

Green boost for regions to cut industry carbon emissions

- Projects in the West Midlands, Tees Valley, North West, Humber, Scotland and South Wales win share of £8 million government backing to develop ways to cut carbon emissions from major industrial areas
- UK drive to lead global green industrial revolution will create 4 low-carbon industrial hubs by 2030 and at least one net zero emission cluster by 2040
- new funding is latest phase of government's £170 million Industrial Decarbonisation Challenge which has the potential to create tens of thousands of jobs as UK builds back greener

Six projects across the UK will today receive a share of £8 million in government funding as part of a drive to create the world's first net zero emissions industrial zone by 2040. Projects in the West Midlands, Tees Valley, North West, Humber, Scotland and South Wales will see local authorities working with industry to develop plans to reduce carbon emissions, with one scheme alone – across the North West of England and North East Wales – aiming to create over 33,000 new jobs and more than £4 billion of investment as it bids to become the world's first net zero industrial zone.

A net zero industrial zone will see all industries in a region collectively reducing their carbon dioxide emissions to as close to zero as possible using low-carbon energy sources and new technology like carbon capture.

All 6 areas receiving funding today have high concentrations of industrial activity and will get a share of up to £8 million towards the development of decarbonisation plans.

Energy Minister Kwasi Kwarteng said:

The UK is leading the world's green industrial revolution, with ambitious targets to decarbonise our economy and create hundreds of thousands of jobs.

As we continue to level up the UK economy and build back greener, we must ensure every sector is reducing carbon emissions to help us achieve our commitment to net zero emissions by 2050.

This funding will help key industrial areas meet the challenge of contributing to our cleaner future while maintaining their productive and competitive strengths.

Decarbonising UK industry is a key part of the government's ambitious plan for the green industrial revolution, which is laid out in its [Ten Point Plan](#)

and [Energy White Paper](#) and is set to create 220,000 jobs as we build back greener over the next decade.

The Industrial Clusters Mission aims to support the delivery of 4 low-carbon regional zones by 2030 and at least one net zero green hotspot by 2040, kickstarted by the government's £170 million Industrial Decarbonisation Challenge.

The 6 winners will now produce detailed plans for reducing emissions across major areas of industrial activity, where related industries have congregated and can benefit from utilising shared clean energy infrastructure, such as carbon capture, usage and storage (CCUS) and low-carbon hydrogen production and distribution.

All the winners have produced initial plans for reducing emissions across major industrial clusters across the UK and, in subsequent years, will build on these preliminary successes by bringing together industry and public sector bodies in a comprehensive effort to devise a route to net zero emissions.

Bryony Livesey, UKRI Challenge Director, Industrial Decarbonisation, said:

Today's announcement shows that the industrial clusters campaign is proceeding at pace. This second phase of the competition asks companies and partners to plan for comprehensive changes to industries, products and supply lines.

This is a crucial step in the government's plans to develop cost-effective decarbonisation in industrial hubs that tackle the emissions challenge UK industry faces. The move to low carbon industry is a huge opportunity, with the chance for the UK to take the lead and seize a large share of a growing global market.

Notes to editors

The Industrial Decarbonisation Challenge will commit £170 million towards deploying technologies like carbon capture and hydrogen networks in industrial clusters, supporting the Industrial Clusters Mission to establish the world's first net zero industrial cluster by 2040.

The Industrial Decarbonisation Challenge supports co-ordinated research, technology and infrastructure that allows UK industry to reduce carbon emissions across a large scale and in a way that can be easily replicated.

The funding for the £170 million Industrial Decarbonisation Challenge is being made through the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund.

Regional cluster leads

- in the West Midlands, the Black Country Consortium will be the cluster plan lead
- in the Tees Valley, the cluster plan will be overseen by the Tees Valley Combined Authority
- in the North West of England and North East Wales, the cluster plan will be led by Peel Environmental
- in the Humber it will be led by the Humber Local Enterprise Partnership
- in Scotland NECCUS, an alliance of industries and experts, will lead
- in South Wales, the cluster plan will be led by CR Plus consultancy

List of IDC Phase 2 Cluster Plan Projects

Project title: South Wales Industry – A Plan for Clean Growth

Region: South Wales

Project Lead: CR Plus consultancy

The South Wales Industrial Cluster (SWIC) is a diverse mix of critical industry that have come together to collaboratively achieve common objectives for decarbonisation and clean growth delivering job security.

