

steps towards becoming an energy efficient school

Carbon Reduction Commitment Efficiency Scheme update

Since the last Energy Busters briefing in the autumn the Government has abolished the reward and penalty element of the Carbon Reduction Commitment Efficiency Scheme (CRC). Norfolk County Council and other major consumers of energy will still have to pay for allowances to cover their carbon usage but the money will now be retained by the Government. It is in all our interests to keep the cost of allowances down – at current rates, the County Council's allowance liability for its sites would be over £1m.

The Government has also decided that the cost of these carbon allowances for schools should be charged to the Direct Schools Grant – ie top-sliced as one sum rather than shared between all schools on a formula basis. So the less that has to be spent on carbon allowances, the more money there will be to distribute to schools under the funding formula.

Following assessment by the Carbon Trust, Norfolk County Council was one of only 500 organisations nationally to successfully achieve the Carbon Trust Standard Certification in December 2010. We have together cut carbon emissions by 6%, saving £2.6m in the process during 2009/10.

Sustainable schools training workshops coming soon . . .

Children's Services wants to support schools to reduce their energy consumption. We are looking to run some workshops across the County during October. The aim is to support a practical whole school approach in order to equip schools to make the most of their energy and money, as energy costs rise. The events are aimed to support the whole school – headteachers, school governors, business managers, caretakers, all support staff and the students themselves.

To ensure that as many schools can participate as possible, we have changed the intended dates from May/June to **October 2011**.

We feel a cluster approach will leave schools with a more local support structure for further energy work and we are actively looking for three clusters to work with on a pilot basis. If your school or cluster is interested in being part of the pilot workshops or would like to know more about the support programme you can contact Jo Ashford at jo.ashford@norfolk.gov.uk

Schools requiring energy advices prior to the intended workshop dates please contact the Energy Busters Team at andrew.coles@norfolk.gov.uk

Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) Programme update

The AMR installation programme across schools is progressing well with over 70% of our electricity and over 80% of our gas consumption being measured. The AMRs will enable consumption to be tracked half hourly which will allow rapid intervention when anomalies are found. We are in the process of building a web-based energy monitoring system, which will produce regular, high quality data on energy usage.

All enquiries about AMRs should be made to David Clements at david.clements@npsco.uk

Frequently asked questions

Because of the significant changes to the CRC and FIT schemes, we are revising the 'frequently asked questions' and these will be published together with the next energy busters briefing. If you have any urgent questions before then you can contact Paul Cockaday at paul.cockaday@nps.co.uk



Financial opportunities for schools

There is an opportunity for schools to take advantage of financial support through renewable energy feed in tariffs (FIT). The window of opportunity is small because the Government has started a review of FITs which should be completed by the end of July 2011. It is likely contracts will not be so generous in the future.

Feed in tariffs

- FIT is a Government scheme which enables income to be generated from renewable energy installations such as wind turbines or photovoltaic panels (PVs).
- The Government pays towards the electricity generated through renewable sources whether it is used directly or is fed into the national grid.
- FITs will provide a guaranteed financial income over the FIT contract period which is typically 20 to 25 years.
- For a typical installation the payback period is 10 -12 years by taking into account FIT income, energy savings resulting from lower energy bills and any payments received for supplying the national grid.

Ways to take advantage

The typical cost of a small wind turbine is approximately £25k and of Photovoltaic Panels, having a peak power output of 4kw, would be £16k.

- Schools could invest in FIT technology at their own cost and earn an income which would be kept by the school.

For schools where the full capital investment is not possible there are other options which can be considered:

- In the last briefing we explained that Norfolk County Council has set up a £9.38m Carbon and Energy Reduction Fund (CERF) to support the carbon efficiency of buildings. The funding, which is all capital, requires a five year payback so would need to be topped up. Possibilities include capital available to schools participating in Energy Busters/e-futures or school's Devolved Formula Capital. Where CERF makes a contribution the energy savings and the feed-in-tariff income would need to be shared.
- Some schools are being approached by companies with 'deals'. It would be a governing body matter as to whether to enter into a contract. Some offer to fit the technology free but are then taking the feed in tariffs. As ever, caution is the watchword, before contracts are entered into and advice should be sought independently of the company making the investment proposal. For example who is responsible for moving the panels when maintenance is required and will the school be liable for loss of income if the panels need to be disconnected?

NPS Property Consultants Ltd can help schools consider delivery options, advise on installation types, help assess any offers schools may receive and discuss potential for CERF funding. Enquiries should be made to Richard Varvel at richard.varvel@nps.co.uk.

Please let us know if your school installs any renewable energy source. NCC needs to know this for its annual Carbon Reduction Commitment return to Government.

Contact Paul Cockaday at paul.cockaday@nps.co.uk

Renewable Heat Incentive

The Government has also confirmed that it will proceed with the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) from June 2011. This is a similar type of financial support to FITs for technologies such as solar thermal, biomass and combined heat and power. We will provide more information on this in the next briefing.

The briefing has been prepared by Children's Services, Planning and Buildings.

If you have any comments or suggestions please get in touch with Jo Ashford at

jo.ashford@norfolk.gov.uk