

# Sustainability in the News

**The following stories have been extracted from  
the regional on-line newsletter – bdaily – in  
recent months.**

**They will help you and your pupils understand  
some of the current issues surrounding  
sustainability and to learn of some of the new  
initiatives, products and services being offered  
in this growing area.**

**We hope they provide inspiration and ideas.**

**Occasionally you will see stories which go back some time – that is because they are linked to newer stories and add to your complete picture.**

### **Universities paint a major breakthrough for the environment**

Experts from Durham and Manchester Universities have developed a new material set to revolutionise the paint and coatings industries. The new material, HESS, is a component of water-based coatings and solves one of the major problems faced by the industry in seeking to reduce the environmental impact and health risks of certain types of paint.

HESS was developed by Professor Peter Lovell, Dr David Berrisford and Dr Andrew Whiting and has been supported by The University of Manchester's Intellectual Property commercialisation company (UMIP) to secure a European and US patent. The developers also secured funding of £90K from NorthStar Equity Investors (NSEI), through its Proof of Concept Fund.

The NSEI funding will enable work to be carried out at Durham University to scale up the synthesis of HESS to quantities suitable for industry trials.

Richard Price, Business development manager at UMIP, said: "Paint manufacturers have been searching for the answer to the question of how to produce high-performance paints that are environmentally sound for a very long time and HESS is that solution - it's groundbreaking and, as you can imagine, is attracting a lot of interest from the industry. HESS has been in development since 1998 so it's very exciting to be on the verge of a breakthrough in terms of turning it into a commercial reality - the NorthStar funding will be instrumental in achieving this."

Michelle Cooper, investment manager at NSEI, said: "This is a major breakthrough for paint technology, combining environmental and health benefits with improved performance. "It's good to see the expertise of two leading universities being pooled to develop new technology with such exciting market potential. It's exactly the type of early stage business we look to invest in to turn innovative ideas into commercial success."



### **University dreams of Green Christmas**

One of the North East's universities is dreaming of a green Christmas this year. The University of Sunderland is hoping to make those dreams a reality by giving back to the environment exactly what it takes out over the festive season.

Environmental experts worked out that the lights on the university Christmas tree would emit a total of 600kg of carbon dioxide. They calculated that they could offset these emissions, and the emissions created by the transportation and eventual mulching of the Christmas tree, by planting another tree on site. University pro vice-chancellor Baroness Estelle Morris planted the first of five new trees - four silver birch trees and one bird cherry tree – on the university's City Campus on Chester Road this week.

Sarah Legg, the university's environmental coordinator, said: "The trees were chosen to compliment the species already in place, ensuring that there was a mix of species which aids biodiversity."

Sunderland is one of the top universities in the UK for its commitment to cutting carbon emissions. In May this year environmental group the Carbon Trust recognised the University of Sunderland for its environmental efforts. The university has also signed up to the Higher Education Carbon Management Programme and is encouraging staff and students to think about how their actions affect the environment.



### **Digital Security**

A North East CCTV firm has been awarded a major contract with Northumbrian Water. The utility has commissioned North Shields based security specialists 2020 Vision to provide a

major overhaul to its surveillance systems at both its Pity Me head office and Washington sites.

2020 Vision will supply, install and maintain a complete networked CCTV structure across both sites with a total of 36 cameras being installed. The upgrade will provide centralised management surveillance in order to further protect Northumbrian Water staff, visitors and property. It will use the very latest in digital recording technology.

Peter Houllis, managing director of 2020 Vision, said: "We are delighted to have secured such a prestigious contract. Security is extremely important for a company as large as Northumbrian Water and it is testament to the reputation of 2020 Vision that we have been selected to implement this project. It further adds to the company's growing profile in the blue chip sector."

2020 Vision was established fifteen years ago, and has provided security in environments such as hospitals, casinos, universities, sports stadia, government offices and even a seabird island.

For more info on 2020, visit [www.2020cctv.com](http://www.2020cctv.com)



### **Delivering an impressive package**

Thinking outside the box has helped Traidcraft, the fair trade organisation based in the North East, increase the number of packages it can deliver by about 10,000 a year. This five per cent increase will help the Team Valley distribution centre meet the growing demand for the developing world products it supplies to its customers throughout the UK.

It has been achieved through a programme of training and flexible working which has improved the skills and motivation of over 16 per cent of the staff employed at Traidcraft's Tyneside headquarters.

The latest initiative has been NVQ Level 2 and 3 training in team leading, warehousing and distribution, customer service, business administration and IT delivered by Access Training involving staff working across six different departments.

Christine Borley, Director of Human Resources, said: "We have people here from different backgrounds including some from overseas whose first language is not English. Effective training not only improves skills, it creates a greater cohesiveness among the workforce, improving communication and motivation. The results have been impressive and, as a result, we are well prepared for our busiest season."

In addition, Traidcraft has introduced extremely flexible working packages to help its staff balance work and family life, including part-time, flexi-time, job-share, annualised hours and home working.

Chris Scott, Training Manager at Access Training, said: "We began by talking with Traidcraft to understand what it wanted to achieve. This enabled us to identify the areas and types of training which would best deliver results and then we had to devise very flexible delivery. The workforce has responded very positively which has helped them to deliver impressive improvements in productivity."



### **Consumers hamper climate change battle**

A consumer electronics boom is hampering the fight against climate change, says a new report. Sophisticated new gadgets often use more electricity than older models, warns the Energy Saving Trust. Digital radios, set-top boxes, laptops, plasma TVs, DVDs and computers have all soared in popularity, and by 2010 consumer electronics, computers and home entertainment will use 45% of domestic electricity, the EST says.

The equivalent of 14 power stations will be needed just to power these devices, the report warns. Having more hi-tech kit dotted around homes means consumers often forget what they have left switched on.

Some hi-tech devices are less energy efficient than their predecessors – set-top boxes mean many viewers now use more electricity while watching TV. By contrast, the latest designs of traditional domestic appliances such as fridges and washing machines are more energy efficient than their predecessors.

In addition, the report points out that some electronic goods still have no manual "off" switch which means they are permanently left on. The increase in single-person households is also "taking its toll" on energy use, the report warns.



### **Wind farm moves a step closer**

A plan to site an offshore wind farm off the Teesside coast has moved a step forward. EDF Energy first announced plans for up to 30 of the 420ft turbines off the coast of Redcar in 2004, and consent has now been given by the Department of Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform.

The company said it was considering how to move the project forward, and would consult with the local council, residents and other interested parties. The planned wind farm will be capable of producing up to 90MW of electricity, enough to supply the annual requirements of about 60,000 households.

Vincent de Rivaz, EDF Chief Executive, said: "We're very pleased with DBERR's decision which marks an important milestone for the project. We have been consulting on our plans extensively with local groups for over 4 years and we would like to thank all those who took part for their valued input.

"EDF Energy has a long-term commitment to maintaining a diverse and sustainable energy mix in the future, involving all types of generation including renewables. We believe this diversity is crucial to address climate change, for security of supply and to provide competitively priced electricity for all our customers.

"We recently announced our Climate Commitments which set out our plans to transform our business to help tackle climate change. A key commitment is that over the next 5 years, EDF Energy and its affiliates will invest in around 1,000 MW of UK renewable energy production. The project proposed for Redcar will play an important role in helping to achieve these targets and will help lead the way in providing low carbon energy for current and future generations."



### **Wind farm plans for Durham**

An extra ten wind turbines could be built in County Durham. E.ON UK, the company that runs Powergen, is holding three public exhibitions about the plans to build the wind farm at Butterwick in County Durham.

The wind farm could generate enough electricity for 8,500 households, and E.ON UK believes the turbines would directly benefit the local and regional economies by £7m. The proposed site is next to the already approved seven turbine Walkway Wind Farm on Butterwick Moor, north of the A689 and east of Sedgfield.

Alex Fornal, Project Developer for E.ON UK, said: "We'd really encourage people living near the proposed site to come out and take a look at our plans and to ask us questions."

Visitors will also get the chance to learn more about how the local community may benefit from the wind farm.

"We're proposing the creation of a community fund that would be made available over the life of the scheme to support local projects if we get permission to build the wind farm"

Details of the proposal and will be available at: Fishburn Community Centre, Fishburn on Wednesday 20th September, from 12pm to 3pm; Trimdon Village Hall, Trimdon village on

Wednesday 20th September, from 5pm to 9pm; and Sedgefield Parish Hall, Sedgefield on Thursday 21st September, from 12pm to 8.30pm, and on Friday 22nd September, from 9.30am to 4pm. The UK Government has set a target of generating 15% of electricity from renewable sources by 2015.

