



YOUR NGN NEWS UPDATE

March 2022

Work begins on energy village research project



Work has begun on our latest innovative research project which will test emerging technologies and explore how energy is used in homes in the future.

The project, located at our research site at Low Thornley Gateshead, involves building nine homes from different building eras to create a unique 'Customer Energy Village' which will be used to research different technologies for decarbonising home energy use and how we heat our homes in a more environmentally friendly and cost-effective way.

As part of the work beginning on site, pupils aged five to 11 years from West Lane Primary school in Winlaton have included their ideas of how people will be using energy in 2050

- the target for net zero - inside a time capsule which will be buried in the foundations.

The village consists of three 1910 terraced homes, two semi-detached 1930s houses, a 1950s bungalow, two flats from the 1970s and a detached home from the 1990s, to represent millions of UK homes.

They will be used as a test bed for different technologies to understand which energy solutions are best suited to decarbonise different housing stock and how energy use can be reduced.

Keith Owen, project lead for NGN, explains: "Each property in the village has been designed in keeping with the era in which it was built, rather than today's building standards so we can fully understand the impact the original design can have on decarbonising the homes we live in. This will help us identify the most efficient and affordable solutions to support a fair transition to low carbon living for all."

The homes are being built by us with support from our partners including Newcastle University, National Energy Action and North East Energy Catalyst. The project secured £1.96 million from the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (NELEP) through the Local Growth Fund and Getting Building Fund. Construction is expected to be completed in the autumn.

[See more about our plans](#)

NGN joins forces with college to create £3.2m Energy Education Hub



We are working with Redcar and Cleveland College to support plans to create a £3.2m Clean Energy Education Hub in the region that will improve employability in the North East.

The Tees Valley is at the forefront of developments in the clean and renewable energy sector and the Hub will deliver training to equip young people from across Teesside with the skills they need to develop careers in a range of industries that will lead the energy transition.

Through training for school leavers, apprentices and adult learners the Hub's offer will include higher education and commercial and professional courses, and will also respond to employers needs through bespoke employer-led programmes.

Lindsey Filer, NGN's HR Director, explains: "By providing high class training in the future energy market it means young people in Redcar and Cleveland can develop skills which will thoroughly prepare them to move into work and give employers like us access to a skills ready workforce for the future."

Parliamentary visit to the hydrogen house

As part of our ongoing conversations with MPs and Local Authorities about how hydrogen can help us in our journey to net zero, we were delighted to welcome Shadow Chancellor and Leeds MP Rachel Reeves to our Hydrogen Home.



See what the Shadow Chancellor made of
her visit

Get involved

Understanding customer perceptions

At the start of this year, we completed our flagship annual perceptions research with over 1,100 customers from across our network. The survey digs into customers opinions and perceptions of key areas of our business including customer priorities, sustainability commitments, energy use, hydrogen, vulnerability support, communities and the impact of NGN's works.

We surveyed 1,124 domestic and business customers which has helped us understand what our customers are feeling and thinking on key business areas- something that is crucial to help us make better decisions.

The key findings include:

- * **There is a widespread fear around bill costs** - For the first time customers ranked keeping bills as low as possible a higher priority than providing a safe service.
- * **Awareness and support for hydrogen is on the way up** - Awareness of hydrogen had nearly doubled from 28% in 2020 to 48% in 2021 - 54% of domestic customers were positive about hydrogen boilers and 47% were positive about hydrogen

cars.

*** Customers want to give back to those in vulnerable situations** – Likely to be a knock-on impact of the pandemic and shift towards shared societal responsibility, this will shape our approach to supporting customers in vulnerable situations.

You can [read more about the research](#) on our website.

Get in touch...

If you have any feedback about this e-bulletin or any questions about our work, we'd love to hear from you.

Just email stakeholder@northerngas.co.uk

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