

GBEB Net Zero Energy Mission, July 2024

Based on discussions at the Greater Brighton Economic board, the Board have decided to use their convening power in order to focus on a single grand challenge. This is not to say that other work the Board has done is not important or valued but more a reflection of the unique opportunity that GBEB has to convene public sector, academic and business to address one of the most pressing aspects of the climate emergency in a way which also brings significant economic and social opportunities and benefits.

The Board invites all members of our community - residents, businesses, institutions, and organisations - to join us in this ambitious journey. Together, we can transform our communities, creating a legacy that will benefit generations to come.

Grand Challenge

The Greater Brighton and wider Sussex areas are significant net importers of energy. The challenge is for the area to produce as much energy as it uses by reducing energy demand and increasing supply of zero-carbon energy generated within the region by 2040.

Vision

We imagine transforming our community into a model of sustainability and resilience, where every home, business, and public space thrives on 100% zero-carbon, affordable energy, fostering a healthier environment, robust economy, and equitable society for all.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to achieve net zero energy status by 2040, where the total amount of energy used by our community on an annual basis is equal to the amount of zero-carbon energy created within the community, thereby significantly reducing our carbon footprint, increasing energy security by reducing our reliance on imported energy, and contributing to the global fight against climate change.

Organising around our Mission

Project categories

There are a lot of existing ongoing projects (e.g. heat networks in Worthing and Crawley, housing retrofitting in Lewes, battery storage in West Sussex, rooftop solar in Brighton, etc) that align with the Sussex Energy mission. When presented together as one story and connected to the bigger picture (e.g. strategic energy planning, their value, skills, jobs, economy, impact, etc) they demonstrate that Sussex is making headway in the energy sector and it makes a compelling case to Government. These existing projects will fall into the first 2 project categories below. The 3rd category will focus on initiatives to accelerate the work, tackling any blockers or bottlenecks.

- a) Community and place-based solutions (e.g. energy installations, retrofitting, etc. organised by community group, co-operative, council, etc.)
- b) Scaled solutions (e.g. energy solutions requiring deep collaboration by multiple partners, e.g. heat networks).
- c) Strategic system interventions (e.g. tackling common challenges to help accelerate the launch of solutions).

The four working groups allows focus on themes that progress the Sussex Energy mission. Each working group would kick off by articulating the problem specific to their theme, defining the objectives, scanning the market/other regions for best practice and performing a viability assessment of potential projects to achieve the objectives, understanding their full lifecycle, key performance indicators, challenges and gaps. Then engaging key stakeholders to tackle common challenges to accelerate project implementation.

Working group	Goal	Notes
Energy efficiency solutions	Energy Efficiency: Retrofit and upgrade all residential, commercial, and public buildings to achieve maximum energy efficiency, reducing overall energy demand by 50% by 2030, and reducing fuel poverty.	This builds on work already being led by community energy groups and Lewes DC.
Local, Zero Carbon Energy Infrastructure	Zero Carbon Energy: Transition to 100% zero-carbon energy sources for electricity, heating, and transportation by 2040, leveraging solar, wind, hydro, and other sustainable technologies. Modernise the grid to support these new technologies. Implement strategic system interventions to help accelerate zero carbon energy production solutions launch.	This continues work started in the Sustainable infrastructure working group and builds on the work of the community energy groups, Hydrogen Sussex and the Worthing Heat Network project.

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Key Proposition Development, Success Measurement & Funding Strategy	Develop a pipeline of projects and funding models to secure funding and investments to support energy transition projects, including grants, public-private partnerships, and community-based financing models to ensure local people benefit directly from this energy production. For each project the success measures and targets would be defined and tracked against.	This is a new function which would be established collaboratively to underpin the work.
Developing Jobs and Skills	Economic Transformation: Create new economic opportunities through the green economy, including high-quality jobs in renewable energy, green building, and sustainable agriculture, fostering prosperity and equity across the community.	This connects to the skills work already being undertaken following the dissolution of the LEP

Strategic Pillars

There are four areas which underpin the mission and will need to support the working groups to provide the right operating conditions for them to make progress.

Pillar	Purpose	Notes
Policy and Governance	Work together to implement supportive policies, regulations, and incentives that encourage energy efficiency, renewable energy adoption, and green investment.	This could be the focus of the Local, Zero Carbon Energy Infrastructure working group as it looks to create a favourable policy context and understand system blockers
Communication and network building	<p>Collaboration and Partnerships: Foster strong partnerships between government, private sector, academia, and civil society to leverage collective expertise, resources, and innovation.</p> <p>Community Engagement and Participation: Engage the entire community in the mission through education, outreach, and participatory projects, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from the transition to net zero energy.</p>	This would be delivered by the GBEB comms function and BHCC secretariat and the Board members

<p>Innovation and Technology</p>	<p>Foster a culture of innovation that supports the development and implementation of cutting-edge technologies and practices in energy storage, smart grids, and sustainable transportation.</p>	<p>This is an overall responsibility of GBEB</p>
<p>Data and reporting</p>	<p>This is a mission which needs clarity around our approach to measurement and also needs to build on the measurement work already in place for each GBEB partner. A starting point for this would be to create a shared baseline based on pre-existing research and agree with each working group progress measures for each goal.</p>	<p>This would need a working group to be set up made up of carbon leads across the partnership</p>

Why a mission-based approach?

Adopting a mission-based approach to creating a local net zero energy solution is a strategic choice that harnesses the power of setting a bold, unified, ambitious, long-term objective to catalyse wide-ranging innovation, collaboration, and investment towards a sustainable future. It is designed to be adaptable and scalable, reflecting the unique needs, resources, and aspirations of the community. It serves as a rallying call for collective, joined-up action, emphasising the importance of inclusivity, collaboration, and innovation in achieving the net zero energy goal.

This approach, inspired by the work of thinkers like Mariana Mazzucato, emphasises the role of proactive, visionary public policy in tackling grand societal challenges such as climate change. It leverages the strengths and resources of the entire community, including government, businesses, academia, and civil society, aligning them towards a common goal.

By framing the transition to net zero energy as a mission, it not only sets a clear, ambitious target but also inspires a sense of purpose and urgency across the community. This strategy fosters an environment where innovation can thrive, driving the development and adoption of renewable energy technologies, energy efficiency measures, and sustainable practices.

Moreover, a mission-oriented approach facilitates the integration of economic, social, and environmental objectives, ensuring that the move towards net zero energy contributes to broader goals of economic resilience, social equity, and environmental stewardship. It positions the community not just as a passive responder to global challenges but as an active leader in creating a sustainable, resilient future.

In essence, adopting a mission-based approach provides a comprehensive, inclusive, and dynamic framework for achieving a local net zero energy solution, turning ambitious vision into actionable reality.

Mobilisation approach?

	Working groups	Strategic Pillars
July - October	Identification and scoping of potential projects	Identification of challenges for project acceleration Comms / participation to start work of network building by testing the grand challenge and gathering feedback
July 2024	Public launch with invitation to participate	
July - September	Recruit and set up timetable of meetings Explore grand challenge feasibility and propose mission refinements	Governance working group to decide approach to policy work
July – October	Development work to identify problem spaces and opportunities	Policy work to identify where shared approaches have greatest impact
November - January		Share research on policy and funding space
Nov - Feb	Development of a pipeline of fundable projects ready to go with an investor prospectus that bridges public / private finance options Public pledge and plan for community action	