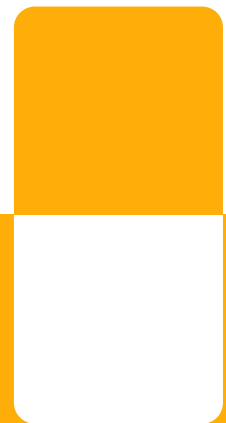


Community Energy Action Plan

Worcestershire
County Council

July 2026



Glossary

Distribution Network Operator (DNO). A licensed company responsible for owning, operating, maintaining, and investing in the regional electricity distribution network that carries power from the national transmission system to homes, businesses, and other consumers. DNOs manage substations, transformers, overhead lines, and underground cables, typically operating at voltages below 132kV. They do not generate or sell electricity; instead, their role is to ensure a safe, reliable, and efficient supply, respond to power outages, and provide new or upgraded connections for consumers and generators. GB DNOs operate within defined geographic areas and are regulated by Ofgem, which sets performance standards and controls how much they can charge through regulated network fees. The DNO for Worcestershire is National Grid Electricity Distribution (West Midlands) PLC.

Feed in Tariff (FiT). A UK government scheme (2010–2019) that provided guaranteed, long-term payments for renewable electricity generation and export. FiTs underpinned the early growth of community energy by offering stable, predictable income, enabling share offers and long-term planning. When FiTs closed to new projects in 2019, many community energy business models became unviable. Whilst the Smart Export Guarantee (SEG) replaced FiTs for exports, its lower and variable rates limit SEG's usefulness for many community-owned projects. As a result, the sector has shifted towards on-site use and long-term PPAs.

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 the Council and provide long-term price certainty, carbon savings, and community benefit. They are commonly used alongside roof or land leases.

Executive Summary

Worcestershire County Council 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 (February 2026) 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 the Council can best support community energy activity without duplicating existing efforts. This document sets out the resulting action plan.

Worcestershire has active community energy groups, an emerging project pipeline and increasing policy support. Activity already includes renewable generation, feasibility work on heat networks, and partnership-led delivery models that aim to retain local economic value while delivering decarbonisation, lower energy costs and greater resilience. Progress is currently constrained by grid capacity, finance, planning, skills and coordination challenges. The immediate priority is therefore a coordinated, place-based approach focused on delivering "quick win" rooftop solar projects where grid capacity exists, alongside stronger partnership working.

A population-based pro-rated calculation of Worcestershire share of the 8GW target across England, would indicate 83MW potential for community-owned or community partnered renewable energy across Worcestershire. A more realistic target has been produced with very conservative estimate of the potential for rooftop solar, and rural ground based solar and wind generation, using publicly or community-owned buildings and land of 32MW, with the most rapidly achievable projects contributing 2.2MW of that potential. This indicates real opportunities to progress the development and delivery of a pipeline of community energy projects, both short and longer term, which will enable Worcestershire to scale-up from their current baseline. Further unrecorded community-owned capacity may also exist.

Looking ahead, Worcestershire has strong opportunities in heat networks and battery storage. Existing feasibility studies, active community groups and emerging schemes, including activity in Bewdley, provide a foundation for heat networks serving public buildings, schools, healthcare facilities, social housing and regeneration sites. Battery storage could help maximise the value of local renewable generation, ease grid constraints and improve project viability, particularly across public and community buildings. Worcestershire's geography, including the River Severn, also presents longer-term opportunities such as hydropower.

Overall, Worcestershire has solid foundations for growth. Success will depend on reducing barriers, aligning stakeholders, and accelerating early projects to build momentum and confidence.

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 Worcestershire County Council.

National policy and funding context

Historically, many community energy projects in England were underpinned by the FiT scheme, which provided guaranteed payments for renewable electricity generation. The closure of the FiT in 2019 has shifted the sector towards alternative commercial and community-based models. Emerging projects are increasingly exploring PPAs and other routes such as private wire arrangements or export to the grid at wholesale rates. These evolving revenue models are shaping the financial viability and delivery pathways of community energy projects across Worcestershire and beyond.

The primary mechanism for supporting community energy in England is delivered through GBE, a publicly owned entity established by the UK Government to accelerate the transition to low-carbon power and strengthen national energy security. A central component of its remit is the Local Power Plan which sets out the national framework for scaling locally and community-owned energy.

The Local Power Plan establishes an ambition to deliver up to 8 GW of local energy capacity by 2030, supported by up to £1 billion of investment, with a vision that every community can participate in or benefit from local energy generation. The Plan sets out a coordinated package of support, including direct funding and finance, capacity building and advisory services, development of scalable business models, and policy and regulatory reform to enable greater levels of local ownership and participation.

Going forward, a key delivery mechanism within this framework is the rebranded GBE Community Fund. The 2024-25 programme equivalent provided structured grant funding to support the early stages of community energy development, enabling projects to progress from initial concept through to investment-ready proposals, typically available at two stages: the programme funded up to £40,000

for feasibility studies and up to £100,000 for detailed development such as technical design, planning, and business case preparation². In 2026 councils should expect funding to offer similar per-project grants but from a smaller overall pot, delivered via intermittent, competitive regional rounds.

