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Local energy news

South Norfolk to host Vattenfall EV chargers

South Norfolk is to be the recipient of 20 new electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, set to be installed before the end of December. Vattenfall announced a partnership with EV charging bay installers BMM Energy Solutions and South Norfolk Council, that will help to facilitate the installations.

The charge points will be installed and operated by BMM Energy Solutions but owned by South Norfolk Council. The chargers will be distributed across five public car parks in the South Norfolk Council area. Additionally, all of the electricity to charge EVs connected to the points will be produced by 100% renewable energy from Vattenfall’s wind farms.

Norfolk and UK sees rise in excess winter deaths

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) Excess Winter Mortality in England and Wales: 2017 to 2018 report was released on 30 November. Excess winter deaths are defined by the ONS as the change in the average number of deaths in the period December to March, compared to those from August to November.

It was revealed that there were 50,100 excess UK winter deaths in 2017-18 – the highest since 1975-76. This figure was 45.1% higher than the 2016-17 figure. Norfolk saw around 590 excess deaths during the 2016/17 winter – 200 (34%) more than the year before.

National Energy Action (NEA) criticised the news, with Chief Executive Adam Scorer labelling the figures “predictable, preventable and shameful”.

The information came as the NEA launched its Warm and Safe Homes campaign, which aims to raise awareness of the annual “devastation that cold homes wreak” on the most vulnerable consumers and focuses on what more needs to be done to end fuel poverty.

Funding for Cambridgeshire community

Cambridgeshire County Council has recently agreed a fund of £30.6mn toward four new clean energy schemes in the county. These include the development of smart energy schemes at the Trumpington and Babraham Park and Ride sites, where the sale of electricity and provision of grid services is expected to generate in excess of £30mn for the council over the next 25 years.

Leader of the council and committee chairman, Councillor Steve Count, said: “The development of our new corporate strategy, which was also discussed at our meeting, and which sets out the key outcomes, activities and behaviours that the council will pursue over the next three year, sees us focus even more clearly on developing the future of Cambridgeshire.”
Battery storage for Essex and Suffolk

Water company Northumbrian Water, under partnership with Argonaut Power, has announced its plans for battery storage facilities across its sites in the North East, Essex and Suffolk.

The sites will see installation of second-use Renault electric vehicle batteries by Connected Energy. These will be distributed across several of the water company’s sites, and likely host power exceeding at least 1MW per site.

Through the initiative, Northumbrian Water hopes to shift its peak demand, to draw electricity from the grid when tariff rates are lower, as well as provide flexibility services to National Grid. This would allow the Grid access to its supply in times of high demand.

Connected Energy chief executive, Anthony Browne said: “We’re very proud to be involved in a project that will demonstrate how companies installing behind-the-meter energy storage can generate new revenue streams while simultaneously bolstering their sustainability credentials.”

Cambridgeshire village seeking community heat

Cambridgeshire village Swaffham Prior has advanced a community heat initiative, which aims to reduce the reliance on oil and move toward renewable heat sources. The Swaffham Prior Community Land Trust (SPCLT) was set up by members of the village to deliver housing in 2017 but has now approached the council to co-sponsor a funding bid for a feasibility study regarding a low-carbon community heat scheme. Another one of its studies found that a combination of geothermal heat and mains gas would be the most viable option, stating that a 4.5% return per year could be expected if 50% of homes in the village take it up. This could raise to 7% return if 70% of homeowners take it up.

Councillor David Greenfield, member of the community land trust and vice-chairman of the Swaffham Prior Parish Council, said: “The project is important for the village but it is also of strategic importance to communities that are off the gas grid and are looking for ways to move from oil based heating to a more sustainable, low carbon options that are also therefore less susceptible to price fluctuations and fuel security issues.”

UKPN awarded for vulnerable customer care

On 10 December, UKPN celebrated further success at the Utility Week Awards ceremony, winning three separate awards for Customer Care, Team of the Year and an Environment accolade.

