

# Regional Energy Strategic Plan policy framework Draft Impact Assessment consultation response by Community Energy Scotland

## Introduction

Community Energy Scotland is a member-led organisation that works to increase community resilience and enable our members to play a significant role in a just energy transition. Community energy groups create locally controlled, decentralised solutions for meeting local energy needs. They are 'more than profit' groups that organise collective and locally-driven action to:

- Generate renewable electricity or renewable heat,
- Reduce energy or fossil fuel demand (e.g. through retrofitting or EV car clubs)
- Positively impact energy systems e.g. demand side management, load balancing, flexibility or storage projects.

We provide technical assistance, training and knowledge-sharing forums, and we deliver projects including the Scottish Government-funded Carbon Neutral Islands project and the Islands Centre for Net Zero, and the UK-wide Energy Learning Network.

Contact:

Eibhlin Norquoy, Head of Trading: [eibhlin.norquoy@communityenergy.scot](mailto:eibhlin.norquoy@communityenergy.scot)

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Has anything in this draft IA changed your views/response to our July 2024 RESP policy framework consultation? If so, please explain what part of your response/view has changed and the reasons why. Please provide as much detail as possible.

Community Energy Scotland were unfortunately not able to submit a response to the July 2024 RESP policy framework consultation. We welcome coordinated development of the energy system across multiple vectors to provide confidence in system requirements and enable network infrastructure investment ahead of need. Community organisations should be engaged at an early stage to co-design these plans. Community groups are expanding what they do in their local area and increasingly we're seeing groups providing energy efficiency advice, community transport and EV chargers, renewable generation, providing heating and renovating and building housing. All of which has an impact on local energy requirements.

Ideally, funding would cover volunteer community members' time in participating on working groups per Grid Supply Point to enable meaningful engagement and co-development of these plans. RESP should be required to take account of Community-led Local Energy Plans, community-owned land plans, Local Place Plans, Area Partnership Plans, and any other recognised plans that have been democratically-developed with community input. The most efficient way to do this is for those community groups that have produced those plans to participate in working groups about their local area.

Community groups have a much smaller geographic area of focus than Local Authorities. Which means they know what's happening in their community better than the Local Authority does and this granularity is critical for building plans from the ground up. It's far more efficient to have those groups that have these plans to participate in the development of the networks rather than third parties trying to understand them.

Do you agree that we have, to a reasonable extent, identified and understood all the potential costs of implementing the RESP?

At this early stage in development of the RESP, it is unknown how the RESP will be delivered in practice. It is therefore not possible to identify all the costs associated. The transitional RESP allows opportunity to support the development of the RESP process. Communities will be vital to our future networks, but they need to be enabled to engage meaningfully. One route to enabling engagement is funded positions for communities on working groups, with one working group per Grid Supply Point.

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