
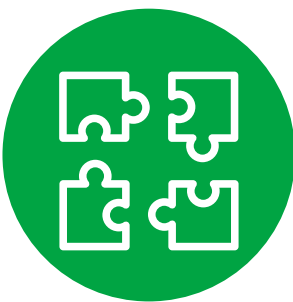
Connecting a Project

Covering:
• Connection journey
• Connection prices
• Connection teams

Starting a Solar PV Project

Covering:
• Technology insight
• Planning
• Feasibility

Flexibility Service Opportunities

Covering:
• Grid balancing
• Flexible markets
• Commercial opportunities

Raising Awareness

Awareness

Over the past year, we have concentrated on strengthening our engagement with stakeholders, supporting existing projects, and showcasing success stories to inspire others. This effort has been crucial in ensuring that more people are informed about the potential of community energy and motivated to participate. By raising awareness, we aim to highlight the positive impacts that community energy projects can have on local economies, the environment, and social wellbeing.

The groups we worked with

Community Energy Groups/ Projects
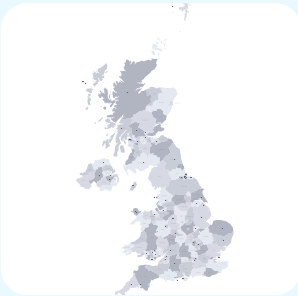

Community Energy Scotland

Community Energy England

Community Energy Wales

Local Government

Climate Action Hubs

CE Education (CE Ed.)

CE Experts

What we have achieved

Engagement

Inclusivity
Ensured all stakeholders had the opportunity to contribute to the strategy's development.

Transparency
Guided by principles of inclusivity, transparency, and responsiveness.

Needs and Challenges
Identified specific needs and challenges faced by community groups, local authorities, and other stakeholders.

Partnerships

Collaboration
Worked closely with key organisations, groups, and individuals across the Community Energy Sector.

Support and Promotion
Facilitated knowledge sharing, provided technical assistance, and promoted best practices.

Best Practices
Promoted knowledge sharing and best practices through collaborative initiatives, including annual conferences and keynote speeches.

Raising the National Profile of Community Energy

Raising the profile of the community energy sector is essential for driving widespread adoption and support for local renewable energy projects. SP Energy Networks has a vested interest in this because a well-informed and engaged public can significantly enhance the success and sustainability of these initiatives. By promoting the benefits of community energy, we want to help to create a more resilient and decentralized energy system, which aligns with their goals of grid reliability and community empowerment.

Raising the National Profile of Community Energy

National State of the Sector Report 2024

- Sponsored the UK-wide Community Energy: State of the Sector Report 2024.

Regional State of the Sector Report 2024

- Commissioned a SPEN Regional Community Energy STOTS Report.

CE Body Membership

- Became full members of CE-England and CE-Wales.

CE Body Support

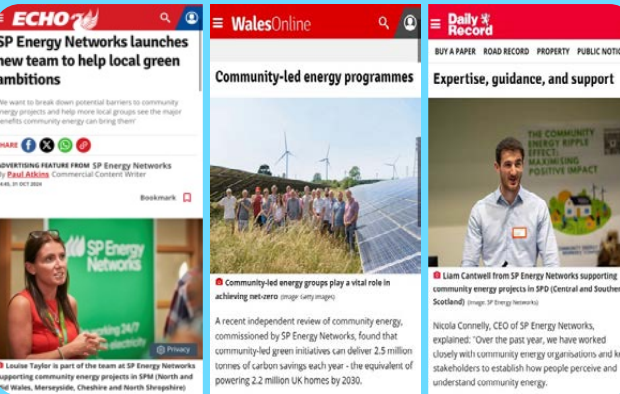- Were lead sponsors of CES, CEE, and CEW annual conferences.

National Promotional Campaign

- Promoted the benefits of Community Energy within national news outlets both online and in print.

Targeted Campaign

- Highlighted support mechanisms available through our CE Team.

