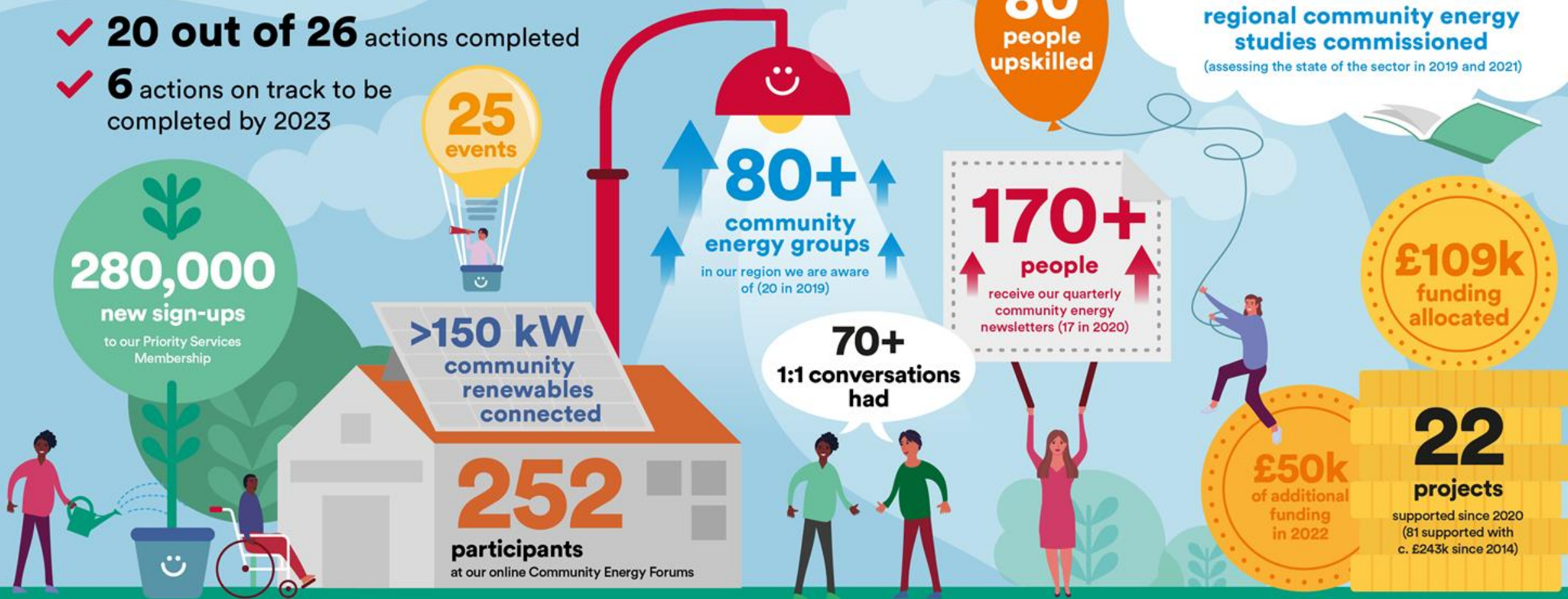


# Northern Powergrid's Community Energy Engagement Strategy progress update 2021/22 - highlights

Powering the growth of community energy

- ✓ **20 out of 26** actions completed
- ✓ **6** actions on track to be completed by 2023



**Over 6,000**

interactions with community energy stakeholders since early 2020 – insights shared with BEIS, Ofgem, Environmental Audit Committee, and local governments

# LISTEN We have continued to listen to communities through the ongoing engagement as outlined in the community energy engagement strategy 2020-2023