Led by CR Plus consultancy the SWIC plans centres around a 5 stepped approach to net zero carbon (NZC), 5 spatial zone types will allow SWIC to take immediate steps toward NZC with a low chance of incurring 'Regret Capital'. As well as targeting a NZC cluster by 2040, this plan focuses on societal needs, circular economy and clean growth aspirations of the region, tackling the common and unique commercial and operational challenges facing SW industry.

Project title: Repowering the Black Country Phase 2 Cluster Plan

Region: Black Country

Project Lead: The Black Country Consortium

The Black Country is 1 of 7 strategic industrial clusters across the UK being supported by BEIS and Innovate UK to decarbonise by 2040. By 2030, without radical action, Black Country industry will be responsible for 2.3 MtCO₂ emissions a year, from an industrial base of more than 3000 energy-intense businesses, many still engaged in the region's traditional metal processing operations.

This project, led by the Black Country Consortium (a partnership of private, public and voluntary sector organisations), aims to reduce these emissions to zero by 2030 through a co-ordinated programme of transformational projects focused around a new type of industrial estate: the zero carbon hub.

Zero carbon hubs will be based around anchor industrial processes, strategically-selected to match Black Country skills and strengths (for example aluminium reprocessing). Each hub will contain a mix of businesses carefully selected to complement each other by thinking about their energy

and waste flows.

Project title: Net Zero Tees Valley: Cluster Plan Stage 2

Region: Teesside

Project Lead: Tees Valley Combined Authority

The Tees Valley is the UK's most compact and integrated industrial cluster with a radius of 5 miles. The cluster includes several of the UK's top CO2 emitters and is responsible for 8.8 million tonnes of CO2. The Tees Valley industrial cluster generates £12 billion of exports annually, employs over 12,000 people and currently contributes some £2.5 billion to UK gross value added (GVA).

The cluster plan will be led by the Tees Valley Combined Authority and will identify the most appropriate range of technologies and potential pathways for the various industrial producers and energy generators in the Tees Valley, considering both existing and future new entrants. It is expected that this plan will combine carbon capture at scale, fuel switching to hydrogen, integration of renewables, low carbon energy sources, feedstocks changes, together with improved process and energy efficiencies.

Project title: Scotland's Net Zero Roadmap (SNZR)

Region: Scotland

Project Lead: Neccus

To achieve net zero by 2045 Scotland needs to decarbonise industry, transport, heat and power. Scotland's Net Zero Roadmap project (SNZR) will provide the roadmap to enable large-scale industrial CO2 emissions reduction in a way that focuses on ensuring the continued, but evolving, contribution of high-value industry and employment in a future net zero economy.

Led by Neccus, an alliance of industries and experts, the SNZR will provide the roadmap that enables the deployment of options in a way that ensures competitive decarbonisation through continued and growing prosperity across the economy.

Scotland is in a strong position to lead this new large scale CO2 management industry. Offshore Scotland has some of Europe's best-characterised and largest CO2 storage sites while CCS and hydrogen will create opportunities for jobs and economic activity and help transition staff employed in sectors such as oil and gas.

Project title: The Net Zero NW Cluster Plan

Region: North West

Project Lead: Peel Environmental

The Net Zero NW Cluster Plan, led by Peel Environmental, a development company, will set out the transition to net zero for industry in the North West of England and North East Wales. It will describe the investments,

technologies, infrastructure changes and sequencing required to fulfil the UK's Industrial Clusters Mission.

Industry and public sector bodies, building on the preliminary research completed in Phase 1, will collaboratively promote and engage on plans to decarbonise, ensuring businesses have a strong voice in planning decarbonisation activity in line with current and future business needs whilst leveraging inward investment opportunities.

By enabling multiple industrial facilities to reduce their emissions by the greatest possible extent, with knock-on effects in the reduction of commercial, domestic and transport emissions, the Net Zero NW Cluster Plan hopes to realise over 33,000 new jobs, over £4 billion investment and the world's first net zero industrial cluster.

