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Future Energy Landscapes Guidance



Centre for Sustainable Energy



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1. Introduction to Future Energy Landscapes

1.1 About the Centre for Sustainable Energy

The Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) is a charity supporting people and organisations across the UK to tackle the climate emergency and end the suffering caused by cold homes. We do this by sharing our knowledge, practical experience and policy insights. For over 40 years, we've supported people to take effective action on energy in their homes. We help communities and local councils to understand energy issues, set priorities, and put plans into action. Our research and analysis focus on making the energy system greener, smarter and fairer.

Dan Stone, is the project lead for Future Energy Landscapes at CSE. He is a chartered planner with over 20 years' experience. Dan has experience of renewable energy projects from all sides of the planning system. This includes:

- Determining planning applications for renewable energy projects as a development management officer.
- Working for a wind power consultancy seeking to develop projects and negotiating with landowners.
- Supporting communities and local government to understand and build public support for greater renewable energy deployment.

CSE would like to thank [MCS Charitable Foundation](#) for assistance in making this guidance possible.

1.2 About Future Energy Landscapes

The way we produce and use energy needs to change. It's one of the main causes of the climate emergency. We currently rely on fossil fuels, like coal, oil, and gas, for most of our heating, power, and transport. We need to stop using fossil fuels as it's releasing too much carbon dioxide into our atmosphere, accelerating the climate emergency. Transforming the way that we generate and use energy, so we produce less carbon, is key to tackling the climate emergency and reaching net zero targets. To reach net zero, we must generate more energy from renewable sources, like wind, hydroelectric and solar.

The benefits, cost, and impact of making this happen must be shared across society fairly, otherwise people will not buy into the transformation that is needed. The changes we need in the energy system must be made in ways which make sure everyone can participate in, contribute to, and benefit from the transition to net zero.

Most of the public is also aware of the need to scale up renewable energy to phase out fossil fuels, but they also have legitimate expectations that they will be able to meaningfully influence how, where and what renewable energy projects will happen within their communities and landscapes. These expectations are not being fulfilled by current community engagement approaches, which

tend to be technocratic and top-down. If we're to roll out renewables at the scale needed to reach net zero targets, more nuanced public engagement processes are vital.

CSE has therefore developed the Future Energy Landscapes (FEL) methodology to put local communities at the heart of planning for renewable energy development. It is a deliberative methodology designed to enable communities to suggest an outline energy plan based on insightful, detailed and mature discussion.

The approach localises the challenge of decarbonising our energy system to a specific community and landscape. It allows the public to consider the trade-offs between various types and size of renewable technologies, and the visual impact of these on the local landscape.

Our experience has found that hosting a space to discuss renewables, in the absence of specific development proposals or imminent planning applications, give the community a chance to have a different and more open conversation.

"It's great that the Council are looking to garner local opinion when it comes to decarbonising energy production. The more voices that can be heard on this important topic, the better the solution will be for local communities."

"The workshop allowed different renewables options to be discussed between a mix of residents - some of whom were very informed and some who were learning about specific topics for the first time. Education and discussion on these topics is the best way to garner support and uptake." Alastair, Tickenham and Nailsea workshop

To significantly increase renewable energy generation, communities need to be given thinking space to consider their options, beyond the normal plan making or planning application processes. A new process was needed that allows consideration to be given to future energy infrastructure in a wider sense, rather than when the mind is focused on an individual application for a specific installation in a pre-determined location (though the process can be adapted to site specific proposals).

The FEL workshop design allows members of a given community to discuss, in a strategic way, how they feel energy use and energy generation might be best developed in their local area. It also allows them to suggest a mix of energy generation technologies they think are appropriate for their area.

FEL workshops can be incorporated into the initial stages of plan making but can be useful outputs in themselves. For example, in communities that are in the early stages of exploring what might be possible in their local area. It can also be useful for local authorities or other organisations that are interested in consulting communities in a meaningful way.

1.3 Design Rationale

Proponents of increased inclusion of renewables in the UK energy supply system consistently point to high public support for renewable energy in national surveys¹. Yet, once projects are proposed in a given location, they often arouse impassioned and visceral local campaigns aimed at preventing them from going ahead (while there is often a reasonable level of at least passive local support). This disconnect between high levels of support for renewables in theory and lower levels of overall support when projects are proposed in practice (with that support frequently more qualified and nuanced) is often termed the ‘social gap’.

The existence of this ‘social gap’ implies that, at some point in the process of translating the abstract idea of renewable energy into plans on the ground, something changes those supportive views.

Opposition to renewable energy at the local level is often labelled as NIMBY-ism, but this dismissive term is unhelpful. It masks a broad range of personal drivers that may contribute to an individual’s low level of support for a proposed energy development.

Academic studies have demonstrated that a wide range of factors affect an individual’s likely level of support for a renewable energy project in their local area. These studies also show that the views of a given individual are not always unchangeable; people’s views on the acceptability of energy infrastructure can change between planned projects, and indeed across the time period of a single project’s development. These factors are crucial considerations, which can cement or sway opinion (often overlooked in statutory consultations undertaken as part of a planning application), and are around issues of:

- Place attachment (an individual’s personal, emotional bond to a place),
- Distributive fairness (that the benefits of a development accrue in a way that appears transparent and reasonable),
- Procedural justice (that the process by which a development has happened is fair, as well as the outcome itself).

These considerations are also interlinked in determining whether an individual is likely to support a development in their area. Whether or not a proposal for a new energy development is seen as being imposed upon an area without genuine consultation can affect an individual’s conception of whether it will damage their local ‘place’. Similarly, proposals for local energy development may be seen as an opportunity, if considerable benefits will be accrued locally, thereby considering fairness and place attachment (for example reinvesting the profits of a wind farm into local initiatives). In such a case, place-protective resistance could be absent, whereas when no local benefits are

¹ BEIS Public Attitudes Tracker: Energy Infrastructure and Energy Sources, Summer 2022, UK - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1105383/BEIS_PAT_Summer_2022_Energy_Infrastructure_Energy_Sources.pdf

accrued the place-protective behaviours often come to the fore. Forming a full understanding of local views formed by such considerations is a key part of adhering to planning best-practice (as laid out in the National Planning Policy Framework² (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance³ (PPG)). However, such values-based considerations are often absent from planning processes in practice.

The multi-faceted nature of how individuals form views on the future development of their local area underpins the need for more place-sensitive and nuanced approaches to local energy planning. This helps explain the disconnect between simple expressions of support for ‘more sustainable energy’ at the national level and more qualified support (or outright opposition) to specific projects at the local level. The FEL methodology allows time for community participants to work through issues such as ‘how’ and ‘by whom’ energy development should be carried out in their area, at the same time as looking at ‘what’ and ‘where’.

1.4 The purpose of this guidance

This guidance has been designed to provide an overview of the FEL process for anybody who is interested in putting communities at the heart of energy planning.

Since it was first created in 2016, the FEL methodology has always been designed to be an open-source methodology. This updated guidance is based on our practical experience in delivering the workshops in eight different locations, both on behalf of neighbourhood planning groups and local planning authorities. Within the guidance and annexes you will find all the tools and resources required to run the FEL process.

1.4.1 The Guidance

This main guidance documentation provides information on:

- How to approach the process, including a case study from CSE’s experience
- When and where to run a FEL workshop
- What you need to do and check before you begin
- Engaging with the community prior to the workshop
- Engaging with the community following the workshop
- Using and sharing the workshop results

We also have four downloadable packs that provide the resources you’ll need to engage a community in the FEL process. The content of each pack is outlined in the following sections. The packs give more detail on specific parts of the process and complement this main guidance document which is intended as an overview of the whole process.

