

COMMUNITY ENERGY PARTNERSHIPS

GB ENERGY FUNDING & SWNZH SUPPORT

Arabella Peatfield, South West Net Zero Hub

Great British ENERGY

MARKET ROLE

South West NET ZERO HUB

As the UK accelerates to Clean Power 2030, local and community-owned energy has a critical role to play, giving people a real stake in our energy future, reducing bills for critical frontline services, bolstering national energy independence and building wealth in our neighbourhoods, towns and cities.

Our vision: By 2030, all communities will have the opportunity to own and benefit from local energy.

1000+

Local energy projects supported by 2030

Lower bills

For frontline public services, households and communities

£bn

Additional investment crowded into the sector

Widening access

Every community with the opportunity to own local energy



Deploying investment

Providing grants, affordable finance and equity to de-risk high-impact models and unlock high-value local projects.



Building capacity

Providing hands-on technical, commercial and process support alongside pre-approved partners and digital tools that make development simpler and cheaper – especially for new and underserved communities.



Standardising delivery

Creating standard models, contracts and processes so projects can be replicated, financed and delivered at pace — without reinventing the wheel each time.



Recognising value

Building wider social benefits – lower public energy bills, community wealth, resilience – directly into our investment and delivery decisions.

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PRINCIPLES GUIDING GBE STRATEGY

- **Scale and pace:** 1000+ projects by 2030 through aggregation, standardisation and partnershiping with experienced local and community partners
- **Fairness:** ensuring that all communities regardless of income or geography can own and benefit from local power
- **Innovation:** de-risking, standardising and scaling novel, high-impact models – especially those which reduce bills for consumers
- **Ownership:** prioritising community and public ownership in all investments, maximising value and wealth that stays in local areas

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How GBE plan to invest to unlock community ownership at scale

Grant funding: GBE Community Fund and Partnership Grants

- **Loans:** to address credit market access and failures
- **Equity:** to invest in projects and pipelines – helping de-risk and active partners in development

Grant funding

GB Communities Fund: Feasibility and development funding for community energy projects.

Partnerships Fund (NEW): Feasibility and development funding for projects developed by local authorities and community energy in partnership.

Public sector

Behind-the-meter solar and storage at no up-front cost, with end-to-end delivery by GBE Local in partnership with a local/community developer. Community ownership options built-in to project delivery, finance and governance.

Community power

Accessible loans for community energy organisations developing their own sites at construction stage and seeking finance to invest in shared ownership in commercial developments at any point post-planning/grid connection.

GBE equity

Equity options for GBE Local to invest directly in projects, pipelines and developer organisations. Includes the **Stewardship** model, where GBE can purchase shared ownership stakes on behalf of communities, allowing them time to raise finance and build capacity.

GBE COMMUNITY ENERGY AND PARTNERSHIP FUNDS

*COULD STILL BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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- TO BE ANNOUNCED LATER IN SEPTEMBER
- Grants will be managed by the Treasury (Grant agreements, change requests and claims - learnings from the Mayors Funds)
- The application form is via a web form, which you will need to complete and upload supporting documents and templates - PLEASE use a file protocol for updating supporting documents
- Projects appraised by GBE and the Treasury - Hubs will have a say via the GBE Funds Programme Board
- Potentially 2 funding windows during 2026/27. Type A (generation/storage) & Type B (energy advice) projects in scope.
- Programme end 31st March 2028 - all project feasibility work must be completed by this date
- Hubs will offer wrap around support, from application to project completion after initial triage (depending on volume of requests for support, and the stage/maturity of the group/project, applicants may be advised to further develop and apply for the second funding window)
- Stage 3 Capital Funds planed for a later launch

SWNZH SUPPORT (SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

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Initial Triage:

- Identify those projects that are not eligible
- Sign post to third party support if governance support is required
- Gauge amount of applications from mature orgs, that may only require light support
- Identify projects that are not developed enough for the first window, and advice actions/support to prepare for future windows

Support:

- Provide templates, eg Risk Assessments, Project Plan templates
- Webinars on how to complete the application form, and top tips
- Up to two 1:1s
- If applications completed within an agreed time period we can check over them and advice on further input requirements/improvements to the project

Appraisal:

SWNZH will also carry out a light appraisal of all submitted projects, in order to fairly represent them at the GBE Programme Board

SWNZH SUPPORT: SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS

(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

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- 1:1 every 6 weeks
- A range of support from third party providers, to be agreed by the Hub
- Building connections between LA and CE orgs
- Events and peer Learning
- Toolkits and templates (eg monitoring and evaluation, financial model)
- Check first claim and GBE tracker input to ensure that the right amount of data and the right tone has been inputted
- Support with change requests
- Further capacity building, subject to resources

In addition to this SWNZH will be leading the fund working group across the nation, and completing our own performance management requirements

TOP TIPS FOR APPLICANTS (MIGHT BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

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- Start your application NOW using the old GBECF application form and guidance on SWNZH website here
- Remember 3 quotes – start getting these now
- CVs of staff working on the project AND directors

Additional things to consider:

- Equalities – does your project impact on groups from the equalities characteristics?
- State Aid, if working in Northern Ireland
- Fraud

