



'A season of reflection and planning'

Michael Gallagher, Head of Midlands Net Zero Hub

Welcome to the winter edition of the Midlands Net Zero Hub newsletter. Even with periods of very mild weather, energy remains to be at the forefront of conversations, with many experiencing higher bills than ever before. The independent review of Net Zero, led by Chris Skidmore MP is therefore a timely publication. I was fortunate to attend a round table with Chris Skidmore MP and provide my thoughts drawing on the evidence provided by the Midlands Net Zero Hub Board and the Hub team.

Within [the Mission Zero report](#) it was positive to see the Net Zero Hubs being referenced. The report discusses that smaller local authorities face challenges on net zero capacity and capability, often resulting in individual authorities procuring expensive consultancy services to help with their plans. The review heard that the Government's Local Net Zero Hubs have been helpful in this regard, as they have been able to organise a consortium approach to drive down costs and use scale to mobilise regional supply chains. The report included suggestions that the Government ensures the Net Zero Hubs continue to have capacity to support local solutions.

In this newsletter we look to welcome local authorities to our Electrification of Depots roadshow held in the [East Midlands on 24th January](#) and another in the [West Midlands on 27th of January](#). We update you on the training opportunities through the [Home Decarbonisation Skills Training Competition](#) - delivering courses to support the domestic retrofit workforce - which aligns nicely with videos that have been produced to provide a simple guide to help all local authorities deliver PAS 2035 compliant retrofit. The newsletter explores exciting work in the Marches LEP area and updates you on Community Energy information now available on our website.

I look forward to continuing to work with our valued stakeholders across the region, to deliver the region's Net Zero ambitions through 2023.

The Midlands Net Zero 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.

Upcoming events

Join the Electrification of Depots roadshow

This event is designed to benefit council fleet and facilities managers, who will be responsible for managing the installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure at local authority fleet depots. It is intended to provide attendees with an understanding of the technical challenges and potential pitfalls that will need to be overcome when installing electric vehicle charging infrastructure within municipal fleet depots to support the transition to battery electric fleets.

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Delegates will be walked through the process for delivering depot scale charging infrastructure, including:

- Defining the scale of the project, spatial viability, delivery programme
- Securing the right connection to the electricity distribution grid
- Concept design
- Software and standardisation
- Commercial options

The event will include speakers from: Hilson Moran, Cenex, BP Pulse, National Grid Electricity Distribution (formerly WPD). After the talks, there will be a tour of a working council depot to enable participants to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the extent of the works required, how to avoid difficulties, and examples of future-proof depot electrification projects.

We will be hosting one event in the [East Midlands on 24th January](#) and another in the [West Midlands on 27th of January](#). Find out more and reserve your spot now.

News

Thousands of training courses available to upskill the domestic retrofit workforce

The Home Decarbonisation Skills Training Competition (HDSTC) is a £9.2m scheme to provide grant awards to a range of training organisations to deliver courses to support the domestic retrofit workforce. The funding is provided by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and managed by the Midlands Net Zero Hub.


Appointed training providers will offer training courses to support installers operating across the different domestic retrofit schemes that are run by BEIS, including Sustainable Warmth Competition and Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. The training will lead to a recognised qualification across three work packages: insulation, heat pumps, and retrofit accreditation.

These work packages have been designed around anticipated industry requirements and will look to address key shortage areas that currently exist within the supply chain. The competition is expected to deliver an approximately 9,000 courses.

Building expertise in the supply chain in this way will also help build capacity and resilience for home energy retrofit delivery more widely, as well as scaling up delivery further as Government works towards meeting its 2030 and 2050 decarbonisation targets. [Find out more about the courses.](#)

Energy projects supported in the Marches with £4m Fund

In 2022, the Marches LEP Board agreed to allocate £4million of funding to support projects that could meet the priorities set out in the Marches Energy Strategy. This represented the first significant investment in energy projects by the LEP and arose in response to a recognition of the increasing importance of investing in energy efficiency and generation to businesses across the region. The Hub's regional project officer has been supporting the LEP to manage the Fund and ensure that the chosen projects fit the overarching strategy. The Fund is supporting three projects.