You said	Action/commitment	What we did	Date delivered and evidence
<b>Listen to us</b>	1. Interview community energy organisations in our licence areas.	<p>To inform our strategy, we interviewed 17 community energy organisations across our licence areas via phone calls with Regen to gather information and plan engagement.</p> <p>The published strategy has been widely promoted externally and internally, and viewed over 1,300 times to date. The delivery of actions is being further refined, and new actions identified, by gathering stakeholder feedback.</p>	<p>December 2019</p> <p><a href="#">Community Energy Engagement Strategy</a></p>
	2. Further work to engage new and existing community energy organisations that we aren't aware of.	<p>We have increased our mailing list more than ten-fold from 17 to over 170. We are continuously seeking to engage with more community energy organisations, and are aware of more than 80 groups in our region with community energy projects (in various stages of project development).</p> <p><b>In addition</b>, we carried out a regional community energy study with Community Energy England (CEE) in 2020 and are carrying out another regional study in 2022 to understand the sector dynamics in our region.</p> <p>Moreover, we have been working closely with other stakeholders, such as CEE, Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) officers, and other community energy fund providers like Centrica, to ensure our work is complimentary and to make our resources and engagement activities accessible to all groups and individuals interested in community energy, even those who we are not aware of yet.</p> <p>We conducted research and consulted a range of stakeholders on how we can better focus community energy funding, and launched a new 'Net Zero Community Energy Fund' in March 2022.</p>	<p>December 2020</p> <p><a href="#">Regional Community Energy Study</a></p> <p><a href="#">Net Zero Community Energy Fund guidelines</a></p>

# INFORM We kept communities up to date and informed about our activities as outlined in the community energy engagement strategy 2020-2023

You said	Action/commitment	What we did	Date delivered and evidence
<b>Tell us what Northern Powergrid want and how communities can help</b>	3. Make a public statement about why we want to work with communities and how they can help.	We included these statements in our Community Energy Engagement Strategy.	April 2020  <a href="#">Community Energy Engagement Strategy</a>
	4. Speak about this at four internal and four external events regionally or nationally.	<p>We spoke about about our work to support community energy at five external events and at least six Northern Powergrid organised events in 2020. We spoke/shared information about our work to support community energy at five external events and at least ten of our own events in 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CEE and Ofgem Information Sharing Event - Significant Charging Review on 28 January;</li> <li>• UK Parliament’s Environmental Audit Committee’s oral evidence session on 14 April 2021;</li> <li>• CEE's State of the Sector 2021 report launch on 23 June 2021;</li> <li>• Energy Networks Innovation Conference on 14 October 2021;</li> <li>• Future of Utilities Summit on 15 September 2021; and</li> <li>• two forums, two training sessions, one webinar, a future service workshop, and four stakeholder panels organised by us.</li> </ul> <p>We are continuing to hold and participate in our own and external events in 2022.</p> <p><b>In addition</b>, in 2020, we shared a press release about the launch of the strategy and five follow-up featured articles and blogs were published (Energyst, Smart Energy International, Energy World, York Press, and CEE website). In 2021, we continued to raise awareness and speak about the importance of community energy with numerous local governments.</p>	December 2020  <a href="#">Community Energy &amp; Ofgem Information Sharing Event</a>  <a href="#">Environmental Audit Committee oral evidence session</a>  <a href="#">Community Energy State of the Sector 2021 launch event</a>  <a href="#">ENIC agenda</a>  <a href="#">Future of Utilities Summit agenda</a>  Recordings Northern Powergrid’s events available from <a href="#">Community energy webpage</a>
<b>Keep us up to date via email</b>	5. We will send out quarterly email updates tailored to community and local energy stakeholders.	Since April 2020, we send out quarterly newsletters to community energy stakeholders, to keep them up to date on funding, events, our business planning and other relevant information. In 2021, our newsletters had an open rate of 52%.	April 2020
	6. We will create a new community energy page on our website.	We created a community energy page on our website which has information, news, tools and resources for community energy stakeholders in our region. Our webpage has had over 2,100 unique visits to date.	May 2020  <a href="#">Community energy webpage</a>

# ENGAGE We have continued to listen to communities through the ongoing engagement as outlined in the community energy engagement strategy 2020-2023

