

END ENERGY  
POVERTY CIC

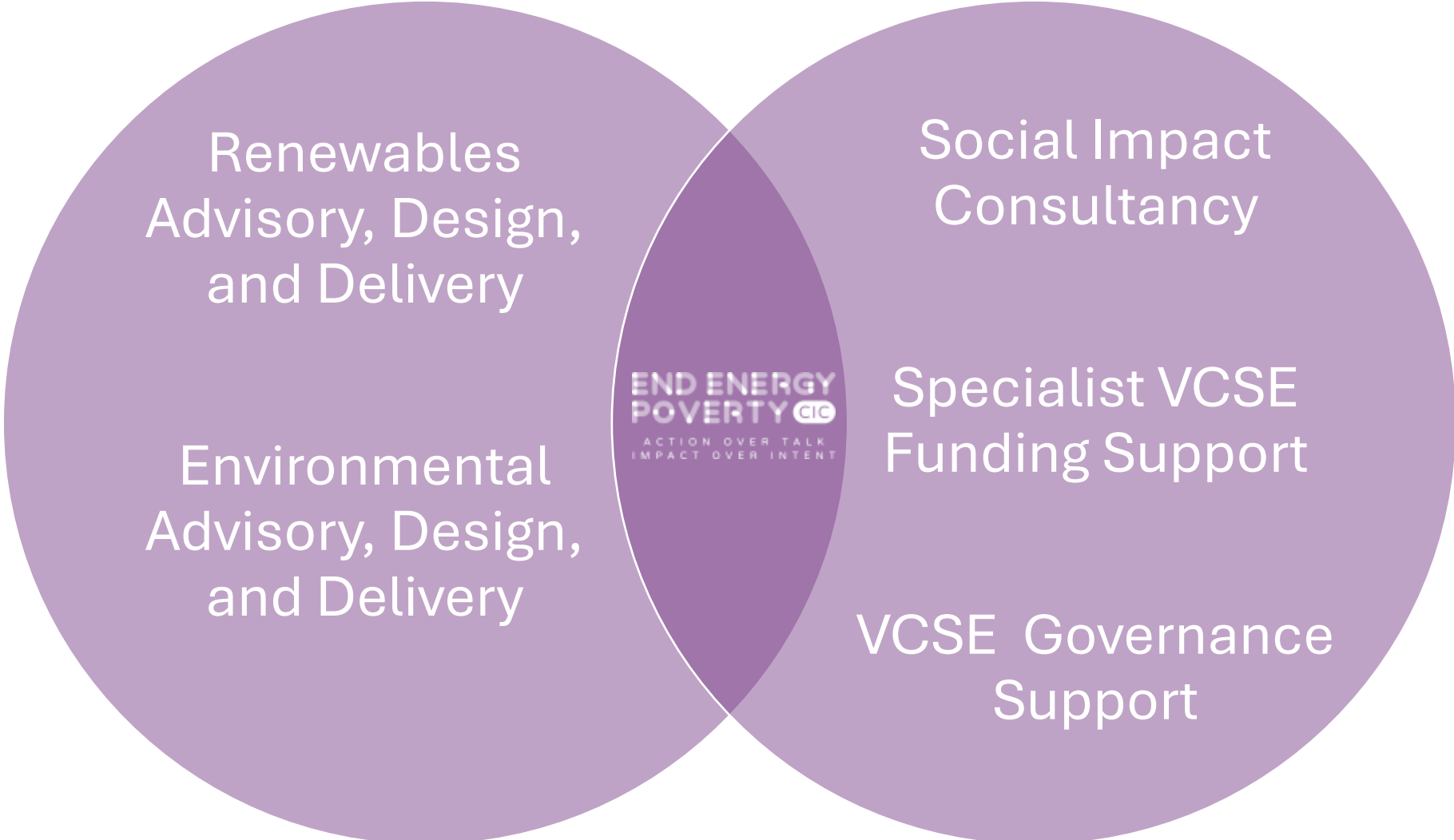
ACTION OVER TALK  
IMPACT OVER INTENT

# How to Develop Community Energy Projects

From Ideation to Feasibility

Dr Lloyd Glanville, CEnv

# Who we are



# Context



Community projects saved **over 120,000 tonnes of carbon in 2024 alone**



The sector raised **£24 million for new projects in one year**



Over **61,000 people engaged in community energy initiatives**

# How to Develop Community Energy Projects



Step 1: Idea



Step 2: Building a  
Community group



Step 3: Feasibility  
Study



Step 4:  
Development Phase

# Step 1: Idea



Every Project Starts With  
A Local Opportunity



High Energy Bills



Available Land Or  
Rooftops



Community Interest

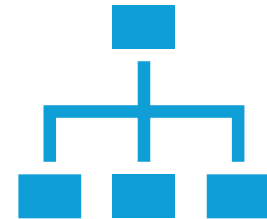
# Step 2 – Building a Community Group



Community energy is built on people



At least **275 community energy organisations** are **cooperatives or benefit societies**



Structures such as Community Interest Companies and Cooperatives are popular, but selection is on a case-by-case basis.



