

Seeing is believing Community Energy/Local Authority energy generation partnerships

Welcome:

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Benefits of collaboration on decarbonising the public estate



COMMUNITY ENERGY & LOCAL AUTHORITY PARTNERSHIP

Sara Grimes, Community Business Development Director, BWCE

APSE Conference 2025

• The BWCE Story...2010:

- Since then raised £25 million to install 14.6MW, matching annual demand from 5,200 homes
- 5 ground mount & 37 rooftop solar systems, mainly schools
- B&NES Council partnership to create a Community Energy Network
- Delivered flexibility and local supply innovation pilots
- Launched a home energy programme in partnership with B&NES Council & Retrofit West CIC
- Donated £470k to support action on carbon reduction & fuel poverty



BWCE's Community Business Strategy



Partnership Opportunities

- Co-designed community energy strategy – integration into LA policy
- Joint investment
- Shared ownership/joint venture
- Joint grant funding bids
- Community renewables on LA estate
- Long term power purchase agreements
- Joint delivery of energy efficiency/energy advice services



Legal Basis - Cooperation Agreement – Since 2011



**BATH & NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL AND
BATH & WEST COMMUNITY ENERGY COOPERATION AGREEMENT 2023-28**

This Cooperation Agreement is made on the _____ 2023

BETWEEN: Bath and North East Somerset Council of the Guildhall, High Street, BA1 5AW, United Kingdom ("**B&NES**");

AND: Bath & West Community Energy Ltd (Registered IPS number IP 30960R) of The Guild, High Street, Bath BA1 5EB United Kingdom ("**BWCE**")

Collectively referred to as the "**Parties**" and each a "**Party**".

1. Introduction

1.1. B&NES has a pivotal role in tackling climate change by reducing carbon emissions from its own estate and operations, encouraging and enabling its residents, businesses and visitors to reduce their carbon emissions and by achieving national priorities such as domestic energy efficiency and the deployment of renewable energy in a locally appropriate way.

1.2. Under Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 B&NES has the power to do anything which it considers is likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area. Under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 B&NES also has a general power of competence to do anything which individuals may generally do.

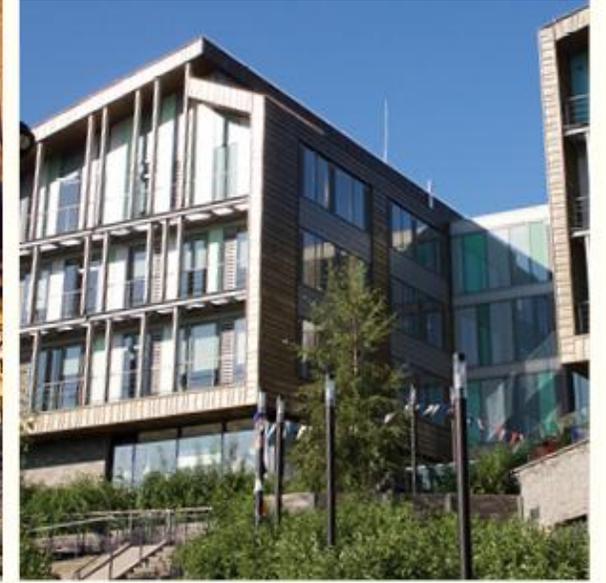
The Future of Energy is Local

- Community energy offers:
- A not-for-profit, democratic and locally accountable community business model ...
- ...offering a practical response to the climate crisis through collective action and local benefit
- **Work with us** so that community owned **renewable energy can be the powerhouse** for a just transition to net zero