Support Commitments

Enhancing Our Support

SPEN is dedicated to increasing awareness and understanding of the community energy sector. In the coming year, we will focus on promoting the benefits and opportunities of community energy solutions to a wider audience.

Support Outcomes

By engaging with local communities, educational institutions, and media outlets, we aim to highlight the positive impact of community energy projects and encourage more groups to get involved. We believe that raising awareness is key to fostering a supportive environment where community energy can thrive and contribute to a sustainable future.

CE Group engagement

Our Community Energy Team will work to support community energy projects and community groups covering our license areas. As a central contact point, we will continue to guide community groups through the process, connecting them with the relevant areas of our business as needed. We will partner with community energy organisations to leverage their expertise, resources, and networks, fostering a collaborative approach to achieving our shared goals.

Information

In line with our goals to make our information as accessible as possible we will work to redevelop our Community Energy webpage to host a range of resources including: self-help guides, project case studies, connection guides and access to previous workshops.

Internal Engagement

We will work with our internal teams (Connection, Flexibility, Vulnerability, Community Benefits, Strategic Optimisation) to develop guides and support content to help ensure consistency and maximum support to our stakeholders throughout the business.

CE Bodies

We will collaborate with key community energy bodies to align our strategies, share best practices, and advocate for supportive policies that benefit community energy initiatives.

CE Workshops

We will host workshops to provide training, share knowledge, and facilitate networking among community energy groups, helping them build capacity and drive their projects forward.

CE Webpage

We will develop our dedicated community energy webpage. Covering various aspects of community energy projects, from planning and funding to implementation and management, ensuring community groups have the information they need to succeed.

Awareness Commitments

Raising Awareness of the Community Energy Sector

Building on our learnings, SPEN is committed to continuously improving our support for the community energy sector.

In the coming year, we will focus on expanding our support for community energy projects, with a particular emphasis on supporting community energy solutions. We will also strengthen our partnerships with community groups, local authorities, and other stakeholders, recognising the importance of collaboration in achieving our shared goals.

CE Bodies

We will sponsor the national State of the Sector (STOTS) report produced by community energy bodies and commission the 2025 STOTS regional report focused on SPEN's licence area.

Project Capture

We will establish SPD and SPM GIS Maps detailing the community energy assets and projects within our licence area.

Project Case Studies

We will capture and share the success stories of community energy projects within our licence area.

Sector Research

We will partner with educational institutes to conduct sector-based research inquiries, providing support mechanisms and insights into the community energy sector.

Engagement Plan

We will fulfill a structured engagement plan targeting key areas across our SPD and SPM licence areas to ensure all geographical and demographic groups are effectively reached.

CE Youth Engagement

As part of our demographic engagement, we will create a youth engagement programme to support a continuous pipeline of talent aware of and involved in community energy.

Events

We will sponsor and attend regional events across SPD and SPM to highlight the importance of community energy and the support mechanisms we offer to the sector.

Comms Engagement

We will utilise the digital, print and targeted media sources to ensure that community groups and key stakeholders are continually kept up to date with developments within the sector.

Community Energy Across the UK

Installed Renewable Energy Capacity
61 MW installed,
9% annual growth

Job Creation
7% annual growth in community energy jobs

Carbon Emissions Reduction
150,000 tonnes reduced annually by community energy projects

Financial Savings
Households save an average of **£200** per year

Community Investment
Over **£50 million** invested by communities

Educational Outreach
500+ workshops and events conducted

Continuous Improvement Commitments

Ensuring Continuous Improvement

We will look to ensure that we are continually building on our strategy, ensuring that the sector has the necessary enabling environment to thrive. We will also continue to improve our data collection and reporting, ensuring that we have a clear understanding of the community energy landscape and the impact of our support initiatives.

Focussed approach

We will also explore new and innovative ways to engage with underrepresented communities, ensuring that the benefits of community energy are shared equitably. By focusing on these priorities, we are committed to building a stronger and more resilient community energy sector.

