



State of the Community Energy Sector Survey brief

Tenders are invited for the design and delivery of a survey and report outlining the current state of the community energy sector in the United Kingdom.

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1. Summary

Community Energy England (CEE), Community Energy Wales (CEW) and Community Energy Scotland (CES) are inviting tenders from organisations with the requisite skills, experience and expertise to carry out research related to community energy sector in the United Kingdom in 2020, building upon previous [State of the Sector](#) (SOTS) reports for England & Wales.

This contract is split into three parts to present findings on activity across the United Kingdom, in Wales and in North West England.

2. Background and context

CEE and CEW have published four annual state of the sector reports with the aims of:

- Building a comprehensive understanding of the community energy sector in the UK.
- Identifying key barriers and opportunities for community energy organisations and where facilitation and support is needed.
- Creating an evidence base for CEE and CEW's advocacy work.
- Shaping CEE and CEW's shaping activities to build capacity and grow the community energy movement.
- Reducing the research burden on community energy organisations, by providing a publicly accessible database for organisations and researchers seeking to further understand the sector.

The SOTS reports have been well received and are CEE and CEW's flagship reports. As such, the profile of both the organisations and the sector have increased, as the SOTS reports have been quoted in many different outlets and are consistently used by politicians and civil servants.

There are, however, a number of challenges related to ensuring the ongoing impact of the SOTS:

- As community energy activities and the energy system become more complex, designing a survey that is simple enough to ensure a high response rate whilst being detailed enough to capture meaningful data is becoming increasingly difficult.
- The need to clearly demonstrate the additional social and environmental impact that the community energy sector delivers whilst ensuring that survey questions are posed in a way that is simplistic enough for comparison across the UK.
- The SOTS is used by politicians and funders developing support mechanisms and has been successful in leveraging discussions with key stakeholders and politicians. However, it has been difficult to gather the level of detail in the survey responses to always create a clear evidence base. For example, linkages between specific barriers such as the removal of tax relief and the increase in stalled projects.
- The community energy sector has been affected by significant changes to the policy landscape, broader shifts in the energy system, and rapid development of new technology. Within this context we want to make sure that the narrative and findings from SOTS gives a clear and inspiring message about the potential and future of the sector, as well as an accurate portrayal of its current state.
- The quality of the data depends on a good survey response, which may be challenging for some community energy groups to provide (such as development trusts) during COVID restrictions.

In order to try to overcome these challenges and ensure the ongoing impact of the SOTS, we would like to work with the successful contractor to extend the project into Scotland, redesign the SOTS survey and how the findings are presented, and publish findings from 2020.

If successful and if future funding allows, this contract may be extended for a further two years.

3. Project scope

Scope: Part 1

CEE, CEW & CES are looking to appoint a contractor to work alongside them to redesign the community energy SOTS survey and to produce a UK-wide SOTS report for 2020.

The work commissioned here is expected to consider, as a minimum, an overview of:

- Key UK policy and support changes in 2020.
- Community energy organisation data across the UK e.g. number of organisations, type of organisation, number of staff/volunteers, equality & diversity data, number of members.
- Total community energy projects and activities in 2020, broken down by electricity generation, heat generation, storage, electric vehicles, and energy efficiency.
- Value of the finance raised and invested within 2020.
- Added value delivered by community energy. We are keen to see some sort of measure of social return on investment to help us to promote the value of community energy.

- Challenges/barriers & opportunities, particularly looking at what communities are doing around shared ownership, PPAs, heat, transport, energy efficiency.
- Case studies.

It is essential that the survey continues to receive a high response rate. We will work with the successful applicant to produce a list of priority areas and survey questions for research based on the above headings, but advice is sought as to the most effective way to design and deliver the survey (we are also open to other methods of data capture) to ensure a high completion rate whilst delivering meaningful and impactful data.

In addition, we would expect those taking part in Wales to be able to take part in either English or Welsh and that all correspondence with groups in Wales should be done bi-lingually. CEW can provide support on this.

Scope: Part 2

CEW is seeking to produce a stand-alone Welsh report which will sit alongside the UK SOTS report. This report should support and complement Part 1 as it is important to recognise that UK policy has a significant impact on Wales and that CEW, CEE and CES regularly work together when lobbying on UK policy decisions. Welsh Government has confirmed funding for the report and more detail on this will be available from CEW shortly.

