

Northern Power Grid Community Forum.**Consultation on OFGEM's Significant Code Review – 25 August 2021 - UPDATED**

This document is in response to the formal consultation on behalf of Community First Yorkshire; a membership based registered VCSE infrastructure charity and the Rural Community Council for North Yorkshire. We are a member of Action for Communities in Rural England (ACRE), the national network of rural community councils which seek to understand and advocate for the needs of rural communities. We are part-funded by the Department of Environment and Rural Affairs to undertake this work.

This response is on behalf of both rural and urban community generators in North Yorkshire where there is a track record of achievement and significant unrealized ambitions. We work collaboratively with other charities such as CAVCA based in Scarborough; local councils and the Local Enterprise Partnership in a collective effort to decarbonize our local economies in line with our local and national strategies.

We learned of this consultation on 20th August 2021 via colleagues in Richmondshire, but we have not been able to understand in the time available how the revisions to the code enable or impede community energy generation. The groups we support are facing significant challenges which we will endeavour to highlight through this consultation opportunity.

Appendix One sets out examples of community based generators in rural North Yorkshire, the largest rural county, which have been achieved despite the significant challenges faced by rural communities wanting to decarbonize. We recognize Northern Power Grid have a major impact on the future of renewable energy and the availability of Electric Vehicle charging points in our area.

The main obstacle these groups, charities and social enterprises face is securing funding to put in three phase electricity and surge protection as part of the installation of new generating capacity. Thus in the context of this consultation we are advocating for further targeted investment from the national Green Futures Fund and its successors and/or related funding opportunities for rural and coastal generators to be able to remove the barriers to installing and generating where people in these organisations live and work.

The Community Building / Generator examples we feature below relate to the Richmondshire and Ryedale districts of North Yorkshire and these in turn can be used as a proxy of need for both rural and coastal communities.

Richmondshire is within the parliamentary constituency of the current Chancellor of the Exchequer and we shall also continue to inform him of the need to level up and target investment at all rural and coastal communities to enable them to generate on a par with their urban counterparts.

When we conduct a community renewable energy feasibility study our communities are finding that the upfront cost of the infrastructure almost always makes the project not financially viable. This is because of the cost of linking to the grid with a three phase connection and associated surcharge connections (needed to install electric vehicle chargers). Anything that can be done to break down this barrier for rural and community groups would enable more local efforts to de-carbonise our economy to succeed.

We would welcome the opportunity to access more funding opportunities and community energy generation engagement opportunities by linking in with Regen and the fora you facilitate. Please add me to your mailing list of stakeholders.

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Copies to:

Caroline O' Neill; Head of Partnerships and Policy and Jane Colthup; Chief Executive of Community First Yorkshire.

Jan Thornton; Vice Chair of Community First Yorkshire and Action for Communities in Rural England

Jos Holmes, Local Authority Climate Action Co-ordinator, York and North Yorkshire LEP

Leah Furniss, Development Officer, Community First Yorkshire

Mel Bonney Kane, Chief Executive, CAVCA

Sue Stokes, Askrigg Community Energy Askrigg / Richmond Climate Action Partnership

Appendix One

Richmondshire District Schemes Struggling for Viability Due to lack of infrastructure / cost of infrastructure making local initiatives and capacity to decarbonize not viable:

Askrigg Community Energy - can install EV chargers at the sports centre car park because there is an existing three phase supply already serving the floodlighting for the football pitch/MUGA. Unfortunately, the lottery bid to install EV chargers and solar panels etc. was unsuccessful due to being over-subscribed. Other community buildings such as the church and village hall and a community car park do not have a three phase supply which increases the cost to the extent of making them unviable. Other nearby three phase supplies either have no further capacity or are on the other side of main roads.

Newton le Willows had a proposal for EV charging at their community building (s) and this has not been installed due to the cost to install a three phase supply.

Richmondshire District Council has multiple sites across Richmondshire where EV charging points are planned but the cost of the three phase supply is prohibitive.

Tunstall village hall - keen to install EV charging, but there is no three phase supply on site.

Barningham Net Zero – Lack of provision of three phase supply to the village made their scheme not financially viable.

Ryedale District Schemes:

We are seeing increasing numbers of halls interested in installing Electric Vehicle Charging points and associated energy generation projects. However, the biggest challenges are lack of understanding around technology requirements for installing the charge points and lack of knowledge of how to fund it.

Hovingham Village Hall has EVC charging points (we have a podcast on this project) and **Worsall Village Halls** have Photo Voltaic Panels. There is also a **recent feasibility study of 20 village halls in Ryedale and Hambleton Districts for PV Panel feasibility so we have interest, where there is existing knowledge and understanding amongst the community.** However, we need access to additional resources to:

- Increase knowledge and understanding of PV Panels EVC points; and
- How to fund the additional infrastructure costs in rural areas.