²[National Planning Policy Framework](#)

³[Planning Practice Guidance](#)

1.4.2 The Facilitation Pack

The guide refers to other resources which form part of the ‘facilitation pack’ - the materials and information needed to run the workshops. The pack consists of:

Item	Details
This guidance document	Provides overall guidance on the engagement process, including where to target workshops, how to advertise and recruit for participants, advice on appropriate venues and setting up.
FEL facilitation guide	This document gives detailed instructions on running the workshop process with timings for each session.
FEL workshop slides	To guide participants through the workshop on the day. You will need to enter information specific to your community, and this is indicated on the slides in red text.
Workshop checklist	A tick-list for equipment and materials needed for the workshops.
Ground rules	A list of suggested ground rules for participants to follow, to go through at the start of each session to ensure they run smoothly, and leave displayed throughout the session.
Workshop participant consent form	For workshop participants to complete on arrival.
Workshop participant expense claim form	For participants to claim expenses in order to attend workshop.

1.4.3 The CESAR tool pack

A major part of the FEL process is for the community attending the workshop to suggest a list of renewable energy technologies they think are acceptable for the area, choosing from a menu of what might be technically possible. This is carried out using the Community Energy Saving and Renewables (CESAR) tool, developed by CSE, which sits at the heart of the workshop methodology. It enables participants to quantify how much energy would be provided by renewable technologies suggested as well as the impact of any energy saving measures discussed. It also shows how this compares to the amount of energy the local area uses. The resources therefore also include:

Item	Details
The CESAR tool setup and user guide	This document describes how to set up the CESAR tool before use so that it contains the correct data and technology choices for the community in question. It also contains notes on running the exercise of workshop participants suggesting different technologies.

Item	Details
CESAR tool - Excel workbook	This workbook contains the tool itself, which is used to calculate how much of a community's energy demand would be met by specific technology choices and must be populated with data beforehand. There are two versions of the workbook: one intended for use by Local Planning Authorities and neighbourhood planning groups carrying out consultations in preparation for plan making; and a version intended for use by Community Energy Groups with a project and site in mind.
CESAR tool calculations and assumptions	This explains how the calculations in the tool are made.
CESAR card selection exercise prompt sheet	Reflective prompt questions for the workshop participants to think about as they're selecting renewable technologies to enter into the tool.
CESAR technology cards	The CESAR tool is made up of a series of cards depicting a range of energy generation and energy saving technologies that are used to lay out the 'main planning table' (where participants using the tool will lay out their technology selections).
The CESAR tool videos	These videos are for use by facilitators at the start of the CESAR session, enabling them to explain the energy generation options to the participants via short films.
CESAR tool posters	A series of posters that are used to describe the technologies on the cards that the participants use to select the energy technologies they wish to put forward as suggestions.

These are all downloadable and saved as Word documents rather than PDF so that they are editable. This allows a facilitator with expert energy knowledge to alter the size and output of different technologies on the cards and posters (e.g. instead of offering a 90 kilowatt anaerobic digestion plant, it could be scaled up to 500 kilowatts in an area with lots of agricultural waste for a larger installation).

1.4.4 Promotion materials pack

We have also created sample promotional materials, which you might adapt and use to promote your events:

Item	Details
Sample website text	This is based on a Wix website created by CSE for Bath and North East Somerset Council.
Two example posters which you might display to promote the workshop and to drive traffic to the online survey which follows	These are based promotional material created by CSE for workshops and online surveys with Bath and North East Somerset Council. The website Canva is excellent for creating posters based on pre-designed templates.
Sample email and social media text for promoting the workshop	Covers email, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

1.4.2 Advanced CESAR tool pack (energy saving and transport)

This is an 'add on' pack to the main set of resource packs. It contains:

Item	Details
Advanced version of the CESAR tool	This includes the option to explore energy saving measures such as retrofit of different aged houses. It also includes the option of explore uptake of electric cars and electric bikes, and this impact this has on the community's carbon emissions.
Advanced CESAR tool setup and user guide	A version of the setup guide including how to setup the tool for including energy saving and transport.
Energy saving and transport cards	The CESAR tool is made up of a series of cards depicting a range of energy generation and energy saving technologies that are used to lay out the 'main planning table' (where participants using the tool will lay out their technology selections).
Energy saving and transport posters	A series of posters that are used to describe the technologies and cards that the participants use to select the energy technologies they wish to put forward as suggestions.

Section 10 of this guidance outlines in which scenarios you might use the advanced CESAR pack. Generally, for Local Authorities it is advisable to concentrate on standalone renewable technologies through the main CESAR tool pack. However, Neighbourhood Planning groups and Community

Energy groups may wish to explore energy saving and transport through the advanced version of the CESAR tool.

1.5 Key Principles

The following are key principles underpin the process and should be followed to enable it to go smoothly.

1.5.1 General principles

- **Landscape matters**

To have a meaningful discussion about the local deployment of renewable energy development, it is necessary to first explore the landscape context in which they might be located, and how that is valued by local communities. Most of the population, of all political persuasions, support the principle of increasing renewable energy, but in practice when projects are proposed locally in specific locations, they often encounter opposition.

What is missing is opportunities for local communities to meaningfully influence how, where and what renewable energy projects will happen within their communities and landscapes.

- **Nimby labels (not in my back yard) are not helpful**

Nimby labels are generally unhelpful, inaccurate and leave the cause of opposition unexplained. We prefer to use the term 'social gap' as shorthand for the discrepancy between apparent general public support for renewables and any localised opposition.

Much of the time, people have good reasons as to why they might be concerned about particular forms of renewable energy or particular locations. If these concerns are aired and addressed in policy making and/or in the formulation of renewable energy projects, ambitious policies and proposals can be drawn up hugely increasing supply. The views of a given individual are not always unchangeable; people's views on the acceptability of energy infrastructure can change.

- **Mature dialogue is possible, and support can be built**

A proposal for new energy development area without genuine consultation can affect an individual's perception of whether it will damage their local 'place'.

In contrast, when people are given objective and technical information, along with the opportunity to discuss trade-offs and make decisions on complex matters, ambitious renewable energy policies can be developed.

- **The community owns the workshop outputs**

The role of the workshop organiser is to provide participants with unbiased resources that enable them to learn about the issues and consider the different options with autonomy in the workshop time. The workshop outputs belong to and are decided by people from the community who attend. The event facilitators should be neutral and should not seek to direct any particular outcome.

- **Workshops should be inclusive and welcome all viewpoints**

A risk with a public engagement process and workshops focusing on renewable energy is that the workshops can be dominated by environmentalists who may not be representative of views in the wider community. This is understandable but wastes the chance to create opportunities for dialogue and learning among people who haven't had thought about renewable energy. Additionally, there may be people who have concerns about renewables, but if they are shared and addressed in a workshop, those people may then be supportive.

- **Communities are not Homogenous – a variety of communications channels and approaches need to be used**

For all the different use cases of this consultation approach (discussed in section 10), to a lesser or greater extent, there is a need to discover communication routes and channels to different parts of the community.

While a community energy group, parish council or climate action group may be made up of residents from the local community, it is not “the community” but a small sub-set of it. Every effort should be made to engage the wider community and include all viewpoints.

Promoting the workshops through community outreach is a vital part of this process. The ethos of this is to “go to where there is a crowd”, to engage and involve people interactively who would not normally respond to traditional consultations and may have no prior interest in renewable energy.

- **Facilitators should be neutral**

CSE found the best approach is to “under facilitate”. We provide objective information to inform the discussion, but don't get involved in the debate. You'll likely find that participants will have different levels of knowledge and varying opinions. They learn from one another, challenge one another and benefit from hearing different viewpoints, enabling a consensus to emerge from the group.

