



Biomass Fuel

How does it work?

Biofuels, typically in the form of wood pellets, wood chips or wood logs for small-scale domestic applications but also arable crops, are burnt to provide space heating and/or hot water.

There are two main systems: stand alone stoves providing space heating for a room; and boilers connected to central heating and hot water systems. These can work alongside each other.

What are the benefits?

- Plentiful supply of fuel – Kent has one of the largest wood resources in the UK
- Carbon neutral – biofuels only release the same amount of CO₂ they absorb whilst growing
- Very cost effective – when locally sourced fuel is used
- Wide selection of boilers available
- Can be used at various scales from individual dwellings to neighbourhood projects where excess heat from biomass-fuelled Combined Heat and Power systems can be used in a district heating scheme
- Often no need for a planning application for most microgeneration installations at a domestic-level¹ - please contact the Council's Development Control Section for further details (e-mail: planning.applications@tmbc.gov.uk Tel: 01732 876230)
- Government grants available

When and where is it suitable?

Biomass is the most cost effective option when the source of biofuel, eg farm, is close by and the transportation costs are therefore kept to a minimum. The option is even more cost effective if the biofuel can be supplied in large quantities, thereby reducing the number of required trips.

Storage space is a significant factor when determining the feasibility of biomass. Sufficient space needs to be made available for the storage of the biofuel near the boiler.

It is also important that a suitable flue designed for wood fuel appliances is installed in compliance with all safety and Building Regulations and the Clean Air Act.

You may need to make a planning application for some elements of the scheme, especially the flue.

You need to take into account other considerations including your property (Listed and/or in a Conservation Area), your neighbours and the landscape setting. Please contact the Council's Development Control Section (e-mail: planning.applications@tmbc.gov.uk, Tel: 01732 876230) for further advice. You will also need to consult the Council's Building Control Section (e-mail: building.control@tmbc.gov.uk Tel: 01732 876305).

Further detailed technical advice, including information on typical costs:

- **Centre for Alternative Technology**
http://www.cat.org.uk/information/info_content.tmp?sku=info_is_renewables/
Tel: 01654 705950
- An Eco-Centre providing practical advice and free information on Biomass
- **Energy Saving Trust (EST)**
www.energysavingtrust.org.uk
Tel: 0800 512012
- a non-profit organisation providing general advice on Biomass (click on 'Generate your own energy' tab on their home page) and technical advice for the development industry professionals (type 'Planners Pack' in the search box)
- **Low Carbon Buildings Programme**
<http://www.lowcarbonbuildings.org.uk>
Tel: 0800 9150990
- find out about available grants
- **London Renewables Toolkit**
www.london.gov.uk
Tel: 0207 9834000
The Greater London Authority has produced a useful toolkit for planners, developers and consultants (type 'London Renewables' in the search box)
- **Creative Environmental Networks (CEN)**
www.cen.org.uk
Tel: 0208 6836694
- not for profit organisation providing technical advice on Biomass (click on 'Developer Support' and select 'Renewable Energy')
- **Kent Energy Centre**
www.kentenergycentre.org.uk
Tel: 0800 3586669
- not for profit organisation offering free and impartial advice on Biomass (click on 'renewable energy solutions')

If you have difficulty reading this leaflet and would like the information in another format, please call 01732 876266 or email ldf@tmbc.gov.uk.

¹Exceptions apply for Listed Buildings, and buildings in Conservation Areas
Image courtesy of Energy Saving Trust