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## **Durham team leads multi-million pound study into wind power**

Durham scientists are taking the lead in a £2.55 million research project into wind energy for the future.

Engineers at Durham University are leading members of an expert team to investigate how to improve the cost-effectiveness of large scale wind turbine systems in the UK.

Funded by the Engineering and Physical Science Research Council (EPSRC), the project is part of the fifth phase of the £40 million SuperGen Sustainable Power Generation Programme which is using world-leading experts to research the future of electrical power generation.

Known as the Wind Energy Technologies Consortium, the Durham-led group will use the funds for a four-year project researching ways to improve the reliability and availability of wind energy, reduce the cost of energy production and facilitate the siting of turbines in off-shore locations.

Principal Investigator, Professor Peter Tavner of Durham University's School of Engineering said: "While many are familiar with the idea of wind power it still contributes a relatively small amount to UK's overall energy needs, partly because it can be difficult to agree sites for wind turbines on land.

The offshore wind resource is much larger but the costs of building and maintaining off-shore wind turbines are currently seen as high. Over the next four years we are going to look at engineering solutions that could create large-scale wind turbine systems that are both cost-effective and reliable and could generate a significant proportion of the UK's energy needs. With many countries waking up to the urgency of finding alternative sources of energy to the world's dwindling oil and gas resources this project couldn't have been more timely. "For more information on energy research go to [www.epsrc.ac.uk/ResearchHighlights/Energy/Guide/default.htm](http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/ResearchHighlights/Energy/Guide/default.htm).

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## **Manufacturer goes for green energy**

Excavator manufacturer Komatsu UK is trying to help tackle the region's climate change issues by looking at the feasibility of a wind turbine at its Birtley plant. The wind turbine is estimated to save the production of 500 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year.

This month Komatsu UK will submit an application with Gateshead Council to erect a temporary wind monitoring mast, which would ensure the wind resource assumptions made so far are accurate. If approved, the 40 metre test mast would be installed in the centre of Komatsu UK's working site and would remain in place for 12 months, to give accurate year round measurement of site wind speed.

This year, Gateshead Council pledged to reduce its carbon footprint and if planning permission for the wind turbine is granted, Komatsu UK will be the first manufacturing site in the borough offsetting its impact on the environment in this way.

Graham Henderson, manufacturing director at Komatsu UK, said: "If the project is given the green light, it will be a positive move towards supporting the local environment. As Gateshead Council is an area where major wind farms are not viable, they must rely on contributions from companies like Komatsu UK to help reach its renewable energy targets. "A full public consultation process would be carried out at the end of the test mast's monitoring period, enabling all interested parties to learn full details of the proposed project."

Komatsu UK will also incorporate the project into its existing educational programme hoping to ensure that school and college groups benefit from onsite visits.

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### **Seaward goes green to boost business**

A County Durham manufacturer has introduced a campaign to improve its green credentials and launch the electrical industry's first carbon neutral product. The Peterlee-based Seaward Group has undertaken an audit of its energy consumption and is putting in place a series of measures initially aimed at reducing its carbon dioxide emissions by 20% each year for the next three years. Alongside this aim initiatives will be run to ensure that all products manufactured by Seaward will be carbon neutral within the next 18 months.

Among the changes to be implemented, the company will be switching its energy supplies to renewable sources and green tariffs. It is also setting up new arrangements for waste management and recycling, putting timers on switches and appliances, making lighting system changes throughout its buildings and changing all stationery to recycled grades. As well as making practical changes, Seaward will also be using carbon offsetting programmes to make an immediate impact in reducing the company's carbon footprint.

Rod Taylor, Seaward managing director, said: "Climate change has moved rapidly from being a fringe concern to a key business issue. It is not only the sensible thing to do for any responsible business, but it is increasingly becoming a determining factor in whether or not contracts and orders are won or lost. "The aim is to reduce our carbon footprint by 50% in three years. Some of the changes we are introducing will actually add to our costs in the short term, but over time the commercial payback is expected to be considerable. "Having now established a new set of environmental principles we are committed to monitoring our performance and minimising the effect of our activities on the local, regional and global environment."

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### **Orange is the new green**

Sainsbury's is set to save 6,500 tonnes of plastic every year – equivalent to 53,500 barrels of oil – by replacing its white carrier bags with orange bags made from 33% recycled material, 57% raw plastic and 10% chalk.

The announcement comes as all the UK's major supermarkets are stepping up their efforts to 'go green'. Rival Tesco recently launched a scheme to award Clubcard points to customers who recycle old carriers or pack their shopping in other bags.

Launching orange as the new green, Justin King, Sainsbury's chief executive, announced: "It's been our aim for some time to tackle what we do with our standard plastic bag because we know this remains a passionate subject for most of our customers. This is a major green step forward because recycling carrier bags, very much like lots of our packaging, means we're again cutting down on the use of plastic as well as what goes to landfill. "Our ultimate aim is to further increase the amount that can be recycled in the bag so that we use even less plastic. We want to encourage all our customers to support our green revolution in food packaging and carrier bags by re-using and re-cycling."

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### **Grow your own garden furniture**

A furniture retailer has taken a novel approach to garden chairs with the launch of a range of grow-your-own grass armchairs. Purves & Purves' is offering a green alternative to normal garden furniture, which often find themselves at risk from rust and theft. The DIY armchair requires 240 litres of soil and "steady watering", taking about 10 days to sprout its green covering. Check it out at <http://www.purves.co.uk/>.

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### **Student creates 'allotment in a box'**

An innovation in gardening could soon be bringing the grow-your-own concept to thousands of people. A revolutionary 'allotment in a box' is the brainchild of Northumbria University

student Carly Stephenson. The core product is a vegetable patch in a self-watering container which means the plants are virtually indestructible.

Carly, a final year Design for Industry student, said: "When I was growing up my family had an allotment and I loved the whole concept of growing fresh vegetables and the sense of family togetherness that goes with that. This idea is aimed at people who are probably already into organic produce and would love to grow their own but simply don't have the time."

The range comes with a variety of accessories that can transform the product into a vertical garden for a wall or a stackable tower - making it a suitable addition for any urban garden, courtyard or even a balcony. To successfully recreate the community appeal of the allotment, Carly has taken 'Ugro' to the next level by creating a website forum 'Ugro over the garden fence' where people can swap tips, hints, advice and recipes over the net. Carly's idea could soon become a business reality as she has already approached leading DIY stores with her idea and has had a very favourable response.

Mark Bailey, a Senior Lecturer in Design for Industry, said: "Carly's project is extremely topical and taps into a real market opportunity. We are beginning to recognise the importance of eating healthy food. "We're tremendously proud of Carly, a local student who has taken full advantage of the opportunities offered by the course and is now set to start a career with one of the UK's leading design consultancy businesses."

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### **Consumers not so green**

Cynical consumers are suffering from 'green overload', and think there is little they can do to help the environment, according to a report. Market analysts Mintel have found that people feel powerless to make a difference and believe companies use green issues for their own ends. The research shows that one in five people are apathetic about the environment.

Despite high awareness of green issues, 17% are cynical about what they can personally achieve, and nearly a quarter (23%) of consumers are simply unsure how to lead a greener way of life. Just 16% of respondents felt they were doing everything possible to be eco-friendly.

Angela Hughes, Mintel consumer research manager, said mixed messages about the environment were making people switch off. She said: "Although there are no easy solutions to many of the environmental and ethical dilemmas which face society today, most consumers clearly need to be presented with simpler messages."

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### **Environment Secretary 'kick starts' student recycling scheme**

Environment Secretary David Miliband last week launched a new 'green' scheme to encourage Durham University students to recycle more of their rubbish. Mr Miliband – who chairs South Shields Football Club in his free time – was presented with a football to reuse, marking the start of the University's first-ever Green Move Out initiative. The Green Move Out will see students from Durham's 16 colleges recycle, take to charity shops or give away unwanted items at the end of term instead of throwing them in the bin.

Mr Miliband said: "I'm extremely impressed by the level of Durham's engagement with environmental agendas at all levels, and by the breadth of its internationally-recognised research programme in this area. One of the Government's aims is to encourage people to take responsibility for their environment and the effect of their actions on climate change. Even small changes to their daily lives can make a difference. The Green Move Out is an excellent example of a project which has inspired students to contribute to recycling efforts, and will be a valuable lesson which will stay with them long after they leave Durham."