Marches Energy Grant (MEG)

The MEG will continue to offer free advice and grants for energy efficiency and renewable energy measures for SMEs and community buildings. Managed by a partnership of local councils and Chambers' of Commerce, the MEG has been designed to build on the success of previous EU funded schemes, such as the Marches Renewable Energy (MarRE) fund and the Business Energy Efficiency Project (BEEP) grant scheme. To date, these projects have identified potential financial savings of £1.8M, installed over 2MW of renewable energy generation, and saved around 4,500t of CO₂e.

Marches Network Monitoring to support Community Decarbonisation

National Grid Electricity Distribution and EA Technology are using the funding to install monitoring equipment into 200 Low Voltage substations within the Marches LEP area. Targeted to focus on areas of community interest and areas prioritised for inward investment, the project will use the data to help locate capacity constraints, and help identify opportunities for providing demand side measures.

Herefordshire Low Carbon Technology Centre

Herefordshire, Ludlow & North Shropshire College are using the fund to convert two farm buildings into a training centre for low carbon and renewable technologies installation at the College's Holme Lacy Campus. As a Microgeneration Certification Scheme approved centre, training will be provided to the construction industry, developing the skills required to install low-carbon technologies, including retrofit. The Centre will be amongst the first nationally to offer the new apprenticeship standard in Low Carbon Heating Technician.

Take a look at the before and the proposed interior for the project - it will be quite the transformation!



Find out more about the [Marches Energy Fund here](#).

Discover the steps to spatial energy assessments with new toolkit

Recent reports by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change made it clear that we are at a critical time to take action to tackle the climate crisis and deliver the net zero agenda. Local government has a vital role to play in the transition to a net zero energy system. Local authorities must better integrate planning and climate change considerations to inform local plan making and development management decisions.

In 2022, local authorities across Derbyshire conducted a spatial renewable energy study to act as the evidence base for county-wide climate change planning guidance and to assist in future sustainable and net zero policy and decision making. Funded by the Midland Net Zero Hub and D2N2 LEP, the project resulted in a toolkit which provides LAs with the processes and tools to conduct their own spatial energy assessments.

If you want to understand how spatial energy assessments can influence and improve sustainable policy and decision making in your local authority, [read the report now](#).

Find out what's feasible in community energy projects with new information hub

Community energy projects bring benefits to local groups across England by helping them to maximise the income-generating potential of renewable energy and put this income to work in their area. By increasing the uptake of locally owned renewable energy, these initiatives support the Government's targets for reaching net zero.

Projects like these benefit the communities by promoting rural growth, creating new jobs and volunteering opportunities, and enabling communities to access the economic benefits associated with renewable energy schemes. Through the Rural Community Energy Fund, the Hub supported 35 projects through Stage 1 and a further seven through Stage 2.

To share the knowledge of what is achievable for community groups, we have created a new area on the Midlands Net Zero Hub website which includes the feasibility studies from the projects we supported. From a heat network at Brassington village in Derbyshire to reinstating the water mill at Cromford Mills (a UNESCO World Heritage site), there are lots of examples to inspire your projects.



[Discover the projects](#)

Put PAS 2035 into practice with a new toolkit video series

The Midlands Net Zero Hub and the Retrofit Academy have created a **series of 10 videos** to compliment the [Midlands Retrofit Toolkit](#). The toolkit was designed to help with the variety of engagement, management, contractual and technical challenges involved in making compliance happen.

The videos provide a simple guide to help all local authorities deliver high quality and PAS 2035 compliant retrofit. Key factors to ensure projects are compliant with PAS 2035 processes are explored in the videos, and they highlight where you can look in the Retrofit Toolkit to find out more. [Watch the videos now.](#)

Join Sustainability West Midlands as a Project Officer

[Sustainability West Midlands](#) (SWM) was established in 2002 as an independent, not-for-profit organisation. They strive to make the West Midlands region more sustainable, fairer and greener for all. Their vision is that the West Midlands is leading in contributing to the national target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 whilst addressing health inequality and driving inclusive growth. With our proven success, their team needs to grow.

The Project Officer will lead on the delivery of projects and provide sustainability advice and business development to deliver our mission. You will be central to our small dynamic team that has been making a difference throughout the West Midlands for over 20 years. This is an ideal opportunity for someone with over one year's experience in the provision of sustainability advice or consultancy, wanting to lead on the delivery of similar projects to help grow our organisation. [Find out more and apply now.](#)

Our partners

