Dear Sir/ Madam,

I support community energy delivery across the NW and have worked closely with ENW since they sponsored the 'Powering Up North' event in 2015 which was a seminal event for community energy in the region that spurred a rise in activity of groups and projects.

I have worked closely with ENW on their Powering Our Communities fund, which provides vital seed funding for the delivery of community energy projects. They currently offer a fund of £75k which is hugely oversubscribed, with 25 applications being submitted for the 2022 round.

I was hugely disappointed to see that Ofgem has rejected the ENW application for any expansion of the successful Community Energy Fund to provide decarbonisation support to a wider range of local projects and increase support available beyond support and advice - this is a massive blow for Community energy in the NW.

I have recently delivered the RCEF in the NW and have converted £1.5m of seed funding into a pipeline of £54m projects working towards planning, financial close and delivery. Community projects offer different insights and innovations from main stream projects, often centred around affordable energy and warmth. Please see the attached, a great example of a community led project working holistically to deliver Net Zero.

Net Zero can't happen all top down, grass roots activity is vital to its delivery. Communities are self-organising and understanding the challenges of Climate emergency, often much faster than policy makers and Local Authorities. Allowing them small budgets to precipitate delivery often creates projects that bring momentum and a ripple effect that goes well beyond the usual metrics.

To get to Net Zero, we need all hands on deck, that means communities too. I hope you can revisit this ENW communities fund and understand the overall benefits it will bring will outweigh the cost of the fund itself,

Many thanks

Kate