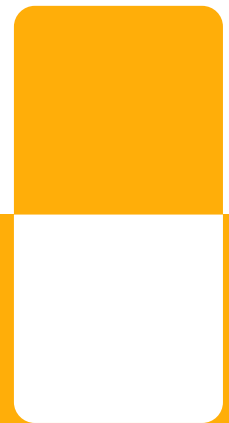


Community Energy Action Plan

Birmingham City
Council

July 2026



Glossary

Memoranda of Understanding (MoU). A non-legally binding agreement that set out how organisations will work together toward shared objectives. It can provide a light-touch but formal framework for cooperation, covering areas such as governance, information sharing, joint project development, and decision-making processes, without the complexity of contractual arrangements. MoUs are particularly useful in coordinating activity across multiple organisations, providing continuity during periods of change, and enabling partners to align resources and expertise whilst retaining organisational independence.

Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). A long-term contract (typically 15–25 years) under which an organisation agrees to buy electricity from a specific renewable energy installation at a pre-agreed price. A third party (such as a community energy organisation) finances, installs, owns and maintains the system, whilst the building owner or occupier purchases the electricity on-site typically at a price lower than or capped against grid rates. PPAs require no upfront capital from councils and provide long-term price certainty, carbon savings, and community benefit. They are commonly used alongside roof or land leases.

Executive Summary

Birmingham City Council (BCC) is one of six local authorities taking part in a community energy capacity-building study funded by the Midlands Net Zero Hub (MNZH) and delivered by Energy Saving Trust in partnership with Marches Energy Advice. The exercise is designed to prepare councils and partners for anticipated growth in community energy activity associated with the Government's Local Power Plan¹ and forthcoming Great British Energy funding.

The research involved desk-based analysis, a survey and three workshops exploring the local community energy landscape, opportunities and challenges. The aim was to identify how BCC can best support community energy activity without duplicating existing efforts. This document sets out the resulting action plan.

This action plan sets out how BCC and its partners can enable community energy to support net zero, reduce energy costs, strengthen resilience, and deliver wider local benefits.

In Birmingham, community energy is constrained less by ambition or technical capacity than by access to suitable sites, complex procurement processes, and the absence of clear shared ownership targets. To address these challenges, BCC should build on existing sector activity, simplify delivery routes where possible, and create clearer opportunities for collaboration.

The immediate priority is to establish clear delivery routes and points of coordination between BCC and community energy organisations. This includes identifying and unlocking a pipeline of viable sites, particularly across BCC-owned assets such as schools and housing, clarifying procurement pathways, and creating consistent points of contact. Early demonstration projects that showcase tangible benefits and workable delivery models will be important in building confidence and momentum.

Workshop participants also identified significant longer-term opportunities for Birmingham in heat networks and energy storage. Birmingham's existing experience of district energy infrastructure, combined with potential anchor loads such as hospitals, universities, public buildings and major regeneration areas, creates favourable conditions for expansion. Battery storage was viewed as a key enabler of future local energy systems, including solar-plus-storage projects, vehicle-to-grid (V2G) technologies and community-scale flexibility services. Looking further ahead, seasonal thermal storage linked to heat networks and heat pumps could help position Birmingham as a leader in integrated energy systems that connect heat, electricity, transport and storage.

Overall, scaling community energy represents a practical opportunity for BCC to combine climate action with local economic and community benefit. Beyond immediate opportunities in solar and retrofit, Birmingham also has the potential to become a national leader in integrated local energy systems through the development of heat networks, energy storage, local flexibility services and innovative community-led energy models.

¹ Local Power Plan | Great British Energy
Energy Saving Trust

Background and current state

Introduction

The Midlands Net Zero Hub (MNZH) provides funding, grants, and strategic support to accelerate net zero projects across the Midlands, including community energy, public sector decarbonisation, and building retrofit initiatives.

Funded by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) and hosted by Nottingham City Council, MNZH offers free strategic, technical, and financial support to local authorities, public sector organisations, and community groups to help take net zero projects from concept to investment-ready delivery. It covers sub-regions including the Black Country, Coventry and Warwickshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, Greater Birmingham and Solihull, Greater Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, The Marches, Stoke and Staffordshire, and Worcestershire.

The MNZH commissioned a Community Energy Capacity Building Study across six selected Midlands local authority areas, with the aim of strengthening local capacity and accelerating net zero progress through community-led energy initiatives.

Part of the commission involved engaging stakeholders through a series of three workshops in each local authority area to develop bespoke community energy action plans. This report provides the bespoke community energy action plan for Birmingham City Council (BCC).

BCC

Strategic context

BCC has a highly ambitious and comprehensive net zero programme, with strong emphasis on housing and infrastructure. In its strategy – *Route to Net Zero Action Plan*² – BCC combines technical innovation with social objectives, including fuel poverty reduction and improved urban environment.

The approach is whole-system and cross-sector, targeting coordinated change across housing, transport electrification, energy, waste, and the natural environment. This is reflective of its broad decarbonisation strategy combining demand reduction, electrification, and low-carbon energy deployment.

Although current financial constraints, asset disposals and reduced capacity present challenges for scaling community energy in Birmingham, they also present opportunities to cut costs, make better use of the city's estate, and deliver social value for residents and local businesses.

² [BCC \(2020\). Route to Zero Action Plan.](#)

Central to delivery is housing with ambitions to build 7,000 sustainable social homes by 2031 and establish a sustainability team to lead decarbonisation of BCC's housing stock.

Large-scale retrofit plans include a pilot of 300 BCC-owned homes within a wider programme targeting c. 4,000 properties. BCC aims for all of its 58,000 homes to be EPC C and is incorporating retrofit and renewable energy generation into its planned maintenance programme. BCC's re-roofing programme is including in-roof solar as business as usual. See photo below.



