

Next Generation end of project case study: Lockleaze Loves Solar – community owned solar PV

About Lockleaze Loves Solar

Lockleaze Loves Solar (LLS) was a partnership between [Low Carbon Gordano](#) and [Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust](#). Low Carbon Gordano is a community energy business that owns a number of solar generation installations, funded and owned by the community, which provide green electricity to the grid and community benefit funds to the local area. Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust is a resident-run charity that works for the benefit of the people of Lockleaze.

The image shows a project poster on the left and an information sheet on the right. The poster has a black background with orange and white text. At the top, it says 'LOCKLEAZE LOVES SOLAR' in large orange letters, with a subtitle 'A new community project to create a resident owned solar farm on Lockleaze roofs'. Below this are three images: a 'LOCKLEAZE' street sign, solar panels, and a globe. At the bottom, three icons (a lightbulb, a globe with a plus sign, and a group of people) are next to the text 'SAVE MONEY', 'SAVE THE PLANET', and 'INVEST IN YOUR COMMUNITY' respectively. The information sheet on the right has a white background with orange sunburst icons. It contains the following text:

Lockleaze Loves Solar
1 Megawatt of solar on 300 roofs in Lockleaze. Supporting Lockleaze residents to save money on energy, save the planet and invest in their community

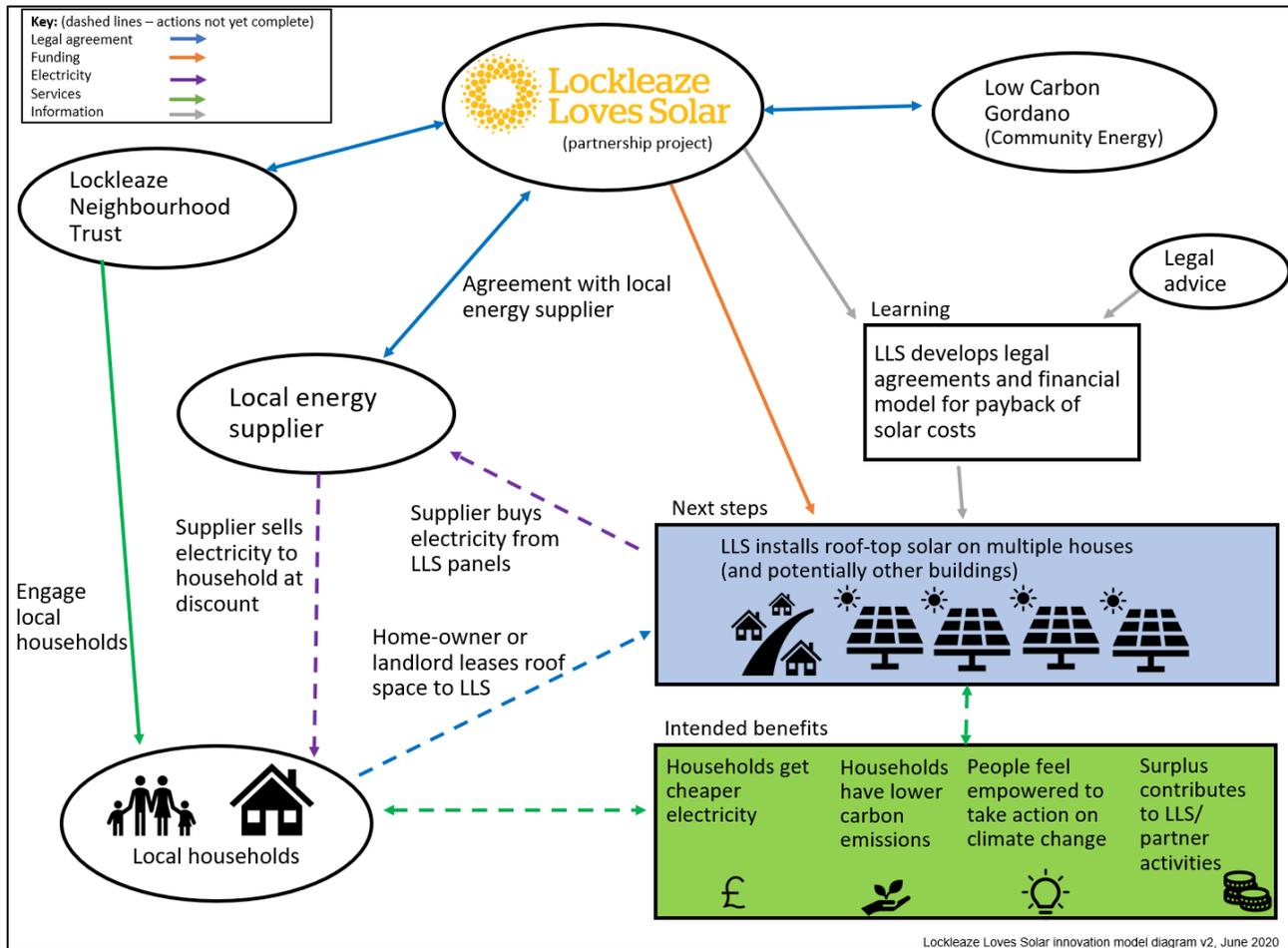
How
Solar panels are installed on roofs for free and energy from them is purchased by residents at 30% discount reducing electricity bills. The community owns and runs its own community energy generation. Profits are returned to the community

