



Future Energy Landscapes

Community Energy Workshop
Westhall
26/09/26



Section	Time
Arrivals, tea and coffee	10am
Introduction	10.15
What is the local area like?	10.35
Renewable energy discussions	10.50
Whole group discussion	12 noon
Close and next steps	12.25pm

The Community Energy Programme

- Community Energy is one of the Strategic Priorities of East Suffolk Council.
- The Council has partnered with the Centre for Sustainable Energy, Community Energy England and Ashden on this 18-month project.
- The Programme's focus will be on supporting existing groups to deliver community energy and identifying new projects.
- Flexible, 1-2-1 support will be given to groups, based on the specific needs of each organisation, alongside community engagement



Image: East Suffolk Council and its Community Energy Programme partners: Centre for Sustainable Energy, Community Energy England and Ashden at a kick-off meeting earlier in 2026.



Our Partners

- Community Energy England is the national voice for Community Energy.
- Ashden works with communities to showcase outstanding climate solutions and accelerate local change that unleashes the potential of local areas.



Halesworth ASH





The way the UK is producing and using electricity is changing.

More energy we produce in the UK is coming from renewable sources.

We now generate much less from traditional sources like gas and almost none at all from coal.

Energy security is an increasingly important issue. UK renewables can support this.

**Staying
warm in
winter and
cool in
summer is a
basic right.**



Community energy



- Community-led energy projects keep benefits local. For example, providing investment in local facilities.
- Projects include rooftop solar schemes, ground mounted solar, wind turbines to energy efficiency schemes and retrofit programmes.
- The main commonality is they are all community led
- The government's Local Power Plan has set out a vision for every community to have the opportunity to own a local energy project, backed by £1bn in grants, loans and expert support.



The Support Programme



- Through this project, we will **work collaboratively with local communities across East Suffolk to identify, develop, and implement community-owned and led renewable energy projects**
- **We will look at a range of opportunities**, from smaller scale renewables on buildings, to larger scale free standing opportunities such as wind turbines or solar farms.
- **By April 2027, success will mean:**
 - At least 4 new community energy project ideas identified by communities, with a clear pathway identified to next stages of development



What are we doing today?

Aim: Explore how you feel about a community energy project in your area and how it could benefit your community.

How are we doing this?

- Share some information about community energy.
- Learn more from you about your local area
- Explore options for potential ideas
- Discuss as a group.

Note: We're not looking at grid connection and all ownership options today. This would be explored as part of future work.



Roles

- **Our role today (CSE):** here to facilitate the conversation, helping you get your views across as individuals and a group.
- **Partner groups: East Suffolk Council, Community Energy England, Halesworth ASH:** To support with note taking (anonymously) and answering technical questions.
- **The workshop outputs are decided by you!** Please be respectful to facilitators and each other.



Timeline

Today's
workshop

Workshop
summary and
public survey to
find out what
other people
think

Additional in
person
engagement

Final report of
all
conversations
with the
community

September

October

October - December

January



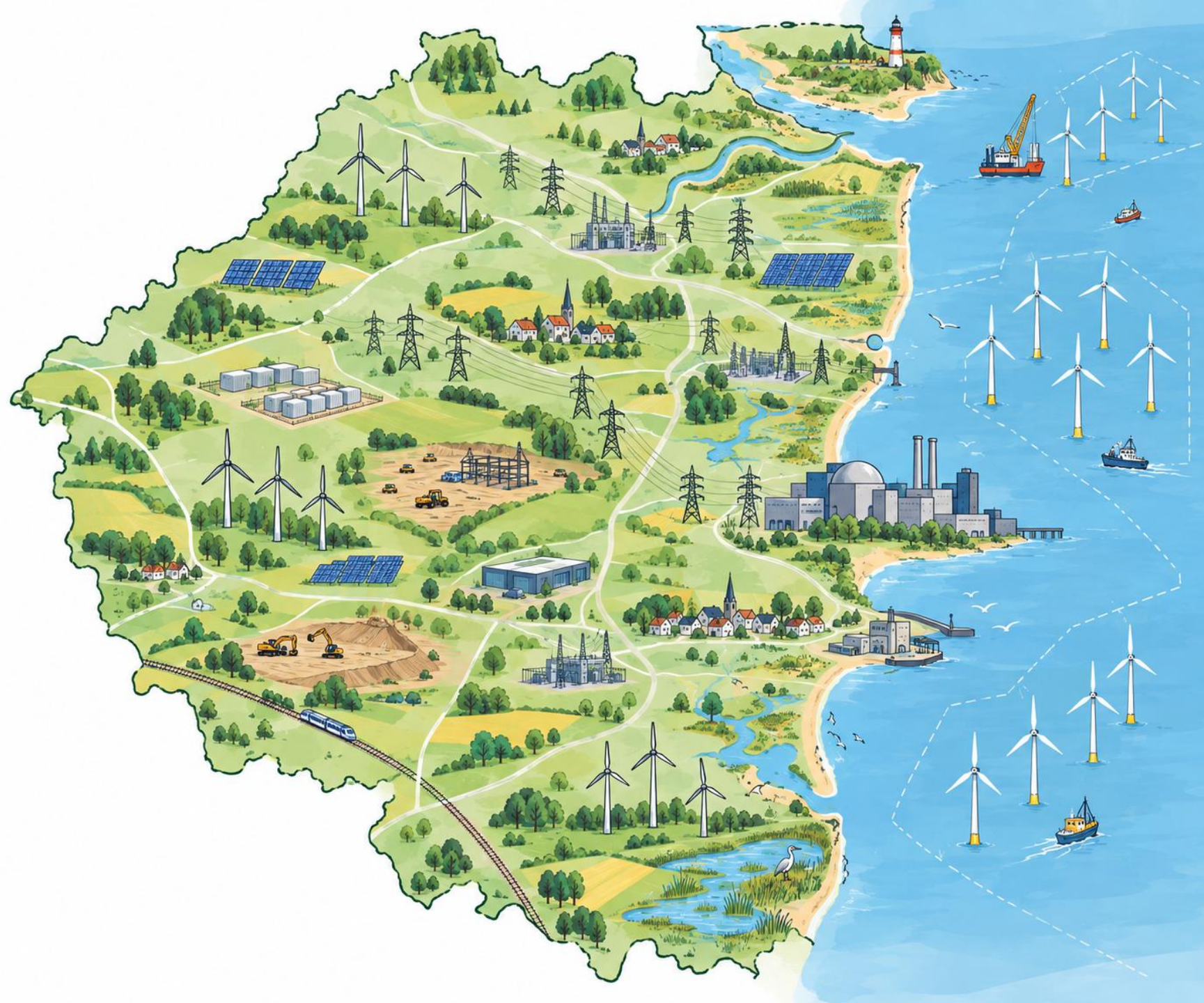
Community Energy



**There's lots of
development already
happening in Suffolk
involving the energy
system.**

**How do you feel about
this?**

**Are you as a community
feeling any benefits?**





What is Community Energy?

Social enterprise, mutuals and cooperative business models.

Invest in local renewable energy.

Reward Local Savers and Impact investors

Use surplus to fund other social impact work

Democratic, not for profit, place based.

Putting people at the heart of the Clean Power transition.