Pilot projects (e.g. Gressel Lane) are testing integrated solutions such as heat pumps, solar PV and battery storage. The emerging *Birmingham Local Plan Preferred Options document* provides a clear and strengthening policy context for community energy³. Section 5 explicitly recognises the role of community-led energy initiatives in supporting sustainable development and the city's net zero ambitions. With submission for examination expected by December 2026 and adoption to follow, the Local Plan signals a clear expectation that developers will incorporate community energy into new schemes. This creates a supportive strategic environment for expanding community energy models in Birmingham, reinforcing their role as a key delivery mechanism for local renewable generation, community benefit, and inclusive energy transition.

Community energy in Birmingham – the current landscape

Energy Saving Trust conducted a survey across participating local authorities, and the findings below reflect responses received for Birmingham. However, these should be considered alongside engagement through workshops and other activities, as some perspectives may not be fully captured in the survey.

Birmingham has an active community energy ecosystem including generation-focused groups, retrofit and energy advice networks, and emerging consortia such as **Brum Energy**⁴. Initiatives are typically delivered in collaboration with local authorities, universities, health bodies, housing partners and national programmes (e.g. LEAD, Warm Homes). However, activity remains fragmented, with funding structures often driving competition between organisations and limiting collaboration. Respondents

³ [Birmingham Local Plan Preferred Options Document – Details – Keyplan](#)

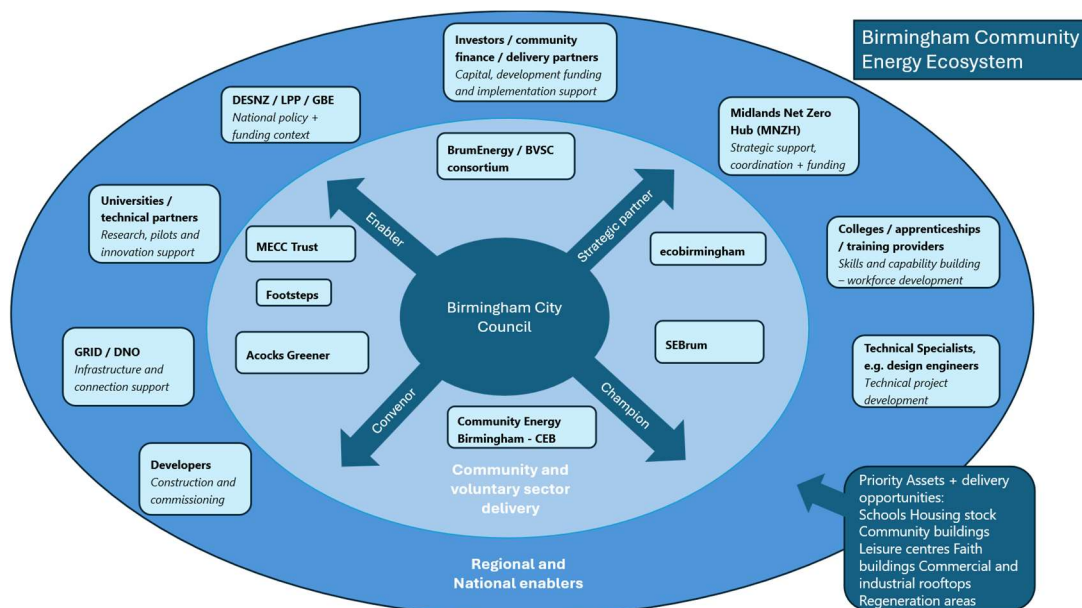
⁴ [BrumEnergy | Home | Birmingham Voluntary Service Council](#)

identified a lack of coordinated planning, inconsistent information sharing, and the absence of a clear city-wide framework, resulting in duplication of effort and missed opportunities to scale delivery.

Community Energy Group	Role	Projects
Acocks Greener	Delivers energy and retrofit advice, leads <i>South-East Birmingham Energy Local Co-op (SEBrum)</i> , and acts as a “living lab” for emerging technologies.	Active projects: Warm Homes Local retrofit delivery in Tyseley ward. Infrared drone retrofit assessments (BrumBIRD). Planned/developing projects: Community energy cooperative organised at substation level. Energy Local model with pilot targeting 25 MW of solar capacity serving c. 15,000–15,000 households (roughly half the population connected to that substation). Bi-directional EV charging pilots. Ambient temperature community heat network (Flagship) Pilot with the University of Birmingham involving AI-designed vertical axis wind turbines (Birmingham Blade).
SEBrum	Large-scale urban attempt to apply the Energy Local model across a complex electricity substation area serving c. 85,000 people.	Planned/developing projects: Combining large rooftop generators, small domestic PV owners, and households in fuel poverty into a shared local energy system. Aims to optimise demand, promote storage (including EVs as batteries), and enable participation without requiring all households to own generation assets.
ecobirmingham	Frontline delivery organisation, providing in-home energy advice, follow-up support, and practical help with damp, mould, overheating, and access to grants.	Works extensively to support c. 1,500 people annually through schools, food banks, libraries, places of worship, and community centres.
MECC Trust	A trusted intermediary organisation supporting vulnerable and marginalised residents with energy advice,	Works with partners including National Energy Action, Redress and Brum Energy, and delivers

Community Energy Group	Role	Projects
	billing support, home visits, and basic efficiency measures (e.g. warm packs, LED bulbs).	health-linked fuel poverty support MECC Trust was funded by BCC to provide support to LADS3 and Warm Homes Local retrofit programmes.
<u>BrumEnergy</u>	Led by the Birmingham Voluntary Service Council (BVSC) coordinating a consortium of nine Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise organisations delivering impartial energy, retrofit, and benefits advice. National delivery partner (<i>Warm Homes Healthy Futures, Centres for Warmth</i>). Works closely with health and social care services.	Took on the management role for the Local Energy Advice Demonstrator (funded by MNZH) which aimed to show if the Balsall Heath model (i.e. MECC Trust) of community engagement in retrofit could be transferred to other communities in the city. This funding provided the support for organisations to be trained in energy advice.
<u>Footsteps – Faiths For A Low Carbon Future</u>	Brings together diverse faith groups across Birmingham to collaborate on climate and energy issues, creating a shared platform for collective action.	The GrassRoutes programme builds capacity within faith groups to lead and participate in local climate and energy initiatives including: - Eco-Action Projects (practical local initiatives led by communities) - National webinars & knowledge-sharing - Learning and dissemination through news, blogs. The Saving Energy programme focuses on reducing energy use and carbon emissions in faith buildings and homes. The <u>Birmingham Faith Community Map</u> covering 800+ faith organisations and buildings.
<u>Community Energy Birmingham (CEB)</u>	Non-profit community energy cooperative established in 2012. Originally focused on raising community investment for solar PV installations.	As of 2025, CEB raised over £135,000 in share offers and £20,000 in grants which installed 145 kWp of solar PV and have generated 883,000 kWh of clean energy. Maintains community-owned solar PV