You said	Action/commitment	What we did	Date delivered and evidence
<p><b>We want a named person/point of contact for communities</b></p>	<p>7. Anda Baumerte, Sustainability Manager at Northern Powergrid, is the appointed community energy contact.</p>	<p>Details of our community energy contact, Anda Baumerte, and a dedicated community energy inbox for getting in touch with us feature on our new community energy webpage.</p>	<p>April 2020</p> <p><a href="#">Community energy webpage</a></p>
<p><b>We want to have conversations to find viable solutions, before filling in a form and spending money</b></p>	<p>8. We will have conversations with communities to find solutions and facilitate constructive conversations with our network engineers.</p>	<p>We've had these conversations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• at breakout sessions of our community energy forums;</li> <li>• at community energy stakeholder panel meetings;</li> <li>• during monthly Customer Surgeries (at least four groups have attended Connections Surgeries);</li> <li>• by you contacting our engineers directly - their contact details are publicly available on our website; and</li> <li>• directly with more than 20 community energy groups.</li> </ul>	<p>On track</p> <p><a href="#">Customer events and surgeries listed online</a></p>
<p><b>We want more face to face engagement</b></p>	<p>9. We will continue to participate in the wider energy system transformation debate.</p>	<p>We partnered or participated in four external community energy events in 2020 and five in 2021, building on our relationships with organisations across the sector, as mentioned under action 4. We also joined meetings to discuss the outputs of 'Enabling Community Energy in the North East of England' commissioned by North East LEP, North of Tyne Combined Authority, Durham County Council and South Tyneside Council in partnership with CEE, and delivered by the Centre for Sustainable Energy.</p>	<p>On track</p> <p><i>See Action 4 to access the relevant hyperlinks</i></p>
	<p>10. We will continue partnering and participating in regional energy and climate change events.</p>	<p>During 2020 and 2021, we had more than 25,000 interactions with stakeholders to discuss their decarbonisation plans, and our role in delivering them, including a range of industry and community energy organisations. Stakeholders asked us to develop plans which would enable decarbonising the region as soon as possible, while balancing this ambition and its associated costs.</p> <p><b>In addition</b>, we continued to attend regional events and working groups focused on decarbonisation and reaching net zero emissions target, e.g. workshops held by Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Authorities in our area, among others. We are also represented in the North East England Climate Coalition and the Yorkshire and Humber Climate Commission.</p>	<p>On track</p> <p><a href="#">Northern Powergrid's RIIO-ED2 Business Plan, Annex 3.3 Detailed engagement findings</a></p>

<p><b>We want events specifically designed for us</b></p>	<p>11. Our community energy events will be participatory and include plenty of networking time and time for communities to talk to us about their specific projects and ideas. These events will focus on subjects that matter to communities and we will invite feedback face to face.</p>	<p>We have developed and committed to an engagement programme and will continue to hold at least two events per year, shaped by feedback from community energy participants.</p> <p>We held three online community energy forums in 2020 and two in 2021, attended by 167 and 85 community energy representatives, tailored for participants at all stages of the community energy journey. We have also held the first of two community energy forums scheduled for 2022, which was held in person and was attended by 39 representatives. Our forums have been rated 8.6 out of 10 on average.</p> <p><b>In addition</b>, we trained and upskilled 80 community energy representatives in two training sessions for community energy groups in 2021. We have planned to hold two more training sessions in 2022.</p>	<p>2020</p> <p>Recordings of all sessions available from <a href="#">Community energy webpage</a></p> <p><a href="#">Event pages on Regen's website</a></p>
<p><b>Everyone we sign up to the PSR should receive a welcome pack, and you should know we made the referral</b></p>	<p>12. We will make sure every new person signed up to the Priority Services Register (PSR) receives a link to the online welcome pack, and look into new systems that could identify referral organisations.</p>	<p>We have ensured every new referral receives an online welcome pack. A total of 100,000 new customers signed up to our Priority Services Membership (PSM) in 2020, and around 180,000 in 2021.</p> <p>In 2020, we reviewed all of the communications we send out to customers and brought it in line with our repositioning of the PSR as our PSM. Following this, we sent out a revised digital copy of our welcome pack out to 700,000 customers. In 2021-22, we had a total of over 835,000 customers signed up to PSM and we sent out around 380,000 welcome packs. We also carry out an annual survey to quality-check our PSM services.</p> <p><b>In addition</b>, we have carried out a mapping exercise to identify groups underrepresented in our PSM register as well as mapping partner networks who would support those groups. Through this, we have identified c. 800 support agencies and added them to our stakeholder database to include them in all PSM outreach campaigns.</p> <p>We also translated our PSM video in 10 languages most frequently spoken in our region to promote this service and encourage sign-up to PSM.</p>	<p>March 2020</p> <p><a href="#">Interactive welcome pack</a></p> <p><a href="#">Printable version</a></p> <p><a href="#">More information</a></p>