Data on Welsh organisations gathered under Part 1 will feed into this report.

It is expected that in addition to providing a Welsh focus to the minimum requirements set out in Part 1 above, the Welsh report will explore:

- Policy context in Wales. What is different in Wales and what impact does that have on community energy? What further support could make an impact? It will be important to recognise that UK policy also has an impact on Wales.
- How do groups feel about the future? Are they optimistic or pessimistic?
- Specific Welsh Case studies.
- Key lobbying asks for Welsh Government 2021 based on the above data as well as suggestions for working with CEE and CES on lobbying at a UK level.

We hope that this will become an annual report to help CEW and the Welsh Government monitor and track progress within the community energy sector in Wales, understand the impacts of key policy decisions in Wales and to gauge the level of confidence community energy groups in Wales have about the future prospects.

It is important that engagement is supported in both English and Welsh and the report should be fully bi-lingual. CEW can help with this, but it will be a crucial element of the work.

Scope: Part 3

The successful contractor will also be required to produce a regional report for Electricity North West, from the data provided in Part 1 of the scope, that will include as a minimum:

- Community energy organisation data: number of community energy organisations; type of organisation; number of staff/volunteers; equality & diversity data; number of members.

- Community energy projects and activities, specifically the total installed capacity in 2020 to add to the running total from previous years and number of groups across the main categories of generation, energy efficiency, storage and EVs.
- Value of the finance raised and invested within 2020.
- Additional value delivered by community energy through community benefit funds, social impact, environmental activities.
- A summary of the policy support changes and requests from the main report.
- An interpretation of the findings from the main report and a commentary on if there are any differences in the distribution Network Operator (DNO) licence area.

There may be the opportunity to work with other DNOs to provide further regional reports. The format of the regional report can be co-designed with CEE and the appropriate DNO but should act as a supplement to the main report to give figures of the size of the sector in each participating DNO licence area and where appropriate commentary on any specific features of the sector in that area as it differs from the national picture. DNOs will be able to provide postcode level data for the footprint of their licence area. They may also be able to provide other support such as lists of known groups, help to promote the survey and insight and intelligence into the sector in their area. Electricity North West has committed to providing all of the above.

Indicative approach

The research should be conducted using a mixture of methods including:

- A survey sent to all known community energy organisations (CEE, CES & CEW will support with targeting groups and wider dissemination).
- Follow up phone/video calls with selected community groups to develop case studies or to check data if necessary.
- Desktop research of any community energy organisations that do not respond to the survey and identification of new organisations that may be missing from the list.

Additions/improvements to the above approach are welcome.

Communications with Welsh groups must be bi-lingual and the opportunity to speak in Welsh on calls will be key. CEW can offer this service on behalf of the contractor but this must be reflected in the costings of the project if required.

Data must be supported by evidence and validated. All data is to be given to and remain the property of CEE, CES and CEW.

We also require three webinars to be organised in partnership with CEE, CEW & CES: one ahead of the survey being launched to raise awareness of the importance of the survey and to increase likelihood of survey completion; one during the survey to help with any queries; and one after to launch the report. CEE can lead on the arrangements for the webinars.

Outputs

The project is expected to result in:

Scope 1

- A designed report for the United Kingdom (this could be in the form of a PDF or integrated into a new webpage on CEE, CES and CEW's websites).
- An Executive Summary report.
- 3-5 case studies.
- A database of all data collected for the project in an accessible format for CEE, CES and CEW to use for further analysis. Ideally, CEE would like to be able to incorporate this data into their Capsule CRM system.
- A database of selected, anonymised data collected for the project in an accessible format for that is suitable for sharing publicly.
- A creative and accessible dissemination strategy, including social media pack, online and offline dissemination materials (e.g. infographics, data tables, key messaging and lobbying asks, PowerPoint slides, animations, interactive online data maps or tools). As some of these options may be expensive/take additional time, they may be quoted for as an optional addition to the main tender quote.
- A communications plan for launching the report (CEE, CES & CEW will lead on the delivery of the plan).

