

## RSN Seminar: Rural Decarbonisation

**Date:** 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**Subject:** Rural Decarbonisation

**Chair:** [Graham Biggs MBE<sup>1</sup>](#), Chief Executive, Rural Services Network

**Host:** Online Event via Zoom

### Speakers

**Speaker 1:** Dr Emily Prestwood, Development Manager, Birmingham Energy Institute

**Speaker 2:** Mark Davies, Director for Communities and Environment, Lancaster City Council

**Speaker 3:** Stuart Easterbrook, Head of NetZero Energy Frameworks, Cadent

**Speaker 4:** Dr Karen Barrass, Policy and Research Manager, UK100

### Learning Outcomes

#### Examples of Good Practice

- [Eden HA<sup>2</sup>](#) newly installed electric charge points for e-bikes at Head Office, Penrith.
- Lancaster City Council's decarbonisation funding work at [Salt Ayre Leisure Centre<sup>3</sup>](#)

### Key Learning Points

#### Heat, Storage, Energy from Waste and Hydrogen: Energy Decarbonisation opportunities for Rural Communities and Economies

- **Birmingham Energy Institute (BEI)** is developing and applying policy to develop sustainable solutions at regional level. The BEI covers extensive research areas including thermal energy storage and how it feeds into transport/medicine etc.
- BEI is part of the [Energy Research Accelerator \(ERA\)<sup>4</sup>](#) which makes the case to government to wrap funding around decarbonisation themes. Technology needs to be developed to support economic growth.
- [National Centre for Decarbonisation of Heat<sup>5</sup>](#), in conjunction with the CBI and University of Birmingham published the report "[Net Zero: The Road to Low-Carbon Heat<sup>6</sup>](#)" calling on government to set up a National Delivery Body (NDB) to decarbonise heat. The NDB would work with local authorities to synergise local energy plans.
- **Focus on solutions and decarbonisation** at scale in cities with rural seen as an add on to urban but very much needs its own focus on its own challenges. E.g. increase in electricity demand due to increase in Electric Vehicle usage, solid wall properties are hard to heat and costly, lower population numbers means reduced funding opportunities etc.
- **Heat decarbonisation** – piloting economic models and develop community learning platforms. **Energy Storage** – investing in battery storage of electricity, thermal energy

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/page/our-team/graham-biggs/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://rsnonline.org.uk/cumbria-bike-mayor-launches-new-public-chargepoints-in-penrith>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.lancaster.gov.uk/news/2021/mar/lancaster-city-council-receives-funding-to-decarbonise-salt-ayre-leisure-centre>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.era.ac.uk/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/energy/national-centre-decarbonisation-of-heat.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/documents/college-eps/energy/publications/20200722-heat-policy-commission-final-report.pdf>

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storage systems for heating, goods etc. **Energy from Waste & Circular Economy** – how this can be made circular as it has a carbon impact and how to reduce it. It will be a long time before there is a zero-carbon impact of energy from waste. **Hydrogen Economy** – producing green hydrogen for local use, mapping transport networks, fuel cell agri-solutions and how to fund this.

- **Opportunities for rural economies** - an increase in R&D research into rural decarbonisation, new industry partnerships, engaging communities, piloting projects and developing circular economy approaches to combine solutions.

### Lancaster City Council's 2030 Net Zero Plans and Progress

- In 2019, the Council voted to create a **zero-carbon district by 2030**. The district is the most northerly in Lancashire with a population of 60K covering a large rural area.
- Key to delivery of projects on this scale needs to have **political ownership and a Corporate Plan**. The Council focused on gathering data on current CO2 emissions from the Councils own estate and actions to have a baseline and the work was done in-house. The data showed that 57% of emissions came from heating buildings via gas with a combined total of 7.5 tonnes of CO2.
- Many of the **buildings were heritage sites/listed buildings** and therefore hybrid heating solutions were required e.g. biomass, air source heat pumps and natural gas.
- **Salt Ayre Leisure Centre** was the worst building for CO2 emissions in the District. Took a 10-year plan approach and secured £6.8M in PSDS Funding. Used several initiatives including a 1.3MWp solar array, air source heat pumps, LED lighting etc. Challenging timescale for funding. Already a net 12% CO2 reduction to the Council's overall figures.
- **Council vehicles** CO2 emissions data was also analysed. 61% of all fleet emissions came from 26 refuse collection lorries. Challenges included the price of Electric Vehicles (EVs) and charging supplies. With the move from diesel to electric the Council had to know how much electricity was drawn down from the grid or other sources. Currently have 29 EVs with 2 electric refuse lorries due in Aug 2021. Charging points installed in all Depots and at key sites. Worked in partnership with [Charge My Street<sup>7</sup>](#) to provide public access off peak. Plan to phase in more EVs as current vehicles need replacing.
- **Car Club Scheme** re-directed the casual user mileage allowances into a pooled vehicles fleet which includes 9 EVs. Scheme will open to the public to book cars from May 2021.
- **Looking to increase efficiency of council housing stock next**. Includes increasing the number of solar arrays and supplying energy to tenants.
- **Key message** – do not delay, look at data, understand, plan, cost out and deliver, deliver at pace and plan for this.