Its Customer Care award was a result of its consideration of those in vulnerable circumstances under its Priority Services Register (see margin).

Its ‘Stay Safe’ team won Team of the Year through implementation of safe working practice in UKPN’s schemes and initiatives, whilst the third award was in recognition of its efforts to help improve London’s air quality though the £28mn ‘Low Carbon London’ project which seeks to observe the impact of a wide range of low-carbon solutions on London’s electricity network.
Energy tariff headlines

Pay upfront tariffs increase in popularity

Two more suppliers launched pay upfront tariffs in November, following Eversmart Energy’s October launch of its Family Saver Club deal. Outfox the Market, a white label brand of Fischer Energy, launched a nine-month fixed Boom! Tariff, priced at £738 for the period on average, requiring customers to pay for six months of energy upfront. According to Outfox the Market’s terms and conditions, the supplier requires the initial payment within 48 hours of sign-up.

Outfox the Market also increased prices four times over the last six months, made changes to its standing charges, and introduced a winter weighting policy which has seen direct debit payments increase by 40% on average over the winter months. On 18 December, Outfox the Market published an FAQ bulletin addressing the multiple direct debit changes and notifications received by customers, and noting direct debits will be adjusted again in March at the end of the winter weighting period.

Toto Energy also launched two pay upfront tariffs in November. Both require customers to pay the full 12-month bill in advance and both occupy an average cost of £965/year. Payment for its Annual Saver tariff is required within the cooling off period, although it will refund this payment if a customer changes their mind within the 14 days. However, it was not facilitating switches to its Annual Saver products through its website at the time of writing.

Short-term wholesale trends drive tariff reductions

Average fixed and variable tariff offers reduced in price in November, following October’s fall in wholesale prices. This breaks the recent trend of increasing prices which has been apparent for much of the year. Although November saw wholesale gas and electricity prices increase again by £21/year on our measure for dual fuel tariffs, suppliers appeared to follow October’s £52/year fall in their pricing strategies.

The greatest reductions were seen in medium supplier fixed offerings, which fell by £58/year on average, driven largely by reductions from First Utility, Octopus Energy and OVO Energy, with small supplier fixed tariffs also falling by £24/year.

Large supplier variable tariffs also reduced in November by an average of £45/year, driven by E.ON UK, npower, and SSE reducing their standard variable offerings to the level of Ofgem’s default tariff cap, which is set to come into force on 1 January 2019 at £1,137/year on average. Among the medium suppliers, Co-operative Energy reduced its variable tariff by £82/year to £1,136/year on average.
East of England energy tariffs

Overview

In this section, we illustrate the cheapest tariffs in November for various customer types (A-G) in East England. Customer types are described in our ‘Best buys’ section overleaf and are based on typical electricity and gas consumption values. The three main types of tariff are shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tariff</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard variable tariff (SVT)</td>
<td>A supply contract with an indefinite length, which has variable prices that can go up and down with the market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed tariff</td>
<td>Offers guaranteed standing charges and unit rates, usually until a defined end date.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepayment (PPM) tariff</td>
<td>A tariff for customers with prepayment meters, which requires payment for energy in advance by ‘topping-up’ using prepay cards or a key.</td>
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Across all customer types, the average price of the lowest cost fixed tariff this month was £907. This was £74 more than the lowest cost SVT. Outfox the Market dominated the cheapest supply to customer types A-E, with People’s Energy the most competitive supplier for F and G. The cheapest fixed tariffs were shared between three suppliers; Simplicity Energy (A-B and D), Avro Energy (C) and Orbit Energy (E-G).

The average price of the lowest cost PPM tariff equated to £922. The cheapest deals to all types of PPM customer were provided by Economy Energy. Customers with Economy Energy will be glad to hear of its announcement on 6 December that it has ‘no intention’ of closing its doors, after speculation that the company may cease trading.

