

ENERGY NEWS



The newsletter of the Midlands Energy Hub

Summer 2020



‘Reducing fuel poverty and driving clean growth’

Michael Gallagher, Regional Energy Projects Manager

Welcome to the summer edition of the Midlands Energy Hub newsletter. In the previous edition, I mentioned that the coming months were going to be challenging and interesting. This is certainly proving to be the case; the Hub’s Regional Energy Team have been going above and beyond to support Local Authorities, LEPs and BEIS deliver reports and asks for data and evidence in tight timescales, helping to inform the work going on to support the green recovery. I am very thankful to all stakeholders for the support they have provided and the ambition shown as the team have gathered the required information.

This summer the Midlands Energy Hub will be welcoming their newest team member, who will be working to address fuel poverty across the Midlands. Ellen will be focusing on energy efficiency retrofit and low carbon heating. With the current challenges facing the UK, those [working to reduce fuel poverty](#) are concerned that the impacts of Covid-19 are going to result in an increase in the number of households who will experience fuel poverty this winter.

Recent virtual roundtables hosted by the Energy Research Accelerator, supported by the Midlands Energy Hub, have highlighted an acceleration of developments in the hydrogen economy across the Midlands. This edition of the newsletter looks to a local example where work is ongoing. The Midlands Energy Hub is also sponsoring work to identify suitable locations for strategic Low Carbon Transport and Energy Hubs in the region.

The Rural Community Energy Fund continues to support community groups across the Midlands develop exciting and innovative energy projects. It is currently supporting the development of fifteen community energy projects and we encourage other interested rural community groups to get in touch.

The Midlands Energy Hub is funded by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) as part of the Clean Growth Strategy. It is supported by Nottingham City Council who are the accountable body.

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News

Committee on Climate Change Progress report – ‘more action needed’.

Twelve months after the government committed to [Net Zero](#) the Committee for Climate Change has published its annual [progress report](#). The report emphasises the need for a green recovery post Covid 19 ‘that drives vital new economic activity, accelerates our transition to Net Zero and strengthens our resilience to the impacts of climate change’. It notes that ‘initial steps towards a net-zero policy package have been taken’, but points out ‘this was not the year of policy progress that the Committee called for in 2019’. The report suggests the immediate expansion of several measures. These include investments in low-carbon and climate-resilient infrastructure, support for reskilling, retraining and research for a net-zero, climate-resilient economy and upgrades to our homes and other buildings. The development of green infrastructure is recommended in addition to action to make it easy for people to walk, cycle, and work remotely. The report also suggests the use of carbon taxes to strengthen incentives to reduce carbon emissions.

Coventry & Warwickshire Clean Transport & Energy Hub

Coventry City Council has received funding to support the development of a business case for the delivery of a multi-modal low carbon transport hub in the locality of Ansty Park. The site is strategically located to the northeast of the city, Warwickshire and the M6 and M69 motorways. It is easily connected to existing and future transport links into the City and neighbouring centres. The business case for the Ansty Park site is being developed by [Cenex](#). The project will also identify additional potential sites for similar low carbon transport hubs across the Midlands. If you are aware of any potential strategically located sites in the region, please contact the team [here](#).

Promoting Energy Efficiency in Housing

The Midlands Energy Hub are working in partnership with [Nottingham City Council](#), [West Midlands Combined Authority](#) and [Energy Capital](#) to deliver a social housing decarbonisation technical assistance pilot for BEIS. The pilot will provide insights into where social housing providers will need support to develop energy performance improvement plans and how funding can help providers analyse the energy performance of their housing stock. Alongside this work the Midlands Energy Hub are welcoming Ellen Cooper-Tydeman to the team as the new Principal Fuel Poverty Projects Officer. Ellen will support the reduction of fuel poverty through the development of energy efficiency and low carbon heat retrofit programmes.

