

The Current Climate for Community Energy Groups like Repower Balcombe



Some of the challenges facing us

- Not allowed to be energy suppliers
- Not given the opportunity to tender for schools projects
- Not supplied with data from WSCC
- No subsidy for solar from April 2019
- No Tax relief for investors
- A Carbon Tax imposed on renewable energy
- No possibility of getting planning for onshore wind
- The proposal that we will have to export solar electricity free to the grid

The government data

- 82% of the public expressed support for the use of renewables
- 18 % expressed support for fracking
- The government proposes reducing planning costs for shale gas and oil to zero
- Repower Balcombe's proposed solar farm is likely to cost a minimum of £150,000 for planning costs.

The Traction Project

- This is a world first, proposed and started by community group Repower Balcombe.
- Working with 10-10 Climate Charity and Community Energy South we have brought forward this innovative project.
- The collaboration brings together groups including Network Rail and Imperial College.
- The current feasibility study is funded via the Rural Communities Energy Fund .
- We aim to power the mainline with solar power at a lower cost than any other supplier. Cheaper cleaner sustainable transport.

The Potential

- We aim to build a solar farm or farms on low grade agricultural land in and around Balcombe in your Horsham constituency.
- To generate enough electricity to power the largest trains on our part of the network.
- The community solar farms will not only provide cheaper electricity to the railway but will also generate a community fund for local projects.
- There is potential for this project to be replicated all over the world, allowing for a massive increase in deployment of renewable energy.

The challenges remaining

- To continue to get the very modest support and funding needed, now the government has closed the Rural Communities Energy Fund.
- To overcome the remaining technical and legal questions, particularly around procurement, such that Repower Balcombe isn't squeezed out of any tendering process, as has happened with the schools, to commercial companies that charge more.
- Getting a solar farm through the planning process without the support offered to fossil fuel extractors.