Project title: Humber Industrial Cluster Plan

Region: Humber

Project Lead: Humber Local Enterprise Partnership

The Humber Local Enterprise Partnership (Humber LEP) and membership organisation CATCH will lead on the project and work with industrial partners across the Humber to develop the Humber Cluster Plan (HCP) that will enable the Humber industrial cluster, the UK's largest by carbon emissions, to achieve net zero by 2040.

The Humber emits more CO₂ than any other industrial cluster (30% more than the next largest), while the area is one of the most vulnerable to climate change. A quarter of the Humber's GVA and 1 in 10 jobs depend on these industries, making safeguarding their competitiveness imperative for the local economy as well as strategically important for the UK.

A phased approach will prioritise near-term deliverable investments that will see quick results, significantly reducing the Humber's emissions by 2030, mapping out how carbon capture and storage (CCS) and hydrogen infrastructure can be scaled up over time, and identifying the full range of interventions required to achieve net zero by 2040.

HCP will also outline the potential for the Humber's industrial decarbonisation to support decarbonisation beyond the industrial cluster, including maritime in the UK's largest ports complex, road/rail transport and decarbonisation of the gas supply (25% of the UK's supply passes through the Humber). Linked opportunities and implications for renewable energy, especially bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS) and offshore wind (both of which the Humber leads on and are integral to decarbonising industry), will also be identified.

Prime Minister welcomes significant uplift in key public sector jobs

- NHS recruitment drive boosts the number of doctors by more than 6,000 and nurses by 13,000.
- Almost 6,000 police officers have been hired as part of the Government's commitment to reach 20,000 additional officers by the end of this Parliament.
- 41,000 new trainee teachers were recruited during 2020.
- PM calls on those looking for jobs or a career change to consider frontline public sector roles in 2021.

The Prime Minister today reaffirmed his commitment to boost the numbers of teachers, police officers, nurses and other public sector workers as part of the Government's drive to build back better from the Covid pandemic in 2021.

In a year which saw the number of nurses grow by more than 13,000, police officers by 6,000, and teachers by 41,000, the Prime Minister will make continuing to recruit the brightest and best into frontline public sector roles a priority in 2021.

Campaigns to hire more NHS staff, teachers, prison officers will be ramped up throughout the year, with ministers ready to redouble efforts to fill frontline roles to further support public services.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

We have the very best public servants and I feel an enormous sense of admiration when I think about the care, fortitude and determination with which our doctors, nurses, teachers, police officers and prison workers have faced up to the challenges of the pandemic.

There is light at the end of the Covid tunnel – the vaccine provides increasing hope of returning to normality by Easter and I am determined that we build back better from the pandemic and take advantage of the opportunities that are ahead. My commitment to recruit more teachers, nurses, police officers and other frontline workers is unwavering. We have made good progress this year, but 2021 will be a year of growth and renewal – and having the very best frontline workers will be a critical part of that.

NHS and Social Care

Figures from the Department of Health and Social Care reveal that the number of nurses in the NHS in England increased by 13,313 last year to a record 299,184. The Government is committed to delivering 50,000 more nurses by the

end of this Parliament. The number of doctors also rose, with an additional 6,030 to a record 122,446, latest figures up until September show.

The number of nursing and midwifery students accepting places at university this year increased by a record 26% compared to last year, and professionally qualified clinical staff including paramedics are at record levels, as are scientific, therapeutic, and technical staff.

The starting pay for a newly qualified nurse has risen by over 12% since 2017/18. Most existing nurses have also seen a pay rise of at least 6.5% over the course of the latest pay deal.

The NHS Pension Scheme is also one of the most comprehensive and generous schemes in the UK, where the employer pays a contribution equal to 20.68% of salary towards the cost of the pension.

Teachers

Figures show that 41,000 new trainees were recruited during 2020. This year we announced the biggest pay rise the teaching profession has seen since 2005, with above-inflation rises to the pay ranges for every single teacher in the country.

Police Officers

The Government has already recruited almost 6,000 extra police officers, putting us on track to hit the target of bringing in an additional 20,000 police officers this Parliament. In July, the Government announced that police pay would rise by 2.5% in 2020 to 2021, providing officers with an increase above inflation for the second year running.

