



Black Mountains Community Energy
A Llangattock Green Valleys Project

Community Consultation

June, July 2024



For further information or to get involved
visit our website, llangattockgreenvalleys.org
Or email info@llangattockgreenvalleys.org

LGV is a Community Interest Company (reg no. 07255186).
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Mae cyfieithiad Cymraeg ar gael ar ein gwefan.
llangattockgreenvalleys.org

We've received funding from the
Shared Prosperity Fund Grant Scheme
which helped us to engage with the 5 council communities.

Funded by UK Government  Wedi ei ariannu gan
Llywodraeth y DU



Cronfa Datblygu Cynaliadwy
Sustainable Development Fund
BANNAU BRYCHEINIOG

Black Mountains Community Energy Project is supported by a grant from Bannau Brycheiniog's Sustainable Development Fund. The fund supports projects that help improve quality of life in communities – protecting and enhancing the local environment, helping people to live healthy and fulfilled lives now and in the future.

Summary of the Community Consultation

1. Context

Llangattock Green Valleys (LGV) is developing a project to maximise the use of locally generated renewable electricity in the Crickhowell area through a community organisation to ensure profits return to the local community. This will involve constructing medium to large-scale renewable energy installations managed by a Smart Local Energy System (SLES). Community engagement is crucial from the start and ongoing advice from a community group to guide the project's development.

The communities are those in the Crickhowell Five Councils Region, namely the councils of Crickhowell, Llangattock, Llangynidr, Cwmdru and Vale of Grwyney (Glangrwyney, Llangenny, Llanbedr). The first phase of the project (funded by the Making a Difference in Powys fund) is to seek the views of those living in these communities.

The purpose of this report is to summarise the information gathered during the community consultation. It has been prepared by Llangattock Green Valleys in discussion with the Community Oversight Group comprising local individuals who have expressed interest in contributing to the development of the project.

Fact-finding is also being undertaken (funded separately) to gather information on the funding, operation

and management of large, multi-technology generation schemes.

This is a public document and will be discussed at a public meeting in the Clarence Hall 1:00pm to 4:00pm 14 September 2024. We'll have discussions at 1.30pm and 2.30pm

2. The consultation process

This document is a summary of views expressed by those attending the six consultation events organised by LGV and at a meeting with a farmers' buyers group, Crickhowell Rotary Club and members of the Eco Committee at Crickhowell High School. LGV had a display about the project at the Llangattock Fete and at Cwmdru Show and at the Llangynidr Show. Members of the five local councils have been briefed on the project and some of them attended the LGV events.

Posters and information sheets were available at these events and participants were asked to indicate on a map of their area those regions they cherished, and those where in their view solar, wind, hydro, biomass and storage facilities could be sited. They were also asked to record their reasons for their choices, and comments or questions on post-it notes. These inputs and conversations are summarised here.

A total of 115 people signed up for the project Newsletter during the consultation events from April 2024. We have 155 in total on the project email list.



3. General comments and questions

All the comments below will be followed up as the project develops further. Some quick answers are given in *[italics]* to some questions.

Is there sufficient grid capacity and connections available? *[currently no, but use of a Smart Local Energy System (SLES) is being explored as a means to help with that.]*

What restrictions are imposed by the National Park? *[We are in discussion with them and hope that their targets of reaching Net Zero by 2035 will help us.]*

Where will the money come from? *[several possible approaches: grants, loans, public subscription, shared ownership.]*

What are the relative merits of a small number of large installations (lower capital cost per MW capacity) compared with a larger number of smaller installations (higher capital cost per MW capacity) which may be less visually intrusive?

Impact on wildlife and biodiversity. *[Renewable energy projects can minimise negative impacts and actively contribute to enhancing wildlife habitats and biodiversity. Ensuring harmony between renewable energy development and ecosystem protection.]*

Does sewage have a value? *[Yes, some plants use anaerobic digestion to break down organic matter like sewage sludge, producing biogas that can be captured and used as a renewable energy source.]*

“An opportunity to take charge of our energy production and invest in a local project.”

Pumped storage using the Grwyne Fawr reservoir.

Questions about run-of-river hydro. *[Viable, but dependant on various permissions]*

The need for impartial advice.

Role of electricity supply companies.

What are the capital and set up costs, and running costs of solar, hydro and wind? *[This will be a significant part of the feasibility study.]*

The participants at the LGV events and at the Rotary Club were encouraging and generally supportive of the ambition, with a positive attitude to local energy generation.

The farmers we met asked about the likely income per acre that a lease of land for an installation could provide. That information will be available from a feasibility study of specific sites. On that basis they were supportive of the scheme being explored further. They were very sceptical of the attitude of the planners. We assured them that all our meetings with the National Park had been encouraging.

4. Messages from the consultation

There is community support in principle for large scale renewable energy installations in the region, evidenced by the 155 signed up for the newsletter and the willingness to indicate personally acceptable locations on the maps.

The consultation has also provided a number of messages LGV should consider in taking the project forward.

4.1 Advice. To obtain impartial advice a Community Oversight Group has been set up of people who have volunteered to help. This group will be involved in the development of the project from now on.

LGV has had a meeting with National Grid, zoom discussions with Welsh Government Energy Service and is continuing its conversations with Bannau Brycheiniog National Park.

