



Energising Britain events Visioning Exercises

July 2026

Delivered by Climate Outreach and the Young Foundation, along with members of the Action for Climate Empowerment (ACE) Coalition including Local Storytelling Exchange, Involve, Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations (CAST)

Background

On 6th July five Energising Britain events were hosted by the five regional Net Zero Hubs. These were a commitment in the [Government's public participation strategy, 'Energising Britain'](#), published in December 2025. The aim of the events was to celebrate progress, and to inform the ongoing implementation of the strategy. DESNZ has confirmed that Net Zero Hub leaders would be invited to future meetings of the Net Zero Council Working Group on Public Participation and the Local Authority Delivery Group.

Climate Outreach and Young Foundation, in partnership with members of the ACE Coalition delivered a visioning exercise at the end of each of these events. The purpose of the exercise was to understand the challenges and trade offs needed to achieve the clean energy transition in each region. We also wanted to ascertain commonalities and differences between each of the regions in engaging the public in this transition. Participants were divided into tables and asked to submit answers to two questions:

1. *Imagine the clean energy transition has gone really well over the next 10 years. What does your region look like and how are people engaged in the transition?*
2. *What are one or two really key things that need to happen to reach this vision? How can your organisation contribute and what do you need from the Government?*

Question 1 - Developing a vision for the region in 10 years' time

"The benefits from energy transition going back into communities where energy is produced."

Across all five regions some common themes emerged from participants' answers in shaping a vision for the region for the future. Across the different regions, the preferred future is not simply a low-carbon energy system; it is a **social, economic, and community transformation**. Respondents want climate action to become normal, affordable, and beneficial in everyday life.

The areas discussed and some key ideas are captured here:

Theme	Summary of shared ideas
Community involvement and ownership	Communities should actively shape and own the transition, not just receive decisions made elsewhere. Community energy, local assets, participation, and shared benefits were repeatedly emphasised.
Education, skills and workforce development	Education from schools through to adulthood, apprenticeships, green skills, retraining, and workforce pipelines are seen as essential.
Affordable clean energy	Clean energy should become cheaper, accessible, and remove energy poverty. People should not have to choose between heating and other essentials.
Healthy, efficient homes	Retrofit, insulation, ventilation, cooling, renewable energy, and comfortable homes are central priorities.
Long-term government leadership	Respondents want consistent policy, long-term funding, less political uncertainty, and clear national direction.
Fairness and inclusion	The transition must benefit everyone, including low-income households, rural communities, renters, and people currently excluded from opportunities.
Better communication and building trust	Better communication, transparency, trusted information, and meaningful involvement are required. Dealing with mis and disinformation on social media identified as critical across regions over the next ten years.
Transport transformation	Better public transport, active travel, EV infrastructure, and reduced car dependency
Green economy and jobs	Getting to net zero emission is widely viewed as an economic opportunity: creating jobs, supporting communities, and developing new industries.
Devolution and local decision-making	Regional flexibility and local control are seen as essential

Many of the responses from participants highlighted these requirements for achieving this:

- **Building Trust:** through clear communication and tackling misinformation
- **Participation:** through community ownership and meaningful decision-making
- **Capability:** through skills, education, and workforce development
- **Fairness:** ensuring vulnerable groups benefit rather than carry costs
- **Leadership:** through stable, long-term government commitment
- **Infrastructure:** through clean energy, transport, and housing transformation

Overall, the responses suggest that success in 10 years would be measured not by people talking about “net zero” as a separate issue, but by it becoming the normal way society operates. **Technology alone is insufficient; social acceptance and participation are equally important.**

"A future where everybody... feels included, listened to... has a stake in the future, can have a say on what happens and where they all benefit from it."

Question 2 – Barriers to realising this vision

Across all five regions, participants identified that a successful clean energy transition requires **more than technological change**. Participants repeatedly call for a transition that is:

- community-led and place-based
- supported by long-term, consistent government action
- underpinned by trust, education and effective communication
- enabled by skills, funding and infrastructure
- designed around fairness, inclusion and quality of life

The biggest recurring message is that current systems are seen as too fragmented, short-term, centralised and difficult for communities, businesses and individuals to navigate.