The students' Green Move Out is led by sustainable energy expert, Dr Antje Danielson, who came to Durham from Harvard University, where she initiated similar conservation programmes which saved the US institution over \$100,000 in the first year. It is part of a wider Sustainable Living programme, which has a dedicated action group.

Dr Danielson said: "Based on my experience at Harvard, I think our sustainability programme overall could potentially reduce the CO2 emission from the University by 500 tonnes and generate £40,000 in savings in the first year. This is the equivalent of the electricity consumption of 120 average households."

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### **Green mortgage launched by NE building society**

A North East building society has launched its first ever green mortgage. Universal Building Society has teamed up with CarbonNeutral Newcastle (CNN) on its Climate mortgage which will allow customers to reduce the energy they use in their homes and make a contribution to helping homes in deprived areas.

For every customer taking up a Climate mortgage, Universal will provide £50 to CNN for the first five years of the mortgage. This money will be used to contribute in balancing the remaining CO2 emissions from the customer's home. It will also enable CNN to insulate more homes in deprived areas and reduce further the pollution to the climate.

Every Climate mortgage customer will also benefit from a free check-up and personalised report by the Energy Saving Trust to help them cut energy use in their own home.

Kevin Robinson, Universal's Chief Executive, said: "We are the first North East building society to launch a green mortgage of this kind and it is very much in keeping with the Universal's environmentally friendly principles and values. "Customers who sign up to this mortgage will not only be putting something back into the environment by reducing carbon emissions, they will also be benefiting from a great service and stability from a fixed rate mortgage."

Universal became the first financial organisation in the UK to sign up to a green scheme with CarbonNeutral Newcastle last year. As well as insulating homes, Universal's money has also gone towards other worthwhile methods of using energy from renewable sources, including planting more trees.

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### **Energy management scheme for North East companies**

A new £5m scheme to help businesses tackle rising energy costs has secured the regional development agency's support and investment.

One NorthEast has agreed to invest £4.2m into launching the Energy Management Excellence project which will begin next month and is due to run for two-and-a-half years at selected companies across the North East. The scheme aims to help companies develop new approaches, awareness and skills when it comes to the management and use of energy.

Up to 160 businesses will be targeted in the programme – the first of its type in the country. A team of specialist engineers will be seconded to the project, working closely with firms to develop an energy action plan, analysing current energy usage and highlighting innovative means to cut bills.

Sarah Green, CBI North East Regional Director, supported the scheme stating that: "Over the past two years, energy prices have soared and placed growing pressures on business, moving the issue of energy supply from newspaper science pages to the front page."

The Energy Management Excellence project also seeks to safeguard jobs. The North East companies involved in the project will contribute a total of £800,000 to fund staff development and implementation of the action plan recommendations.

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### **Tees Valley receives further boost**

The North East's green fuels economy has received another boost this week with the announcement of a bioethanol production plant at Wilton, near Redcar. UK renewable energy

firm Ensus' plans to build its first bioethanol plant will help to encourage the use of green fuels within the North East, say Renew Tees Valley.

The plant, which will have an annual production capacity of around 400million litres of bioethanol a year and is expected to come on stream in 2008, will use wheat as a feedstock and, as well as bioethanol, will produce significant quantities of material known as DDGS (Dry Distillers Grain Solubles) which will initially be marketed as animal feed, together with carbon dioxide which has a number of potential uses.

Doctor Dermot Roddy, Chief Executive of Renew Tees Valley, said: "Obviously the fact that we are seeing confirmation of plans for another major production facility further strengthens the Tees Valley's position as the leading area in the UK for renewable energy projects of all kinds – especially as it follows the recent announcement of Centrica's involvement in the proposals for the development of the UK's first coal fired power plant to use the revolutionary Carbon Capture and Storage technology.

"At the same time it gives added impetus to the efforts involving ourselves and many other organisations, such as Northeast Biofuels, to raise awareness of opportunities for the use of new green fuels. "Having a major bioethanol production facility at Wilton will obviously help to encourage the switch to green fuel – something which is absolutely vital given that 25 per cent of the UK's entire carbon dioxide is generated from road transport."

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### **Government must not block energy efficient investment?**

The government must remove barriers to energy efficiency business investment, manufacturer groups are warning.

An action plan to remove barriers preventing the industry realising its full potential in tackling climate change has been proposed by EEF Northern, the manufacturers' organisation. The report examines how energy efficiency can help to meet the UK's short, medium and long-term goals on reducing carbon emissions, and makes a number of proposals to increase gains from investment.

EEF Northern Director Alan Hall, said: "Energy Efficiency by all sectors, not just business, can play a major role in helping the UK meet its target for reducing emissions. However, government needs to up the ante and introduce more sophisticated measures to overcome the barriers to achieving greater energy efficiency."

Research by Enviro has suggested that improved energy efficiency across the UK as a whole could contribute to a reduction in 30 million tonnes of carbon by 2020 (20% of current emissions). However, barriers to improving energy efficiency in business include lack of skills - especially in smaller companies - to assess the costs and benefits associated with investing in energy efficiency; hidden costs such as the need to pay specialists in areas such as safety; and lack of R&D in technology.

EEF's energy survey showed that only 22% of companies with less than 50 workers are investing in energy efficiency. This compares with 48% of those with more than 500 employees. However, 40% of firms with less than 100 employees outside climate agreements had taken action to monitor and target their energy use and efficiency.

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### **Workers not green enough**

42% of workers don't switch off their computer overnight, and 48% don't even switch lights off when they're the last ones to leave at the end of the day, new research reveals.

Consumers appear to be more 'green minded' at home than at work, the survey by energy company E.ON shows, with three-quarters of people conserving energy around the home and over four in five recycling newspapers and other household waste. Samantha Baylis, director of E.ON's B2B, said: "Most people probably feel there's not a lot they can do about saving energy at work but I think they'd be surprised.

Every time you overfill the office kettle to make a drink, turn up the air conditioning or leave your computer running needlessly, you're having an impact on your company's bottom line.

"Our 'turning down and turning off' message is one of the simplest ways to reduce energy consumption and bills – whether at work or at home – and companies can reduce their energy bills by as much as 10% through low-cost and no-cost energy efficiency measures." Information about energy efficiency is available at [www.powergen.co.uk/business](http://www.powergen.co.uk/business).

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### **North East bid to be 'clean energy capital'**

A high-powered delegation visits the North East today to assess the region's bid to lead the UK's billion pound clean energy development programme. The bid's backers say that success could mean the North East reclaiming its title of 'energy capital' of the UK. The North East has already made a shortlist of five to host the Energy Technologies Institute, which will spearhead national research and development.

The bid has been tabled by a consortium of Newcastle, Northumbria and Durham Universities, the New and Renewable Energy Centre (NaREC) at Blyth in Northumberland and the Centre for Process Innovation (CPI) in the Tees Valley, with support from the regional development agency One NorthEast and the regional Science and Industry Council.

Newcastle University and NaREC are hosting today's fact-finding visit by a team of executives from energy companies Shell and E.ON, industrial equipment manufacturer Caterpillar and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (the Government's research funding agency).

Professor Paul Younger, HSBC Professor of Energy and Environment at Newcastle University, leader of the North East consortium, said: "If we are selected to host the ETI, the region will have the chance to re-established itself as the energy capital of the UK, with clear potential to create hundreds of high quality jobs. North East companies and research centres would have fantastic opportunities to collaborate with major players in a booming technology sector in this country and abroad.

Dr Graham Hillier, Director Fuel Cell Applications at the Centre for Process Innovation, at the Wilton Centre in Redcar, said: "The North East of England has a unique combination of internationally recognised research universities, energy focused innovation centres, natural energy resources and commercial production plants that supply and support energy supply to the domestic, commercial and transport sectors. "It is a fantastic opportunity to catapult the UK and the region back to the forefront of international development so we can prepare ourselves for the changes in the supply and use of energy in the future."

The other four shortlisted bidders for the ETI are the Midland Consortium, North West Consortium, Scottish Partnership and Sheffield University.

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Renewable energy company Ensus has successfully raised the finance needed to create its first bioethanol production plant at Wilton. Renew Tees Valley, the company which promotes Tees Valley as a location for renewable energy production, has described the announcement as 'a very significant step forward in establishing our area as a key centre for green fuel technology.'