Working Groups

Over the course of this year we facilitated a range of working groups with an independent engagement facilitator in order to review our previous Community Energy Strategy and Community Energy Webpages helping to shape our ongoing priorities and future planning for ED3.

Feedback

We will establish regular feedback loops with community energy working groups to gather insights and suggestions, ensuring our support evolves to meet their needs effectively.

Sharing

We will create platforms for sharing best practices and lessons learned with other DNOs to ensure uniformity in our approaches approaches ahead of ED3.

Data Analysis

We will leverage data analysis to identify trends, measure the impact of our initiatives, and make informed decisions to enhance our support for community energy projects.

Strategy Analysis

We will conduct regular internal strategy analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of our community energy initiatives and adjust our approaches to better align with evolving needs and goals.

Strategy Survey

We will implement an annual strategy survey to gather feedback from community groups and stakeholders, using their input to refine our strategies and improve our support services.

ED3

As we progress towards ED3 we will continue to engage with stakeholders to offer extended support. We will offer extended support to community energy projects, providing additional resources, expertise, and guidance to help them overcome challenges and achieve long-term success.

Contact Us

For more information on SPEN's Community Energy Strategy, please visit spenergynetworks.co.uk.

We encourage you to reach out to us with any questions or comments you may have. We are committed to building strong partnerships with our stakeholders and working together to achieve a sustainable and equitable energy future.

Community Energy

Communityenergy@spenergynetworks.co.uk

Flexibility Support

gettingconnected@scottishpower.com

Connections Support

Connectionssupport@spenergynetworks.co.uk

Community Energy Website/STOTS

https://sots.communityenergyscotland.org.uk

Community Energy Webpage

Register as a Stakeholder

Community Energy Strategy

Community Energy/ Flexibility Support Document

Case studies

Case Study:
Sponsorship of Community Energy Wales Conference 2025

In 2025, SP Energy Networks proudly sponsored the Community Energy Wales Annual Conference, reinforcing our commitment to supporting the growth and visibility of community energy across Wales. The event brought together community groups, policymakers, and energy experts to share insights, challenges, and opportunities in the sector.

What we focussed on:
• Strengthening relationships with Welsh community energy stakeholders.
• Showcasing SPEN's support tools and strategy for community-led energy projects.

How we carried out the project:
• Provided headline sponsorship for the conference.
• Delivered keynote contributions and hosted engagement sessions.
• Shared resources including our Community Energy

Benefits:
• Increased awareness of SPEN's role in enabling community energy in Wales.
• Facilitated knowledge exchange and collaboration across the sector.
• Highlighted funding and connection support available to Welsh communities.

Next Steps:
• Continue working with Community Energy Wales to support local mapping and project development.
• Expand outreach and engagement across Welsh communities through workshops and digital resources.
• Ensure Welsh community energy priorities are reflected in SPEN's ongoing strategy and planning.

Michael Shanks, UK Energy Minister, held live Q&A with attendees.

Case Study:
Youth Engagement Programme

This initiative consisted of both online and in-person Community Energy events with participating pupils from schools across Scotland, with a focus on learning more about community energy and how they can support local low carbon technology projects in their area.

What we focussed on:
• The Electricity Grid.
• Community Energy.
• Career Opportunities.

Who was involved in this project:
• School pupils (16-18) across central and southern Scotland.
• Glasgow Community Energy.
• Developing the Young Workforce.
• Engineering Development Trust.

Benefits:
• Highlighting the opportunities to engaging with Community Energy.
• Helping young people understand the role of the electricity grid.
• Highlighting opportunities for young people.

Next Steps:
• Continue to engage young people in Community Energy.
• Ensure we are reaching as many pupils as possible to help support their professional and educational growth.
• Actively encourage attending pupils to apply for roles available within SP Energy Networks.

