

Schools across Cambridgeshire are collectively saving £600,000 per year after joining an innovative energy programme – and more are being urged to sign up.

Cambridgeshire County Council began a programme of energy efficiency and energy generation projects in schools in 2014 by providing loans or managed service arrangements from its Local Energy Investment Fund. The aim is to help schools plan for the future, upgrade their energy assets and manage their energy bills. This schools programme is part of the most successful programme of guaranteed energy retrofit measures in England.

There are now over 40 schools that have signed up to the programme, which has seen them reduce their energy use by 7,547MWh per year – enough to power a village. Twenty-three have already completed their installation and are reaping the benefits of reduced energy costs, and all the sites will have completed their installations by early next year.

Thanks to a package of measures, which include LED lighting upgrades, solar panels for electricity and heat generation, biomass boilers, combined heat and power systems, various improvements to heating systems and controls and various types of insulation, schools have saved an average of 20% on their energy bills.

Cllr Josh Schumann, the County Council's Commercial & Investment Committee chairman, said:



Schools have made significant savings on their energy bills through joining this programme. It means they get much more control over their energy usage whilst reducing their carbon footprint – and can even generate income. I am thrilled to see so many have already signed up to the scheme but we want to encourage even more schools to sign up, and see the benefits of guaranteed energy savings.”

Schools have seen a number of benefits from the programme including brighter teaching and learning conditions from upgraded lighting while improvements to boilers, energy management systems and insulation help tackle issues of excessive or insufficient winter heat.

Hinchingsbrooke School in Huntingdon has been reaping the rewards of smart energy after joining the programme in 2015. As the single largest school project in the portfolio to date, with more than 14 building complexes, ranging from 11th Century to 2016 construction, the project was split into two with solar panels fitted in December 2015.



(https://mlei-live.storage.googleapis.com/upload/www.mlei.co.uk/other/SH__room_309_web_small.jpg)

This was followed by LED lighting replacement throughout the site and the installation of Building Energy Management Systems along with five new condensing boilers, six condensing water heaters, insulation in all plantrooms and heating control upgrades.

Since installation, the school has seen a 15 per cent reduction in its energy bills.

Principal Andrew Goulding said:

"We're thrilled to have finally completed the installation at Hinchingsbrooke. It hasn't been without challenges, but it has been well worth it. We've seen a transformation in our plantrooms, have much greater control of our energy usage and we're starting to see the benefits. The opportunity to get involved in long-term and guaranteed energy savings has made a real difference to our school".

Earlier this month, Bouygues Energies & Services were appointed as 'service provider' to design and deliver projects for the next programme phase, after a procurement process under the Refit framework.

Miles Messenger, Energy Engineering Manager for Bouygues said:

"the RE:FIT energy performance contracting approach is an excellent way for schools to invest in energy saving measures, as the guarantees offered by our group provides a high level of financial security and the reassurance of best value for money. The partnership has developed an innovative combination of engineering solutions with commercial and financial models, which has proven to meet the needs of many schools. Bouygues Energies & Services is very proud of our achievements thus far and look forward to working with more schools in future."

The next phase of the schools programme is now being developed. If your school is interested in joining, please contact us on mlei@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.