### The Future Role for Gas and Decarbonising Heat

- **Cadent Gas Ltd** owns and operates half of the UK's gas network and is looking at its role in the future energy system.
- **Hydrogen Strategy** – The Government knows that electricity alone is not the only decarbonising solution. Cadent is looking at [HyDeploy<sup>8</sup>](#) – blending hydrogen with up to 20% methane (blue hydrogen), using the same gas appliances so minimum disruption to customers.
- [H21 Projects<sup>9</sup>](#) – safely preparing the existing gas network for 100% hydrogen flow.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://chargemystreet.co.uk/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://hydeploy.co.uk/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.h21.green/>

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- [HyNet<sup>10</sup>](#) – is the first real project based in Liverpool Bay.
- **A whole system** perspective is needed for the economic case for hydrogen. It will require consumers to understand the costs/alternatives/hybrids etc. Consumer preference will be key to heat decarbonisation with a plan for all homes, to manage expectations, costs, and disruptions.
- **Decarbonising Heating off the Gas Grid** – the Government is considering tackling Oil and Coal Heating ahead of wider heat policy decisions. Cadent would prefer a whole community approach to decarbonising.
- **Large Village Project** – Cadent is looking into this as it would need the most appropriate area and storage as it would need a lot of hydrogen.

## UK100: Countryside Climate Network

- Traditionally, **rural areas are seen as an “add-on” to urban areas**. The UK100 set up the Countryside Climate Network in June 2020 to combat this and to drive more attention and more funding to local authorities. There are 27 local authorities currently in the Network covering 45% of land area in England.
- **Three strands** to the Network: Information Sharing, Shared Policy Asks and Insight & Engagement.
- 75% of rural residents believe cutting emissions will create **new job opportunities** according to work undertaken by [Climate Outreach<sup>11</sup>](#) for UK100 [on rural attitudes to climate change<sup>12</sup>](#). There is the same level of interest to address climate change in rural areas as there are in urban areas.
- Rural Local Authorities need to be at the **forefront of climate change** and UK100 agrees that they also need more funding and supports the RSN’s call for fairer funding. Significant under funding, the higher costs of delivery, structural bias, market failures and the one-size-fits-all approach are all constraints.
- **Policy Asks** include that Government policy is workable and rural proofed, to consider sparsity and rural Local Authorities seen as key partners.
- **Latest report from UK100 – Power Shift<sup>13</sup>** – Research into Local Authority powers relating to climate action (published 03.05.21)

## Any Other Key Outcomes from the Seminar

RSN’s [Revitalising Rural Campaign<sup>14</sup>](#) Specific Policy Asks of the Government is for fairer distribution of national resources to rural areas and more nuanced national policies. There are 14 Chapters in the campaign and one looks at “[Decarbonising Rural Communities and Economies<sup>15</sup>](#)”. As new Government strategies are announced, RSN puts them through a “Rural Lens Review” which adds depth and texture to the Policy Asks. A fresh crosscut of the Revitalising document being worked on will look in more depth at younger and older people, working age families and businesses (includes agri.). It will also look at the impact of various issues on these groups of people and develop case studies (personal experiences) rather than dry policy discussions.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://hynet.co.uk/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://climateoutreach.org/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.uk100.org/publications/rural-attitudes-climate-change>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.uk100.org/publications/power-shift>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.rsnonline.org.uk/revitalising-rural>

<sup>15</sup> <https://rsnonline.org.uk/images/revitalising-rural/decarbonising-rural-communities.pdf>

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## Attendance and Apologies

### Attendance

<b>Full Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Valerie Adams	Richmondshire District Council
Sarah Adams	Wychavon District Council
Bethan Aldridge	Rural Services Network
Mick Allen	Nottinghamshire County Council
Mark Balchin	Hastoe
Jason Ball	Mid Devon District Council
Adrian Banford	Eden District Council
Dave Barber	Stratford-on Avon District Council
Matt Barker	Malvern Hills District Council
Karen Barrass	UK100
David Baxter	Sedgemoor District Council
Ann Bean	New Alresford Town Council
Ursula Bennion	Trent & Dove Housing
Graham Biggs MBE	Rural Services Network
John Birtwistle	First Bus
Kristy Blackwell	Sedgemoor District Council
Cllr Jeremy Bolas	Borden Parish Council
Kerry Bolister	Housing Plus Group
Kerry Booth	Rural Services Network
Cllr Roger Burgin	Penrith Town Council
Margaret Carr	Sevenoaks District Council
Helen Chadwick	Harborough District Council
Hugh Clear Hill	North Yorkshire County Council
Jenny Clifford	Mid Devon District Council
Robert Coggings	Derbyshire Dales District Council
Ben Colson	Bus Users UK
Robert Craighead	Bassetlaw District Council
James Craigie	Bideford Town Council
Lois Dale	Shropshire Council
Mark Davies	Lancaster City Council
Andy Dean	Rural Services Network
Cllr Cynthia Dereli	Burscough Town Council
Stuart Easterbrook	Cadent
Harriet English	Plunkett Foundation
Lewis Evans	Northumberland County Council
Brendan Flanagan	Cheshire East Council
Patrick Ford	CPRE, The Countryside Charity
John Fowler	Farming Community Network
Hannah Girvan	South Lakeland District Council
Cllr Jan Goffey	Okehampton Town Council
Cllr Nicholas Gowrley	Suffolk County Council