Community Energy Group	Role	Projects
	Expanded into energy advice, retrofit planning, and support for households seeking lower energy costs and reduced reliance on gas. Runs community workshops and training courses on retrofit, insulation, ventilation, solar and battery storage, energy tariffs, and collective retrofit.	installations (e.g. Ackers Adventure and Moseley Exchange). Seeking additional community and third-sector solar opportunities and encouraging community or commercial buildings to host future solar projects.



There is growing, albeit uneven, renewable generation activity across the city. Rooftop solar is the most common delivery model, particularly across schools, community buildings, and businesses. In contrast, relatively few organisations are developing wind or heat network projects. Whilst there are several heat network projects in development, these typically take longer to progress. However, delivery is expected to accelerate once heat network zoning becomes mandatory. Wind generation is currently considered unfeasible within the city. This is due to a combination of low average wind speeds and significant spatial constraints. Birmingham lacks sufficient available land for turbine deployment, and the proximity of an international airport further restricts viable locations. As a result, local efforts are predominantly focused on expanding solar generation.

There is clear ambition by community energy groups to expand community energy across BCC-owned assets, housing stock, schools, and private and community buildings. Interest is also emerging in programme-level approaches (e.g. large portfolios of sites such as schools) to enable shared ownership and investment models at scale.

BCC's Route to Net Zero Carbon Team has been supporting Solar for Schools to navigate the BCC legal processes and has so far supported four schools through the Solar4Schools initiative and a further four are in development. For existing schools, the Solar4Schools model combines renewable energy generation with education and social value benefits. In contrast, new-build schools must be delivered in line with Department for Education (DfE) requirements to meet net zero standards if they are being funded by the DfE.

Challenges

Informal partnerships and limited strategic alignment

Relationships between BCC, community energy groups, and regional bodies are generally positive and collaborative, but they are largely informal and dependent on individual officers, making them vulnerable to staff changes and resource pressures. Several respondents to the survey noted that where BCC support was proactive, projects progressed more smoothly. However, this was not consistently experienced across services or asset classes.

Capacity and coordination constraints

Across the survey, organisations reported very limited delivery capacity, with typically one to two paid roles and around five volunteers per organisation. Limited capacity, time and staffing were consistently identified as fundamental constraints, particularly when navigating complex feasibility, planning, and funding processes. Volunteer-led models create fragility, slowing progress and increasing the risk of burnout, particularly as projects move beyond feasibility.

This context is also reflected more broadly across the ecosystem. For example, ecobirmingham's work tends to be seasonal and responsive to demand, with a range of funding streams and differing KPIs shaping delivery. Similarly, whilst MECC Trust has strong reach into newly arrived communities and emphasis on early intervention, it operates within a landscape where strategic coordination is still developing.

Funding and income uncertainty

A persistent challenge is the lack of stable, long-term income for community energy groups. Funding is typically fragmented, short-term, and tied to narrowly defined KPIs, which diverts limited organisational capacity away from delivery. This environment inhibits collaboration and makes it difficult to progress projects from feasibility to implementation.

Workshop participants noted that wider organisational and financial pressures within the local authority are influencing the pace at which some enabling functions – such as asset planning and procurement – can support community energy delivery.

Community trust and engagement

Respondents also noted that community trust has been weakened by previous retrofit and energy programmes that were inconsistently delivered. This has increased the effort required for engagement, particularly in areas experiencing fuel poverty. Trusted local organisations are seen as essential to rebuilding confidence but require sustained support and clearer pathways into delivery.

Procurement processes

Procurement remains a key structural barrier, particularly for BCC-owned or publicly controlled assets. Current processes were described as slow, risk-averse, and poorly aligned with community energy models, which rely on long-term partnerships, shared ownership, and incremental development.

Uncertainty around eligibility, decision-making authority, and procurement timescales has led to delays, and in some cases, abandonment.

Planning and regulatory complexity

Complex ownership and tenure arrangements present additional systemic barriers, including:

- Mixed-tenure streets, where fragmented ownership complicates decision-making and viable business models.
- Schools and education assets delivered through DfE frameworks or PFI-style arrangements, where key decisions are fixed early, limited community involvement.
- Significant delays and additional costs associated with DfE processes, even where there is local support.

Internal alignment within the local authority also is inconsistent. Teams across housing, planning, procurement, regeneration, and transport do not always share a common understanding of community energy, resulting in mixed signals and duplication of effort. Where alignment does exist – particularly within climate, net zero, or regeneration teams – respondents reported stronger partnerships and clearer routes to delivery.

Opportunities

Creating a Birmingham-wide community energy network

Birmingham already has a strong foundation of active community groups, local authority partnerships, and existing directories and resources. A network could build on and strengthen these assets, rather than requiring a wholly new structure. A Birmingham-wide community energy network could:

- Connect local groups and stakeholders
- Provide a central hub for information and resources
- Share learning, best practice, and case studies
- Coordinate support and reduce duplication of effort
- Strengthen collective representation with BCC and delivery partners
- Turn isolated projects into a more strategic, coordinated programme.

