

HEAT NETWORK ZONING UPDATE – FEBRUARY 2026

THE NORTH EAST AND YORKSHIRE NET ZERO HUB HOSTS SUPPORT FROM THE DEPARTMENT FOR ENERGY SECURITY AND NET ZERO HELPING LOCAL AREAS PREPARE FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF HEAT NETWORK ZONING. THIS REGULAR UPDATE SETS OUT THE LATEST POLICY, FUNDING AND BEST PRACTICE RELATING TO HEAT NETWORKS.

POLICY & FUNDING UPDATES

Low Carbon Heat for Buildings: Government Responds on Heat Network Zoning

The UK government has now responded to the heat network zoning consultation, aiming to accelerate low-carbon heating through deployment of district heat networks in designated areas of England. This response sets out how the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero have considered the consultation feedback in the policy design for heat network zoning.

Within these areas, known as ‘zones’, certain buildings - such as new developments, large non-domestic properties and those with communal heating - may be required to connect to heat networks.

Buildings that may be required to connect include:

- New buildings approved after a zone is designated
- Non-domestic buildings with annual heat demand over 100MWh
- Properties already using communal ‘wet’ heating systems

Exemptions can apply where connections aren’t feasible or where low-carbon systems are already in place.

By 2050, zoning is expected to expand coverage towards 20%, attract £80 billion in investment and create thousands of green jobs.



Ofgem has been appointed heat network regulator in Great Britain and will begin regulating the sector from **January 2026**. The focus will be on good customer service, improving reliability of energy supply, transparent easy to understand bills and fair pricing. For UK businesses, this marks a pivotal opportunity to future-proof operations and contribute to their net-zero transition.

You can find both the full document and a very helpful summary by clicking the following link:
[Proposals for heat network zoning 2023 - GOV.UK](#)

Understanding this more in depth...

To find out more about all things Heat Network Zoning there’s the option to join a series of informative webinars starting on the **February 4th 2026**.

The webinars will unpack major policy decisions and what they mean in practice for the rollout of heat network zoning in England. You can sign up for those that you feel are relevant to you and your projects via the links below:

Date	Title
Wednesday February 4th 12.30pm - 1.30pm	Public webinar 1: Government Response to Heat Network Zoning Consultation: Introduction Government Response to Heat Network Zoning Consultation: Introduction Meeting-Join Microsoft Teams
Wednesday February 11th 1pm - 2pm	Public webinar 2: Defining Heat Network Zones: Roles and Identifying Zones Government response to Heat Network Zoning Consultation: Defining Heat Network Zones - Roles and Identifying Zones Meeting-Join Microsoft Teams

Thursday February 19th 12pm - 1pm	Public webinar 3: Heat network zones in practice: Heat sources, connections and existing networks Government response to Heat Network Zoning Consultation: Heat Network Zones in Practice - Connections, Heat Sources and Existing Heat Networks Meeting-Join Microsoft Teams
Thursday February 26th 1pm - 2pm	Public webinar 4: Delivering Heat Network Zones: Developer Appointment (competition and consenting) Government response to Heat Network Zoning Consultation: Delivering Heat Network Zones - Developer Appointment Meeting-Join Microsoft Teams
Wednesday March 4th 12:30pm - 1:30pm	Public webinar 5: Bringing zones to life: Operation Government Response to Heat Network Zoning Consultation: Bringing Zones to Life - Operation Meeting-Join Microsoft Teams

Establishing the Heat Network Zoning Authority (HNZA)

Heat network zones will be areas where heat networks can provide the lowest cost low carbon heating solution, identified using national modelling that compares heat network costs with low-carbon alternatives. A new **Heat Network Zoning Authority** will coordinate heat network zoning across England. It will be housed in the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero initially, moving to the Warm Homes Agency once it is established. The HNZA will lead implementation, supported by interactive mapping tools, and support local Zone Coordination Bodies.

In turn, **Zone Coordination Bodies (ZCBs)** will coordinate the development of heat networks within specific heat network zones and carry out other local functions. Local government will also play a significant role in the development of heat network zones in their areas. Heat network zones may cross multiple local authority boundaries, including local authorities at different levels of local government. Because of this, the structure of zone coordination bodies will be adaptable to different local circumstances.

Heat Networks and the Warm Homes Plan

On Wednesday 21st January, alongside the HNZ consultation response, the Government published its Warm Homes Plan (WHP), which contains an entire chapter to heat networks and restates the Government's ambition that heat networks will provide 20% of all heat by 2050.


The plan sets a target to more than double the amount of heat demand met via heat networks in England to 7% (27TWh) by 2035 with them expected to provide a **fifth of all heat by 2050**, noting:

"Heat networks can provide the lowest cost, low-carbon heat for consumers in the right locations. They are an essential part of our path towards lowering bills, decarbonising heat, enhancing energy security and achieving net zero by 2050."

You can find the Warm Homes Plan via the following link: [Warm Homes Plan](#). The Hub has also produced a briefing note on the plan which [you can read here](#).

Additionally, the Hub has published a briefing note covering key points covered in both the WHP and the HNZ consultation response, this can be found on the Hub's LinkedIn page, or can be requested by getting in touch with us directly: enquiries@neynetzerohub.com



IN PERSON & TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES	
<p>New video series for operators, managers and students</p> <p>DESNZ have produced a 13-part video series designed for current and future staff working for heat network service providers, as well as those who own or manage buildings supplied by district heat networks or communal heating systems.</p> <p>The videos are designed for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • current and future staff working for heat network service providers • owners or managers of buildings that are supplied by district heat networks or communally heated systems • teaching students about the heat network sector (as an educational resource) • informing and engaging end users, with the inclusion of a consumer-focused video <p>The content is suitable for a wide audience, no technical knowledge is required, and you can access the videos via the link to the right.</p>	<p>Heat networks: operation and maintenance upskilling videos - GOV.UK</p>
<p>Connecting Women in District Heat</p> <p>Connecting Women in District Heating 2026 took place from in January. Organised by the District Heating Divas, the week-long festival was open to everyone, women and allies alike.</p> <p>On Thursday January 15th an in-person event was hosted in London, delivering a programme of talks covering a host of different topics, whilst still allowing time for networking and break-out sessions. We had the chance to hear from a range of different people about their educational and career journeys and learned what brought them to the wonderful world of Heat Networks.</p> <p>The in-person event was also a wonderful opportunity to see colleagues in person, some for the first time! And I'm always grateful to see my Zoning Lead partners in crime from the other Net Zero Hubs around the country.</p> <p>More webinars: The team behind the festival will be hosting a second week of webinars in late Feb/early March. I'll share more details with you all as soon as the dates are confirmed.</p> <p>Joining the Divas: If you would like to join the UK National District Heating Divas mailing list please contact Liz Warren(liz.warren@se-2.co.uk) or Rachael Mills (rachael.mills@se-2.co.uk).</p> <p>You can also follow the Divas' LinkedIn page.</p> <div>  </div>	
KEEP IN TOUCH	
<p>For more information about Hub support for Heat Network Zoning please contact: lauren.kemp@westyorks-ca.gov.uk or enquiries@neynetzerohub.com.</p>	
<p>Don't forget, the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero have their very own Heat Networks newsletter. You can sign up here: DESNZ – HN Bulletins</p>	