

Guide to shared community ownership protocol published by CEE

The UK's first guide to shared community ownership of energy generation projects is published today. This is two weeks before DECC Secretary of State Ed Davey is to launch a protocol, requiring renewable energy developers to offer community participation in all their substantial new projects.

Community Energy England, which represents the community energy sector, launches its guide for communities today. It is also finalising a similar guide for project developers, to be published next week. These 4-page documents are backed up by a comprehensive website (www.sco-res.uk) and give straightforward advice to both partners in co-ownership projects on how to follow the voluntary protocol developed by the government's Shared Ownership Taskforce.

"We are delighted that leading developers are embracing community ownership", says CEE Chairman Philip Wolfe. "We at Community Energy England want to do all we can to minimise any additional delay and cost to their projects. Our guide enables local groups to prepare for shared ownership, so that developers will find suitable project-ready community partners to deal with."

Shared ownership is one of the new approaches proposed in the government's Community Energy Strategy to boost the contribution of socially-owned energy assets – a field where the UK lags woefully behind countries like Germany, Denmark and the USA. Project developers will be required to offer local communities the opportunity to buy into new renewable generation stations worth £2.5m and over. Ministers hope shared ownership schemes will come forward under the voluntary protocol, but have included legislation in the current Infrastructure Bill, to impose the requirement by law if necessary.

The full details of the protocol will be in the final report to be launched early next month by DECC's taskforce of community and commercial energy experts. It refers to four shared ownership approaches:

- Split ownership, where the generating station is divided into separate plants; one owned by the commercial developer and the other by a community organisation;
- Joint ventures, where the corporate and community partners each own a share of a single generating plant;
- Shared revenue, where the plant is developed and operated by the commercial partner with the community group buying the right to a proportion of the project's income; or
- Other approaches whereby community enterprises achieve a long-term ownership position in the project.

This last option recognises that the shared ownership concept is relatively new to the UK and that innovative models are likely to emerge as the protocol takes effect.

CEE has been in the forefront of the development of the voluntary protocol with three of its directors and eight of its members on the Taskforce. It is also arranging a series of regional seminars on shared community ownership – with the first in London last month and the next in the North East early in the New Year.

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Notes for editors:

The Communities' Guide to shared ownership projects is available [here](#). The supporting website is www.sco-res.uk.

Community Energy England (CEE) was launched in June with an inaugural address by Ed Davey, the DECC Secretary of State to provide a voice for the community energy sector. It already has over 130 members encompassing social enterprises and community energy focused organisations from the private and public sectors. Details can be found on the CEE website at www.communityenergyengland.org.

The **Community Energy Strategy** was first published by the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) in January 2014. Further details are available [here](#). Amongst other provisions the strategy states: *“We expect that by 2015 it will be the norm for communities to be offered the opportunity of some level of ownership of new, commercially developed onshore renewables projects.”*

The **Shared Ownership Taskforce** was established by DECC to investigate ways of achieving this aspiration on a voluntary basis. Further details are available [here](#).

The proposed **Infrastructure Bill** now being debated in parliament includes provisions – called the Community Energy Right – for community ownership to be required by law, if voluntary arrangements are not successful. Details are available [here](#).

CEE’s first **seminar on shared ownership** took place on Thursday 18th September in London, as part of Community Energy Fortnight. Details of this and other events in the series are [here](#).

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