It's the space between domestic energy and commercial energy.
Electrification + Democracy = Community Energy

Owned & run by the community

RACEHORSE

OWNED & RUN BY THE COMMUNITY

[Click here for the Latest News, Events & Project Updates](#)



Possible benefits from community owned schemes

Community benefit fund for local projects

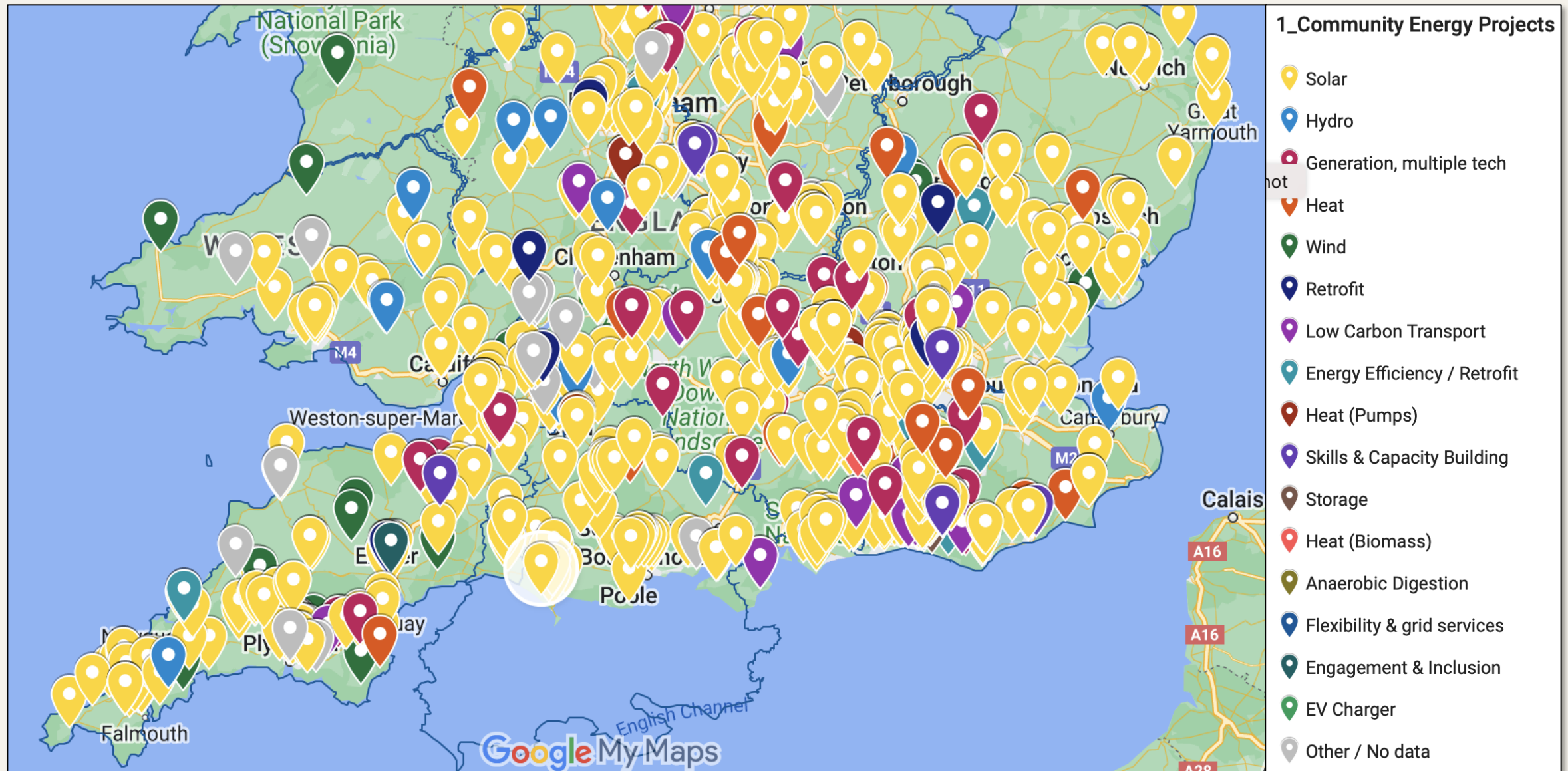
Investment opportunities for local people, keeping profits in the community

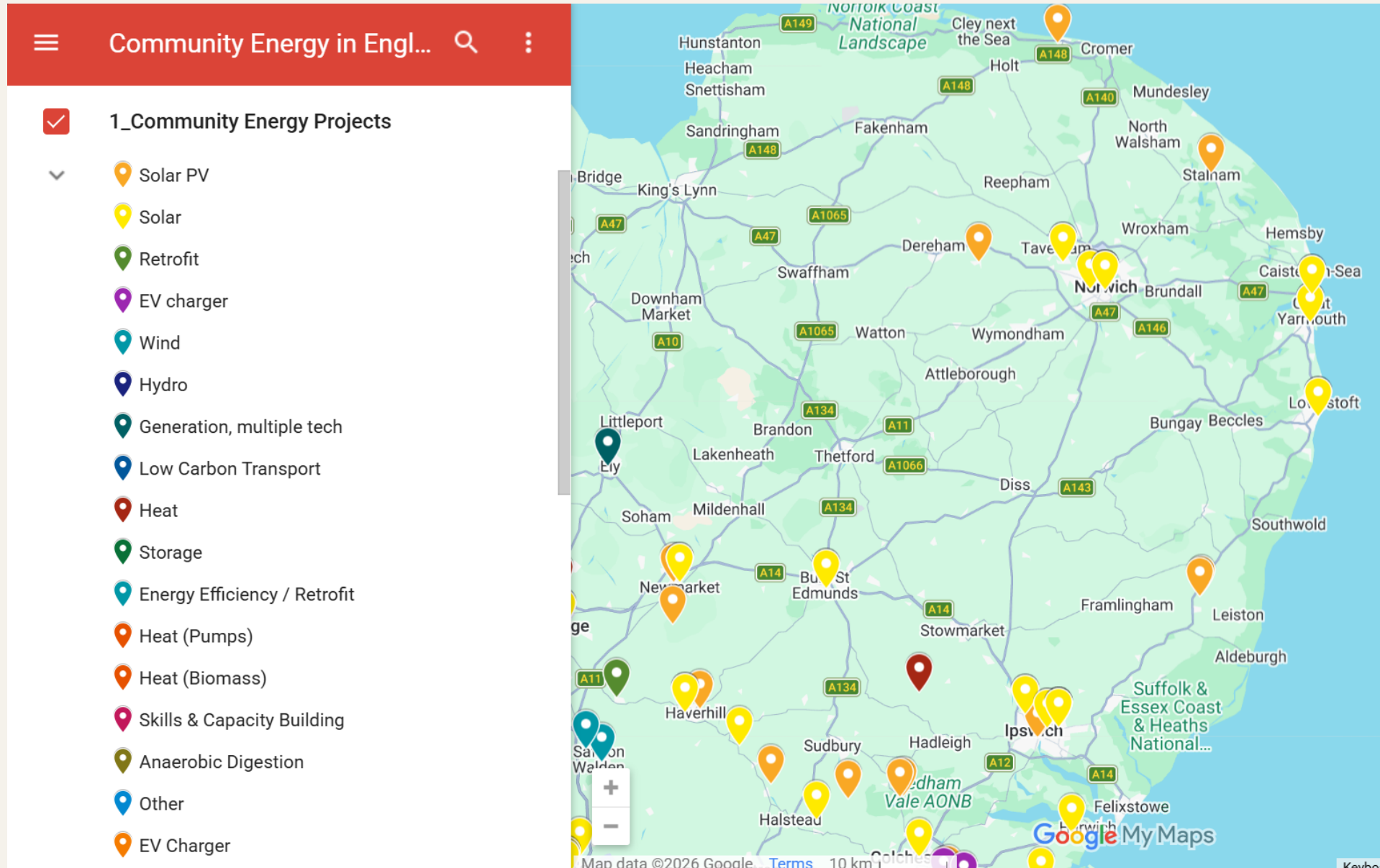
Revenues from renewables used locally

Opportunities to increase biodiversity

Lower cost electricity for local people possible in some areas

Reduction in air pollution and carbon emissions





There are currently not many existing projects, but East Suffolk has immense potential for community energy, particularly as local communities look for grassroots alternatives to the region's large, developer-led national infrastructure developments.



