

Most power-hungry site run by council revealed

BY KATHRYN ANDERSON, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

A Perthshire school campus used more energy than any other Perth and Kinross Council (PKC) building last year.

Breadalbane Community Campus in Aberfeldy racked up an energy bill of almost £500,000, using a total of 3,690 MWh.

PKC spent a total of £6.55 million on gas and electricity in 2023/24.

Breadalbane Community Campus has a range of sport and leisure facilities including a swimming pool and games hall. The Highland Perthshire building is open seven days a week and is used by the wider Aberfeldy community as well as pupils.

The local authority is working towards driving down its energy use as it seeks to reduce its carbon footprint. PKC's energy use has dropped by 35% over the past 10 years.

And the local authority has developed a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy with a five-year delivery plan from 2024-29.

A recent investigation by not-for-profit consultancy Box Power CIC uncovered a "jaw-dropping" variation in energy costs of 404 public bodies, which included UK local authorities and major institutions such as the

Ministry of Defence and the emergency services.

The figures for PKC from April 2023 to March this year showed it spent £4,735,000 on electricity and £1,817,000 on gas. Electricity came in at 30.8p per kilowatt hour and gas at 5.9ppkwh. It was ranked a fairly respectable 324 out of 404 public bodies, No 1 being the body paying the most over the odds.

It was ranked 278 for electricity and 330 for gas.

Hastings Borough Council paid the highest price for electricity at 66.2ppkwh. The average UK price paid for electricity was 33.3ppkwh.

The average price Scottish authorities paid for gas was 6.2ppkwh.

In fact the Box Power investigation found local authorities in Scotland bought gas and electricity at cheaper rates than their counterparts in England.

A PKC spokesperson said: "We have for several years been taking forward a range of measures to reduce the energy consumption of the council estate as part of our wider aims to address climate change and make savings for the council budget.

"These include using the Scottish Procurement Framework to bulk purchase our energy, as do local arm's-length external



organisations, e.g. Live Active Leisure; improving insulation and heating systems to make buildings more energy efficient and cost-effective to operate; introducing our Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy, which sets a co-ordinated approach to the planning and delivery of energy-efficiency and heat decarbonisation; and supporting the use of renewable energies.

“Perth and Kinross as an area has the second highest installed capacity for renewable energy in Scotland and the UK. In 2023-2024, the building which consumed the most energy was Breadalbane Community Campus, with a total of 3,690MWh, costing £499,250.29.

“Over a 10-year period the council’s consumption of energy has shown a reduction of 35%.”

Box Power CIC chief executive Corin Dalby said: “Box Power CIC are putting these results in the public domain because we want to bring more transparency and value into the sector when it comes to energy buying.

“When you consider that some local authorities also buy energy for the schools, leisure centres and more in their area who trust them to deliver the best value for money, the hugely different amounts paid raise some important and difficult questions.”