**EMPOWER** We want to empower and build the capacity of community energy organisations to participate in and contribute to our changing energy system, to make sure it is democratic and benefits those less able to engage as outlined in the community energy engagement strategy 2020-2023

You said	Action/commitment	What we did	Date delivered and evidence
<p><b>We need financial support for community energy and energy efficiency activities</b></p>	<p>13. We were the first DNO to have a community energy fund and we will continue to deliver this.</p>	<p>Community energy projects are within the fund scope, and we further amended the wording to state it more clearly. In 2020, ten projects were supported and in 2021, 12 projects were supported with a total of around £109,000. Over 1,200 people have been engaged in this process. In total, almost £243,000 have been awarded to community organisations since 2014.</p> <p><b>In addition</b>, we have launched an additional ‘Net Zero Community Energy Fund’ in 2022. Learning from experience of other community energy funding mechanisms and shaped by community energy stakeholders, we designed this fund to support organisations with capacity-building at the early stages of their projects.</p>	<p>December 2020</p> <p><a href="#">Community Partnering Fund page</a></p> <p><a href="#">Net Zero Community Energy Fund guidelines</a></p>
<p><b>We need financial support for fuel poverty outreach</b></p>	<p>14. We will consider paying a referral fee to community and local energy organisations who make referrals to the PSR and report our decision to communities via the newsletter.</p>	<p>We have completed an internal review of this. We are continuing to consider this and working out how we would be able to process this.</p> <p>In the meantime, we continue to provide support to our charity and voluntary organisation partners in other ways.</p>	<p>December 2020</p>
<p><b>We need resources for fuel poverty outreach</b></p>	<p>15. We will continue improving information and offering resources such as fridge magnets to help people know what to do in a power cut and how to save energy.</p>	<p>We have considered this. Our digital Priority Services Membership welcome pack contains information about what to do at a time of power cut as well as advice about energy efficiency. We have been investing in our services and in information and outreach campaigns and proactively seek to identify priority services customers. We have also been sharing additional branded resources when we are on site with customer service vehicles, attending areas experiencing power cuts or public information events.</p> <p>In 2021, we refreshed our <i>A Force For Good</i> webpage to signpost to and referral to our partners providing energy advice and financial advice. We have developed an energy saving app with Energy Saving Trust which provides bespoke hints and tips to reduce their energy use.</p> <p><b>In addition</b>, we also expanded our fuel poverty and affordability programmes, partnering with Citizens Advice in Sheffield and Citizens Advice Hull, and with Energy Service Trust to provide a telephone outreach model to provide affordability support service.</p> <p>We also partnered with MoneyHelper (government-funded debt advice agency) to ensure referrals into their services through our PSM outreach campaigns.</p>	<p>December 2020</p> <p><a href="#">A Force For Good page</a></p> <p>Energy Saving App – <a href="#">for Apple</a> and for <a href="#">Android</a></p>