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Helen Harris	Leicestershire County Council
Lizzi Hearn	CPRE, The Countryside Charity
Catherine Hickford	Selby District Council
Cllr Barbara Jones-Williams	Malvern Hills District Council
Antony Leech	West Devon Borough Council
Stacie Lockey	Flitwick Town Council
Cllr Graham Lofthouse	North Devon District Council
Cllr Anna Meares	Sedgemoor District Council
Angie Morrissey	Cornwall Rural Housing Association Limited
Denis Murphy	Advance Northumberland
Mark Nokkert	Cambridgeshire ACRE
Elaine O'Leary	Northamptonshire ACRE
Cllr Ken Pollock	Worcestershire County Council
Dr Emily Prestwood	Birmingham Energy Institute/Birmingham University
Tony Price	Trent & Dove Housing
Cllr John Raine	Malvern Hills District Council
Mandy Ramm	Lincolnshire County Council
Cllr Louise Richardson	Leicestershire County Council
Kate Richardson	Lewes and Eastbourne Councils
Cllr Jeremy Savage	South Norfolk District Council
Frances Simpson	New Alresford Town Council
Ian Sosnowski	South Hams District Council
Cllr Virginia Taylor	Eden District Council
Cllr Pamela Taylor	Wirksworth Town Council
Paul Taylor-Armstrong	Guildford Borough Council
Sarah Thorneycroft	Cornwall Council
Nadine Trout	Rural Services Network
Cllr Sue Tucker	Scarborough Borough Council
Cllr Julie Tucker	Wychavon District Council
John Upham	Oxfordhealth NHS Foundation Trust
Cllr Philip Wicks	Richmondshire District Council
Janet Williams	Torrington District Council
Jo Wunsch	Homes First, Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough Councils

## Apologies

Full Name	Organisation
Cllr Steve Abbott	Corsham Town Council
Cllr Victoria Aitken	East Riding of Yorkshire Council
Christian Allen	Boston Borough Council and East Lindsey District Council
Dominic Allen	Norfolk County Council
Rachel Baconnet	Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Jenny Bartlett	Leominster Town Council
Cllr Belinda Bawden	Lyme Regis Town Council

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CLlr David Beavan	East Suffolk District Council
Jo Calvert	South Somerset District Council
Martin Collett	English Rural HA
Jennifer Davies	SP Energy Networks
CLlr Dereke Eagle	Sutton Valence Parish Council
Stuart Emmerson	Hartpury University & Hartpury College
Shannon English	East Suffolk Council
Tim Miller-Fay	Northumberland County Council
CLlr Kevin Frea	Lancaster City Council
CLlr Chris Furness	Derbyshire Dales District Council
Alex Gandy	Dartmoor National Park Authority
Jane Goodall	Lewes and Eastbourne Councils
Mark Gormley	Trent & Dove Housing
Carol Grey	Penrith Town Council
Andy Haime	Lincolnshire Rural Housing Association Ltd
CLlr Peter Hames	Torrige District Council
CLlr Edwina Hannaford	Cornwall Council
Teresa Harvey	Sedgemoor District Council
Nik Harwood	Young Somerset
CLlr Mervyn Head	North Kesteven District Council
CLlr Robert Heseltine	North Yorkshire County Council
CLlr Bob Holt	Westerham Town Council
Bryn Howells	Tewkesbury Borough Council
Holly Jones	Isle of Wight Council
CLlr Nick Mannion	Cheshire East Council
CLlr Graham Marsh	East Lindsey District Council
Holly McFarlane	North Yorkshire County Council
Adele Metcalfe	Peak District National Park Authority
Julie Milburn	Sparsholt College Hampshire
Rick O'Farrell	Northumberland County Council
Eleanor Patey	Western Power Distribution
Neil Peters	Environment First Eastbourne Borough Council
Sue Petters	Barnstaple Town Council
Corentin Cortiula-Phelipot	Eden District Council
CLlr Gregory Powell	Cheadle Town Council
Bobbie Preston	SP Energy Networks
CLlr Mark Rudhall	Eden District Council
Chris Ryley	Burscough Parish Council
CLlr Sue Sanderson	Cumbria County Council
Jennifer Shaw	Ashford Borough Council
CLlr Paul Skinner	Boston Borough Council
Susan Southwell	Somerset West and Taunton Council
Vicki Tomlinson	Connexus Homes Limited
Michelle Turner	Lincs Rural Housing Ass
CLlr Mick Warren	Cheshire East Council

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Laura Waters  
Tricia Watson  
Barbara Williams  
Cllr Beth Williamson  
Mark Wilson  
Sarah Winlow  
Cllr Judith Wright

Norfolk County Council  
Stroud Town Council  
Malvern Hills District Council  
Leominster Town Council  
Braintree District Council  
Northumberland County Council  
Biddenden Parish Council

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