



Glasgow City Council

Net Zero and Climate Progress Monitoring City Policy Committee

Report by Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Regeneration & Sustainability

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UPDATE ON THE COMMUNITY RENEWABLE ENERGY FRAMEWORK

Purpose of Report:

To provide Committee with an update on the Community Renewable Energy Framework.

Recommendations:

The Committee is asked to:

- 1) Note the contents of this report.
- 2) Continue to support the work of Neighbourhoods, Regeneration & Sustainability (NRS) in the development of a Community Renewable Energy Framework.
- 3) Note that the finalised Community Renewable Energy Framework will be brought to committee following summer recess.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the development of the Community Renewable Energy Framework (CREF) and the public sector support required to mobilise community-owned renewable electricity and heat installations in Glasgow.
- 1.2 The Community Renewable Energy Framework (CREF) aims to support the increased generation of renewable energy from community-owned assets by identifying a portfolio of sites which are suitable for community-led renewable energy development, and outlining a process that enables GCC to work with communities to enable the delivery of such projects.
- 1.3 This report provides an update on the following areas:
 - Our approach to support eligible communities to consider, and act upon opportunities to deliver community led renewable energy projects through the proposed Framework.
 - The potential to utilise learnings from the [People Make Glasgow Communities](#) process to support the CREF.
 - Progress towards identifying a portfolio of sites suitable for community-led renewable energy projects, including the number of potential sites for the initial phase, the route to market, and the proposed launch of a Community Renewable Energy Opportunity Map displaying the sites for community renewable development.

2 Background

- 2.1 Our collective ability to enable high quality community-led renewable energy is influenced by both national and local policies. Alignment of these policies, procedures, and funding could remove significant barriers to low carbon solutions and enable innovations to rapidly scale.
- 2.2 At a National level the [Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement](#) (LRRS) sets out the vision for a strong and dynamic relationship between Scotland's land and its people. This is supported by the [Community Empowerment Act](#), which introduces a right for community bodies to make requests for ownership, lease, or other rights to all local authorities, for any land or buildings they feel they could make use of. It also outlines the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process for the transfer of the responsibility for an asset from the Council to a community group or voluntary organisation.
- 2.3 At a local level, [Glasgow's Climate Plan](#) identifies the opportunity to build capacity to support sustainable innovation to unlock Vacant and Derelict Land for greening and rewilding in combination with renewable energy generation measures and reducing flood risk (Action 37). The plan also commits to supporting communities to build capacity to deliver community renewable energy projects (Recommendation 59).

- 2.4 Whilst there are existing community-owned renewable energy projects in the city, the utilisation of public land for community renewables is novel and no formal support is currently in place to enable communities and GCC to transact land for this purpose. Therefore a new process is needed to enable land to be used by communities for this purpose.
- 2.5 The Community Renewable Energy Framework may require a review of the Council's Off Market Disposal policy to allow for the inclusion of transfer of council land for projects that contribute to the Council's Net-Zero Carbon target. This will include community renewable energy generation, and projects where there could be benefits to the economy, society, or environment over both the short and longer term. If required, the policy update will be taken to the Contracts & Property Committee for approval prior to the steps outlined within the remainder of this report.
- 2.6 The development of the CREF will also be closely linked to the development of Climate Investment and Delivery Vehicles, ensuring that the principles set out in the CREF to support community-owned energy assets is supported by the aforementioned vehicles. The developing vehicles will have targets and KPI's included to support community ownership and to support a Just Transition.
- 2.7 In addition to support the Climate Plan, the CREF will also present opportunities to support the Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy and Glasgow City Council Carbon Management Plan by seeking to promote opportunities for community-owned assets to feed energy into heat networks and/or Council-owned properties.

3. Delivery Approach

- 3.1 As part of the development of the CREF, work has been undertaken by NRS to identify the most common barriers and constraints to mobilising a community-owned renewable energy project. These include:
- The acquisition of land.
 - The requirement of community organisations to be formally constituted or working towards being formally constituted on a democratic basis prior to formal land negotiations beginning. This is a requirement to enable the community to apply for funding.
 - Due to the conclusion of the feed in tariff, the requirement for a Power Purchase Agreement to ensure the financial stability of the project for capital funding and for the asset to be insured.

- Funding support provided by from [Local Energy Scotland \(LES\)](#) is on a case-by-case basis and is currently focused on the delivery of outputs associated with project development.
- As the siting of urban renewable energy projects within community neighbourhoods is a new concept, we have not to date had specific planning guidance in place to support.

3.2 The Community Renewable Energy Framework aims to guide and support communities to mobilise a community energy project and overcome these barriers. In order to do this, the CREF requires the development of both internal and external processes. Both of which are outlined within our approach to delivery.

3.3 Internal Process

3.3.1 Before the sites can be formally taken to market a number of internal steps need to be followed:

1. The selected sites will require to be declared surplus to requirements and identified for Community Renewables at the Contracts and Property Committee (CPC). CPC will then approve the sites for use in the CREF.
2. Concurrently the CREF process (outlined in section 3.4) will be finalised for consideration by the Net Zero and Climate Change Monitoring Policy Development Committee and the City Administration Committee.
3. Once we have approval from the Contract and Property Committee to take the sites to the community, the sites would then be informally offered to the community to scope interest. This will be initiated after steps 1 and 2 are complete.
4. Once an interested community is confirmed the sites would then be taken back to Contracts and Property to agree and initiate the Off Market Disposal.