The Fund supports a wide range of technologies, including solar PV, wind, hydropower, heat networks, battery storage and EV infrastructure, and is open to a broad set of community-based organisations. Projects are expected to deliver clear local benefit and incorporate meaningful levels of community ownership. Delivery of the GBE Community Fund is undertaken through the five regional Net Zero Hubs, including the MNZH, which provides both funding administration and wider technical, financial and strategic support. This regional model enables place-based delivery, reflecting differing levels of community energy maturity and allowing support to be tailored to local needs. Whilst Worcestershire is not prominently represented in the latest GBE Community Fund award lists, there is evidence of early-stage community energy activity aligned with the Fund's objectives and eligibility criteria³. A number of local groups are actively developing projects that fit the GBE Community Fund development pipeline (See Community energy in Worcestershire – the current landscape).

Worcestershire County Council

Strategic context

Worcestershire's approach to energy and decarbonisation is framed primarily through the *Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Energy Strategy* – published in March 2019 – ⁴, although elements of the evidence base have been updated more recently⁵. The current strategy sets out a vision for Worcestershire to become a thriving low-carbon economy by 2030, characterised by energy-efficient housing, modernised infrastructure and increased deployment of locally generated renewable energy. This framing places decarbonisation not only as an environmental priority but also as a means of supporting productivity, innovation and inward investment, particularly within emerging low-carbon and clean technology sectors.

Strategic responsibility now sits within Worcestershire County Council following the integration of LEP functions in 2024⁶. The strategy establishes a clear set of countywide targets, including a 50% reduction in carbon emissions (from a 2005 baseline), a tripling of renewable energy generation, and a doubling of the size of the low-carbon economy by 2030. These ambitions are supported by a delivery framework that tracks progress against key indicators such as renewable generation (with a target to meet around 15% of local demand), energy efficiency improvements (including retrofit of c. 2,000 homes per year), and the growth of low-carbon businesses. Taken together, these targets reflect a dual emphasis on emissions reduction and economic development, reinforcing the role of energy as an enabling infrastructure for wider regional growth.

Worcestershire's approach is structured around four interconnected priorities: affordable clean energy, clean economic growth, infrastructure and development, and low-carbon transport and active travel. This recognises the need to address fuel poverty and household energy affordability, support the expansion of low-carbon business activity, and deliver enabling infrastructure – including electricity networks and digital systems – to unlock housing and commercial development. Emphasis is placed on

² [Community Energy Fund](#)

³ [GBE Community Fund projects \(May 2026\) - GOV.UK](#)

⁴ [County Energy and Climate Strategies | Worcestershire County Council](#)

⁵ <https://www.wlep.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Energy-Strategy-Evidence-Base-July-2025.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-enterprise-partnerships-integration-of-lep-functions-into-local-democratic-institutions/guidance-for-local-enterprise-partnerships-leps-and-local-and-combined-authorities-integration-of-lep-functions-into-local-democratic-institutions>

overcoming grid capacity constraints, which are identified as a key barrier to growth and decarbonisation, as well as on integrating smart energy systems and leveraging local innovation assets such as the Worcestershire 5G testbed.

The strategy also highlights several place-specific challenges, including relatively high levels of fuel poverty, a rural and dispersed settlement pattern with continued reliance on carbon-intensive heating fuels, and a shortage of skills within the low-carbon workforce. These factors shape both the pace and nature of the transition, requiring coordinated action across public, private and community stakeholders to ensure that decarbonisation is both deliverable and equitable. Worcestershire identifies a range of opportunities, notably in geothermal energy, heat networks, EV infrastructure and smart grid development, alongside support for innovation and clean technology business growth. Still, it is anticipated that the emerging Energy Strategy refresh will include more on community energy than the current version.

Transport policy provides an additional strategic layer through the *Local Transport Plan (2011–2026)*, which supports the development of an efficient, low-carbon, multimodal transport system and promotes active travel, public transport use and the uptake of EVs. This reinforces the broader strategic aim of reducing emissions whilst improving air quality, accessibility and quality of life.

These strategic documents provide a largely economically framed mandate for enabling local energy solutions. They point to a role for approaches such as community energy in helping to unlock constrained grid capacity, increase local generation, support affordability through locally retained value, and build local capability within the low-carbon transition. However, compared to some other areas, the policy landscape is less explicitly focused on community-led delivery, meaning that realising this potential is likely to depend on alignment between economic growth priorities, infrastructure investment, and local partnership working.

Community energy in Worcestershire – the current landscape

In addition to the workshops, Energy Saving Trust carried out a survey across participating local authorities; the findings below reflect insights and responses from Worcestershire.

Worcestershire's community energy ecosystem is small but active, characterised by a limited number of established and emerging volunteer-led organisations. These include **Malvern Community Energy Co-operative**, **Evesham Vale Energy Renewables (EVER)**, **Transition Bewdley**, and **Crowle Community Energy**. Collectively, these groups are delivering or developing early-stage projects focused on rooftop solar, ground-mounted solar, and emerging heat network schemes. Hydropower has also been considered; however, the only known operational scheme in Worcestershire is privately owned and therefore not classified as community energy, while any additional hydro opportunities remain at an early feasibility stage and are not yet quantifiable. All these organisations are volunteer led, with only very limited paid capacity across the Worcestershire community energy ecosystem, which can influence the pace and scale of project development.

In addition to these core delivery-focused organisations, Worcestershire has a broader network of community and voluntary groups that contribute to the local energy ecosystem. These include Transition Malvern Hills, Transition Kidderminster, and the Wyre Forest Green Alliance, which play an important role in community engagement, awareness raising, partnership development, and behaviour change activity.