Scope 2

- A designed report focussed on Welsh activity.
- An executive summary report.
- 3-5 short case studies.
- A database of all data collected for the project in an accessible format for CEE and CEW to use for further analysis.
- A dissemination strategy, including social media pack, online and offline dissemination materials (e.g. infographics, data tables, key messaging and lobbying ask, PowerPoint slides).
- This would all need to be made available bi-lingually.

Scope 3

- A designed report for Electricity North West's geographical area.
- Report graphics provided as separate documents in a suitable file format for use in PowerPoint and Word documents.
- A database of the survey results for the DNO licence area.

Any further regional reports will be discussed as separate contracts.

Contract management

To deliver this project, the appointed contractor will be expected to work closely with CEE, CES and CEW, including:

- Attending an (online) inception meeting.
- Providing regular updates on progress to the project managers, including highlighting any challenges faced in delivery.
- Working in a collaborative and iterative way.
- Agreeing in advance the methods to be pursued and individuals to be consulted.

The key contacts will be:

- Project Director - Emma Bridge, Chief Executive, CEE.
- Project managers, scope 1 – Philip Coventry, CEE, Nicholas Gubbins, CES, & Robert Proctor, CEW.
- Project manager, scope 2 – Robert Proctor, CEW.
- Project manager, scope 3 – Helen Seagrave, Electricity North West, and Philip Coventry, CEE.

The appointed contractor shall nominate and provide details of the person who will be the main point of contact and project manager(s) responsible for contract delivery. This should be clearly set out in submissions.

CEE, CES and CEW will provide the following information in order to assist with this contract:

- SOTS 2019 data for England, Wales & Northern Ireland will be shared with the successful applicant, subject to the necessary confidentiality agreements.
- A list of community energy organisations and contact details across England & Wales and support in contacting them.
- Candidates for strong case studies.
- If required, support on Welsh language provision in Wales.

For Scotland, the Scottish Government commissioned an annual report from Energy Saving Trust on the number & type of community and local energy projects to assess progress towards their 1GW CLE target for 2020. This is publicly available and can be emailed to interested contractors.

Skills, knowledge and expertise of the contracted team

Tenderers will be expected to set out how they will undertake the task effectively and efficiently and show the following skills and experience:

- Understanding of the community energy sector across the UK.
- Delivery of research projects and stakeholder engagement to obtain relevant insights and information.
- Knowledge of demonstrating social return on investment models.
- Experience of providing comprehensive, usable reports or other creative, innovative and/or online methods of summarising complex findings and recommendations for a range of audiences.
- Proven project and risk management acumen, with the ability to meet key milestones within a short timeframe.
- Working closely and flexibly with clients.

4. Timeline

Stage	Date(s) and Time(s)
Issue of Invitation to Tender	9 November 2020
Deadline for receipt of clarifications	4 December 2020
Deadline for submission of Tenders	18 December 2020
Notify Tenderers of outcome of evaluation	8 January 2020

Interviews	w/c 18 January 2021
Final evaluation	22 January 2021
Expected date of Contract Award	25 January 2021
Contract start date	1 February 2021
Contract end date	31 May 2021

5. Budget

The maximum budget is set out below and includes all expenses and VAT over the contract period. This will be aligned to key milestones and competition of outputs and agreed at the inception meeting. Tenders exceeding the maximum budget will not be considered further in the evaluation process.

Maximum budget = £40k

Tenders are required to set out indicative costs as a minimum against the following areas of activity:

- Survey design, dissemination, collation, data analysis and database provision (with data provision split by DNO area) – with costs split for England, Scotland & Wales.
- Designed full report and executive summary for the UK, including case studies and dissemination materials.
- Designed report for Wales, including case studies and dissemination materials.
- Designed report and graphics for Electricity North West's geographical area.
- A database of the survey results for Electricity North West's licence area.

6. Submission process

The submission process will be as follows:

- This proposal was sent to selected organisations with experience of gathering data in this field and posted on CEE, CES' and CEW's websites on 9 November 2020.
- Final responses should be submitted by close of play on 18 December 2020 to emma.bridge@communityenergyengland.org. Representatives from the contracting organisations will be available to discuss the brief if required prior to this date.
- The intention is to select and notify applicants of the final decision by 25 January 2020. Representatives from CEE may contact selected bidders to discuss proposals in more detail ahead of the final decision being made.
- A simple legal agreement recording the contract will be completed by 1 February 2020.