Engaged with over 100 pupils across Central and Southern Scotland

Glossary

Anchor organisation *(pages 2, 7)*
A large, stable group that supports its community.

Balancing *(page 14)*
Keeping supply and demand of electricity equal on the grid.

Capacity *(pages 4, 7)*
The maximum amount something can contain or produce (e.g., energy).

Capacity building *(page 4)*
Helping people or groups gain skills and resources to do something better.

Carbon emissions *(pages 5, 6)*
Release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, often from burning fossil fuels.

CO_2 *(page 5)*
Carbon dioxide: a greenhouse gas released by burning fossil fuels.

Co-operative Society *(page 7)*
A business owned and run by its members.

Community-led *(page 6)*
Run or directed by local people.

Community Benefit Society *(page 7)*
A type of organisation that runs for the benefit of the community.

Community Interest Company *(page 7)*
A company set up to benefit the community, not private owners.

Decarbonisation *(page 5)*
The process of reducing carbon emissions from energy and industry.

Decentralised *(page 6)*
Spread out, not controlled by one central authority.

Distribution *(pages 2, 7)*
Delivering electricity from the grid to homes and businesses.

Distribution System Operator *(page 9)*
A company that manages the local electricity grid.

DNO *(page 2)*
Distribution Network Operator: a company licensed to distribute electricity in a region.

ED2 *(page 2)*
Electricity Distribution Price Control 2: regulatory period for DNOs from 2023–2028.

ED3 *(page 2)*
Next regulatory phase after ED2, shaping future community energy support.

Engagement *(pages 8, 13)*
Involvement or participation in something.

Feasibility *(page 11)*
How possible or practical something is.

Flexibility *(pages 9, 12)*
Ability to change energy use or supply to help the grid.

Gigawatt (GW) *(page 7)*
A unit of power equal to one billion watts.

GIS *(pages 13, 17)*
Geographic Information System: a tool for mapping and analysing locations.

Grid *(pages 6, 11)*
The network that delivers electricity from producers to users.

GWh *(pages 5, 7)*
Gigawatt-hour: a unit of energy equal to one billion watt-hours.

Infrastructure *(page 8)*
The basic systems and services needed for a society or organisation.

Innovation *(pages 2, 14)*
A new idea, method, or device.

Just Transition *(page 5)*
Ensuring the move to a low-carbon economy is fair for all.

Kilowatt (kW) *(page 7)*
A unit of power equal to one thousand watts.

Megawatt (MW) *(page 7)*
A unit of power equal to one million watts.

Net Zero *(pages 2, 5, 8)*
A target to balance greenhouse gas emissions with removal from the atmosphere.

Network monitoring *(page 9)*
Watching and measuring the performance of the electricity grid.

Non-firm connections *(page 9)*
Electricity connections that may be interrupted or limited at times.

Ofgem *(page 4)*
Office of Gas and Electricity Markets: UK energy regulator.

Renewable *(page 6)*
Energy from sources that are naturally replenished, like wind or solar.

Resilience *(page 13)*
Ability to recover from difficulties or adapt to change.

SPD *(pages 5, 8)*
SP Distribution: part of SPEN, covering Central and Southern Scotland.

SPEN *(pages 4, 5)*
SP Energy Networks: the company distributing electricity in certain UK regions.

SPM *(pages 5, 8)*
SP Manweb: part of SPEN, covering North Wales, Merseyside, Cheshire.

Self-service tools *(page 14)*
Online resources that let users do things themselves.

Stakeholder *(page 2, 13)*
A person or group with an interest in a project or decision.

Stakeholder Led Improvements *(page 13)*
Changes or actions based on feedback from people or groups with an interest in the project.

State of the Sector Report *(page 7, 15)*
A report summarising the status and progress of community energy projects.

Strategic Optimisation *(pages 10, 12)*
Planning to make the best use of resources for long-term goals.

Transmission *(page 4)*
Moving electricity over long distances from power stations to local grids.