Doctor Dermot Roddy, Chief Executive of Renew Tees Valley, was responding to the announcement by Ensus that it has obtained the support of two major private equity firms, enabling it to go ahead with the development of the plant on a 30-acre site at Wilton, with production beginning early in 2009. It is estimated that 800 jobs will be created during construction of the site, in addition to 100 jobs at the plant itself. Ensus are planning to use locally sourced wheat in the production process, and expect to support up to 1500 associated farming jobs in the nearby area.

Doctor Roddy said: "The fact that Ensus has been able to gain the financial backing it needs to go ahead with the Wilton project demonstrates the increasing recognition of the opportunities in the renewable energy field—and that must be good news for our area which is now clearly the UK's key centre for a wide range of technologies.

“One of the key factors is the strong backing for switching to green fuels coming from both the European Union and the UK Government, such as the measure to ensure that biofuels must make up at least five per cent of the country’s transport fuel requirements by 2010.”

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### **'Eco-Park' project moves ahead**

Plans for the Tees Valley's first 'Eco-Park' are moving ahead rapidly with a waste management project involving state-of-the-art technology developed by a North East company as its cornerstone. Waste management company Graphite Resources is planning to install its 'Proteus' system as part of the 53-hectare South Tees Eco-Park development.

As well as reducing the need for landfill waste disposal, the process eliminates the need for householders to sort waste. It also offers reductions in greenhouse gases, reduced operating costs and the cost-efficient recovery of 'co-mingled' materials that are beyond the scope of conventional waste treatment processes. A civic amenities site is also being considered along with a building materials recycling facility and Graphite Resources is talking to other potential tenants who can benefit from the Proteus system or make use of the materials recovered.

Chris Hayward, Technical Manager for Waste and Recycling with Renew Tees Valley, said: "This development will be Teesside's first dedicated Eco-Park and it will have a hugely positive impact on the way that waste is managed in the Tees Valley. It can serve as a waste management model that demonstrates economically viable solutions to some of the major problems of extracting valuable resources from the most difficult to manage waste streams."

Michael Thompson, Graphite Resources' managing director, said: "It makes a huge difference in a project like this to be working through a single organisation with people who understand both the waste management industry and the way businesses operate. Renew Tees Valley has supported us every step of the way, from carrying out the initial feasibility study to championing our project and playing a key role in helping us to find the ideal site."

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### **Assess your environmental compliance**

By Rachel Moss of [Business Link](#)

Environmental issues are becoming a significant consideration for all businesses as the amount and scope of environmental legislation increases. Stakeholders such as employees, customers, suppliers and investors are also more and more aware of, and interested in, the environmental impact of businesses. To help North East businesses comply with environmental regulations, we've launched a new online tool called 'assess your environmental compliance'.

This self-assessment tool will help you find out what you need to do to comply with environmental legislation and it is anonymous - you do not need to enter your details, and no-one will check up on you. After completing the questions you will receive environmental guidance that is specifically relevant to your business. Your answers will generate a final report with guidance on the regulations that you must comply with and the permits, licences and exemptions that you may need.

This interactive tool uses a short questionnaire to help you comply with the law and avoid fines and prosecution, save money by using your resources more efficiently and improve your business' competitive edge. The tool is quick and easy to use. It should take between 10 and 20 minutes to complete, depending on the number of activities that are relevant to your business and you can save and print your final report so that it can be reviewed at a later date.

To help the region's businesses comply with regulations like these, the Business Link website includes a range of handy, user-friendly tools that can be accessed at the touch of a button, so you don't even have to pick up the phone or leave the comfort of your home or office. This tool is just one of the features on the website's newly enhanced environment and efficiency section, which also includes other tools, advice and guides on environmental topics from pollution control, running a sustainable business as well as a broad range of areas of business support.

The website enables you to access key information at the touch of a button 24 hours a day, seven days a week. However if you would like to discuss this with one of our team we're always at end of the phone.

Business Link's substantial team of expert brokers operate across the region in local access points and on a mobile basis. For further information about Business Link, visit [www.businesslinknortheast.co.uk](http://www.businesslinknortheast.co.uk) or call 0845 600 9 006.

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### **North East loses ETI, gains energy funding boost**

The North East's pioneering energy sector will benefit from a £2.4m funding boost announced last week. The Three Pillars Investment Fund is targeted at three of the sectors identified as having the most potential to spearhead growth in the North East - new and renewable energy, process industries and healthcare and health sciences.

The news came after the Government announced that the North East's Energy Technology Institute bid had been unsuccessful. Despite not being awarded the ETI, regional development agency One NorthEast said that investment in the energy market remains one of the regional development agency's strategic goals.

The pilot Three Pillars Investment Fund will help innovative regional small and medium-sized companies continue to grow.

One NorthEast Chairman Margaret Fay said: "This fund will help bolster the development of companies in these growing and vitally important sectors. "New and renewable energy alone has the potential to generate an estimated £2bn worth of new growth for the regional economy through the development of a new generation of high-tech companies. "The North East is the energy innovation capital of the UK, and despite not being host to the ETI, our plans to put the region in pole position to seize new national and international opportunities in new and renewables remain clear and focused."

Andrew Sugden, NECC director of membership, said of the Government's ETI decision: "This is a major missed opportunity by the Government to build on the tremendous foundations the North East has created in new and renewable energy technology. "Despite this decision, the North East will continue to build upon the tremendous assets that exist within the region. The North East has enthusiastically embraced the potential that this technology offers and it will develop further the strengths that are already present in this field."

For more information on the Three Pillars Investment Fund contact fund manager Dr McMurray at NStar on 0191 211 2309.

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### **Firm welcomes waste glass mountain**

A campaign to encourage licensed premises throughout the North of England to send their waste glass for recycling, rather than to landfill, has provided a boost to a growing business in the Tees Valley.

J&B Recycling of Hartlepool, which already collected waste glass from licensed premises between Northumberland and North Yorkshire, was one of the first companies to register for the 'Have you got the Bottle' campaign, run jointly by Renew Tees Valley (RTV), Recycling Action Yorkshire (RAY) and Envirolink Northwest. The three organisations used leaflets, a website and the trade and local media to seek to persuade 17,000 licensees throughout the North to dispose of their waste glass through specialist collection companies such as J&B. Due to the enthusiastic response, an additional 4-acre site has also been brought into early use to handle the increased volumes.

J&B Recycling originally entered the recycling sector to keep its 12 staff and transport fleet in work following the decline of its traditional solid fuel business. It now employs more than 90 people handling kerbside materials and providing site management in partnership with numerous local authorities, operating a skip hire business and collecting waste glass from licensed premises, as well as providing third party contract transport services.

RTV has worked with the company on a number of projects - including carrying out market research into the glass recycling sector and supporting the development of a new website – [www.jbrecycling.co.uk](http://www.jbrecycling.co.uk).

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### **Electric van maker in jobs boost**

Up to 500 jobs are being promised by a Wearside company which specialises in making electric vehicles. Washington-based Tanfield Group is looking for a suitable site for their new factory, planned to open in 2009. The firm is in talks with regional development agency One NorthEast to keep the new plant in the region. The company already employs 1,200 people worldwide and last year took over the former LG Philips electronics factory in Washington. Chairman Roy Stanley said the early discussions with local authorities over the possibility of developing the facility in the region were positive. He said: "Ideally we would like it to be in the North East but it depends on the availability of space and the support from local government." He plans to meet representatives from One NorthEast next week in the hope of gaining financial support.

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### **Regeneration leads the way on renewable technologies**

A North East regeneration initiative is helping to address the growing threat of climate change and hopes to achieve national status with the new appointment of a new Sustainability Advisor. Keith Melton, Director of Technology at the New and Renewable Energy Centre (NaREC), will work closely with the South East Northumberland and North Tyneside Regeneration initiative (SENNTRI) to offer advice on the implementation of renewable technologies for a variety of regeneration projects taking place across the area.

Keith Melton, Director of Technology at NaREC, said: "This is a significant step forward for the region in helping to reduce our energy consumption levels, and will hopefully encourage other organisations to work with us to help accelerate their own sustainability agendas. "With all new developments now required to supply 10 percent of their energy requirements from renewable sources, we have developed a toolkit to help developers meet these targets and this is one of the ways in which we will be able to offer support to SENNTRI and its partners."

