Item 2

10th November 2026

Glasgow City Council

Net Zero and Climate Progress Monitoring City Policy Committee

Report by George Gillespie, Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability

Contact: Gavin Slater Ext: 78347

COMMUNITY RENEWABLE ENERGY FRAMEWORK (CREF) - PHASE 2 UPDATE

Purpose of Report:

To provide Committee with an update on the Glasgow City Council's Community Renewable Energy Framework.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Committee:

(a) Notes the contents of this report.
(b) Notes the updated information in respect of Phase 1 of the CREF programme.
(c) Notes the intention to report to the City Administration Committee on the CREF Capital Grant 2026 recommendations and seek approval for grant award to successful applicants.
(d) Notes the revised approach to CREF development.
(e) Notes the timeline for returning to Committee with proposals for Phase 2 of CREF delivery.

Ward No(s):	Citywide:
Local member(s) advised: Yes No	consulted: Yes No

1 Introduction

1.1 Glasgow's Community Renewable Energy Framework (CREF) outlines the Council's package of support for local groups to develop community-led renewable energy projects. The CREF is intended to accelerate local decarbonisation and support Glasgow's transition towards a net zero carbon future by increasing the deployment of locally owned renewable energy generation.

1.2 The CREF also seeks to create lasting community value through renewable energy assets that generate long-term benefits for the communities in which they are located.

1.3 Community participation is a key building block of the CREF and the development of community capacity and participation is at the core. The framework therefore aims not only to deliver individual projects, but also to strengthen local capability over time. Community renewable energy projects face a range of practical challenges, and the ultimate aim of the CREF is to overcome these by establishing a scalable and replicable framework.

1.4 The CREF has been established with the principle that the Council's role is to create the conditions necessary for community organisations and delivery partners to succeed, positioning Glasgow City Council as an enabler of community renewable energy.

2 Background

2.1 In September 2024, the City Administration Committee approved Glasgow's Community Renewable Energy Framework.

2.2 In November 2024, the Contracts and Property Committee authorised the Council to negotiate off-market leases for the four sites initially identified as suitable for the Community Renewable Energy Framework Phase 1.

2.3 A progress update to Committee in March 2025 provided information on the development of the CREF process for Phase 1. A further update was provided in September 2025, detailing the public launch of the CREF, the timeline for assessing pre-applications received and the indicative timelines for progressing lead community organisations through the CREF Phase 1 process.

2.4 The September 2025 update to Committee also committed the Council to conduct a review of the existing CREF processes to inform a revised model for Phase 2 of the CREF.

2.5 The remainder of this report provides:

- An update on CREF Phase 1 Delivery
- An overview of the review of CREF Phase 1
- The revised approach to CREF development

- The timeline for returning to Committee with proposals for Phase 2 of CREF delivery.

3 CREF Phase 1 Delivery Update

3.1 Launched in June 2025, The CREF was widely promoted to community groups and organisations in proximity to the four available sites. Two organisations applied to become CREF Lead Community Organisations, and were successful following assessment of the pre-application submissions. Love Milton (LM) were aligned with the site in the Milton area (Mingulay Place) and Glasgow Community Energy (GCE) were assigned the three locations in the Easterhouse area.

3.2 GCE also acted as a technical advisor to LM and committed to undertake community engagement within the Easterhouse area with the aim to potentially identify local organisations to assume the role of lead community organisation for these three sites.

3.3 With the support of the CREF Working Group, led by NRS Sustainability and supported by Finance, Legal, Property & Asset Management, Corporate Procurement, and People Make Glasgow Communities, both organisations have progressed with exploring the potential for renewable energy at their respective CREF locations.

3.4 Love Milton has reached the stage of undertaking professional technical feasibility studies into the potential for renewable energy project development at the Mingulay Place location. The technical feasibility study will consider the potential of various renewable energy technologies in the context of the CREF location, its surroundings, the regulatory, financial and planning context and the potential for energy use. The outputs will enable the CREF project to move from early concept to an informed business case development at Mingulay Place, reducing uncertainty and creating a clear roadmap for implementation.

