

Strict Embargo: 00:01 Sunday, June 14

Geothermal energy projects awarded quarter million

Aberdeen Exhibition & Conference Centre among five schemes planning to harness Scotland's significant energy potential

Almost a quarter of a million pounds of funding has been awarded to five feasibility projects across Scotland that will investigate how the thermal energy in the ground can be used to heat homes and businesses.

A total of £234,025 has been awarded to projects targeting sites in Fife, West Lothian, North Lanarkshire and Aberdeenshire that will explore the technical feasibility, economic viability and environmental sustainability of the emerging technology.

The awards have been made from the Scottish Government's Geothermal Energy Challenge Fund, supported by the Low Carbon Infrastructure Fund, the first strategic intervention established under the new European Structural Funds Programme. They are the first support for geothermal projects in Scotland following a 2012-2013 study which identified significant potential for geothermal heat as a renewable heat source.

Heat is estimated to account for over half of Scotland's total energy use and responsible for nearly half of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions.

The projects are an important step towards demonstrating how geothermal energy could cut the estimated £2.6 billion a year spent on heating by householders and the non-domestic sector.

- **Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre:** to conduct a feasibility study for the installation of a deep geothermal single well system to provide heat to the new Centre and associated buildings
- **Guardbridge, Fife:** to explore the geothermal potential under a brownfield site to provide heat to on-site industries and the local community
- **Polkemmet, West Lothian:** to establish the feasibility of geothermal heat from mineworkings, which will heat proposed new social housing in the area
- **Hartwood, North Lanarkshire:** to develop a fully operational minewater geothermal district heating system which could act as an exemplar of how to transform farm economics and transfer benefits to local communities
- **Hill of Banchory, Aberdeenshire:** to explore the viability of adding geothermal energy from hot dry and hot wet rocks to the existing renewable heat network that is already serving the local communities

Energy Minister Fergus Ewing said:

“As set out in the Heat Policy Statement published last week, heat is estimated to account for over half of Scotland’s total energy use and is responsible for nearly half of Scotland’s greenhouse gas emissions, so it makes sense that we explore and grow technologies such as geothermal energy. These projects will help improve our understanding of this renewable energy source and the contribution it can make to helping Scotland reduce its carbon emissions.

“These five projects demonstrate how the Scottish Government is supporting the geothermal industry to make the most of this largely untapped resource and to develop a delivery model which reduces carbon emissions, is self-sustaining and is economically viable.

“The announcement of the geothermal feasibility projects follows the publication of the Heat Policy Statement (HPS) on Thursday, June 11. This is part of the wider approach to support the development of a resilient heat system that enables households, organisations and industry to transition to an affordable low carbon heat system and seize the economic opportunities that this transformation offers.

“The HPS sets out the support being provided to reduce the need for heat, supply heat efficiently and at lowest cost to consumers and to generate low carbon and renewable heat.”

Professor Russel Griggs, Chair of the Geothermal Energy Expert Group, said:

“The most recent research suggests that geothermal energy offers a genuine opportunity for Scotland to develop a new industry sector, one that will allow homes and businesses to reduce heating bills while generating a sustainable cut in Scotland’s carbon footprint. The technology still requires further development, but these five feasibility projects, which trial new ideas and build on more established techniques, are a vital step along the road to fully utilising this potentially extremely valuable resource.”

Stephanie Clark, Scottish Renewables, Policy Manager, said:

“To meet Scotland’s ambitious renewable heat target we will need to see geothermal projects, biomass boilers, solar thermal systems, heat pumps and other renewable technology become much more commonplace across the country.

“Our geothermal resource remains largely untapped, and we welcome developments which could see this green energy source harnessed to bring affordable warmth to Scotland’s homes and businesses.

“These five projects show the huge variety of potential uses for our underground heat. This is an industry at its early stages in the UK, but Scotland’s history of innovation and engineering excellence mean that if geothermal will succeed anywhere, it will succeed here.”

Background

The Geothermal Energy Challenge Fund was launched in March in response to a recommendation from the Geothermal Energy Expert Group. The Challenge Fund is the first project being delivered as part of the Low Carbon Infrastructure Transition Programme (LCITP). More information about the Challenge Fund and the LCITP is available at: <http://news.scotland.gov.uk/News/-250-000-to-unlock-Scotland-s-geothermal-potential-16ef.aspx>

The findings of a study commissioned by the Scottish Government highlight that, within Scotland, there may be significant potential for geothermal energy in naturally occurring groundwater and in minewater.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/11/2800>

Last autumn, the Minister for Business, Energy and Tourism convened a group of experts to produce a viable proposal within which geothermal heat or heat and power can be encouraged and developed in a Scottish context, and its implementation accelerated with a view to reducing Scotland's carbon footprint while providing additional security of energy supplies.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Business-Industry/Energy/Energy-sources/19185/GeothermalEnergy/GEEG>

Contact

Peter John Meiklem : 0131 244 3069 / 07815703299