

GREATERLONDONAUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR DECISION – ADD2753

London Community Energy Taskforce

Executive Summary:

Community energy groups play a key role in delivering smart and clean power, renewable heating, and energy efficiency measures to support London's transition to a fair zero-carbon energy system. The Community Energy Taskforce will bring together representatives from community energy groups, central government, the GLA, London boroughs, the finance and business sectors, and other key institutions to remove structural barriers to the sector's growth and enable London's community energy groups to play a vital role in the national government's local power plan. This decision seeks approval to provide funding to Community Energy London (CEL), who will offer secretariat services to the Taskforce.

Decision:

That the Assistant Director of Environment and Energy approves:

- expenditure of £27,972 to establish a Community Energy Taskforce, to guide Mayoral funding and financing decisions in the sector, to engage with businesses and anchor institutions to unlock funding and project delivery, and to better integrate community energy into the Mayor's and the national government's clean power mission as well as borough-led delivery schemes
- a related exemption from the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code to award the contract (to provide Community Energy Taskforce secretariat services) to Community Energy London.

AUTHORISING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/HEAD OF UNIT

I have reviewed the request and am satisfied it is correct and consistent with the Mayor's plans and priorities.

It has my approval.

Name: Megan Life

Position: Assistant Director – Energy and Environment

Signature:



Date:

31/03/2025

PART I - NON-CONFIDENTIAL FACTS AND ADVICE

Decision required – supporting report

1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The Mayor, along with other leaders, has declared a climate emergency, setting out an ambition for London to be a zero-carbon city by 2030. For this to be achieved, increased action is needed, including support for community energy projects which can deliver solar, retrofit and heat decarbonisation interventions on the ground.
- 1.2. In 2023, Community Energy London (CEL) identified over 20,000 community buildings with the potential for community energy projects. CEL is a not-for-profit network of people and organisations with an interest in supporting the development of community energy projects across the capital. It holds monthly meetings with its members, who are community energy groups and provides tools and services to support the expansion of community energy in London. The organisation has managed the delivery of phase seven of London Community Energy Fund (LCEF).
- 1.3. Over half of the sites CEL identified had capacity for solar PV, totalling over 1.1GWp. CEL have set itself a goal of creating 1,000 community energy projects in London by 2030. In addition to delivering solar PV schemes, community energy groups can also play a key part in delivering smart energy technologies, renewable heating and energy efficiency measures to advance London's transition to a zero-carbon energy system.
- 1.4. The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero announced on 21 March 2025 that community energy groups will be able to access a share of £5,000,000 in government grant funding to support projects that will help communities generate their own clean power. In addition, there will be £180,000,000 of government funding available to support renewable schemes on schools and hospitals—sites that are attractive for community energy projects. The Mayor of London and CEL are keen to support community energy groups in accessing London's fair share of this funding and in harnessing GB Energy's Local Power Plan to support the deployment of community-owned clean power projects.
- 1.5. An important advantage of working with community energy organisations is their ability to involve Londoners in the net-zero transition and to contribute to local wealth building, while generating community benefits. Many community energy groups focus on tackling fuel poverty, using revenue generated through energy projects to fund face-to-face support to vulnerable members of the local community. Additionally, these groups have strong links with community centres, schools, faith groups and other organisations. This allows them to reach Londoners from diverse backgrounds, to act as a trusted intermediary for local energy planning and to support with the delivery of domestic retrofit. Community energy projects facilitate the sharing of knowledge and skills development, particularly for young Londoners, offering entry points into careers that are vital for a just transition to a zero-carbon economy.
- 1.6. Since 2017, the Mayor has provided grants to community energy projects through seven rounds of the LCEF. LCEF has provided £2.5m of funding to 194 projects across 65 different community organisations. This funding has supported both development and delivery of community energy projects. This has, amongst other outcomes, resulted in the installation of 3.3 MWp of community solar PV, enough to cover two football pitches, and led to an estimated lifetime saving of 9,600 tonnes of CO₂e. For community energy groups to deliver at scale, the sector will need to build capacity and resilience to be able to deliver a higher number of projects and to attract more funding (public and private). The taskforce recommendations would help bridge the gap between the current 194 projects to meet CEL's goal of 1,000 projects by 2030.
- 1.7. In September 2024 the Deputy Mayor for Energy and Environment called for the establishment of a Community Energy Taskforce. The Taskforce, chaired by the Deputy Mayor, will bring together representatives from community energy groups, central government, the GLA, London boroughs, the

finance and business sectors and other key institutions to unlock structural barriers to the sector's growth and identify routes to securing additional funding. It will run from spring 2025 until winter 2025.

1.8. Therefore, this decision seeks approval for:

- establishing a Community Energy Taskforce bringing together key stakeholders to produce a roadmap to deliver 1,000 community energy projects in London by 2030 and address structural barriers to the sector's growth
- to award the contract (to provide Community Energy Taskforce secretariat services) to CEL, with a related exemption from the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code.