3.5 The technical feasibility study is being funded through the Scottish Government Vacant and Derelict Land (VDL) Fund, administered by GCC. Funding has been provided to undertake feasibility studies with completion anticipated by the end of the calendar year.

3.6 With regards to the Easterhouse sites, GCE has undertaken high level investigations of the feasibility of various renewable energy options, however further progress is affected by minimal local community capacity and buy in at this early stage. GCE are producing a report which will summarise the findings of their work in Easterhouse to inform the next steps on these 3 sites.

4 CREF Capital Grant 2026

4.1 The CREF was originally designed to support community progression of renewable energy on undeveloped sites, focussing on opportunities available

on sites designated as Vacant and Derelict Land (VDL). In addition to the work being undertaken on VDL sites, a number of local community organisations have lease agreements for the use of GCC buildings and assets through the People Make Glasgow Communities process. It was identified through the CREF project that many of the organisations could also benefit from the development of renewable energy options at these sites.

4.2 Therefore as part of the CREF, a dedicated funding stream has been developed for PMGC organisations that hold, or are in the process of securing, a suitable lease agreement for Glasgow City Council properties. This is being delivered through the CREF Capital Grant 2026, which provides grants to support eligible capital costs associated with the installation of renewable energy generation assets on buildings managed by PMGC organisations. It is expected that individual projects will not exceed £80,000 of capital costs.

4.3 The grant has been delivered through a two-stage application process comprising an Expression of Interest (EOI) stage and a Full Application stage. To date, seven participating organisations have progressed through the EOI stage and invited to develop and submit a full application.

4.4 Once the required additional information or application amendments have been completed, a report will be prepared with funding recommendations for the City Administration Committee. This Committee will be asked to formally approve grant award to successful applicants.

5 CREF Phase 1 Review

5.1 As part of the commitment to assess the progress of CREF Phase 1 and understand the issues impacting upon delivery and address obstacles, a comprehensive review has been undertaken and key findings are outlined below.

5.2 In summary, in the locations identified in the first phase, there is some community interest and organisational willingness to deliver community-led renewable energy projects in Glasgow, particularly where an established local organisation exists to provide leadership and coordination. However, several challenges remain to improve scalability, reduce delivery risk and broaden participation in future phases.

5.3 The review was informed by engagement with community organisations throughout Phase 1, including the Phase 1 lead organisations, CREF Working Group members and external organisations. The review also benefitted from consultant support and highlighted several positive outcomes from Phase 1 which are outlined below.

- During the development of the CREF Phase 1, stronger collaborative working was established across multiple Council services and external partners, including Glasgow Community Energy, Local Energy Scotland and local community organisations.

- The Working Group model is an effective mechanism for engaging internally and also with applicants and providing support throughout the process.
- There is interest from all partners to enable increased community led renewable energy projects.

5.4 Phase 1 has also functioned as a pilot with the review identifying several areas where the CREF can be strengthened.

5.4.1 Community Capacity Constraints: The review identified community capacity as one of the most significant barriers to delivery. Successful participation in the CREF requires community organisations to understand the principles of community energy, appropriate governance structures, project management capability, technical understanding and the capacity to engage in a multi-year project. This therefore requires more dedicated support directly into communities.

5.4.2 The short timescales associated with Phase 1 meant that only communities with existing organisational capacity were well placed to participate. This was evident in Milton, where Love Milton provides local leadership. In contrast, the absence of a comparable local lead organisation in Easterhouse has contributed to slower project progression.

5.4.3 Limited Site Availability: The site selection methodology applied in Phase 1 resulted in a limited number of sites available for community development. A binary assessment process resulted in sites being excluded where mitigation measures may have been feasible. This constrained the programme's reach and limited options for community involvement.

5.4.4 Compressed Delivery Timescales: The need to align with external funding timelines (e.g. from Local Energy Scotland), both in terms of application and completion schedules, created a compressed pre-application period. This limited opportunities for communities to develop interest, build partnerships and strengthen organisational capacity before being expected to submit applications.

5.4.5 Technical Feasibility Risks: The Community led model that the CREF aims to deliver, means that technical feasibility assessments were not undertaken prior to the original four CREF sites being offered to communities. This creates a risk that projects may progress through significant stages of development before technical barriers to delivery become apparent.

