

COMMUNITY POWER - BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Parliamentary Briefing for Community Energy Fortnight debate
15th September 2015

KEY POINTS

- community-owned renewables energy is a big success in Scotland
- we are on track to deliver nearly twice as much as the Scottish Government's target for 2020 of 500MW of community and locally-owned energy
- increasing the 2020 target to 1GW and setting a 2030 target of 2GW would send a strong signal to communities thinking of making their own electricity or renewable heat
- the Scottish Community Energy Coalition brings together leading players in community renewables to help press for even more progress.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of climate change and the historical carbon debt of industrialised countries, a renewable energy transition is imperative. However, while the transition to a renewable energy system is broadly understood to be necessary it is crucial that in our urgency to act on climate change we do not miss this opportunity to address the underlying inequalities of our current, highly centralised energy system. Both the environment and people must be at the heart of the renewable energy transformation and we believe that the best way to achieve this is through Community Power - people's ownership of renewable energy.

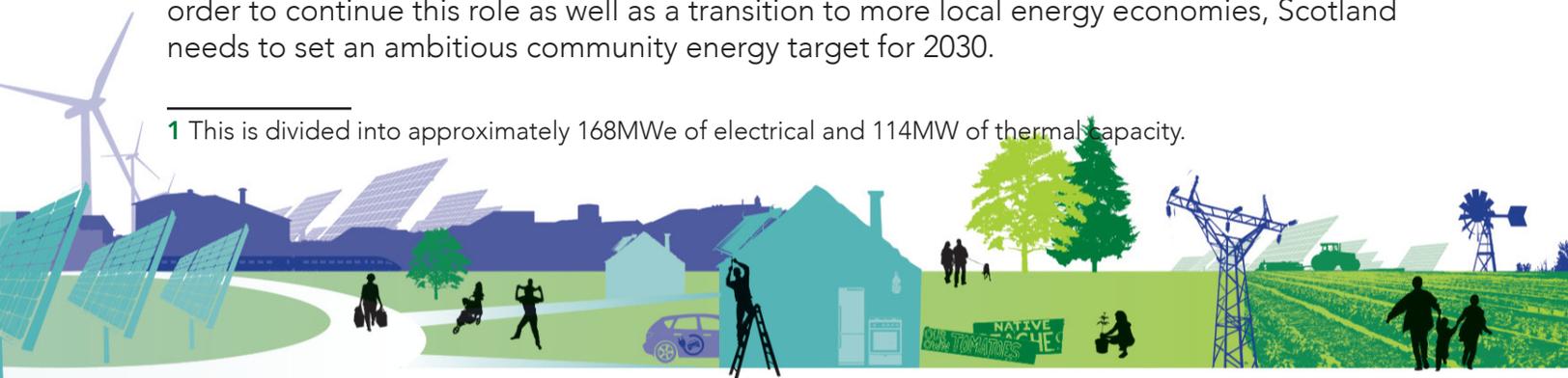
You can find 14 case studies of communities across Scotland creating their own energy here: <http://www.communitypower.scot/case-studies/>

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

The government's existing target of 500MW for local and community-owned renewable energy by 2020 has been a successful policy mechanism to ensure communities are able to harness local natural resources for their own benefit. In addition community ownership is also vital in building public support for the transition to renewables particularly in regard to wind energy. 285MW¹ of community and locally owned renewable energy was already installed in 2013 with a further 679MW of generating capacity in the pipeline. This suggests that 500MW by 2020 will be relatively easily achieved and the target should be increased to 1GW.

With its unique community and locally owned energy target, Scotland has established itself internationally as a recognised leader in renewable energy. The recent European Energy Package also talks about putting citizens at the heart of the energy transition. In order to continue this role as well as a transition to more local energy economies, Scotland needs to set an ambitious community energy target for 2030.

¹ This is divided into approximately 168MWe of electrical and 114MW of thermal capacity.



Adoption of policy that requires commercial developers to secure 20% of citizen ownership similar to the Danish model would further enable shared ownership projects important in reaching this target.

An ambitious 2030 target of 2GW for community and locally owned renewable energy also reflects the estimated overall increase in required generating capacity by 2030 (Scottish Government, 2012). This target can also support ambitions in renewable heat developments such as tackling fuel poverty (see Heat Generation Policy Statement).

The UK Government has recently proposed cutting support for some renewables but it is not clear yet how much this will affect schemes developed by communities. Strong targets in Scotland will demonstrate our continuing commitment to empowering communities.

There are still barriers to local energy economies and community energy becoming mainstream. These include the inability of community groups to supply to electricity directly to their members, as in Belgium or Germany, as well as issues of access to the electricity grid and lack of investor certainty that result from proposed changes to financial support mechanisms for renewables.

SCOTTISH COMMUNITY ENERGY COALITION

The Scottish Community Energy Coalition (SCEC) promotes community energy in Scotland and is part of a wider UK coalition. SCEC members include ClientEarth, Community Energy Scotland, Energy4All, Energy Action Scotland, Friends of the Earth Scotland, Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Local Energy Scotland, SCENE and Sharenergy.

SCEC believe that community energy can, and should:

- 1** Enable willing communities in Scotland to play a substantial role in meeting Scottish and UK targets for carbon and renewables by saving energy and creating a secure, clean and affordable heat and electricity supply.
- 2** Increase the scale of investment in renewable energy and energy saving and attract new individuals, communities and institutions to invest.
- 3** Encourage people to act cooperatively to create sustainable communities and give everyone an equal opportunity to own and control shared assets democratically.
- 4** Respect communities, the landscape and wildlife through genuine stakeholder involvement and management of natural assets for the benefit of current and future generations.
- 5** Increase people's awareness and support for renewable energy projects and encourage energy saving.
- 6** Include frameworks that enable communities that generate electricity to sell directly to themselves.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, SEE <http://www.communitypower.scot>

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