

# ENERGY NEWS

The newsletter of the Midlands Energy Hub



Winter 2022



## ‘Energy Challenges, Solutions & Support’

Michael Gallagher, Head of Midlands Energy Hub

Welcome to the winter edition of the Midlands Energy Hub newsletter. The team have been very busy over the last quarter, and there has been some really positive progress on a number of our projects, including mapping out opportunities in the Midlands for growing food from waste heat to the development of a guide to support local authorities to understand the infrastructure requirements for electrifying fleets. This exciting activity is taking place alongside a rebranding exercise we are conducting as we start our transition to become the Midlands Net Zero Hub. We look forward to updating you on our new logo and website (currently in development) when we send you the spring newsletter.

While it has been a relatively mild winter, rising energy prices are making energy bills unaffordable for many, putting further pressure on household budgets. A significant amount of support is required to meet this challenge and assist those who need it most. Further to the current Local Authority Delivery Phase 2 programme, the Midlands Energy Hub successfully bid for £82m from the Sustainable Warmth Competition. This funding will allow Midlands local authorities to continue delivering retrofit activity utilising the support mechanisms the Hub team have developed.

This issue promotes Midlands Energy Hub’s launch event of the PAS 2035 toolkit, alongside informative articles on work our stakeholders are doing to mitigate fuel poverty, an update on the Parish Council Carbon Calculator – IMPACT tool, and the support the Midlands Energy Hub are putting in place to support the decarbonisation of the public estate.

*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

### Join our PAS 2035 toolkit launch event on 14<sup>th</sup> February



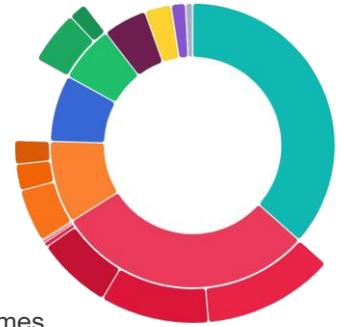
The Midlands Energy Hub (MEH) identified a knowledge gap between the technical standard of PAS 2035 and the operational requirements for implementation by local authorities delivering building retrofit schemes. Given the mandate of PAS 2035 in all public funded projects, MEH has commissioned the MEH-COE LA Toolkit to provide a clear process for all LAs to follow to help facilitate PAS 2035 compliance. The toolkit highlights key steps and points for intervention for local authorities, in order to be a well-informed

Funding Client.

MEH would like to invite you to the Midlands Retrofit Toolkit Launch event, hosted alongside the Retrofit Academy CIC. **The event will take place from 11am – 12.30pm on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> February.** To join, please [register online](#). The session will be recorded for any LAs unable to attend.

## New updates to Impact – the community carbon calculator – increasing coverage to Scotland, Wales, and ward-level data

The [Centre for Sustainable Energy \(CSE\)](#), in collaboration with the University of Exeter, has developed the reach of [Impact, the UK's free community carbon calculator](#), to cover the whole of England, Scotland, and Wales. The innovative carbon foot printing tool also offers data at ward level, in addition to parish and town council level. A new automatic report generation function and changes to layout make the data easier to understand and interpret.



Impact is a free, open-source online tool providing small communities with easy-to-understand data about where most carbon emissions come from in their local area. It draws on more than 30 datasets to estimate the total amount of greenhouse gases produced directly and indirectly as a result of everyday human activities from heating homes, using electricity, transport, producing and distributing food, disposing of waste, and more. Members of the community can then use this information to work together to cut emissions.

The tool supports more targeted climate action through identifying which community activities can have most impact on emissions, and it has supported around 3,000 people from around 300 local councils so far.

Speaking about the developments to the Impact tool, Annette Lamley of CSE said: *“Impact supports local climate emergency plans, through identifying the best climate actions at community level. To reach our net-zero targets, we all need to adjust our priorities, make different choices in what we buy, change our habits and practices, and organise and work with others in new ways. Impact helps drive this change through supporting people and groups in local communities to understand their local emissions. This means that local climate actions focus on the big-emissions sectors rather than spending time on well-meaning but low-impact activities.”*

Impact uses two different but complementary approaches to carbon foot printing: territorial-based reporting and consumption-based reporting. Both approaches provide useful information to help target local action. The updates to the Impact tool have been supported through the Midlands Energy Hub. For more details visit <https://impact-tool.org.uk/>

## Lowering the carbon footprint of the public sector estate

The built environment contributes around [40% of the UK's total carbon footprint](#), and with more than 300,000 properties, the UK public sector manages the largest property portfolio in the country. Efforts to decarbonise this estate play a pivotal role in tackling the climate crisis.

To assist public sector organisations to lower the carbon footprint of public buildings, the Cabinet Office has released its Net Zero Estate Playbook. This document provides guidance to support UK Government property professionals as they transition towards net zero. The Playbook has taken best practice from around the UK to create a 'Roadmap to Net Zero' which encourages the use of a common framework across projects to streamline and measure progress. Download the [Net Zero Estate Playbook](#) now.

To support public sector organisations to lower the carbon footprint of their estate, [Energy Systems Catapult](#) have launched Modern Energy Partners (MEP): Public Sector Decarbonisation Guidance. The MEP programme explored how the rapid scale-up of decarbonisation project delivery is required across the public sector, and a host of resources (including tools, templates, and insights) can [now be found online](#). With the aim of helping users to form an end-to-end decarbonisation process, the resources from Energy Systems Catapult set out the steps that might be included in a decarbonisation plan covering the whole estate portfolio.

The Midlands Energy Hub has been awarded funding to support public bodies to decarbonise their buildings. If you are interested in benefitting from the [Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme](#), please [contact the team](#).