Month-on-month comparison

SVT deals were still the cheapest energy tariff for consumers, though this month they were the only type of tariff to rise in price on average (by 1.92%). Both fixed and PPM prices decreased this month by 3.20% and 1.28% respectively. This fall in fixed prices is a delayed manifestation of the fall in wholesale prices that occurred in October.

Big Six savings

Switching from a Big Six supplier to the cheapest supplier in November could have offered consumers savings of up to £312, £214 and £149 for SVT, fixed and PPM deals respectively.

Useful Contacts

Citizens Advice is able to independently advise on your energy supply (Contact: 03454 04 05 06)

The Energy Ombudsman can help resolve disputes between you and your energy supplier (Contact: 0330 440 1624)
**Best buys in East England**

A. Small electricity-heated

- **Outfox the Market**
  - £792
  - Simplicity Energy
  - £862
  - Economy Energy

- **Economy Energy**
  - £891

B. Medium-large electricity-heated

- **Outfox the Market**
  - £1,136
  - Simplicity Energy
  - £1,195
  - Economy Energy

- **Economy Energy**
  - £1,250

C. Small non-metered fuel-heated

- **Avro Energy**
  - £532
  - Outfox the Market

- **Simplicity Energy**
  - £641
  - Outfox the Market

- **Economy Energy**
  - £721

D. Medium-large non-metered fuel-heated

- **Outfox the Market**
  - £532

- **Simplicity Energy**
  - £641

- **Avro Energy**
  - £704

- **Economy Energy**
  - £721

E. Single adults in social rented flats

- **Outfox the Market**
  - £844

- **Simplicity Energy**
  - £863

- **Orbit Energy**
  - £775

- **Economy Energy**
  - £844

F. Younger working families in medium-sized rented houses

- **People’s Energy**
  - £975

- **Orbit Energy**
  - £1,071

- **Economy Energy**
  - £1,064

G. “Average” mains gas-heated households

- **People’s Energy**
  - £1,141

- **Orbit Energy**
  - £1,037

- **Economy Energy**
  - £1,127
Other energy news

London seeks additional flexibility

Through the Flex London project, public and private companies that may benefit from investment in flexibility technology are being sought. The capital has 1GW of flexibility but growing this could decrease costs and reduce carbon emissions.

The project aligns with both the Mayor’s and UKPN’s plans to transform London into a low-carbon hub and create flexibility. It will create a marketplace for flexible low-carbon technology.

A study by The Carbon Trust and Open Energi found that there were many companies with the opportunity to increase their flexibility, but that were put off by associated complexity in transitioning. Flex London is helping to bring together some of those organisations with flexible solution providers to help highlight a route to flexibility.

It is also bringing together organisations that can seek flexibility opportunities as one, to improve the efficiency of investment.

These methods will help to lower overall costs of flexibility, to allow for the lowest prices for consumers and maximum decarbonisation.

Energy innovation platform designer Energy Unlocked CEO, Molly Webb said: “It is about improving the efficiency of the system. Flexibility has been shown in numerous models to deliver the lowest cost decarbonisation resource – which means directly the lowest cost to consumers.”

Consumers need help to engage with flexibility

A new study from Imperial College London’s Energy Future Labs has concluded that consumers need to be provided with more detailed information and the right tools to be able to participate in demand-side response. Demand-side response sees consumer change how and when they use energy to help ease load on the grid.

Published on 5 December, the report recommended that the government and the energy industry need to maximise the financial incentive of demand-side response through combining time-of-use tariffs with electric vehicles, as well as including smart tariffs on digital price comparison tools.

It also recommended that customer’s awareness of the benefits of demand-side response must be raised.

Dr Rob Gross, Director of Policy at Energy Futures Lab said: “We believe that openness, understanding your customer and making it as easy as possible for them will drive uptake.”
Vulnerable customers excluded from energy support

New research published on 11 December by the Association for Decentralised Energy (ADE), the UK Energy Research Centre (UKERC) and the University of York has concluded that disabled people and low-income families with children are often frozen out of schemes that support fuel poor households. Since 2015-16, the number of people experiencing fuel poverty has increased from 210,000 to 2.55mn.

