



ECO-FRIENDLY

The best low-bills boltholes

Feeling the chill? Eco-friendly pads where you can turn up the heat without worrying about bills



Hertfordshire, from £217,950: Set to put Hemel Hempstead on the front line of progressive eco-living, the 17-storey Beacon will comprise 272 studios, one-, two- and three-bedroom balconied flats and penthouses, due to be completed in 2018. Its green technologies — triple glazing and what is thought to be the highest-density solar farm in the world — should generate sufficient heat and power to ensure residents don't need to pay any energy bills for at least the first five years. 020 3283 8583, thebeacondevelopment.co.uk



Be honest. You must have done it by now. And even if you've resisted the temptation, you know you're going to do it soon. Turned on the heating, that is. This is the weekend when we traditionally flick the switch, having realised that summer really is over, and putting on another cardie and pair of socks just isn't going to do it. So we are preparing for the shock of energy bills, as well as fights over who controls our home's temperature.

Depressingly, Uswitch.com has found that more than half of British couples battle over the thermostat. Women prefer a more tropical ambience — which often leads to a frostier atmosphere.

We're all confused, too, about whether we'll really get better long-term deals if we change energy provider, or any government discount schemes we might be eligible for. And don't even mention the smart-meter scandal, with many users reporting their energy bills actually rocketed after the new gadgets arrived.

We admit that retrofitted solar panels aren't the greatest look, but there are plenty of stylish eco-homes that could more than halve your energy use. Here's our pick of the best low-bills boltholes.



THE BEACON
EXEMPLAR LIVING



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