



Cleantech en-vision

The quarterly newsletter of Cambridge Cleantech

January 2013

In this issue...

- 1 Energy Bill takes another step forward
- 2 Dual support levels available for solar installations
Offshore wind “better than gas” for UK, say green groups
- 3 Green Investment Bank open for business
UK’s renewables attractiveness falters
The Crown Estate awards rights for three tidal projects

Sector round-up...

-  Policy
-  Low-carbon
-  Enterprise and finance
-  Renewables
-  Other topics
-  Environmental

Energy Bill takes another step forward

The government’s *Energy Bill* was unveiled by energy and climate change secretary Ed Davey on 29 November, setting out the road-map for the UK’s low-carbon transition.

The strike price

Contract for difference feed-in tariffs (CfD FiTs) are set to be introduced to drive investment in low-carbon generation, but it is this mechanism that has seen the most development since the draft Bill was published for pre-legislative scrutiny last spring.

Under this mechanism designated generators will sell electricity to the market, but when the market reference point is below a pre-agreed price (strike price), the supplier will receive a top-up payment from a government-backed counterparty. However, if the market reference price is higher than the pre-agreed price, the generator pays the difference to the counterparty. This mechanism provides financiers with a stable revenue stream and should incentivise more companies to invest. A consultation on the first set of strike prices will take place during 2013 for implementation mid-2014.

Capacity market auctions

The government is also taking powers to introduce a capacity market, allowing for auctions from 2014 for delivery of capacity in the winter of 2018–19, if needed.

Under this mechanism, a forecast will be made of future peak power demand, which will be used to determine the level of reliable capacity needed. Providers of capacity (either generation or demand-side response) then have the opportunity to bid in to a central auction to be paid to ensure they can have spare capacity available.

Climate change targets

To help the UK meet climate change targets, an emissions performance standard will ensure new fossil-fuel power stations are fitted with carbon capture and storage technology. But the Bill fell short of setting an explicit decarbonisation target for the power sector.

Despite concerns from MPs over the substance of the Bill, it passed its second reading in the Commons in late-December and will now be scrutinised by a public bill committee.

A free overview of the Bill, prepared by Cambridge Cleantech member Cornwall Energy, is available to download [here](#).

Government

Dual support levels available for solar installations

The level of support for solar photovoltaic projects under the Renewables Obligation (RO) will be different between ground- and building-mounted installations, the government has confirmed.

The announcement was made mid-December as part of the government's response to a consultation, held last year, on subsidies for solar photovoltaic technologies. To stimulate investment in solar installations on large factory or warehouse buildings the banding for the new rooftop RO band will be set at a higher rate than support provided to ground-mounted installations. Barker said the new band would encourage businesses to consider solar technologies as a "serious option" for meeting their power needs.

The rate for new building-mounted projects in 2013–14 will be 1.7 Renewable Obligation Certificates (Rocs)/MWh, falling to 1.4Rocs/MWh in 2016–17. Support for ground-mounted installations will be



1.6/Rocs/MWh in 2013-14, and it will fall to 1.2Rocs/MWh over the same period.

The government also decided against a supplier cap for biomass power – instead the regulator has introduced a non-legislative cap of 400MW for new-build dedicated biomass projects at a rate of 1.5Rocs/MWh. It was also confirmed dedicated combined heat and power (CHP) plants will be permanently excluded from the scope of the cap and the notification process when they are first certified under the CHP quality assurance programme. Support for standard co-firing of biomass and regular bioliquids will be reduced to 0.3Rocs/MWh in 2013–14 and 2014–15.

Currently the RO is the main financial mechanism by which the government incentivises the deployment of large-scale renewable electricity generation. However, this mechanism is shortly to be replaced with the new contract for difference feed-in tariffs provided for in the *Energy Bill*.

Government

Offshore wind “better than gas” for UK, say green groups

Greenpeace and WWF have claimed chancellor George Osborne's plans for a new dash for gas are not economically viable in a new report.

The Economics of Gas and Offshore Wind claims investment in offshore wind would create more jobs and generate higher GDP than relying on gas-fired generation. Written on behalf of the green groups by Cambridge Econometrics and published in early December, the report assessed the macro-economic impact of large-scale offshore wind deployment compared to a future of gas-fired generation.

It suggested focusing on offshore wind could deliver an increase of £20bn to the economy and an additional 70,000 jobs by 2030. In the long term, investment in offshore wind capacity would allow the UK to make substantial savings on fossil fuel imports. Investing in the resource would save the UK £8bn a year in gas imports by 2030, equating to £90 for every household.