However, relatively few of these organisations are currently progressing projects through to the development and delivery of energy assets. This highlights that, whilst community interest and engagement is evident across the county, the number of groups actively delivering community energy projects remains limited, with activity concentrated in a small number of locations and organisations.

Community Energy Group	Role	Projects
Malvern Community Energy Co-op	Deploys small to medium-scale renewables (mainly rooftop solar). Enables local ownership and investment models. Generates local economic and social value through reduced energy costs and reinvestment.	Operates a ~30 kWp rooftop solar installation at the Malvern Cube⁷. It powers the community centre at reduced cost whilst generating returns for local investors. Raised c. £40,000 through a local share offer to deliver the scheme.
EVER		Developing a pipeline of rooftop solar projects on community buildings supported by community investment models. Also proposed a 225 kW wind turbine linked to a heat pump system at Sedgeberrow, which has secured early-stage development funding and progressed through feasibility, environmental assessment and pre-planning stages⁸.
Transition Bewdley	Acts as a local convenor and project originator, supporting early-stage development of community energy solutions whilst building local awareness and engagement.	Progressing a 1.6 MW community heat network linked to schools and housing, exploring water- and air-source heat pump systems. The project has secured early-stage development funding through the Net Zero Hub-administered Community Energy Fund and is currently at feasibility stage⁹. Also works in partnership with Wyre Forest Green Alliance to deliver community engagement, events and workshops on energy use and carbon reduction.
Crowle Community Energy	Community Benefit Society (established c. 2022) initially formed through the Parish Council, with strong engagement in project development and regional support structures. Demonstrates advanced technical learning and project development experience.	Developed a c. 249 kWp ground-mounted solar PV scheme at Fircone Farm (c. 1 acre), which is technically ready but not currently financially viable. Developing rooftop solar feasibility across 30+ buildings in Wychavon and progressing an early-stage partnership project in Worcester^{10,11}.

⁷ <https://malverncommunityenergy.org/the-cube/>

⁸ <https://ever.me.uk/projects/>

⁹ <https://www.bewdley.org.uk/bewdley-energy>

¹⁰ [Crowle solar farm plan for net-zero bid village - BBC News](#)

¹¹ [Crowle Community Energy](#)

Challenges

Grid constraints and local network limits

Survey responses from Worcestershire organisations highlight grid capacity as a significant constraint, alongside wider viability challenges. Local groups report grid limitations and limited grid capacity as barriers to delivery, alongside high capital costs and uncertainty affecting project progression. Grid constraints mapping included in this report further reinforces this position, showing limited and spatially uneven network capacity, which constrains the availability viable sites for generation.

Projects not financially viable at current prices

Local examples in Worcestershire demonstrate that some “shovel-ready” projects are currently not investable due to low export prices (e.g. c. 9p/kWh compared to c. 14p/kWh required for viability), particularly affecting ground-mounted solar and rural schemes with higher costs and greater reliance on exports.

Planning and policy friction

Survey and workshop feedback indicates that planning and delivery processes for community energy in Worcestershire can be slow and challenging, creating delays even for small-scale schemes. Stakeholders also highlight wider barriers, including high capital costs and uncertainty in funding and policy frameworks, which together constrain project development and progression.

Skills gaps, volunteer sustainability and capacity constraints

Community energy groups across Worcestershire are essentially volunteer led, with limited capacity and notable gaps in finance, legal structuring, and delivery expertise. Recruiting and retaining volunteers is an ongoing challenge, compounded by the typical age profile of existing volunteers and a lack of clear succession planning within some groups. This creates risks for long-term sustainability and continuity of delivery. For example, Malvern Community Energy Co-op and Transition Bewdley are solely run by volunteers (7 and 12 volunteers, respectively), whilst Evesham Vale Energy Renewables is supported by three volunteers.

Challenges specific to heat and non-electricity projects

Whilst much of the current activity focuses on electricity generation (particularly solar PV), there are additional barriers to developing heat-based community energy projects. These include higher complexity, longer development timelines, greater upfront costs, and more challenging business models. Heat networks and building-level heat decarbonisation projects (e.g. heat pumps) often require coordinated retrofit, long-term demand certainty, and higher levels of technical and organisational capacity, making them more difficult for community groups to initiate and deliver.

Regulatory and market barriers

Regulatory constraints continue to limit the ability for community energy projects to maximise value from locally generated electricity. Limitations on local supply and the current market arrangements mean that projects remain heavily dependent on export payments. Whilst reforms such as P441 are expected to improve the ability to supply electricity locally and unlock new business models, there is

ongoing uncertainty around implementation, timelines, and the extent of benefits. This creates risk for project development and can delay investment decisions.

Fragmentation, delivery risks and long development timelines

Activity across Worcestershire is fragmented, with uneven geographic coverage and limited coordination between groups, resulting in duplication of effort and missed opportunities to scale. This fragmentation contributes to longer development timelines as groups often lack the capacity or partnerships needed to progress projects efficiently. Extended timelines create additional risks including loss of sites, reduced landowner confidence, and declining volunteer engagement. More complex projects, such as ground-mounted solar and heat networks, are particularly affected.

