



# Energising Edgbaston

## Case study



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Craig Flindall, Chief Operating Officer, Edgbaston



### In partnership with Drax

Drax, formerly Haven Power, has been Edgbaston's electricity supplier and partner since October 2018, following an introduction from consultancy Amber Energy - the stadium's intermediary since 2012. Craig Flindall, Chief Operating Officer (COO) at Edgbaston, takes up the story: "During 2018, we knew our existing supply contract was coming to an end; Amber scoured the market looking for an energy supplier and partner for the stadium.

"We chose to work with Drax because we want to be sustainable and want renewable electricity. I don't think we look just for a supplier, we look for a partner; a two-way relationship – somebody to deliver an efficient service... and to work together for the benefit of both parties."

The Drax approach to the partnership, which encourages Amber Energy's involvement too, has impressed the COO:

**"We've been with Drax for four months [and] I've already spent more time talking about working together than I've done with any supplier during my eight-and-a-half years here at Edgbaston."**

## Background

The home of Warwickshire County Cricket Club since 1886 and a Test Match venue since 1902, Edgbaston is one of England's best-known cricket grounds. It hosted the first-ever floodlit domestic game in 1997 and, in 2017, the inaugural day-and-night Test Match between England and the West Indies.

In 2019, the stadium was one of the venues for the "Ashes" Test Match series against Australia. And it's due to host more Tests, One-Day Internationals and other first-class games before 2024.

Against this background of elite sporting occasions, Edgbaston – according to Craig – aims to be "the best cricket business in the world". This ambition includes a desire to make Edgbaston "the most sustainable cricket stadium in the UK." As he suggests, "Energy efficiency, and how much we use, is obviously a key part of that."

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## Working together

The experts from Drax met with Edgbaston's key stakeholders and Amber Energy to gain a better understanding of the business, its energy needs and ambitions.

The aim of any meeting of this kind is to explore the business and energy- specific challenges facing the customer. Following the discussions, Drax presents a range of relevant services and solutions. As Craig said,

**"We got some really interesting ideas coming out of that meeting, which we're going to take forward over the next few months. I'd certainly recommend that other energy consumers take part in a meeting – we found it really helpful to share our ambitions with the ambitions of Drax."**



## Understanding Edgbaston's challenges

While Edgbaston's conference and events business operates all year, the requirement for energy picks up dramatically during international match days. This is something that the stadium wants to manage very closely, as Craig explains: "We obviously have a big footprint when we stage our international games - it's very important that we operate those in the most sustainable way possible."

For example, the business will be ensuring that everything used around the stadium is combustible and that none of the match-day suppliers sell single-use plastics. It's also installed water fountains around the stadium, so that fans can fill up their own water bottles. Longer term, the business is looking to develop the stadium infrastructure. As Craig says: "We're redeveloping all our entrance plazas and car parks, and looking at electric vehicle provision and charging points. We know that Drax is doing some work in that area, so the team's going to come back to us with some ideas."

To support its own sustainability agenda, the supplier is installing solar panels, battery storage and electric vehicle (EV) charging points at its Ipswich office – and has invested in an EV. What's more, Drax Electric Vehicles team works with customers to enable the adoption of EVs in their fleets. These projects include a feasibility study and, assuming electrification is possible and desirable, the phased introduction of charging stations tailored to the individual needs of the customer.

Craig continues, "We're also working with Drax and Amber Energy to reduce our carbon footprint, to reduce our energy use, and with our waste management partner to reduce our waste footprint."

In addition, Edgbaston aims to reduce the impact of match-day transport and traffic by operating a shuttle bus service alongside official car parks. It also promotes walking routes and public transport routes to the stadium, Craig explains, in a bid to "make sure that the footprint of our major matches creates a better, and not a negative, influence on the local community."

He concludes by reiterating his point about choosing a partner, not just a supplier: "We don't really want 'plain vanilla' supply relationships with any of our core partners. We saw a strong desire from Drax to work with us to become a true partner of the stadium and the club."

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### Next steps?

Working alongside your organisation's key stakeholders, we'll deliver energy solutions that give you more control while cutting emissions and costs. To find out how, please email [energyservices@drax.com](mailto:energyservices@drax.com)