Border Force

As part of preparations for Brexit, around 900 additional operational staff were recruited in the 2019/20 financial year and a further 1,100 staff will be recruited by July 2021.

Prison Officers

During 2020, a further 1,760 prison officers were recruited across England and Wales, alongside an additional 443 probation officers. The Ministry of Justice plans to recruit a further 3,200 prison officers and 1,500 probation officers during the financial year 2021/22. In July, the Government announced a pay rise of at least 2.5% for all prison staff – with cumulative awards of up to 7.5% for some staff when progression pay is taken into account.

As part of efforts to recruit key frontline posts across the NHS, police, teaching and prisons, public-facing campaigns will ramp up during 2021.

A new TV advertising drive for police officers will launch on Tuesday (5th January) across England and Wales. The campaign aims to showcase the difference that police officers make to their communities – including those

from underrepresented groups.

Meanwhile, targeted campaigns in areas with the highest prison officer vacancies will continue during 2021, as will specific campaigns for further recruitment of teachers, doctors and nurses.

Contingency framework implemented across London boroughs

The government has today (1 January) announced that the education contingency framework will be implemented across all London boroughs, following a further review of the transmission rates.

In light of Covid case rates rising rapidly across the capital and ongoing engagement with London leaders and the evidence submitted, the government has reviewed the London boroughs where the contingency framework will apply, with all further boroughs added.

The contingency framework is being implemented across London as a last resort to help suppress the spread of the virus in the community, protect public health and save lives. The framework is not being implemented due to safety concerns in education. Schools have well established protective measures in place to maximise safety for pupils and staff and help reduce the risk of transmission.

Decisions on which areas are subject to the contingency framework are taken working closely with Public Health England, Department of Health and Social Care and the NHS. Due to the fast moving situation, and where local conditions are changing rapidly, the review of London boroughs was brought forward for a decision today as part of the contingency framework process.

From Monday 4 January, London primary schools will be required to provide remote learning to all children but vulnerable and critical worker children who will continue to attend school.

Early years will remain open in London, as will alternative provision and special schools.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Children's education and wellbeing remains a national priority. Moving further parts of London to remote education really is a last resort and a temporary solution.

As infection rates rise across the country, and particularly in London, we must make this move to protect our country and the NHS. We will continue keep the list of local authorities under review, and reopen classrooms as soon as we possibly can.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Over the past week we have seen infections and hospitalisations rise sharply across London and hospitals are coming under increased pressure.

While our priority is to keep as many children as possible in school, we have to strike a balance between education and infection rates and pressures on the NHS.

The situation in London continues to worsen and so today we are taking action to protect the public and reduce the spread of this disease in the community.

Everyone across London must take this situation incredibly seriously and act responsibly to minimise the spread of this deadly disease.

Evidence shows the new strain of COVID-19 is increasing across the country. The majority of the cases identified in London, the South East and the East of England are of the new variant. Infection rates have increased faster than expected in these areas where the new strain has been circulating and stronger measures are required to get the virus under control.

To support high quality remote education during this period, the government expects to deliver over 50,000 laptops and tablets to schools across the country on Monday 4 January, and over 100,000 in total during the first week of term. Over 1 million devices will be provided in total.

The current plans for rapid testing in secondary schools and colleges remain in place, with two rapid tests available to all secondary and college students and staff at the start of term to identify asymptomatic cases.

The first starter packs of up to 1,000 test kits will arrive at all secondary schools and colleges on 04 January. The 1,500 military personnel committed to supporting secondary schools and colleges remain in place, providing virtual training advice and guidance on establishing the testing process with teams on standby to provide in-person support if required.

Daily testing of all staff and students that have been a close contact of a

confirmed case, reducing the need for self-isolation, will continue to be available to all secondary schools and colleges from the first week of term, along with weekly rapid tests for all staff in secondary schools, colleges, special schools and alternative provision.

All pupils, students and staff are encouraged to consent to testing, as are parents of pupils under 16. Testing for primary school staff will follow in the second half of January.

The rollout of laptops and tablets to schools on this scale follows close collaboration between the government and its partner organisations, which has seen over 560,000 devices delivered to schools and councils since the start of the pandemic. With the further rollout this term, over one million will be provided in total – making the programme one of the largest of its kind in the world.

