

Barnet Community Energy Fund Guidance Document

May 2025

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Barnet Community Energy Fund

In May 2022, Barnet Council declared a climate and biodiversity emergency, recognising that urgent action is required to address the impacts of a changing climate. Barnet Council has committed to be a net zero organisation by 2030 and a net zero borough by 2042.

Through our Sustainability Action Plan, we have committed to 'Supporting residents, communities and businesses to access grants and support to make energy use more sustainable and affordable, and to increase the uptake of solar power.' Enabling a thriving community energy sector in the borough is crucial to delivering this commitment.

Community energy is about people understanding, generating, using, owning and saving energy in their communities and putting people at the heart of the energy system.

Barnet's Community Energy Fund will make funding available to enable community energy projects by funding feasibility and business case development and contribute to capital costs of project implementation. We recognise the widespread benefits that community energy brings to the borough and want to support projects that are able to demonstrate carbon reduction whilst directly benefiting local communities in the borough.

This document outlines the structure of the fund, eligibility to apply and how successful projects will be selected.

For further information, get in touch via barnetzero@barnet.gov.uk

Overview of the fund

The Barnet Community Energy Fund will make £50,000 available for community-led energy projects in the borough. This fund is made available through the councils' Carbon Offset Fund, which is ring-fenced for carbon reduction projects.

In line with other London boroughs and the Mayor of London's Community Energy Fund, the fund will be separated into three streams:

- **Stream A** - Feasibility and business case development grants of up to £5,000 per project.
- **Stream B** - Project implementation and delivery of grants of up to a third of the capital value of the project, capped at £15,000 per project supported.
- **Stream C** - Training, events and engagement grants of between £500-5,000 per project supported, depending on size and impact. These can be used by community energy groups to provide training and engage with new community groups and must demonstrate carbon reduction and value for money.

Further detail on Streams and eligible projects can be found on pages 6-7.

Fund objectives

Applications must demonstrate how projects will achieve at least two of the following aims:

- A reduction in carbon emissions in the borough with demonstrable impacts
- An increase the amount of renewable energy generated in Barnet
- Working in partnership with communities in need to tackle climate change and have impacts beyond the project itself
- Long-term change and support the growth of Barnet's community energy sector
- Help to tackle fuel poverty and reduce energy demand in Barnet through innovative approaches

How Funding will be awarded

Set against the fund objectives, we are looking for projects that demonstrate:

- Community leadership and collective action.
- Carbon reduction
 - Resource for estimating carbon reduction: [Government conversion factors for company reporting of greenhouse gas emissions - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/government-conversion-factors-for-company-reporting-of-greenhouse-gas-emissions)
- Scalability and learning: projects that demonstrate and support the growth of community energy and further energy projects in the borough and lead to long-term change.
- Collaboration between communities and sectors, with particular interest in involvement of vulnerable communities.
- Cost effectiveness and viability, including supporting documentation such as project plan, preliminary research, appropriate governance measures and permissions from building owners or relevant parties.
- Additional benefits to local people such as tackling fuel poverty.

Who is eligible to apply

- Registered charities
- Community and voluntary groups
- Co-operatives
- Schools working with community groups
- Faith and equalities groups
- Social enterprises
- Community interest companies
- Community benefit societies
- Tenants' and residents' associations

Although we welcome applicants registered outside the borough, all proposed projects and activities covered by this fund must take place in the London Borough of Barnet.

Prior to completing [your application](#), please review the [terms and conditions](#).

Individual bank accounts will not be considered. Groups that are not able to apply for this are encouraged to partner with other organisations who are eligible to hold the funding to support projects getting set up.

This funding can be used as match funding with other grants. To explore other grants that might be available for your project, look at the list published by the Centre for Sustainable Energy: [Funding for charities and community groups - Centre for Sustainable Energy](#)

Applications will need to demonstrate how this money will make a project happen or to enhance a project that is underway. This funding cannot replace community engagement such as community ownership through a community share offer, it is designed to accelerate the delivery of project and/or make projects financially viable that would otherwise not be. Applications will need to demonstrate how the project is community led and/or owned.

Projects applying for Streams A and B should be confident that their energy project will be delivered.

Key dates

The fund will open in May 2025 for 6 weeks. Successful applicants will be notified within 4 weeks of the funds close. The funding will be administered and will be required to be spent within a year of being awarded.

After the funding has been allocated, successful projects will be required to report on the outcomes and outputs achieved by the project and submit a project evaluation.

Further information for applicants

This section will provide further information for applicants to help decide how to shape the application. Each stream will require different outputs for monitoring and evaluation.

Support to develop a project

If you are a community organisation that is interested in the Barnet Community Energy Fund, but are not sure how to develop a suitable project or don't have the expertise to develop your idea, please get in touch via barnetzero@barnet.gov.uk. The team will try to connect you with a suitable group to support your application.

