

Delivering energy self-sufficiency and savings in record time

Case study

Leigh Sports Village Stadium

When the UEFA Women's Euro 2022 matches are televised this July, the action will be broadcast from Leigh Sports Village Stadium in Greater Manchester. And while there will no doubt be plenty of action on the pitch, what won't be so obvious is the intense activity that's occurred behind the scenes in the run-up to the event.

Thanks to a super-fast installation orchestrated by E.ON Solutions, the 12,000 capacity stadium will be powered by solar energy from a new 200 kilowatt PV array, with illumination provided by almost 2,000 newly-installed low-energy LED light fittings.



This is complemented by an additional 153kW array on the neighbouring leisure centre. "Both venues use a large amount of energy, with the leisure centre running pool heating and temperature control via a CHP system for 93+ hours seven days a week," says E.ON Development Engineer Dr Edward Mitchell. "This makes them ideal venues for energy conservation measures and low-carbon technologies such as solar PV panels, LED lighting and heat pumps."

The solar array will also take the complex a long way towards being energy self sufficient. "We also have scope to export any additional power we don't use," explains Stuart Holding, Senior Energy Assessor for Wigan Council.



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In today's climate of high energy prices, that could bring welcome revenue for the Council, as Leigh Sports Village is its largest single energy consumer. But even if all the power is used on site, that's around 344,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity that are no longer having to be purchased from the grid. "This will help the Council on its journey to Net Zero by saving over 95 tonnes of CO₂ per year," says Edward.



(Left to right): Colin Walls and Jane Fisher from Wigan Council with Nick Phillips from E.ON Solutions and Stuart Holding, also from Wigan Council, at the Leigh Sports Stadium.

"We are one of the first stadiums in the UK to have gone 100% LED," says Colin Walls, who's been managing the works on site and driving the project on behalf of the Resources and Contract Directorates within Wigan Council. "Swapping from the old fluorescent lighting to LED means we'll save around £200k or 750,000 kilowatts a year in energy costs across the Leigh Sports Village complex, which as well as a leisure centre, includes offices, education classrooms, an NHS facility and a pharmacy."

However, due to global shortages of PV panel components and LED light fittings – as well as very long lead times from most contractors – the project nearly didn't happen at all.

"There have been many challenges on the road to delivering this," explains Nick Phillips, Strategic Account Sales Manager at E.ON Solutions. "For example, covid impacts, supply chain delays, material cost increases and strict deadlines

around using Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) funding. These have been a national problem, with many councils and other public sector organisations having to return PSDS grants for projects that couldn't be delivered within the required timescales."

But through the council's energy supply framework with YPO and npower Business Solutions, E.ON Solutions were able to take on the project for Wigan Council at short notice, and successfully source the necessary materials.

"From the initial order going in, we delivered the full installation in just three months," says Nick.

"At the beginning of the year, our service users at Leigh Sports Village didn't believe this project was achievable in such tight timeframes," says Colin. "But E.ON Solutions came through with flying colours."



"They've also been really flexible, working around the complex's staff and customers," says Stuart. "Everything remained operational while the installations took place."

"We also had the added pressure of ensuring the works were completed before the Women's Euro tournament starts in July," adds Colin.

"But the project was pretty much complete by mid June – we are just waiting to install the last of the LED fittings after the Euro tournament – so we are very happy. But more importantly, the service users are very happy."

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