

# Hidden talents

**David Garrity says that the Government's Heat Strategy, published this year, requires solutions such as self-contained radiators, with hidden features.**

With heat accounting for around 47 per cent of the UK's total carbon emissions it's no wonder that the heating industry has been getting a little hot under the collar in recent years.

Although it's widely acknowledged that new heating technologies will play a significant role in achieving the targets set out in the Government's Climate Change Bill, of reducing UK carbon dioxide emissions by at least 26 per cent by 2020 and at least 60 per cent by 2050, to date there has been no heating blueprint.

This was until January 2008 when energy minister Malcolm Wicks launched a call for evidence on the best ways to 'decarbonise' the way we heat our homes and businesses. The findings, which are currently being analysed, will form the foundations of the Government's Heat Strategy (due to be published later this year) and is expected to address issues such as:

- how existing technologies for producing heat in a lower carbon way can be developed further;
- whether new incentives are required to stimulate the development of renewable heat, and what form these might take;
- how surplus heat might be captured, transported and re-used rather than going to waste;
- what role there is for low-carbon electricity in heating;
- which heating options could provide the most cost-effective solutions.

Forward thinking developers are already installing electric heating systems in their properties as they recognise that a seismic shift in energy is about to take place. Our reliance on fossil fuels is affecting our economy, our environment and, with gas and oil supplies increasingly concentrated in unstable parts of the world, the security of our energy supply.

The Government has already stated its plans to significantly increase the Renewables Obligation – where electricity suppliers must obtain a specified and increasing proportion of their electricity from renewable sources – as part of its Renewable Energy Strategy, in order to achieve its goal of 20 per cent of the UK's power coming from renewable energy sources by 2020. The message is therefore clear: clean, green electricity is the key to our economic and environmental future.

Against this backdrop products such as ours have a vital role to play, offering a smooth transition between energy sources. Developers can install the system confident that homeowners will be able to take full advantage of suppliers moving to low and zero carbon electricity over the coming years, while in the meantime limiting energy usage through enhanced controllability.

The success of any new heating initiative will be



determined by the consumer who wants a system that is not only proven, but with which they are comfortable. The range of electric water filled radiators we manufacture overcomes this issue by providing an innovative system in a familiar guise.

While each unit might look like a conventional radiator, a built in boiler, pump and thermostat transforms each into a self contained central heating system. Wall mounted on brackets and plugged into any 13 amp socket, the system requires no pipework, immediately eliminating this form of energy wastage.

With the Government's aim of having zero carbon new homes by 2016, the role of electric heating has never been clearer. Tighter building regulations mean, amongst other things, reducing air leakage, installing higher levels of insulation and fitting heat recovery systems, all of which reduces the overall demand for heat. It is therefore the ability of electric heating systems to deliver heat in highly focused areas of a property at specific times of day.

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**David Garrity is managing director of Heat Electric**

