



2019

ANNUAL REPORT

Community Energy London (CEL) was formed in 2017 as a network of people and organisations with an interest in supporting the development of community energy projects across the capital.



Chair: Syed Ahmed (Energy for London)
 Vice Chair: Ben Pearce (Power Up North London)
 Vice Chair: Alex Hartley (South East London Community Energy (SELCE))
 Secretary: Sydney Charles (en10ergy)
 Treasurer: Alan Jones (SE24 Energy)

CEL Officer: Hannah Short (hannah@communityenergy.london)
 CEL Officer: Fleur Disney (October 2017 - April 2019)

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Chair's Introduction

Despite major setbacks and challenges faced by the sector at the national level over the past year, community energy in the capital has managed to steadily grow, prosper and bring forward a number of exciting new projects.

London's urban environment places major constraints on the size and types of technologies that can be used, so solar PV projects are now being joined by community-led LED lighting retrofits, EV charging infrastructure installations, and increasingly important energy advice and fuel poverty alleviation workshops.

Community Energy England's (CEE) recent State of the Sector report set out that 2018 was the toughest year yet for community energy groups, with project development adversely impacted by a number of Government decisions. The closure of Feed in Tariff (FITs) was the most significant of these, but followed earlier setbacks including the removal of tax incentives¹ for renewable energy schemes and the addition of business rates to solar PV projects, all of which have contributed to stalling activity. Of particular concern for London was the Government's decision to cut energy efficiency funding, through reductions made to the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and the failure of the Green Deal, both of which have played their part in reducing opportunities for energy efficiency action.

... And yet, community energy groups continue to demonstrate resilience and determination, exploring new business models, technology options, and, critically, building partnerships with new stakeholders to help steer projects through to completion.

Community Energy London has worked closely with the Greater London Authority (GLA) to support the sector during this challenging period. The launch of the London Community Energy Fund (LCEF) by Mayor Sadiq Khan has supported over 30 community energy projects across the city over its first two rounds of funding, and an announcement on LCEF 3 is to be made shortly, which could result in even more projects being supported by the Mayor before the Mayoral election of May 2020.

Extinction Rebellion and the School Strikes for Climate protests have raised the issue of climate science as never before, and CEL and its members are seeing increased interest by community groups and individuals who want to take action locally on reducing emissions. A Net Zero commitment by Government is not enough: it now needs to be followed by new policies to support communities to take climate action in their neighbourhoods.

It's been a busy year for CEL and we are already working on plans for 2020. I would like to thank all of CEL's fantastic members for their huge drive and energy in bringing forward project after project, and special thanks to CEL's Board, Alan, Alex, Ben and Sydney in shaping the direction and ambition of CEL over the year. Thanks also to Afsheen Rashid through the support that Repowering London have provided in securing initial funding for CEL and providing office space to CEL's Officer, Hannah Short. I also want to thank CEL's previous Officer, Fleur Disney who helped get the organisation off the ground in the early days of our establishment.

Syed Ahmed
Chair, Community Energy London
October 2019

¹ Enterprise Investment Scheme (EIS), Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme (SEIS) and Social Investment Tax Relief (SITR)

COMMUNITY ENERGY IN LONDON 2019

10

**NEW GROUPS
DELIVERING
PROJECTS**

INVESTMENT CROWDFUNDED

> £600K

SOLAR CAPACITY INSTALLED

475 KW

Community Renewable
Energy Wandsworth
Ealing Transition
En10ergy
Lambeth Community Solar
North Kensington and
Chelsea Community Energy
Power Up North London
Schools Energy Coop
SE24
Wolves Lane

Community Renewable Energy Wandsworth
Ealing Transition
En10ergy

North Kensington and Chelsea Community Energy
Power Up North London
Schools Energy Coop
SE24
Wolves Lane

15

EVENTS HELD

By Community Energy London

PROJECTS INITIATED

35

FUNDS SECURED FOR COMMUNITY ENERGY

£800,000

Camden Community Energy Grant
Islington Community Energy Fund
Lewisham Community Energy Fund
London Community Energy Fund round 2 & 3
UK Power Networks Power Partners



These numbers have been calculated based on best available data

The work from CEL has been vital in supporting the efforts from the Mayor to nurture community energy in the Capital. Despite the adverse policy climate towards community energy groups, the collaborative efforts of CEL and the Mayor have led to more and more community energy projects coming to life in London and new community energy groups being established. Whilst the GLA provides the grant funding necessary for these projects to get going, CEL has been instrumental in bringing the community groups together, enabling shared learning and getting more established groups to mentor new community groups.