SENNTRI was formally launched four years ago to rejuvenate the area of Wansbeck, Blyth Valley and North Tyneside with an aim to revive its social and economic performance.

Jeremy Sherlock, Director at SENNTRI, said: "One of SENNTRI's main objectives is the promotion of high standards of development including sustainability and renewable technology initiatives that would make this sub region a national exemplar. To be able to realise this ambition we need impartial, practical advice on what actually works, and what proposals could be developed in the sub region, which is why we have chosen to work with NaREC."

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### **Super turbines tested in Northumberland**

A new generation of wind-powered "super turbines" are to be tested off the Northumberland coast. Californian power company Clipper Windpower is to develop the machines at a renewable energy facility at Blyth.

Business and Enterprise Secretary John Hutton made the announcement on a visit to the company's US headquarters. Regional development agency One NorthEast is investing £5m in "project Britannia", to create offshore turbines each capable of powering 5,500 homes. The company will use the New and Renewable Energy Centre (NaREC) in Blyth as its base.

Ian Williams, One NorthEast director of business and industry, said: "Clipper viewed the North East as its global location of choice for this project which we hope will lead to long term manufacturing and job creation in the region."

James Dehlsen, chairman of Clipper Windpower, said: "We are working toward the launch of an offshore wind turbine, which will offset the need to import and burn one million barrels of oil."

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## Environmental Academy puts MPs to the test

An agency in the North East is offering every MP in the country the opportunity to prove their green credentials. The Environmental Academy is urging MPs to show how committed they are by enrolling on a free of charge online environmental qualification.

Designed to enable MPs to fit environmental learning around their late night House of Commons sittings, the Environmental Academy's green training will give MPs a nationally recognised qualification Level 2 (NCFE) Environmental Awareness Award for Business and Industry. The Environmental Academy believes the course will help MPs prove their commitment to the environment as well as learning facts, figures and the effects of such issues as climate change.

Anna-Lisa Kelso, the Academy's Training Director, said: "The Environmental Academy recognises that the environment is now such a major political issue. But we want all our MPs to make their decisions about it from an informed perspective - knowing the facts about the impact of issues such as climate change is critical in order to achieve support from the general public.

"This course has been very popular with a wide range of students from many leading businesses and we hope that all MPs, regardless of their political party, will benefit from a good grounding in these important issues."

Offered free of charge to all MPs as an incentive to prove commitment to this crucial area of politics, the Environmental Academy hopes that the qualification will contribute to the drive towards reduced carbon emissions and a healthier future for our planet.

MPs interested in enrolling on the Environmental Academy environmental online qualification should log on to [www.environmental-academy.co.uk](http://www.environmental-academy.co.uk) or call 0191 493 4848.

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## Businesses underestimating environmental damage

Date 17 Sep 2006

Author bdaily.info

[Contribute](#)

92% of UK businesses don't think they undertake any activities that harm the environment, although when prompted with a list of possible activities, 43% admitted to being guilty of at least one. The research was conducted by [www.netregs.gov.uk](http://www.netregs.gov.uk), a free website that provides practical, sector-specific guidance to small businesses on their environmental obligations.

Richard Martin, Programme Manager at NetRegs, said: "If you run a small business it's important to stay up-to-date with your environmental legal requirements. Waste materials produced by your business or within your workplace are regulated by law, and you are responsible for their safe and legal disposal.

"By ensuring compliance with environmental legislation, small businesses can avoid the risk of prosecution and could benefit commercially in terms of cost savings and improved customer relations." John Holbrow, National Environment Chairman at the Federation of Small Businesses, said: "Small businesses often don't have the time or resources to keep up with the ever increasing environmental legislation.

This assessment tool will hopefully encourage managers and owners to take a closer look at how successful they are in complying with their responsibilities." SMEs can quickly assess if they are adhering to environmental legislation with the online questionnaire at [www.netregs.gov.uk](http://www.netregs.gov.uk). Small businesses can also register on NetRegs to receive its free email updates and guidelines about environmental issues, plus links to further information.

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## Small firms twice as green but still need support

Date 17 Sep 2007

Author bdaily.info

[Contribute](#)

Twice as many small businesses are now implementing practical environmental measures compared with 2005, a new report has claimed. According to a new study by NetRegs, which provides guidance to businesses on environmental regulations, there has been a marked shift in small businesses' awareness of their impact on the environment.

The study noted that 40% of small and medium-sized businesses now have an environmental policy in place compared to a mere 26% just two years ago. However, it also found that many small firms were still unaware of how their business practices impacted on the environment, and therefore needed more advice from regulators and local authorities.

Tricia Henton, director of environment protection at the Environment Agency, said: "There is a growing will among small and medium-sized businesses to protect the environment through improved business practices. "But with limited time at their disposal, many small businesses still don't understand their basic environmental obligations."

NetRegs said the fact that small and medium-sized businesses had been fined around £2.4m for pollution and environmental damage over the past year meant the need for better support had never been greater.

Richard Martin, NegRegs programme manager, said: "Small and medium-sized businesses are the engine room of our economy - making up 99% of UK business and contributing over £10bn to the economy. "The government is committed to delivering better, not more, regulation - and many [small firms] wrongly assume that assessing their environmental impact will be expensive in time and money. In fact, small businesses can often save money by reducing waste and using water and energy more efficiently."

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**Businesses Unite to combat environmental damage**

Two North East businesses have united creatively against increasing environmental damage. The socially-conscious pair are using one's waste to create another's masterpiece. Frank Haslam Milan North East found a unique way to re-use their glass water bottles. Joining forces with Sunderland's National Glass Centre, they combined their skills to create a contemporary art piece to be showcased at FHM North East's head office at Deptford in Sunderland.

The scheme is just one initiative from FHM North East's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) team who have increased the firm's waste recycling up to 85%. Perhaps the new partnership will encourage more regional enterprises to make 'rubbish' art?  
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**Key role for North East in wind power plans**

The North East could play a key role in leading the way on wind produced energy, according to a renewable energy expert from Durham University. Professor Peter Tavner, Head of the School of Engineering, has suggested that government plans to have all home electricity provided by wind power by 2020 are an achievable target which the North East can both benefit from and help accomplish.

The plans, announced on Monday, involve the installation of up to 7,000 offshore turbines around the UK to boost wind produced energy 60-fold within 13 years.

Professor Tavner said: "Offshore wind power has a strong potential for the North East of England because of the wind resource off our coast, the expertise and facilities in the region and the close proximity of the National Grid in Teesside, Wearside, Tyneside and Northumberland. We are an island nation; we have a lot of wind and we are ideally placed to meet these energy challenges."

He suggested that the developments could create thousands of job opportunities in the region: "These offshore turbines could meet the energy commitments and they will require maintenance and contract work which the North East can benefit from. "Obviously we have to be careful of the onshore impact. We have a beautiful coastline and people will not want these turbines so close they ruin that, but they are a very real solution.

"This is a challenging but achievable target which the North East should take up with relish and in which Durham University intends to play a major role."

For more information on the government's energy plans, visit the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform website at [www.berr.gov.uk](http://www.berr.gov.uk).

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### **New organisation champions waste re-use in the North East**

A new organisation offering an on-line brokerage facility for the waste management sector has been launched in the Tees Valley. Resource Network North East Limited (ResNET) is the first organisation in the region to become accredited to run the Chartered Institute of Waste Management's (CIWM) one-day Waste Awareness Course.

The brokerage service ([www.resnetnortheast.org](http://www.resnetnortheast.org)) will enable a wide range of organisations to 'market' their waste to the businesses and community groups who can realise its commercial potential.

The website will serve as an information portal for businesses and community groups in the waste management sector, while ResNET itself seeks to develop partnerships that will help it to influence policy at local, regional and national level.

ResNET was conceived and developed by three organisations with experience of the region's waste management sector: Renew Tees Valley (RTV), the North East Social Enterprise Partnership (NESEP) and Recycling IT (Europe) Limited, a company which pioneered the recycling and recovery of waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) in the Tees Valley.

For further information, contact Chris Hayward of Renew Tees Valley at [chayward@renewteesvalley.co.uk](mailto:chayward@renewteesvalley.co.uk) or call 01642 438420.

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### **Eco-village unveiled at Wynyard**

Plans have been unveiled for a 2,000-home eco village on Teesside. Wynyard Park Ltd said the project would involve fuel efficient buildings, renewable energy systems and sustainable transport solutions.