<p><b>We need technical support</b></p>	<p>16. We are committed to explaining technical information to communities in plain English. We will explore how we can offer more technical support and resources to community energy organisations.</p>	<p>We encourage colleagues to use their volunteering day in skills-based opportunities across the region and ensure that we have a wide range of opportunities represented on our volunteering portal.</p> <p>We included a section in our newsletter to encourage community groups to ask for volunteers by emailing us. In 2021, at least one community energy group used the opportunity, which was widely promoted within Northern Powergrid. One volunteer devoted 5 hours to support the group in tree planting activities. Any groups are encouraged to email us if they are seeking some volunteers.</p> <p>Our engineers continue to provide technical support by having conversations with community energy organisations as part of their job. They have also joined the engagement sessions in our community energy forums.</p>	<p>December 2020</p> <p>Resources, incl. our community energy case studies, Connections Factsheet, guides and external resources, recordings of Community Energy Forums and training sessions are available from <a href="#">Community energy webpage</a></p>
<p><b>We would like training on how the network and our energy system works</b></p>	<p>17. We will endeavour to upskill and build the capacity of community energy organisations.</p>	<p>We've used our events, forums and meetings to deliver targeted training for communities, supplemented by resources on our website. Six forums and nine community energy stakeholder panel sessions were delivered to date, with a total of 368 participants.</p> <p><b>In addition</b>, two technical training sessions were delivered in 2021 upskilling 80 participants. Participants rated these sessions at 8.5 and 9.1 out of 10. Two more training sessions have been planned for 2022.</p>	<p>December 2020</p> <p>Recordings of all sessions available from <a href="#">Community energy webpage</a></p>
<p><b>Support us with energy efficiency activities to reduce demand</b></p>	<p>18. We will explore this theme with communities at our events during 2020 and collectively decide appropriate action.</p>	<p>We held an event on heat and energy efficiency on 29 September 2020 with participants rating it 9 out of 10, and we have continued to work with Green Doctor.</p> <p><b>In addition</b>, we held a training session on energy efficiency on 20 May 2021, with participants rating it 9.1 out of 10.</p>	<p>September 2020</p> <p><a href="#">Heat and Energy Efficiency forum</a></p> <p><a href="#">Energy Efficiency training session</a></p>
<p><b>We need financial support to get new network connection</b></p>	<p>19. We will communicate the evidence we have received from communities as part of this research to Ofgem and BEIS.</p>	<p>Specific feedback on connections cost impact and interest in local supply shared during CEE and Ofgem event on 28 Jan 2021. We have summarised the feedback received from community energy groups to the UK Parliament's Environmental Audit Committee and BEIS, as outlined in action 25.</p> <p><b>In addition</b>, our Regional Community Energy Study, our community energy Page, and the need for additional support for community energy have been shared in external events (regional or national), where appropriate, with local government, LEP as well as industry representatives.</p>	<p>December 2020</p> <p><a href="#">Community Energy England and Ofgem Information Sharing Event</a></p> <p><a href="#">Environmental Audit Committee witness response</a></p>

<p><b>We need technical support to get new network connections</b></p>	<p>20. We will have conversations with communities to find solutions and facilitate constructive conversations with our network engineers.</p>	<p>Community energy groups have attended at least four connections surgeries since 2020 and have had around 70 informal conversations with Northern Powergrid colleagues. At least three groups have applied for a connection.</p> <p><b>In addition</b>, we have developed and published a <i>Community Energy Factsheet</i> outlining connections-related FAQs.</p>	<p>On track</p> <p><a href="#">Community energy factsheet</a></p>
	<p>21. We have developed a visual map of our network in a desktop app which includes a design tool, useful for EV installation and as a low voltage design tool. Designed for connections, it can help in the pre planning and project design stage.</p>	<p>Our award-winning AutoDesign tool is a free to use, self-service tool which reflects the low-voltage network capacity (green, amber, red) and designs a new connection in minutes. It also gives an indicative low voltage connection cost estimate for a new connection. Run-through of this tool has been included in Community Energy Forums in 2020, which were attended by 167 participants. Links to the tool have been provided on our community energy webpage.</p>	<p>November 2020</p> <p><a href="#">Link to AutoDesign tool on community energy webpage</a></p>
<p><b>We'd like more community energy innovation projects that help us develop new business models at scale</b></p>	<p>22. We will continue to offer support to communities with innovative project ideas that haven't been done before.</p>	<p>Groups with new innovative ideas can contact us by using the community energy inbox to discuss these on an ongoing basis. We continue to actively explore opportunities to involve communities in relevant innovation trials.</p> <p>We have one community energy innovation project – Boston Spa Energy Efficiency Trial (BEET) – in progress. We held an innovation festival in 2020, where we shared information about this project, among other innovation trials we are running. Case studies from our previous community energy innovation projects, Energise Barnsley and Activating Community Engagement (ACE), are available from our community energy page.</p> <p>Our Innovation team took part in our Community Energy Forum on 25 March 2022 in York.</p>	<p>On track</p> <p><a href="#">Boston Spa Energy Efficiency Trial</a></p>