Establishing such a network would enable local authorities to better empower communities, build local resilience, and support the growth and sustainability of community energy projects. More broadly, it represents an opportunity to strengthen the overall support architecture and unlock progress across the sector through:

- A central information hub
- A consistent interface between BCC, community energy organisations, and delivery partners
- Regular forums (potentially BCC-hosted) to improve coordination, share pipeline progress, and address barriers early on
- Clear local authority points of contact

- Improved planning and pre-application guidance and support
- Better mapping of the community energy landscape
- Stronger links to investors and funding opportunities
- Targeted support for deprived or underrepresented communities
- Improved matchmaking between projects, expertise, and funding.

Accessing blended finance and national funding schemes

Alongside improved coordination, unlocking finance will be critical to scaling delivery. National policy developments, particularly the Local Power Plan and GB Energy funding, create an opportunity to develop blended finance models that combine grants, private investment, and community share offers. Survey responses indicate strong appetite and proven capability within the sector for raising community finance where projects are viable and trusted. Blended models could improve financial resilience and reduce risk to the public sector.

The survey also demonstrates that strong skills, experience, and delivery expertise already exist within Birmingham's community energy ecosystem with links to regional and national networks, including Energy Local, Big Solar Co-op, Sharenergy, Community Energy England, and partnerships with universities. This existing capability provides a solid foundation for scaling activity if capacity is stabilised and entry points into public-sector programmes are made clearer.

BCC as a community energy champion

Senior officers and elected members may not be fully aware of the opportunities presented by community energy, or of the specific needs of local groups. This can result in missed opportunities to align policy, funding, and delivery. However, with greater awareness of the wide-ranging benefits that community energy can deliver, BCC is well placed to act as champions, convenors, and enablers – alongside their role as funders.

Key opportunities for Birmingham include:

- **Early engagement.** Involving community energy organisations at the outset of development processes, supporting collaboration on feasibility studies, shared infrastructure planning, and viable model design. This helps ensure that both new and existing communities benefit from locally generated energy (e.g. solar PV).
- **Formalising partnerships.** Using MoUs and clear Terms of Reference to establish shared objectives and expectations between BCC, community groups, and delivery partners.
- **Aggregating demand and enabling scale.** Facilitating procurement and aggregating demand across housing, public buildings, and community assets to improve commercial viability, reduce unit costs, and create clearer pathways for participation.
- **Leveraging procurement and social value.** Using procurement frameworks to encourage investment in community energy through social value requirements.
- **Supporting the local economy.** Embedding funding criteria that incentivise local supply chains (e.g. use of local contractors), helping to retain economic benefits within the area.

By taking on a more active leadership and coordination role, BCC can help create the conditions necessary for community energy to scale, delivering both environmental and local economic benefits.

Improving internal coordination across planning, procurement and assets

Planning policy already provides a supportive framework for community energy, with recognition embedded in relevant local policies. Respondents indicated that planning itself is not the primary

barrier; rather, challenges arise at the interface between planning, procurement, asset management, and funding decisions. For example, uncertainty around which BCC-owned assets are available can delay or prevent projects from progressing, whilst limited procurement capacity can restrict the development of appropriate delivery frameworks. Addressing these implementation barriers would allow planning policy support to translate more directly into delivery, reducing uncertainty for community groups and improving confidence among investors and delivery partners.

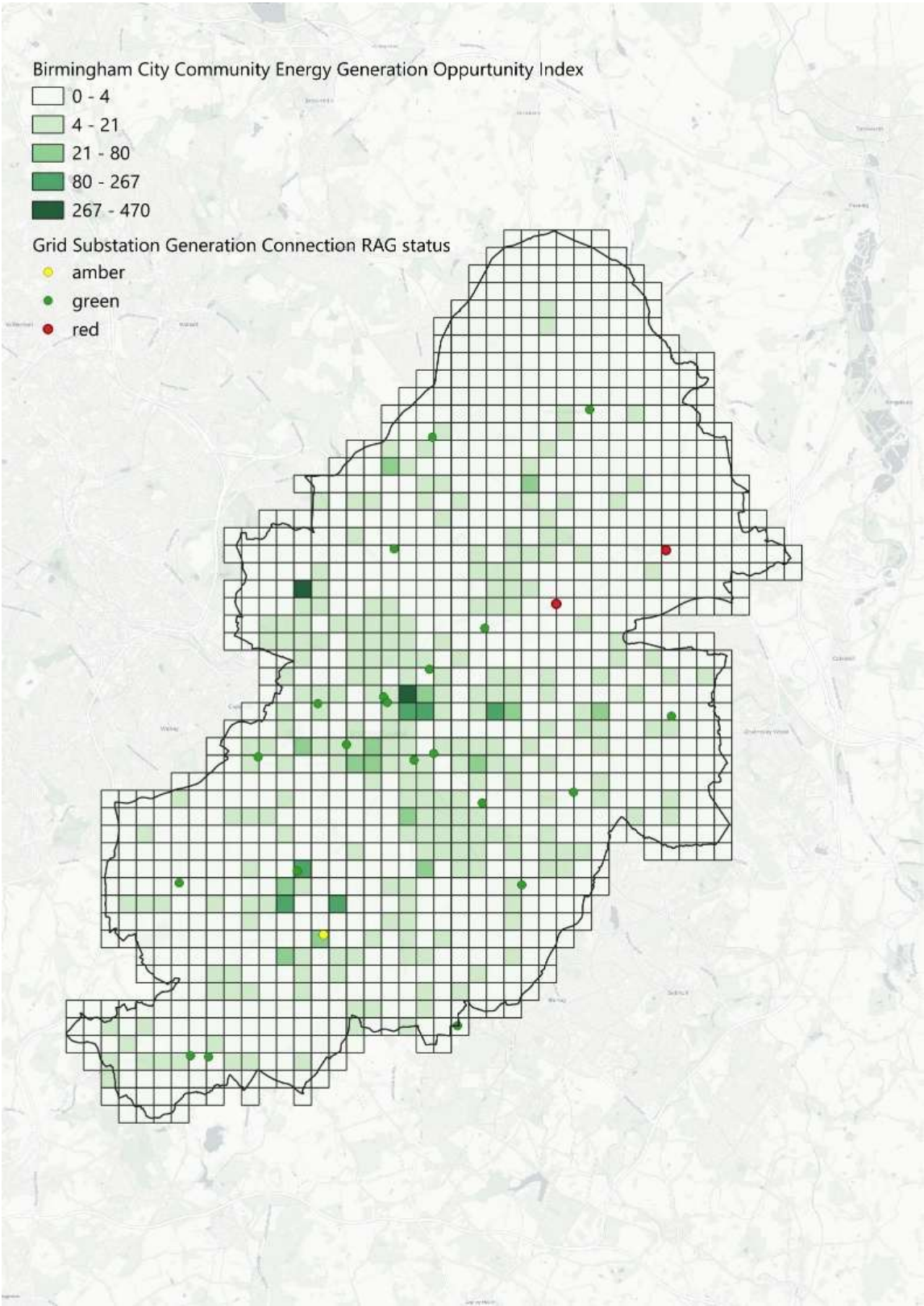
Unlocking potential of rooftop solar PV on community buildings and BCC-owned assets