Community Energy Network

A partnership in Bath and North East Somerset



Bath & North East
Somerset Council

Improving People's Lives



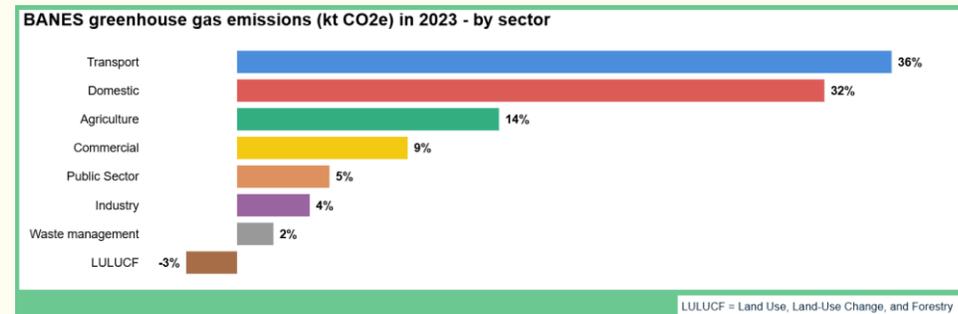
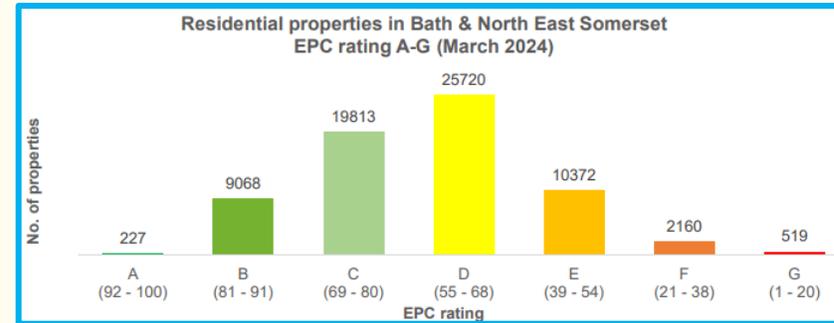
Why do we need the Community Energy Network in BANES?

We all want warm and healthy homes

- 10.2%, of households in **fuel poverty**
- 61% of residential properties have an **EPC** rated D-G.

We're in a climate emergency

- Domestic housing accounts for 32% of emissions in BANES
- The Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, and an Ecological Emergency in 2020.
- **The Council set out four priorities for climate, including decarbonising buildings and increasing renewable energy generation**



Community Energy Network Partnership

Funder



Partners
(named on partnership
agreement)



Improving People's Lives



Partners (contracted for
project delivery)



- 3 year project until February 2028.
- Interim webpages are set up here - www.bathnes.gov.uk/communityenergynetwork
- The key strands are **Energy at Home** (including a network of **Energy Champions**) and **Energy in your Community**



Energy at Home

- Energy advice from Age UK, Citizen's Advice and Centre for Sustainable Energy through the Community Wellbeing Hub.
- Energy cafés to offer in person support
- Signposting to Retrofit West's services
- Online resources signposting to energy saving advice, retrofit support, funding/grants, how to reduce mould and damp etc.
- Team of trained Energy Champions, who listen to residents and offer support, through signposting

Energy in Your Community

- Working with the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) and Bath and West Community Energy
- Delivering a series of workshops and activities that explore the potential for community-owned renewables, including the local benefits.
- 3 areas are being continued from a pilot in 2022
- 3 new areas selected by grouping together organisations that responded to a call out for interest in the project
- Target of 5MW of community owned renewables



Why Community Energy?

- Engages residents in the energy transition
- Creates local value – ethical investments, supply chain, Community fund
- Expertise that may not be found within councils
- Helping us (the council) meet ambitious climate targets



What's next

- Building on existing relationships, continuing to explore potential for working together
- Thinking about the legacy for CEN and how we continue to work together collaboratively

BRISTOL ENERGY COOPERATIVE

APSE Conference 2025

Helen Martin, CEO



Bristol Energy Cooperative

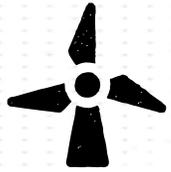
About Bristol Energy Cooperative



- **Local roots & democratic structure:** founded by Bristolians in 2011, now almost **2000 investor members**, minimum investment £100, one member one vote
- **Capacity:** professional **staff team**, experienced NEDs, expert advisors and network
- **Track record:** 23 rooftop arrays and 2 solar farms totalling **12MWp**; battery & microgrid investments
- **Community commitment:** distributed **£400k+** to local community projects



Our Impact



Clean local energy – 12MWp, powering around 3,500 homes. Generating near demand builds system **flexibility** and resilience



Lower bills for our rooftop sites: £30,000 per year



Engaging people in the energy transition: inspiring, informing, empowering members and community partners



Building community wealth through community funding c. £40,000 per year; local contracts and job creation



BEC & BCC – an evolving partnership

Early project partnership to reach scale – 2016 4MW solar farm on BCC land with BCC co-investment

Growing BEC capacity to lead – 2020 1MW rooftop array on BCC estate building

Growing BCC Net Zero ambition and City Leap programme – ongoing work to (re)define Community Energy role

Looking ahead – plans for sleeving pool and long-term local PPAs

Lessons Learnt

1. Success needs council resourcing + community capacity
2. Embed CE in net zero and energy strategies
3. The up-sell - Community groups offer agility and legitimacy with communities
4. Build trust early through shared values and collaboration



5. Understand each other's limitations - expectation management
6. BWCE-BAINS, BEC – BCC and PEC–PCC
Have shown what's possible with vision, trust, and support
7. As funding tightens, these partnerships are more vital than ever

Q&A



Seeing is believing