Falling capital costs for wind turbines and rising natural gas prices would also mean offshore wind is only marginally more expensive than gas-fired power stations by 2030.

Under the wind scenario, UK power sector carbon emissions would be 66% lower than in the gas scenario in 2030; yet this position still includes an allowance for some gas-fired power to provide back-up when there is insufficient wind to meet demand.

Cambridge Econometrics

For more information on any of these stories, please contact [Cornwall Energy](#)

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Cambridge Cleantech or Cornwall Energy

Green Investment Bank opens for business

Business secretary Vince Cable has heralded the opening of the UK Green Investment Bank by announcing two new investments.

Cable revealed in late November while in Edinburgh, where the Bank has its headquarters, that it had made its first investment since becoming operational: committing an initial £8mn to the construction of an anaerobic digestion plant at Teesside. The investment, which will attract an additional £8mn of private sector match funding, has been made through fund manager Greensphere Capital as part of an £80mn programme by the Bank in small waste projects.

Cable also confirmed the institution would invest £5mn to retrofit Kingspan UK's industrial facilities with systems and services that would reduce its energy consumption by up to 15%. It is the first project supported by the Bank in its £100mn non-domestic energy efficiency investment programme.

Government



UK's renewables attractiveness falters

The UK has slipped two places to sixth in Ernst and Young's (E&Y) latest *Renewables Attractiveness Index* due to "a number of political miscommunications and an apparent lack of consistency over key energy reforms".

The UK also dropped two points in the technology-specific index for wind energy; the Index said onshore wind had struggled through "conflicting messages about the level of government support", and noted some developers in traditional markets were shifting their focus to offshore projects. It went on to describe the current financial environment as "trying" for onshore wind development, with plans for a proposed £210mn wind turbine factory in Hull postponed until later this year.

There were some positive developments in offshore wind, with permission sought for the world's largest offshore wind project totalling 1.5GW in the Moray Firth off the coast of Scotland. It was also noted that The Crown Estate awarded licences for sites off Northern Ireland, including a 600MW project.

The UK's score in the solar photovoltaic index remained unchanged, ranking in 22nd place overall. A proposed subsidy reduction for large-scale projects was expected to create a rush for developments to be completed before the banding review is implemented in April this year.

E&Y

The Crown Estate awards rights for three tidal projects

Three organisations have secured rights from The Crown Estate to progress the development of tidal energy projects at sites around the UK.

The awards, announced in mid-November, were made following the fourth application window in The Crown Estate's leasing process, which opened in April last year. The Isle of Wight Council has a lease for a managed testing facility called the Solent Ocean Energy Centre. This creates an opportunity for developers to test tidal stream turbines and gain experience of installation, operations and maintenance. Orkney-based Scotrenewables Tidal Power won a lease to develop a 30MW tidal stream array in the Orkney Islands, while Swedish technology developer Minesto secured a lease to deploy a quarter-scale 3kW prototype of its Deep Green Ocean Kite, off the coast of Northern Ireland.

The Crown Estate

For more information on any of these stories, please contact [Cornwall Energy](#)

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Cambridge Cleantech or Cornwall Energy

Scotland brings forward 50% renewables generation target

The Scottish government is to source 50% of electricity demand from renewables to 2015.

The announcement came at the end of October during first minister Alex Salmond's keynote political address at the Renewable UK conference in Glasgow. It followed the publication of government statistics that revealed Scotland was set to exceed its interim renewables generation target of 31% in 2011 by four points. Salmond said the revised target would provide "energy security, environmental sustainability and employment opportunities" for Scotland. He added the target was "ambitious but achievable", and based on current data about capacity that is operational, under construction or has been consented.

Expanding renewables electricity generation would, Salmond noted, help to deliver security of supply, "not just in Scotland but at UK level".

Scottish government

North Sea's clean energy potential is lauded by Norstec

Large-scale deployment of offshore wind in European waters will be a major contributor to the region's energy security and economic development by 2020.

This is the view of Norstec, which presented its *Clean Energy from the Northern Seas* project at its first full meeting in October. The consortium of key players in the offshore renewables sector – incorporating developers, the supply chain, and other stakeholder organisations – suggested the expertise and technologies developed in offshore wind can be exported to renewable offshore markets across the world.

