



Community Energy

SP Energy Networks Community Energy Overview Guide

Community
Energy

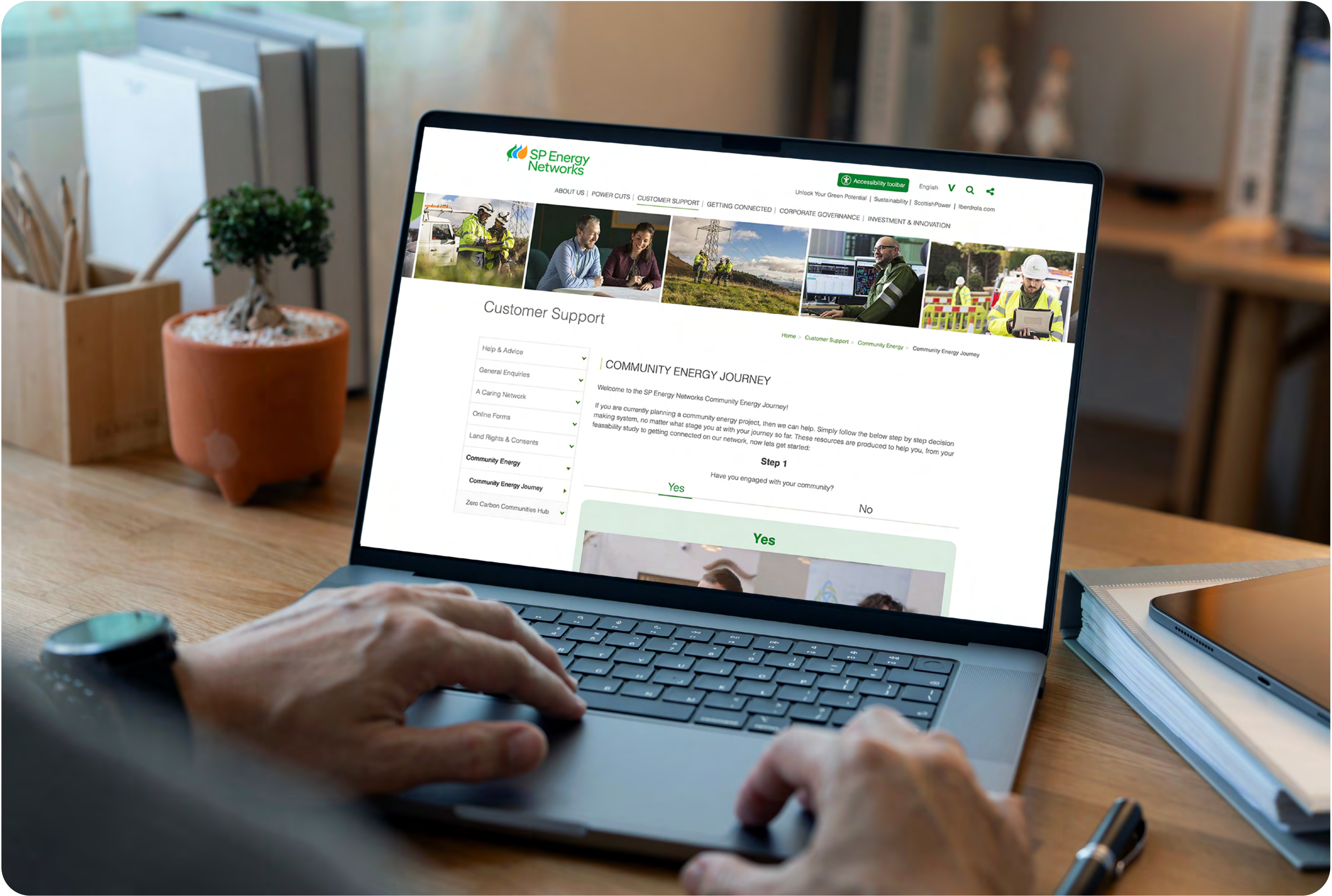


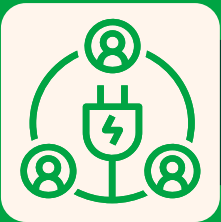
Overview Guide

This guide provides a structured checklist to support communities in planning, developing and delivering community energy projects from project inception through to any ongoing obligations.

It is designed to inform you about the Community Energy Journey, Community Energy more broadly and then provide a practical checklist for delivering a successful community energy project.

For more information, please visit:
SPEnergyNetworks.co.uk





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1. What is SP Energy Networks Community Energy Journey?