3.3.2 Although this doesn't not stop competing interests for the sites from other developers; it does allow us to market the assets for the purpose of community renewables projects.

3.4 External Processes

3.4.1 The involvement of communities in the development, management and delivery of local services and venues is already a key policy priority of Glasgow City Council. [People Make Glasgow Communities \(PMGC\)](#) is the mechanism by which local groups and organisations can express an interest in being more involved in the delivery of community projects. Through the scoping of the CREF, this process has been identified as a mechanism that can be replicated to support communities with an interest in community owned renewable energy projects.

3.5 The use of this process within the CREF would require some modifications. However once complete, the CREF will provide support for communities to navigate the transfer of land. This support will include:

- Guidance to the community to provide the necessary documentation, and lodge their expression of interest in land or a building identified in Community Renewable Energy Opportunity Map (see section 4).
- Guidance on how to undertake checks to confirm if there are any obvious title or other restrictions on the use of the building/ venue/ facility which would preclude any form of transfer of responsibility.
- Guidance to navigate the Off Market Disposal or lease process,
- and to set out the conditions of the contract and assess the capacity of a community to deliver and manage the asset over time.

3.6 Once the process to transfer land is underway, there are additional external opportunities for support, which the CREF will sign post to, to enable the further development of community renewable energy projects. The additional external support is framed around the four phases to the delivery of a community energy project. They are: (1) project inception, (2) project development, (3) construction, operation, asset management and maintenance, and (4) project conclusion.

3.7 Support has been identified for each of the 4 phases of delivery. Direct community support is available from [Local Energy Scotland](#) (LES) at all phases of delivery. A summary of the proposed support is outlined below:

- Phase 1: LES can support the development of the business case required in order to apply for the acquisition of land in phase 1.
- Phase 2: LES can support the community during project development.
- Phase 3: Energy co-operatives could provide support for the construction, operation, asset management and maintenance required in phase 3.
- Phase 4: LES will provide support for the negotiations needed with GCC around the decommissioning or transfer of the renewable energy asset at the end of lease period.

4. Site Portfolio & Opportunity Map

4.1 GCC Owned Vacant & Derelict Land Sites suitable for renewable potential have been identified through the following steps:

- (i) carrying out a desktop study via a PV opportunity map that assess technical and policy constraints,
- (ii) reviewing the Community Asset Register, Vacant & Derelict Land Register, and Housing Supply list,
- (iii) removing sites with potential for flooding, and the current planning applications pipeline, and
- (vi) ensuring the legal titles have been checked.

- 4.2 Before the sites can be formally taken to market the internal processes outlined in section 3.3 need to be followed:
- 4.3 To support communities through this process a Community Renewable Energy Opportunity Map (story map) is being developed. It will provide information about the aims of the CREF, details of the sites available in the first phase, details of the site characteristics and location, and information on the process that communities need to follow.

5 Timeline

- 5.1 Table 1 below provides an indicative timeline for required for the full suite of next steps for the CREF.

CREF Milestones	Timeline 2024-2025						
	Jun	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	2025
Community Renewable Energy Framework & Site Story Map Completed							
Net Zero Committee and CAC Approval							
Sites Declared Surplus through formal process managed by Property and Consultancy Services							
Contracts and Property Committee (Stage 1): Sites approved for CREF							
Launch of sites to scope community interest. Initiate support from GCC for transfer of land.							
Contracts and Property Committee (Stage 2): Initiate off market disposal with interested communities							
Transfer of land and Project Initiation (Communities access support through the CREF and LES etc)							

Table 1 – CREF Milestone Plan

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 The CREF and Site Story Map will be brought back to the Net Zero and Climate Progress Monitoring City Policy Committee post recess. This will be followed by the City Administration Committee for formal approval.
- 6.2 GCC will evaluate the success of the CREF based on the uptake of the first tranche of sites by the community and report within a year of CREF launch.
- 6.3 Following finalisation of the sites to be included, and completion of the Storymap, a process of engagement will be initiated to fully engage with the relevant stakeholder groups and to provide the support detailed in the CREF in relation to the delivery of community-owned renewables.

7. Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

Financial: There are no direct financial implications arising from the report.

Legal: The report raises no legal issues.

Personnel: The development of the Community Energy Framework is managed within existing resource in the sustainability team with support from wider council through the dedicated working group. The delivery of the framework will require support from the Glasgow Makes Communities Team.

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 2021-25? Please specify. An Equality Impact Assessment needs to be undertaken and the impact will be scoped as part of the Framework and Community Makes Renewables process.

What are the potential equality impacts as a result of this report? To be scoped through undertaking the EqIA.

Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage. The sites have been identified in SMID areas. An agreed allocation of Profits 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 Recommendation 59: The Council's business support and planning services are made available to support

community investment in renewable energy, including the Glasgow Community Energy Cooperative. And Action 46: To establish a framework for engagement with local energy cooperatives.

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

8 Recommendations

8.1 The Committee is asked to:

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