Get involved
We need help on steering the project, getting the word out and recruiting roof owners. Get in touch on how you'd like to help
Suzanne@lockleazent.co.uk
0117 914 1129

At the bottom of the information sheet are logos for 'power to change', 'business in community funds', 'centre for sustainable energy', 'Low Carbon Gordano', and 'Lockleaze Neighbourhood Trust'.

About this innovation project and its impact:

The project concept was based on the development of a community owned cluster (1MW) of solar photo-voltaic (PV) installations. The electricity generated via the panels was expected to be sold to an energy company who would then provide discounted electricity to the panel hosts and potentially also other Lockleaze residents. The intention was to develop a model for roll-out of domestic solar PV without upfront costs to homeowners. A schematic overview of the project concept is shown below.



Key activities undertaken by LLS included:

- The project was successful in securing the involvement of Bristol Energy, but unfortunately this company later went out of business and this was a major setback.
- LLS successfully engaged IDDEA as an installer partner. This provided a valuable additional source of challenge and expertise.
- It was anticipated that a proportion of the participating households would be social housing tenants. Conversations were held with several social housing providers, but unfortunately none of these were prepared to allow the involvement of their properties.
- A cornerstone of the LLS model was a standard agreement whereby the homeowner, or other property owner, leased the use of their roof to LLS. This was expected to simplify the process and to reduce costs. In practice LLS could not rely on a standard contract as it would always need to be checked over by an individual homeowner’s advisors.

Ultimately, it proved impossible to devise a viable business case for the LLS project. Alternative models were considered but were not pursued because they did not meet LLS criteria or could not be completed within the timeframe of the Next Generation programme.

Low Carbon Gordano will not be actively pursuing the LLS domestic rooftop solar model at this time. However, another member of the LLS project is exploring opportunities to apply some form of the model as part of a Community Climate Action Project led by Bristol Green Capital Partnership.

Advice for other groups considering this approach:

- It's easy for an enthusiastic group to be overly optimistic when undertaking financial modelling. Subjecting business plans to external scrutiny can help to 'ground' a project.
- It is often assumed that organisations such as local authorities and housing associations are natural collaborators for community energy organisations. However, such organisations will often be involved in other, potentially competing, schemes. If a project requires the participation of external collaborators then early engagement, to determine their interest and ability to participate, is recommended.

Key messages for policy-makers:

Grassroot community energy schemes can add value to local authority and social housing provider low carbon initiatives. Such organisations should consider the scope for accommodating and enabling and community energy projects when developing their plans.

If you want to know more:

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For the final project report, example financial models and lease templates from this and other Next Generation projects, see: <https://www.next-generation.org.uk/resources>