The study, Justice in Energy Efficiency: a Focus on Fuel Poor Disabled People and Families, interviewed 125 households and practitioners, finding that vulnerable groups often had higher energy demands, but found it difficult to get access to support schemes due to barriers around advice. The report recommended there should be greater recognition of the needs of vulnerable households, more consistent approaches across the UK and better cooperation with non-energy sectors.

Energy efficiency fund raises £100mn

The SDCL Energy Efficiency Income Trust (SEEIT) announced on 7 December that it had launched a fund, raising £100mn to invest in energy efficiency projects. SEEIT has been unveiled as the first listed company of its kind to capitalise on operational opportunities in the energy efficiency sector, a rapidly expanding sector of the infrastructure market.

The amount raised fell short of the £150mn target that SEEIT had announced in November that it intended to raise through selling its stock publicly for the first time. The money will go towards a seed portfolio comprising of nine energy efficiency projects totalling £57mn. Tony Roper, Chairman of SEEIT, said: “We are delighted to be listing SEEIT as the first investment company on the main market of the London Stock Exchange to focus exclusively on energy efficiency infrastructure.”

UKRI to fund smart local energy system projects

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is to fund business-led smart local energy system projects through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund with ~£10mn available of the £102.5mn from the “prospering from the energy revolution challenge”.

Announced on 7 December, the projects include an energy marketplace and local trading platform between commercial premises in London South Bank and Waterloo, a renewable flexibility market in Bridgend and developing sensing and control devices, data analytics and artificial intelligence for the Cheshire Energy Hub.

innogy IME invests £500,000 in Verv smart homes

On 6 December, smart home energy hub developer Verv received a £500,000 investment from innogy International Middle East (IME) to develop a three-phase hub to enable compatibility with a wider range of buildings. Verv stated
that its hub identifies individual home appliances and incorporates blockchain to enable peer-to-peer trading of renewable energy between neighbours through artificial intelligence.

Pierre Samaties, Managing Partner and Chief Executive at innogy IME said “We aim to add Verv to our Smart Living client offerings and plan on supporting its global expansion in general and across the Middle East.”

Local planning key to cutting decarbonisation costs

A new report from the Energy Systems Catapult (ESC) has concluded that local authorities will need to take a key role in decarbonisation developments, rather than government applying a blanket national policy, to reduce costs. The report, published on 6 December for Energy Technologies Institute, stated that each local area requires a “unique mix of technologies and networks” to meet decarbonisation targets at the lowest cost.

Richard Halsey, Innovation Business Leader at ESC, commented on the findings: “To meet the government’s national target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2050, we will need a radical transformation of our local energy systems. However, every local area is different. The state of homes and buildings, energy resources and networks, and levels of ambition are unique to each area. A single solution imposed across the country is likely to cost more and produce less desirable outcomes for people, and businesses.”

A Whole Systems view was recommended, taking into account building energy performance, heating technologies, electrification of cars, gas, power and heat networks, as well as local spatial constraints and opportunities. Pilots conducted in Newcastle, Bridgend and Bury found that the decarbonisation of heat could be achieved for less than 15% above the cost of decarbonising electricity using a Whole Systems view.

Solar scheme to be rolled out across UK

In June 2017, Solarplicity announced a programme to install solar panels on social landlord properties in Stoke-on-Trent. The pilot has been deemed a success following 3,500 hundred sign-ups from council tenants and 750 installations. The scheme has seen customers benefit from bill savings of up to £300.

Solarplicity now plans to expand the scheme to social landlords on a national scale. The scheme will see Solarplicity fund, install, operate and maintain rooftop solar photovoltaic systems. It also provides smart meters, LED lighting and, in certain cases, energy storage units in conjunction with the renewable technology.