If the principles outlined above are taken into account, our experience has found the workshop are constructive and can take much of the heat out of planning for renewable energy. This approach does however require a change in the mindset of the local planning authority. While the local planning authority remains the plan maker, within the context of the workshops, their role is as a neutral facilitator (if they are running it) or impartial observer (if it is being run on their behalf). This enables the community to have an informed debate and come to a consensus without being stifled or restricted by the view of the council as Local Planning Authority.

1.5.2 Principles to follow in workshops held to build support for a community energy project

- **Be open about commercial realities and about the possible options**

It is helpful and entirely legitimate to share commercial realities which might constrain options. If the grid connection costs are high, meaning that only a scheme of a certain size or above would be commercially feasible, it is helpful and legitimate to share this with workshop participants.

- **Be clear about roles and how the outputs will be used**

Identify who initiated the workshops and why, how the outputs will be used, the roles of the facilitator and any other staff with speaking roles at events.

The workshops should ideally be facilitated by an independent organisation, or at least an individual able to be independent and set aside their personal views.

If the workshops are being initiated by a community energy group to build support for a project, the workshops should not be facilitated by a member of the project team. It would be legitimate for a representative from this group to be there to answer questions, and even to present at some length on the nature of the potential development available. But it would not be appropriate for them to play a part in the discussions that follow.

- **Be open minded and willing to adapt ideas**

Proposals should not be presented as 'a take it or leave it' option. There should be scope for workshop participants to consider the trade-offs, and indeed introduce and discuss other options than that currently on the table.

Instead, we would recommend presenting to the community the potential proposal (or different options) and the constraints you have uncovered which must be overcome if the development is to happen, and the reasoning behind the proposals. Take the community through what's led you to the proposals you'd favour:

For example: "the quarry site is large and open and could physically accommodate a large solar farm with low visual and landscape impacts. However, the site is very dusty, and this would negatively affect the efficiency of the solar panels, and therefore the output from the development and its financial viability. Additionally, the electricity distribution grid has many solar farms already connected to it, with the result that at times of peak generation, there is likely to be little capacity to accept electricity from the site, which would similarly limit financial viability. By contrast the generation profile of wind turbines is likely to present less of a problem, and wind turbines would not be affected by the dust. For these reasons, from our studies our preference would be to develop a wind farm rather than a solar farm."

2 Different uses for the Future Energy Landscapes approach

The process we have developed can be used for a variety of different use cases and initiated by a variety of different actors or stakeholders:

Facilitator / process initiator	Use case
National Government department or Combined Authority	Evidence to support national or sub-regional policy development.
Council planning department	Local Plan. Consultation to identify suitable areas for different forms of renewable energy, to inform local plan policies.
Council climate emergency team	As above, and/or to support the development of community energy proposals.
Parish/Town council or neighbourhood forum	Neighbourhood Plan. Consultation to identify suitable areas for different forms of renewable energy, to inform neighbourhood plan policies.
Climate action or sustainability group	To develop and demonstrate support for renewable energy and lobby for more supportive policies.
Community Energy Group with a project and site in mind	Community Energy Project. To build community support, shape the project to meet community concerns and aspirations and open discussions as to how project surpluses might be used by the local community.

Table 1 - Different use cases for the FEL workshops

The different use cases have implications for how the workshops are targeted, and what is covered within them. These are explored in section 7.

3 A typical approach

Table 2 below shows the typical steps you would go through in planning and running a workshop. This covers different aspects from choosing the target communities and recruiting participants, through to running the workshops and then consulting with the wider community on the workshop outputs.

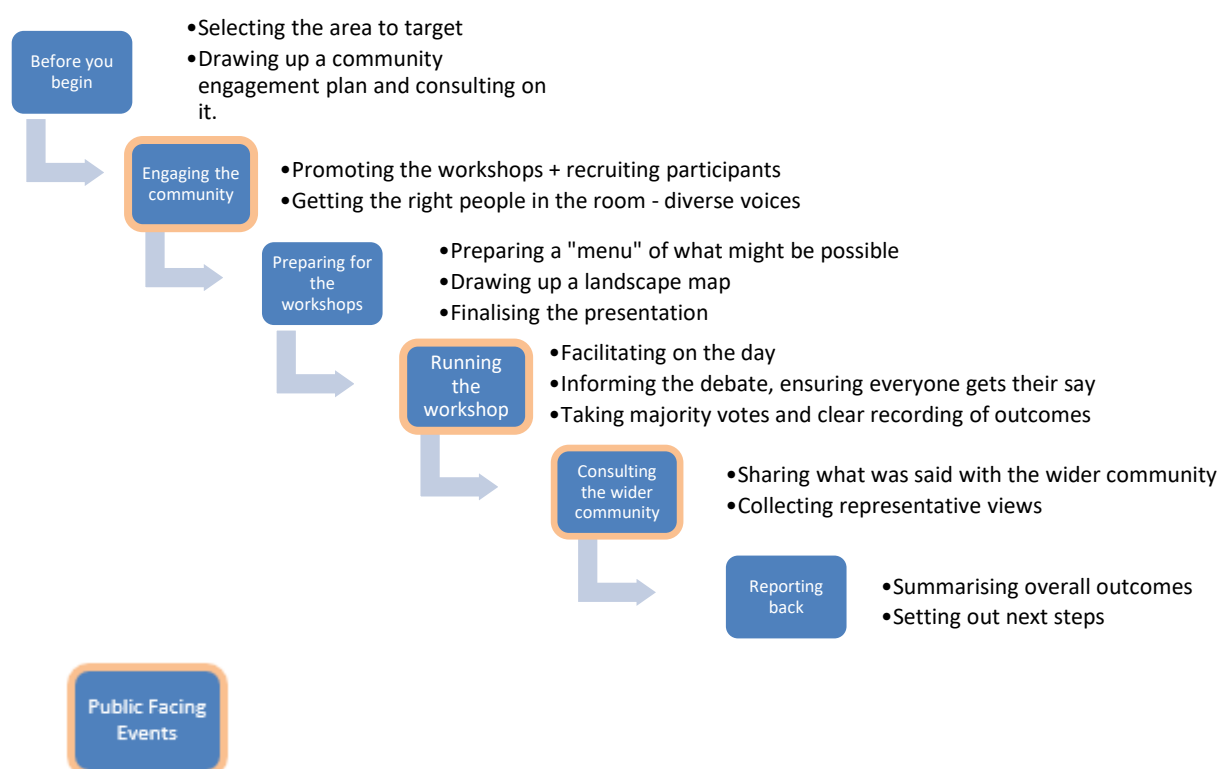


Table 2 - Typical stages in running the FEL workshop and consultation

Case Study: Future Energy Landscape Workshops in North Somerset (for North Somerset Council)

In spring 2022 CSE ran three workshops in rural communities in North Somerset for the Council to inform the council's local plan. Each workshop covered two adjoining parishes. The workshop locations were chosen based on mapping of areas where onshore wind could likely be delivered and consideration of key planning constraints.

Consultation outputs

In all the workshops there was constructive discussions about the pros and cons of different forms of renewable energy. Each workshop produced renewable energy strategies which would increase renewable energy generation. All three workshops supported the development of onshore wind and solar farms.

We shared the workshop outputs with the wider community in an online consultation. This sought feedback on whether the views expressed in the workshop were shared. In two of the communities, the workshop outputs were confirmed. In the third community generalised support was lacking for the development of onshore wind turbines and no consensus emerged as to preferred locations for solar farms.

In the two supportive communities, renewable energy sources supported in the workshops and online consultation would result in these communities generating 800% and 118% of their electricity use from renewable sources respectively.