Opportunities

Phased and strategic project delivery

A more strategic approach to grid use can unlock delivery across Worcestershire by using existing mapping and LAEP data to prioritise projects in areas with available capacity. Adopting a phased approach can help manage risk, starting with smaller and simpler projects such as rooftop solar to build experience before scaling.

Beyond solar, there is opportunity to diversify into technologies such as hydro, heat networks, and thermal storage. Targeting high-demand users – including industrial estates, agri-business, and social housing – can strengthen demand-led models and improve overall project viability. The Council and its partners should also explore the development of local energy systems including private wire arrangements and substation-level schemes (up to 5 MW), which can bypass some grid limitations. Securing long-term agreements with site owners early in the process is essential, alongside identifying anchor loads (such as schools, NHS sites, and industrial users) to stabilise project economics.

Developing standardised delivery models and processes will also help reduce timelines and improve consistency across projects.

Building skills, capacity and coordination

Scaling community energy will require strengthening skills and building local capacity through partnerships with universities, colleges, and training providers, as well as the creating placements and training pathways. There is a clear opportunity to establish a more coordinated, county-wide approach.

Creating a community energy network or “super group” could support collaboration, align priorities, and develop a shared project pipeline. Alongside dedicated coordination roles, a central knowledge-sharing platform or resource hub would enable groups to access case studies, tools, and guidance. At the same time, regular meetings and forums would help maintain momentum and build partnerships.

In addition, strengthening coordination between project developers and funding sources will be critical to ensuring that viable projects can progress beyond the feasibility stage. Local authorities are well placed to act as conveners, ensuring alignment between stakeholders and strategic objectives.

Community energy as a platform for education and engagement

Community energy projects present an opportunity to integrate delivery with education, awareness, and engagement activities. Schools in particular are a key opportunity, both as host sites for pilot projects and as environments for building understanding of energy, climate change, and local action.

Embedding educational elements alongside project delivery – such as curriculum-linked activities, student engagement, and community outreach – can help build long-term awareness and support for community energy, whilst reinforcing the role of “catalyst” projects in demonstrating benefits and building local participation.

More broadly, linking projects with engagement initiatives can support behaviour change, help recruit new volunteers, and contribute to addressing capacity and succession challenges across the sector over time.

Funding gaps & alternative financial pathways

Worcestershire has successfully secured funding for feasibility and early-stage project development. However, many schemes struggle to progress to construction due to a lack of capital funding and limited access to investment at the delivery stage. There is an opportunity for local authorities and partners to explore bridging finance mechanisms, such as revolving loan funds, to support projects through to delivery. Expanding the use of community share offers (e.g. through Community Benefit Society models) can also help mobilise local investment and build community ownership.

In addition, bundling multiple projects into larger portfolios can improve economies of scale and attract institutional investors. Likewise, integrating battery storage and exploring shared ownership and local trading models can further enhance returns.

Policy alignment, planning reform & early-stage support

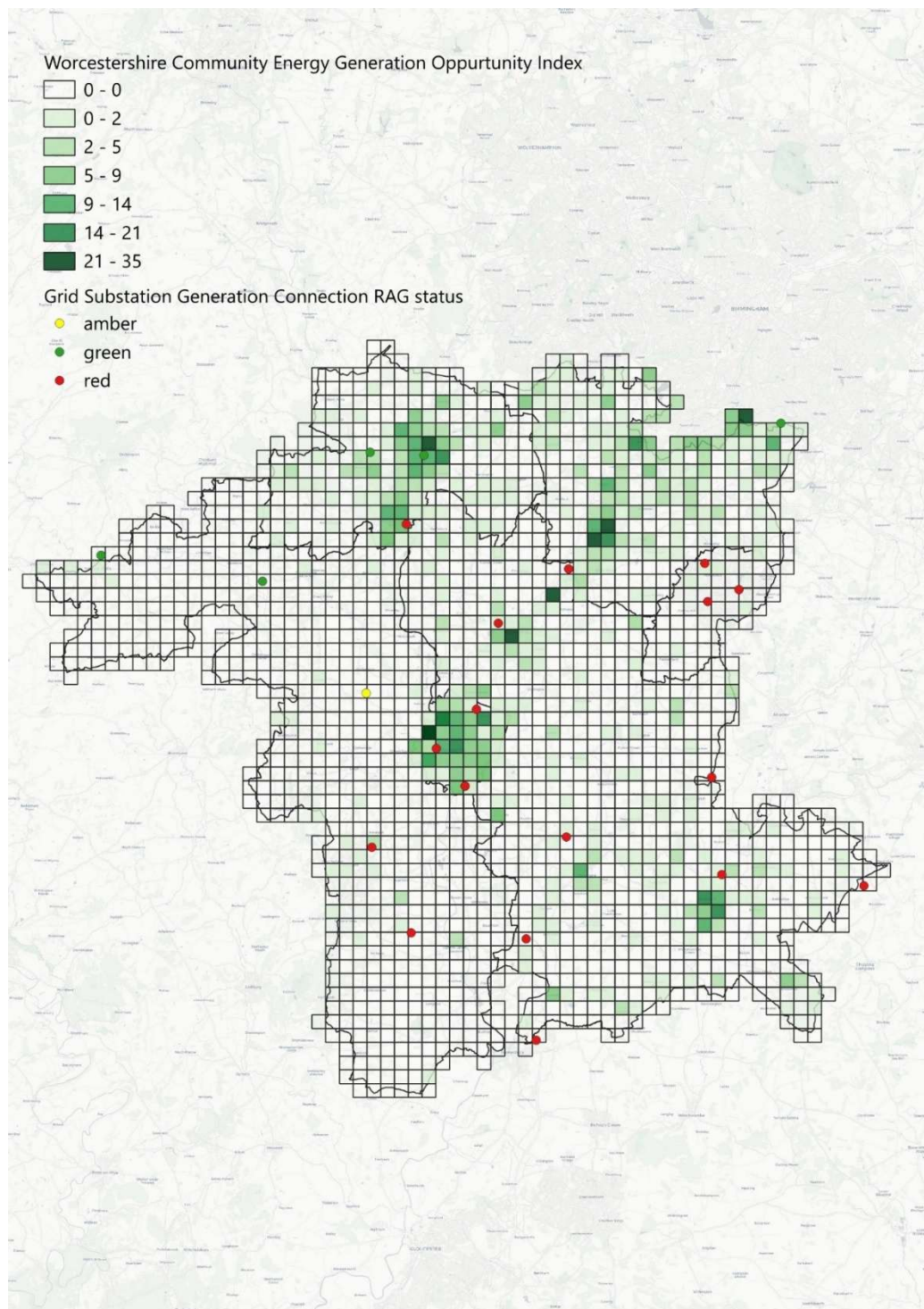
Community energy should be more clearly embedded within local policy frameworks, including the Worcestershire Energy Strategy and refreshed LAEP. There is also an opportunity to introduce enabling mechanisms, such as reduced planning costs for community-led schemes and clearer expectations for incorporating community energy into new developments.