About 700 acres of land has been earmarked for the new 'eco-village' at the site near Billingham. The homes themselves will be built to the latest energy efficient specifications with, renewable and water recycling systems. Networks of footpaths, nature trails and cycle ways will be laid through 300 acres of adjoining woodland for the new community to enjoy.

News of the scheme comes just weeks after Wynyard Park Ltd announced £450m plans to build three million square feet of offices, geared to creating 10,000 jobs over the next 15 to 20 years.

Chief executive Chris Musgrave said: "We intend to build something that is right for the area. If we can make it work, it will bring huge benefits to the Tees Valley region both economically and socially and that will be positive for the whole community. "Ultimately we are looking to create an easy, pleasant and inviting environment to work and live in that is pedestrian friendly and promotes sustainable means of transport."

Ranald Boydell, Wynyard Park's sustainable development director, said: "This is a fantastic opportunity to create a sustainable development starting from a clean slate. The technology exists to create carbon neutral communities - you just need the will to make them happen."

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### **Businesses urged to cut carbon emissions**

Businesses could save money by following carbon-cutting measures outlined in a new action plan, says the Carbon Trust. The Trust said that UK businesses could save around £1.4bn and more than 11m tonnes of carbon by following the guidelines in their 'New Year business action plan'.

The list of energy-efficient measures has been designed to be easy to follow, but with maximum impact on a business' energy expenditure. Guidelines include replacing tungsten light bulbs with fluorescent lamps or energy efficient light bulbs, switching off PCs and

electrical equipment at night, reducing the heating and fitting seven-day timers to water coolers and vending machines so they switch off out of hours.

The Trust added that before implementing the guidelines, it is essential for businesses to calculate their carbon footprint so they can 'benchmark' their progress as they go along.

Tom Delay, the Trust's chief executive, said: "Reducing your carbon footprint through improved energy efficiency should be the top of the new year's resolution list for any business in 2008. "Our six steps show that putting energy efficiency and carbon saving into action couldn't be easier."

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## **'Carbon map' reveals impact of business**

Date 4 Jun 2007

Author bdaily.info

[Contribute](#)

A new UK "carbon map" has revealed that businesses account for more than half of carbon emissions in some urban areas. The Carbon Trust has today published a map illustrating the CO2 emissions released by businesses in 33 towns and cities across the UK.

The new figures also include the percentage of carbon dioxide emissions generated by business activity in each town or city. According to the Carbon Trust, business in the UK is responsible for approximately 40 per cent of carbon emissions. Of the areas surveyed, Greater London emerged as the city with the highest overall volume of CO2 emissions (50,754,000 tonnes) with Aberystwyth the lowest at 696,000 tonnes.

The towns where businesses had the most impact were Leicester, Norwich and Sheffield, with businesses responsible for 55% of carbon emissions. The lowest proportion was Newry in Northern Ireland, with businesses only producing 26% of the emissions. Of the towns and cities in the North East, only Newcastle is detailed on the map, and follows the national average of 40%.

Tom Delay, Chief Executive of the Carbon Trust, said: "Business has a critical role to play in tackling climate change as it is responsible for approximately 40 per cent of CO2 emissions in the UK and poor energy efficiency costs business an estimated £2 billion annually.

Implementing straightforward energy saving measures in the workplace could reduce energy bills by up to 20 per cent, enhance their reputation and drastically cut their carbon footprint." The carbon map was designed so cities could better analyse their overall carbon footprint and identify areas where more efforts can be made. To see the map, which has detailed regional information, visit the Carbon Trust microsite at [www.carbonmap.co.uk](http://www.carbonmap.co.uk).

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## **Businesses wasting 15% of energy**

Wasted energy will cost UK businesses £570 million this summer, according to figures from Carbon Trust. Even in the summer months, businesses are wasting 15 per cent of total energy spend due to poor energy efficiency.

Carbon emissions are the key cause of climate change, and business is responsible for up to 45 per cent of all carbon emissions in the UK. Wasted summer energy emits over 8 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, the equivalent to Birmingham's annual carbon emissions.

Carbon Trust has examined the carbon emissions of 11 of the UK's cities. Newcastle, the only North East city in the study, is likely to emit 202,000 tons of carbon dioxide this summer, of which 38,000 could be saved. The cost of wasted carbon in the city is £3million.

Tom Delay, Chief Executive of the Carbon Trust, said: "British businesses are wasting millions on energy, hitting the environment and their bottom line. The sheer scale of the energy wasted is staggering and something businesses can no longer afford to ignore. What's more, consumers and shareholders alike are becoming more aware of a company's environmental record and this trend is only going to grow.

Today's campaign will empower companies to make business sense of climate change by taking cost effective action – to cut carbon and make significant savings on their bottom line. Energy saving today is a no brainer for business and the environment.”

Businesses with energy bills of more than £50,000 a year can apply for free surveys from Carbon Trust consultants, who can identify energy-saving opportunities and growing businesses are offered interest-free loans of up to £100,000 to help them invest in energy efficient equipment. Last year the Carbon Trust identified carbon savings of 2.7 million tonnes of carbon through working with companies. To find out more, businesses can call the helpline on 0800 917 3030 or visit the Carbon Trust website: [www.carboncosts.com](http://www.carboncosts.com).



### **Government support for new technologies to reduce CO2 emissions**

Research and development into low carbon energy technologies is set to receive a boost through a £10 million investment by the Government-sponsored Technology Strategy Board. With many countries moving towards a lower carbon economy, the Technology Strategy Board is keen to encourage the development of innovations that will both contribute to the UK's carbon-reduction targets and position UK companies to take advantage of increasing global demand for low carbon energy technologies.

The £10 million investment will fund highly innovative research and development in areas such as intelligent grid integration and management, carbon abatement technologies, hydrogen & fuel cells, microgeneration & photovoltaics and bioenergy. The investments will help to fund winning projects, which will involve businesses working collaboratively with other businesses or with research organisations and academic institutions.

The Technology Strategy Board's Low Carbon Energy Technologies competition will help to accelerate the development of new technologies, bringing them quickly into use in the UK and around the world.

Explaining the background to the competition, Technology Strategy Board Chief Executive Iain Gray said "The challenge of moving towards a lower carbon economy, using a mix of technologies and energy sources, requires us to develop a variety of low carbon energy technologies for the electricity, heat and transport markets.

"The Technology Strategy Board is committed to stimulating the development and deployment of technologies which, while contributing to the UK's climate change and energy security goals, also represent major business opportunities for the UK. New markets are being created in low carbon energy technologies and this brings significant potential for wealth creation in the UK."



### **Home-grown green fuel could cut carbon emissions**

Bio-diesel made from crops grown and processed in the region can reduce carbon emissions by up to 94% compared with fossil fuels, according to a new study.

A survey into the environmental impact of a complete bio-diesel supply chain in the region has been carried out by not-for-profit company Northeast Biofuels – a consortium of petrochemical businesses, farmers, agricultural suppliers and regional development agency,

One NorthEast. The research measured the carbon dioxide and other green house gas emissions for all stages of the bio-diesel supply chain. Accounting for tractor use in preparing the field, as well as the energy needed to move intermediary products between processing locations, the survey showed a 94% reduction in the levels of carbon emitted. One NorthEast Board member Ian Brown said: “

The North East is gaining a reputation as a leader in the development of renewable fuels. This information shows the importance of the work we're doing in promoting a supply chain in the region that starts from the seed and ends in the consumer's tank. We already recognise that the growth in this field has the potential to create new jobs but what we hadn't

appreciated was the scale of the environmental impact.” For more information about Northeast Biofuels, visit: [www.northeastbiofuels.com/](http://www.northeastbiofuels.com/)

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## **Fridge energy ratings for houses**

Energy ratings similar those found on fridges and freezers will feature on every home bought and sold in England and June from June 2007, the Government has announced.

Houses currently account for 27% of the UK's CO2 emissions. The Energy Performance Certificate will give home buyers and sellers A to G ratings for their home's energy efficiency and carbon emissions. It will reveal current average costs for heating, hot water and lighting in the house, and offer advice on how to cut costs with energy efficiency measures. From 2009, all homes for sale in the EU will have similar energy certificates.

Housing Minister Yvette Cooper said: “Given the growing challenge from climate change and rising energy costs, I think people should be entitled to this kind of information about the home they buy. You can get this kind of consumer information on fridges and washing machines, so why not on a home where the emissions - and the savings - are so much greater?