1.9. The GLA has received a proposal from CEL to provide the secretariat to this Taskforce, which would include the following services:

- recruitment of Taskforce members
- organising meetings
- preparing of briefing materials
- progress reporting and communications with the community energy sector
- promotion of Taskforce and its achievements including through social media
- drafting report on Taskforce's outputs and findings

1.10. Officers acknowledge the need, under section 9 of the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code (Code) to competitively tender for such contracting opportunities. Section 10 of the Code, however, allows for exemptions from this requirement to be approved where a supplier has had previous involvement in a specific current project or the services concerned are a continuation of existing work that cannot be separated from the new project/work. In this instance, CEL has extensive experience of the Mayor's LCEF programme and the GLA's needs because of its previous involvement in the delivery and design of previous LCEF rounds as well as its extensive engagement with community energy groups across London.

1.11. Accordingly, approval of an exemption from the requirement of the Code to tender for contracting opportunities is sought. This decision seeks approval to grant up to £27,972 to CEL for providing secretariat services to the Community Energy Taskforce from spring 2025 until the work is completed in winter 2025.

2. Objectives and expected outcomes

2.1. The Taskforce will leverage the Mayor of London's convening powers to incentivise London-based organisations to partner with the community energy sector on net zero delivery. During this phase, Taskforce membership will consist of GLA officers, CEL members, the Deputy Mayor for Energy and Environment, and representatives from London boroughs, central government, anchor institutions and private sector organisations (e.g. large businesses/estate owners). The work of the Taskforce will be showcased at a Community Energy Summit in the summer. This will present the outputs from the Taskforce and raise the profile of community energy projects across the capital.

2.2. The Taskforce will produce a roadmap of actions needed to deliver 1,000 community energy projects in London by 2030. This will:

- provide recommendations on how to enable organisations to build capacity and resilience, moving away from a reliance on project-based grants
 - identify how to integrate community energy into the delivery of the Mayor's net zero programmes in alignment with national government's clean energy mission. For example, this will explore ways to integrate with aspects of the Greener Schools and Warmer Homes London retrofit activities
 - advise the GLA and other stakeholders on how best to harness Great British Energy's Local Power Plan to support the development of community energy in London and accelerate the uptake of clean energy across the capital
 - address issues to broker better relationships with public and private sector institutions, including London boroughs, anchor institutions, businesses and the community energy sector, to deliver clean energy, retrofit and fuel poverty projects
 - establish routes for better access to finance for the community energy sector.
- 2.3. The scope of the Taskforce will be shaped in consultation with the Mayor's Office, GLA officers and CEL throughout delivery to be responsive to developments and announcements relating to GB Energy's Local Power Plan.

3. Equality comments

- 3.1. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the Mayor and GLA are subject to the public sector equality duty and must give due regard to the need to:
- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not
 - foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3.2. The "protected characteristics" are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership status. The duty involves having appropriate regard to these matters as they apply in the circumstances, including having regard to the need to: remove or minimise any disadvantage suffered by those who share or is connected to a protected characteristic; taking steps to meet the different needs of such people; and encouraging them to participate in public life or in any other activity where their participation is disproportionately low. This can involve treating people with a protected characteristic more favourably than those without one.
- 3.3. The Community Energy Taskforce will select its members while paying due regard to equality and diversity concerns; and ensuring that Taskforce members are representative of London's diverse population. The Taskforce's recommendations will also address diversity in the community energy sector, paying due regard to equality and inclusion.
- 3.4. Community energy groups often seek to directly support members of the community impacted by the cost-of-living crisis, including fuel poverty, and continued structural inequalities. Londoners with protected characteristics are more likely to be part of these communities. For instance, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities are almost 60 per cent more likely to be fuel-poor than White households; those with disabilities or long-term illnesses are 50 per cent more likely to be fuel-poor. Community energy groups in receipt of funding will need to demonstrate how their work benefits their

local communities, and particularly Londoners with protected characteristics. Interventions benefiting these communities may include:

- using revenue generated from clean energy projects to alleviate fuel poverty and provide green skills training opportunities
- seeking to supply local buildings with cheaper electricity; this could mean lower energy bills for its occupants, who may not be able to afford solar panels
- allowing members of the local community, including disadvantaged and marginalised communities to own a share of the project and benefit from any return on investment rather than only financial institutions benefiting.

4. Other considerations

Risks and issues

4.1. The key risks and mitigations are detailed below:

Risk description	Mitigation / response	Probability (1-5)	Impact (1-5)	Overall risk (1-25)
Key stakeholders such as DESNZ, boroughs and the private sector do not engage with the Taskforce	Leverage other relationships from CEL and across the GLA, including other programmes, such as Government Relations, the Business Engagement Team and the London Anchor Institutions' Network to ensure the right level of buy-in and engagement	2	3	6
Community Energy London (CEL) lack the time resource they anticipated to fully provide secretariat services to the Taskforce	CEL has been engaged with Taskforce discussions since it was suggested in September 2024. The Taskforce remains a core priority in their work to support community energy groups across London	1	2	2

Links to Mayoral Strategies and Priorities

4.2. The programme funded through this ADD will help achieve several relevant London Environment Strategy policy proposals:

- Proposal 10.1.2.a: To support start-ups and business growth across the economy, including in the low carbon and environmental goods and services sector
- Proposal 10.1.1.e: The Mayor will work with stakeholders from across the financial and environmental sectors to develop financing mechanisms.

