District heating

*Posted on **February 22,2017** by **admin***

[caption id="attachment_1493" align="alignright" width="250"] Our cat loves the wood-burner![/caption] District heating is a good thing right? In the UK its still relatively uncommon but in Scandinavian countries very common and in some such as Sweden the most common form of heating. (By district heating I mean a heating system common to a building, a street or even a district or entire city.) Heating is a real problem as far low carbon energy is concerned. By contrast de-carbonising electricity or even transport is actually easy (believe it or not). This is because renewable heating systems are low temperature systems. Such systems are disruptive to fit and also require very well insulated buildings. For more details see our book. This helps to explain why in the UK the renewable heat incentive has been low on the uptake and not cut by the government. District heating systems are very expensive and disruptive to build (with lots of digging up roads and burying pipes). However as far as the householder is concerned district heating systems have one huge advantage, they work with existing heating technology. So what's the problem? There have been increasing numbers of complaints on consumer programmes and advice columns about them. These fall into three areas. First, the energy costs for the householder are not cheap. Second, the householder is not allowed to fit any micro-generation such as solar hot water. Lastly they seem to unreliable and repairs are not being done in anything like the guaranteed timescale. These problems need sorting out fast. I doubt if the second issue would stand up in court and its only a matter of time before someone takes legal action over the last problem. One drawback is that these systems are exempt from the energy regulation system. However with all new developments in London requiring such systems to get planning permission the above complaints look set to grow until something is done. Neil

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