Norstec identified that, to make its project a success, it must involve collaboration between academics, industry and investors with assurance from the government that it will create a favourable investment environment. It intends to deliver these plans by communicating the scale of the opportunity to the public, businesses and the political sphere, and said co-operation with the private sector will drive the project forward.

Norstec

First inward investment success for Cambridge Cleantech

Cambridge Cleantech has notched-up its first inward investment success for the area in securing the arrival of The Solar Cloth Company from Spain at the Cambridge Research Park in Waterbeach.

The Company specialises in a unique process of laminating flexible solar cells onto building material for uses such as in car ports. Cambridge Cleantech chief executive Martin Garratt said: "We are delighted The Solar Cloth Company has chosen Cambridge as its HQ, development and assembly centre as we were in competition with a number of European locations, not least those from Spain, the company's previous base. We hope this will be the first of many investments in Cambridge to help promote the area as a leading Cleantech cluster in Europe".



Founder of The Solar Cloth Company Perry Carroll said: "We decided on Cambridge in the UK as a location for our company over three other world technology centres. We see Cambridge as Europe's leading technology hub and, when allied to the support that we have received from local networks and organisations in particular the support received from Cambridge Cleantech, and we are convinced we made the right choice."

For more information on any of these stories, please contact [Cornwall Energy](#)

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Cambridge Cleantech or Cornwall Energy

Haverhill Research Park wins double Growing Places funding

Construction work has begun on a flagship project to bring new homes, leisure and employment space to Haverhill in West Suffolk.

It follows the award of £4mn by the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership.

The partnerships have each allocated £2mn from the Growing Places Fund for the provision of infrastructure and site enabling works to open up this 29.5 acre site for residential dwellings, employment space, a hotel and family pub/ restaurant to the north west of Haverhill, Suffolk.



The development is expected to create up to 2000 new jobs and homes for around 350 people. The funding bid was written jointly by Carisbrooke Investments and St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

Communities secretary Eric Pickles met representatives from the developer Carisbrooke Investments, the Suffolk-based construction company Breheny, which is carrying out the works, as well as representatives from the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and St Edmundsbury Borough Council on 6 November.

Pickles said: “The £770mn Growing Places Fund is unlocking much-needed local growth and getting the infrastructure and homes we need built. The New Anglia and Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnerships, made up of civic leaders and local businesses, are using the money to help create jobs, homes and leisure facilities in Haverhill. I now want to see more of these partnerships coming together and finding innovative ways to unlock local sites to get Britain building again.”

St Edmundsbury Borough Council leader John Griffiths said: “St Edmundsbury and Carisbrooke put a lot of work into this bid and its success is very welcome news, putting the Haverhill Research Park project securely on-track to securing 2000 new jobs for the town. It is an excellent example of people and organisations working well together across boundaries for a common goal.”

Nic Rumsey, director of Carisbrooke, said: “This, together with bank finance from BLME, was the final piece in the jigsaw that allowed the scheme to go ahead. We have appointed Breheny as the contractor and works on-site commenced 5 November, with completion programmed for May 2013. The high-quality environment we are creating has already been recognised by Taylor Wimpey, who recently received planning approval for the detailed design of 150 residential units. We have also agreed the sale of land to Marston Inns, who have just received planning approval to their design for a 180-cover family pub/ restaurant.”

New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership chairman Andy Wood, said: “The Growing Places Fund has been set up to help kick-start projects that will create jobs across Suffolk and Norfolk. Haverhill Research Park is a fantastic project that will bring a significant number of jobs, new homes and businesses to the area. The application was very well put together and the board was unanimous in its support of the scheme.”



Mark Reeve, Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership board member said: “This is a great step forward for the creation of new jobs in our LEP area as a direct result of Growing Places Funding. Working together on this project with New Anglia LEP and St Edmundsbury Borough Council has meant we can bring a significant amount of new jobs and much needed new homes to Haverhill.”

For more information on any of these stories, please contact [Cornwall Energy](#)

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Cambridge Cleantech or Cornwall Energy

Cleantech collaboration at Alconbury Weald

In early December fifty environmental goods and services or cleantech businesses attended a unique business event at Alconbury Weald to find solutions for world-class sustainable development.

The event was hosted by Cambridge Cleantech and Urban&Civic – the owners and developers of the 1420 acre former airfield site being transformed into Alconbury Weald. The development of Alconbury Weald will include over 3mn square foot of commercial space, 5000 homes, 700 acres of open space and a range of sustainable energy, transport and community facilities.

