Matlock Town Council
Building a Community Energy Model for Matlock which Inspires and innovates further afield

Project Brief and Feasibility Study Terms of Reference

Introduction

Matlock Town Council (MTC) is the Council for Matlock, a small rural town with a population of some 10,875[1] in the Derbyshire Dales District of Derbyshire. Matlock is part of a larger conurbation with a population of some 20,000 comprising Darley Dale, Matlock and Matlock Bath. The town comprises mainly housing, as is to be expected, but also contains large commercial, large churches, local authority properties and schools. The town is the seat of Derbyshire County Council and Derbyshire Dales District Council. Derbyshire County Council has several large sites around the town with accompanying private carparks. The District Council has its principal offices in the town with a private car park, but also owns retail property including a Marks and Spencers store and several large carparks. There are also two large secondary schools, several primary schools, a manufacturing facility and some smaller commercial office blocks in the town.

Matlock is largely built on the steeply sloping south side of the Derwent river valley, with the built environment spanning altitude from approximately 100m at river level to 230m.The built area of the town is constrained by the adjacent urban development to the east and west, and the hills to the north and south of the town which rise to some 300m. The town itself is just outside the Peak District National Park. The MTC area itself extends to the top of Slack Hill to the north and Riber Hill to the south, which are both some 300m above sea level. These upper reaches are a mix of agricultural land, commercial forestry and moorland.

The geographic characteristics of the town provides opportunities for sustainable energy production. The town's southern sloping aspect means that many of roofs face south or near south and are not shaded by nearby development. They are suitable, therefore, for solar panels. The upper reaches to the north and east of the town may provide opportunities for wind turbines although such opportunities have previously failed to obtain planning permission.

Community Energy Company vision and aims

MTC declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency in June 2019 and committed the Council to becoming carbon neutral by 2030. They also declared a wish to encourage and support Matlock in this goal; ensuring that our town does its part to keep global warming less than 1.5 degrees.

MTC are now working with Derbyshire Dales Community Energy – a group of interested local people - to create a community energy organisation for Derbyshire Dales: which will create renewable community energy systems throughout the district and distribute the profits for the benefit of the community. The organisation must support inter alia the creation of local jobs and support a more sustainable local economy. The aim is to support the local Councils and the Peak District National Park(PDNP) in accelerating the transition to a zero-carbon energy district while increasing community resilience.

Scope of work - feasibility stage

As a first step we seek to create a working model of a renewable energy project which can then be replicated throughout the Derbyshire Dales district and potentially into the Peak District National Park.

[1] 2014 estimate, Derbyshire Observatory

We require a robust but ambitious feasibility study, prepared as per the Rural Community Energy Fund (RCEF) Stage 1 study structure, so that we can bid for state 2 funding from the RCEF.

The output from this stage study should:

1. Identify a maximum of two suitable sites for energy generation within the town boundaries of Matlock where resources available can be used to generate electrical power in a sustainable manner.

Whilst the preference will be for a site that provides a building mounted solar array; other sites for solar array, such as canopies over car parks can be considered. Sites for wind turbines or hydro may also be considered if they are commercially viable at this stage.

In tandem determine whether there is likely to be market failure in the provision of EV charging in the Matlock area, if so identify suitable locations for charging points at or linked to the above sites and identify prospective service providers that may wish to participate in the provision of such points.

2. For each site determine whether there are appropriate local energy consumers who would be willing to enter into a power purchase agreement – including businesses, schools and the local authorities.

3. Consider the planning implications of the sites and discuss any issues with the planning authorities.

4. Determine the best structure for the community energy organisation – either a community Benefit Society (CBS) or community interest company (CIC). This structure should enable:

- The organisation to raise funds from the local community – so that as many people can participate as possible. These investors should get a reasonable rate of return, but all investors must be equal in terms of decision making.

- The distribution of profits to the local community for projects that benefit the community and promote carbon neutrality in the Matlock area.

In addition, develop a business model of the community energy organisation. This model should enable critical factors to be considered including:

a. The proportion of households, businesses or organisations needed to participate in any solar power generation and as power customers
b. The impact of including and excluding large solar power suppliers or power users
c. The impact of including and excluding wind power
d. The inclusion and exclusion of EV power points
e. Partnerships with national EV power point providers
f. Funding requirements
g. Cashflow, EBITDA, EBIT and IRR outputs

5. Determine the level of interest for such a scheme within the community, which should include residents, local community charities and stakeholders, and businesses. Specific consideration should be given to the following:

a. Funding such a company
b. Using their roof space for solar power generation
c. Enabling wind turbines to be built on open space on the surrounding hills
d. (For landowners) Providing space for wind turbines
e. EV charge points
f. Energy conservation within their own buildings

Information to be provided in the tender

1. A comprehensive proposal covering all aspects of the Feasibility Report Structure.

2. A project plan with defined stages including key deliverables at each stage and overall timeframe.
3. A demonstrable track record of experience and/or qualifications in the relevant field to include a statement of experience listing any similar projects and CVs of consultants who will undertake the project focused on work of a similar kind.
4. A budgetary estimate of the fixed price and VAT payable.
5. A statement agreeing to share all intellectual property (IP) with the Local Energy Hub and BEIS.

Tenders are required by 19th March 2021 with a start date TBD dependent on a successful application to the RCEF