



# *Communities and RESS*

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IWEA AUTUMN CONFERENCE– 11 OCTOBER 2018



## Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future

2015-2030



# Energy White Paper

Government will widen the opportunity for citizen participation in energy matters by:

- Supporting community participation in renewable energy and energy efficiency projects;
- Providing funding and supports for community-led projects;
- Developing a framework for agreeing how communities share in the benefits of substantial new energy infrastructure located in their area;
- Establishing a register of community benefit payments;
- Shared ownership opportunities for renewable energy projects in local communities.



Renewable Electricity Support  
Scheme (RESS)  
High Level Design

# RESS published in July

- Community ownership and partnership at its heart.
- “The new RESS will deliver:
  - 1. Ireland’s renewable electricity ambitions to 2030 including reducing the gap to 2020;
  - **2. Community ownership and partnership;**
  - 3. Increased renewable technology diversity.”

# Community Benefit Proposals

- **Mandatory** Benefit Fund at €2/MWh
- National Community Benefit Register to be established
- Approach to be 'standardised' across the sector
- Huge financial opportunity for rural communities



# Community Benefit Questions

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Different funding models exist, some administered by third parties and others by the wind farm operator.

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How to maximise community participation while ensuring good governance practice?

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Should some funds be targeted at energy efficiency projects like electrification of heat/transport, retrofitting, matching SEAI grants?

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How will variations in duration of RESS contracts affect community funds?



# Community Investment

- **Mandatory** investment opportunities for all RESS projects
  - Register interest pre-auction and then opportunity offered if project successful in the auction
- Single offering to all residents within 10 km – first refusal to those within 5 km
- No minimum level and **no penalties** for projects which fail to attract investment



# Community Investment Questions

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Clarity needed on the legal and financial responsibilities on an operator for running a share offering, how will the design work for a bank or lender?

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What supports will be there to assist communities and individuals in navigating the investment process and in identifying sources of capital?

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Who will decide whether developers have abided by RESS proposals on offering investment opportunities, will there be a cap on number of shares and standard minimum price?

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Should developers be incentivised/compensated for achieving high levels of community investment?

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# Community-led Projects

- Community-led not defined in paper but there is a reference to 'criteria'
- Ten per cent of **capacity** in second auction **reserved** and may range between 5-15 per cent in future rounds
- No bid bonds for community-led projects
- Financial support, legal & technical advice, '**trusted intermediaries**' to be provided through State and private sector funding





## Community-led Projects Questions

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How are these defined and what happens if level of community ownership changes, drops below 50 per cent? Are they genuinely community-led?

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If the community-led reserve is not taken up, is it recycled back into the auction?

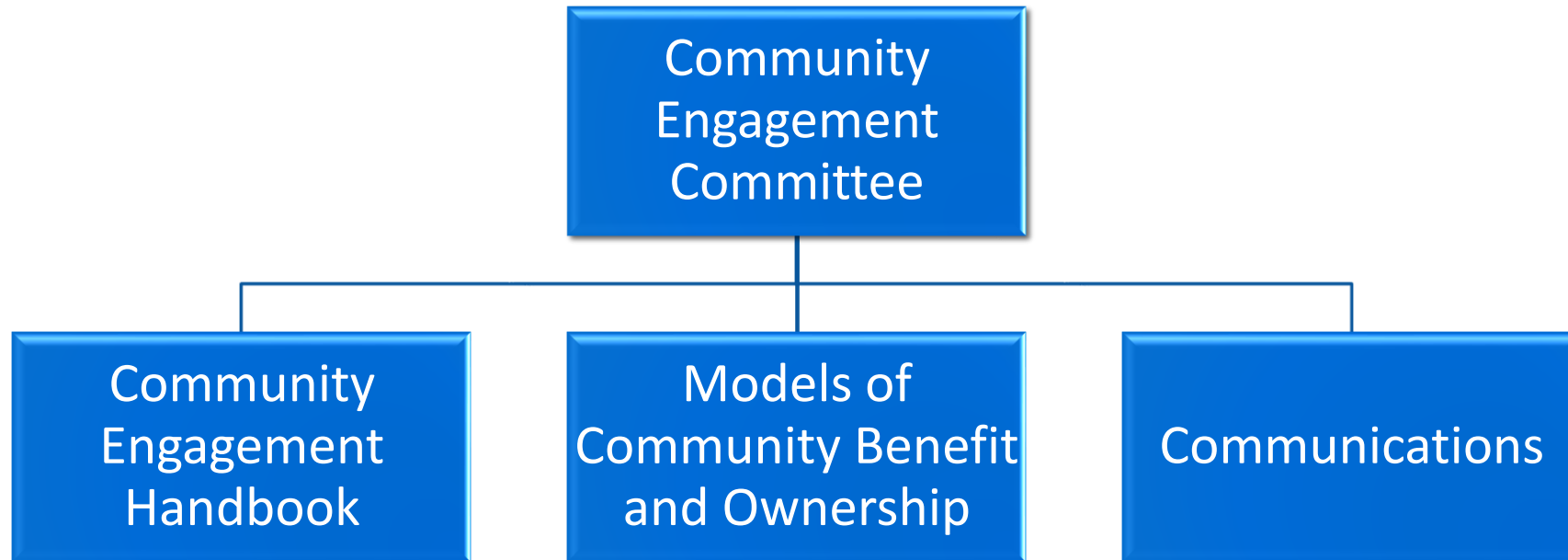
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How will risk of non-delivery of community-led projects be managed in absence of bid bonds?

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How will financial and technical support be provided, by whom, and how will 'trusted advisors' be identified?

# Coordinating Our Response



Email [justin@iwea.com](mailto:justin@iwea.com) to get involved

# Work Programmes

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## **Handbook**

Guide for individuals, communities and developers to ensure community engagement is as participative and transparent as possible.



## **Benefit and Ownership**

How do we empower communities to benefit from wind energy? What supports are needed to enable communities and individuals to invest in wind energy?



## **Communications**

We need to challenge the myths about wind energy, presenting an honest, positive, message that highlights wind energy as an Irish success story.

# Thank you

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