



Christmas Newsletter

2018



It's been a busy but rewarding year at SE² Towers and, as Christmas approaches, it's a great opportunity to pause, draw breath and reflect on what we've been up to...

If I was king or queen for the day...

Given absolute freedom and unlimited budget, what environmental policy would you introduce?

Join us at the SE² Seminar on Tuesday 5th February at The Castle, Farringdon to join the debate, invest your cash* and network over a glass of wine

Email rachael.mills@se-2.co.uk to book your place!

Going local

So much of our energy system is inherently local: decisions made in our homes and businesses, choices about energy generation technologies, how and where we travel. This year, we've been working with Kent County Council to explore how the county can best combine local and national approaches to reducing emissions and improving air quality. It's been a pleasure collaborating with [Aether](#) as we develop a new Kent and Medway Energy and Air Quality Strategy; a partnership we hope will continue to grow.

We have followed this local thread in our other work: Liz has become a Director of [Frome Renewable Energy Cooperative](#), helping support community-owned renewable energy generation. It's a tough challenge given the economics of renewables right now, but we're looking at some great sites for PV and exploring opportunities for heat pumps (Liz [really](#) wants a water source heat pump...).

Smartening up

The smart meter roll-out marches on with over 10 million meters now installed. We've been working with the GLA to deliver a Smart Energy Collaboration, bringing together technology providers, network operators, end users, policymakers and others to share ideas and inspiration to ensure that the transition to a smart energy system works in the interests of London's citizens and businesses. It's a vibrant network and one that we hope to continue into the future.



We're also exploring how smart meter data can unlock behaviour change and investment in energy efficiency within the schools' sector. We're working with Hoare Lea, City Sciences and Flourishing on a BEIS funded innovation project to develop a platform through which schools can work with their metering data, both in improving energy management and in building data and analytics into the curriculum.

Reaching out

We've been supporting [Retrofit Works](#) this year on a great project to explore how energy advice, funding and support can best reach those who are vulnerable. We've worked with some great stakeholders - from NEA, local authorities, through the supply chain of energy assessors, installers and contractors - to talk about how to define vulnerability, how to identify when someone might be vulnerable and how to work with a customer who may need extra support or care during the retrofit process. Retrofit Works members are putting the theory into practice as they deliver the Mayor of London's [Warmer Homes Fund](#), which offers up to £4,000 for energy efficiency works for London households.

Feeling the heat

Liz has continued her work on heat networks, working with both BEIS Heat Networks Delivery Unit and the Vanguard's District Energy Network to build capacity and confidence among local authorities and industry to push forward with the new generation of heat networks that we need. This year saw the publication of [guidance on stakeholder engagement for heat networks](#), which we helped to produce with CAG and Carbon Trust. Never underestimate how difficult it is to create a heat network! There are so many stakeholders, technical barriers, financial and economic challenges and planning issues, not to mention the uproar that arises every time you try to dig up a road... Oh, and your customers, the price they pay and the service they expect. If you meet someone who's created a heat network project, please do shake them by the hand and say "well done". They deserve real credit!

Heat networks are a growth sector at the moment, with the Heat Network Investment Programme (HNIP) launched in October to complement the work of the HNDU. Much of 2018 has been taken up with the CMA heat network market study and recommendations, and it came as no great surprise in December when BEIS announced that it will introduce a heat network regulatory framework. Many stakeholders within heat networks welcome regulation, and it should help to strengthen customer confidence and protection. But it does mean that a shake-up of the industry is coming. Alongside Liz's work with local authorities, Rachael has been working with housing associations to understand what their wants and needs are when it comes to district and communal heating and figuring out ways in which we can share best practice. She's continued her work with [Southern Housing Group](#), taking a strategic look at their communal heat portfolio and implementing improvements across metering and billing, efficiency performance and customer service. She was also lucky enough to join a study trip to see [how the Danes do heat networks](#), which was enlightening, insightful and jolly good fun! Rachael is now involved in other housing association fora to help share ideas and to develop a resource bank for other organisations at the beginning of their communal heating journey. We're involved in a new enterprise called [Chirpy Heat](#) too - officially launching next year, but you heard it here first!



This year has been more mixed on the insulation front. We are hearing more about people removing insulation - whether external cladding following the Grenfell tragedy or cavity wall insulation that was badly installed the first time round - than we are about people installing it. I wonder what this winter will bring. Are we due for another big season of ECO? Will the industry be able to rebuild trust in the safety of its products? Can innovation bring us attractive and cost-effective products for installing solid walled properties?

Back in business

Whilst you probably know us for our work in the housing sector, we've got a long track record of research, strategy and engagement in the business and commercial sector too. We're delighted to have brought this experience in to a project helping the GLA to understand the opportunities for carbon reduction from the commercial sector. We have been working with the ACE Research team again and it has been a fascinating journey.

We're also continuing to work with the Energy Systems Catapult to look at opportunities for industry to transform as the energy sector moves more towards services models. The Catapult has done some great work this past year exploring the types of business models that can thrive in an energy service driven market, testing customer responses to purchasing service bundles rather than units of energy, and understanding the interplay of forces that create, shape and regulate markets. Much of their work is due for publication early in the New Year, so keep an eye out for some great insights.

University challenge

We've been delighted to have Catriona Reebby working on our behalf this year at the University of Surrey. We've known Cat for more than fifteen years since our time together at the Energy Saving Trust and it's great to be working with her again. She's been supporting the Sustainability Team at the University, getting involved with stakeholder engagement, strategy development, developing business cases and delivering projects on the ground, including an exciting borehole project to provide a water supply direct to campus.

Our old friends



As well as working with new partners and clients this year, we've also continued to work with old friends too. The ADE's black tie Awards Dinner in October was a great success (some said the best so far) and we were thrilled to be part of the delivery team for the Heat and Decentralised Energy Conference in November, not least because over half of all speakers and the chairs of all the workshops were women! If anything, our links with the ADE are stronger than ever: Rachael has been appointed a Non-Executive Director of the Association, building on her similar role with ACE as the two organisations merge.

We look forward to seeing all you soon - and don't forget to book your place at the SE² seminar!

More information about our work is available at www.se-2.co.uk

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