Targeted training for planning officers and councillors can improve understanding of community energy benefits and support more consistent decision-making. At the same time, standardised guidance and policy templates would further support more efficient project delivery.

Refreshed Energy Strategy and emerging LAEP

Although there are challenges posed by local government reorganisation in the short term. There is significant untapped long-term potential for rooftop solar PV on community buildings, leisure centres and council-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 a partnership led by Energy Saving Trust and funded by Scottish Government. 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.

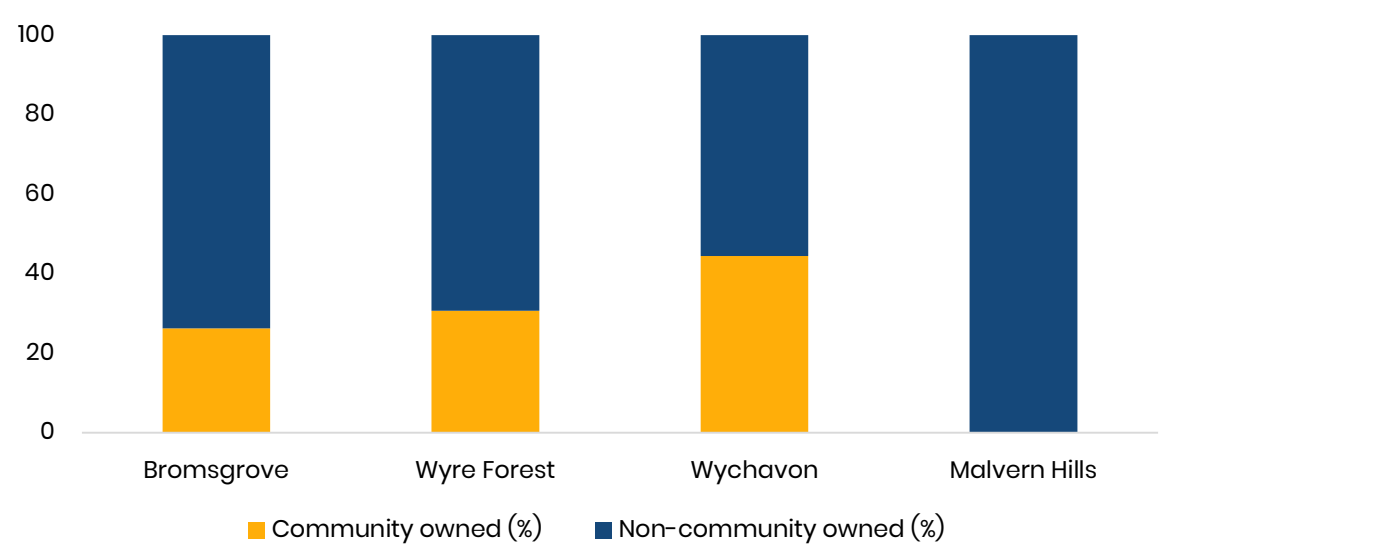


The potential number of opportunities across both buildings and land was analysed, excluding existing renewable installations and areas designated SSSI. The resulting map, shown on the following page, highlights the potential number of community energy projects across the study area. We also mapped out the electricity grid substations and their contracted generation RAG status, providing an indication of the likelihood of obtaining a generation connection in each location. This highlights a key dynamic across Worcestershire: areas of higher opportunity are not always aligned with available grid capacity, reinforcing the importance of spatial prioritisation and the need for demand-led and locally optimised delivery models.

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

Among green RAG sites, non-community ownership dominates, with community-owned sites limited to buildings and no presence in land assets (Chart 1).

