

Support for community energy groups

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What are the Net Zero Hubs?

- Created by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero in 2018, the Local Net Zero Hubs are a national network of five local partnerships.
- The Hubs provide strategic and technical support to local authorities, public sector bodies, and community groups for free.
- We support projects from the earliest stages of development and feasibility to investment and delivery.

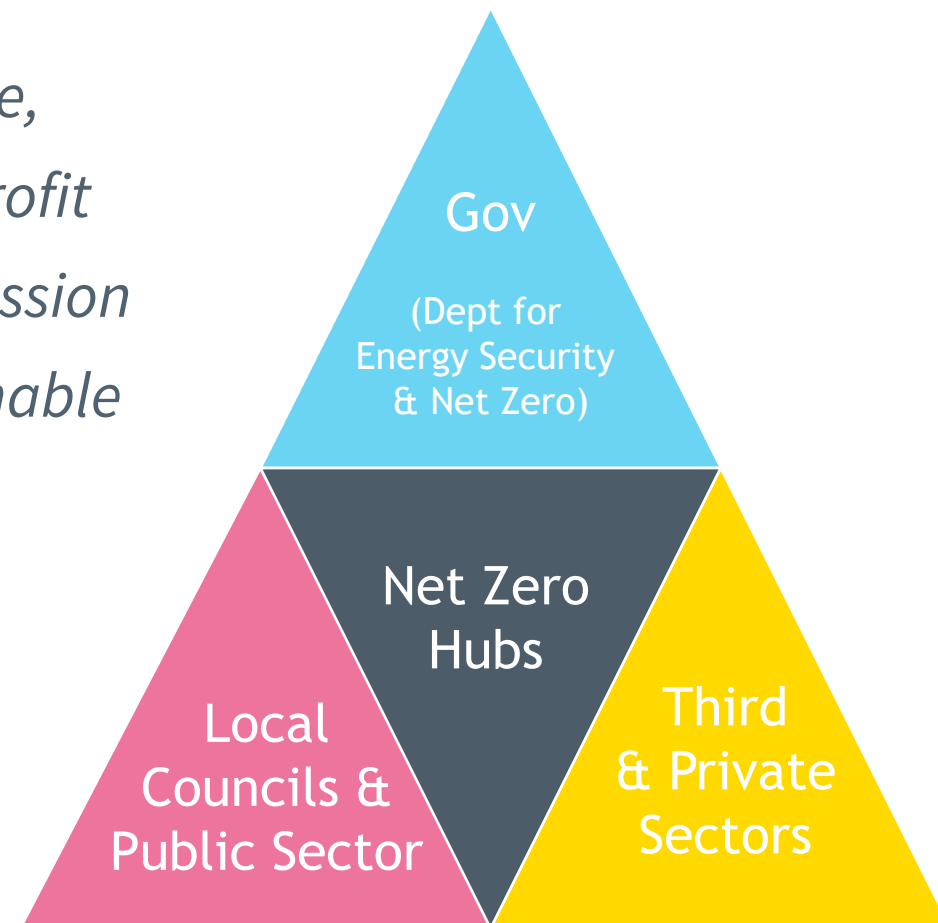
What are the aims of the Net Zero Hubs?

The Local Net Zero Hubs' objectives are to:

- Increase the number, quality and scale of local clean heat and energy projects
- Enable local areas to attract private or public finance for Net Zero projects
- Raise awareness of the opportunity for, and benefits of, local energy investment
- Support regional co-ordination and collaboration between local partners and share local learning

Purpose statement in the South West

The South West Net Zero Hub provides impartial advice, technical support and funding to public and not-for-profit organisations, to develop projects that accelerate emission reductions and enable the transition to a more sustainable future.



Community energy in the South West

We administered the Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) up until last year.

We administer the Community Energy Fund (CEF) now.

We can work to support community energy beyond CEF.

But, how?

Community energy in the South West

The Hub commissioned some work to carry out an assessment of the community energy sector in the South West.

Delivered by Community Energy South and a local partner team.

The aim:

To identify the needs of the community energy sector, and define the potential role that the Hub could take in addressing those needs.

Community energy in the South West

The objectives:

- Gain and in-depth understanding of the sector, it's make up, level of expertise & current activity.
- Understand the needs and wants of the sector & how the Hub can help meet these needs.
- To support collaboration between the CE sector, local government and the private sector.
- To identify key stakeholders who can address the challenges faced by the CE sector.

Community energy in the South West

The work involved:

- Researching and categorising community energy organisations across the South West.
- Workshops and engagement with community energy groups via the local partners.
- Interviews with a broad range of stakeholders.
- Interviews with energy and climate action representatives from 6 LA's in the region.

Community energy in the South West

Highlights:

- 70 community energy groups identified in the SW region.
 - 8 within tiers 3 & 4.
 - 62 within tiers 1 & 2, with highly variable degrees of capability, support and appetite to expand or scale.
- Supportive, experienced and impactful stakeholders.
- Supportive, understanding and interested local authorities.

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Key recommendations:

The central finding is that **healthy local energy ecosystems** are the crucial element of a thriving community energy sector.

Community energy in the South West

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The central finding is that healthy local energy ecosystems are the crucial element of a thriving community energy sector.

The key actors in this healthy ecosystem are:

- Local Authorities
- County, District, Town & Parish Councillors
- Community energy organisations
- Existing community energy networks
- Supply chains
- Informed and engaged public
- DNOs
- Capacity builders and support organisations
- Local asset holders
- Regional Area Energy Planners
- Net Zero Hub
- Commercial renewables developers

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Community energy in the South West

“The needs and wants of the sector & how the Hub can help meet these needs”...

- Recognition that the support needed differs depending on what stage of development a CE group is at.
- Conclusion that well established / professionalised groups are best placed to offer support and guidance to new / emerging / stagnant groups.
- 3 pages of recommendations

You can download the summary report:

<https://www.swnetzerohub.org.uk/knowledge/information-guides-and-toolkits/>

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Workshop activity & discussion

- Please give feedback / thoughts on the recommendations
- Is there anything missing?
- Use this session to explore generally what support / resources / events / activities might help you, and this network

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Next steps:

- Complete the report feedback review phase.
 - final stages of this happening now
- Use this work to inform the Hub's direction and focus for supporting community energy in the South West.
- Also using SW Hub RCEF evaluation report and a synthesis report of RCEF across all Hubs which can support the development & improvement of CEF / grant funding.

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