Clean Reliable Energy for Greater Lincolnshire

Greater Lincolnshire LEP have set up an [Energy Council](#) to drive forward affordable and reliable energy for the region, whilst promoting economic growth, through a whole-system clean energy approach. Andrew Brooks, LEP lead for energy says, 'there is a lot going on in the business of clean energy, all of these changes will affect the Greater Lincolnshire area, and the Energy Council exists to contextualise this transition via a business lens'. Working with the Midlands Energy Hub and other partners, our current priorities include, developing a HNDU bid for feasibility funding for the EfW plant in Lincoln, promoting hydrogen opportunities with the Energy Research Accelerator and establishing place based local energy models that are reactive to current infrastructure constraints.

Features

Fuel Poverty - a local charity's perspective

Simon Ross - Marches Energy Agency

[Marches Energy Agency's](#) fuel poverty work is full steam ahead, and we expect this winter to be markedly busier as furlough finishes and the heating goes on. Our independent service operates across Shropshire, Telford, parts of southern Staffs, Derby and Derbyshire and supports over 4,000 households a year, many with health issues. Here are some things we are up to, to help address this scourge.

From a householder perspective, we are seeing many complicated billing issues coming forward and expect more as energy company payment holidays end. We are making many 3-way calls between householders and energy companies to address this. We utilise [energy redress](#) pre-payment meter vouchers offering £49 each, these are being allocated rapidly with many beneficiaries referred to us through food banks; however, we will need to secure continuation funding to see us through to Christmas!

Installers are now returning to work and we are seeing an uptick in householder demand for internal wall, cavity and especially loft insulation in addition to heating measures but funding is patchy and cherry-picking remains. MEA currently has 12 installers on its framework. We are tracking the Government's new [£10k voucher retrofit scheme](#) to understand how we can best support struggling householders with this new resource.

We are working closely with West Midlands Combined Authority and others to bring together a person-centred, whole house approach, to fuel poverty alleviation called [Warmer Homes Saves Lives](#) and we hope this will prove to have national



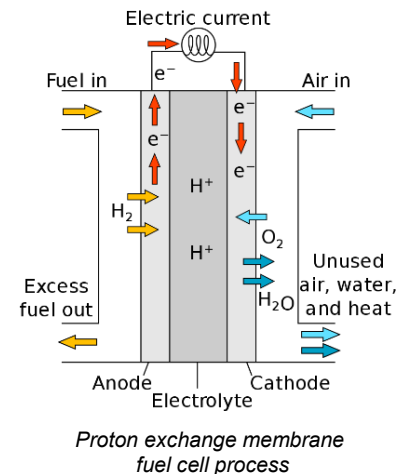
resonance. Looking to the longer term shift to a deep retrofit, whole house approach, we are also a partner in the [Connexus Housing's Warmer Homes](#) project where our role is tenant engagement and technical monitoring. The approach will use the [Enhabit](#) and the [Passivhaus Planning Package](#) tools to model 132 homes in Herefordshire & Shropshire. The results will drive initial capital investment in external wall insulation and heating. We also continue to work away on a First Time Central Heating project under the [Warm Homes Fund](#) in partnership with Shropshire Council and E.on and we are working with [Communitas Energy CIC](#) to develop a viable air source heat pump solution under their Assignment of Rights programme to help the fuel poor in rural areas.

Hydrogen in the Midlands

Gavin Fletcher, Regional Senior Energy Project Officer & Dennis Hayter, Intelligent Energy

Hydrogen has long been considered a [future fuel](#); however, it now seems to be gaining significant traction with a number of different uses being explored in trials, university schemes and innovative enterprises. In the Midlands, the [Energy Research Accelerator](#) is taking a lead in researching a number of areas of hydrogen activity, which show huge potential. Partners are exploring alternative methods of production as well as production alongside Carbon Capture Use and Storage (CCUS), geological storage of hydrogen and using hydrogen in the gas grid (mixed with natural gas or 100% hydrogen).

In Leicester and Leicestershire, East Midlands Airport is developing hydrogen capabilities. East Midlands Airport (EMA) became the first European airport to receive [certification](#) as carbon neutral in 2012 and has maintained this status ever since. The airport is preparing a new corporate social responsibility strategy (CRS) that takes this further. In addition to a commitment to net-zero status by 2038, they have intermediate targets including transitioning the entire airport fleet to be ultra-low emissions with airport infrastructure to be run on renewable energy no later than 2030.



