



Making Community Energy in Southwark- An update from Repowering

1. About Repowering London

Repowering London is a Community Benefit Society ('BenCom') that specialises in creating local energy. Creating local energy means that we adopt a community-led approach to delivering renewable energy projects that are owned by the community and provide benefits to local residents.

Our vision is to create resilient, empowered communities across London with greater control and ownership of their energy generation and usage. At Repowering London, we are committed to working with Local Authorities and communities, developing local solutions to local energy related problems. Through our projects, we aim to:

- Tackle fuel poverty and reduce exposure to energy price shocks
- Generate decentralised renewable / low carbon energy;
- Provide training and employment opportunities for local people;
- Promote local leadership through mentoring and community ownership
- Provide opportunities for local and socially responsible investment;
- Increase awareness about energy efficiency and encourage behaviour change.

To deliver these objectives, Repowering London has created a strong team that possess the necessary technical, financial, legal, project management and community engagement expertise to co-produce community-owned renewable energy projects.

Repowering plays a critical role in shaping the policy development of the community energy sector by playing a leading role in the following groups:

- Local Energy Contact Group a special unit that advises the Department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy on community energy policy.
- Community Energy England a trading body set up to provide a voice for the community energy sector and help create the conditions within which community energy can flourish.
- DG Forum Steering Group which convenes representatives from the distributed generation sector and Distribution Network Operators, reporting to Ofgem.

2. Our experience

Repowering London is unique in the UK in its delivery of a programme of social works alongside each community-owned renewable energy installation. We run mentoring sessions, training and workshops for local residents, paid youth internship programme and work experience through the development of projects.

Repowering London have co-produced five community-owned solar projects, three in Brixton with the support of Lambeth Council and a fourth project in Homerton with Hackney Council. These have included both the first and largest inner-city community-owned energy projects on social housing in



Creating Local energy



the UK. We have recently completed our fifth project in Vauxhall and are raising funds for sixth scheme in North Kensington working with Kensington and Chelsea Council.

The projects installed a total solar PV capacity of 300kW through community share offers raising £375,500 largely from local investors. Shareholders of the co-operative receive a 3-4% return on investment and historically have also benefited from 30-50% tax relief. The projects will also generate a Community fund of £75,000 for further training opportunities and tackling fuel poverty in some of London's most deprived estates.

To date 84 young people have benefited from Repowering's training programme. **The Repowering London youth training programme** is a paid scheme covering sustainable energy, social enterprise and community development. The programme is offered to young people (16-19 year olds), who are lacking opportunities and role models and who may feel alienated from greater society, disengaged with education and uncertain of the future.

Repowering also runs training and workshops to help people understand the simple changes they can make to reduce their energy bills, for example through draught proofing their homes and switching to different energy tariffs that match their energy usage. Through our fuel poverty programme delivered in 2017-2018 we have provided direct advice and support to 972 London residents saving them a total £6,732.

We are also delivering an innovative project called 'Energy Garden' the world's first citywide community energy and gardening project. delivered through a partnership between Repowering London and TfL and is funded by the People's Postcode Lottery.

3. The Repowering model for Local Authority landlords

The Repowering model was developed to address specific challenges to community ownership of renewable energy systems in urban areas, namely:

- Raising finance for capital costs without public sector investment
- Providing material benefits to all residents, regardless of their ability to invest in a scheme
- Ensuring independent oversight and O+M support

What this means from a Local Authority perspective is that each community energy project set up by Repowering is fully financed and maintained without requiring any investment or ongoing facilities maintenance staff resource.

Repowering undertake all the design and feasibility work, and are responsible for raising the finance through a community share offer, once the Local Authority has given their approval and all necessary consents are in place.

Repowering will liaise with the relevant teams in planning, capital projects and asset management, and provide the relevant documentation in terms of lease Heads of Terms, method statements and construction risk assessments.

Once the scheme is operational, Repowering are then contracted by each Community Benefit Society that we set up to provide ongoing maintenance and governance support in order to comply



Creating Local energy



with FCA and HMRC requirements. This support can be transferred to another provider after 3 years, at the discretion of the Community Benefit Society.

Each project includes a community fund which is for the benefit of residents local to the scheme, ensuring that the financial benefits are managed equitably. Repowering manage the community fund, in consultation with members, residents and local stakeholders.

4. Opportunities for increasing benefits to residents

To date, all of Repowering's projects have benefited from the UK Government's Feed in Tariff policy which has supported small scale renewables. As the FiT scheme ends for new projects in March 2018, Repowering have initiated a number of trials to develop new models for maintaining the financial viability of community energy. These have been supported by funders such as Innovate UK and the energy regulator Ofgem. The technical details are currently confidential, but essentially provide a route for electricity from rooftop solar panels to be supplied to residents of multi occupancy buildings such as blocks of flats. On-site solar electricity can be supplied at a significant discount to market prices, meaning savings of approximately 20% to residents.

Repowering are also leading on work to integrate additional low carbon technologies such as LED lighting and battery storage to improve the financial performance of solar PV and create additional benefits to residents.

While these business models are still at the trial stage we would be delighted to work with Southwark Council in taking them further.

5. Repowering London credentials: Awards and achievements

- In July 2012, BES1 was selected by KPMG as one of the Top 100 Innovative Urban Infrastructure projects globally.
- In October 2012 Repowering received further recognition, winning the Inside Housing Sustainable Finance award for the innovative financial model developed for the Brixton Energy projects.
- In July 2013 Repowering won the Renewable Energy Association Community Awards.
- In August 2013 Repowering was ranked top 20 UK Social Enterprise by ReEconomy.
- In September 2015 Repowering was highly commended for the National Community Energy Awards.
- In June 2016 Repowering won the Ashden Sustainable Communities Award with Low Carbon Hub.
- In November 2016 Repowering won the European Solar Prize 2016 Local Organisation of the year
- In September 2018, Repowering won the award for Healthier Cities for our Energy Garden Project and 'Overall Winner' at the 2018 Sustainable Cities Awards