

[Open consultation: Air quality: using cleaner fuels for domestic burning](#)

We want to know what you think about our proposals for helping householders move to cleaner fuels for domestic burning. The changes we propose include only allowing the sale of cleaner solid fuels. These proposals apply to England only.

Domestic burning is the single largest source of harmful particulate pollution in the UK. Many people do not realise that there are cleaner alternatives, such as dry wood instead of wet, or low-sulphur smokeless fuel instead of coal.

[Press release: Smart meter enabled technology could see electric car owners cut bills and make money](#)

- growing number of electric car owners could save and even make money from innovative technology by selling energy back to the grid
- smart energy innovations, including smart tariffs, could save the UK as much as £40 billion between now and 2050

Energy Minister Claire Perry today (16 August 2018) hailed OVO Energy for its “innovative” electric vehicle (EV) products – enabled by smart meters – which could see millions save and even make money from their electric cars.

OVO Energy, based in Bristol city centre and London, is one of just a few companies already using smart meters to offer innovative products, such as rewarding customers for charging their electric vehicles at off-peak times. These offers, made possible thanks to a smart meter, help customers use energy at times when there is less demand on the grid, in turn saving money on their bills.

Smart charging and Vehicle to Grid charging could become a cornerstone of the way we use energy in the UK, with more than 8 million people in Britain considering buying or leasing an electric vehicle in the next 5 years. With this technology, customers will not only be able to choose to use energy at the cheapest times but also make money by selling energy from their vehicle’s battery at times when it is most in demand. This will support the growth of renewable energy generation in the UK.

Smart energy innovations, such as smart tariffs and smart charging, could

save the UK as much as £40 billion between now and 2050.

Smart meters also support OVO's intelligent platform VCharge, which is enabling residential appliances such as electric vehicles, electric heaters and in-home batteries to help balance the grid and reduce energy costs.

Energy and Clean Growth Minister Claire Perry said:

More than 11 million meters are already empowering consumers to reap the rewards of a smarter energy system, putting homes and small businesses on the road to a smarter future.

Smart meters will be the cornerstone of a cleaner, flexible and efficient energy system, saving the country tens of billions of pounds.

New innovative products and tariffs like these will put consumers in the fast lane when it comes to control of their energy use, saving and even making them money when using their electric vehicles.

These products are just one of the ways smart meters save money. They put people in control of their energy use by showing them how much energy they use in pounds and pence via an easy to understand In-Home Display. With this information at their fingertips, consumers can easily understand how they can make small changes to the way they use energy in order to use less and save money on their bills – up to £1.2 billion a year by 2030.

Stephen Fitzpatrick, CEO and Founder, OVO said:

Getting the smart meter rollout right should be the top priority for the government and the energy sector in the UK right now so it's encouraging to see the minister here today.

The smart meter rollout is a huge and complicated programme. However, there's no question it needs to be done as we can't build the energy system of the future unless we know accurately how much energy people are using and when.

OVO is using technology like electric vehicles, smart electric heat and batteries to help lower energy bills for consumers and enable us to use more renewable energy. None of this technology will work without smart metering.

We welcome the government's recent efforts to improve the delivery of smart meters but there is still more work to do.

At OVO's offices, the minister also met with their smart meter installation engineers, who undergo thorough training ahead of installations. When having

a smart meter installed all homes and small businesses benefit from a free visual safety check of their gas appliances and electricity supply; and the past 18 months alone, installers have raised 430,000 safety notices for issues not related to smart meters during installation visits as part of the free visual safety check provided.

More than 400,000 meters are being installed by energy suppliers across Great Britain each month. Consumers can call their supplier and book an appointment to have one installed.

More than 500,000 households in the South West have already had a smart meter installed and those still without one could save a collective £50 million if they had a smart meter installed. If every household in Great Britain got a smart meter, we could save enough energy to power every household in Exeter, Plymouth and Swindon for 2 years.

Apprentices powering Hinkley Point C

Separately, the minister also visited new nuclear site Hinkley Point C today, where a 250-strong apprentice force is powering this Somerset nuclear project – site owners, EDF expect 1,000 apprentices to work on the project during its lifespan.

Hinkley Point C is the UK's first new nuclear power station in a generation and is poised to make a major contribution to the UK's move to reduce carbon emissions through clean energy production.

Nuclear energy already provides around 20% of the UK's electricity from existing sites and Hinkley Point C's future output will significantly boost this figure. The clean electricity it will generate upon completion is all part of this government's modern Industrial Strategy, which actively encourages clean growth in business and energy production, helping to create better higher-paying jobs across the UK.

Hinkley Point C remains on track to meet its next major milestone, the 2019 nuclear concrete construction target of completing the foundations for the first reactor. Energy production is expected to start in 2025.

Notes to editors

82% of people with smart meters say they have a better idea of their energy costs and 8 out of 10 people with smart meters say they would recommend them to friends or family.

