

PRESS RELEASE

OPDC AWARDED £36M TO KEEP THOUSANDS OF HOMES WARM WITH WASTE HEAT FROM DATA CENTRES IN UK FIRST

The Mayor of London's development corporation, OPDC has been awarded £36 million from the government's Green Heat Network Fund (GHNF) to harness waste heat from the cooling of several data centres.

The innovative project is the first of its kind to secure GHNF support and will provide low carbon heating captured from data centres into buildings. It forms part of a wider £65m award from the GHNF to five projects across the UK.

The network is located in the largest adopted Opportunity Area in London spanning three London Boroughs. Old Oak West, OPDC's planned new development area, around the future Old Oak Common Station, will deliver over 9,000 homes and 250,000m² of commercial development.

It is one of the UK's largest and most important urban brownfield regeneration projects which includes the Old Oak HS2 and Elizabeth Line interchange. The development will have excellent connectivity for the thousands of new and affordable homes in the area and the new district heating network is key to achieving a zero carbon and sustainable new urban district.

The funding award of £36 million will support the commercialisation and construction of the district heat network. This substantial scheme is expected to deliver 95GWh of heat across 5 phases between 2026 and 2040. The Old Oak development will create 22,000 new jobs.

The Mayor of London's Local Energy Accelerator (LEA) funding programme, which is co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund, has also provided almost £400,000 to fund technical expertise to develop the OPDC-led heat network. The LEA, which funds the development of clean, locally generated energy projects, including heat networks, has just been extended to March 2024 with £3 million additional funding provide by the Mayor of London.

Data centres offer a predictable supply of low grade heat (between 20°C and 35°C) which is often wasted with many centre operators running inefficient plants to reject this heat into the atmosphere. As a result of this scheme, the wasted heat will instead be distributed to a number of energy centres via a plastic "ambient" network, where it will supply heat pumps that then raise the temperature to Low Temperature Hot Water "LTHW". This will then be piped via a traditional steel network to a mixture of new and existing residential buildings.

David Lunts, OPDC Chief Executive says:

"Recycling the huge amounts of wasted heat from our local data centres into heat and energy for local residents, a major hospital and other users is an exciting and innovative example of OPDC's support for the Mayor's net zero ambitions.

We are excited to be leading the way in developing low carbon infrastructure, supporting current and future generations of Londoners in Old Oak and Park Royal to live more sustainably.”

Lord Callanan, Minister for Energy Efficiency and Green Finance, said:

“Keeping homes warm with waste heat from technology is a glimpse into the future - and demonstrates just how innovative this country can be when it comes to reducing our carbon emissions.

“The £65 million we’ve awarded today will help spread this success across the country, by rolling out innovative low-carbon heating to help to drive down energy bills and deliver our net zero goal.”

Infrastructure consultancy AECOM is designing the heat network.

Jo Streeten, Managing Director, Buildings + Places – Europe and India, AECOM said:

“This is a fantastic opportunity for the new communities emerging within the OPDC area to lead the way in how our cities can operate more sustainably, by using the waste heat sourced from data centres.

An enormous amount of stakeholder collaboration and technical expertise has gone into getting us to this point, but we now have a blueprint for an innovative ambient heat network which we hope will provide a template for future developments.”

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Notes to editors

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About OPDC

Old Oak and Park Royal (OPDC) is Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC), established by the Mayor of London to secure the regeneration of our area, which spans three London boroughs – Ealing, Brent and Hammersmith & Fulham.

Our area includes Park Royal industrial estate, the Old Oak development area around the new High Speed 2 Old Oak Common Station, and the protected land at Wormwood Scrubs. We are the Local Planning Authority and regeneration agency for this 650-hectare site.

About GHNF

The Green Heat Network Fund (GHNF) is a multi-year, capital grant fund that opened to applicants in March 2022 and is anticipated to run to 2027. It will provide support to organisations in the public, private, and third sectors in England. The GHNF is a key part of plans to reduce carbon emissions from heating homes and businesses by 2050. It replaced the Heat Networks Investment Project (HNIP) scheme which closed for applications in January 2022. In contrast to the HNIP scheme, the GHNF scheme will only fund heat network projects where there is a low-carbon heat source.

For all media enquiries, please contact: comms@tp-heatnetworks.org