Dr. Sylvia Baron

Programme Manager Energy Efficiency Team, Greater London Authority

October 2019

What is community energy?

Community energy is used to describe a project in which a group of people come together in an open, participatory way to generate, own, manage, or reduce consumption of energy. In the UK community energy projects come in many shapes and sizes but generally share aims of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, re-connecting people with how energy is generated and consumed, tackling fuel poverty, and returning benefits to the local economy.

The community energy sector has been an active player in developing small-scale low carbon generation capacity over the past decade, with projects sited in often challenging locations which commercial developers would not look to develop, ranging from church roofs and school buildings, to residential tower blocks and GP surgeries. These installations have involved countless hours of volunteer-time to develop, raised millions of pounds in investment, and generated many thousands of GWh of renewable electricity. More recently, community energy projects have also involved energy efficiency retrofits, the provision of energy support services to fuel poor households and behaviour change programmes.

Community energy groups are unique in their ability to support the development of these projects, being able to identify suitable sites and provide access to local networks to help build community support for the development of these new energy assets. The majority of projects also crowd-source funding via community shares offers from their local community to finance these developments, driving investment into their neighbourhoods and typically employing local businesses as part of the install. Projects have also provided training and internship opportunities for local people, undertaken residential energy surveys and supported residents to help reduce their energy use and carbon footprint.

A report on the future potential for community energy, commissioned by Government, found that: *“community projects installed offer between 12-13 times as much community value re-invested back into local areas as would be achieved through 100% commercial models. The estimate is based purely on an assessment of economic value, when full social and wider environmental returns are factored in the benefits will be substantially higher.”*²

² *Community Renewable Electricity Generation Potential Sector Growth to 2020*, Report to DECC, 2014

London and Community Energy

London has proved to be a challenging environment to develop community energy projects. London-based groups often struggle to identify sites for energy installation in a volatile property market with the complexity of tenure and ownership of commercial building stock. Reluctance or refusal of some local authorities to engage with community energy groups, low levels of social capital, and lack of funding and capacity building opportunities has compounded these challenges. These are development issues common to many other community energy groups across the UK but are particularly acute in London, where the limitation on size (and hence generation output for technologies such as solar) impacts the overall economic viability of projects.

There are multiple benefits associated with community energy which are aligned with policies ranging from the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG) 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), the Government's Clean Growth Strategy and Net Zero commitment and London Mayoral goals, including reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, an increase in decentralised energy, reductions in energy costs for buildings that serve the community, alleviation of fuel poverty, and wider issues around the promotion of community cohesion.

London Community Energy Fund (LCEF)

The Government's decision in 2016 to close the Urban Community Energy Fund (UCEF), a £10m fund to kick-start renewable energy generation projects in urban communities across England by providing grants and loans to support the development stages of a renewable energy project, was a major setback for London groups. UCEF had been in operation for less than two years, and though challenging, had begun to support project development in the capital.

Following UCEF's closure, CEL worked closely with the Greater London Authority (GLA) to set out the benefits and potential of community energy³ and the close alignment of project outputs to the Mayor's own policy goals. CEL welcomed the Mayor's announcement to establish a London Community Energy Fund (LCEF) in October 2017, linked to the Mayor's Solar Action Plan for London, which supported 13 projects across a range of sites⁴. LCEF 2 was launched in August 2018 and, following discussions with CEL and its members, was expanded to take in a wider range of actions, including energy efficiency and behavioural change work, and an LED lighting retrofit project, as well as community-led solar PV installs.

A total of 31 projects have been supported to date and LCEF3, launched by the Mayor during London's first Climate Action Week (July 1 – 8, 2019), will provide support to a further tranche of projects (to be announced shortly), which should bring the number of LCEF-supported community energy schemes in the capital to over 50.

³ *Community Energy in London: Realising the Potential*, 2017

⁴ See <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/energy/london-community-energy-fund#acc-i-53824>

Who are we?

Community Energy London is a not-for-profit member organisation established to support the growing network of community energy practitioners currently operating in London. We aim to help community energy become a core component of London's transition to a zero-carbon city with a clean, fair and decentralised energy system. Our objective involves supporting practitioners and identifying opportunities for collaboration, capacity building, identifying and lobbying for potential new funding routes, engaging with policy makers, local authorities and existing communities, and finally promoting community energy to new stakeholders and the wider London public.

CEL's day-to-day activities are supported by a Board, made up of a Chair and four supporting Directors, who all work on a voluntary basis, and one part-time paid CEL Officer.

