

# COMMUNITY GUIDE TO RENEWABLE ENERGY



## WHY SHOULD LOCAL AUTHORITIES INVEST IN RENEWABLE ENERGY?

Local authorities, keen to meet the needs of the communities they serve, face on-going challenges. Tasked with finding ways to reduce costs, fight fuel poverty, generate new revenue and provide cheaper and cleaner energy, more and more local authorities are choosing to tackle those challenges head on by embracing clean green renewable energy.

Renewable energy is an investment in the future and local authorities have a key part to play. By delivering low carbon energy saving solutions for the community, local authorities are making steps to help alleviate fuel poverty and meet their annual carbon reduction targets.

## LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND THE EUROPEAN UNION OBLIGATION FOR 15% RENEWABLE ENERGY BY 2020

Local authorities, as we all do, have a responsibility to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and tackle climate change.

On a local level authorities have a vital role to play in helping the government meet a European Union obligation to generate 15% of energy from renewables by 2020.

Local authorities investing in low carbon energy solutions have the opportunity to generate a secure long-term stream of revenue.

**WHY RENEWABLE ENERGY?**

- HIGH YIELD
- BE GREEN
- REDUCE ENERGY BILLS
- REDUCE CARBON FOOTPRINT
- HIGH RETURN ON INVESTMENT
- LOW COST
- LESS TAX



## THE CLIMATE CHANGE ACT AND GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

The UK is transitioning towards a low carbon economy, aided by the introduction of the 2008 Climate Change Act. The country aims to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions by a minimum of 26% by 2020, and eventually all greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050. These are legally binding targets.

To help advise the government about how to meet these targets, an independent body called the Committee on Climate Change was established under the Climate Change Act.

Read more about the [Climate Change Act](#)

## RENEWABLE ENERGY AND NEW HOMES

Under the Climate Change Act, by 2050 the UK must reduce its carbon emissions by at least 80%. Unfortunately, the country's ageing housing stock is among the least energy efficient in the whole of Europe, and almost half of our carbon emissions can be attributed to our old, draughty, energy inefficient buildings.

New homes must be sustainable if we are to meet those long-term carbon reduction targets. The good news is that new builds are now up to 50% more efficient than older houses, as buyers become more concerned about energy bills and the effect of greenhouse gases on the environment.

## THE BENEFITS OF RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR NEW BUILDS

Consumer awareness of renewable energy is at an all time high, as a greater number of households recognise the importance of living in an energy efficient home. With household energy bills of pressing concern, potential homebuyers regard energy efficient properties as an attractive option, and made even more so by the long-term savings achievable.

Installing energy saving renewable energy solutions in new build properties is a much cheaper option compared to retrofitting renewable technologies at a later stage. If all new homes were built to higher standards of efficiency with eco-friendly features such as solar panels and heat pumps, it would be kinder for the environment and go a long way towards reducing our dependence on expensive imported fossil fuels.

## TAKING RENEWABLE ENERGY INTO YOUR OWN HANDS

We all have a part to play in helping to tackle climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Instead of adding to our ageing inefficient housing stock, house builders are perfectly positioned to lead from the front line by building eco-friendly homes with low running costs.

**To do so they need local authorities to be more supportive of new builds that integrate renewable energy technologies into their designs.**

**But the UK isn't building as many new houses as it once was, never mind energy efficient homes. Local authorities have a key role to play when it comes to building sustainable housing, but problems such as a lack of resources and bureaucracy can hinder the construction of new build projects.**

**A quicker and more efficient planning process would help to increase the number of new homes being built.**

**Given that the government aims to build around a million new homes over the next five years - to address our housing shortage - it's vital local planning offices are properly resourced.**



## WHAT PART DO COMMUNITY RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS HAVE TO PLAY?

Community owned and financed renewable energy projects are growing in numbers up and down the country. These projects directly benefit the community, and give local people the opportunity to invest in and develop clean energy and provide a more sustainable energy future, reducing the negative impact traditional fossil fuels have on the environment.

The role of renewable energy in the community is an important one. Aside from the long-term financial benefits and helping to directly reduce the community's carbon footprint, community-run renewable projects help strengthen the local economy. They also help to educate people at a local level about the advantages of clean green energy.

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## EARN MONEY FOR YOUR COMMUNITY FROM GOVERNMENT BACKED INCENTIVES

Renewable energy solutions are a great investment opportunity, providing adopters with not just a way to save money but a way to generate a long-term income too. In order to help community renewable energy groups to build a viable business model for their green energy projects, the government has established financial support through the Feed-in Tariff.

The **Feed-in Tariff** scheme provides financial support to community renewable electricity projects. The scheme pays a set amount over 20 years for each kWh of electricity generated, and excess electricity can also be sold back to the National Grid.

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## BECOME PART OF THE COMMUNITY LED RENEWABLES REVOLUTION

As each day passes, more people are joining forces within their communities to take energy generation into their own hands. Uncontrollable fuel price rises, energy security and climate change are fueling interest in community-run renewable energy projects.

Community renewable energy projects help to improve the energy efficiency of local buildings through the installation of energy saving technologies including biomass boilers; solar heating and solar PV arrays. Renewable technologies are ideally suited to village halls, community centres, schools and sports clubs.

Did you know that in Germany, around 50% of installed capacity is owned by individuals and communities? There really has never been a better time to become part of the global community led renewables revolution.

Community-owned solar PV arrays are an ideal project for communities looking to invest in renewable energy technologies. Solar can be easily tailored to meet the community's energy needs, which is why so many communities start with solar.

**Community renewable energy schemes have the power to reshape the future of energy in the UK, benefitting individuals, households and the wider community on a social and financial level.**