Example – Kelsale-cum-Carlton Community Energy

- Built in 2014 32 panel, 8Kw ground mounted solar in a field next door to the village hall
- Electricity generated powers the village hall and village social club
- Cost £18,000 and was funded through a community share offer
- Money from the share offer provided the match funding to receive £15,000 from ESC to improve the insulation and windows in the village hall





Map activity



Activity 1: tell us about your area

- Write on some sticky notes and put them onto the map.
- Use different colours for different prompts.

Specific areas that are special (and why)

Specific areas that you dislike, or think are not special (and why)

Ideas for community benefit you would like to see.

Or anything else!



Rooftop solar





Rooftop solar

- Panels are installed on the roof of a building and generate electricity from the sun
- Electricity is first used by the building, and any excess goes to the grid
- Can also be installed alongside a battery to store excess energy generated
- More cost efficient to use the energy directly than to export
- Many community energy organisations start with rooftop projects before moving onto larger projects





What makes a good roof / building?

- Structurally sound – roof type (asbestos / slate etc)
- South facing ideally if not east & west
- The less shading the better
- Occupier has a high energy usage
- Not listed or in a conservation area (more challenging but not impossible)
- Owned not leased (again not impossible but an added challenge)

Search locations

solarwizard.org.uk

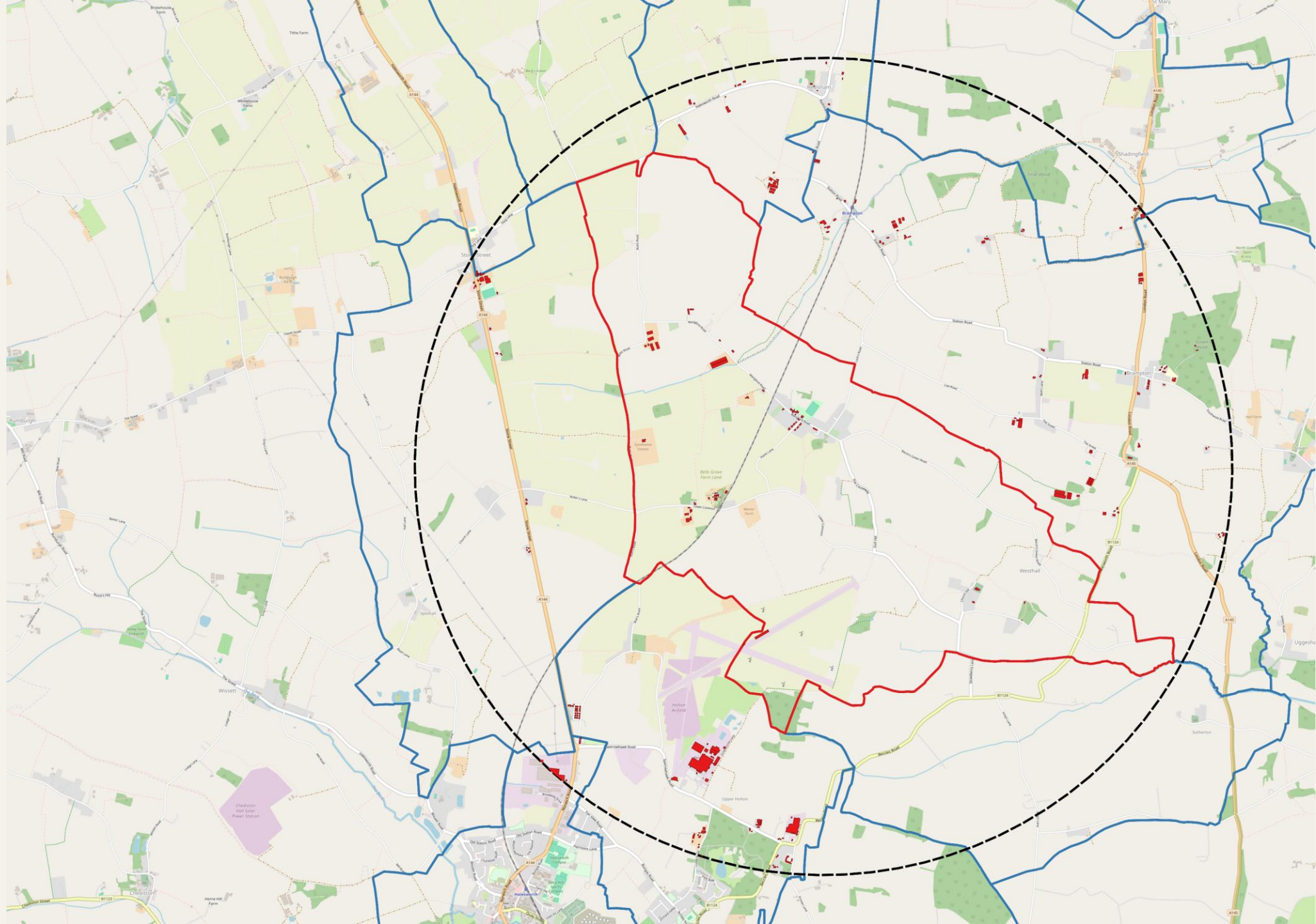
Map key

Buildings Yield (kWh/kWp)

- No data
- Excluded by filters
- 1 0 - 750
- 2 750 - 800
- 3 800 - 850
- 4 850 - 900
- 5 900+

