Work starts on Saughton Park Micro-hydro Scheme

Saughton Park took a step towards becoming fully eco-powered yesterday (Friday 10 May) with a ground-breaking ceremony for the park's innovative micro-hydro scheme.

The project, part of the park's £8m regeneration project, will involve a 39kW Archimedes Screw hydro installation. And, together with ground source heating, will make Saughton Park a fully green-powered park.

Combined with two ground source heating installations, this 10m-long, 10-tonne structure will prevent over 90 tonnes of CO2 being pumped into the atmosphere each year, while generating enough energy to power the whole park (lighting, buildings incl. new cafe).

The micro-hydro scheme project was partially financed thanks to £482,107 from the SP Energy Networks Green Economy Fund. The scheme is part of the bigger Saughton Park renovation project, which includes landscaped grounds as well as a new, fully-accessible play park and a multi-use games area designed to suit roller hockey and basketball, which have already proved very popular.

Meanwhile, work continues on a brand new cafe for the park – due to open its doors to customers in June.

Transport and Environment Convener Councillor Lesley Macinnes performed the ground-breaking ceremony today alongside representatives from the SP Energy Networks Green Economy Fund, the Friends of Saughton Park and Big Cat Contracts. She

said: “What a great moment for Saughton Park and for Edinburgh as a whole.

“This micro-hydro scheme and new ground source heating installation will cut more than 90 tonnes of CO2 emissions, making Saughton our first totally ‘green’ park. The terrifying truth about climate change is hitting home harder than ever now all over the world. Here in Edinburgh we are considering a very ambitious carbon neutral target as part of our sustainability strategy for the Capital.

“By harnessing clean energy in one of our premier parks, we are clearly demonstrating our commitment to cutting carbon emissions. Saughton Park has undergone a fantastic transformation over the past couple of years or so and we can’t wait for it to formally open to the public later next month.”

l-r Guy Jefferson SP Energy – Networks Green Economy Fund, Cllr. Cathy Fullerton, Cllr. Denis Dixon, Douglas Beddie – Friends of Saughton Park. © Alan McCredie Photography

Frank Mitchell, CEO of SP Energy Networks, said: “We’re investing £20 million into innovative projects across the country that make Scotland a cleaner and greener place and

ultimately help to deliver a better future, quicker for our communities. We're proud to have awarded the Saughton Park micro-hydro project almost £500,000 to bring its ground-breaking hydro scheme to life.

"The project has demonstrated innovation in the way it is integrating renewable energy into this historic community space. I'm looking forward to seeing the progress as the micro-hydroelectric system is installed."

Shona Nelson, Chair of the Friends of Saughton Park, added: "The micro-hydro is the last piece of the jigsaw in the re-development of Saughton Park and we think it will really put the park on the map! From the environment to science we are looking forward to sharing what is happening and telling everyone why we think Saughton Park is so special."

A diversion route has been put in place along the Water of Leith path at the south of the park while the scheme is built. Walkers and cyclists will still have access to this part of the park and the Water of Leith viewpoint.

The project has benefited from £3.8m in Heritage Lottery funding, plus £500,000 from Sustrans and £25,000 from the Mushroom Trust. Additional funding of £164,000 from WREN's FCC Scottish Action Fund, Viridor and EB Scotland went towards the new playground, plus £50k from the SUEZ Communities Trust to create a multi-use games area, which has also been supported by the Edinburgh Inline Hockey Club.

The contract for the micro-hydro scheme was awarded to Big Cat Contracts following a competitive tender process. Works commenced on site this week and are due for completion by January 2020.