BCC-owned but externally operated buildings (e.g. leisure centres, trusts, community facilities) offer one of the most immediately deliverable pathways for community energy in Birmingham. Unlike directly operated BCC buildings, these assets often require only landlord consent and lease arrangements, rather than full procurement, where the operator is the electricity off taker and no BCC purchasing decision is made.

Existing decency works, retrofit, and regeneration programmes such as Druids Heath represent another major opportunity to embed community energy at scale, rather than delivering it as a standalone intervention. Survey respondents highlighted that community energy is most effective when aligned with wider housing, regeneration, and place-based investment programmes. Integrating solar PV, heat networks, storage, and community-led advice into planned works could reduce delivery costs, improve resident engagement, and ensure long-term social value, provided community energy groups are involved early enough in programme design.

There is significant untapped potential for rooftop solar PV on community buildings, leisure centres, and BCC-owned assets. Community energy audits offer a practical entry point to identify viable sites and develop investable projects. As a starting point, Energy Saving Trust's in-house non-domestic analytics database was used to identify buildings suitable for community energy generation projects. The building categories are informed by insights and learnings from the CARES programme in Scotland, which is administered by the Energy Saving Trust. These categories include community buildings, public buildings, faith buildings, educational facilities, and healthcare-related buildings. In addition, we incorporated several publicly available datasets, including the Local Authority Land Database, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) dataset, the Renewable Energy Planning Database, and National Grid's Network Opportunity and Development Map.

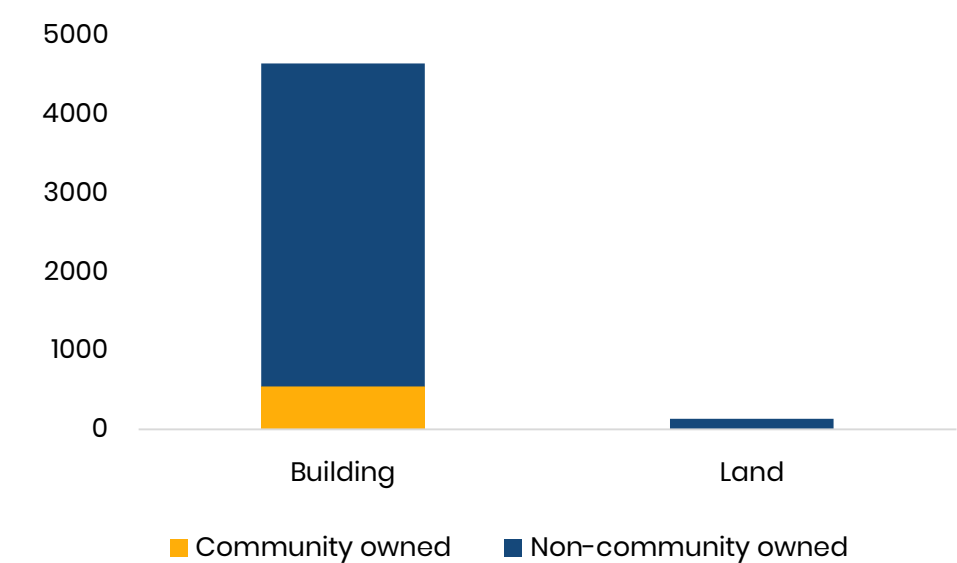
The potential number of opportunities across both buildings and land was analysed, excluding existing renewable installations and areas designated SSSI. The resulting map, shown on the following page, highlights the potential number of community energy projects across the study area. We also mapped out the electricity grid substations and their contracted generation RAG status, providing an indication of the likelihood of obtaining a generation connection in each location.



Appendix 3 presents a detailed breakdown of green RAG sites across Birmingham by local authority and site category.

Community ownership of green RAG sites is limited to buildings, whilst non-community ownership dominates both buildings and land, with a small proportion of land-based sites (Chart 1).