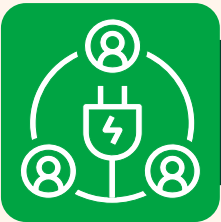
Community energy projects can bring a wide range of benefits to local areas — from generating renewable electricity and reducing carbon emissions to creating income, improving local resilience, and bringing communities together around a shared purpose. However, developing a community energy project can sometimes feel complex, particularly for groups who are at the beginning of their journey.

To help support community groups through this process, SP Energy Networks developed the Community Energy Journey — a step-by-step guide designed to help groups understand the key stages involved in developing a community energy project. The journey has been designed to support communities at different stages of development, from early engagement and idea generation through to feasibility, funding, technical support, and ultimately connecting a project to the electricity network.

The journey combines practical guidance, videos, and supporting resources to help demystify the process and make community energy more accessible. It is not intended to be a rigid pathway, as every project and community is different, but instead provides a flexible framework to help groups understand the questions they may need to consider as their project develops.

These supporting guidance documents have been developed to sit alongside the Community Energy Journey and provide additional detail, examples, and practical advice for each stage of the process.



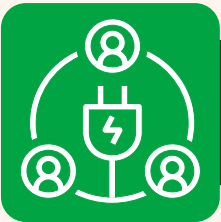


2. What is Community Energy?

Community energy refers to locally driven energy initiatives such as renewable electricity generation, renewable heat solutions and energy efficiency programmes that are owned, controlled, or delivered by communities for the benefit of local people.

These projects play an important role in supporting the UK’s transition to net zero by enabling low-carbon, decentralised energy solutions while also addressing issues such as fuel poverty and energy security.

By retaining financial benefits within the community and encouraging local participation, community energy schemes help build public engagement, increase acceptance of energy infrastructure, and deliver wider social, environmental, and economic value.



3. What is this Overview Guide and why is it so important?

This overarching guide has been developed to complement the SP Energy Networks Community Energy Journey framework, providing practical support to communities as they progress through each stage of project development. While the original framework clearly outlines the key phases involved, from initial engagement through to delivery and operation, this companion resource is designed to make those stages more accessible, actionable, and user-friendly.

The guide brings together a series of structured checklists aligned to each stage of the journey. These checklists can be used to ensure that each stage is delivered in clear, manageable steps, enabling community groups to track their progress, identify gaps, and build confidence as they move forward. By breaking down complex processes into tangible actions, the guide supports a more consistent and informed approach to project development.

Recognising that community energy projects often involve diverse stakeholders, varying levels of expertise, and evolving objectives, the guide is designed to be flexible and inclusive. It can be used by groups at different stages of maturity, whether they are just exploring initial opportunities or refining advanced plans. The checklists also act as a useful engagement tool, helping groups communicate progress with partners, funders, and network operators.

Ultimately, this resource aims to reduce barriers, improve clarity, and support better decision-making throughout the community energy journey. By providing a practical overview to the existing framework, it empowers communities to navigate the process more effectively and increases the likelihood of successful, sustainable project outcomes.



4.Community Energy Project Checklist

The checklist below provides a high-level overview of the key actions to consider across each stage of the SP Energy Networks Community Energy Journey.

It is designed to help community groups understand where they are in the journey, track their progress and identify any areas that may require further consideration before moving forward.

Every community energy project is different, and groups may move between stages or revisit earlier actions as their project develops. The checklist should therefore be used as a flexible guide alongside the more detailed guidance, templates and supporting resources available for each stage.



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Community Energy Project Checklist: Vision, Purpose & Scope

Step 1 : Community & Stakeholder Engagement

Notes

☐ Identify key stakeholders

☐ Speak to local community to assess support

☐ Plan engagement strategy and develop key messages

☐ Identify initial supporters and challenges

Step 2 : Project Research

Notes

☐ Define goal, technology and scope

☐ Consider appropriate legal structure

☐ Assess project finances: estimated costs, funding sources, revenue etc.

☐ Consider knowledge gaps for feasibility study support

☐ Consider any potential ongoing obligations: monitoring, record keeping, O&M etc.

Step 3: Feasibility

Notes

☐ Identify key stakeholders

☐ Speak to local community to assess support

☐ Plan engagement strategy and develop key messages

☐ Identify initial supporters and challenges

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Community Energy Project Checklist

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Step 4 : Technical Assistance

Notes

☐ Assess need for technical assistance across the project

☐ Discuss projects grid connection with SP Energy Networks

☐ Consider support for moving project forward from feasibility

Step 5 : Financial Support

Notes

☐ Estimate project costs

☐ Identify funding sources

☐ Define revenue streams

☐ Assess operational costs

Step 6 : Install & Ongoing Obligations

Notes

☐ Promote the project appropriately

☐ Plan operations

☐ Consider potential maintenance needs

☐ Plan for end-of-life

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Community Energy Project Checklist



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communityenergy@spenergynetworks.co.uk