”By providing people with sound advice on how to improve energy efficiency this will help sellers and buyers who want to do their bit to cut carbon emissions as well as cutting their fuel bills too. ”The Energy Performance Certificate will be part of the Home Information Packs (HIPs) to be introduced June 2007. HIPs will be required by law, and will provide information on the condition of the house and survey and valuation findings.

They will be paid for by the house seller, and be provided for buyers at the beginning of the buying process rather than at the end, to avoid sales falling through as a result of lack of information. HIPs are expected to cost around £600-700 plus VAT.

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## **ClimateDome savings 'not just hot air'**

Since the launch of the ClimateDome initiative in January over 1,500 people in the North East have pledged to reduce their carbon footprint, with their pledges saving 338 tonnes in carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions. Increases in CO2 are largely responsible for global warming and climate change, according to scientists.

The six-metre inflatable ClimateDome is the first project of its kind anywhere in the world, and makes the North East region a pioneer in reducing its impact on climate change. Being more energy efficient can save money too - as these pledges are followed, an average household could save up £300 a year on fuel bills.

Mike Thomas, project manager, said: "Visitors are asked to fill out a pledge card - saying how they'll make small changes to cut carbon emissions – such as not leaving their TV on standby, or part-filling kettles. The quantity of savings pledged so far is a fantastic result. It shows that we are already making people think about how small changes to their everyday lives can help protect their region in years to come. "What's more, this is just the start. Over the next 13 months, ClimateDome will tour shopping centres, shows and festivals, sporting events and schools, encouraging thousands more visitors to make a pledge and make a difference."

The next stop for the ClimateDome is The Gates shopping centre in Durham today, followed by The Bridges in Sunderland on 12 March.

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## **Government pledges to go Carbon Neutral**

In a bid to lead the way, the Government office estate has announced it will go carbon neutral by 2012. The speech made by Environment Secretary David Miliband confirmed that the Government would become a pioneering force in acting in an environmentally sustaining manner.

As part of this commitment, the Government has set an aspirational target to reduce carbon emissions from all government offices and agencies throughout the UK by 30 per cent by 2020.

The Government has already introduced carbon offsetting for official air travel. The measures to make the Government estate carbon neutral will save approximately 800,000 tonnes of carbon - the equivalent of filling the Albert Hall with carbon dioxide more than 20 times a day or taking over three quarters of a million cars off the road. Cabinet Secretary Gus O'Donnell has agreed to ensure that every department within the UK Government responds effectively to the report's recommendations.

Prime Minister Tony Blair, who today met Task Force leaders implementing the plans, said: "Making the shift to a more sustainable lifestyle is one of the most important challenges for the 21st century. The reality of climate change brings home to us the consequences of not facing up to these challenges. I want the public sector to take a lead on doing things sustainably - through the way we run central Government and through the way we buy goods and services."

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### **UK's CO2 hot spots**

Reading has the highest CO2 emissions per dwelling in the UK - the average house in the town emits the same damage as two return flights between London and New York.

The research, commissioned by British Gas, found that average house in Reading produces 6,189 Kg of CO2 – 27% above the UK average.

The lowest levels of CO2 per house were found in Hull, where the gas consumption is 19% below the UK's average and its electricity use 15% below the average. Sunderland was fourth worst in the country, and Newcastle was 11th worst.

Jill Harrison, Head of Consumer Affairs, British Gas said: "Around 25 percent of UK carbon emission is generated in domestic properties. The difference between the areas of the UK with low domestic CO2 emissions and those producing high emissions is staggering. With £1 in every £3 spent heating homes being wasted, it is clear that energy efficiency in particular has the potential to deliver dramatic emissions reductions and reduce energy bills. "The Chancellor, in his budget, has made £20 million available to Local Authorities to promote energy efficiency. It's clear that urgent action from poor performing councils is needed now if the Government by 2010."

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### **African community benefits from recycled NE uniforms**

A Sunderland business has put thousands of its old uniforms to good use by donating them to one of Kenya's poorest communities. People and property business, Gentoo, has donated its old uniforms to the UK international relief and development charity World Emergency Relief (WER), following a rebranding exercise in June. The 3,720 items are due to arrive in Nairobi at the end of January.

The idea came about after Michelle Treglown, Sustainability Projects Officer for Gentoo and a member of the Green Team, wanted to think of new use for the uniforms previously used by the Group's electricians and plumbers.

Michelle said: "It just seemed such a waste to throw away over 4,000 uniforms so I suggested to the Green Team that perhaps we should look for an alternative - we all agreed that WER seemed to be doing some fantastic work, and with the support of my colleagues and the Group, I'm delighted we have been able to contribute to that.

The donation will be delivered to the Kenyan Christian Industrial Training Institute (KCITI), a large vocational not-for-profit college, which is a partner of WER in Kenya. KCITI will then distribute to its students and the local Mathare Slum, an impoverished community with 750,000 residents.

Alex Haxton, Director of Operations for WER, said: "We are thrilled to partner with Gentoo and congratulate them on thinking beyond normal recycling and green parameters. This donation will be a real practical blessing to students in the college and many thousands of residents of the Mathare Township."

This initiative forms part of the Group's wider environmental strategy, the focus of the Gentoo Green arm of the business, which has recently been awarded the Green Apple Environmental Award, CIH UK housing award and a Constructing Excellence award for their partnership with another registered social landlord.

For more about World Emergency Relief, visit [www.wer-uk.org](http://www.wer-uk.org).

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### **Government support for new technologies to reduce CO2 emissions**

Research and development into low carbon energy technologies is set to receive a boost through a £10 million investment by the Government-sponsored Technology Strategy Board.

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"The Technology Strategy Board is committed to stimulating the development and deployment of technologies which, while contributing to the UK's climate change and energy security goals, also represent major business opportunities for the UK. New markets are being created in low carbon energy technologies and this brings significant potential for wealth creation in the UK."

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### **B daily jan 82008**

#### **North East firm provides groundwork for £80m biofuels plant**

A North East company has won a contract on an £80m biofuel facility that will turn food waste and packaging into energy. The plant will divert up to 180,000 tonnes of waste away from landfill and generate around 24MW of green electricity for the National Grid - enough to power 37,000 homes a year.

It is being developed at a former rail decommissioning building in North-East Lincolnshire, and is the first of ten regional waste-to-energy sites in the UK planned by the EnCycle initiative.

Structural experts from AMP Consultants, of Darlington, have been appointed to carry out static load tests of the existing foundations to ensure they are suitable for the site's new use. The consultancy was approached to carry out the study by the site's owner, Peter Dibdin, after it provided structural designs for numerous developments in the UK for his logistics operations that are now part of the Innov@te Logistics group.

David Hodgson, AMP Managing Director said: "EnCycle hopes to build ten regional power stations over the next five years and, in doing so, divert 1.5 million tonnes of waste from landfill. It is a very exciting project and, having been involved in laying the ground, so to speak, for the first plant, we hope it will now lead to long-term association with EnCycle and the development of biofuel-based energy."

Construction of the Immingham plant is expected to take a year, but Encycle has already secured contracts with food manufacturing companies Greencore, Northern Foods and high street bakery Greggs, to take their food waste and non-recyclable packaging.

The technology will take the food waste and packaging and treat it in enclosed chambers. This will remove all the moisture from the waste and break it down into small particles similar to coffee granules. It will then be vaporised in a gas conversion process.

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**B daily 10.01.08**

**NETPark Incubator ahead of target**

Demand for premises at a regional technology development is "far ahead" of target after companies queued up to become tenants. The Incubator building at Sedgefield's science and technology park NETPark, was expected to hit 95% occupancy after three and a half years but has already reached that target in just over half the time.

NETPark has proved popular with a range of businesses in fields such as forensic nanotechnology, photonics and optoelectronic crystals.

Stewart Watkins, managing director of the County Durham Development Company who manage the park, said: "The success of the NETPark Incubator has been staggering and is testament to the vision of the county to establish a science and technology park in its boundaries.

"These businesses have the potential to be the leading North East firms of the future and it is vital they get every assistance to be the great success we believe they will become."

NETPark this month celebrated the start of work on the Innovation Village - a series of larger accommodation, developed by Helios City, providing incubator residents with space to grow and expand.

A total of 11 companies are currently located in the NETPark Incubator which was built with financial assistance from Durham County Council, One NorthEast and the European Regional Development Fund.