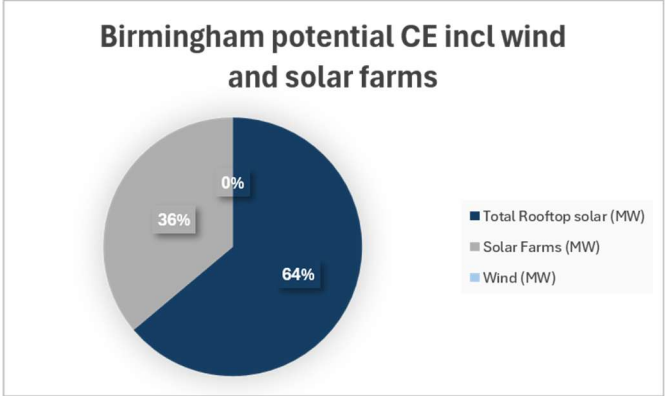
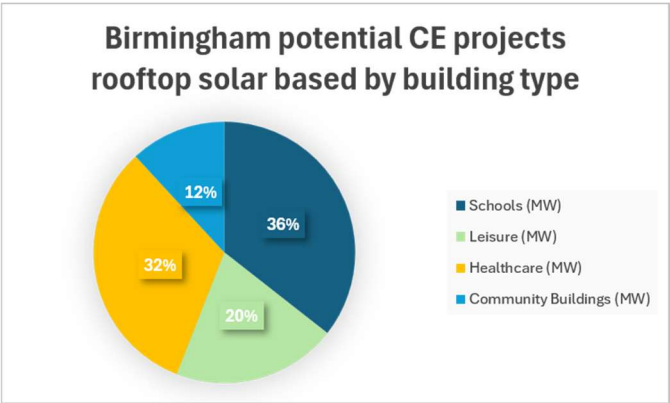
Chart 1: Ownership and Site Type Distribution of Green RAG Sites (Birmingham)



An assessment of the available community or publicly owned buildings, based on the lowest end of probable capacity reduced by 40% to allow for non-participation, and including only assets which are noted as green in terms of grid mapping, showed the potential for getting some community energy projects off the ground quickly in Birmingham to achieve around 10MW capacity – generating around 18GW per year. The conservative assessment of wind and solar farm potential in rural areas was also considered, and this offers significantly more capacity, of an additional 25MW but could take significantly longer to deliver and could inform a longer-term target.

The following table shows conservative estimates for potential rooftop solar capacity on different types of community buildings in Birmingham, and the same for ground based rural community solar and wind projects. They have used only sites which are green on grid mapping, used the most conservative estimate of capacity and lowered this by 40% to allow for non-participation.

Local Authority	Schools (MW)	Leisure (MW)	Healthcare (MW)	Community Buildings (MW)	Total Rooftop solar (MW)	Solar Farms (MW)	Wind (MW)	Total (MW)
Birmingham	6.3	3.6	5.7	2.1	17.7	10	0	27.7



Longer-term opportunities: Heat networks and energy storage

Workshop discussions suggest that Birmingham has the potential to play a nationally significant role in the development of both low-carbon heat networks and local energy storage systems, building on its dense urban form, existing district energy experience, and large concentration of public, commercial and residential buildings⁵. Whilst current community energy activity is often focused on solar generation, participants emphasised the opportunity to broaden this towards integrated local energy systems.

Workshop participants identified heat networks were as a major long-term opportunity. Birmingham already hosts one of the UK's largest urban district energy schemes. Operated by Birmingham District Energy Company (BDEC) through a long-term partnership with Birmingham City Council, the network supplies heat, cooling and electricity to some of the city's major buildings, including the Library of Birmingham, ICC, Utilita Arena, Council House, Aston University and Birmingham Children's Hospital.

Whilst BDEC is not a community-owned heat network, it demonstrates that Birmingham already has substantial experience in developing and operating large-scale district energy infrastructure, providing a platform for future expansion and potential community participation in new heat network projects. The key challenge is not technical feasibility but governance, coordination and investment. If these barriers can be addressed, community involvement in heat network development could become a significant component of the city's net zero strategy.

Energy storage was viewed as equally important. In the near term, battery systems can increase the value of rooftop solar generation, reduce pressure on the electricity network, support schools, housing estates and commercial buildings, and provide flexibility services. They can be particularly valuable for community and faith buildings, where daytime electricity demand is often low relative to solar generation, enabling more of that energy to be used locally rather than exported at low value. Opportunities also extend to vehicle-to-grid (V2G) and bidirectional EV charging, allowing EVs to act as distributed storage assets that absorb excess renewable generation and help manage peak electricity demand. This could reduce network constraints, improve local energy resilience and support more decentralised energy systems.

Looking further ahead, Birmingham could also explore seasonal thermal energy storage, including the storing heat in the ground through borehole thermal energy storage and related technologies. When combined with heat networks and large-scale heat pumps, seasonal storage offers the potential to capture renewable energy when it is plentiful and use it during periods of high winter heating demand. This would help connect heat, electricity and transport within a single local energy system, improving resilience, affordability and decarbonisation outcomes. The workshop findings suggest that heat networks, battery storage and long-duration thermal storage should be viewed as complementary components of Birmingham's future energy infrastructure rather than as standalone technologies.

⁵ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2025). *Heat Network Zone Opportunity Report: Birmingham*. Heat Network Zoning Pilot Programme.

Actions

A series of suggested actions based on the workshops is set out in the plan below to inform BCC's next steps as they determine a more detailed plan with clear ownership, resourcing and timescales for progressing the community energy agenda locally.

Short-term delivery (Quick wins)

	Action	Owner	Target Deadline
1	Identify and publish a pipeline of commercial/industrial and BCC-owned buildings including under-used or derelict assets with potential for third-party-operated renewable energy generation (e.g. solar PV or wind). This should include a limited number of quick wins to catalyse activity.		
2	Develop a guidance document for community energy groups and delivery partners whilst promoting early engagement with BCC to support project development.		
3	Develop clear BCC-approved routes for community energy leases and PPAs that can be standardised and reused (drawing on models from Brighton and Bristol).		
4	Pilot a quarterly Birmingham Community Energy Forum, hosted by BCC, to improve coordination, share progress on the project pipeline, and address barriers early.		
5	Promote Birmingham's community energy achievements, social value outcomes and future ambitions through a coordinated public communications and engagement programme. This should raise awareness, build civic pride, encourage participation and investment, and position Birmingham as a national leader in community energy, local energy systems and net zero innovation.		
6	Establish a city-wide innovation funding programme that supports community energy groups to participate as demonstration and delivery partners in major funding bids, including Horizon Europe and GB Energy opportunities. BCC should play an active role in consortium development, bid coordination and project sponsorship, particularly through Housing, Transport and Net Zero teams.		