Robin Butler, managing director of Urban&Civic, said: “We have a real opportunity at the moment: we have set out the low-carbon principles of the site in our outline application, and are now planning the first phase of commercial and residential space. With such an established cleantech sector in the area, we wanted to have early discussions about the type of products, services and companies with which we could work. The range of people we saw was exceptional and we have already identified a number of companies we want to carry on talking to.



“We also had some really interesting ideas for projects and collaborations where we can use the scale of the site or existing space to trial and demonstrate some of the innovations just emerging. The discussions have reinforced our ambitions to be an exemplar for low-carbon living and working, and to provide a platform for local cleantech innovation.”

Cambridge Cleantech chief executive Martin Garratt added: “We were delighted with the response shown by our members to this event with companies attending from sectors as diverse as solar, recycling and water.”

The products included hemp bricks, energy producing solar cloth for car ports, and water monitors. The companies presenting their products included Breathing Buildings, the David Ball Group, Amey Cespa, Cyan Technology, Ridgeons, Myriad CEG and the Larkfleet Group.

[More information](#)

Strategic planning: growing your company without the pain

This hands-on workshop gives attendees a clear insight into when planning does and does not work, and how, when it does, it can generate value within any activity.

Evening workshop;

21 January;

Cambridge.

Attendees will be given the opportunity to work through a hypothetical strategic planning task. The MAPP interactive planning tool will be using during the practical session.

The Planning Equation – a formula for knowing when planning makes sense – a simple approach to judging when structured planning is and is not appropriate.

Introduction to three simple foolproof planning concepts – a detailed look at the three main pillars of planning activity and how they can be easily addressed in “X” easy steps. Planning “got-to-haves” – what extra elements are necessary to ensure that planning is successful and that it links explicitly with implementation.

The talk and workshop will be run by [Andrew Hatcher](#) (Applied Knowledge). There will also be plenty of time for Q&A so please bring your burning questions to put to our speaker. Join us before the event from 18:00 for nibbles and refreshments. Then stay around for networking until 21:30.



[More information](#)

For more information on any of these stories, please contact [Cornwall Energy](#)

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Cambridge Cleantech or Cornwall Energy

Cleantech Patenting Strategies conference

In a highly competitive and growing sector, how can you ensure your cleantech intellectual property is adequately protected and use your patents to maximise return on investment?

One-day conference; The Cleantech Patenting Strategies conference to be held on the 5 February in London will provide unique and focused insight into clean technology specific patenting issues. Highlights will include: the IPO giving an overview of the “Green Channel” and the advantages and risks of using the fast-track process for your business; Edwards Limited sharing approaches for effective competitive monitoring and accounting for blackout periods and resource required; LM

**5 February;
London.**

Windpower assessing whether patents require the optimum protection for your technology and other alternatives such as design rights and prophylactic disclosures; and Oxford University discussing whether patents are a hindrance to cleantech transfer.

Develop & protect your patent portfolio & capitalise on your IP



Quote CAM10 in the “how did you hear about this conference?” section when registering to save 10% off early registration dates – saving up to £629.80.

Plus, do not miss our *Freedom to Operate Workshop* (on 6 February in London).

[More information](#)

Looking to export, but not sure where to start?

For those new to exporting, UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) is offering a series of heavily subsidised Export Insight Visits to European markets between November and March 2013 to help companies understand more about international trade.

These visits aim to introduce novice and non-exporters to the principles of international trade so that they can go on to grow internationally. If you have not exported before, you will probably have lots of questions and be unsure where to start. We expect that, and UKTI is here to help you by providing a low-cost and accessible way to expand your business horizons. These visits will enable you to experience first-hand the support available in the UK and from British Embassies and Consulates overseas to enable you to do business internationally.

There is a charge of £99 plus VAT for each of the Export Insight Visits. You will have to fund your transport to the final departure airport or railway station. UKTI will then organise and pay for group flights, accommodation, also group transport and activities in market. Participants will need to pay for other food and drink, public transport and any personal extra charges incurred.

Visit our [website](#) or call UKTI East’s International Trade Team on 0845 641 9955 to find out more.

2013 New Energy and Cleantech Awards coming up

Now in their sixth year, the event recognises the best-performers who play a pivotal role in the process and shaping the future of the green energy and cleantech industries. Building on the success of the Awards we are adding an afternoon conference to debate the key issues that face fast-growth companies in this sector, with a strong focus on new finance streams and innovative market penetration.

