

Local Energy Matters

Covering the EPN region: November 2019 edition

East of England energy news

Basildon Council plans energy deal to reduce fuel poverty

Basildon Council has revealed plans to join forces with London Borough of Barking and Dagenham to secure lower energy bills for residents, potentially saving up to £152 per year. Latest figures, from 2017, showed more than 8% of Basildon residents were classed as living in fuel poverty, with some poor and elderly residents becoming unwell during the winter months due to an inability to afford heating under current arrangements. Basildon's Policy and Resources Committee will enter into discussions with Barking and Dagenham to consider an inter-authority agreement to create a white label energy company. This would allow councils to represent residents and enter a deal with an energy firm on their behalf to secure a lower tariff by providing the firm business in bulk.

Ørsted's East Coast Fund donates £1.1mn to projects

More than £1.1mn has been donated from Ørsted's East Coast Community Fund to local projects across Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and North Norfolk. The funding has supported a range of different projects, from refurbishing cafes and installing boat sheds, to supporting local energy projects. Imran Nawaz, Ørsted's Community Benefit Fund Manager, noted that the funding has made "a huge impact on deserving projects in the regions and with each additional round of funding, we look forward to finding out which groups benefit from the donated funds". The fund is part of the community engagement programme for Ørsted's Hornsea One and Race Bank offshore wind farms. Until 2037, around £390,000 will be contributed each year to support a wide range of projects.

Wind turbine contract creates 30 new jobs for Norfolk firm

3sun Group has been awarded a contract to service Swedish energy group Vattenfall's onshore and offshore turbines. 3sun Group currently employs 200 technicians and will hire up to 30 more to service Vattenfall's turbines. The Yarmouth-based business was founded by Graham Hacon 12 years ago. Hacon, said "this is the biggest framework agreement in our 12-year history and will create 20 to 30 new jobs, which will support the growth of our international multi-skilled workforce."

Energy skills event held at East Coast College

A new Energy Skills Centre at the Lowestoft campus of East Coast College opened on 12 November. The £11.7mn centre will offer training for the energy sector including oil, gas, nuclear and renewables. The centre is supported by the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and will help local energy businesses find local, skilled workers. On 27 November, the centre hosted an open day where secondary school and higher education students attended skills workshops to learn about roles in the energy sector. More than 30 companies exhibited at the event including ScottishPower Renewables, EDF Energy, 3sun Group, James Fisher Marine Services, UEA, OPITO, Gardline, Ørsted and Vattenfall.

Impact of offshore wind in East Anglia to be reviewed

A review is being launched by Andrea Leadsom, the secretary of state for business, energy and industrial strategy, to assess the environmental implications of onshore infrastructure from offshore wind farms. The review follows worries over associated disruption to the countryside. Although not opposed to offshore wind itself, campaigners are concerned by plans for the development of onshore substations and network infrastructure to connect offshore wind energy to the grid. Activists are urging energy companies and National Grid to develop an "offshore ring main" to connect wind farms at the coast rather than inland. Andrea Leadsom, announced a review of these impacts, following a meeting with a delegation of MPs from Suffolk and Norfolk in October.

Norfolk school bids for eco-friendly building

Norwich Road Academy, in Thetford, has announced plans to build an eco-friendly dining hall to replace the existing hall. The current building, built in the 1860s, is described as being poor quality. The academy has secured plans with Breckland Council to create the hall, that will be funded by the Department for Education. The plans for the building have been drawn up by Net Zero Buildings, featuring solar panels and would use no fossil fuels for heating. The solar panels will power the building as well as others in the school.

King's Lynn gas plant powers up following redevelopment

Centrica has invested £100mn on refurbishing its King's Lynn power station. Now operational again, the plant produces enough electricity to power 400,000 homes. The plant on the Willows Business Park at Saddlebow was upgraded and fitted with a new gas turbine. It will provide extra power to the grid to meet demand at peak times. Centrica's Managing Director Jorge Pikunic said "The speed and flexibility of King's Lynn supports the transition to a renewable led energy system, helping balance the grid during gaps in generation caused by the intermittency of renewables. It does so as efficiently as possible which is vital as we transition to a low carbon energy system." The plant is expected to be operational for 15 years and will employ 30 staff.

