

NET ZERO POLICY ROUNDUP MARCH/APRIL 2024

HUB UPDATES	LINK
The second round of the Community Energy Fund - designed to help communities develop energy services which benefit their local area – is open until Midnight on May 5 th . Community organisations – including sports clubs, faith groups, charities, community interest companies and town or parish councils – can apply for up to £140,000 of funding to get their local clean energy and heat projects off the ground.	NEYHUB
STRATEGY/POLICY UPDATES	LINK
The government has committed to support the building of new gas power stations into the 2030s to maintain consistent energy supply on days when renewable sources are unable to meet national energy needs. New gas plants be required to be able to be converted to low carbon alternatives in the future.	DESNZ
New permitted development rights for solar panels have been introduced, including rights relating to homes with flat roofs and solar canopies on off-street car parking.	DLUHC
New regulations will allow hydrogen-powered tractors, diggers and forklifts to be used on roads in Great Britain.	DfT
The Energy System Operator has published its investment plan, setting out how it intends to develop the grid to meet the growing demand for electricity by 2035 and how an anticipated additional 21GW of offshore wind production will be transmitted to where it is needed.	ESO
The Yorkshire Green Energy Enablement (GREEN) project has been granted consent from the Secretary of State. The project will upgrade and reinforce the high-voltage power network to deliver more low-carbon energy can get to homes and businesses in Yorkshire.	National Grid
Homeowners will no longer have to install cavity wall or loft insulation to use Boiler Upgrade scheme, which offers grants of £7,500 off the cost of heat pump installation. The government has also asked the Competition and Markets Authority to review competition in the home heating market.	DEZLNZ
The government has launched a national Energy Efficiency Home Campaign website providing details on ways to make homes more energy efficient.	GOV.UK
CONSULTATIONS AND REVIEWS	LINK
The government is seeking views on what barriers are preventing the establishment, development and scaling of community energy projects - and how might they be reduced or removed. The call for evidence is open for submissions until June 30 th	DESNZ
The open review of energy markets continues to investigate the introduction of a zonal pricing system which would divide the transmission system (where power is moved from one place to another) into zones or regions, which each zone having its own fixed wholesale electricity price during settlement periods. Nodal pricing – a more hyper localised approach - is no longer being considered.	DESNZ

The review is accepting evidence until May 7 th	
<p>The Treasury is consulting on proposals for the design and administration of the UK carbon border adjustment mechanism.</p> <p>In order to address carbon leakage, the government proposes placing pricing requirements on imports of certain carbon intensive imported goods, including aluminium, cement, fertilisers, glass, hydrogen, iron and steel from 2027.</p> <p>The consultation is open until June 13th</p>	HMT
<p>Department for Transport is consulting on a transport adaptation strategy, which will set out actions and policies designed to improved climate resilience in the transport system.</p> <p><i>Current proposals include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A research and development programme including £10 million research hub in partnership with UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).</i> • <i>Improve risk assessment across the transport sector through the Defra-led adaptation reporting process.</i> <p>The consultation is open until May 31st.</p>	DfT

FUNDING ANNOUNCED	
<p>The Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund is open for applications between April 17th and May 1st.</p> <p>The fund provides grants for public sector bodies to access skills and expertise to decarbonise their estates.</p>	DESNZ
<p>44 local authorities – including several in the North East and Yorkshire – has received funding from the Local Electric Vehicle (LEVI) fund to deliver public electric vehicle charging points. The fund also includes an electric vehicle infrastructure training course open to all local authorities to assist with the installation and procurement of charging points.</p> <p>A £350 Electric Vehicle ChargePoint Grant is also available to support the purchase and installation of charging points at residential properties.</p>	DESNZ
<p>The list of the successful applications to Wave 2.2 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund has been announced.</p> <p><i>Successful projects from the North East and Yorkshire region are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Gentoo Group Ltd - £2,845,000</i> • <i>North Yorkshire Council - £1,772,000</i> • <i>Places for People - £1,797,000</i> <p><i>A consortium of local authorities and housing associations led by the North East and Yorkshire Net Zero Hub attracted funding from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.1 to deliver energy efficiency improvements at over 5000 homes across the North East and Yorkshire.</i></p>	DESNZ
<p>Three new projects have been announced as part of the Tees Valley Hydrogen Transport Hub, including:</p>	DfT

