

Stakeholder Engagement Responses

Types of Respondee

Type		Number	Percentage
Individual		121	86.4%
Business Community Energy or other groups	Business	1	0.7%
	Parish or town council	5	3.6%
	Other voluntary group	4	2.9%
	Other organisation	2	1.4%
Elected representative		7	5%
Total		140	100%

Supportive or Opposed to Adoption of a County Council Action Plan

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage
Strongly Support	84	61.3%
Support	29	21.2%
Neither support nor oppose	5	3.6%
Oppose	6	4.4%
Strongly oppose	13	9.5%
Total	137	100%

Supportive or Opposed to Council Facilitating a Cambridgeshire Community Energy Co-operative

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage
Strongly Support	74	54.4%
Support	30	22.1%
Neither support nor oppose	15	11%
Oppose	2	1.5%
Strongly oppose	15	11%
Total	136	100%

Supportive or Opposed to Match Funding for Feasibility Studies

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage
Strongly Support	61	44.9%
Support	38	27.9%
Neither support nor oppose	15	11%
Oppose	6	4.4%
Strongly oppose	16	11.8%
Total	136	100%

Supportive or Opposed to a County Council Community Energy Development Officer

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage
Strongly Support	71	52.6%
Support	31	23%
Neither support nor oppose	6	4.4%
Oppose	9	6.7%
Strongly oppose	18	13.3%
Total	135	100%

Supportive or Opposed to Council Provision of Guidance & Advice

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage
Strongly Support	78	57.8%
Support	32	23.7%
Neither support nor oppose	7	5.2%
Oppose	4	3%
Strongly oppose	14	10.4%
Total	135	100%

Supportive or Opposed to Council Brokering Relationships with Potential Customers

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage
Strongly Support	59	44%
Support	45	33.6%
Neither support nor oppose	10	7.5%
Oppose	6	4.5%
Strongly oppose	14	10.4%
Total	134	100%

Supportive or Opposed to Council Search for Sites Suitable for Community Energy Projects

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage
Strongly Support	76	56.7%
Support	27	20.1%
Neither support nor oppose	10	7.5%
Oppose	6	4.5%
Strongly oppose	15	11.2%
Total	134	100%

Comments Provided on the Above Proposed Actions to Support Community Energy

65 responses included comments regarding the above actions to support community energy.

Twenty one expressed support for Council action in this area. This included supporting the need for strategic leadership, provision of a hub to pool skills, sharing of experience, independent endorsement of decarbonisation proposals, expert support for volunteer groups, generating a sense of community ownership of projects, awareness raising, advice and a mechanism to respond to opportunities emerging from the Government's Great British Energy initiative. One emphasised the importance of adopting all the actions and not just advice and guidance elements. Three strongly supported the establishment of a Cambridgeshire Community Energy Co-op, a Community Development Officer to support communities with their projects. Two strongly supported match funding for feasibility studies. One asked for a pre-feasibility study questionnaire to prevent wasted effort pursuing unfeasible projects.

Five expressed an interest in, or were engaged in existing activity on, a community energy project in a specific area.

Three expressed concerns about the reliance on volunteers. Two queried where funding for projects would come from.

One advocated installing solar on all public buildings and requiring solar and batteries on all new housing. Another advocated domestic solar. A third expressed frustration that solar was not installed when their apartment building was built.

One noted Community Energy England resources as an important source of guidance and UKPN/IRENES, Friends of the Earth and Wewantwind.org as sources of data for a search for suitable sites for projects. They also noted proximity to housing and land ownership as important factors in a Search for Sites. One expressed concern that the Search for Sites should not lead to the Council imposing developments against the wishes of communities.

Other individual responses suggested: the Council should facilitate, but not lead on, the Search for Sites and customer engagement; a point of contact to coordinate and substantiate proposals; local surveys to identify initiatives including reducing energy use and waste.

Two responses queried how the Action Plan would benefit small villages. Another noted that there was insufficient evidence to confirm the benefits.

One opposed the Council brokering customer relationships fearing that this would add to costs for end users. NB the term brokering in the draft Action Plan was not intended to mean acting as a financial broker, merely introducing community energy groups to potential customers.

Thirteen responses opposed or queried the value of the actions. Three expressed scepticism about climate change and Net Zero targets. Another was sceptical about

the lifecycle emissions benefits of solar panels, batteries, generators etc. Nine expressed concerns about Council spend in this area and emphasised that the Council should focus on statutory services. One suggested that the Council lacked the necessary knowledge and skills. Two were concerned about diversion of agricultural land from food production or impact on the countryside. One expressed support for new fossil fuel extraction and fracking. Another expressed the view that a central Government initiative was needed.