If all the renewable energy developments supported were delivered, over 100 megawatts of additional renewable electricity generation would come on stream. We recommended that North Somerset Council consider identifying suitable locations for onshore wind and solar in the two parishes where support was evident, in the next local plan consultation.

What we learned

The biggest challenge is engaging the whole community and attracting diverse participants to attend events. Whilst we identified a wide range of intermediary organisations representing different sections of the population, including groups and organisations which might potentially have concerns about renewable energy, workshop attendees were predominantly environmentalists.

The online consultations which followed helped to address this problem. However, we have concluded that with events organised by organisations from outside communities (for example by the local authority) significant effort is needed to assemble a representative group of people representing all viewpoints.

Additionally, in previous events organised for neighbourhood planning groups, participants seemed willing to spend a significant amount of time creating a community energy plan. However, in the context of local plan consultations, workshops need to be short and snappy and focused on standalone renewable energy.

4 Key questions before you begin

4.1 What areas should we target for the workshops?

The workshops lend themselves to considering standalone renewable energy projects of reasonable scale which require planning permission such as onshore wind developments, solar farms and micro-hydro projects. They therefore lend themselves to rural or semi-rural places where there is land and space available for these types of projects to go ahead. It will rarely be worthwhile to run this type of process in a fully urban or even urban edge location. The options for significant standalone renewable energy generation may be very limited in urban settings and/or the parcels of land that remain are likely to have ‘hope value’ for residential development.

It makes sense to target areas with the greatest technical potential for renewable energy. Many local authorities have technical renewable energy capacity studies which analyse and map all the main deployable sources of renewable energy in detail. Where such studies exist, they should always be used to inform where the workshops are targeted and to present a realistic “menu” of the renewable energy options which might be developed locally.

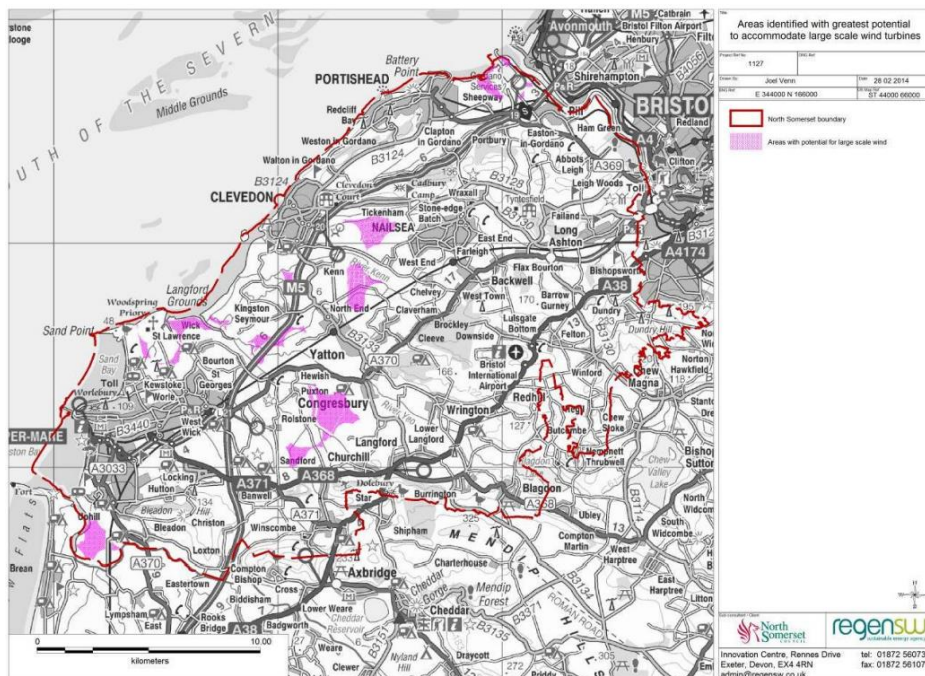


Table 3 - areas with potential for large scale wind - Resource assessment for wind and solar in North Somerset (2014) Regen SW

Other considerations which should be considered are the planning constraints which might prevent projects from going ahead, such as Green Belt designations, national parks and other landscape designations and designated wildlife sites. Even where there is an extensive untapped renewable energy resource, it may not be developable due to these constraints. These constraints are often

addressed in renewable energy capacity studies, but if not, this information is freely available at <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>.

4.2 What geographical area should be covered in a workshop?

The workshops explore people's lived experience of their area, the sensitivity of the landscape and ask people what kind of renewable energy projects might be acceptable around them. The process works because it localises the need to become more energy self-sufficient to the scale of a community. It asks the people likely to be affected by development what might be acceptable and what landscape impacts they might be prepared to accept.

As a result, the workshops should be run at the scale of 1 or 2 parishes or at the scale of the community likely to experience the direct impacts of a significant renewable energy project going ahead. Participants attending the workshops need to live in the local area and identify it as home. It would not be appropriate to attempt to run a workshop covering a very extensive area.

In most contexts it will make sense to define the geographical scope of the workshops by parish boundaries, potentially combining two small parishes together.

The geographical extent of the renewable energy resource should also be taken into account. The technical mapping shown in figure 1 below showed a significant area as being potentially suitable for medium and large-scale onshore wind spanning several parishes. It made sense therefore to combine these two parishes into a single workshop to enable this opportunity to be considered by both communities, as shown in figure 2.

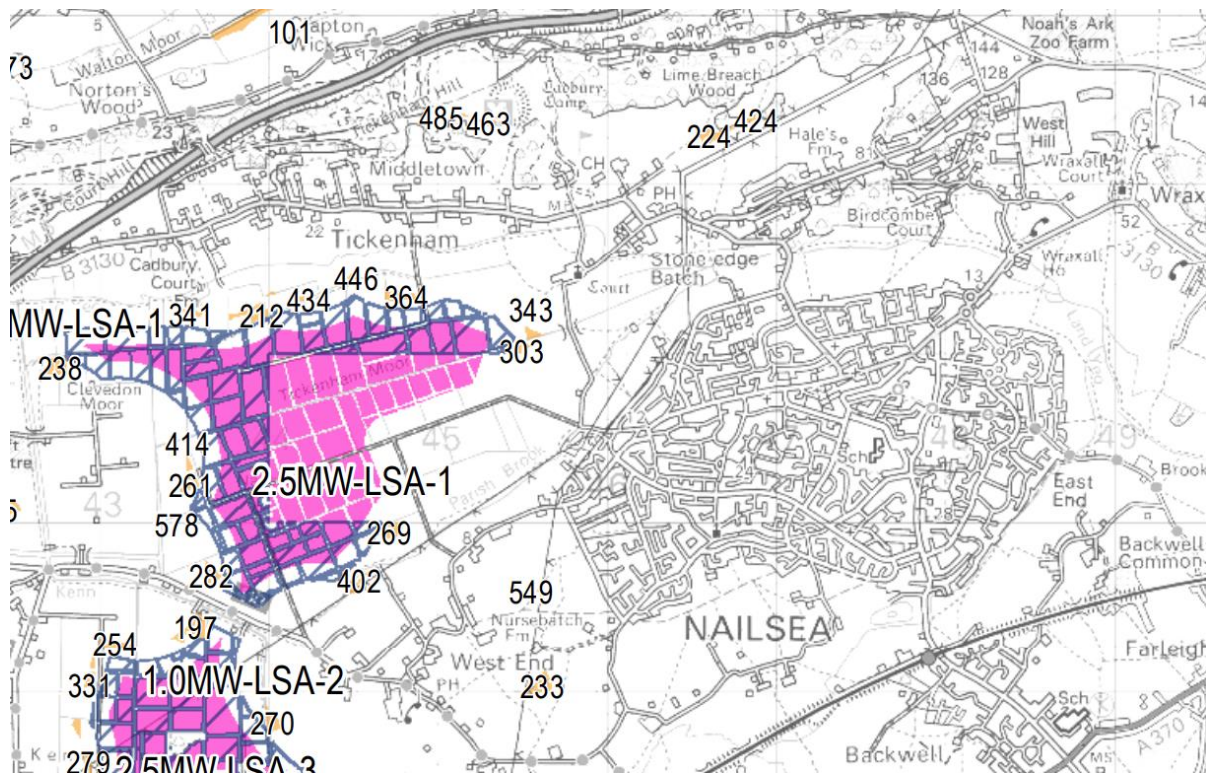


Figure 1 - areas potentially suitable for medium and large-scale onshore wind, Tickenham Moor, Somerset - Resource assessment for wind and solar in North Somerset (2014) Regen SW