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An airside vehicle demonstrator project at Teesside International Airport • A publicly accessible refuelling centre in Middlesbrough serving HGVs • A publicly accessible refuelling centre at Teesside International Airport aimed at supermarket logistics operations. 	
Applications are open for the Heat Network Efficiency Scheme. The programme provides funding to public, private and third sector applicants to support improvements to existing district heating or communal heating projects.	DESNZ
DSIT has announced £16.6m of funding designed to give semiconductor researchers and businesses access to new equipment, enabling them to test and make chips for use in electric vehicles.	DSIT
<p>£1.5m of funding is available to training providers across England - including in the North East and Yorkshire - to upskill professionals in the heat networks sector. Successful applicants in the Heat Networks Training Grant competition can offer trainees grants of up to £500 to undertake short courses relating to heat networks.</p> <p>The competition – managed by our colleagues at the Midlands Net Zero Hub - is open until May 6th</p>	DESNZ
<p>Northern Gas Networks have been awarded £300k innovation funding from Ofgem for two feasibility studies exploring how a future gas network could support Net Zero.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A study of the market for chemical hydrides (a chemical compound containing hydrogen) as a storage vector for hydrogen and coupling their production to industrial hubs, reducing energy requirements and distributing storage throughout the UK. • A whole systems modelling study exploring how all gas, water and power networks can work better together through strategic planning to support regional decision-making for low carbon infrastructure, and support constraint management of the electricity system. 	NGN
Funding for new projects has been announced under the AI for Decarbonisation Innovation Programme, which supports the development of AI technologies which support the transition to Net Zero.	DESNZ

RESEARCH AND STATISTICS	LINK
<p>Government commissioned social research into community benefits of electricity transmission infrastructure suggests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 49% people found find new transmission infrastructure in their community acceptable. The largest reason for acceptability was the recognition of growing electricity demand and the need to enable transition to low-carbon and renewable sources of energy. Visual impact was the most frequent rejection for new infrastructure being unacceptable. • 58% of those surveyed would accept their energy bill rising by £1 a month to fund investment. • 78% of those surveyed cited discounts on energy bills as the largest factor increasing acceptance. 65% cited jobs and training opportunities for local people. 	DESNZ

<p>On April 2nd the requirement for new developments to deliver a biodiversity net gain (BNG) was extended to small sites (consisting developments of less than 10 houses or commercial sites of less than 1ha or where the building footprint is less than 1000m²). The Forestry Commission has published a blog setting out different ways that trees can contribute towards BNG for any scale of development.</p> <p><i>Carbon sequestration is a strategic priority of the North East and Yorkshire Net Zero Hub, with delivery including support for the Trees on Tees project, which seeks to plant one million trees across Tees Valley.</i></p>	Forestry Commission
<p>Yorkshire & Humber Climate Commission have published an insight paper, outlining potential actions that could be taken at a regional level to advance nature recovery.</p>	YHCC

MISCELLANEOUS	LINK
<p>Ørsted's Hornsea 3 Project has been granted acquisition of land from the Secretary of State for a 2.9 GW wind farm off the coast of Hull.</p>	Hornsea 3
<p>A free electric bus service has been launched in Sheffield City Centre. The service will run every 7-8 minutes on 2 circular routes covering the city centre.</p>	SCC
<p>The Leeds-based UK Infrastructure Bank has announced a commitment of up to £50 million to support the creation and scaling of bioscience and environmental science businesses seeking to unlock the commercial potential of research tackling climate change and biodiversity loss.</p> <p>The North East and Yorkshire frequently engages with the UKIB as part of its objective to attract commercial investment into projects which accelerate progress towards Net Zero.</p>	UKIB
<p>Hartlepool Borough Council has launched a new trial of Kerbo Charge through-pavement channels. The channels enable residents with street parking to safely charge their electric cars at home and take advantage of low-cost off-peak tariffs.</p>	HBC

To find out about upcoming events relevant to Net Zero, please check out our website events page [here](#).