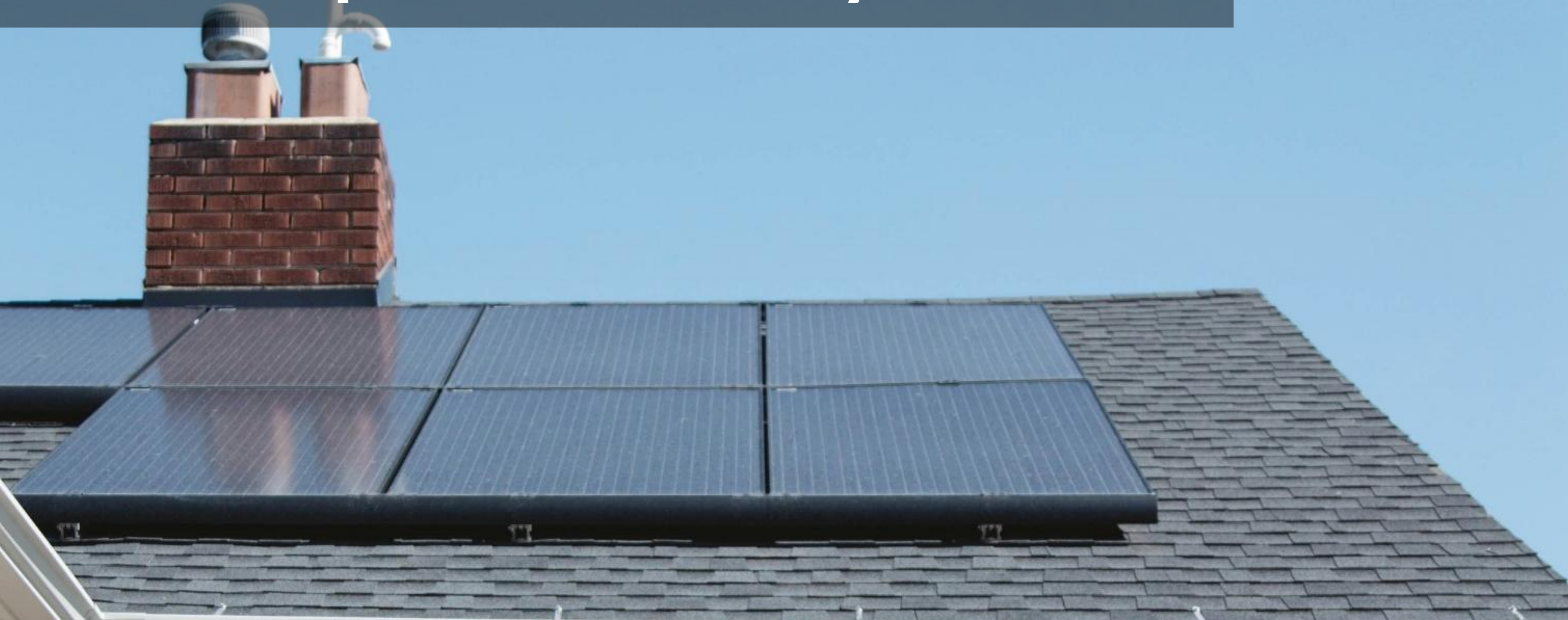
Other

- Viewable area





Rooftop solar activity





Tell us your ideas for rooftop solar

- What buildings in this area do you think would be good for rooftop solar?
- We are going to focus on non-domestic roofs for this activity. Domestic roofs are more challenging for community led projects to deliver
- This could be a business, schools, industrial areas, community buildings etc
- Consider things like access, size, ownership/occupier, energy usage etc
- Put sticky dots on your maps for rooftops that you think might make a good community energy project.
- Discuss on your tables. Facilitators will make notes on what you say.

Activity two

What buildings in this area do you think would be good for a rooftop solar community energy project?

Consider things like access, size, ownership/occupier, energy usage etc.

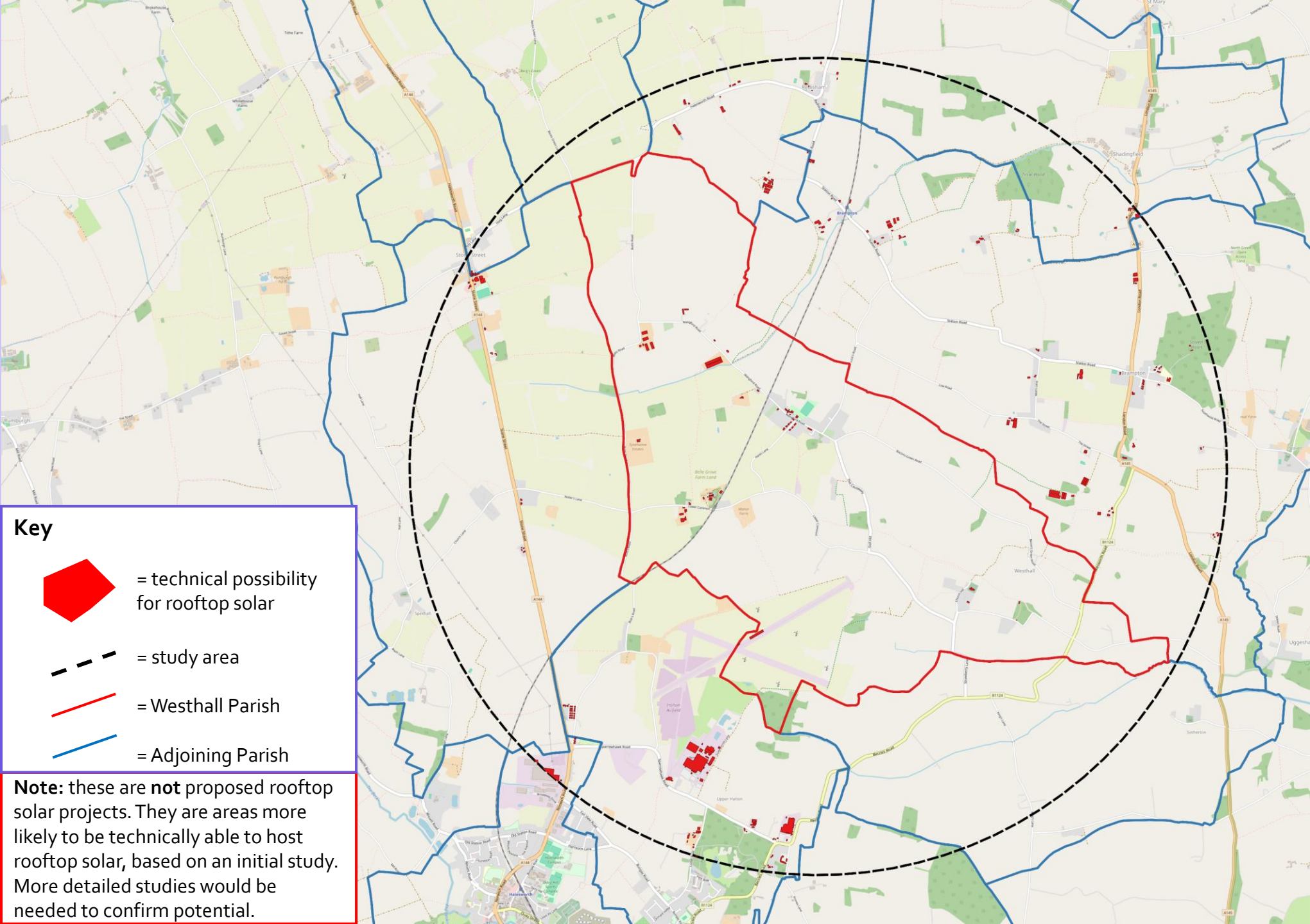
Put sticky dots on your map for rooftops that you think might make a good community energy project.

Prompts

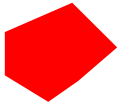
We have used Solar Wizard to identify some potentially viable rooftops on non-domestic buildings – these are all over 50sqm in size. You could use these as a starting point for your discussions.

Discuss

Discuss on your tables. Facilitators will make notes on what you say.