<p><b>Support us long term to address climate change</b></p>	<p>23. We have funded Energy Heroes climate change education programme for many years and will continue to, we will also engage more with this programme offering professional development support and volunteer resource via corporate social responsibility resources.</p>	<p>We continued to fund the Energy Heroes programme in 2020 and also committed to funding it in 2021 and 2022. In 2020, 4,500 children have been involved, with calculated energy savings of 640 MWh and calculated carbon savings of 180 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. In 2021, over 4,300 children have been involved, with calculated energy savings of 336 MWh and calculated carbon savings of 96 tCO<sub>2</sub>e.</p> <p><b>In addition</b>, we have continued to deliver our Community Partnering Fund.</p>	<p>2021</p> <p><a href="#">Energy Heroes information</a></p>
	<p>24. We will consider integrating a social and environmental weighting when procuring flexibility services.</p>	<p>The market for customer-led flexibility is developing in our region. As of 2021 we had not procured any flexibility. We continue to work to identify the best approach to customer-led flexibility through expressions of interest and engagement with potential flexibility providers. We are working with the industry via the Energy Networks Association to develop a common and transparent approach for all DNOs making decisions on flexibility procurement, including an associated cost-benefit assessment tool to address feedback from stakeholders that it should go further in the areas of carbon assessment and optionality valuation.</p> <p><b>In addition</b>, as of Q1 2022, Anda Baumerte, our community energy lead, has joined the Energy Networks Association's 'Open Networks' work stream which is looking to develop a methodology for assessing the carbon impact of flexibility solutions.</p>	<p>On track</p> <p><a href="#">Search launched for flexibility service providers</a></p> <p><a href="#">Section 3.3 of our Environment Report</a></p> <p><a href="#">More information</a></p>

# ADVOCATE

We recognise communities don't have the capacity and time to lobby, we want to amplify their voice as outlined in the community energy engagement strategy 2020-2023

You said	Action/commitment	What we did	Date delivered
<p><b>Help us have a voice with government and Ofgem</b></p>	<p>25. We will use our industry position to feedback to BEIS and Ofgem what community energy organisations say they need to thrive.</p>	<p>The engagement with community energy stakeholders and their feedback has been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- shared directly with different teams at BEIS on several occasions;</li> <li>- shared with Ofgem directly and by including it in a range of annual reports, e.g. our Stakeholder Engagement and Consumer Vulnerability submission; and</li> <li>- documented as part of our RIIO-ED2 process. It has informed our and influenced business plan submission to Ofgem (1 December 2021).</li> </ul> <p>We will continue to advocate for community energy organisations.</p> <p><b>In addition</b>, we provided evidence to UK Parliament's Environmental Audit Committee in writing (responding to their inquiry into community energy and summarising the feedback we had received from community energy stakeholders) and also took part in their oral evidence session on 14 April 2021.</p>	<p>2021</p> <p>Community energy voices included in <a href="#">Environmental Audit Committee witness response</a></p> <p><a href="#">Northern Powergrid's RIIO-ED2 Business Plan</a></p>
<p><b>Include communities in your business planning</b></p>	<p>26. We will inform communities of how they can engage in our RIIO-ED2 business planning process.</p>	<p>In 2020, we set up a community energy stakeholder panel with a representative group of panellists from across the region, comprised of 13 community energy organisations and two support organisations, to help guide our work around community energy and decarbonisation, give us feedback and hold us to account. We have continued to run the panel sessions, and the panel have been providing feedback on our ED2 proposals.</p> <p><b>In addition</b>, we have advertised our RIIO-ED2 consultations and events via our newsletter and Community Energy Forums, and several community energy groups took part in our ED2 events during 2020 and 2021. We continue to signpost relevant engagement opportunities through these and other channels.</p>	<p>2020</p> <p><a href="#">Northern Powergrid's RIIO-ED2 Business Plan, Annex 3.3 Detailed engagement findings</a></p> <p><a href="#">Events page on our ED2 website</a></p>