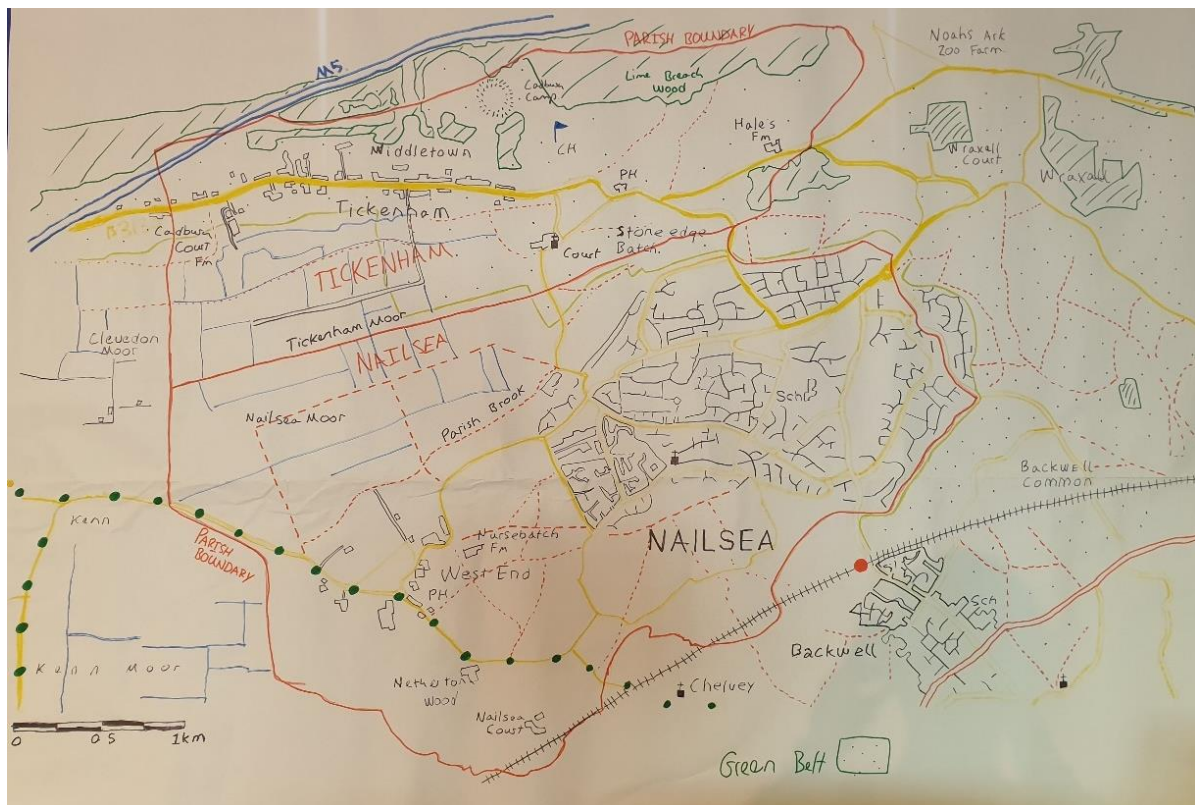


Figure 2 - Area covered by workshop - the parishes of Tickenham and Nailsea

4.3 Defining the geographical area where there is a project and a site in mind.

Where the process is being run by a community energy group with a project and site in mind, a different approach should be adopted. Here the scope of the workshop area should be defined by the proposed development and by the scope of its direct impacts including:

- The proximity of the proposed site to where people live or work.
- The area of visual impact.
- The likely impacts of the construction: for example, disturbances such as increased traffic and the impacts of site infrastructure such as pylons.
- The impact on groups within the community who have a particular interest in the area, for example for recreational or conservation reasons.
- Local administrative and political boundaries for example parish boundaries.

As a result, the scale of the community you would wish to engage with is likely to increase with the scale of the intended project and may not align with parish boundaries.

Identifying who constitutes the 'local' community is essential for clarifying who needs to be engaged in the development process.

4.4 What skills are needed to run the workshops?

To run the Future Energy Landscapes public engagement workshops, you will need:

- Experience of running public open meetings, and a good understanding of facilitation skills.
- A good understanding of the main renewable energy technologies currently implemented in the UK, of common planning issues arising from different forms of renewable energy and how these issues are assessed through the planning process. If you personally don't have this, then you are strongly advised to work with a second facilitator who does.
- The ability to use Microsoft Excel, Word and PowerPoint.

You should ensure that whoever facilitates the workshops is seen as a neutral party by workshop participants. The facilitators' role is to enable everyone to have their say, to provide objective information that helps people make informed choices, and to keep the workshop on track to deliver the desired outputs on time. If there is significant disagreement during the workshop, record the disagreement and point out that there is no need for everyone to agree and that there will be further opportunities to comment.

5 Pre-workshop community engagement: reaching the whole community

The hardest tasks by far are getting sufficient people to engage in the workshops and the online consultations which follow. Also ensuring that the people who do engage are representative of the wider community, including hard to reach groups.

A particular danger with a public engagement process and workshops focusing on renewable energy will be that the workshops are dominated by environmentalists who may not be representative of views in the wider community. This is understandable but wastes opportunities for dialogue and learning amongst people who haven't thought about renewable energy or who have concerns that, if aired and addressed, might be supportive of renewable energy deployment.

If there are essentially no arguments between participants at the workshop, people largely agree, and there's a high level of knowledge about renewable energy, you should be disappointed. The people who disagree with what's being said just aren't in the room, and you've not done a good enough job in engaging beyond the usual suspects!

5.1 Draw up a draft community engagement plan

This should identify communication channels to different sections and segments of the population and local forums. A wide range of intermediary organisations which have access to different sections of the community should be identified including:

- Parish Council and Councillors
- Churches and faith groups
- Sports clubs, such as a bowling club or cricket club
- Senior Citizens' Lunch Club
- Women's institute and Rotary clubs
- Walking and wildlife groups
- Historical and archaeological associations
- Neighbourhood watch groups
- Youth groups

The intention should be to identify and contact organisations whose members might have concerns about the expansion of renewable energy, for example walking, landscape or historical groups. Representatives of these groups can then have time and space at the workshop to discuss their concerns and reach an informed consensus.

Additionally, local media, forums and communication channels should be identified, including:

- Local newsletters, local media, and events websites, school newsletters

- Libraries, garden centres, shops and pubs which might be locations for posters
- Facebook and other social media groups and forums

5.2 Share the draft engagement plan with the community you wish to engage

Share the draft plan with the parish council, local councillors and other community groups and seek their views as to whether groups are missing and on the most effective promotion techniques. Set up an online meeting to go through it and go through the following questions:

- *What other groups should we be contacting?*
- *Will the right people be in the room / know about the event?*
- *Are the groups representative of the wider community? Have you identified communication routes to the hard to reach?*
- *Are there pre-planned public events we can piggyback on, such as village fetes etc?*
- *What are likely to be the most effective communication methods around here? Posters on noticeboards, flyers, social media posts, articles in local newsletters?*
- *What's the best local venue to use for the workshop – what's most familiar to local residents?*
- *Could they help promote the event through their networks?*

5.3 Execute your community engagement plan

When contacting these intermediary organisations, don't assume that people read emails! Phone the most important groups in person to explain the potential relevance of the event to their members. There's a particular need to do this for groups who might not ordinarily respond to planning consultations or see this issue as being for them.

