



Broughton Community Energy

Revised Proposal Survey Results

October 2026



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Background

- On 21 September 2026, Broughton Community Energy (BCE) distributed its **revised** proposal to generate our own sustainable electricity combined with a low-cost community tariff (broughtoncommunityenergy.org/documentlibrary).
- The revised proposal removed the wind turbine because of significant planning risks, increased the capacity of solar PV panels from 4 MWp to 7.2 MWp, retained the 2-4 MWh of battery storage, and recommended a new site of up to 30 acres on Manor Farm – closer to the Houghton electricity substation than the previous site to reduce grid connection costs.
- BCE hosted a drop-in session at the Village Hall on 3 October 2026 to explain the proposal in more detail and to answer any questions. The event was attended by approximately 50 people.
- To understand the views of the wider community, a survey was issued to all village residents with the proposal. The survey closed on 11 October 2026.
- The following digital channels were used to ensure broad engagement:
 - Broughton Gaggle email group
 - Email distribution list of people who have asked to be kept informed about the project
 - Broughton Facebook group
 - Various village WhatsApp groups
- Hard copies of the proposal and survey were also available at the village shop.
- The response rate was encouraging, with 187 people completing the survey.

Key findings

Residents are very concerned about the impacts of climate change (96%) and high energy prices (93%), both of which the proposal seeks to address.

5. *How concerned are you about the impacts of Climate Change?*

Very concerned	130
Concerned	50
Neutral	4
Not Concerned	2
Not at all concerned	1



6. *How concerned are you about the increases in your energy costs over the past few years?*

Very concerned	97
Concerned	76
Neutral	10
Not Concerned	4
Not at all concerned	0



There is **very strong support for the scheme** (92% support, 4% neutral, 4% oppose)

7. *Based on the information provided, how supportive are you of the proposal?*

Strongly support	135
Support	37
Neutral	7
Oppose	5
Strongly oppose	3



Key concerns raised in the survey

While support for the scheme is overwhelmingly positive, some residents raised important concerns. We take these seriously and will continue to address them as the project develops.

Use of farmland and impact on biodiversity

We have agreed access to up to 30 acres of Manor Farm's least productive land. Converting farmed land to solar generation can create opportunities for biodiversity to recover and thrive. Planning requirements include demonstrating at least a 10% biodiversity net gain, and we aim to exceed this.

Visual impact

The solar panels will be visible from some locations, particularly the public footpath crossing Broughton Grange and Manor Farm, and from the Down. Existing screening at Broughton Grange will mature over time, and further planting will help reduce the impact. The site should not be visible from Rookery Lane. The connection to the substation in Houghton will use underground cables, avoiding additional overhead lines.

Financial viability

Some residents questioned the scheme's viability following the removal of the wind turbine. Working with Prospus Consulting, we have developed a detailed financial model indicating that the revised solar and battery scheme is financially viable.

The model uses realistic estimates for construction costs, operating expenses and electricity revenues, with funding from commercial loans (8% interest), equity investment (targeting 6% annual returns) and grants. Both debt and investor capital are assumed to be repaid over 20 years.

Great British Energy has also announced plans to invest up to £3 million in individual community energy projects, offering a potential additional source of funding. This is provided from the £1 billion the UK government has committed to invest in community energy by 2030.

Our priority is to deliver a financially sustainable scheme that provides lasting benefits to the village.

Questions raised in the survey

We received some excellent questions. Below are brief answers to the main themes. We'll also publish a fuller FAQ covering these and other questions in more detail.

Is the proposed 12p/kWh tariff achievable?

12p/kWh is our stretch-target for electricity used when local demand is matched with BCE generation; it is not yet a guaranteed tariff. As a not-for-profit scheme, our aim will always be to set the matched tariff as low as financially sustainable.

Comparable community-energy schemes have already achieved attractive local tariffs, and we expect regulatory change and increasing supplier competition to create further opportunities.

How much could a household save?

Savings will depend on electricity consumption and how much of that usage can be matched with local generation.

As an illustration, a household using 6,000 kWh/year (the average for Broughton households in 2022 based on Office for National Statistics data), currently paying 26p/kWh, with 60% of its annual consumption matched at 12p/kWh, would save around **£500 per year**.

Will I need to switch electricity supplier?

Yes. BCE will partner with a licensed electricity supplier, and residents will need to switch to that supplier to access the local low-cost tariff when electricity use is matched with BCE generation. The process should be no different from when you've previously switched.

Will everyone in the village have to switch supplier?

No. Participation will be entirely voluntary. For some households that already have solar panels, batteries, or particularly competitive tariffs, remaining with their existing supplier may make sense. The scheme is intended to make the benefits of renewable energy available to households that cannot, or do not wish to, install their own generation and/or storage.

Questions (continued)

Will I need a smart meter?

Yes. Electricity use and local generation need to be matched in 30-minute intervals.

What if a smart meter doesn't work at my property because of poor cellular coverage?

A smart meter will still be needed. Newer meters can use home Wi-Fi and broadband where cellular connectivity is poor, and suppliers are beginning to roll these out.

Will enough electricity be generated in winter?

Not all the time. The amount of locally generated power available to individual households will depend on the weather and how many households join the scheme. When local generation and battery storage cannot meet demand, our partner supplier will provide electricity from the wider grid at its applicable tariff.

What will the scheme cost residents?

There will be no charge to join the scheme. Residents support BCE by choosing the partner supplier and using locally generated electricity when available. This benefits residents through lower electricity costs and BCE through a stronger, more predictable income stream.

Will residents be able to invest in the scheme?

Yes. We intend to offer community shares with a competitive return. Full details will be provided when BCE is ready to raise the required capital.

Will the scheme restrict households with solar panels from exporting electricity?

No.

If I already have solar panels, can I export surplus electricity into the local scheme?

That is our aim. It will depend on electricity-market rule changes currently in progress and on the arrangements agreed with our licensed supplier.

Questions (continued)

Will there be special tariffs for specific groups, such as low-income or disabled households?

Potentially. This will ultimately be a decision for BCE's members. As a Community Benefit Society, BCE will be owned and governed by the community on a one-member, one-vote basis.

Participation in the electricity tariff will not be a requirement for membership.

Next steps

Given the significant support for the proposal:

- We have already submitted the Pre-Planning Application to Test Valley Borough Council.
- We are applying for the GBECF Stage 2 £100k grant to continue developing the project to an investible scheme, including full planning permission. The application deadline is 12 November. Decisions are expected in early 2027.