Chart 1: Community vs Non-Community Ownership by Local Authority (Green RAG Sites, Worcestershire)

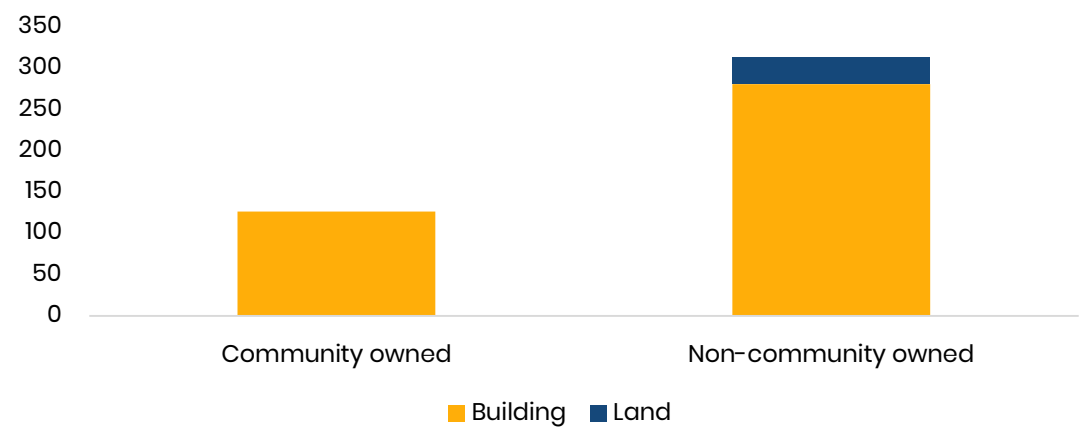


Community ownership of green RAG sites varies by area but remains a minority, with non-community ownership dominant and some local authorities having no community-owned sites (Table 1, Chart 2).

Table 1: Number of community owned and non-community owned green RAG status sites across Worcestershire Local Authority areas.

Local Authority	No. community owned sites	No. non-community owned sites	Total no. sites
Bromsgrove	49	138	187
Wyre Forest	73	165	238
Wychavon	4	5	9
Malvern Hills	0	4	4

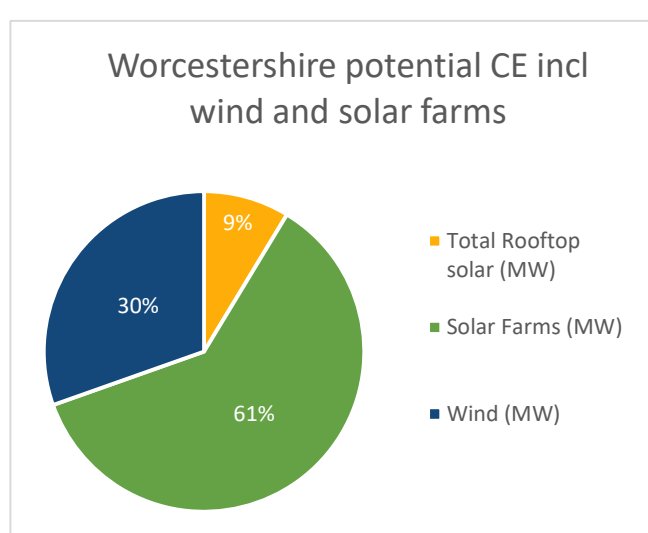
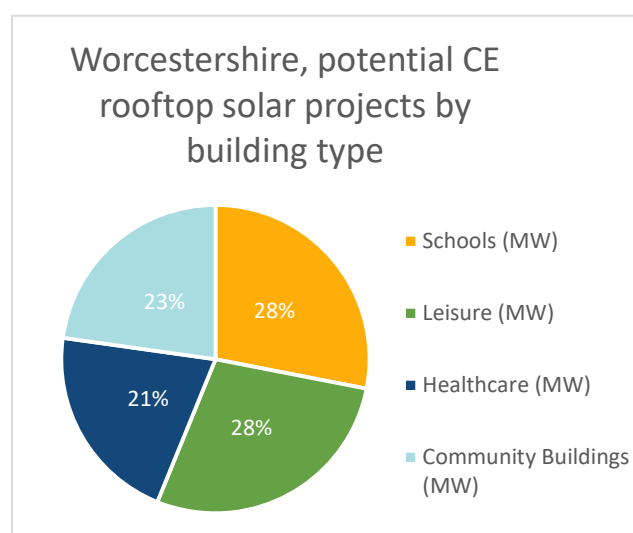
Chart 2: Ownership and Site Type Distribution of Green RAG Sites (Worcestershire)



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 Worcestershire to achieve around 2.2MW capacity – generating around 2GW 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 30MW 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 Worcestershire, 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)
Worcestershire	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.65	2.85	20	10	32.85



Longer-term opportunities: Heat networks and battery storage

Worcestershire has some of the strongest foundations for future heat network development across the areas considered. Workshop discussions identified existing feasibility work, active community energy groups and emerging projects, including activity in Bewdley, as evidence of growing local interest and capability. Heat networks may be particularly attractive in locations where electricity network constraints limit opportunities for large-scale electrification and where clusters of public buildings, town centres or regeneration sites can provide sufficient heat demand.

Potential anchor loads could include civic offices, leisure centres, schools, healthcare facilities, social housing and other publicly owned buildings. Opportunities may also exist to link heat networks to future housing growth areas and regeneration projects where local authorities or public-sector partners have influence over land ownership and development planning. Community energy organisations could play a role in project development, local engagement and long-term ownership models, helping to ensure that economic benefits are retained locally.

