



# Get Ready Community Energy - Fund for Leicestershire

## Fund Guidance

February 2025

Are you part of a community group or organisation in Leicestershire that is interested in helping the county move towards a low-carbon future? If so, the Get Ready Community Energy Fund in Leicestershire could help you. There is £140,000 available to kickstart renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in your area.

The fund is available as part of GreenerFuture Leicestershire project, an initiative led by Leicestershire County Council to cut carbon emissions across the county.

### What is community energy?

Community energy is about bringing people together so that they can be part of local renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. Projects may include those that reduce the energy use of homes or community buildings and renewable energy generation projects such as photovoltaic panels, heat pumps and wind turbines.

### What's happening in Leicestershire?

Communities across Leicestershire are being given the opportunity to be part of developing renewable energy and energy efficiency projects that have community benefit and that help the county move towards a low-carbon future.

All districts are supported by a project team that is already kickstarting local projects and securing funds for their development. The Leicestershire Community Energy Forum has also been formed, to bring together people and provide peer-to-peer support for the development of community energy projects.

### How will the fund work?

The funding will be available across all districts in Leicestershire. To be eligible for the fund you will need to be part of a community group or the organisation that has a designated bank account and that has a plan in place to develop energy efficiency and/or renewable energy projects that benefit local people.



The fund will open for expressions of interest on the 26<sup>th</sup> March 2025 and all funds must be spent by 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025. Payments will be made monthly according to your planned project budget and quotes obtained. Evidence of spend and a report on your project progress will need to be submitted on a monthly basis.

Alongside your work, you will be allocated a project mentor to help make your project a success and will be invited asked to join the Community Energy Leicestershire Forum.

You will be keen to both develop your project locally and be part of countywide initiative to help communities play a part in the transition to a low carbon society. You will need to commit to working with your mentor and meeting with them regularly.

### **Who is eligible?**

To be eligible you will need to be based in Leicestershire and part of:

- A registered charity;
- A registered society;
- A Co-operative or Community Benefit Society;
- A Community Interest Company;
- An unincorporated community group or organisation with a constitution; or
- A group or organisation that is looking to incorporate and develop community energy projects.

You will also need to have a designated bank account for your group or organisation. The fund is not open to Limited Companies or individuals.

Applications from a partnership of organisations are welcomed. In such cases, one of the organisations would need to act as 'lead applicant' to which any grant monies would be paid.

The grant will only be available for projects where the main beneficiaries are residents of Leicestershire, excluding Leicester City and Rutland.



### **What can the funding be used for?**

The fund can be used to develop renewable energy and/or energy efficiency projects that have community benefit in the districts you are located. This may include:

- Incorporation and set up costs for a community energy group or organisation.
- Undertaking feasibility studies in developing renewable energy or energy efficiency projects.
- Providing support for communities to improve the energy efficiency of homes, or for community buildings.
- Marketing and promotional costs to support the development of a community energy project, such as website development, promotional leaflets and events.
- Costs to develop renewable energy installations such as structural surveys, planning applications, contract and legal fees.
- Developing demonstration projects that help educate people about community energy.
- Running costs for an organisation that is dedicated to developing community energy projects such as computer equipment, meeting venue costs and accountancy.
- Travel costs for the purposes of your project.
- Project management costs and contractors directly working on the project. It is not intended to directly fund PAYE positions.
- Developing new business models that can directly support community energy projects that you are looking to develop.
- Where relevant, all necessary consents, permissions and approvals should have been obtained for any work proposed prior to funding being awarded.

Existing projects or project expenses will not be considered. However, consideration will be given to existing projects where it can be demonstrated that the application is for the further development, expansion, or enhancement of the project.

The funding is intended for project development costs and cannot be used to directly fund the cost of installing renewable energy, unless the installation is part of a demonstration project for the wider community. It also cannot be used to fund energy efficiency measures in single residential dwellings. There should be clear community benefit demonstrated.



### **What is community benefit?**

Your project will need to plan to save energy or generate community energy and provide community benefit. Community benefit can take many forms including:

- Cutting costs for community buildings or public services.
- Raising awareness about energy efficiency or renewable energy in the wider community.
- Reducing carbon emissions for multiple dwellings, as a pilot for demonstrating feasible approaches in the wider community.
- Generating income that is invested in wider community projects.
- Developing a business that has wider community benefits.

### **How do I apply?**

To apply for the fund, you will need to complete an expression of interest (EOI) form. EOIs will be assessed on a rolling case by case basis. However, it is encouraged to apply as soon as possible as the total funding amount is limited.

If your expression of interest is shortlisted, you will be asked to complete a support plan questionnaire and you will be contacted and supported to prepare a short project plan to outline:

- The type of project and what you intend to do;
- Outcomes your project is expected to achieve;
- How you will manage it, achieve key milestones (timescales);
- Detailed breakdown of project costs; and
- Explanation of how the project delivers community benefits.

A template will be provided for you to use to complete your project plan. We advise project plans are submitted no later than 3 weeks after your shortlisting date.

The grant will be closed for new EOIs and project plan submissions on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2025, this is to ensure newly funded project are able to deliver before final grant spending deadline of 28<sup>th</sup> November 2025.



## **What Happens with Your Application?**

Once we have received your application, we will acknowledge receipt and advise you of any initial clarifications / additional information required. If your application is not eligible for the Get Ready Community Energy Leicestershire Fund, you will be advised of the reasons for this, how you can re-apply (if this is appropriate) and, if applicable, any other potential sources of funding.

We may share your application with relevant colleagues from across the Council or from other partner agencies, to get their professional views on your proposed project/ activity. We will be asking colleagues to comment on the following:

- Assurance your project suits community energy business model and provides community benefit as expected.
- Aspects of your project considered to be particularly positive.
- How your project could be further improved or enhanced.
- Issues that would need to be resolved before funding could be awarded.
- Alternative/ additional sources of funding that may be available for your project.

Following consultation with colleagues, you will be provided with feedback, which could include requests for clarification around certain elements of your project proposal. Your mentor will remain in contact with you to ensure all queries are resolved before the application is referred for a final decision. In some cases, you may be required to submit a revised or updated version of your application.

The assessments of project plans will be undertaken by Leicestershire County Council and Community Energy Pathways according to the criteria set out in this guidance.

For more information and to submit completed EOIs, please email [netzero@leics.gov.uk](mailto:netzero@leics.gov.uk).