Hydrogen is expected to play a key part in delivering against their CRS commitments and for specific applications at EMA. Hydrogen fuel cells can power zero-emission airport vehicles and provide a zero-carbon alternative for ground and aircraft power units. Hydrogen can also transform warehousing and logistics, with zero-emission [fuel cell powered material handling equipment](#) offering substantive operational productivity uplifts. The significant warehousing at EMA and the neighbouring SEGRO gateway could provide trials for this approach. A consortium is being formed with EMA to enable a Hydrogen Hub supplying green hydrogen for these multiple activities. This includes [Intelligent Energy](#) and a renewable energy / hydrogen supply and local network systems integration utility firm. The [Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership](#) is also looking at how activity at EMA can support wider hydrogen deployment e.g. converting shuttle buses linking the airport with nearby towns and cities. Looking ahead, hydrogen fuel cells also have a role to play in the future of aviation with the development of hydrogen propulsion systems for aircraft.

Funding News

Rural Community Energy Fund

The [RCEF](#) is a scheme to support rural communities across England who want to set up renewable energy projects. Funding is split into two stages. Stage one grants provide up to £40,000 for feasibility studies and stage two grants providing up to £100,000 for business development and planning. The scheme is administered in the Midlands by the Midlands Energy Hub. If you are based in a rural area and have a project that could benefit from RCEF support, please contact the team [here](#).

Industrial Energy Transformation Fund now open.

Phase 1 of the [Industrial energy transformation Fund](#) is now open. Phase 1 will provide funding for projects deploying technologies that improve the energy efficiency of industrial processes (minimum grant size £ 250k).

Funding is also available for feasibility & engineering studies of energy efficiency and deep decarbonisation projects. To find out more [drop in clinics](#) have been arranged on the 3rd & 17th August.

Energy Redress Scheme:

Local authorities and other organisations working directly with charities to support low carbon energy projects can play a role in projects funded by [this scheme](#), however only their charitable partner will be able to submit an application and be responsible for the funding and project delivery. The funds can pay for anything from making a home more energy efficient, to providing advice to help consumers keep on top of their bills. It can only fund projects lasting up to 2 years and the minimum grant request is £20,000.

MCS Charitable Foundation:

[MCS Charitable Foundation](#) is open to funding a range of projects that accelerate the adoption of renewable energy and low carbon technologies. Projects should have a UK wide impact either through having a national reach, or by demonstrating an innovative approach that can be replicated, adapted or scaled up. Grants will usually be for £5,000 to £50,000, in exceptional cases grants will be considered for higher amounts up to £100,000.

Partners

Energy Systems Catapult

[Energy Systems Catapult](#), have developed a [Local Area Energy Planning](#) (LAEP) process for local authorities and regions which involves strategic engagement with LAs, businesses, gas & electricity networks and regulators. It provides an in-depth technical analysis of current energy infrastructure to enable planning of future energy requirements for housing, heating and businesses. We have already delivered decarbonisation strategies for Newcastle, Bury and Bridgend, that will help attract funding from central government and investors whilst achieving a cost-effective route to Net Zero.

Sustainability West Midlands

[Sustainability West Midlands](#) are supporting the West Midlands Combined Authority with their green recovery plans. They recently engaged with members of their Innovative Low Carbon Working Group via an [online webinar](#) for over 40 attendees to hear their thoughts on key themes of green recovery including the circular economy, fuel poverty and retrofit, green spaces and natural capital, and financing and procurement.

Community Energy England

This year's [Community Energy Fortnight](#) took place in June. During the fortnight, [Community Energy England](#) launched their fourth annual review of the community energy sector. [The State of the Sector Report](#) is a comprehensive review drawing on information from 300 community energy organisations. It has the latest figures on the sector's size, energy generation, emissions saved, and projects in development. The report features a host of useful companion infographics that can be used by stakeholders in their own presentations. Also launched was the [Community Energy Vision](#), which defines and explains community energy and showcases the sector's ambitions to 2030. The vision articulates how community energy can shape a decentralised, decarbonised and democratic future energy system. It is an easily accessible and free to use resource with many companion graphics and slides.

Hub Partners

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