

New Midlothian low carbon heating network almost ready

A £20 million project to provide low carbon alternatives to heat houses at the new Shawfair town will be ready to provide energy in a few months, with the first homes expected to link up before the end of the year.

Vattenfall Heat UK joined with Midlothian Council to create Midlothian Energy Ltd to provide heating initially for the new Shawfair development which will have around 3,000 homes.

The initial phase of the network will supply the homes, education and retail properties at Shawfair Town using waste heat from FCC Environment's Millerhill Recycling and Energy Recovery Centre which will burn tonnes of waste which would otherwise go to landfill to create energy.

But as the project expands heat from underground mining networks across the county will be harnessed to supply more customers.

This week Vattenfall said the construction of district heating centre will be completed by April with commissioning work continuing on the site.

And it revealed it is also in discussions over extending the network to new housing planned for Newton and Wellington Farms in the county where more than 600 homes are being built.

Three 100,000 thermal storage tanks are in place at the Millerhill site where 20 megawatts of heat will be produced.

The site is the first in Scotland and Vattenfall says it could reduce emissions in Midlothian by up to 90%³ in comparison to individual gas boilers fitted in every home taking away reliance on fossil fuels.

Mark Street, operations manager at the Midlothian site, said the benefit for the county and Scotland is that the company has been operating similar sites across Europe for years.

He said: "This district heating network might sound new, and is new to Scotland, but it is not new to Vattenfall and we bring our experience here so we know it works."

The first Shawfair homes to join the network are hoped to be ready before the end of the year and Mark says he hopes more developers recognise its value.

He said: "It should be a big selling point, this is a cheap low carbon heating system available to people buying their homes. We hope to expand into Edinburgh and other parts of the Lothians and bring more households into our network as we progress."

by Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter



Midlothian Energy site is nearly ready to produce heating pic
courtesy Vattenfall