



UKDEA

DISTRICT ENERGY ASSOCIATION

The Voice for the UK District Energy Sector



Image: Birdsall Networks

Chairman’s Diary

Receive an update from the Chairman about all the events and initiatives he and the association took part in February. Page 12.

New Member

Learn all about the 3 newest members of the UKDEA. Pages 24-25.

UKDEA Events

Take a look the latest events and initiatives taking place in the UKDEA currently and across the next few months. Page 18.

DESNZ News

Get the latest news and updates from DESNZ and what we have been doing with them over the past month. Page 40.

Member Spotlight

Learn all about UKDEA Member Birdsall Networks in month’s member Spotlight. Page 26.

UKDEA Member News

Read the latest news, updates and press releases from UKDEA members. Page 35.

Member Spotlight



Built for the Regulatory Moment

The transformation in the heat network sector could not be better timed for a business structured around innovation, compliance and technical excellence.

The commencement of Ofgem's Heat Network Authorisation Regime in January 2026, the launch of the HNTAS consultation, and the government's ambitious targets for Heat Network Zoning collectively represent the most significant regulatory shift the sector has ever seen and the clearest possible validation of everything Birdsall Networks has been building toward.



Birdsall Networks has developed dedicated HNTAS services, designed to support network operators through the technical commissioning, re-commissioning, and compliance verification demands that the new framework will introduce. Many operators will find the new regulatory environment genuinely challenging.

Birdsall have spent ten years building the operational systems, the engineering talent, compliance processes and an innovative culture that the sector now urgently needs. Our size is our advantage here. We can move quickly, adopt new technology decisively, and embed new standards faster than larger, more rigid organisations.

That agility is not incidental it is a deliberate

strategic asset. Where larger contractors often struggle to pivot their delivery models in response to changing technical or regulatory requirements, Birdsall Networks has consistently demonstrated the ability to iterate quickly, bring new capabilities to market, and attract talent that wants to work at the cutting edge of the industry rather than within the constraints of a legacy service model.



Intelligent Heat Network Operations for a Regulated Future

Birdsall Networks Ltd was founded in 2016 when the UK heat network sector was a very different place. Regulation was absent, technical standards were fragmented and the operational expertise required to run complex district energy systems efficiently was in short supply.

Recognising the future potential of the market, Birdsall Networks now stands as one of the sector's more dynamic and forward-thinking operations and maintenance providers.

Based in London, Birdsall Networks specialises in the operation and maintenance of heat networks and district energy systems, with a growing portfolio spanning high-density urban schemes through to the emerging low-density network market.

With a team of sixty engineers and managers and a decade of consecutive growth behind it, the company has built a commanding presence in London's O&M services market while setting its sights firmly on expansion beyond London.

A Decade of Operational Excellence

The company's founding ethos was simple but ambitious: bring genuine engineering rigour, transparency, and innovative and proactive service delivery to an industry that often had to accept a reactive, break-fix mentality. That commitment has defined Birdsall Networks' approach ever since.

Operating across some of London's most complex heat network environments, Birdsall delivers 24/7 monitoring, preventative maintenance, emergency response, and compliance management for a range of clients including major estate operators, social landlords, and ESCO partners. The company's deep familiarity with BMS platforms including Trend and Tridium, combined with a proprietary CAFM system, enables a level of operational visibility and reporting that clients increasingly demand and that incoming regulation will require.

Birdsall are currently fine tuning its latest service model named OM₂: an outcome-driven approach to heat network operations that moves beyond reactive maintenance to deliver measurable improvements in network reliability, efficiency, and consumer outcomes. Rather than simply responding to failures, Birdsall Networks uses data to anticipate them reducing downtime, cutting energy waste, and building the kind of performance records that will become essential under the new Ofgem authorisation regime.

Technology as a Competitive Differentiator

Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of Birdsall Networks' evolution is its investments in embedding artificial intelligence and data analytics into its core service delivery. The company is currently developing a proprietary cloud-based heat network management platform designed to deliver

AI-powered predictive maintenance, real-time network optimisation, and automated regulatory compliance reporting.

The goal is not technology for its own sake. Every element of the platform is designed to produce tangible outcomes: fewer unplanned outages, lower heat losses, faster fault diagnosis, and the kind of auditable compliance trail that both Ofgem and end consumers will increasingly expect.

The company anticipates that AI-driven predictive maintenance will significantly improve network performance compared with conventional reactive maintenance models, with significant implications for consumer satisfaction and operator costs alike.

Consumer-facing applications are also in development, recognising that transparency with end users is no longer optional in a regulated environment. The ability to give heat network customers genuine visibility of their consumption data, pricing, and network performance is fast becoming a baseline expectation and Birdsall Networks intends to lead from the front.



Looking Ahead

With Heat Network Zoning set to be implemented across major UK cities including Bristol, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, Newcastle, Glasgow, and Edinburgh, and the government committed to doubling heat network output by 2035, the pipeline of opportunity for technically excellent, regulation-ready operators has

never been larger. Birdsall Networks is actively positioning for expansion beyond its established London base, targeting new zone structures as they come into force and pursuing the partnerships and service integrations that will allow it to serve clients across the full spectrum of heat network development and operation.

The UKDEA has long argued that growing the supply chain and supporting contractor capability is essential to delivering the government's heat network ambitions. Birdsall Networks is precisely the kind of business the sector needs more of: founder-led, technically driven, commercially ambitious, and genuinely invested in the long-term credibility and performance of the networks it operates.

For more information about Birdsall Networks Ltd, visit www.birdsallnetworks.co.uk or contact the company directly to

discuss how its O&M, HNTAS compliance, and heat interface services can support your portfolio. We will be exhibiting at the annual UKDEA Heat Networks Expo.

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