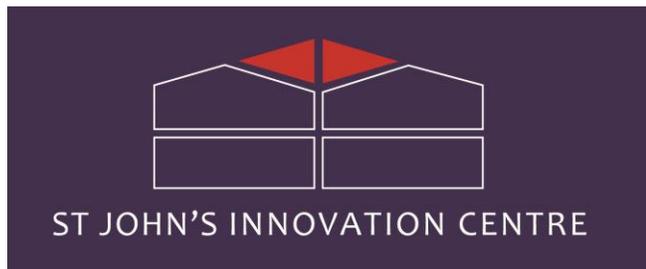
The event will bring together 300 of the most successful owners/managers of the “cream of green” companies along with investors and city professionals who are currently active in the green economy.

Please visit the [website](#) for more information and to book your place.

Cable visits Cambridge innovation centre

It was a memorable day at St John's Innovation Centre on 3 October – for many reasons.

First, in support of the £200mn *Growth Accelerator* service launched in July, the secretary of state for business, innovation and skills, Vince Cable, spoke to 50 ambitious entrepreneurs from the east of England – and numerous journalists – packed into the Sanger Suite of the St John's Innovation Centre.



“This government is committed to supporting our growth industries and Cambridge is an example of what can be achieved when academia and ambitious, innovative young companies come together,” Cable said.

Cable's introduction was followed by a number of short talks from local entrepreneurs in support of coaching. Former tenant Billy Boyle, co-founder of Owlstone

Nanotech, recalled the importance of informal mentoring to Owlstone in its early days and welcomed the wider availability of a government-supported service.

Anita Human, managing director of Human Touch Training and Care, described how working with the right coach helped her business develop and grow. Current St John's Innovation Centre tenant James Tweed, managing director of Coracle Online, which recently started on *Growth Accelerator*, saw business coaching in the same light as athletics coaching: Olympic success shows how potential can be unlocked.

The final speaker was Mike Lynch, Founder of Autonomy – another former tenant. Lynch felt nostalgic coming back to St John's Innovation Centre as it is “where it had all begun” for him. He said there was no formalised concept of mentoring back then and that the companies present had a remarkable opportunity. “I strongly advise you to take advantage of *Growth Accelerator*,” said Lynch.

Small- and medium-sized businesses who had expressed interest in taking part in *Growth Accelerator* were then given the opportunity to experience a taster coaching session by breaking into smaller discussion groups with experienced coaches and other companies at a comparable stage of evolution. The message that high-growth businesses are more likely to realise their full potential sooner with the benefit of targeted coaching and advice was so well-understood after the taster sessions that the St John's Innovation Centre team then received 20 approaches to find out more.

Before Cable submitted himself to a battery of media interviews in the Atrium, he unveiled a plaque to mark the 25th anniversary of the centre's inauguration. This plaque is now on display behind reception – its neighbour commemorating Prince Philip's visit in the very early days of the centre.

To assess your eligibility and find out more visit www.growthaccelerator.com. Or you can contact your local growth managers, Dave Richards and Kirsten Masson, based at St John's Innovation Centre, who are keen to answer your questions. They can be contacted on 01223 420252 or via email: coaching@stjohns.co.uk



The Centre is part of a consortium, including Grant Thornton and Pera, delivering the national *Growth Accelerator* service to support high-growth firms.

For more information on any of these stories, please contact Cornwall Energy

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Cambridge Cleantech or Cornwall Energy

Decarbonisation should be “plan A”, not a dash for gas: Committee

Focusing on gas investment at the expense of low-carbon technologies would be neither economically sensible nor compatible with meeting carbon budgets, according to the Committee on Climate Change.

Following the launch of the government’s *Gas Generation Strategy* in early-December, chief executive David Kennedy said early decarbonisation of the power sector should be “plan A” for the UK economy – and a dash for gas “plan Z”. He added that including different investment pathways in the Strategy exacerbated the “mixed signals” already given by the government and was damaging for the sector’s investment climate.

[Committee](#)

Salmond welcomes Scotrenewables investment

Scottish first minister Alex Salmond has welcomed the announcement by Scotrenewables Tidal Power that they have finalised details of a package of foreign investment worth £7.6mn.

The package will fund the design, construction, installation and testing of the next generation commercial-scale Scotrenewables tidal turbine. The latest investment comes in addition to a £1.24mn WATERS2 grant from the Scottish government awarded in August last year.