Tim Day, head of community energy at Solarplicity, said “the scheme is perfect for social housing landlords and it is designed to be a win-win situation for all involved. It is a totally new and unique solution that is already proving its value”.
Community-funded solar projects announced

Brighton Energy Coop (BEC) announced four new community-funded solar projects on 10 December.

In 2019, BEC will begin developments on the educational buildings at Woodingdean, Coldean and Carden Primary Schools. The projects at Coldean and Woodingdean will be 180kWp and 60kWp respectively.

The two other projects are at the University of Brighton and Shoreham Port. The university will support the installation at Grande Parade, Central Brighton. The other development will be at the Lady Bee business centre at the port. Both are to be 60kWp developments.

UK wind generation hits record 14.9GW

Windy weather has resulted in UK wind output hitting a new high of 14.9GW, according to RenewableUK. In the 30 November announcement, wind farms were reported to have supplied over one-third of the UK’s electricity between 6pm and 6:30pm on the evening of Wednesday 28 November.

RenewableUK showed on 17 December that the total added offshore wind generation capacity in 2018 amounted to over 2GW – nearly double the previous record of 1.15GW (see Figure 1).

RenewableUK’s Executive Director Emma Pinchbeck said: “As well as tackling climate change, wind is good for everyone who has to pay an electricity bill, as the cost of new offshore wind has fallen spectacularly so it’s now cheaper than new gas and nuclear projects, and onshore wind is the cheapest power source of all.”

Figure 1: UK annual offshore wind deployment (MW)

Source: RenewableUK
Electric vehicles update

EV registrations 6% up on 2017

On 5 December, the Society for Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) published its November 2018 UK electric vehicle (EV) registration data. The figures indicate a 10.4% increase on battery electric vehicle (BEV) sales for the year-to-date compared to 2017. BEV sales grew from October 2018 by 12.6%. Figure 2 (below) compares UK BEV sales.

![Figure 2: BEV registrations](source: Pixie Energy)

First pub chain installs EV chargers

Marston’s Inns and Taverns has partnered with rapid EV charging firm Engenie to become the first pub chain in the U.K. to adopt charging points.

The aim is to deploy a network of nationwide chargers but to start, the Marston’s sites will see the installation of 400 rapid chargers powered entirely by renewable energy. The points will allow up to three cars to charge at a time.

Engenie’s rapid chargers are simple to operate, do not require a membership
Optimise Prime: UKPN EV project set for 2019

The Optimise Prime project will launch in early 2019. It aims to increase understanding of how commercial fleets and private hire vehicles can be electrified. It will also aim to develop ways of overcoming the significant costs of fleet electrification to accelerate commercial EV uptake.

Ofgem has approved the project via its Network Innovation Competition, and has provided £16.6mn of funding. The three year project will be led by Hitachi Vantara, a data technology solutions provider, in collaboration with U.K. Power Networks. The scheme will see 3,000 vehicles from Centrica, Uber and a large parcel courier firm participate on the streets of London, the East, South and South-East of England. The partner companies have provided the remaining funds for the project, totalling to £18mn.

The project aims to deliver an infrastructure appraisal, which essentially provides an overview of the strain placed on the grid by commercial EV fleets, as well as opportunities for network operators to identify solutions to relieve this strain, particularly at times of peak demand.

The project could prove vital if the UK is to achieve its decarbonisation and climate targets and see 60% of new vehicles sales being electric in 2030.

or connection fee and contactless payment cards can be used. The charge points are compatible with all EVs currently on sale and can provide an 80% charge in as little as 30 minutes.

Patrick Sheriff, business development director at Engenie, said “our national network of rapid chargers is having a significant positive impact on local air quality; another feather in the cap of Marston’s already impressive long-term environmental commitments. At the same time, our easy-to-use rapid EV charging points will put the customer at the centre of the EV transition.”

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