

Sharing value



Celebrating £100m of Community Investment and Impact

The energy transition comes with opportunities to share value with communities. SSE recognises the importance of achieving a Just Transition to net zero. We understand that our success is interlinked with the well-being and prosperity of the communities in which our renewable assets operate. Since our first community fund in 1998, SSE has grown to become one of the largest corporate grant givers in the UK and Ireland. To date, we have invested £100 million from renewable funds into the 150 communities we work with, spanning over 11,000 local projects which are pivotal to the sustainability, resilience and vibrancy of the local areas.

The transformative impact of £100 million investment

The ambition and achievement of the communities who host renewable assets is exceptional. When local people are empowered to take control of local development, they enable innovative solutions which enhance the prosperity, resilience and sustainability of their communities. To capture the impact of community investment the grant holder identifies their primary impact goal which is mapped to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Scottish National Outcomes and the Northern Ireland Wellbeing Framework.

Decent work and quality education

£23 million invested



- Including six rural apprenticeship schemes, provision for over **635 schools** and support for more than **739 scholars**.
- Over **900 rural jobs** supported ensuring that key skills are retained which the local community and that local economic growth is prioritised.

Sustainable communities

£65 million invested



- **111 community owned homes built** ensuring communities reduce depopulation and have the homes for the future including retirement bungalows, key worker flats and family homes.
- **873 enhanced community assets**
 - including community owned shops, medical centres, museums, education facilities, rural hubs and community forests.

Climate and nature

£12 million invested



- **2,140 community energy programmes**
 - including community owned hydro's, retrofit academies, community energy initiatives, home energy efficiency schemes.

A quarter of a century's worth of experience

SSE's approach to community investment

To ensure a consistent and responsible approach to community investment SSE's commitment to communities is underpinned by some key principles which we know support successful community funding:

Our key principles



Sharing value

We commit to long term investments and empower local communities to make all investment decisions.



Co-creation

Community collaboration to tailor funds to local priorities.



Maximum impact

We measure and evaluate the social impact of strategic and sustainable benefits.



Flexible funding

We respond quickly to local needs and provide up to 5 years advanced funding.



Good governance

Our specialist team works with communities to build capacity and provide tailored provision.

Our approach to community funding is tailored to each communities' needs and ambitions. However, common forms of community funding include:

Local

Local panels

- Inclusive decision-making by local representatives who invest based on local priorities.

Local communities organisations

- Nominated local organisation to deliver specific projects linked to local action plans.

Regional

Regional funds

- Focus on larger, transformational projects which deliver socio-economic value across wider regions.

Skills fund

- Rural skills initiatives e.g. apprenticeship programmes to retain young people and improve local economic development.

The evolution of community funds

2008

8 funds providing **£85,500** and **€223,000** per year

2010

SSE Community Benefit Principles established – setting an industry leading investment approach

2012

SSE regional funds established – regional strategic investment shown to provide a SROI of **£10.95 for every £1 invested**

2013

Ambition increases - community ambition grows to tackle societal issues including service retention and community connectivity

2015

First offshore community fund established – Beatrice provided **£6 million** and demonstrated a legacy for coastal communities

2017

Capacity grows - community capacity increases to support complex priorities including pandemic recovery and carbon neutral communities

2020

Skilled and experienced communities - focus investment on strategic priorities including housing and depopulation

2024

Delivery models evolve - Communities expand delivery models to increase impact – local funds shown to provide **£9.30 in wellbeing and economic returns** for every **£1 invested**

2025

Looking ahead - community action plans show future priorities include community wealth creation and socio economic growth.

2030

£200 Million – forecasted amount SSE will have invested in communities from current renewable assets

Impactful projects



Highland Energy Efficiency

The award-winning **Highland Energy Efficiency** programme allocated **£1.85 million** to provide whole home energy measures to move households out of extreme fuel poverty. **370 Highland families** have been supported.



Ettrick and Yarrow Community Development Company

Ettrick and Yarrow Community Development Company transformed a derelict steading into five flourishing family homes. SSE community funding has assisted **111 community owned homes to date**.



Northern Irish Scholar Support

511 Northern Ireland scholars have been supported, in partnership with three local universities and colleges, to ensure they receive the training and education required to enter highly skilled jobs.



Kantoher Development Association

Kantoher Development Association, in Co. Limerick completed a community asset transfer to transform a derelict eye-sore site in the centre of the village into a thriving community hub to tackle rural isolation and rising economic deprivation.

Find out more

View all our awards
in our community
investment reviews



Sharing our learning -
learn more from our
impact reports and videos



Lessons Learned

In over a quarter of a century of investing in local communities the ambition and delivery of community funding has evolved considerably. Key reflections on SSE delivering community funds include:

Local decision making	Then	Now
Funding held by external agencies		Communities control their funding. Training and resources provided to ensure informed and inclusive decision making.
Empowerment and capacity building		
Inexperienced and under resourced communities		Capacity funding is vital, facilitated peer community networks and prioritised professional expertise.
Lasting legacy		
Focus on immediate issues such as leisure activities which did not create a long-term impact.		Increased ambition, well-developed community initiatives that provide long term change including ownership of lands and assets.
Flexibility		
Early funds were restrictive, diminished impact.		Funds reflect community diversity, dynamic action for emerging issues, up to 5 years advanced funding.

Future focus to 2035

Over the next decade, SSE Renewables is forecast to invest a further £100m into our local communities. Local communities continue to lead this investment. We commit to continue leveraging our lessons learned and experiences to ensure impactful investment. This includes a focus on:



Accelerating capacity building – building on existing good practice and accelerating early funding for communities to build skills and resilience.



Increasing collaboration – enhancing relationships with other renewable developers to avoid duplication of community effort and enhance the impacts from funding.



Achieving community wealth building – building the local economy including encouraging community ownership, enhancing the local workforce and ensuring funded projects utilise local supply chains.



Prioritising key societal challenges – community action plans focus on resolving complex issues including depopulation, ageing communities and growing the social economy.