Battery storage was viewed as an important complementary technology to renewable generation. Worcestershire faces significant grid connection challenges in some areas, making batteries particularly valuable for maximising on-site use of solar generation and reducing reliance on constrained network infrastructure. Public-sector estates, industrial facilities, schools and community buildings with rooftop solar could benefit from battery systems that store surplus daytime electricity for evening consumption.

There is also potential for batteries to support community energy trading models and improve the economics of solar schemes installed on buildings with variable occupancy patterns. Schools, village halls, churches and faith buildings often generate significant solar electricity during periods of low demand, such as weekends and school holidays; battery storage could capture this generation for later use, reducing export losses and improving overall project viability.

Actions

A series of suggested actions based on the workshops is set out in the plan below to inform Worcestershire'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 up to five sites with potential for developing new community energy projects on a 1–5-year timeline.		
2	Engage positively with the DNO's community energy team to maintain up to date intelligence on network capacity. This could include revisiting formerly constrained sites where there might be more opportunity following the clearing of connection queues.		
3	Engage procurement teams to address immediate concerns over risks.		
4	Review opportunities to improve collaboration across the county between community energy groups, NGOs and Councils on retrofit and fuel poverty. Identify any quick wins on enhancing delivery.		

Building the sector (Strategic actions)

	Action	Owner	Target Deadline
	Networks:		
1	Establish LA Worcestershire community energy network to implement and continue to develop action plan.		
2	Network with groups across the Midlands.		
	Understanding the opportunity:		
3	Strategic planning of deployment including a survey of opportunities on public estate including schools, public buildings and public land. Explore potential sites that allow co-located generation and demand to further improve project viability.		
4	Review and identify opportunities for community energy on industrial estates. Explore potential sites that allow co-located generation and demand to further improve project viability.		
5	Council to work to identify private sector partners for community energy. Consider high daytime energy demand sectors, agricultural sector as well as commercial properties. Explore potential sites that allow co-located generation and demand to further improve project viability.		

	Action	Owner	Target Deadline
	Networks:		
6	Council to explore opportunities for community energy provision for social housing.		
7	Identify an opportunity for village/town scale community energy pilot with significant scalable generation, local benefit, and local governance. For example, consider a private wire pilot and/or an energy local type approach.		
8	Review opportunities for community energy role in District Heating Zones and opportunities for funding (GHN mentioned in Workshops).		
9	Look for opportunity to pilot community-owned battery or alternative grid assets.		
10	Review collaboration on retrofit and fuel poverty between Councils and community groups to identify growth opportunities.		
	Building capacity:		
11	Identify opportunities for support from Council to community energy funding applications through existing or new services.		
12	Develop/expand County-level collaborative approach on fuel poverty and/or retrofit, consider consortium funding application.		
13	Training on community energy for councillors (including Town and Parish) and senior officers (including planning and procurement).		
14	Establish senior officer and member champions at different levels of authority and involve them in the community energy network.		
15	Use network to understand skills needs around project management and operation. Consider opportunities for aggregation to help more cost-effective delivery, including collaboration on buying in skills or possibility of establishing a shared local service.		

Creating the conditions for growth (Policy areas)

	Action	Owner	Target Deadline
	Energy Strategy and LAEP:		
1	Set target for community renewable energy and build this into energy strategy. Consider a short-term strategy of doubling the scale of the sector and a longer-term target for MW installed.		
2	Identify specific community energy opportunities in energy strategy.		

	Planning Policy:		
3	Engage planning teams to ensure community energy is considered in Local Plans and new developments.		
4	Explore opportunities to encourage shared ownership offers from private sector renewables, aligned with emerging national guidance.		
5	Review opportunities to incorporate design considerations (e.g. building orientation, shading) that support future solar deployment in new homes and businesses		
6	Develop and maintain a local register of community energy groups accessible to developers to support partnerships and project delivery.		
	Procurement Policy:		
7	Review suitability of an approach that focuses on building benefits of community energy into the social value component of procurement policy or establishes high level organisational policy on partnership with community energy.		

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

Engagement Plan

This engagement plan sets out a coordinated approach to raising awareness of community energy in Worcestershire, building participation, and supporting the growth of the sector through targeted communications and stakeholder engagement.

Action		Owner	Target Deadline
Objective 1: Build a coordinated engagement network			
1	Establish Worcestershire community energy network to coordinate engagement activity and share learning.		
2	Use the network to identify success stories and case studies.		
Objective 2: Showcase community energy through visible projects			
3	Identify and develop “catalyst” projects to act as visible, real-world examples of community energy (including both established and emerging schemes).		
4	Promote these projects to demonstrate benefits and build local confidence and support.		
Objective 3: Strengthen communications and public awareness			
5	Identify spokespeople to represent the sector in local media and public-facing activity.		
6	Test and evaluate communications channels (e.g. local media, newsletters, social media) to determine the most effective routes for engagement.		
7	Work with Council communications teams to plan and deliver coordinated campaigns and media activity.		
Objective 4: Grow participation and long-term engagement			
8	Deliver campaigns to increase awareness of community energy and build a pipeline of participants, volunteers, and investors. Note that engagement with young people will be key to continuity of community energy groups (e.g. through schools, colleges universities, work experience, and social media)		
9	Develop a long-term strategy for scaling engagement and growing the community energy sector in Worcestershire.		