Key aims

Community Energy London works to establish an energy system that puts people first. We want to:

- Support new and existing community energy groups in setting up and scaling up, and offer career pathways for community energy practitioners
- Help establish mechanisms for communities to collaborate with Local Authorities
- Increase training and funding opportunities for fuel poverty frontline workers
- Help community energy in London to diversify, so that every school, place of worship and GP surgery has an element of community energy
- Engage with policy makers & Local Authorities on community energy
- Promote community energy to the wider London public
- Support the retrofit of all suitable buildings as part of the UK's largest infrastructure project ever
- To put people at the heart of our energy system
- To be part of the solution to the climate emergency

We work to achieve these aims by:

1. **Capacity building to support existing and the formation of new community energy organisations** through regular CEL meetings and events, sharing learning and best practice, peer-to-peer mentoring and provision of template documents and other resources.
- 2 **Identifying, communicating and securing new funding opportunities** – from feasibility through to the completion of projects.
3. **Co-delivery and development of a greater number and larger projects** through collective tendering and collaboration.
4. **Engaging with and lobbying policy makers** (borough councillors and officers, GLA officers, the Mayor, London MPs, amongst others) to ensure that policies supporting community energy are integrated into London's policy framework where appropriate.
5. **Facilitating administrative support** such as installation monitoring, shareholder administration, impact measurement, billing, marketing, and provision of meeting space etc.
6. **Raising the profile of community energy** through events, contact with the media, provision of research, and linking with similar-minded community organisations and local and national NGOs working in the environmental and energy space.

CEL Activities 2018 - 19

In addition to its monthly meetings CEL hold at City Hall for members and supporters, and monthly progress meetings with the GLA, CEL has been actively involved in a range of activities over the past year or so. These have included:

- Working with the GLA to on the design of the London Community Energy Fund (LCEF) and promoting the launch of the second and third rounds of the programme
- Supporting new community groups with their LCEF applications, including: Calthorpe Energy Lab, Bromley By Bow Centre, Portsoken, North Kensington Community Energy, R Urban, Edward Woods Community Centre, Elizabeth House Community Centre, Holly Lodge Estate Committee, Masbro Centre, and Newbery House Cooperative. CEL has advised several new energy groups – supporting them through the process of applying for funding and facilitating mentor opportunities with existing member groups. Due to the increased funding opportunities, we have also been able to encourage dormant groups to re-engage with community energy.
- Launching CEL's online project map⁵, which identifies locations and details of projects in place to help promote wider recognition of the groups and their work. CEL is also collating case studies to better communicate the impacts and stories of projects so far.
- Delivering a CEL event with Friends of the Earth - '*Stories of London's energy revolution*' - presenting case studies of London community energy projects to FOE's London local groups. (March 2019)
- Successfully registering Community Energy London (CEL) as a Community Benefit Society in January 2019.
- Arranging an active programme of Member briefings and events. These included:
 - A community energy 'hackathon' at Bates Wells Braithwaite to explore possible models to increase the financial viability of roof-top community solar projects post-Feed in Tariff (October 2018)
 - A fuel poverty capacity training workshop by Alex Hartley of SELCE (January 2019)
 - A 'Go Get Funded' workshop by Dr. Giovanna Speciale (SELCE), Afsheen Rashid (Repowering London), Neil Madgwick (UKPN), and Hermina Popa (Social and Sustainable Capital) (February 2019)
 - Carbon Offset funds presentation by the Greater London Authority (February 2019)
 - 'Assessing the impact of community energy' by REGEN (March 2019)
 - Community LED Retrofit Case Study by Tim Watson of CREW (May 2019)
 - Exploring post-FIT models for community energy schemes by Andre Pinho of Brixton Energy (August 2019)
 - Mike Smyth (Schools Energy Coop) & Andy Rolfe (Ealing Transition) presentation on their successful model (September 2019)
 - Mayor's Energy Efficiency Fund and Good Growth Fund presentations (September 2019)
- Responded to the following Government consultations:
 - The future for small scale low carbon generation – a call for evidence (BEIS),
 - Consultation on the Feed in Tariffs scheme (BEIS); and
 - The introduction of a Smart Export Guarantee (BEIS)

⁵ See <https://www.communityenergy.london/>

- Promoted three London Boroughs Community Energy Funds (Islington, Camden and Lewisham) and offered guidance and support to several Local Authorities who are considering establishing similar funds
- Re-launched Community Energy London's website in April 2019
- Collaborated with UK Power Network's (UKPN) on the launch of their £300,000 Power Partners programme in January 2019, which provides funding for community groups to deliver projects to help alleviate fuel poverty and improve energy efficiency of community spaces. A second round was initiated in June 2019.
- Held CEL's 3rd annual conference at City Hall on June 27th as part of Community Energy Fortnight.
- Held four workshops during the Mayor's first London Climate Action Week (LCAW) in July 1-8. *Community Energy in a Climate Emergency North, East, South and West* in collaboration with Islington, Haringey, Camden, Tower Hamlets, Newham, Southwark, Lewisham, Lambeth, Kensington and Chelsea and Ealing councils.
- Secured interim funding from the GLA to help support the CEL Officer role.

