

Bradford College connects to energy network in net zero push

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Work to connect [Bradford College](#) to the £70m Bradford Energy Network is officially underway, marking a significant move away from fossil fuels and towards achieving Net Zero.

Heat networks (also known as district heating) supply heat from a central source. Underground pipes carry hot water to buildings on a network, enabling the rapid decarbonisation of heating – the country’s biggest source of carbon emissions. These networks are playing a key role in achieving Britain’s climate goals by providing a locally generated, sustainable alternative to fossil-fuel gas boilers.

The Bradford Energy Network led by 1Energy, the UK’s leading low-carbon city heat network developer, is set to benefit three anchor partners: Bradford College, the University of Bradford, and Bradford Courts. External infrastructure work for the project is being delivered by ThermaMech with underground pipes being laid throughout the city centre.

The College joined the scheme thanks to a £2.6 million grant delivered by Salix and run by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. The Phase 3c Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) supports energy-efficiency works in public sector buildings. The latest internal works will connect Bradford College’s David Hockney and ATC buildings to the Network.

Pamela Sheldon, Head of Projects at Bradford College, said:

“As one of the UK’s youngest cities, Bradford must be future proofed for the next generation. Bradford College is committed to reducing its carbon footprint, and we are proud to be leading the way in this crucial work. Our transition to renewable energy will benefit nearly 3,500 staff and students in two of our main college buildings and marks a major step forward in Bradford College’s sustainability efforts.”

The Bradford District Heat Network will use one of the largest air source heat pumps in the UK, with an annual direct carbon saving of over 285 tonnes per year predicted for the College. In total, buildings on the Network will benefit from an 85-90% decrease in emissions, contributing to a city-wide reduction of approximately 8,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent in the first phase.

Positive social change is at the heart of the Bradford Energy Network. Alongside supporting sustainability objectives, the project is also maximising community and social value outcomes. 1Energy's Group Project Director for Bradford, Marissa Granath said:

"The Bradford Energy Network is a huge, long-term investment in the city, and we want this to have as much impact as possible, not just on reducing carbon emissions but also bringing wider benefits to the city. 1Energy has made a number of commitments to deliver these benefits – for example, opportunities for Bradford College and The University of Bradford students to join us for work experience, placements, site visits, and learning sessions."

Contractor ThermaMech has also agreed to provide study-programme placements for Construction and Engineering students, live project industry masterclasses, student and staff site tours aligned with curriculum, resource support for the ongoing Bradford Beck Community Project (led by Morgan Sindall, Groundworks UK, and Friends of Bradford Beck), and industry insights via a staff CPD day for Construction and Engineering areas.

The pipework for the Bradford Energy Network is due to be completed later this year. A new energy plant for the scheme will be completed next Spring, with a view to the Network providing heat by September 2026.