When promoting events through intermediary organisations, give plenty of notice so they can promote your event through their normal channels. Community newsletters are often finalised a month before publication.

Also establish the age profile of the local community and use appropriate techniques. In a recent event, we created a poster advertising a workshop which included QR codes linking readers to websites to save space. In retrospective given the age profile of the area this was an inappropriate use of technology, as most residents didn't know what QR codes were or how to use them.

Other methods which might be appropriate include

- Attending local events happening in the month before the planned workshop e.g. village fetes, craft fairs. There is more detail on this below.
- Face-to-face meetings with key stakeholders (e.g. parish councils).
- Door-knocking.

- Press release to local media and advert in local paper.
- Posters on noticeboards, village halls, community venues, post offices, pubs.
- Recording short films to share through social media.

We recommend that you plan to advertise the events 6-8 weeks in advance to encourage people to come.

5.4 Recruit people for the workshop - go where there is a crowd

You should take the opportunity promote your events in person, at public events like fetes or farmers markets. This will enable you to capture the interest of people who would probably never respond to a poster or advertisement and who wouldn't describe themselves as environmentalists.

Use the landscape map (used in the workshop to map landscape sensitivity, see section 6 below) to get people to sign up to the workshops. Ask people to mark on the map the places they cherish in their landscape and those they dislike, fear or avoid. This might be where they walk with friends, walk the dog, or go bird watching or cycling, or how they feel about the countryside, for example:

- Descriptive words (e.g. wild, beautiful, ugly)
- Activities that they associate with the landscape (e.g. farming, hill walking)

They could also identify existing energy infrastructure such as electricity pylons and describe how they feel about it. You'll use the annotated map in the workshop to get people thinking about the more and less sensitive parts of their landscape, and where different renewable energy technologies might go.

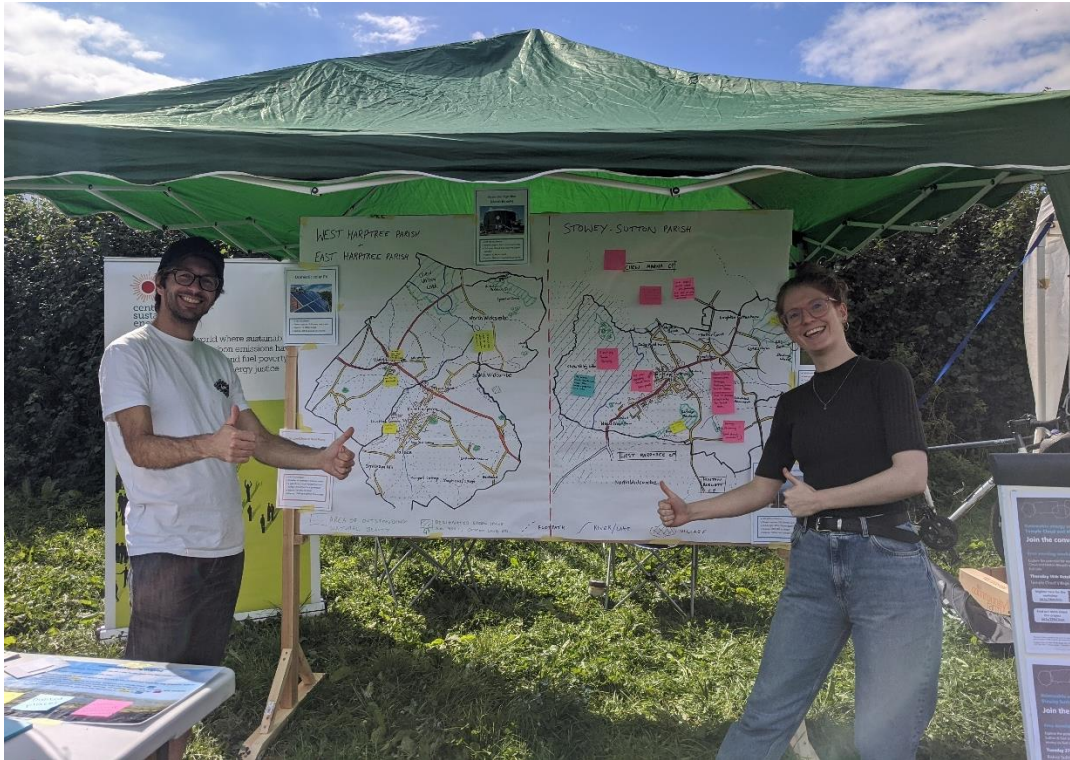



Figure 3 - Recruiting people to our workshops (and mapping landscape sensitivity) using a large hand drawn map at a summer fair

Get people to sign up to the workshops there and then. It's quickest to get them to sign up on a paper form and then register them on Eventbrite and / or your website afterwards. You can also have a QR code/URL for the sign-up link and people can sign up on their phone there and then.

5.5 Managing workshop recruitment

The workshop can be run with groups of up to 20 – 25 people using the timetable and session design given, but with more people than this the session will start to become unmanageable.

Therefore, we recommend ticketing the event using an online service like [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/). This means you can monitor how well workshop recruitment is going in the run up to the event, enabling you to increase your efforts or change your approach if the event is under-subscribed. Provide a phone number or email address so that people have an alternative to signing up online.



APR 02

Have your say - generating renewable energy in Yatton and Kenn

by Centre for Sustainable Energy

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[Details](#)

Have your say - generating renewable energy in Yatton and Kenn

About this event

North Somerset Council is committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030 and would like to increase local renewable energy generation.

The Centre for Sustainable Energy, an independent national charity, are holding a public workshop on behalf of North Somerset Council to find out your views on renewable energy. The workshop is for everyone, you don't need to know anything about renewable energy. A free lunch will be provided. Please note the workshop is for the full duration, 10:00 - 14:00, not a drop-in session. An online consultation (details below) will follow the workshop for wider community engagement.

In the workshop we'll be exploring:

Date and time

Sat, 2 April 2022
10:00 – 14:30 BST

Location

Yatton Methodist Church
High Street
Yatton
BS49 4DW
[View map](#)

Figure 4 - Eventbrite advert - Yatton and Kenn Workshop, North Somerset

Monitor signups in the week leading up to the event. If the event is still under-subscribed, arrange with the local primary school to set up the map outside the school gates at school pickup, or at other busy public locations in order to boost numbers.

6 Preparing for the workshop

Two people will be needed to run the workshop, one to facilitate and one to act as scribe.

There is also considerable extra administration in marking up flipcharts, dealing with refreshments etc, that could leave you run off your feet if you are running this alone. Having a third person to do refreshments and take photos can be useful if you're able to have three people.

In order to run this workshop you will need to have populated the 'Working' tab within the 'CESAR tool Excel workbook'. The process for doing this is described in detail in the separate guide 'CESAR tool setup and user' which you can download at www.cse.org.uk

You will also need to produce a large community map, including a reasonable area of landscape around the settlement itself. As an example, figure 5, is a community map used for a workshop in Nailsea and Tickenham. You will see that the main settlement is central to the map, with a broad boundary of rural land all around, and it covers the whole of the two parishes.