## UK PROTECTED SPECIES THAT CAN SLOW DOWN RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS

These species are legally protected under UK and international law. If present on a site, they can trigger surveys, restrictions, or delays before solar, wind, and other renewable projects can go ahead.

### BATS

- All British bat species
- Active roosts in trees or buildings
  - Night-time surveys often required (May-Sept)

### NESTING BIRDS

- All wild birds while nesting
- Legal protection during nesting season
  - Vegetation clearance often limited (March-August)

### GREAT CRESTED NEWTS

- Triturus cristatus*
- Protection Zones (up to 250m)
  - Ponds may need multiple surveys across seasons

### OTTERS & WATER VOLES

- Lutra lutra / Arvicola amphibius*
- Protected rivers, ditches, and wetlands
  - Works near watercourses often require detailed ecological assessment

### HAZEL DORMICE

- Muscardinus avellanarius*
- Protection Zones (usually 30m)
  - Surveys needed April-October due to seasonal nesting

### BREEDING BIRDS OF PREY

- Kestrel, merlin, barn owl, etc.
- Nests protected while in use
  - 500m+ buffers often applied for major projects



**Timing matters:**  
Surveys are seasonal for many species.



**Surveys & mitigation:**  
Often required by law, adding time and cost.



**Balancing act:**  
Protecting nature while delivering net zero.

Protecting these species is essential – and so is a smooth path to clean energy. Knowing the ecological constraints early helps projects move forward responsibly.



# Key Challenges



Ah, this porridge is just right!

# Success Factors

- ✓ Design so that the environmental elements do not conflict with the proposed development
- ✓ Are the local community bought into the technology?

- Clear Site
- No Flood Risk
- No Wildlife Issues
- Good Grid Access

# Step 3 – Procuring/Delivering A Feasibility Study

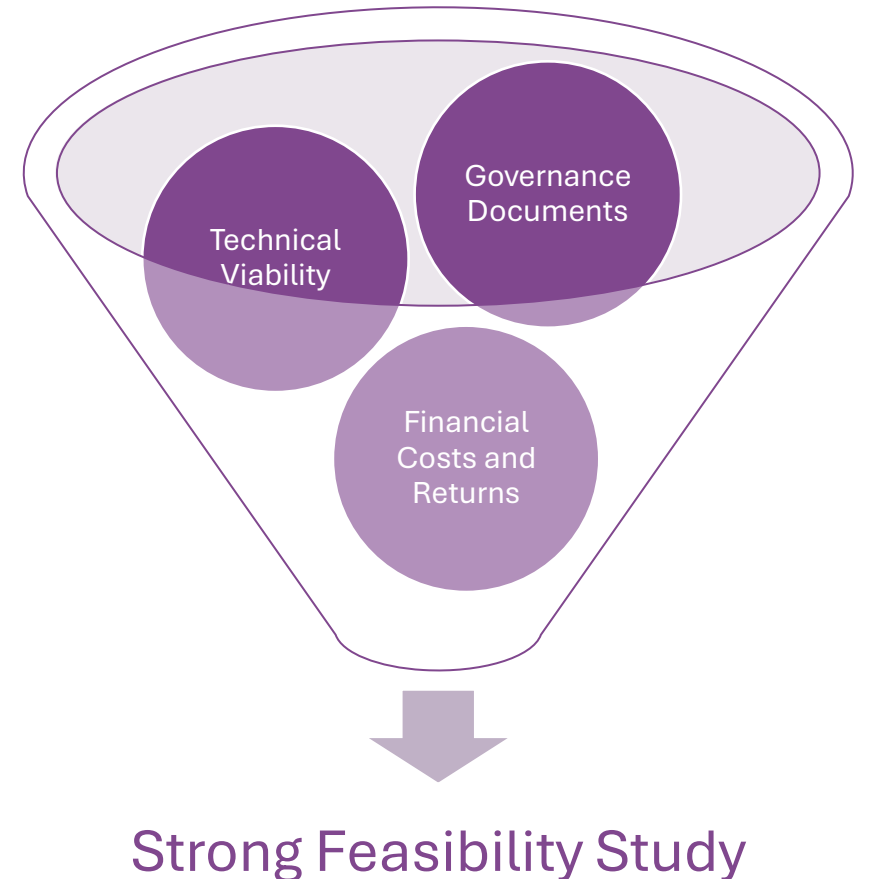
This stage determines whether your idea works.

You assess:

- Technical viability
- Financial returns
- Planning constraints

This is critical because:

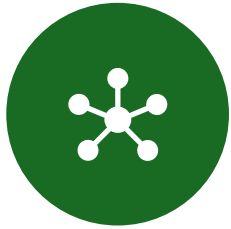
- The UK energy system is complex
- Grid access and planning can delay projects
- Even though the sector is growing, **many projects still stall due to barriers like grid and regulation**



# Summary



People are critical to success – engage them early



Connecting to the grid network will probably be your biggest obstacle – engage them early



Find your 'goldilocks' zone through robust environmental planning – minimal environmental disturbance and reduce planning constraints



Strong governance is key to securing funding to enable your project to develop



Ensure you have a strong feasibility study to support the development



End Energy Poverty CIC are here to help if you need specialist support

Q & A

Contact Us



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