A team from Ynni Teg, which was established by Community Energy Wales to provide advice and services to community groups setting up renewable energy projects, has visited Crickhowell. LGV has also organized a meeting with Share Energy to discuss funding sources, financial strategies, and the potential formation of a company or organization to support these initiatives.

4.2 The influence of scale. A feasibility study should consider the relative merits of a large number of installations of modest scale and a small number of a large scale particularly regarding capital cost per MW and visual intrusion.

4.3 Technologies. Participants indicated possible sites for all technologies, and only wind turbines elicited a few explicit aesthetic objections.

Further work is needed to get a picture of the practical possibilities for long term storage.

It would be helpful to provide some ball-park figures for relative costs per MW of each technology.

4.4 Quick wins. LGV should try to install a few quick wins to show the project moving forward. Ideally these would be chosen as part of the larger plan.



5. Conclusion.

LGV concludes that there is sufficient community support for the project to proceed to its next stage working toward a specification for a feasibility study based on the information in sections 3, and reference to sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3.

This specification will be prepared by LGV and the Oversight Group, drawing on the current fact-finding work, external professional advice, and continuing discussion with the National Park and National Grid.



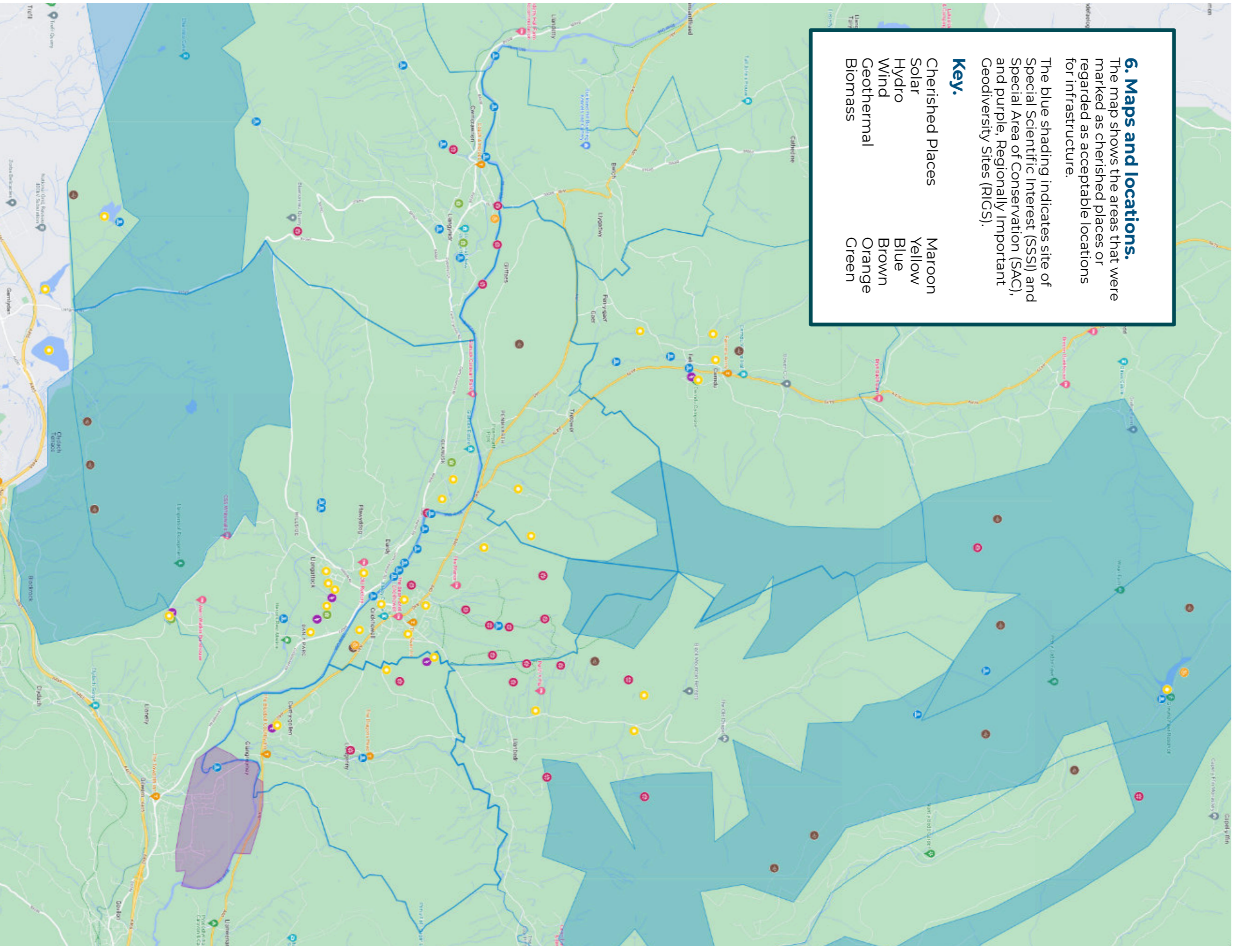
6. Maps and Locations.

The map shows the areas that were marked as cherished places or regarded as acceptable locations for infrastructure.

The blue shading indicates sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and purple, Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites (RIGS).

Key.

| | |
|------------------|--------|
| Cherished Places | Maroon |
| Solar | Yellow |
| Hydro | Blue |
| Wind | Brown |
| Geothermal | Orange |
| Biomass | Green |



All coloured markers were suggestions by the public.
Landowners will be consulted before any sites are considered further.

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