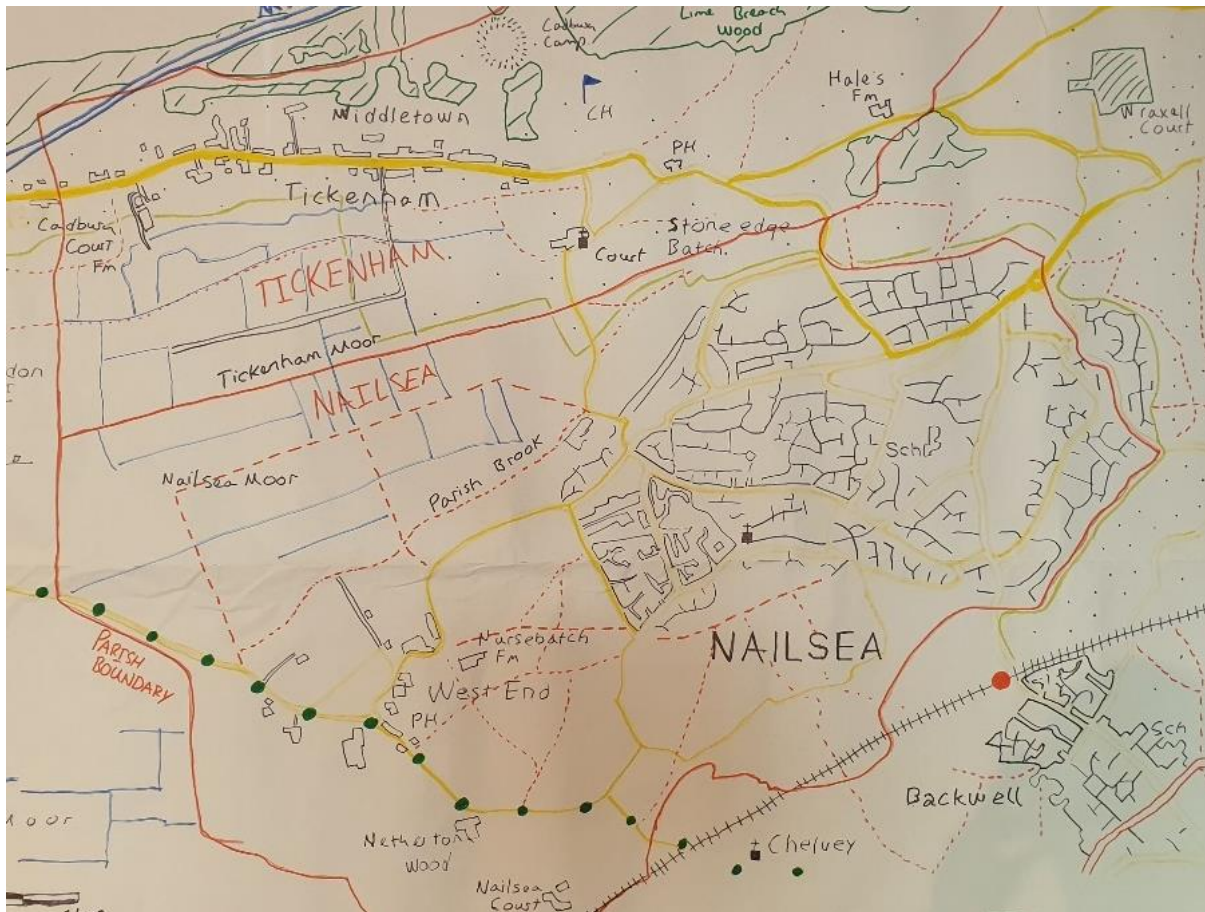


Figure 5 – Hand drawn map for Nailsea and Tickenham, North Somerset

6.1 Creating the Landscape map

Use Google Maps or Magic Map to get a similar map centred around your community of interest. Using a projector, you can then scale up the image. To do this, tape 4-6 sheets of A0 paper together with very strong tape. Gaffer tape works well but make sure you only use it on the back so it doesn't obscure the image on the front. Or you can use masking tape on the front and back which can easily be drawn over. Once created, tape the large blank sheet to a wall.

Project the map onto the paper and using felt tip pens trace over the main roads, rivers and landscape features such as areas of woodland or marsh. You can use black for roads, blue for watercourses and lakes, and green for woodlands, marshes etc. Also mark public footpaths and bridleways and the parish boundaries and obvious local landmarks. You may also choose to identify key planning constraints such as Green Belt or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Once the main structure of the map is done, you will need to zoom in on the screen to be able to see all the road names – it is helpful to name and mark the main roads in the settlement onto your large map. Do not mark or name any other features, such as schools, shops, pubs or churches. This will be done by the participants themselves. Figure 5 gives you an idea of what the Nailsea and Tickenham map looked like once projected and traced.

7 Running the workshop

The workshop structure summarised below, is designed to be run on behalf of a local planning authority as a 2.5 – 3-hour event, to be run on a weekday evening. We have experimented with running local authority events on weekends, but many people found this too great a time commitment. Section ten of this guidance explains how to adapt the workshop process to different uses such community energy groups.

A full workshop timetable with detailed facilitator notes is available as part of the Practitioners' Workshop Resources pack.

Activity	Detail	Outcomes
Context & introductions	Introduction to the project and workshop, and to one another. Description of how the outputs of the workshop will be used.	Everyone understands the purpose of the workshop, who is involved and what their role is. Participants are familiar with each other
Landscape mapping	Participants review the large map of their community and add post it notes reflecting on the importance of different places, where they undertake activities and emotions associated with different parts of the landscape. This can also include highlighting existing energy infrastructure and how they feel about it Facilitated discussion to develop greater understanding of the landscapes, places and services that are important to them.	Participants have a shared understanding of the sensitivity of the landscape and places and services that are important to them and their local community. An understanding of whether there are shared perceptions or a range of interpretations of the landscape.
Energy and Landscape	How energy supply could alter the landscape in the future. How acceptable is the idea of landscape change? Are there any scenarios which would make participants feel more positive about such changes?	Participants understand how different sources of energy might shape the future landscape.
Videos	Showing participants videos with objective information on different forms of renewable energy: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Renewable electricity• Renewable heat• Renewable electricity and heat	Enabling people to learn about different forms of renewable energy and enabling them to then ask informed questions: <i>"How do wind turbines affect bats and how are these impacts assessed?"</i>
Introduction to workshop task	Introducing the workshop questions and the key elements of the workshop: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cards representing different forms / scale of renewable energy give a 'menu' to	Explaining to participants what we're asking of them and how the workshop works.

Activity	Detail	Outcomes
	<p>choose from based on what's technically feasible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tabling options you'd be happy with • The CESAR tool • Mapping suitable areas 	Ensuring that the options participants choose are as realistic as possible, with a reasonable prospect of being developable.
Discussion of renewable energy	<p>Participants select technologies they would support, and after discussion, a majority vote is taken on each. Technologies that receive majority support can be entered into the CESAR tool, so participants can see the effect this technology has on energy supply and carbon footprint.</p> <p>This builds a list of suggested renewable technologies that participants feel could be appropriate for their area.</p>	<p>Participants are actively engaged in shaping energy options for the future, have a comprehensive understanding of the implications of different options and can consider the pros and cons of different options.</p> <p>They can see the impact of different choices on the community's energy supply and carbon emissions.</p>
Next steps	<p>Next steps: for participants to talk to their friends and family about the workshop, their conclusions and thinking process.</p> <p>Links and sharable posters to the online survey.</p> <p>Explanation of the timeline for what happens next .</p>	To seek participants' help in getting public input and feedback into the outputs from the workshop.