### Combatting the energy crisis

Ahead of the widely anticipated price cap announcement from Ofgem in February, which is predicted to result in a 50% rise in energy bills in April, the risk of more households being plunged into fuel poverty is high. Across the Midlands, local authorities and charity partners are supporting households who may be struggling during this time:

#### Warm Homes Save Lives – West Midlands Fuel Poverty Programme



**Warmer Homes**  
West Midlands

Rising energy bills are having a devastating effect on some of the poorest communities and households in the West Midlands, according to Warmer Homes West Midlands, a charity project led by [Act on Energy](#) in partnership with Marches Energy Agency. As the project completes its first year, the service has been inundated with requests

for help by local referral partners and direct appeals for help. The project, which covers Birmingham and the Black Country area, employs a small team of nine Community Outreach Workers and Energy Advisors who helped over a thousand families with energy advice and practical support during the last quarter (October – December 2021).

The project, which was developed in response to [the Warmer Homes Saves Lives Proposal](#), gives practical help and advice to those who need it most. In 2020, the report estimated there were over 304,000 living in fuel poverty in the West Midlands. The recent energy price hike and continued economic pressures mean that number is now likely to be much higher. Sadly, it is no longer uncommon for staff to find homes with no source of heat and in one case, a householder was using candles to light his home and attempt to keep warm. As well as choosing between heating and eating, residents are paying energy bills with money assigned for their rent. In a housing block for vulnerable tenants in Wolverhampton, expensive electric storage heaters meant that many residents reported monthly energy bills over £300. With monthly Universal Credit payments for single households being £324.84 for a single person over 25, it is difficult to see how basic needs can be met without unsustainable debt being accrued.

Warmer Homes West Midlands is in the second year of a two-year programme, funded by Energy Redress, and strives to help such householders. This help involves providing advice, prepayment vouchers, LED bulbs, draughtproofing, and other small measures. The programme also advocates on householders' behalf to energy companies, housing associations, and others. Their aspiration is always to provide sustainable improvement to the home, and with links to other projects such as the Local Authority Development (LAD) scheme, grants to make lasting improvements to the energy efficiency of properties can make permanent difference for householders. The size of the intervention needed to prevent continued and entrenched poverty and hardship is, however, sobering.

For more information visit <https://warmerhomeswm.org.uk/>

#### Midlands Energy Advice Services

As energy prices rise and temperatures drop, [energy advice services](#) across the region are stepping up their support for local people to help address their energy and financial concerns. The last two years have been particularly challenging for many due to COVID-19, a sharp rise in energy bills and general squeeze on the cost of living. Telford and Wrekin Council and Marches Energy Agency have partnered to provide [Telford Energy Advice](#).

TEA is a free and impartial energy advice service for residents across Telford and Wrekin. It aims to support individuals and families who are worried about staying warm this winter. Advisors can help with a range of queries about energy debt, supplier issues, or how clients can make their homes, cleaner, greener, and better for the planet. The TEA [Facebook](#) page also provides plenty of support, advice, and their best energy-saving tips for winter including:

- Heat your home to between 18°C and 21°C in living rooms (rather than hiking your heating up as night draws in)
- Stay active - walk around or move your limbs regularly
- Wear several thin layers rather than one heavy layer of clothing
- Deal with draughts - low-cost DIY products can keep you cosy

- Close the curtains at dusk and tuck them behind radiators to trap heat
- Apply for a home energy check, your home will be more energy efficient in no time!

Anyone with concerns should be encouraged to get in touch on 0800 677 1952 or email [advice@mea.org.uk](mailto:advice@mea.org.uk). For partnership queries or information about other energy advice lines across the Midlands, get in touch with Becky [rebecca@mea.org.uk](mailto:rebecca@mea.org.uk).

## Funding News

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### Sustainable Warmth Competition

The MEH has been awarded a significant £82m funding bid through the [Sustainable Warmth Competition](#) for delivery across the region. The programme will run from January 2022 to March 2023 and will utilise the delivery mechanisms put in place for [Phase 2 of the LAD](#) scheme, including services to help with the customer journey and assisting with procurement through [Dynamic Purchasing Systems \(DPS\)](#) for Installers and Professional Services.

## Partners

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### Sustainability West Midlands

Sustainability West Midlands are celebrating their 20<sup>th</sup> Birthday and invite you to join 200+ stakeholders at their celebrations on the 10<sup>th</sup> March at Millennium Point in Birmingham. The event includes networking, an exhibition, a conference, and the announcement of the winners of the [Sustainability Roadmap to 2030 Awards](#). Why not consider putting in an entry for your organisation? The deadline is the 18<sup>th</sup> of February. Full information and registration for the celebration is [available here](#).

### West Midlands Combined Authority

WMCA has been collaborating with the Midlands Energy Hub on funding bids through Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and the Sustainable Warmth Competition to support retrofit delivery across the West Midlands and is delighted to have secured £2.86m LAD3 funding through the successful SWC bid led by MEH. WMCA is developing a detailed plan for the project, but they will be targeting retrofit upgrades to 300 owner-occupied homes within a defined geographical area, aiming to align deployment with the [Net Zero Neighbourhoods programme](#).

These initiatives are part the SMART Hub programme, which represents a wider ambition for WMCA to support the growth of the retrofit market across the region. As well as leading the delivery of demonstrator programmes like those mentioned above, SMART Hub will support partners in building knowledge and capacity, coordinate local retrofit activity, engage the supply train, and work with partners to overcome key market barriers, such as finance, skills and training, and demand. Ultimately, their aim is to be a catalyst behind the decarbonisation of 1.2m homes in the West Midlands by 2041.

If you'd like to find out more or are interested in working with WMCA, get in touch with George Simms, SMART Hub Lead, at [George.simms@wmca.org.uk](mailto:George.simms@wmca.org.uk).

## Hub Partners

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