Many of the responses related to the following section on domestic energy efficiency rather than the community energy support section. Six responses related to disparity of opportunity and technology applicability across different communities or building types. One emphasised the importance of ensuring that less affluent areas were not overlooked. Two noted that large number of listed properties and conservation areas and expressed a view that the needs of these properties were not addressed. One expressed the view that air source heat pumps do not work in very cold weather. Another that heat pumps were unsuitable for terraced housing. One noted being unable to install solar panels in a conservation area. One requested a domestic retrofit advice co-ordination service. Two requested Council led roadshows or drop-in events touring communities to offer impartial advice on reducing domestic energy consumption, renewables, insulation, heat pumps etc.

Supportive or Opposed to Council Promotion of Domestic Energy Efficiency Grants

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage
Strongly Support	78	57.8%
Support	36	26.7%
Neither support nor oppose	6	4.4%
Oppose	3	2.2%
Strongly oppose	12	8.9%
Total	135	100%

Supportive or Opposed to the Council Raising Awareness of Innovative Energy Tariffs

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage
Strongly Support	66	48.9%
Support	42	31.1%
Neither support nor oppose	12	8.9%
Oppose	4	3%
Strongly oppose	11	8.1%
Total	135	100%

Supportive or Opposed to Supporting Communities on Neighbourhood Domestic Renewables

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage
Strongly Support	73	54.1%

Support	37	27.4%
Neither support nor oppose	10	7.4%
Oppose	3	2.2%
Strongly oppose	12	8.9%
Total	135	100%

Supportive or Opposed to Promoting Private Landlord Uptake of Domestic Energy Efficiency Grant

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage
Strongly Support	68	50.7%
Support	29	21.6%
Neither support nor oppose	22	16.4%
Oppose	4	3%
Strongly oppose	11	8.2%
Total	134	100%

Comments Provided on the Above Proposed Actions to Support Domestic Energy Efficiency

47 responses providing commentary in support of their responses to the above questions.

Six expressed support for all the measures. One commented that a wide range of measures, include domestic energy efficiency, was necessary to tackle climate change. One queried whether there were active community groups to take this forward, another noted the challenge in getting independent expert advice. Cambridge Carbon Footprint offered to work with the Council on local campaigns to promote retrofit and energy efficiency. Another response proposed working with Cambridge Carbon Footprint and the Retrofit Hub and developing a structured event format including training for facilitators and expert attendance. One response called for the addition of an action to train tradespeople to identify energy efficiency opportunities during domestic building works. The same response also called for collective purchasing schemes like Solar Together.

Four noted that care was needed with promoting grant uptake to private landlords to ensure that renters benefit e.g. that improved energy efficiency didn't lead to an increase in rent. Two noted that private landlords should not be subsidised. Another noted that private rented accommodation was often energy inefficient with little incentive for landlords to upgrade it. Two supported promotion of grants for private rented property on the grounds that it benefitted tenants. Two proposed local tightening of minimum EPC E rating for private rented properties. One noted that the Labour Government are considering reintroducing the EPC C rating for private rented accommodation by 2030 and recommended that the Council partner with the

Green Mortgage Advice Initiative in order to present a more compelling case for landlords.

Two expressed a preference for rooftop solar on large commercial buildings rather than solar farms on agricultural land or other valued green space.

Individual responses called for: a greater emphasis on insulation; information on servicing companies who could support equipment once it is installed; information on how this could support listed and thatched properties; grant funding that was not means tested [such as the Boiler Upgrade Scheme for example]; removal of coal and wood fired heating in Cambridge on air quality grounds; promotion, but no penalties for those not installing energy efficiency or renewable energy measures.

One noted that renewable energy should be required in all planning approvals. Another commented that heat pumps would not be suitable for smaller, 100+ year old, terraced properties. One also advocated solar PV uptake on all social housing.

Two responses called for lower taxation. Two responses expressed the view this activity was unnecessary as residents would take up opportunities that are in their interest without the need for the Council promoting this. Three were of the opinion that domestic retrofit and renewable energy would cost more than it saves. One expressed concerns of poor quality workmanship. Another that the Council should not “waste money on feeding the climate con”.

Supportive or Opposed to Council and Education and Awareness Raising

Response	Number of Responses	Percentage
Strongly Support	74	55.6%
Support	27	20.3%
Neither support nor oppose	12	9.0%
Oppose	5	3.8%
Strongly oppose	15	11.3%
Total	133	100%

Comments Provided on the Proposed Education and Awareness Raising Action

39 responses provided some commentary.

Four simply supported the action. Two emphasised the need for communication on how clean energy can both cut costs and reduce emissions. Another noted that they had found carbon literacy training valuable. One emphasised the need to cover all demographics and referenced the RAFT initiative in Lewisham and Southwark. Cambridge Carbon Footprint offered to work closely with the council on education and awareness raising. One called for a dedicated budget and detailed plan for this activity, referenced CSE's Future Energy Landscapes work and asked how the Search for Sites and Co-op would feed in to this activity.