Building the sector (Strategic actions)

	Action	Owner	Target Deadline
1	Map solar and retrofit opportunities across public estates, housing stock, and private/commercial buildings. This should include opportunities for bundled projects (e.g. multiple roofs/streets/estates) to de-risk delivery and enable blended finance models.		
2	Pilot and evaluate proportionate, compliant procurement routes for BCC-controlled assets to enable faster and more flexibility delivery of community energy projects.		
3	Develop and formalise a clearer division of roles between BCC, community energy groups, contractors, and investors across project stages (feasibility, delivery, and operation).		
4	Develop a city-wide programme to support and encourage self-financed low-carbon energy investment by households and businesses, including solar PV, batteries, EVs, V2G participation, community energy membership, trusted installer networks, and access to affordable finance and quality-assured equipment.		
5	Assess the feasibility of establishing a Birmingham Energy Supplier (Brum-E), potentially owned by BCC, WMCA, community energy organisations and local shareholders, to support local generation, storage, heat networks, flexibility services, and community ownership, with the aim of retaining more energy value within Birmingham and enabling a more integrated local energy system.		
6	Develop clear internal guidance on when community energy is an appropriate delivery model, compared to direct BCC-led investment.		
7	Formalise and embed a Birmingham Community Energy Forum as part of the BCC's engagement and delivery approach, providing a consistent interface with community energy organisations and delivery partners.		
8	Support community energy groups to access development funding, blended finance, and training to strengthen project pipeline and delivery capacity.		

Creating the conditions for growth (Policy areas)

	Action	Owner	Target Deadline
1	Embed community energy more explicitly within local energy strategy, procurement policy, planning frameworks, and regeneration programmes to ensure alignment across BCC priorities.		
2	Explore and implement policy mechanisms (e.g. social value weighting, community energy pledges, MoU) to provide long-term certainty and signal commitment to the sector.		
3	Support pathways for community energy organisations to become financially self-sustaining, including through local revenue streams, asset ownership, and long-term partnership models.		
4	Align local action with regional initiatives led by the West Midlands Combined Authority and the Solar Task Force to maximise scale, funding access, and strategic coordination.		

Note that some actions may begin in the short term (e.g. early work on standard documents and processes), with their full value realised over time.

Engagement Plan

	Action	Owner	Target Deadline
1	Improve senior leadership and councillor awareness of community energy benefits through targeted briefings and the use of Birmingham and national case studies.		
2	Identify one or two high-confidence, well-supported pilot areas (e.g. regeneration zones with strong local organisations) to demonstrate delivery and build momentum.		
3	Promote successful projects through BCC and regional communications channels to build visibility, trust, and wider stakeholder engagement.		
4	Support community-led engagement, particularly with hard-to-reach and previously disengaged residents, through trusted local organisations and tailored outreach approaches.		

NB A separate document is being produced focused on how Local Authorities can successfully support community energy.

Information on established community energy group governance structures is summarised in Appendix 1, developed by Community Energy London, based on Co-operatives UK's Simply Legal guide. It helpfully describes key characteristics of different legal forms that are most relevant to community energy⁶.

Appendix 2 provides a list of useful organisations and resources for community energy stakeholders.

⁶ [Community energy governance guide](#)

Appendix 1: Governance structures

Legal form	What is its governing document called?	Can it issue shares? ¹		Does it have to register with a regulatory body?	Is it suitable for charitable status?	Does it have an asset lock? ²	Membership voting
		Standard shares	Community shares				
Company Limited by Guarantee	Articles	No	No	Companies House	Yes	No (unless charity)	One member one vote
Company Limited by Shares	Articles	Yes	No	Companies House	No	No (unless charity)	One vote per share
Community Interest Company (limited by guarantee)	Articles	No	No	Companies House & CIC Regulator	No	Yes	One member one vote
Community Interest Company (limited by shares)	Articles	Yes	No	Companies House & CIC Regulator	No	Yes	One vote per share
Charitable Incorporated organisation	Constitution	No	No	Charity Commission	Yes	Yes	As per the constitution
Co-operative societies	Rules	Yes	Yes	Financial Conduct Authority	No	No	One member one vote
Community Benefit Societies	Rules	Yes	Yes	Financial Conduct Authority	Yes	Yes (optional)	One member one vote

Appendix 2: Useful organisations and resources

National organisations and policy:

- **Community Energy England** – Sector body supporting and representing community energy groups.
- **Great British Energy** – UK Government initiative supporting community and local clean energy projects.
- **Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ)** – Leads national energy policy and funding programmes.
- **Local power plan**
- **Energy Saving Trust** – Delivery partner for programmes such as the Scottish Government's Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES), and provider of community energy support.
- **Regen** – Independent organisation focused on accelerating the transition to a zero-carbon energy system, providing policy insight, market analysis, and support for community energy and local energy systems.

Energy Systems Catapult (ESC) – Independent, government-backed innovation centre focused on transforming the UK energy system. ESC supports whole-system energy planning, local energy systems, flexibility markets, and innovative business models, including through Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP).

Delivery models and innovation:

- **Energy Local/Energy Local Clubs** – Local energy supply model enabling communities to benefit directly from locally generated energy.
- **Energy Garden/Repowering London** – Established community energy delivery and engagement models, particularly in urban contexts.
- **Solar for Schools** – Model combining solar deployment with education and student engagement.
- **Community Energy Pathways** – Organisation supporting the development of community energy projects and groups across the UK.

Finance and investment:

- **Ethex** – Platform for community share offers and ethical investment.
- **Co-operative & Community Finance** – Specialist lender providing finance to community and cooperative enterprises.
- **Power to Change** – National body supporting community businesses through funding and capacity building.

Tools and platforms:

- **Loomio** – Digital platform supporting the development of local energy projects and community energy schemes, including tools for project scoping and supplier engagement.
- **LAEP datasets/tools** – Used by local authorities to identify opportunities and prioritise local energy interventions.
- **Community Energy Go** – National support service providing expert guidance, resources, and capacity-building to help community groups develop energy projects from early-stage ideas to fundable proposals, including support on governance, planning, and access to funding.