We have found that workshops run on behalf of Local Planning Authorities must be short and focussed predominantly on standalone renewable energy projects such as wind turbines on solar farms. Where events are run at the request of neighbourhood planning groups, or potentially community energy groups, there may be more potential to enlarge the workshop scope to consider the local appetite for retrofitting buildings and run events on weekends.

Arranging the room

Lay out tables either cabaret or boardroom style if possible – lecture hall style is not appropriate for this workshop. Hang the large community map on one wall where everybody will be able to see it (it doesn't matter if they will need to turn around for this as they won't be looking at it all the time). Make sure it is in a place where they can all walk to it and stick things to it or write on it without getting in each other's way.

Find a place for a projector screen (or a blank bit of wall) where ideally all attendees can always see the slides. The projector screen should be next to the community map, as participants will need to cross refer between the map and the projector screen during the main workshop activity. You can also have a 'welcome' table as people come in where you can greet them, ask them to write their name on a sticky label and give them the consent form to complete. In addition, you will want to set up a table with the cards for your renewable technology 'menu' so that participants can choose the

cards in that part of the workshop. From experience, it is helpful to cover the cards with some cloth or spare paper so participants only look at them when you want them to, rather than starting to move them before the activity is introduced.

8 Post-workshop community engagement

Whatever efforts made to recruit a diverse set of participants to the workshops, they are necessarily limited in size and cannot be assumed to be representative of the full range of opinion in the local community.

To address this, we would recommend carrying out follow on consultation to see if the views expressed at the workshops are shared by the wider community.

The precise form of the consultation will vary depending on how the workshops are being used, but should ideally include:

- A digital version of the map annotated in the workshop, showing potential locations for renewable energy. Google MyMaps can be a useful way to do this. It allows you to drop pins, draw outline shapes and describe the pins and shapes in a legend. The map can then be shared via a link for people to view. Figure 6 illustrates what this can look like.
- A survey about the renewable energy suggested in the workshop including questions about the type, location, size and ownership of each technology. To understand who the survey is reaching and where you may need to focus promotion efforts to reach a diverse audience, it's good practice to collect optional demographic data in the survey. A demographic details section can come at the end, and participants can opt in or out of providing information such as age, gender, ethnicity, occupation and the first half of people's postcode.

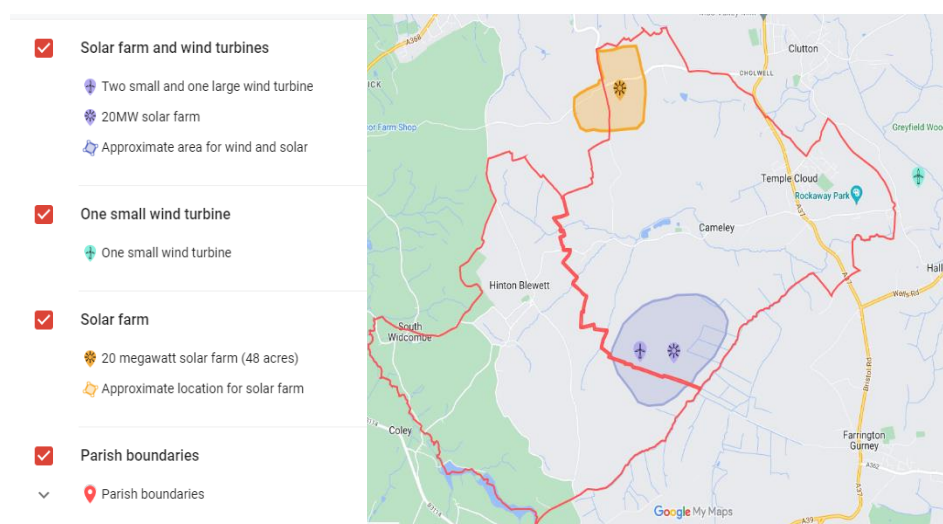


Figure 6 – Google MyMaps for Temple Cloud and Hinton Blewett in Bath and North East Somerset

Depending on the scale of the project, the survey or surveys might be hosted on a website with the capability for people to sign up to receive updates about the project via email.. This will make it easier for you to share the online survey after the workshop, the results of the consultation process as a whole and to keep people updated on next steps. Additionally, if you engage with people at any point in the process who are interested but can't attend a workshop, they can sign up to the mailing list and get notified when the survey is live, and contribute via that.

We have saved the text and suggested structure of our website as a Word document, which you could adapt and use.

9 Using and sharing the results

After the online survey closes, you should summarise the overall outcomes of the whole consultation in a report, to be shared with participants. This should set out any policy recommendations and set out next steps and further opportunities for public involve.

10 Adapting the workshops for different use cases

As discussed in section 2, there are different use cases for the workshops. Below we have listed the three most common use cases, and the likely changes in approach needed for these different use cases.

	Use case 1 - Local Authority (LPA)– planning department or climate emergency team	Use case 2 - Neighbourhood Planning groups / civil society / parish councils	Use case 3 - Community Energy Project Development
Choosing areas to target	Targeting parishes with highest renewable energy potential, lowest planning constraints and / or areas where there is already community interest in renewable energy	Is there significant potential for standalone renewable energy within the Neighbourhood Planning area? Is there community interest?	Area defined by the renewable energy opportunity, e.g. a possible wind farm, and the community it might affect.
Defining the geographical scale of the workshop	Based around parish geographies. The LPA might run multiple workshops, targeting the areas with the greatest potential, with the results combined to inform district-level policy.	Defined by Neighbourhood planning area / parish geography	Defined by the likely impacts arising from possible development. Not necessarily defined by parish boundaries.
Identifying the community, drafting and consulting on the engagement plan	Drawing up community engagement plan + sharing with the community.	Drawing up community engagement plan	Identifying the community around the potential project site. Drawing up community engagement plan + sharing with the host community.

	Use case 1 - Local Authority (LPA)– planning department or climate emergency team	Use case 2 - Neighbourhood Planning groups / civil society / parish councils	Use case 3 - Community Energy Project Development
	Significant effort needed to draw a representative crowd	Building on existing consultation processes & extending beyond the usual suspects.	Extending beyond community energy group members.
Scope of the workshop	Events to be short and focused, concentrating on standalone renewables	<p>Potential for events to be longer, considering standalone renewables and energy saving technologies/retrofit/transport - potentially linking to / informing other community initiatives.</p> <p>To consider energy saving technologies, retrofit and transport you'll need to use the advanced version of the CESAR tool which includes these options.</p>	<p>Potential for events to be longer, considering standalone renewables and energy saving technologies and retrofit.</p> <p>To consider energy saving technologies and retrofit, you'll need to use the advanced version of the CESAR tool which includes these options.</p> <p>There is also potential to explore possible use of profits from renewable energy and how they could benefit the community.</p>
Technical & financial feasibility – the menu of potentially feasible	High level only – informed by technical renewable energy capacity studies	High level only - informed by technical renewable energy capacity studies, or by DIY assessment	Extracts from detailed feasibility and viability studies, to allow trade-offs between impacts, energy outputs and

	Use case 1 - Local Authority (LPA)– planning department or climate emergency team	Use case 2 - Neighbourhood Planning groups / civil society / parish councils	Use case 3 - Community Energy Project Development
renewable energy projects			financial viability, e.g., grid capacity + connection costs.
Wider Community Engagement	Follow up online consultation	Feeding into household surveys.	Follow up online consultation and / or ongoing community engagement with project steering group
Use of consultation outputs	Informing local plan policy formulation / convening debate re community energy projects	Informing neighbourhood plans, building and demonstrating support for renewable energy, lobbying for more supportive policies.	Building support for possible community energy projects, and refining projects.
Analysis and deliverables	Evidence base to inform planning policy	Evidence base to inform planning policy and community strategies	Statement of Community Involvement to support planning application