Conclusion

The single most important action the Council should take in the next 90 days is to identify, prioritise, and publicly publish a planned pipeline of at least five deliverable community energy projects on council-led or supported sites. This matters because the county's primary constraint is a lack of investable, coordinated projects that can move quickly from feasibility to delivery. A visible, council-backed pipeline will unlock developer confidence, attract funding, align stakeholders, and create the "quick win" successes needed to build momentum and credibility across the sector.

Success over the next two years should be defined in clear, measurable terms. By June 2028, the Council should aim to:

- Secure planning consent, or grid offers for 83 MW community-owned or community-partnered renewable capacity¹²
- Establish a live pipeline of 15+ viable projects at various stages of development
- Support at least five community energy groups to sustain paid roles or contracted delivery capacity.

This action plan should now be adopted as a living document, reviewed frequently and updated as projects progress and barriers evolve. To ensure delivery, the Council should appoint a named senior officer with clear accountability for community energy, supported by cross-departmental coordination. With ownership, visibility, and early delivery, the Council can move from strategy to implementation and position community energy as a core pillar of Worcestershire's net zero transition.

NB A separate document has been 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 energy¹³.

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

¹² Represents a proportional per capita share of the national 8 GW community energy target (as set out by Local Power Plan), estimated by applying the area's share of England's population. This provides a high-level, indicative benchmark to guide strategic ambition rather than a site-specific or deliverability-based target. to guide strategic ambition.

¹³ [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: Worcestershire Green RAG Sites by Local Authority and Site Category

Local Authority	Site Category	No. sites
Wyre Forest	Care / Nursing Home	40
Wyre Forest	Indoor / Outdoor Leisure / Sporting Activity / Centre	34
Bromsgrove	Care / Nursing Home	31
Wyre Forest	Public / Village Hall / Other Community Facility	30
Bromsgrove	Indoor / Outdoor Leisure / Sporting Activity / Centre	27
Wyre Forest	Children's Nursery / Creche	22
Bromsgrove	Children's Nursery / Creche	16
Bromsgrove	Public / Village Hall / Other Community Facility	16
Wyre Forest	Primary School	16
Bromsgrove	Community Service Centre / Office	12
Bromsgrove	Place Of Worship	12
Wyre Forest	Church	11
Bromsgrove	Preparatory / First / Primary / Infant / Junior / Middle School	10
Wyre Forest	Community Service Centre / Office	10
Wyre Forest	Place Of Worship	10
Wyre Forest	Church Hall / Religious Meeting Place / Hall	9
Wyre Forest	General Practice Surgery / Clinic	9
Bromsgrove	General Practice Surgery / Clinic	8
Bromsgrove	Church	6
Bromsgrove	Other Educational Establishment	5
Wyre Forest	Other Educational Establishment	5
Wyre Forest	Preparatory / First / Primary / Infant / Junior / Middle School	5
Bromsgrove	Health Care Services	4
Bromsgrove	Health Centre	4
Bromsgrove	Land: Countryside	4
Bromsgrove	Primary School	4
Bromsgrove	Secondary School	4
Wyre Forest	Health Care Services	4
Wyre Forest	Household waste	4
Bromsgrove	Library	3
Wyre Forest	Land	3
Wyre Forest	Secondary School	3
Bromsgrove	College	2
Bromsgrove	Educational Establishment – playing field	2
Bromsgrove	Household waste	2
Bromsgrove	Land	2

Bromsgrove	Museum / Gallery	2
Bromsgrove	Rugby Facility	2
Bromsgrove	Special Needs Establishment.	2
Wychavon	Church Hall / Religious Meeting Place / Hall	2
Wychavon	Indoor / Outdoor Leisure / Sporting Activity / Centre	2
Wyre Forest	Activity / Leisure / Sports Centre	2
Wyre Forest	College	2
Wyre Forest	Land: Countryside	2
Wyre Forest	Special Needs Establishment.	2
Bromsgrove	Football Facility	1
Bromsgrove	Highways depot	1
Bromsgrove	Hospital / Hospice	1
Bromsgrove	Local Government Service	1
Bromsgrove	Right of way	1
Bromsgrove	Secondary / High School	1
Malvern Hills	Educational Establishment - school	1
Malvern Hills	Highways depot	1
Malvern Hills	Land	1
Malvern Hills	Library	1
Wychavon	Children's Nursery / Creche	1
Wychavon	General Practice Surgery / Clinic	1
Wychavon	Other Educational Establishment	1
Wychavon	Place Of Worship	1
Wychavon	Public / Village Hall / Other Community Facility	1
Wyre Forest	Ambulance Station	1
Wyre Forest	Educational Establishment - playing field	1
Wyre Forest	Further Education	1
Wyre Forest	Health Centre	1
Wyre Forest	Highways depot	1
Wyre Forest	Hospice	1
Wyre Forest	Hospital	1
Wyre Forest	Law Court	1
Wyre Forest	Leisure: Sports ground/pitch/playing field	1
Wyre Forest	Library	1
Wyre Forest	Museum / Gallery	1
Wyre Forest	Other: Electricity Sub-Station	1
Wyre Forest	Parking	1
Wyre Forest	Racquet Sports Facility	1