Appendix 3: Birmingham Green RAG Sites by Local Authority and Site Category

Site Categories	No. Sites
Residential Education	1915
Care / Nursing Home	664
Children's Nursery / Creche	279
Indoor / Outdoor Leisure / Sporting Activity / Centre	279
Place Of Worship	194
General Practice Surgery / Clinic	181
Public / Village Hall / Other Community Facility	127
Church	103
Preparatory / First / Primary / Infant / Junior / Middle School	103
Other Educational Establishment	82
Health Care Services	81
Primary School	81
Secondary School	70
Infant School	63
Health Centre	57
Community Service Centre / Office	34
Special Needs Establishment.	34
University	29
College	27
Library	27
Church Hall / Religious Meeting Place / Hall	25
Hospital / Hospice	21
Recreational / Social Club	20
Secondary / High School	19
Activity / Leisure / Sports Centre	16
Junior School	14
Fire Station	13
Local Government Service	11
Hospital	10
Further Education	9
Community Services	8
Job Centre	8
Education	7
Racquet Sports Facility	6
Mosque	5
Museum / Gallery	5
Medical	4
Central Government Service	3
Higher Education	3

Football Facility	2
Land At	2
Land Fronting	2
Law Court	2
Rugby Facility	2
Acocks Green Recreation Ground	1
Adderley Park	1
Adjacent To	1
Aldridge Road Recreation Ground	1
All Saints Park Public Open Space	1
Allens Cross Recreation Ground	1
Ambulance Station	1
Baldwins Lane Allotments	1
Barcheston Road Recreation Ground	1
Barnes Hill Recreation Ground	1
Baskerville House	1
Batchelors Farm Park	1
Bloomsbury Park	1
Boleyn Road/gannow Manor Crescent Development Site	1
Booth Street Recreation Ground	1
Bordesley Green Allotments	1
Bournbrook Recreation Ground	1
Brownfield Road Allotments	1
Chamberlain Gardens	1
Cherry Orchard Recreation Ground	1
Chinn Brook Recreation Ground	1
Chudleigh Road Allotment	1
Clunbury Road Allotments	1
Cofton Road Allotments	1
Colebourne Road Allotments	1
Coney Green Drive Allotment	1
Corner Of Old Snow Hill	1
Cotterills Lane Recreation Ground	1
Court Oak Road Allotments	1
Cowley Road Recreation Ground	1
Daffodil Park	1
Denbigh Street Public Open Space	1
Digby Park	1
Donegal Road Allotments	1
Emergency / Rescue Service	1
Falcon Lodge Allotments	1
Fernbank Allotments	1
Finch Road Play Area	1
Five Ways Gardens	1
Fox Hollies No2 Allotments	1
Fox Hollies Park	1
Fronting Kitwell Lane	1

Garretts Green Walk	1
George Road Pocket Park	1
George Street Public Open Space	1
Gibson Road Allotments	1
Glebe Farm Recreation Ground	1
Grange Road Recreation Ground	1
Greenaleigh Road Allotments	1
Griffins Brook Recreation Ground	1
Gurdwara	1
Hamstead Playing Fields	1
Harborne Lane Allotments	1
Hay Barn Recreation Ground	1
Henry Barber Recreation Ground	1
Hermitage Farm Allotments	1
Highfield Farm Recreation Ground	1
Hiltop Golf Course	1
Hob Moor Road	1
Holders Lane Playing Fields	1
Homecroft Road Allotments	1
Hospice	1
Hunton Hill Allotments	1
Kingstanding Allotments	1
Kingston Hill Recreation Ground	1
Land Adjacent To 78	1
Land At Cemetery Lane	1
Land At The Corner Of	1
Land Mackadown Lane	1
Land To The Rear Of	1
Larches Green Public Open Space	1
Lea Hall Recreation Ground	1
Livingstone Road Allotments	1
Longmeadow Crescent Allotments	1
Magnet Centre (former)	1
Manor Farm Park	1
Manor House Lane Allotments	1
Manor Road Recreation Ground	1
Marlborough House Recreation Ground	1
Marsh Hill Allotments	1
May Lane Allotments Gardens	1
Merritts Brook Playing Field	1
Mount Street Recreation Ground	1
Musgrave Recreation Ground	1
New Hall Valley Allotments	1
Newbridge Farm Recreation Ground	1
Newdigate Playing Fields	1
Paddock Adjacent To 460	1
Park Lane Park	1

Percy Park Road	1
Perry Hall Playing Fields	1
Phillips Street Park	1
Pickwick Park	1
Plots A And B	1
Pool Lane Allotments	1
Religious Community	1
Salford Park	1
Sandwell Recreation Ground	1
Sandwell Road Allotments	1
School Lane Allotments	1
Seven Streets Park	1
Shaftsbury Road Allotments	1
Shard End Playing Fields Number 6	1
Shenley Fields Recreation Ground	1
Shenley Lane Allotments	1
Site Fronting	1
Site Of Stones Giddings And Bolton	1
Springfield Road Allotments	1
St Georges Park	1
St Marks Public Open Space	1
Station Road Allotments	1
Swanshurst Park	1
Sycamores Recreation Ground	1
Synagogue	1
The Avenue Public Open Space	1
The Beeches Recreation Ground	1
The Boulevard Allotments	1
The Circle	1
The Dingles	1
The Leys Allotments	1
The Radleys Allotments	1
Thornbridge Avenue Allotments	1
Vacant Site	1
Victoria Common	1
Walsall Road Allotments	1
Warden Road Recreation Ground	1
Warstock Lane Allotments	1
Weoley Castle Square Public Open Space	1
West Heath Backland Site	1
Wharf Land Allotments	1
Wheeldon Recreation Ground	1
White Farm Road Allotments	1
Withy Hill Recreation Ground	1
Woodcock Lane Allotments	1
Yardley Wood Playing Field	1
Yellow Park	1

