



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

**Energy Innovation District secures funding for pioneering £200k smart grid project in
Cheshire**

The North West Energy Innovation District (EID) has been awarded funding by UK Research and Innovation to deliver the first stage of the 'E-Port Smart Energy Master Plan' - a local, smart energy system based around the industrial heartland of Ellesmere Port. The £200k project, match funded by the EID members, is one of the first concept and design studies awarded under the Government's 'Prospering from the energy revolution' programme.

It aims to develop a nationally-replicable model for a local private grid that can deliver low-cost, low-carbon energy for industrial, commercial and domestic users. The master plan will set out a ten-year private sector investment programme in smart energy solutions that is scalable across the UK.

Spearheaded by the Cheshire Energy Hub, the Energy Innovation District brings together energy users, network owners, innovators and partners – including EA Technology, Burns & McDonnell, Urenco, Cadent Gas, SP Energy Networks and Peel Environmental – working alongside Cheshire & Warrington LEP, Cheshire West and Chester Council and the University of Chester.

With the objective of driving down the cost of clean energy the EID is an opportunity to deliver a new decarbonised energy system for the North West of England, meeting the Government's Clean Growth agenda while boosting economic growth and investment.

Ged Barlow, Chair of the Energy Innovation District said:

"This is an important step forward for the Energy Innovation District and highlights the potential of the North West to lead the charge on decentralized energy systems. What makes the EID truly innovative is the clustering of energy intensive industries alongside energy sources, an established supply chain and a critical mass of energy 'know how' and R&D.

"With the private and public sector working together, this project will show how connecting energy users to local sources of energy generation can reduce costs, cut carbon emissions and increase energy security. The impacts could be huge with the aim to create a network where energy costs are cut by at least 20%."

Councillor Karen Shore, Cabinet Member Environment, Cheshire West & Chester Council said:



“The economy of the North West of England, and particularly Cheshire, is driven by energy, with around 5% of the UK’s energy currently consumed in north Cheshire. The region is leading innovation in the sector and we have the opportunity to put Cheshire on the map with the UK’s first major industry backed local energy system.

“This project could potentially unlock significant private sector investment in the North West and deliver a range of high-value jobs. In a more competitive post-Brexit market, energy intensive companies, like Vauxhall, are looking for lower cost and decarbonised energy supplies. Creating an energy market where energy can be traded locally is part of a low-carbon, low-cost future that will ensure Cheshire remains a competitive place to do business.”

Myles Kitcher from Peel Environmental said:

“Our job is to prove that a local energy system is both scalable and replicable. We have the opportunity to be world leaders, testing the deployment of game-changing technology which could transform the way that people and businesses purchase energy in the future. The vision is that by using smart technologies consumers will be able to switch energy supply based on the most competitive price offering greater choice and transparency.”

Garfield Southall, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Science and Engineering at the University of Chester, said:

“We are thrilled that this funding bid has come to fruition. Innovation in energy research – including the decarbonisation of gas, the hydrogen economy, and intelligent energy management systems – is at Thornton’s core, with its flagship Energy Centre, the development of undergraduate and postgraduate skills in related areas, and an array of energy-related companies on site.”

The project will develop a proposal for a multi vector (electricity, gas, heat and hydrogen) energy system that is capable of being scaled up to other regions of the UK. It is based on an innovative operating system which will be the first digital and virtual platform for the smart management of the whole energy network.

Work is already underway in the region to create a local grid with £14m investment committed at Peel Environmental’s Protos site. This will provide a grid connection to connect local power generation assets, such as Bioenergy Infrastructure Group’s 21.5MW biomass facility, through a micro-grid to existing energy intensive manufacturing.

The study will start in January 2019 and is due to finish in July 2019. The EID is looking to the local community and businesses to provide data on their energy usage. To take part, contact e-portenergy@cheshireenergyhub.co.uk . All data received will be treated confidentially. For more information visit www.energyinnovationdistrict.com.



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Notes to Editors:

ABOUT THE ENERGY INNOVATION DISTRICT

The Energy Innovation District is an existing and developing cluster of energy-related industries. This includes largescale energy assets, energy-intensive industries and Research and Development destinations.

The District will set the blueprint for creating a new energy system – ensuring a supply of secure, low-carbon and low-cost energy helps unlock supply chain and global investment opportunities.

The District includes:

- Storengy UK Underground Gas Storage Site: Storengy UK has invested £350m and is committed to invest a further £150m to double the size of its facility to develop the largest onshore gas storage facility in the UK
- Protos: £170m has been invested in enabling infrastructure and energy generation – including a 21MW biomass facility and a 57MW wind farm
- Essar Oil (UK) Ltd: the Stanlow Manufacturing Complex plays a key part in the national economy, producing over 16% of the UK’s transport fuels – employing over 900 people
- Encirc: the state of the art contract bottling facility is the largest of its kind in Europe and produces container glass for the food and beverage industry – employing over 300 people
- URENCO UK Ltd: uses world-leading centrifuge technology to provide uranium enrichment services to generate low carbon nuclear energy – employing over 300 people
- CF Fertilisers: the UK head office and manufacturing plant over 1 million tonnes nitrogen fertilizer to support grass and arable farming across the UK – employing over 400 people
- Thornton Science Park – the University of Chester campus includes The Energy Centre, a state of the art facility designed to promote growth and acceleration in the development and exploitation of technologies for the energy market.
- Capenhurst Technology Park: owned by URENCO (UK) Ltd, the park is a centre for technology and energy focused enterprises, including C-Tech Innovation, EA Technology, Enrichment Technology Ltd and Flowgroup plc

The Energy Innovation District seeks to work with Government on issues including:



- The provision of an electrical micro-grid that connects electricity generating assets directly to large industrial users to provide secure, low carbon and lower cost electricity;
- Developing heat networks to support local communities and business;
- Promote hydrogen, along with carbon capture and storage, as a means of decarbonising the gas network;
- Providing a network of charging and hydrogen refueling stations to encourage the uptake of electric vehicles; and
- To stimulate the deployment of innovative energy technology and to develop a skilled workforce through work with the University of Chester, local colleges and the Cheshire Energy Hub Graduate Programme

www.energyinnovationdistrict.com

ABOUT THE CHESHIRE ENERGY HUB

The Cheshire Energy Hub is an energy sector support organisation, funded and strategically driven by industry. Its members work collaboratively to advance the skills agenda and energy initiatives in the region. Members include BGS, Burns & McDonnell, C-Tech Innovation, EA Technology, Encirc, Engie, Essar Oil UK, Peel Environmental, Protos, Storengy UK, Tata Chemical and URENCO, together with the Cheshire and Warrington LEP, Cheshire West and Chester Council and the University of Chester's Thornton Science Park.