Snapshots of Community Energy Over the Past Year

October 2018



Ealing Transition host Deputy Mayor for Environment and Energy Shirley Rodrigues and Cllr Julian Bell (Leader of Ealing Council) at unveiling of solar projects at Mandeville and Horsenden schools

November 2018

CEL's 20th Meeting!

Community Energy London's 20th monthly meeting since forming in 2017

December 2018

#LCEF2 launched

CEL issue press release 'Good start to the new year for London's community energy sector' following announcement by the Mayor of projects awarded under London Community Energy Fund (LCEF) Phase 2

January 2019



Power Partners

A community investment fund from UK Power Networks

Electricity Distribution Network Operator (DNO) UK Power Networks, launch a new £300,000 fund to community organisations offering energy efficiency and money saving advice

February 2019



On 4th February 2019 PUNL successfully raised £28,000 with 39 investors in 12 days for the Caversham GP solar PV project in Camden

March 2019



Friends of the Earth

Friends of the Earth invite Community Energy London to hold event for London FOE groups 'Community Power: stories of London's energy revolution'

April 2019



Members of en10ergy management committee, with Catherine West MP and guests at launch of Fortismere School solar project in Muswell Hill.

May 2019



North Kensington Community Energy SMASH their fundraising target for Stage of the NKCE project

July 2019



July 2nd saw the launch of SE24 Sustainable Energy's latest solar PV installation - 76 solar panels installed on the roof of Walworth Methodist Church .

August 2019



City of London Community Energy host their first solar panel making workshop in Aldgate. A huge success!

September 2019



Local groups striving to cut their carbon emissions can now apply for a grant of up to £15,000 from the new Lewisham Community Energy Fund – just launched.

October 2019



London scored big at this year's Community Energy England (CEE) Awards, which included SELCE scooping two prestigious awards.

Community Energy in 2020

The landscape for community energy at the national policy level remains pretty unclear at the present time, with perhaps the best opportunity in the near-term being the government re-introducing tax relief measures for community energy investments. But – even that is hugely uncertain and any decision-making processes have been further delayed by the cancellation of the November 2019 Budget Statement and – at the time of writing – a General Election on the 12th of December.

There are however some causes for optimism and key areas where progress can be made. And lying under all this is the fact that we are in a Climate Emergency where commitments to take action have been made by government – and with Glasgow hosting the November 2020 international climate meeting (COP26) – real pressure on Ministers to show leadership in cutting emissions. CEL will be working closely with our colleagues at Community Energy England, and wider stakeholders, to explore new policy options as the government sets out its Net Zero Carbon Plans in early 2020.

Closer to ‘home’ – 7 May 2020 will also see a London Mayoral election. CEL will be reaching out to all Mayoral candidates to highlight the fantastic work that has been accomplished by community energy groups over the past few years – and, critically, set out the potential for further action that could be accomplished across the capital with the right support in place. Importantly, we would like to ensure that a new Mayor would continue with the successful London Community Energy Fund (LCEF) and work with CEL to see how this could best be utilised.

CEL were pleased that Lewisham launched its Community Energy Fund in September 2019, joining Camden and Islington in doing so. At present, 26 London councils have signed ‘Climate Emergency’ Declarations and are busy working on their action plans on how to reduce emissions in their areas. Community Energy can definitely play a role in this – and it would be great if we could see a further 23 councils introduce community energy funds!

We know the public wants to see more community energy action: a Client Earth survey of August 2018 found that “Almost three quarters of consumers would be interested in joining a community energy scheme if the government made it easier⁶”. And for the forthcoming election, a new Client Earth survey revealed “Seven in ten people (70%) believe that the climate emergency demands more urgent action⁷”. 2020 will hence be a critical year to see if strong public sentiment for action will be transformed into meaningful policies by government.

⁶ British public supports urgent action and litigation on climate change – poll by Client Earth, 20 August 2018

⁷ Climate policies could determine next election as public demands action to tackle “greatest challenge facing humankind”, Client Earth Wednesday 30th October 2019