Key



= technical possibility for rooftop solar



= study area



= Westhall Parish

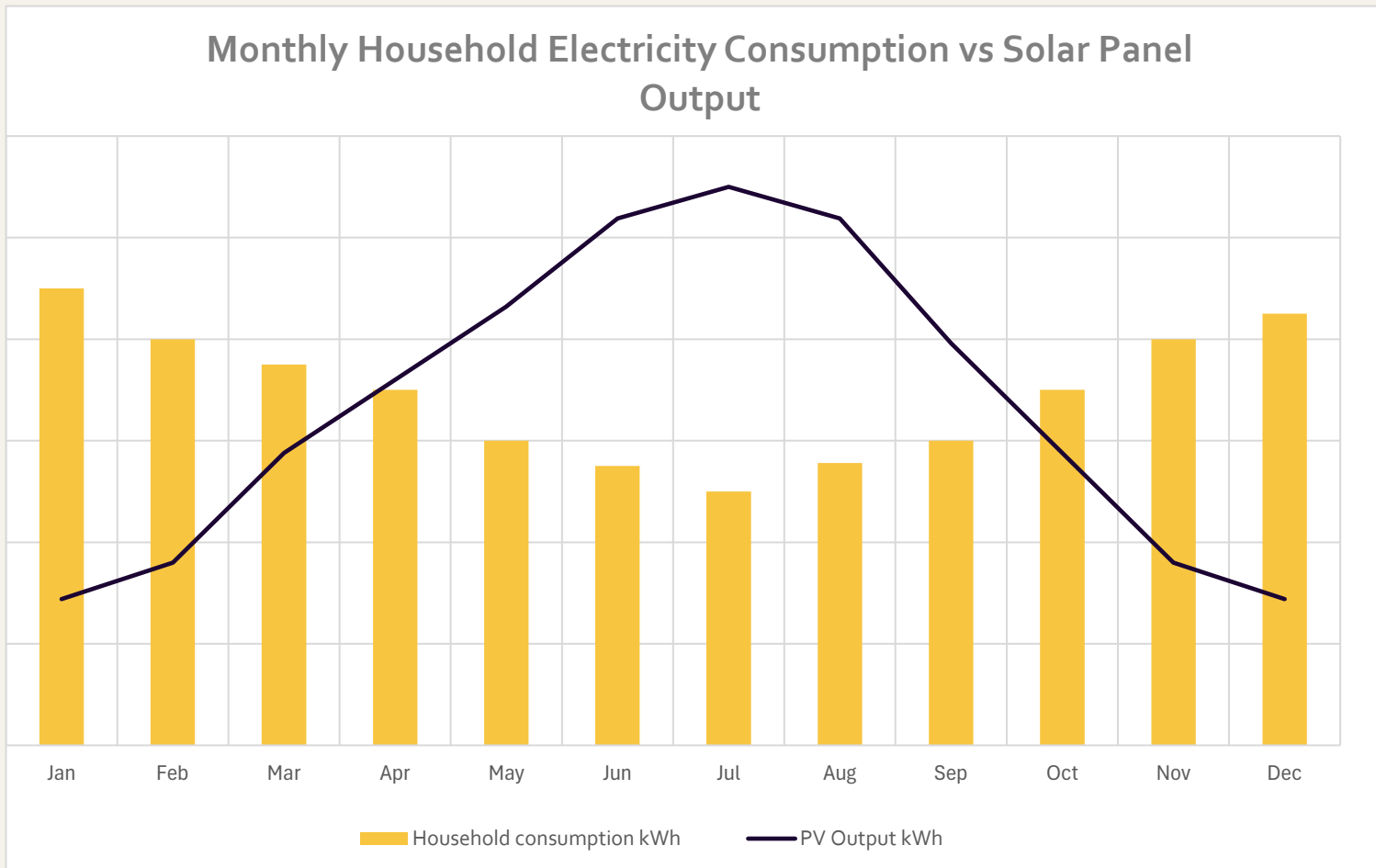


= Adjoining Parish

Note: these are **not** proposed rooftop solar projects. They are areas more likely to be technically able to host rooftop solar, based on an initial study. More detailed studies would be needed to confirm potential.



Solar panel generation

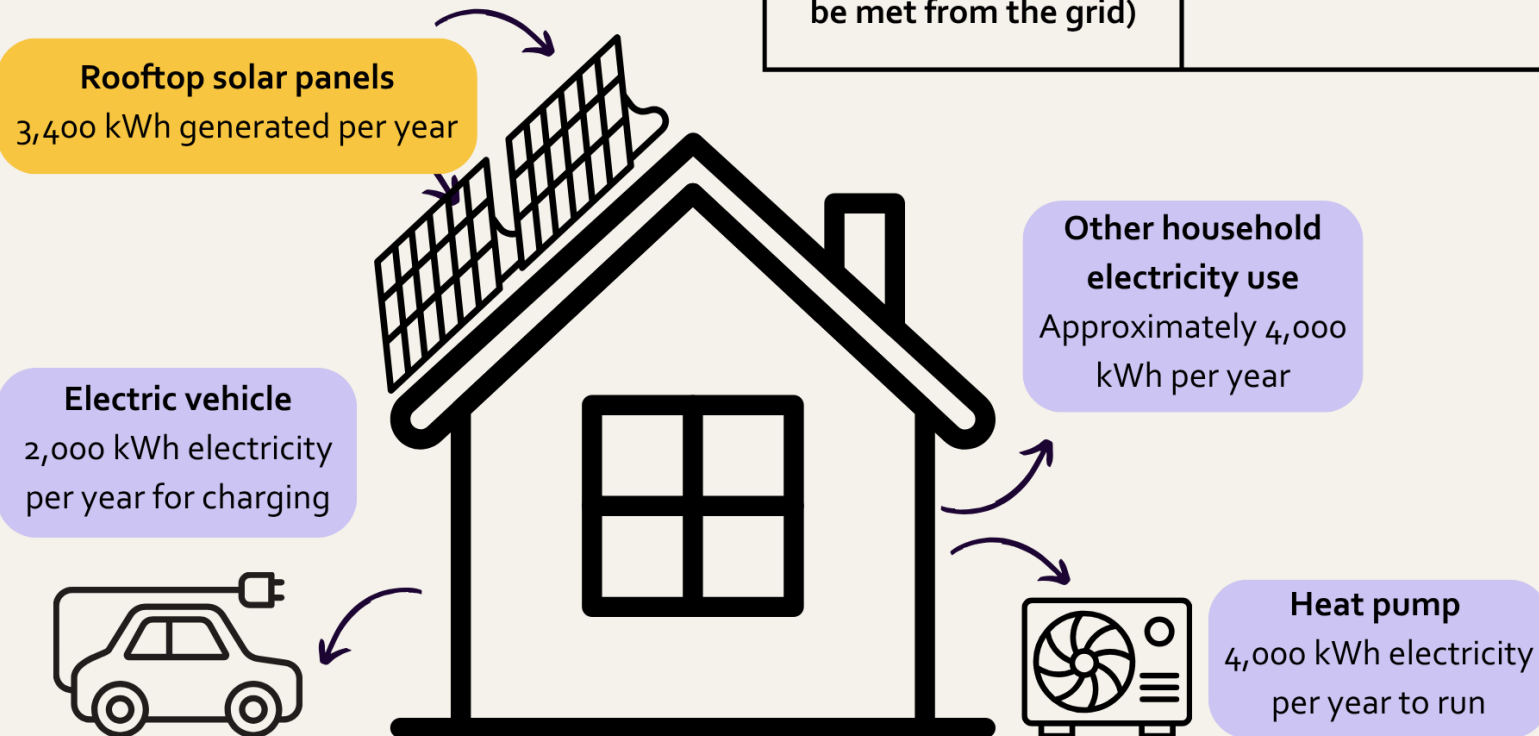


- About 40% of energy generated is used by an average domestic household
- This increases to around 60-80% with a battery



**An all-electric home
(electric vehicle, heat pump, no gas
heating)
uses average of 10,000 kWh per year**

Total energy used	10,000 kWh per year
Total energy generated	3,400 kWh per year
Shortfall in energy demand (this needs to be met from the grid)	6,600 kWh per year



Sources: Ofgem Typical Domestic Consumption Values, Thermly Heat Pump Use, NimbleFins, All Car Leasing.



Rooftop summary

- Rooftops easy first step – makes sense to use what we already have
- If viable can be quicker to install than other technologies
- However, only installing solar on roofs won't meet our overall UK energy demand – depending on the source can be between 15 – 30%
- We should therefore consider rooftops as part of a wider mix of renewable technologies and sources
- What other options could exist in this area?