5.4.6 Communication: The review identified that communication on the benefits of community led renewable energy should be reviewed. In line with the findings from the review of Glasgow’s Climate Plan, we have developed methods to improve communication of the relationship between localised renewable energy generation and the realisation of local benefits.

5.4.7 External Delivery Constraints: Learning from comparable projects internationally suggests that, although community energy projects can be successfully developed in urban environments, the current Scottish legislative

and market environment presents challenges for delivering community energy projects at scale on areas of VDL.

6 CREF Development Process

6.1 NetZero Mission Cities Support

6.1.1 Glasgow City Council sought external independent support to further develop the CREF. The City Expert Support Facility (CESF) was commissioned through the NetZeroMissionCities programme who procured the services of The Equator Company. The purpose of this independent work was to provide strategic analysis and practical guidance to support future development of the CREF.

6.1.2 The consultants examined the regulatory environment, the characteristics of Scotland's local energy systems and electricity networks, relevant community energy case studies, and the systemic conditions that may influence the development of community renewable energy projects in Glasgow. It provided options for how the framework could operate in practice, how key stakeholders may interact, how projects may progress from concept to operation, and which governance and delivery arrangements are most suitable to support successful implementation.

6.2 GreenDEMO Project

6.2.1 In addition, GCC was able to secure further support through its participation in the GreenDEMO project, a European peer-learning and innovation HORIZON funded programme involving Glasgow and several partner cities. The project focuses on supporting the improvement of how local authorities engage residents and communities in the development and delivery of sustainability and climate initiatives, whilst strengthening governance, communication and participation mechanisms.

6.2.2 Lessons from GreenDEMO have informed consideration of how the Council can broaden participation, improve awareness of community renewable energy opportunities and support communities to engage more effectively in the development of local projects.

6.3 The outputs of both these pieces of work have contributed significantly to the development of the CREF.

6.4 CREF Working Group

6.4.1 The CREF Working Group was established to advise and coordinate support for community organisations as they undertake the process of developing their community renewable energy project. The Working Group comprises representatives from the Sustainability Team, People Make Glasgow Communities, and Surveying and Estates Management as core members.

Advisory members include the Energy Management Team, Finance, Planning, Legal Services, and Local Energy Scotland.

6.4.1 As part of the Phase 1 review, the Working Group has played an active role in clarifying issues relating to site selection and planning constraints, leasing arrangements, community engagement and capacity building, and governance and approval requirements within the CREF framework. This work is helping to identify opportunities for improving CREF delivery. The Working Group will continue to provide input and support at both a practical level with applicants and help to inform, guide and oversee continued implementation of Phase 1.

7 CREF: Revised Approach

7.1 During this review a wide range of lessons have been learnt which are being used to develop the CREF. These include, understanding community demand, strengthening engagement, identification of potential sites and streamlining the internal processes for lease progression. However, as outlined through the review, successful delivery of the next stages of the CREF is dependent on more capacity and support for communities than originally anticipated.

7.2 Mapping of Demand

7.2.1 More support is required to establish the level, location, and nature of demand from community organisations, including whether there is sufficient local appetite and organisational readiness to support progression of community renewable energy projects.

7.2.2 Phase 1 demonstrated that there is community interest in community renewable energy, but engagement opportunities were constrained by the programme design and short timescales for delivery. Prioritising time to engage with communities from across the city to understand where there is interest in learning more about a community led renewable energy project needs to be a primary focus. This will be undertaken through working closely with key community-based partners and sharing accessible information widely in locations accessible to communities such as libraries and schools.

7.3 Indication of Interest

7.3.1 Communities will be invited to show their Indication of Interest (IOI), as the engagement progresses. This will be used to gather information on community priorities, preferred locations, organisational readiness and support requirements. An indication of interest does not automatically lead to a formal application or lease process, it enables more accurate information to be gathered on needs and interest from communities.

7.3.2 Once a community has shown an Indication of Interest, GCC will offer the opportunity to hold both online and in-person information sessions to introduce communities to the principles of community renewable energy projects and

provide realistic expectations regarding project timescales, opportunities, challenges and likely support requirements.

