

Open call for evidence – Assessing the case for community batteries

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Council response

Link to consultation documents - [Assessing the case for community batteries - GOV.UK](#)

1. Do you agree with the government's proposed definition of community batteries in section 1.2.1? If not, why not?

The definition of a community battery as '*batteries serving multiple homes with direct bill savings distributed to each home*' is clear. However, the term could be easily confused with community-owned batteries that would not necessarily be linked to a defined list of homes with direct bill savings, and with batteries at community-owned buildings such as village halls. The caption of Figure 1 does not make this distinction clear.

2. Do you agree with our categorisation of community batteries into: shared behind-the-meter, microgrid, and virtual private network. If not, why not?

Yes, agreed. More information is needed here on how the bill saving aspects work and are evenly distributed to participating households.

25. Are there any barriers in addition to those listed in section 3? If so, what are they?

Community batteries are a relatively unknown technology and so there may be resistance to uptake, including of a perceived fire risk. It is likely that some residents will understand better than others about how to maximise their energy bill savings using the battery, which could lead to disadvantaged groups missing out.

It is explained that many of the community battery options work best for new build developments. There will need to be clear policy drivers or incentives for developers to consider including community batteries.

27. What policy or regulatory changes would make community batteries more attractive to install? How would they make community batteries more attractive?

- Introduction of policies to require or significantly incentivise the uptake of community batteries, such as in the National Planning Policy Framework.
- In addition, clear guidance on how installing a community battery would support a development to meet the requirements of existing or upcoming policy, such as the Future Homes Standard or other local net-zero housing planning policies.
- Guidance for local authorities to explain what the planning requirements are, and for assessing planning applications if needed.

- Further consideration of whether planning permission can be simplified for situations such as on listed buildings or in conservation areas.

28. What sort of guidance would be useful for prospective or current owners of community batteries? Which organisation is best placed to provide it?

- A clear breakdown of the associated costs, including upfront capital and other associated costs, and information on the payback periods and how both the residents and the battery owners would benefit
- Step-by-step guidance on planning and regulatory requirements for developing a community battery proposal, including what support services and funding are available.
- Guidance on introducing the community battery to the residents it serves, including how to explain how to maximise energy bill savings.
- Guidance on the impact that connecting to a community battery would have on the EPC rating of a dwelling.
- Advice from the fire service on siting and installation of community batteries, to minimise the risks posed by battery fires.

29. In addition to these barriers and the safety risks highlighted in the following chapter, are you aware of any negative consequences to the rollout of community batteries? If so, what are they?

- Proper education on how to use a community battery to maximise energy bill savings is vital – if a battery is not used correctly, the full benefits would not be realised and there is a danger that a resident feels they were overpromised which could have negative consequences for the reputation of community batteries.

35. What actions could the government take that would most effectively support the rollout of community batteries?

- Grants and low-interest loan schemes for community battery owners.
- Support to bring community batteries into the mainstream by supporting through national policy and guidance.
- Further consideration of whether planning permission can be simplified for situations such as on listed buildings or in conservation areas.