Your project may also be eligible to receive support via a limited number of mentoring slots available through Community Energy London which Barnet Council has funded. Get in touch with the team to find out more.

In July 2024, Barnet Council and **Community Energy London** delivered a series of capacity building workshops focused on community energy. You can access the recordings here: [BarNet Zero: a series of capacity-raising workshops by CEL + Barnet Council – Community Energy Lo](https://www.communityenergy.london/news/2024/07/barnet-zero-a-series-of-capacity-raising-workshops-by-cel-barnet-council/ndon) <https://www.communityenergy.london/news/2024/07/barnet-zero-a-series-of-capacity-raising-workshops-by-cel-barnet-council/ndon>

Support for developing a project is also available on the Community Energy England website: [The Voice of the Community Energy Sector | Community Energy England](#). For examples of projects, look at:

- [The Greater London Authority past projects.](#)
- [Community Energy London case studies.](#)

UK Power Networks (UKPN) maintain the electricity networks in London and the Southeast of England. We recommend reaching out to UKPN for any project that may impact grid capacity (e.g. installing heat pumps) for early advice as grid capacity in the area may affect the project. UKPN have a lot of experience in supporting community energy and may also be able to provide wider advice and support as you develop your project. Find out more and contact them through this webpage: <https://www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/our-company/community-energy>

Evaluation

Successful applications will be required to complete an evaluation of how they have met the conditions of the fund and desired outcomes. Applicants should demonstrate in their application form how the project will be evaluated and how they intend to monitor benefits/outcomes realization.

Streams in more detail

Stream A

Stream A funding is available for feasibility and business case development grants of up to £5,000 per project supported. Funding is available to develop projects that demonstrate carbon reduction and get them ready for implementation.

Projects funded through Stream A are expected to produce a report or equivalent outlining the feasibility assessment or business case.

Types of projects this could support:

- Technical feasibility of an energy project or identifying the suitability of renewable energy or energy-saving measures for a building or set of buildings
- Engagement with stakeholders and the community
- Legal advice
- Applications for permits, licenses and obtaining consent
- Mapping and estimating capacity for solar PV installations across multiple buildings to identify those with most potential for further detailed investigation

There is no match funding requirement for Stream A however we strongly encourage applicants to contribute as much as they can to allow more projects to be funded by the Community Energy Fund.

Stream B

Funding can be used for project implementation and delivery of grants of up to a third of the capital value of the project, capped at £15,000 per project supported.

Therefore, projects funded by Stream B need to be able to demonstrate how the rest of the funding need will be met. You need permission from the building owner to apply for this fund.

We would recommend applications for Stream B that are seeking to install solar panels to reach out to UK Power Networks early to understand any potential challenges with the project.

This funding can be used to cover:

- capital costs (to support the cost of a renewable installation or a deep retrofit)
- core costs (e.g. consulting fees, staff or office costs to support the project)
- project costs (e.g. venue hire, project worker)
- project management costs
- costs of community engagement activities relating to a project
- reasonable 'contingency costs' (on capital projects only)

This can include purchasing materials and technologies (including insulation, double or triple glazing, LED Lighting or renewable energy technologies such as Solar PV or an Air Source Heat Pump).

Stream C

Funding can be used for training, events and engagement grants of between £500-5,000 per project supported, depending on size and impact. These can be used by community energy groups to provide training and engage and partner with new community groups and must demonstrate carbon reduction and value for money.

Types of projects this could support:

- Engagement to help engage groups that are less represented in the community energy sector to take part
- Training and equipping community leaders to deliver energy efficiency advice and measures to local residents
- Increasing awareness of Community Energy and encouraging behaviour change
- Helping to establish new community energy groups. We encourage partnerships and collaboration for this.

Co-benefits

Along with achieving carbon savings, projects should look to maximise co-benefits and outcomes, i.e. wider environmental, social and economic benefits for the community that align with the corporate priorities laid out in [Our Plan for Barnet 2023-2026](#). Examples of co-benefits could include:

- Alleviating fuel poverty
- Reducing air pollution or improving air quality
- Reducing the cost burden of energy bills for residents
- Creating local green jobs, work experience or apprenticeships and upskilling the workforce. It is particularly important to consider equalities impacts in the delivery of this co-benefit to ensure appropriate inclusion and targeting of under-represented groups.
- Increasing the resilience of small and medium-sized enterprises vulnerable to climate change and energy supply, by reducing energy and water consumption, building in adaptation measures and reducing operation costs.

For more information on co-benefits and quantifying them, refer to the [GLA's Carbon Offsetting Guidance](#) or the [London Community Energy Fund](#) guidance.

The fund will not cover

- Full time roles
- Projects that are already complete
- Projects without building owner consent
- Projects that do not meet the fund objectives
- Projects that do not represent good value for money
- Applicants who do not meet eligibility criteria

For any questions or further information, please get in touch via barnetzero@barnet.gov.uk.