7.4 Targeted Engagement - capacity building

7.4.1 The capacity-building stage will be a key output of the revised approach. It will help determine whether, and the extent to which, interested organisations require additional support before any formal project development stage can be considered. It will also enable an understanding of which organisations are best placed to provide this support.

7.4.2 The purpose of this stage will be to understand:

- Community ambitions and expected outcomes;
- Site suitability and project opportunities;
- Existing governance and organisational capacity;
- Support and capacity-building requirements;
- Potential risks and barriers; and
- The most appropriate pathway for project development.

This work will recognise that successful community-led renewable energy project delivery depends not only on site suitability but also on the readiness of communities to undertake a complex and long-term project.

7.5 Site identification

7.5.1 Phase 1 demonstrated that the initial site-led approach limited engagement to communities located near a small number of pre-selected sites, restricting wider participation across the city.

7.5.2 Work will continue to develop the GCC led site identification, focussing on but not exclusively covering, GCC-owned vacant and derelict land, understanding site ownership, availability and capability of being secured for a sufficient period to support community renewable energy projects through the CREF process. This process will also be informed by the preferred locations identified in any Indications of Interest submitted by local communities. Sites subject to insurmountable constraints will be removed.

7.6 Network of wider support

7.6.1 The success of CREF Phase 2 is also dependent on continuing to build the network of existing support services and funding provided by other organisations. These include Local Energy Scotland and the CARES programme and Community Energy Scotland mentoring scheme for communities.

8 Next Steps and proposed timeline

8.1 The project will continue to provide support to the CREF Phase 1 sites and for the delivery of CREF Capital Grant scheme to PMGC communities.

8.2 The project will progress with the mapping of demand and initial community capacity building in interested communities alongside their wider work to embed engagement into climate projects. This work will start in early 2027 and will be complete by the end of 2027 and will include engagement with communities on sites that they have highlighted as being of interest through submission of an Indication of Interest.

8.3 The project will continue to refine the list of proposed CREF sites with colleagues across other teams by the end of 2027.

8.4 Work will continue to explore opportunities for cross organisational working and funding to ensure a coherent package of support is developed for CREF Phase 2.

8.5 A further report will be brought back to this committee following completion of these priorities setting out findings and recommendations on whether and how to proceed to subsequent stages at the end of 2027.

9 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial:	CREF financial support for organisations may be sourced from external or internal (GCC) funding sources, including from the Vacant & Derelict Land Fund or allocated capital funding.
Legal:	The report raises no direct legal issues.
Personnel:	The revised approach will require officer resource to coordinate community engagement, manage demand mapping, support site identification, assess capacity-building needs and prepare recommendations at the decision point.
Procurement:	The report raises no procurement issues.

Council Strategic Plan: Grand Challenge(s) this report aligns with: Reduce poverty and inequality in our communities; Fight the climate emergency in a just transition to a net zero Glasgow; Enable staff to deliver essential services in a sustainable, innovative, and efficient way for our communities.

Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2025-29? Please specify.	Yes
What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report?	The policy framework has the potential to have an even greater positive impact on vulnerable groups by building capacity and support in SIMD areas to help alleviate Fuel Poverty, Cold Homes and Health Inequalities in Scotland.
Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.	An agreed allocation of any benefits from selling energy from the renewables will be invested back into the local community through a defined community benefits process and/or a community wish list.

Climate Impacts:

Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:	The Community Energy Framework supports Climate Plan Category on Energy. Specifically, Energy Objective 3; Support Community renewable energy generation though the implementation of the Community Renewable Energy Framework (CREF)
What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?	Decarbonisation of energy and testing community embedded pathways to our 2030 Net Zero Target.
Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?	Yes, this proposal will positively contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target.

Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:	None

10 Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee:

(a) Notes the contents of this report.

(b) Notes the updated information in respect of Phase 1 of the CREF programme.
(c) Notes the intention to report to the City Administration Committee on the CREF Capital Grant 2026 recommendations and seek approval for grant award to successful applicants.
(d) Notes the revised approach to CREF development.
(e) Notes the timeline for returning to Committee with proposals for Phase 2 of CREF delivery.