Chief Development Officer

Salary: Salary dependent on experience + Up to 20% performance bonus

Benefits: Up to 7% matched Pension, private medical insurance, and travel insurance

Hours/days per week: 37.5 hours/5 days

Place of work: Hybrid minimum 3 days in South Oxford office

Reports to: CEO

About us

Heat in buildings accounts for more than a third of the UK's total carbon emissions, with more than two million businesses and 24 million homes burning fossil fuels for heating.

To achieve Britain's climate goals, there is an urgent need for a national shift from fossil fuel heating to low-carbon alternatives—and heat networks offer a proven, scalable option.

1Energy is the UK's leading developer of low-carbon, city-heat-networks. Our mission is to decarbonise heat in cities and towns across the UK, accelerating the transition to net zero.

Our heat networks provide the lowest cost, simplest and fastest route to decarbonising heat at scale and a long-term foundation for healthier, greener cities.

In just over three years, 1Energy has grown from a start-up to having over £600m of heat networks in development, with ambitions to deploy £1bn within the next eight years into building new networks.

1Energy is backed by a dedicated fund established by Asper Investment Management, which supports the development, construction and operation of our networks.

Our team are leaders in the heat network industry—having delivered and operated more than 100 district heating projects over the past 15 years.

About the job

The Chief Development Officer (CDO) is accountable for leading the development of 1Energy's heat network pipeline and for leading the technical function that underpins it. The role combines ownership of project development and commercialisation with senior technical leadership, integrity and assurance across the portfolio.

A key focus of the role is driving district heating projects through the development and commercialisation phase — from heat demand mapping and feasibility through to investable, deliverable schemes — ensuring that development, technical, commercial, planning and delivery considerations are fully integrated from the earliest stages of project development.

The CDO plays a critical role in shaping 1Energy's projects so that they are commercially viable, investable, and deliverable heat network projects, by ensuring that development strategies, technical assumptions, concept designs and techno-economic models are robust, proportionate and aligned with business objectives.

Working closely with commercial, planning, delivery, operational and finance teams, the CDO ensures that development and technical inputs support:

- A strong customer proposition for customers to connect to 1Energy projects
- Commercial modelling, tariff and affordability assessment, and investment decision-making
- Site identification, land assembly and assessment for Energy Centres and network infrastructure
- Planning applications, public consultation and stakeholder engagement
- Delivery, procurement and contracting strategies
- Long-term operational performance and asset resilience

The role provides authoritative development and technical leadership to senior stakeholders, investors, delivery partners and public sector clients, while ensuring that lessons learned from project delivery and operations continuously improve future developments.

While not responsible for undertaking detailed engineering design directly, the CDO will own and set technical direction, govern technical assurance, and ensure the effective integration of development, engineering, commercial and operational considerations across the full lifecycle of 1Energy's projects.

What you'll do

Development, commercialisation & technical integration

- Direct the development of robust network designs, concept designs and techno-economic models to support project viability, investment decisions and customer propositions

- Lead strategy and oversight during the development and commercialisation phase of district heating projects
- Ensure technical inputs are fully integrated into commercial modelling, investment cases and project business plans
- Oversee feasibility assessments, heat mapping, masterplanning, hydraulic modelling and network optimisation activities
- Lead assessment and selection of Energy Centre sites, including evaluation of spatial, planning, utility, environmental and delivery constraints
- Oversee a technical team which leads on technical specification drafting, tender documentation, pre-qualification studies and connection agreement costing
- Support development of contracting and procurement strategies, including delivery model selection, risk allocation and packaging approaches for design, construction and operation
- Ensure development-stage risks, assumptions and interfaces are appropriately identified, challenged and managed

Development pipeline leadership & assurance

- Define and maintain 1Energy's development strategy, standards and assurance processes across the heat network portfolio
- Act as the organisation's senior authority on development, design and operational matters
- Provide strategic development advice, challenge and decision support to executive leadership, investors and project teams
- Ensure consistency and quality of development and technical approaches, assumptions and outputs across all projects and development partners
- Oversee the development pipeline governance and approval processes, including assurance of concept and detailed design, modelling and enabling works undertaken by the team and external consultants

People, partners & capability

- Lead, develop and, where required, identify gaps and recruit new people into 1Energy's development and technical capability as the business grows
- Build strong relationships with external advisers, consultants, contractors and delivery partners to ensure quality and value for money
- Coordinate the supply chain, including scoping, costing and procurement of development and delivery services
- Help shape the organisation's long-term development and technical operating model, including decisions around in-house capability versus outsourced support
- Foster a culture of development discipline, technical excellence, collaboration, innovation and continuous improvement

Design, delivery & operational integration

- Oversee inputs from feasibility through concept design, detailed design, enabling works, construction and operational readiness
- Support review and assurance of designs, technical submissions and contractor proposals prepared by external consultants and delivery partners
- Ensure operational requirements, maintainability and asset performance considerations are embedded into project development and design decisions
- Work closely with delivery and operational teams to ensure development intent is maintained through construction, commissioning and handover

Performance, optimisation & lessons learned

- Lead the use of technical and operational data to improve network performance, efficiency and resilience
- Ensure lessons learned from operations and project delivery are embedded into future concept designs, standards and development assumptions
- Support development of KPIs, reporting frameworks and performance evidence for internal and external stakeholders
- Provide strategic oversight of remediation, optimisation and lifecycle planning activities across operational assets

Regulatory leadership & stakeholder engagement

- Lead GHNF reporting and ensure ongoing compliance with grant funding obligations, including the Market Transformation Commitment
- Translate regulatory and industry requirements into practical development and technical standards and delivery expectations
- Provide senior input to discussions with local authorities, highways authorities, developers, investors, regulators and strategic partners
- Represent 1Energy as a development leader within the heat network and low-carbon infrastructure sector
- Support bids, funding applications and investor engagement through clear, credible and commercially informed development and technical narratives

What you'll need

- Leadership and strategic skills to contribute to the 1Energy executive team, with a clear ability to set direction and lead growing multidisciplinary teams
- A proven track record of leading the development and commercialisation of major energy or infrastructure projects — ideally district heating, communal heat networks or low-carbon energy infrastructure — from origination through to investment decision
- Degree qualified in Engineering, Building Services Engineering, Energy Systems or a closely related discipline (or equivalent senior experience)
- Significant senior-level experience (typically 10+ years) in district heating, communal heat networks or low-carbon energy infrastructure

- Demonstrable experience across the full heat network lifecycle, including origination, concept, design, delivery and operation
- Strong commercial acumen, including business case development, techno-economic modelling, tariff and affordability assessment and investment decision-making
- Experience leading planning, land, stakeholder and community engagement, including public consultations and supply-chain coordination
- A proven track record of leading and governing complex engineering programmes and multidisciplinary teams
- Strong working knowledge of CIBSE CP1, heat network regulation and UK compliance requirements
- Experience managing development and technical risk and providing assurance at board or executive level

1Energy's team is comprised of head office remote and on-site roles, with our team members based across the UK; for this role, however, occasional travel will be required to meet with customers, stakeholders and colleagues.
All applicants must be eligible to legally work in the UK.

Work with us

If this sounds like you, we'd love to hear from you. Please send us an email with your CV to: info@1energy.uk