Other Renewable Energy Options

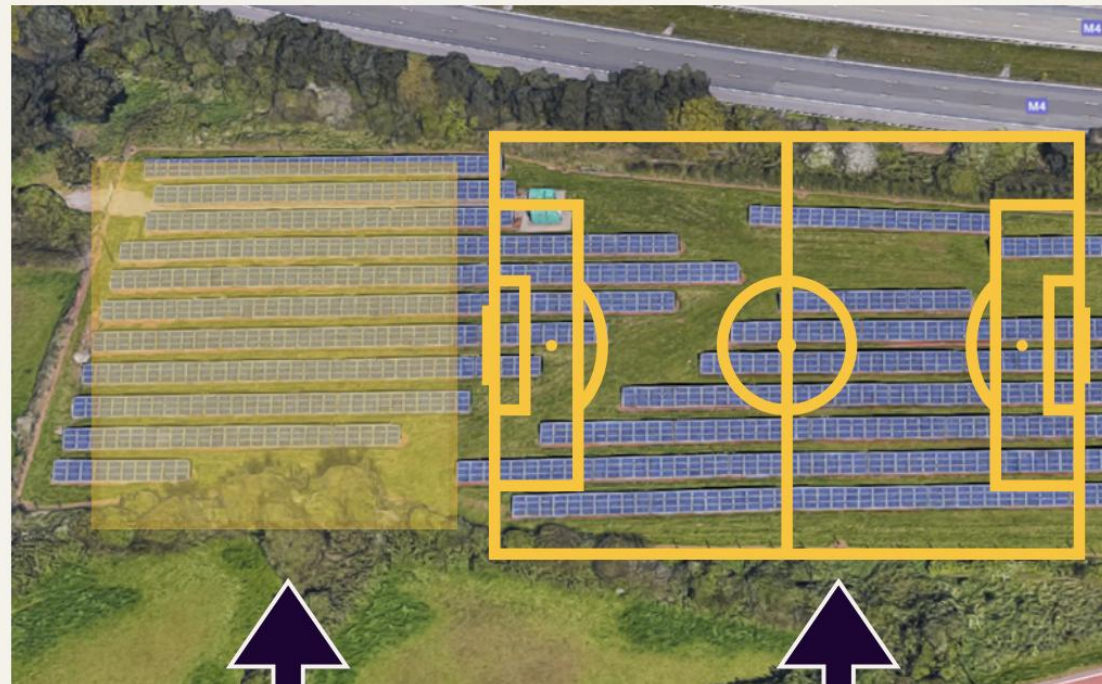


Ground mounted solar

- Interconnected panels arranged in linear rows, absorb sunlight and convert it into electricity.
- Land requirements higher than wind.
- Can provide opportunity for improving biodiversity and animal grazing.



Study of Broxted Estate by Suffolk Wildlife Trust found an increase in biodiversity of 41% since 2011



A 1 acre solar farm

- 0.38MW capacity
- powers 80 homes

A solar farm the size of a football pitch (1.76 acres)

- 0.67MW capacity
- powers 140 homes

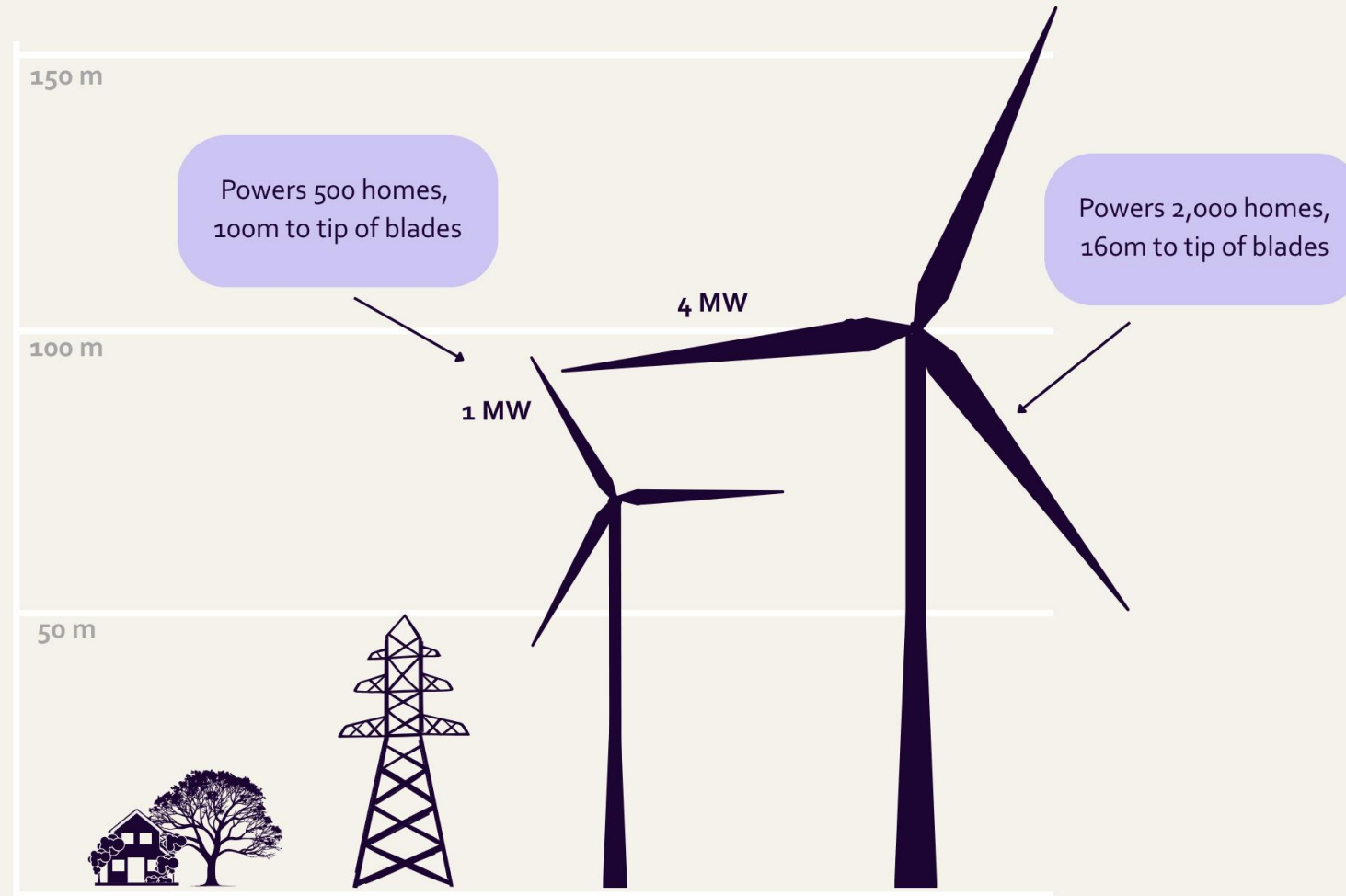
Based on average medium to high household energy use, source: Ofgem, Typical Domestic Consumption Values.



