

DECC working group on community energy grid connections – 3rd meeting

This meeting discussed the recommendations and draft report	Date and time of meeting	09.00-11.00 5 June 2014
	Location	Ofgem, London

1. Welcome

- 1.1. See Appendix for list of attendees. There were no apologies received.
- 1.2. The Chair (Sarah Harrison) welcomed the members of the group and introduced the purpose of the meeting – to discuss the group’s draft report and recommendations.
- 1.3. The report was drafted by Ofgem based on input from the four sub-groups (capacity and investment policy, cost of connection, customer service, demand flexibility and storage) and discussions at previous meetings. The work-in-progress report will not be published alongside these minutes.

2. Updates

- 2.1. Peter Capener (Bath and West Community Energy) provided an update on the launch of Community Energy England on 3 June. This is a new representative body which aims to give community energy groups in England a stronger voice and help shape how the sector changes through the community energy (CE) strategy process and beyond.

3. Draft report – structure and tone

- 3.1. The Chair opened discussion on structure and tone of the draft report. This focused on the section of the report which examines changes outside of the current regulatory regime. The group felt this should be more prominent and clear about the different points of view within the group regarding possible changes. They felt that there needed to be more explanation of why and how CE groups are different to other parties connecting to the grid, while also making clear the impact of any potential changes on other customers.
- 3.2. Group members also suggested that the report should attempt to quantify the impact of its recommendations on CE projects. They felt it should be more explicit about which recommendations related to CE specifically and which related to issues in distributed generation more widely. The group also discussed piloting changes to the current regulatory approach.

Action: Ofgem agreed to revise the structure of the report and to redraft the section on actions beyond the current regulatory framework. Community energy representatives agreed to submit further information to inform this section.

4. Draft report – recommendations

- 4.1. The Chair then asked the group to consider the recommendations in the report which can occur within the current regulatory regime. The group asked that the recommendations be presented as ‘actions’, making clear what progress had already been made where these were already underway.

4.2. There was broad agreement among the group regarding the content of the recommendations. However group members made a number of specific points regarding the wording, practicality, responsibility and timeframe of specific recommendations to be considered when redrafting.

Action: Ofgem will incorporate group members' feedback and comments on the recommendations into a redraft of the report.

5. Next Steps

5.1. Jennifer Mills (Ofgem) set out the next steps for redrafting the report to address the comments made during the meeting, and noted that the group will have the opportunity to review a revised draft of the report in early July.

Action: The group agreed to submit content and best practice examples for a redrafted version of the report by Friday 13 June.

Action: Ofgem will arrange a teleconference in early July to discuss the revised report.

5.2. Fiona Booth (DECC) set out the next steps for the wider community energy strategy. The three community energy working groups (Grid Connections, Planning and Hydro) will report to the Secretary of State in July. The Chairs of these groups and those from the shared ownership taskforce and the CE finance roundtable will meet to discuss their recommendations and ensure that these do not conflict.

5.3. This was the final in-person meeting of the group. The Chair thanked all group members for their hard work and collaboration in preparing the recommendations and report.

6. Appendix

6.1. Attendee list

Sarah Harrison, Ofgem (Chair)

Paul Black, Scottish Power Energy Networks

Fiona Booth, DECC

Graham Campbell, Scottish Power Energy Networks

Peter Capener, Bath and West Community Energy

Steve Halsey, UK Power Networks

Mike Hammond, Northern Powergrid

Brian Hoy, Electricity North West

Merlin Hyman, ReGen SW

Robert Kinnaird, DECC

Liz Lainé, Citizens Advice

Donald MacKinnon, Scottish and Southern Energy Power Distribution

John Malone, Energy4All

Oliver Pendered, Ovesco

Sharon Roper, Northern Powergrid

Nigel Turvey, Western Power Distribution

Felix Wight, Community Energy Scotland

Ofgem: James Veaney, Stephen Bass, Natasha Smith, Jennifer Mills, Clothilde Cantegreil, Alexander Belsham-Harris

6.2. Actions

1. Ofgem agreed to revise the structure of the report and to redraft the section on actions beyond the current regulatory framework. Community energy representatives agreed to submit further information to inform this section.
2. Ofgem will incorporate group members' feedback and comments on the recommendations into a redraft of the report.
3. The group agreed to submit content and best practice examples for a redrafted version of the report by Friday 13 June.
4. Ofgem will arrange a teleconference in early July to discuss the revised report.