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**Transport mission for social enterprise**

A social enterprise is hoping to roll out its innovative approach to community transport across the region. Adapt North East is using funding from One NorthEast to bring together community transport schemes in the North East to explore new ways of making their schemes sustainable and more efficient.

With support from Jobcentre Plus, the Hexham-based charity piloted a training scheme in 2005 to move people from long-term unemployment in Northumberland into jobs as minibus drivers.

Liz Prudhoe, General Manager at Adapt, said: "Our pilot was very successful in making sure we're using our vehicles to their full potential, and gave us the chance to create sustainable jobs in this area, helping people to develop their skills and get back into work.

"Community transport is enormously important in helping people access services and employment, and we want to make schemes in North East England as effective as possible."

Adapt now hopes the approach can be used regionally, to help develop and sustain community transport services and to tap into the resource of people who have been unemployed long-term.

One North East's Economic Inclusion Manager, Robin Beveridge, said: "The region's aim of getting another 70,000 people into work by 2016 simply can't be achieved without input from the third sector. "Charities, community groups and social enterprises like Adapt are ideally placed to try new ways of helping people get involved with the economy, whatever their age, sex, background or circumstances, experimenting with new approaches to help people overcome those things which can prevent them from working.

"Adapt has a big challenge to bring together community transport schemes across the region, but the results could be very exciting."

Adapt's project will culminate in a regional community transport conference later this year.

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## **Enterprise agency building on success**

**Date** 3 Jan 2007

**Author** bdaily.info

A local enterprise agency is celebrating a successful 2006 having helped over two hundred businesses get off the ground last year. The specialist business advisors at Social Enterprise Sunderland (SES) helped to launch 203 varied businesses in the last twelve months.

Mark Heskett Saddington, SES Director, said: "We are delighted to have helped so many people set up their own businesses. For many, self-employment is a life long dream realised and for others it is a means to developing a career when regular employment isn't an option for a number of reasons. "The availability of business advice in Sunderland is vital to boost the chances of businesses developing and growing. We have a successful model of enterprise development that targets both the imagination and needs of those most disadvantaged."

Lynne Summerside, who started her seated exercise business in June 2005, said: "Without the help of SES I wouldn't have been able to start my business and achieve as much as I have. My Business Advisor helped me throughout the process and was there every step of the way which was vital to the success of my business plan, securing funding and ultimately launching the social enterprise Sit N B Fit Limited."

SES is part funded by the European Social Fund. To find out more about the agency, call (0191) 565 0476 or visit [www.socialenterprise-sunderland.org.uk](http://www.socialenterprise-sunderland.org.uk)

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## **'The Apprentice' winner backs social enterprise**

**Date** 24 Jul 2007

**Author** bdaily.info

The first winner of *The Apprentice* has called for all companies to put some profit towards social and environmental goals. Businessman and former reality TV star Tim Campbell made the call when launching the Social Enterprise Ambassadors Programme in London yesterday. The Government-funded ambassadors programme is designed to foster a culture of social enterprise – where profit-making businesses put the bulk of their profits towards social or environmental goals.

Seven publicly-known ambassadors were named at the launch, including Mr Campbell, founder of the Big Issue John Bird, and CEO of Cafedirect Penny Newman – and a further twenty are still to be hired.

Tim Campbell said: "Business is the motor of change and the best way to solve many of the social issues we face in this country. Though many companies are already doing amazing things to fight social injustice there is room for so much more. "The social enterprise business model can turn capitalism into a genuine force for good."

Phil Hope, Minister for the Third Sector, said: "I am convinced that the people best placed to champion social enterprise are social entrepreneurs themselves. I have met and worked with social entrepreneurs and I know that many of them are talented, motivated, dynamic and inspiring people, and I can't think of any better advertisement for the sector."

A further 20 ambassadors are to be recruited over the next month. They will inspire budding social entrepreneurs and raise awareness of social enterprise as both a viable business model and fulfilling career choice. They will be expected to commit to around 12 days a year for the next three years. Their duties will include speaking to the media, attending events, inspiring new entrants to the sector and winning over key professionals.

Application packs for those wishing to become ambassadors can be downloaded from [www.socialenterprise.org.uk](http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk).

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## **Social enterprise on the increase**

**Date** 27 Jun 2007

**Author** bdaily.info

The number of social firms in the UK grew significantly in 2006 as more and more entrepreneurs became involved in social enterprise. According to research by Social Firms UK, which supports the development of social enterprise in the UK, the British social firm sector grew by 15% in 2006 compared to 2005.

A social firm as defined by Social Firms UK is a specific type of social enterprise set up specifically to create employment for people severely disadvantaged in the labour market. The analysis of this emerging sector for the second year running has provided year-on-year data for the first time, the organisation said.

There are now 137 businesses of this kind in the UK, with the majority located in the West Midlands and Scotland, the research found. The study also revealed that the number of full-time equivalent jobs in the sector rose by a third to 1,652, of which 52% are held by disabled and disadvantaged people.

Kathy Baker, Social Firms UK quality support manager, said: "The 2006 sector mapping shows that the UK has a solid base of social firms and a sector which is showing real growth. I've visited many social firms in person over the last couple of years and can see a clear improvement overall in the quality of the businesses."

Sally Reynolds, chief executive officer of Social Firms UK, said: "At a time when government is looking for solutions for welfare reform and helping disadvantaged groups into employment we believe that the sector mapping offers an opportunity to present a case for social firms and we'll be using this information extensively over the coming months."

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## **B daily 15.01.08**

### **Durham Uni leads research into cheaper solar energy**

A national team of scientists led by experts at Durham University are embarking on one of the UK's largest ever research projects into photovoltaic (PV) solar energy. The £6.3million PV-21 programme will focus on making thin-film light absorbing cells for solar panels from sustainable and affordable materials.

Eight UK universities, led by Durham and including Bangor, Bath, Cranfield, Edinburgh, Imperial College London, Northumbria and Southampton, are involved in the four-year project. They will work with industrial partners towards a "medium to long-term goal" of making solar energy more competitive and sustainable, particularly in light of the recent rise in fossil fuel prices.

At present solar cells - used to convert light energy into electricity - are made from key components such as the rare and expensive metal indium which costs approximately £320 (\$660) per kilogram. To cut costs in solar cell production the research team will work to reduce the thickness of the cells.

Researchers will also experiment with sustainable low-cost materials which could be used in the manufacturing of solar cells and on the use of nanotechnology and dyes on ultra-thin silicon to capture increased amounts of energy from the sun's rays.

Principal investigator Professor Ken Durose, in the Department of Physics, at Durham University, said: "With the rapid increase in fossil fuel prices and the recent Government announcement about investment in nuclear power it is even more important that we look at long-term future energy generation from solar power."

Chris Pywell, Head of Strategic Economic Change at regional development agency One NorthEast, said: "This project will add substantially to the position of North East England which is already at the forefront of photovoltaic energy research. "The Agency, Durham University and our other partners are committed to building on this new project and our many other successes to ensure the region leads the UK in renewable energy."

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## **B daily 16.01.08**

### **New proposal for Northumberland eco-town**

Proposals for a new North East 'eco-town' which could lead to a community of up to 5,000 homes have been submitted this week. Regional firm Banks Developments is hoping to build the new community at Cambois on the Northumberland coast. The project is also expected to lead to the creation of around 2,500 new jobs in the area.

The Cambois proposal has been put forward in response to the Government's Eco-town Programme, which aims to help meet the country's housing needs by creating sustainable settlements across all parts of the country.

The proposed site lies to the east of the A189 East Northumberland Spine Road and is comprised of brownfield land on which heavy industry was previously located, low grade agricultural land and coastal dunes.

Justin Hancock at Banks Developments says: "The Eco-towns Programme aims to balance two distinct and pressing requirements - the urgent need to build more homes to house a growing population, and the need to build them in an environmentally acceptable manner. "The Cambois site represents an outstanding and unique opportunity to create a high quality sustainable community ... in a location which has suffered from decades of post-industrial decline."

The proposed Cambois community would also include education facilities, a potential passenger rail link, improved road, footpath and cycleway links to nearby settlements and landscape improvements. The plan is that a large proportion of the settlement's energy requirements would be met by local generation.

Justin Hancock said: "We firmly believe that the proposals we are putting forward have the potential to offer many economic, social and environmental benefits to both the local area and the wider region, and very much hope that we will have the opportunity to create an exciting new eco-town for the region."

A Government decision on which eco-town proposals are to be taken forward is expected in the spring.

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