4.3. In January 2024, the London Assembly Environment Committee published its report on community energy in London which included eight recommendations for the Mayor and UK Government to enhance community energy provision. The objectives of the Taskforce align with the recommendations in that it:

- will use the convening powers of the Mayor and Taskforce to encourage boroughs to develop community energy funds and to remove planning barriers to community energy projects.

4.4. The Mayor's Greener Schools programme is seeking to identify scalable approaches to net zero initiatives in schools by supporting schools working in partnership with community energy groups. The Taskforce will support the development of community energy groups that will be in a position to co-ordinate and deliver a greater number of projects at sites, including schools.

Consultations and impact assessments

4.5. Officers have held regular meetings with CEL and workshops with its members. The GLA has surveyed community groups (including applicants to the London Community Energy Fund) to understand:

- how to support equality, diversity and inclusion within and through the community energy sector
- other support required by community energy groups to expand.

4.6. The Taskforce will be part of ongoing consultations with the community energy sector in the design of GLA policies and funding.

Conflicts of interest

4.7. There are no conflicts of interest to note of anyone involved in the drafting or clearance of this Mayoral Decision.

5. Financial comments

5.1. Approval is requested for:

- expenditure of up to £27,972 to establish a Community Energy Taskforce, to guide Mayoral funding and financing decisions in the sector
- a related exemption from the GLA's Contracts and Funding Code to award the contract (to provide Community Energy Taskforce secretariat services) to Community Energy London

5.2. The expected profile of the planned expenditure is shown below:

Activity	Timeline	Spend
Start of contract	April 2025	£13,986
Final report	December 2025	£13,986

5.3. The budget for this programme is included within the 2025/26 budget. It is important to note that the point of completing these comments the 2025/26 budget has yet to be approved and as such is subject to change.

5.4. This programme is included within the Reducing Non-Residential Emissions delivery plan and there is budget included within this delivery plan.

6. Legal comments

6.1. The foregoing sections of this report indicate that the decisions sought concern the exercise of the GLA's general powers, falling within the GLA's statutory powers to do such things considered to further, or that are facilitative of, or conducive or incidental to, the promotion of the improvement of

the environment in Greater London. In formulating the proposals in respect of which a decision is sought, officers must comply with the GLA's related statutory duties to:

- pay due regard to the principle that there should be equality of opportunity for all people
- consider how the proposals will promote the improvement of health of persons, health inequalities between persons and to contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom
- consult with appropriate bodies.

- 6.2. In taking any decisions sought, the Assistant Director of Environment and Energy must have due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty – namely the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; and to advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (race, disability, sex, age, sexual orientation, religion, gender reassignment) and persons who do not (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010). To this end, the Assistant Director of Environment and Energy should have particular regard to section 3) of this decision.
- 6.3. Contracts of the nature and value of that proposed for award to CEL should be procured competitively pursuant to section 9 of the Code. However, section 10 of the Code allows for exemptions from this requirement to be approved, where a supplier has had previous involvement in a specific current project; or where the services concerned are a continuation of existing work that cannot be separated from the new project/work. Officers have indicated at section 1.8, above, that this is the case here. CEL has extensive experience of the Mayor's LCEF programme and the GLA's needs, because of its previous involvement in the delivery and design of previous LCEF rounds; and because of its extensive engagement with community energy groups across London. The Assistant Director of Environment and Energy may, therefore, approve the exemption sought.

7. Planned delivery approach and next steps

- 7.1. The project will be delivered according to the following indicative timetable:

Activity	Timeline
Community Energy Taskforce	
Procurement of contract	April 2025
Community energy summit at City Hall	August 2025
Interim report	September 2025
Final report	December 2025

Appendices and supporting papers:

None

Public access to information

Information in this form (Part 1) is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FoIA) and will be made available on the GLA website within one working day of approval.

If immediate publication risks compromising the implementation of the decision (for example, to complete a procurement process), it can be deferred until a specific date. Deferral periods should be kept to the shortest length strictly necessary. **Note:** This form (Part 1) will either be published within one working day after it has been approved or on the defer date.

Part 1 - Deferral

Is the publication of Part 1 of this approval to be deferred? NO

Part 2 – Sensitive information

Only the facts or advice that would be exempt from disclosure under FoIA should be included in the separate Part 2 form, together with the legal rationale for non-publication.

Is there a part 2 form – NO

ORIGINATING OFFICER DECLARATION:

Drafting officer to
confirm the
following (✓)

Drafting officer:

Greg Shreeve has drafted this report in accordance with GLA procedures and confirms the following:

✓

Mayoral Delivery Board

A summary of this decision was reviewed by the Mayoral Delivery Board on 31 March 2025.

✓

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, FINANCIAL SERVICES:

I confirm that financial and legal implications have been appropriately considered in the preparation of this report.

Signature:

Anna Gustaf

Date:

31/03/2025