Salmond said Scotland was “blessed with some of the greatest offshore energy resources on the planet”, and Scotrenewables’ announcement was a “huge vote of confidence” in the country’s renewables energy sector.

[Scottish government](#)

Renewables continue to enjoy public support

Using renewable energy to provide electricity and heat in the UK is supported by almost eight out of 10 people, according to the third wave of the government’s *Public Attitudes Tracker*.

Published early-December, the Tracker showed solar photovoltaics remained the most popular renewables source with 82% public backing. Offshore wind (74%) and wave and tidal power (74%) also enjoyed high levels of support. Respondents were more divided on the use of nuclear power in the UK’s energy mix – nearly four out of 10 people (38%) supported its use for generating electricity, while just over a quarter (27%) opposed it.

[Government](#)

Government confirms winners of community renewable heating scheme

Households in 38 communities have been awarded a share of £3mn to install renewable heating equipment.

The government’s Renewable Heat Premium Payment scheme, launched in July 2012, aims to kick-start new projects and build on existing schemes to provide low-carbon heating alternatives that cut emissions.

Climate change minister Greg Barker said in early December the UK needed to “transform” the way it heated its homes, and community groups would be “at the very heart of this revolution”.

[DECC](#)

National Rail and The Crown Estate sign MoU to boost marine renewables

Two of the UK’s largest landowners have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to clarify the process for installing cable crossings that connect marine renewables projects to the national grid across the National Rail estate.

The Crown Estate and Network Rail confirmed the agreement would help to efficiently manage coastal defences, asset ownership and access issues.

Speaking in December, Alison Nimmo, chief executive of The Crown Estate, said the agreement was another example of the company helping the low-carbon energy sector to ensure the UK remained “one of the most attractive places” to invest in offshore renewable energy.

[The Crown Estate](#)

Renewables demonstration projects to receive European funding

The European Commission has awarded over €1.2bn to 23 renewable energy demonstration projects under the first phase of the NER300 programme.

Two UK tidal projects will benefit from the funding: ScottishPower Renewables' Sound of Islay Demonstration Tidal Array (€20.7mn) and Marine Current Turbines' Kyle Rhea Tidal Turbine Array (€18.4mn).

Climate change minister Greg Barker said in December that the funding was "great news" for marine energy and further underpinned the UK's position as a world-leader in the sector.

Government

Plans for major East Anglian windfarm move forward

ScottishPower Renewables and Vattenfall have submitted a planning application for their proposed 1.2GW windfarm off the coast of East Anglia.

The development, known as East Anglia ONE, will require up to 325 wind turbines and could support around 2700 jobs across the UK during the construction phase. The application will be considered by the National Infrastructure Directorate and, if accepted, work on the project is expected to begin in 2016.

Speaking in December, programme director Andy Paine said offshore wind would support a new supply chain that would attract billions of pounds of investment and create highly skilled employment for decades.

ScottishPower

Last London Array turbine is installed

The 175th and final turbine at the first 630MW phase of the London Array offshore windfarm was installed in December, marking the end of major construction activities at the site.

With all turbines in place and 55 already supplying power to the national grid, the windfarm is on-track to become fully operational in spring 2013. DONG Energy head of UK wind business Ben Sykes said: "Building offshore windfarms of this size and larger [...] is an important element of our strategy to drive down the cost of energy."

London Array

Think-tank calls for greater distributed generation focus

The government needs to set out a vision for the role distributed generation will play in delivering the UK's energy ambitions, argues a new report by think-tank Carbon Connect.

The analysis, published in December, said developing the sector could support the deployment of low-carbon technologies, engage consumers in energy management, and delay the need for costly network upgrades. But policies affecting distributed generation – including support for renewables – had suffered in the recent past from instability and unpredictability. This had had a "long-lasting" impact on investors' perceptions of risk, raising the cost of finance and diminishing the pool of viable distributed generation projects.

Carbon Connect

Doha climate talks a "modest step forward"

The latest round of United Nations climate change talks were "very tough" but took a "modest step forward", according to energy and climate change secretary Ed Davey.

Davey said the discussions, which took place in December, had maintained the possibility of a new legally binding emissions agreement for 2020 after the Kyoto Protocol had expired. The second period of the Protocol began on 1 January 2013, after the conference adopted a ratifiable amendment setting out the rules by which it will be governed. Yet Davey said more countries needed "be more ambitious [to] prevent devastating global warming".

Government