

Norfolk Offshore Wind Projects Community Fund Frequently Asked Questions

Updated July 2024



RWE



Working together with Norfolk communities for a sustainable future

Introduction

This FAQ document aims to provide you with responses to frequently asked questions about Norfolk Offshore Wind Projects Community Benefit Fund, its purpose, scope, eligibility criteria, application process and other relevant information.

The document has been structured using the feedback and questions received during community workshops held in 2022 and 2023. It is a working document and will be updated regularly throughout the development stages of the Fund, then as regularly as required during the launch and operational phases.

Active dialogue and development of this Community Benefit Fund began in 2021 with Vattenfall, the previous owners of Norfolk Offshore Wind Projects. In May 2024, the Projects were acquired by RWE, and work towards launch of this Fund will continue as planned with a target of autumn 2024.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who decides how the Community Benefit Fund will be allocated?

A: RWE will appoint an administrative body to manage the fund. Part of their role will be to recruit and support a local panel that will decide which projects are allocated funding.

Q: What are the criteria by which they will judge proposals?

A: We will be developing the final criteria with support from the new fund administrator, when they are in place. The criteria will foremostly be shaped by the feedback from workshops to date, with a focus on supporting innovative, sustainable and inspiring initiatives which have a positive impact on local communities.

Q: How much of the money is going to be allocated to specific villages / surrounding areas?

A: This is yet to be decided, but we expect to see a strong focus on the communities along the cable corridor. Final details will be shared when the fund is launched. We have been having regular dialogue and holding workshops with these communities along the cable corridor over the last 2 years to understand their specific needs and interests. The £15 million fund associated with Norfolk Offshore Wind Projects will be one of the largest funds provided by offshore wind projects in the UK, so there will be plenty of opportunities for communities to benefit. The key now is for communities to start thinking about what they want and need to improve sustainable community life.

Q: Is the administrative body funded by the £15 million committed by RWE?

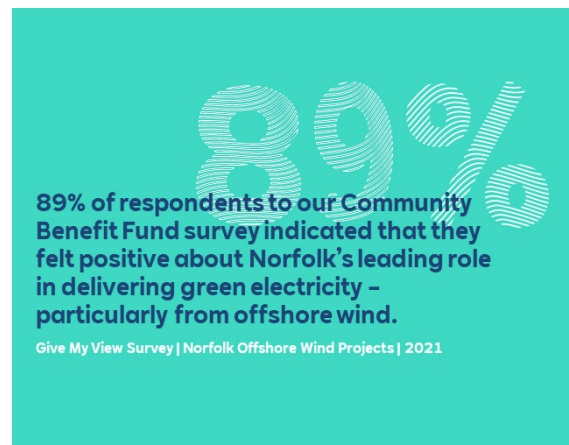
A: Yes, an element of the fund will need to support its administration. Normally this is capped, and kept to a minimum, so that as much of the fund as possible supports the beneficiary communities.

Q: How will the administrative body and local panel be chosen?

A: We will look at organisations that exist locally, and which already administer similar schemes, and appoint a suitable administrative body. Using an experienced body helps to keep overheads down and improve efficiencies. A good administrative body can also help communities look for match funding and optimise the funding in other ways too.

We welcome community views on this topic, but RWE will appoint and manage the contract with the administrative body.

When we have an administrative body in place and the initial fund criteria have been agreed, the fund administrator will advertise for local people to apply to join the award panel. These will be voluntary roles for fixed periods, to ensure the panel is refreshed periodically. We may invite respected local stakeholders to help us interview and select the first panel.



Q: Was the amount of money given to the Community Benefit Fund decided by the developer or the Government? Is the fund part of a Section 106 obligation?

A: The Government/Planning Inspectorate has no involvement in deciding the amount of money included in the Community Fund because it is neither a consent condition nor part of the Development Consent Order application process. Vattenfall made a commitment to provide a £15 million Fund in 2021, and this is a commitment that RWE were very happy to carry forward following acquisition of the Projects in 2024.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why can the fund only be used for sustainable community projects?

A: In the results from the first phase of community benefit fund dialogue, a unifying theme among those who participated in the survey was the recognition that the whole of society needs to make adjustments to prevent climate change from accelerating dangerously. Deploying offshore wind is an efficient, large-scale action that can enable the electrification of many of the services we take for granted today, but we also know we all need to act on a community and on individual levels too. As good neighbours to the communities hosting our projects in Norfolk, RWE wants to support those communities to play their part, and also to reconnect perhaps to what they love about Norfolk already.

In some instances, it may be that communities need to adapt to the impacts of climate change, and this fund may provide that kind of support. Through our experience setting up successful funds elsewhere, we have found that most proposals can be adapted to be more sustainable. Sharpening focus on the theme of sustainability can help communities drive towards Net Zero, address climate change and build social capital by working together to do things a little differently.

Q: Can you provide some small grants to investigate feasibility of ideas?

A: Yes, that is a possibility.

Q: Why does a Community Benefit Fund need stipulations?

A: We will aim to shape criteria that are as flexible as possible but that will also help guide people as they develop their applications, and that can be used to help the local decision-making panel assess the merits of community projects. We have found that stipulations can help communities get what they want while showcasing their innovative sustainable ideas, which then in turn can inspire other initiatives to be more sustainable too. Ideas spread, progress sparks innovation and collaborations happen.

Q: Who can apply for the Fund?

A: We are developing this criteria now. As a guide, it is most likely that we will focus on inviting applications from communities closest to our infrastructure and the Districts through which our onshore infrastructure passes. Normally, on our other funds, applications must be made by a community group and/or registered charity.

Q: Can we partner with other funds/communities to deliver bigger initiatives?

A: Yes. We actively encourage that you collaborate and work together to develop your ideas.

Q: How will you ensure applications from smaller communities will be given equal weighting to those from more prominent members of society?

A: The administrative body and local panel will develop a register of all applications received, all of which will be treated equally following the full review process. Over time we will monitor this register and assess whether certain communities need support to access the funding, and we would work with the administrative body to see how best to support applications from those groups or communities.

Q. Will Local Authorities be able to apply for funding?

A: No, the purpose of the fund is to support projects that would not be funded by local authorities. We are seeking to ensure 'additionality'. However, our fund does present an opportunity for local authorities to contribute towards, or match the funding allocated to, specific projects, or in certain circumstances to work with communities to develop projects in partnership.

Q. Will the fund be distributed according to impact on communities? Will some have a ringfenced fund?

A: We are looking at this possibility. In our experience, it is not always beneficial in the long term, but we are open to it, including potentially for an initial period.

Q. How do we apply for the Fund?

A: We expect to advertise the process for applications to be made when the fund launches in autumn 2024. The process will be transparent, with criteria published, and the local administrative body will support applicants and the panel through the application process.

Q. When will the Fund be available?

A: We expect the fund to launch and be open for applications in autumn of 2024.

Q: What is the current expected timescale for launching and opening the fund?

A: We expect the fund to launch and open for the first applications in autumn 2024. We will share future timescales for the fund in due course when a fund administrator has been appointed.

It is important to note that Community Funds of this type are directly tied to the development and construction programmes of the wind farm projects that provide the financial investment. Any changes to the development and construction programmes of the associated wind farms (Vanguard West, Vanguard East and Boreas) may have a knock-on effect on operation of the Community Fund, or may cause changes to the timescales we have shared for the Fund to date.



**For more information about
Norfolk Offshore Wind Projects,
please visit the website:**

www.rwe.com/norfolkwind