



WOOD ENERGY

Supporting the development of wood energy as part of the evolving renewable energy resource.

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Wood Energy (WE)

Wood has been used for energy for millennia but has been superseded by fossil fuels. Global warming and the move to sustainable development has more recently re-focused attention on renewable energy.

The Regional Spatial Strategy seeks to encourage the development and use of renewable energy resources. There is also a need to find new markets for low-value forest products. Though lagging behind European colleagues, a good start has been made in the region by producing and beginning to implement a Regional Wood Energy Strategy. Policy-drivers are in place, and incentives and technology exist, and so local projects can now show what can be achieved and how. A key action will be to establish a sustainable and consistent wood fuel supply chain. The region is well placed to lead on these issues in England.

Aims:

- To move wood energy from a minor activity to a recognised niche market.
- To make a significant contribution to West Midlands energy supply for business, public sector and domestic markets.

ACTION

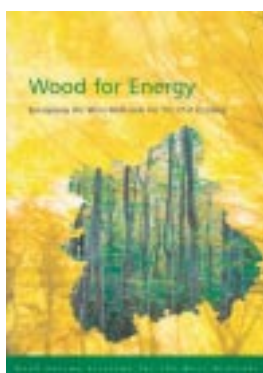
Delivering the vision

Objectives	Actions
WE 1 To improve awareness, understanding and support for wood energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Promote the Regional Wood Energy Strategy, linking it to the Regional Energy Strategy, Regional Economic Strategy and other strategies as appropriate.● Encourage a policy commitment from public bodies to the use of wood fuel, especially from local sources, and help with promotion of wood fuel.
WE 2 To develop the wood energy industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Find the financial support for wood-energy installations and for the fuel-supply infrastructure, support the wood-fuel supply chain, and roll out Heartwoods, Marches Wood Energy Network and others as networking initiatives and organisations for wood fuel.● Support and target locations to establish short-rotation coppice and forest residues (for example, products of ancient woodland (PAWS) restoration) as sources of wood fuel● Support the development of a cluster of working installations with the supply chain, training and infrastructure to demonstrate and help lead wood-fuel development in the region.
WE 3 To help new initiatives and share knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Support the industry in taking on new technology, sharing best practice and promoting wood fuel, with at least one promotional event in the region each year.

CASE STUDIES

West Midlands Wood Energy Strategy

Launched in May 2002, Wood for Energy – Energising the West Midlands for the 21st Century was the first regional wood energy strategy in England.



Commissioned by AWM, GOWM, FC and Countryside Agency, it identifies the barriers to developing wood energy, draws on case studies and sets out an action plan to take wood energy forward. One of its key recommendations was to establish a Regional Networking Organisation, now being piloted in the Rural Regeneration Zone through a partnership between Heartwoods www.heartwoods.co.uk and Marches Wood Energy Network www.mwen.org.uk. Funded through Objective 2 and AWM, this partnership networks, advises, facilitates and grant aids wood-energy projects. Advice has been given to more than 40 organisations and individuals, resulting in the installation of five new wood-fuelled boilers, totalling nearly 1MW. The Wood Energy Task Group of the Regional Woodland and Forestry Forum oversee implementation of the action plan.

Wood heating in Telford

Telford is rapidly emerging as a leading centre for wood heating in the West Midlands.



Chipping wood from local woodlands.
Image: Marches Wood Energy Network

In early 2004, a 320kW woodchip-fired boiler was installed at Oakengates Leisure Centre in Telford. Midlands Wood Fuel Supply Ltd, a company formed by Marches Wood Energy Network, has established a fuel-supply infrastructure for the centre and for future boiler developments in the town. It is based on timber from sawmills and woodlands in and around Telford. Timber is stored at a local farm, where it is chipped by local contractors before being delivered to the boiler.

A second woodchip boiler, a 100kW unit for a Telford theatre, is in the process of being installed, and there are plans for several more over the coming years.



Inside the boiler feed system. Image: Marches Wood Energy Network