Other local energy headlines

Innovation grants fund 6 groups developing community energy

On 12 November, the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) announced that its Next Generation Innovation Grants will support six more groups to develop community energy projects across England. The six successful groups are Burneside Community Energy Regeneration Project, Carbon Co-op, CREW Energy, Gloucestershire Community Energy Cooperative, Plymouth Energy Community and Bath & West Community Energy. The aim is for supported projects to be completed by June 2021. [More information on the projects supported by the fund can be found here.](#)

Sussex solar plant provides electric power overnight

A Lightsource BP solar farm in East Sussex has been able to reduce voltage fluctuations overnight in a UK first. The farm provided reactive power support overnight via UK Power Networks' distribution system. Inverters in solar plants can provide reactive power to help support the grid to maintain voltage levels. This trial has shown that it can help manage voltage with the potential to provide an additional 4GW of power capacity in the South East. Kareen Boutonnat, Lightsource BP Chief Operating Officer, said "The success of this trial clearly demonstrates that innovation is key in addressing the future growth of the energy sector. With electricity demand increasing so rapidly we have to be in a constant state of evolution in order to solve the problems of the future."

Battery storage site given the go-ahead in Yorkshire

Harmony Energy, a battery storage company based in Yorkshire, has secured planning permission for a 49.5MW energy storage system. This installation will be the second at Creyke Beck substation in Cottingham, near Hull. Combined, they will be one of the UK's largest battery storage sites. Alex Thornton, director at Harmony Energy, said "battery energy storage is the key to unlocking the true potential of renewable energy and Creyke Beck is a hugely exciting project for us, not least because we will be connecting two of the UK's largest batteries into the same substation where 2.4GW of offshore wind will come in from the North Sea. We see large batteries like these playing an increasingly important role in decarbonising and balancing the grid, as more and more intermittent renewables such as wind and solar assets come online whilst simultaneously traditional coal-fired power plants are retired." Work to install both of the batteries is due to start next year.

Fuel Poverty Awareness Day held on 29 November

National Energy Action (NEA) moved the annual Fuel Poverty Awareness day to 29 November. Traditionally, the awareness day has been held at the end of winter but has been moved forward this year to raise awareness early to encourage those in need to seek help now. NEA will be working with local MPs, local authorities and other organisations to raise awareness of support available for those in fuel poverty. On 27 November, the Office for National Statistics revealed that 23,200 more people died in England and Wales during last winter compared to the rest of the year. Despite these figures reducing, the NEA Chief Executive Adam Scorer said "This is an annual badge of shame. Cold homes kill thousands of people each winter through respiratory and cardio-vascular diseases, influenza, and in a small number of cases, hypothermia. For the 'dead of winter', their homes were deathtraps. The figures may be down from last year, but that's the luck of the weather, not Government action". NEA hopes that holding the campaign now will make a difference this winter.

DfT announce the best and worst places for EV charging in UK

The Department for Transport published a new league table that has revealed the best and worst places in the UK to charge electric vehicles (EVs). The data shows that London's EV infrastructure is the most developed, with over 4,000 EV chargepoints in the capital. The East of England has 909 chargepoints putting it at number 6 out of 12 regions. The region with the least charge points is Northern Ireland with only 295 chargepoints. Minister for the Future of Transport George Freeman said "Mapping chargepoints and producing a league table of availability by council area is intended to raise awareness." The government are offering grants to increase the number of EV chargepoints across the UK.

The East of England Tariff analysis is being moved online. A link will be included in Local Energy Matters once this is available.

The December 2019 edition will be published on 20 December, before the festive period.



Energy:2030

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