

Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks

# RESILIENT COMMUNITIES FUND

Stakeholder consultation on criteria and scope of the fund

January 2022



Delivery of a generator to a customer in a vulnerable situation during Storm Arwen



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Scottish & Southern  
Electricity Networks

Powering our  
community



## Who we are

Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks manages, maintains and develops the electricity networks which bring power to 3.8 million homes and businesses in the north of Scotland and central southern England.

Our engineers take care of around 130,000 kilometres of wires and cables, and over 100,000 substations. We work hard to ensure our networks are as reliable as possible and invest millions of pounds every year to upgrade and improve the electricity supplies within our transmission and distribution areas.

We pride ourselves on being a part of the communities in which we operate. Our skilled teams are based right across the regions we serve, supported by engineering and customer service teams based in major offices and depots in centres like Reading, Portsmouth, Perth and Inverness.



Connected enough renewable electricity to power 3.8m homes



770,000+ vulnerable customers identified on our Priority Services Register



over 3,800 employees across the country



130,000km of overhead lines and underground cables



106,000 substations



100+ subsea cables powering island communities

## Overview of Resilient Communities Fund

### Fund background and origin

The Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks Resilient Communities Fund is a grant-giving fund which is open to not-for-profit community groups and charities in both SSEN's electricity distribution network areas in central southern England and the north of Scotland.

The fund was created in response to the extreme storms in the winter of 2013/14, which led to significant flooding and disruption of power supplies across SSEN's network area. Following the disruption, the energy regulator OFGEM conducted a review of the network operators performances which, alongside other recommendations, highlighted unclaimed customer compensation.

Since 2015 we have operated the Resilient Communities Fund which has provided £3.4m to 567 not-for-profit community groups and charities in our electricity distribution network areas in central southern England and the north of Scotland.

### Objective of Consultation

Following Storm Arwen, a once-in-a-generation weather event which caused extensive damage to our north of Scotland network, many of the communities we serve experienced severe disruption. The damage was unprecedented in some areas, with the north-east region experiencing the equivalent of almost two years' worth of overhead line faults in just one 12-hour period.

The resilience of the communities impacted was greatly tested, and throughout the storm response, SSEN worked collaboratively with local resilience partnerships across the areas affected, taking a multi-agency approach to ensure the safety and welfare of the public.

In recognition of this critical area, SSEN has committed to making an additional £500,000 contribution to the SSEN Resilient Communities Fund which delivers financial grants to community and not-for-profit organisations for support with community resilience projects. This additional contribution will take the 2022 Resilient Communities Fund total to £1 million for the north of Scotland, with the funding round brought forward to January 2022.

## Scope of consultation

This consultation covers the SSEN Resilient Communities Fund for the north of Scotland which is expected to total £1 million in the 2022/23 funding round.

## Current criteria

Currently, applications can be made for grants of up to £20,000 for projects which create a stronger, co-ordinated resilience framework for local communities. Successful projects are required to meet at least one of the following criteria areas:

- **Resilience for Emergency Events** - To enhance community facilities, services and communication specifically to support the local response in the event of a significant emergency event.
- **Vulnerability** - To protect the welfare of vulnerable community members through enhancing their resilience and improving community participation and effectiveness.

**Given that 'Vulnerability' can be interpreted as a very broad criteria area, priority is given to:**

- Projects which support communities who are particularly remote or isolated and have experienced emergency events due to poor weather in the past.
- Projects which demonstrate innovative approaches to improving the resilience of vulnerable community members.
- Projects which support areas which can be difficult for emergency services to respond to events in.
- Projects from communities which have not applied before and have been identified as having especially low resilience.
- Projects which provide advice on or improve the energy efficiency of vulnerable households.

Fund exclusions include projects that do not benefit people living in the SSEN network area; activities that were the responsibility of the statutory authorities; retrospective funding and projects that were of the sole benefit to an individual.

An internal funding team reviews and appraises applications and a decision-making panel, comprising of independent experts with experience in the priority areas, determines which projects should receive funding. The panel comprises representatives from organisations such as British Red Cross and National Energy Action with expertise in community resilience planning alongside members of the SSEN management team.



All funded projects are listed on the SSEN website:



[ssen.co.uk/resiliencefund](https://ssen.co.uk/resiliencefund)

Customers receiving hot food and drinks during Storm Arwen

## Consultation questions

**1** Following Storm Arwen, we have increased the fund by £500,000, meaning the north of Scotland fund will total £1 million for the 2022 funding round. Additional weighting will be given to applications from communities most severely impacted by Storm Arwen, while maintaining funding opportunities across our wider network area.

### Are you supportive of this approach and weighting?

**2** Recognising the increased amount in the fund this year and the desire to maximise reach and impact of funding, do you suggest any changes to our process to distribute funds, which are currently allocated following a competitive grant application process?

### Potential options for consideration

- a. No change to current process; fund is open for grant applications from any not-for profit or community organisations up to a limit of £20,000
- b. Fund remains open for grant applications from any not-for profit or community organisations, but limit is raised to above £20,000
- c. The fund is split, with the majority of the fund allocated for grant applications as above, with a separate pot specifically for larger cross-community projects, open to any not-for profit or community organisations
- d. The fund is split, with the majority of the fund allocated for grant applications as above, with a separate pot for larger cross-community projects, open to a limited group of constituted organisations such as local authorities and/or community councils
- e. Please also specify any other suggestions for fund distribution.

**3** In recent years the fund has supported a wide range of community resilience projects. Thinking about any potential changes to the criteria for the 2022 fund, what areas do you think should be particularly prioritised?

*i.e.* funding for physical resilience projects such as communication equipment and back-up power solutions or funding for social resilience projects such as resilience planning and capacity building.

**4** Are there any other factors SSEN should consider in the prioritisation, distribution and delivery of funds in the 2022 funding round?



## HOW TO RESPOND

Please email your response to us by 5pm on 2nd February 2022.



[stakeholder.engagement@sse.com](mailto:stakeholder.engagement@sse.com)