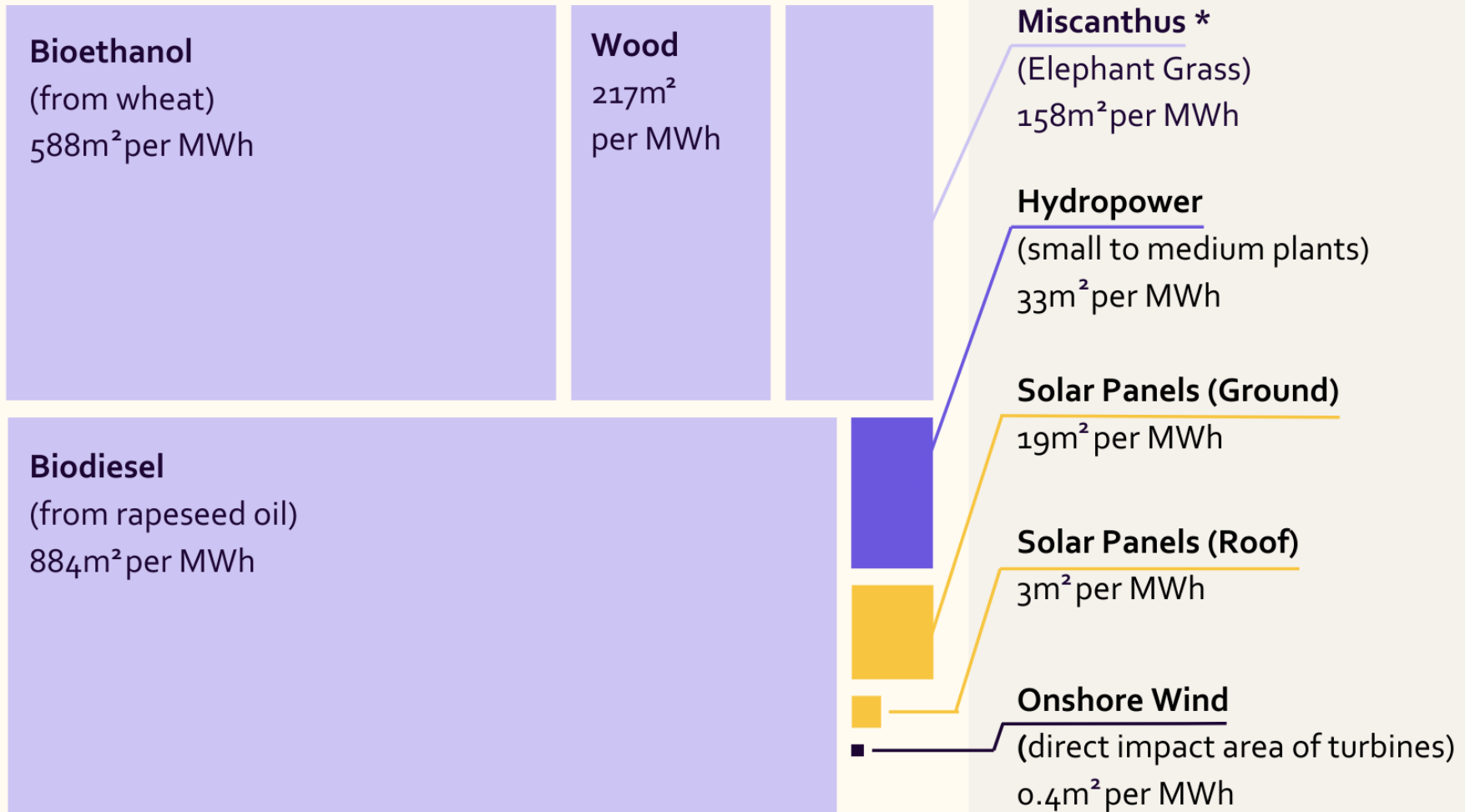
Wind turbine

- Blades rotate by the wind and turn kinetic (movement) energy into electrical energy.
- More visible than solar, but lower land take.
- Produce significantly more electricity the taller and larger they are.
- Average wind turbine height in UK is 94 metres but they can range from 30m to up to 160m





Based on average medium to high household energy use, source: Ofgem, Typical Domestic Consumption Values.



* Miscanthus, or Elephant Grass, has become more popular as a source of bioenergy, often for combined heat and power systems. It is fast growing and grows on land not suitable for farming.



Upper Holton Wind Farm, Halesworth (Bernard Matthews)

- Not a community energy project, but a good illustration of scale
- Five Senvion MM82 wind turbines (100m to tip), total capacity of 11.5MW
- Became operational in 2016
- Contributes to a Villages Community Fund – around £9k a year





Community energy in your area



Wind & solar in the landscape

- How do you feel about the idea of a wind turbine or ground mount solar scheme?
- What are the pros and cons for your area?
- What do you think about the areas on our map? Would you support the idea of a community owned wind turbine or solar farm in any of them?

A large green circle with a thin brown border.

Green dot for
areas you think
would be
suitable

A large red circle with a thin brown border.

Red dot for
areas you think
would not be
suitable



Map notes

- We've already excluded areas of the map where there's more barriers to having renewable energy.
- Anywhere within the shaded areas of our maps could have renewables potential based on our initial desk-based study.
- More detailed feasibility work would happen if there was interest in a project.
- This is all in the context of exploring potential for a **community-owned** project.



Excluded areas within certain distance of	Excluded areas	Other factors considered
Roads	National Nature Reserves (NNRs)	Wind speed
Rail	Special Protection Areas	
Residential properties	Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	
Water	Special areas of conservation (SACs)	
Woodland	Best and most versatile agricultural land (grades 1 – 3a)	
Existing settlements	Historic parks and gardens	
RAMSAR sites	Scheduled monuments	

Activity three

Discuss the pros and cons of a community owned wind turbine in this area.

Prompts

How do you feel about a community owned wind turbine? Why do you feel this way?

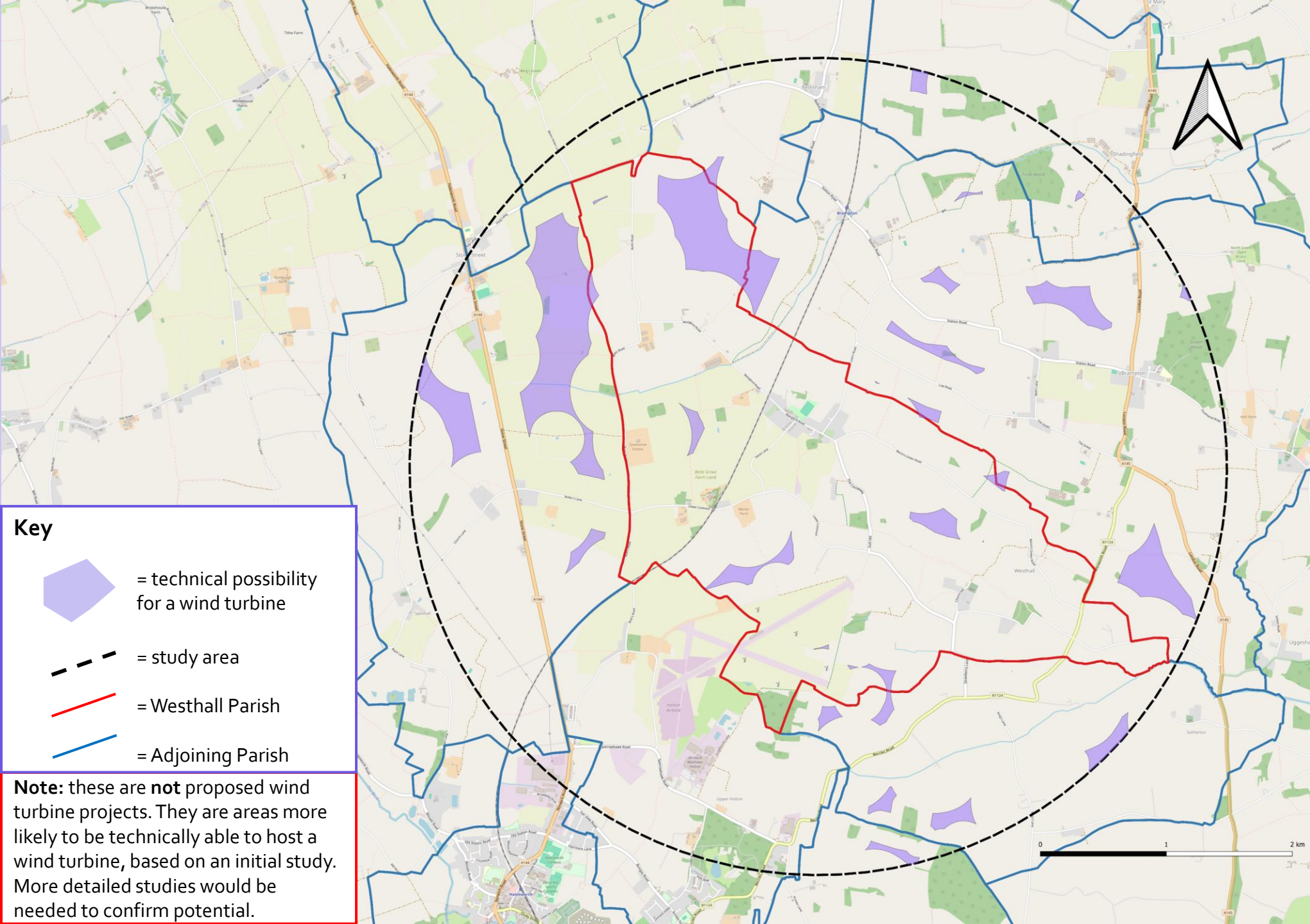
Your note taker will make notes, or you can write on the map.