Notes to editors:

Areas with primary schools subject to the contingency framework from the start of term are: Additional London boroughs added: Camden, City of London, Greenwich, Hackney, Haringey, Harrow, Islington, Kingston upon Thames, Lambeth, Lewisham

Original London: Barking and Dagenham, Barnet, Bexley, Brent, Bromley, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield, Hammersmith and Fulham, Havering, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea, Merton, Newham, Redbridge, Richmond-Upon-Thames Southwark, Sutton, Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest, Wandsworth, Westminster

UKAEA's Professor Robert Buckingham celebrated in New Year's Honours list

News story

The head of UKAEA's RACE robotics centre has been made an OBE.



Dr Robert Buckingham OBE

The UK Atomic Energy Authority's (UKAEA) Robotics Director, Professor Robert Buckingham, has been awarded an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for his services to robotic engineering.

The full New Year Honours list for 2021 recognises the achievements and service of extraordinary people across the United Kingdom.

Reflecting on the award, Professor Buckingham, said: "I'm thinking about what this OBE means for the future – for UK robotics, for fusion power plant design, for decommissioning, and the difference we can make together.

"Engineering is teamwork. As engineers, we can't do anything significant as individuals, so this can only be a collective award – it is the UKAEA's and the Remote Applications in Challenging Environment's (RACE) honour," he concluded.

The New Year Honours are a part of the British honours system, with New Year's Day, 1 January, being marked by naming new members of orders of chivalry and recipients of other official honours.

The awards will be presented by Queen Elizabeth II or her vice-regal representative. They have been awarded at New Year since at least 1890.

The honours system celebrates the breadth of services given by people from all backgrounds across the UK.

Published 1 January 2021

Secretary of State thanks people of Wales in New Year message

Secretary of State for Wales Simon Hart has thanked everyone in Wales for the

sacrifices they have made during the past year.

In a New Year Message, the Welsh Secretary has looked back over a year which has been dominated by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, but which ended with the approval of two vaccines for use across the UK – potentially hastening a return to normal life.

Mr Hart also looked ahead to 2021, which will be Wales' and the rest of the UK's first outside the European Union for decades and pointed to some of the opportunities it brings as the UK Government seeks to build back better from the pandemic.

This has been a year like no other and I want to thank everyone in Wales for the sacrifices they have made during extremely challenging times.

It's a year when every single person in Wales had to cope with the restrictions placed on our lives by the pandemic, including many who have also lost their jobs.

These extraordinary events have highlighted the best of us – from our health workers in the front line of the pandemic to our Armed Forces helping build field hospitals and administering tests. But they have also shown us just how far people the length and breadth of Wales will go to help look after their communities, whether that's providing help and support for others or simply by following the regulations so we can defeat the virus as quickly as possible.

There was fantastic news to close the year with the approval of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine. Every additional vaccine which becomes available takes us a step closer to our normal lives. With production of this vaccine taking place in North Wales it will put Wales on the front line in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

Although it is hard to imagine at the moment but I am also confident that in 2021 we have much to be optimistic about. Christmas Eve saw the end of long months of negotiations and years of debate as we delivered on the result of the 2016 referendum and sealed a trade deal with the European Union – the most expansive deal that the EU has ever agreed.

For the first time in almost 50 years, there is now an opportunity for people, businesses and governments to do things very differently. From now on we can take full advantage of the fantastic opportunities available to the UK as an independent trading nation, following on from the progress that we made in 2020 when we signed free trade agreements with over 60 nations.

In Wales, every part of the county is now covered by a growth deal. These represent huge opportunities to help rebalance the Welsh economy with the UK and Welsh Governments working hand in hand alongside local authorities and business to unleash the full potential of our different regions. Whether it is our green ambitions, digital connectivity plans, freeports schemes or smaller projects linking all corners of Wales, the next few months are going to be about job creation, recovery and livelihoods.

We've achieved so much across the UK with one arm tied behind our back, yet the scale of our ambition for Wales has only just begun. With an end to the pandemic now in sight, the UK Government will continue its work to level up the nations and regions of the UK, creating jobs, delivering prosperity and strengthening the United Kingdom of which Wales is such an integral part.