Other individual responses suggested that Education & Awareness raising needed to: be comprehensible and relatable; cover decarbonisation v offsetting and green electricity purchasing; cover all demographics; reduce opposition to community energy projects; counter misinformation about heat pumps; cover how to find reliable installers; include a “local day” where businesses can provide advice and guidance; include more activity in Fenland.

Another called for training opportunities for construction e.g. supporting apprenticeships for installers and a climate extreme weather action group training local residents on response protocols for floods and wildfires and first aid for heat stroke.

One suggested neutral third parties might be more trusted than the Council to deliver this action.

One expressed the view that decisions are driven primarily by cost.

One welcomed the idea of a community turbine or solar.

Three stated that there are better things for the Council to be spending money on. Two that people will research this for themselves. Two that this was pressure or propaganda. One expressed the opinion that clean energy is costly and inefficient. One said “we are opposed to this crime against citizens”

Factors the Council Should Take Into Account In Implementing the Actions

78 responses were received.

Sixteen responses emphasised ensuring value for money on measures, number of households benefitting, focussing on where greatest carbon saving is achievable and monitoring this. A section on monitoring has been added to the Action Plan to address this. Fourteen responses emphasised the importance of working with and building support amongst local communities and voluntary organisations. The Action Plan has been updated to reflect this.

Six responses noted fairness/equality and accessibility across the county, including hard to reach households as being key factors. Another three mentioned the need to work with small as well as large communities. The Education & Awareness action has been updated to note that this will explicitly aim to engage with less affluent communities to raise awareness of their opportunities to save on energy bills and engage in renewable energy. Another six emphasised the importance of marketing/raising awareness and using simple messaging. Four responses focused on the need for impartial advice and calculations on likely bill savings.

Four responses called for better joining up of planning and environmental functions so as not to block residents who are trying to spend their own money on going green e.g. via planning restrictions.

Two responses expressed the view that heat pumps are not suitable for all homes. Whilst there may be some homes that are challenging to heat with heat pumps the Electrification of Heat study demonstrated that the majority of property types and ages can be successfully retrofitted with heat pumps, in general with radiator upgrades, but no other upgrades required.

Other factors raised in individual responses included: considering different types and ages of property; extreme weather response training; keeping up to date on new technology; ensuring consistency/workmanship across installers; focusing on solar panels not heat pumps on affordability grounds; simplifying grant application processes; energy storage; and care over project locations.

There were 4 responses which related to issues other than Community Energy or outside the Council's influence e.g. cutting Council Tax, increased investment in highway maintenance and social care. 10 responses proposed cancelling work on the Plan and Council decarbonisation activity.

Other Actions the Council Should Consider to Support Community Energy

52 responses were received.

Only four of these proposed additional actions on community energy or domestic energy efficiency and renewables. One of these called for the Council to establish a retrofit design and coordination service. Such a detailed service is not within the Council's skillset and risks competing with commercial offerings. Our view is that ensuring quality of design is best dealt with by central Government and industry initiatives such as MCS standards and PAS 2030/2035. Another called for subsidies to overcome local opposition to community energy projects. The Council does not have a budget to subsidise projects, neither are subsidies necessary in our view. The range of community energy project types delivered nationally demonstrates that community wind and solar in particular are investable propositions without the need for subsidy. Energy Local Clubs provide a mechanism for benefits to be passed on to residents in the form of reduced bills. More progressive commercial developers like Octopus Energy are also offering reduced bills to residents in communities hosting renewables and we hope that more commercial developers will follow suit. A third proposal was that the Council offer workforce training e.g. for domestic installers. This is an important area, but one that is outside of the Council's remit, would require a substantial budget and skillset that the Council does not possess. The fourth proposal called for EPC based penalties for private rented properties to encourage investment in energy efficiency. To some degree this is covered by the Government's Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards although these only require a minimum EPC E rating. Government had considered tightening this to a C rating. This is a complex area with competing issues of energy efficiency v availability of affordable rental housing. Our view is that this issue falls outside County Council's remit.

Seventeen responses related to topics covered by the proposed actions, but providing suggestions as to how these were delivered or the type of projects that could be supported. Three responses suggested working with existing voluntary groups, schools and communities on capacity building (training). The Action Plan has been updated to reflect this. Another emphasised the need for flexibility within the Plan to respond to a changing policy landscape. One requested that guidance & advice include support with planning, another that it include selection and vetting of contractors, another requested a “how to get started” guide for parish councils and another proposed a roadshow. Nine highlighted specific projects or project types they would like to see supported these included building fabric upgrades, local microgrids, Heat Networks, Ground and Water Source Heat Pumps for hotels, swimming pools and NHS buildings, EV on-street charging, micro-hydro, utilising roof spaces for solar, hydrogen and other alternative heat sources. One called for activity ensuring direct benefits to communities from energy projects.

There were six responses which related to issues other than Community Energy or outside the Council’s influence e.g. cutting Council Tax, reintroducing Feed in Tariffs/other subsidies for renewables, potholes etc. Three proposed cancelling work on the Plan and Council decarbonisation activity.