Discuss

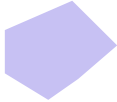
Add green sticky dots to any areas you'd be interested in exploring wind turbine potential further.

Add red sticky dots to areas that you think are not suitable.

Your note taker will make notes, or you can write on the map.



Key

-  = technical possibility for a wind turbine
-  = study area
-  = Westhall Parish
-  = Adjoining Parish

Note: these are **not** proposed wind turbine projects. They are areas more likely to be technically able to host a wind turbine, based on an initial study. More detailed studies would be needed to confirm potential.

Activity three

Discuss the pros and cons of a community owned solar farm in this area.

Prompts

How do you feel about a community owned solar farm?
Why do you feel this way?

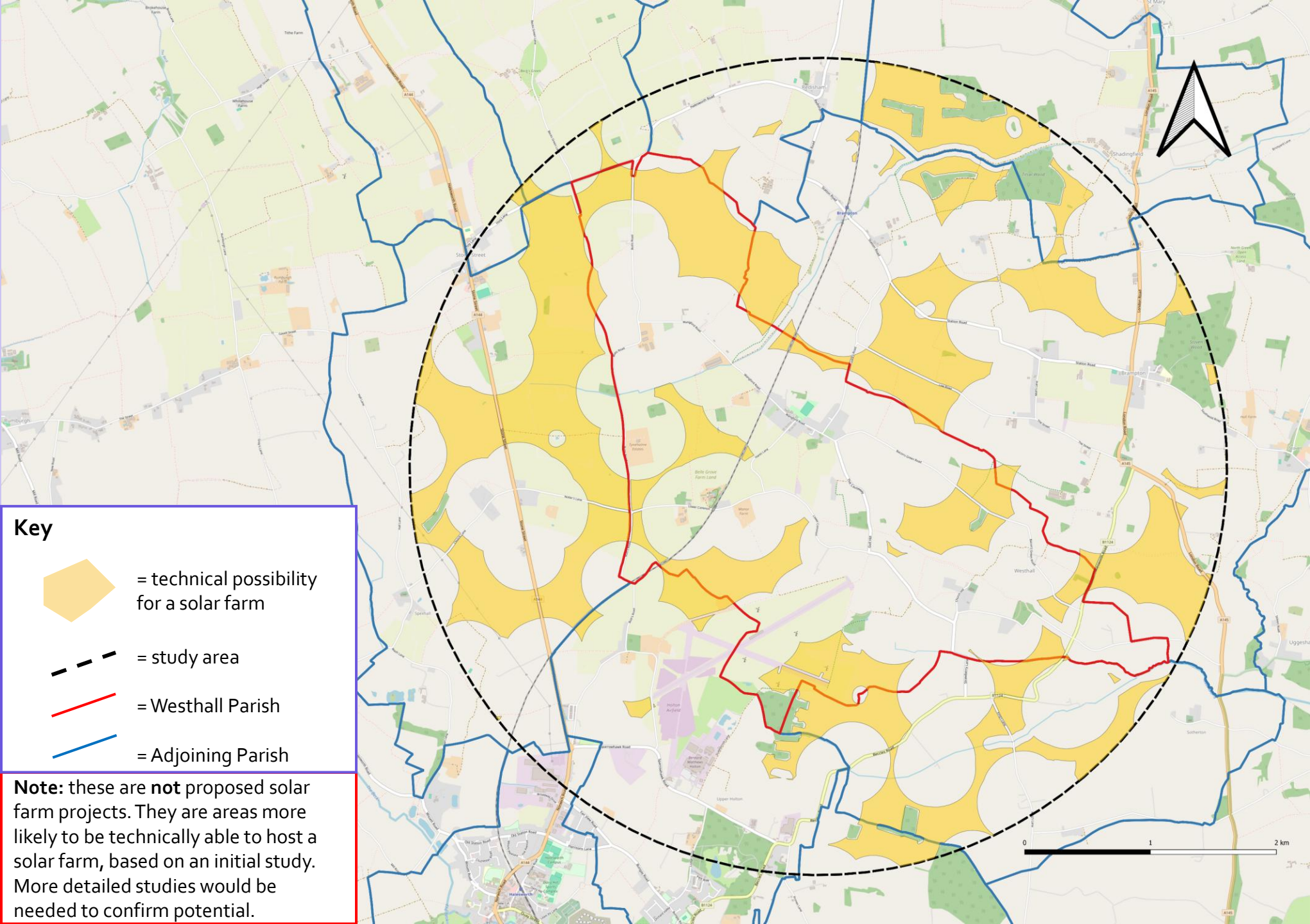
Your note taker will make notes, or you can write on the map.

Discuss

Add green sticky dots to any areas you'd be interested in exploring ground mount solar potential further.

Add red sticky dots to areas that you think are not suitable.

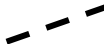
Your note taker will make notes, or you can write on the map.



Key



= technical possibility for a solar farm



= study area



= Westhall Parish



= Adjoining Parish

Note: these are **not** proposed solar farm projects. They are areas more likely to be technically able to host a solar farm, based on an initial study. More detailed studies would be needed to confirm potential.



Discussion



Renewables Calculator Snapshot

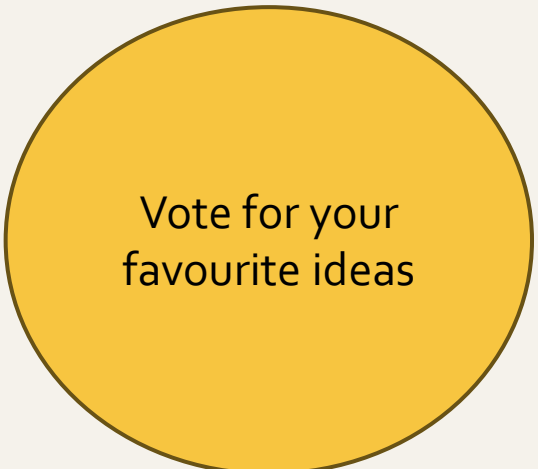


Voting



Tell us your favourite ideas

- Take three sticky dots
- Look at the big map. It now has icons on for ideas identified by you – rooftop solar, ground mount solar and wind
- Place your sticky dots on your three favourite ideas – thinking about technology *and* location
- Alternatively, you can vote for 'none of the above'.

A large yellow circle with a thin black outline, containing the text "Vote for your favourite ideas".

Vote for your
favourite ideas



Final reflection

- A highlight from the workshop – something you enjoyed, found interesting or a key takeaway.
- A change for the workshop – something you think could have been different.
- Suggestions of where and who we can continue engagement with after today.
- Add the suggestions to the prompt sheet on your table.



Next steps

- Thank you for your time and ideas.
- Talk to your friends and family about today's workshop and share the report.
- Ask your friends and family to share their views through our online survey.
- Please contact communities@cse.org.uk with any questions.
- All materials will be published on www.fel.org.uk
- Interested in what next steps you could take as a community? Join our FEL webinar on the 29th September where we launch our new toolkit: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/future-energy-landscapes-fel-a-new-toolkit-tickets-1996779977665>



We're a charity (298740) supporting people and organisations across the UK to tackle the climate emergency and end the suffering caused by cold homes.

cse.org.uk