For more information about the benefits smart meters can bring and to dispel myths surrounding them view our explainer '[Smart meters – the smart choice](#)'.

Press release: Light aircraft used to target illegal abstraction investigations

The Environment Agency in the East Midlands is the first area in the country to use digital imaging collected by light aircraft to put a stop to illegal abstractions from rivers and streams.

The information obtained from the operation is now helping the Environment Agency to effectively target high invasion areas and carry out targeted abstraction patrols to catch illegal abstractors and put a stop to illegal abstraction that can cause harm to the environment and wildlife.

The Environment Agency manages abstraction to balance the needs of the environment with the rights of existing lawful water users during periods of dry weather.

93 abstraction licences in the East Midlands have had restrictions placed on them in the last few weeks to reduce abstractions and 16 licence holders have been told to cease abstracting completely.

To ensure abstractors are complying with the new restrictions, Environment Officers will be carrying out high visibility patrols throughout the East Midlands to check that abstractors keep within the conditions of their licence and do not cause harm to the environment.

Steve Lawrie, Area Environment Manager at the Environment Agency, said:

Our patrols across the East Midlands aim to deter illegal abstraction and identify compliance issues where restrictions are in force, or where we are aware of environmental issues.

We are working to be flexible where possible and allow abstraction where it will not cause harm to the environment or impact other river users. We must balance the needs of farmers and other businesses with those of wildlife and other water users.

As the hot, dry weather continues we are urging everyone to use water wisely to help protect the environment and prevent the need for further water restrictions.

Anyone suspected of abstracting illegally should be reported to the Environment Agency hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Notice: S80 3LJ, Steetley Dolomite Limited: environmental permit draft decision advertisement

The Environment Agency consults the public on certain applications for waste operations, mining waste operations, installations, water discharge and groundwater activities. In some cases they also consult on draft decisions for environmental permits. The arrangements are explained in its [Public Participation Statement](#)

These notices explain:

- the Environment Agency's proposed decision and the reasons and considerations on which they've based this
- additional relevant information available since the application was advertised
- any information or guidance provided by the Secretary of State relevant to the application

Press release: Flood sirens in Grimsby and Cleethorpes to be tested on 24 August

The Environment Agency (EA) is conducting its annual test of its flood sirens in Grimsby and Cleethorpes on Friday, 24 August.

Installed after the summer floods of 2007, 17 of the 18 sirens help the EA warn over 25,000 households and local businesses of imminent tidal flooding while one also warns of flood risk from the river.

Testing will take place on Friday, 24 August between 10am and 12pm. If you hear the sirens during this time, you do not need to take any action. If flooding is expected on the day, the test will be rescheduled and flood warnings will be issued through the Environment Agency's free Flood Warning Service (FWS).

Environment Agency staff will be at Freshney Place shopping centre in Grimsby together with representatives from North East Lincolnshire Council between 9am and 5pm on the day of the tests. They'll be on hand to answer questions about the sirens and provide information about how to manage your flood risk, including what steps you can take to prepare for an emergency.

The sirens in Grimsby and Cleethorpes were installed over a decade ago, and since then the Environment Agency has made great strides in how it can warn people when flooding may be possible. The EA now offers a free Flood Warning Service, which provides targeted flood warnings via phone call, text or email. The EA encourages all residents in Grimsby and Cleethorpes to check their flood risk and sign up for flood warnings if they've not done so yet, by visiting www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings or by calling 0345 988 1188.

Although the Flood Warning Service is now the EA's primary warning tool, the flood sirens in Grimsby and Cleethorpes add value as they can help provide people with crucial time to prepare for flooding. The siren on the Willows Estate in Grimsby is used to warn residents about flooding from the New Cut Drain and the River Freshney, while the others warn of flooding from the Humber.

Greg Smith, Flood Resilience team leader with the Environment Agency, said:

The flood sirens we own and operate in Grimsby and Cleethorpes help us warn over 25,000 households and local businesses. It's important that we conduct these annual tests to make sure the sirens still work as they should.

Although our flood defences reduce the risk of flooding to thousands of homes and businesses in Grimsby and Cleethorpes, we can never remove the risk of flooding entirely. This is why it is crucial that we can warn people when there is a risk of flooding, by using tools such as the sirens or our free Flood Warning Service.

It is important that everyone plays their part to protect themselves from the risk of flooding. Find out what you can do to protect yourself and your family by coming to talk to us at Freshney Place on 24 August.

Cllr Matt Patrick, portfolio holder for the environment with North East Lincolnshire Council said:

On the flood siren testing day, North East Lincolnshire Council staff and its partner Engie will be joining the Environment Agency in Freshney Place Shopping Centre between 9am and 5pm.

Officers will be available to answer any questions on flood risk and how you can prepare.