Theme	Summary of shared ideas
Long-term strategy, funding and policy consistency	Need stable funding, long-term plans, cross-party commitment, fewer policy changes and short-term schemes
Community-led / place-based approaches	Communities should shape solutions, with local decision-making and locally appropriate approaches
Trust, communication and public engagement	Need clearer messaging, transparency, better engagement, positive narratives and rebuilding trust
Skills, education and workforce development	Need green skills, apprenticeships, training, trusted installers and future-proof education
Better government leadership and coordination	Stronger leadership, joined-up policy, clearer accountability and coordination across government
Funding and investment models	Funding needs to be accessible, sustained and designed around real community needs
Infrastructure and energy systems	Grid capacity, energy markets, renewable infrastructure and enabling systems need reform
Fairness and inclusion / just transition	Ensure disadvantaged groups and overlooked communities benefit and are included

Technology accessibility	Green technology needs to be affordable, simple, reliable and easy to adopt
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Considerations for policy

There are clear opportunities to build on Government initiatives, especially the Local Power Plan and Pride in Place funding. Great British Energy was seen as a really positive new organisation, though many people acknowledged it was still in its infancy. But to really spark more community energy, more long term, patient investment is needed – in grants, loans or other forms of finance – for groups to learn and develop schemes.

Creating jobs, and integrating this job creation more tightly into the regional plans for a green transition is critical to success.

DESNZ has confirmed that Net Zero Hub leaders would be invited to future meetings of the Net Zero Council Working Group on Public Participation and the Local Authority Delivery Group and these would be the mechanisms to take forward the recommendations.

Considerations for public engagement

‘More days like this’ was a key ask from many participants. Much more consideration should be given to the role the Hubs can play in convening, pushing, challenging and shaping the engagement agenda in regions.

Regions want to be able to do more engagement with people who don’t know about the green transition. Energising Britain should consider how budgets for local engagement can be made available and regional initiatives and campaigns started and shared.

We heard that there is a real need for more insight and communications support at regional and local level. Much of this infrastructure exists at London/ national level but it needs more support for communications tools, toolkits and workshops to be delivered in places and with communities.

We also heard that many organisations are struggling to deal with and rebut mis and dis information on social media. Workshops or guidance to help with this would be welcome support in an increasingly challenging communications landscape.

Region specific findings

While there was real common ground across the regions, some regional nuances were also clear, and are captured below.

1. Midlands

"People understand the need rather than being told they need it."

The participants in the Midlands had a particular emphasis on community empowerment, with local ownership of energy and devolved decision-making. The Midlands vision for the future clearly highlighted that success is not only about adoption of technologies but about stronger local economies and lower energy costs.

Suggested key policy focus for the region: community-owned energy

2. North East

"Everyone feels able to engage in the energy system – funding, sense of pride, education, positive perception of energy infrastructure – people see the benefits!"

The participants in the North East had a particular emphasis on ensuring no communities are left behind, with skills development and employment opportunities in the clean energy transition spread across urban and rural areas. There was also a strong vision for the clean energy transition to be regenerative for the region's former industrial areas – creating resilient local economies, reducing fuel poverty and creating skilled employment across the region.

Suggested key policy focus for the region: skills development and job creation

3. North West

"Fairness and equality has been put front and centre of work over the last 10 years."

In the North West, participants focused on the fairness of the transition being a top priority over the next ten years. Greater devolution, participation in decision-making and better communication of the changes happening and how these are being done in a fair way. Participants emphasised that success over the next ten years would mean that 'net-zero' is so embedded into people's everyday lives that it is no longer polarising or feels like an imposition to people.

Suggested key policy focus for the region: devolution of funds and decision making to local authority and local communities

4. South East

"Everyone understands where their energy comes from."

In the South East, there was a real emphasis on public involvement in the transition and long-term funding so people are assured of the direction of travel and understand the 'why' and 'how' of the clean energy transition. They emphasised this long-term funding and clear communication of changes particularly in relation to creating energy-efficient and low carbon homes and sustainable transport.

Suggested key policy focus for the region: long-term funding models coupled with public awareness campaigns for the decarbonisation of housing and transport.

5. South West

"Community organisations are resourced and funded to lead and deliver on clean energy."

In the South West, there was more emphasis on building trust, tackling misinformation, and empowering community organisations to deliver change being more trusted than national or local Government. There was a real sense that over the next ten years, sustainable choices must be normalized and communities understand much more clearly that low-carbon choices will benefit their lives, improving health, wellbeing and social cohesion.

Suggested key policy focus for the region: accessibility of information on low-carbon choices and supporting community organisations to communicate the changes required and tackle misinformation.