SWNZH SUPPORT

- **Created a regional capacity building workstream and new team** dedicated to building local authority and community energy partnerships. Contact arabella.peatfield@westofengland-ca.gov.uk
- **Commissioned Community Energy capacity building activity to strengthen the sector**
  - Development of Community Energy Networks across the South West
  - Match funding Community Energy Go, targeted at the SW
  - Mentoring for SW groups (provided by Ashden)
  - Piloting support programmes to get Local Authorities 'partnership ready'
- **Supporting the South West Advice Providers Forum** to identify opportunities arising from Warm Homes Plan for community energy groups (and partnership working with local authorities)

TOOLKITS & RESOURCES

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Hubs and other partners are currently developing standardised toolkits and templates. Lots of resources on Net Zero Go

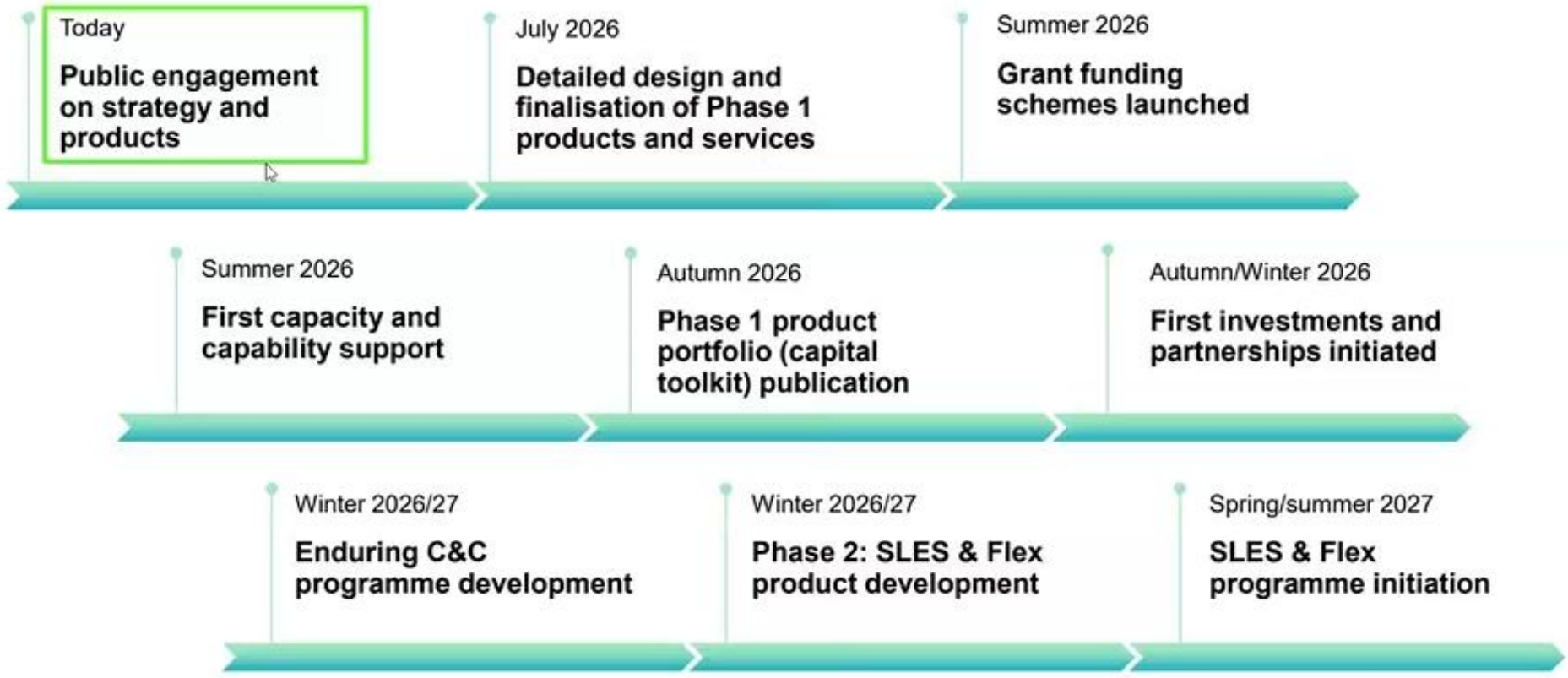
- Guide to Community Solar on Council Assets | GSE NZ Hub, Climate Guide and Community Energy Pathways
- Community Energy Governance guidance | GSE NZ Hub, CSE
- Building collaboration between local authorities and community energy groups | CAG Consultants
- How-your-council-works-A-guide-for-community-energy-groups.pdf
- Webinar: Behind-the-Meter Energy Systems |29 Sept, Local Partnerships
- Solar potential analysis – GIS mapping: Instructions pack |
- Younity Community Power Club allows community generators to earn more through a Licence Exempt Supply arrangement

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PIPELINE

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Planned next steps.



IN CONCLUSION

- **Email SWNZH to share your plans and identify support** arabella.peatfield@westofengland-ca.gov.uk
- **Engage with LAs / CE groups to identify project opportunities**



Photo courtesy of Cornwall Climate Action Network

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Visit
www.swnetzerohub.org.uk

Contact me
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