

NET ZERO POLICY ROUNDUP SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2025

HUB UPDATES	LINK
<p>The Hub has launched a new programme of support for the community energy sector – including a programme of carbon literacy training helping community groups take their first steps in developing energy projects, and one-one-one surgeries for existing groups helping them overcome project-specific issues.</p> <p>We've also held our first Seeing is Believing event, which brings neighbourhood associations, community centres, charities, faith groups and parish and town councils into contact with groups just like them who have developed community energy projects.</p> <p>The Great British Energy Community Fund – which offers up to £140,000 of funding for early-stage community energy projects - is also open for applications until November 12th.</p>	<p>NEYNZH</p>
<p>The Hub will be a key regional partner in next month's Clean Energy UK 2025 conference in Newcastle, showcasing our work supporting the development of heat networks, community energy, public sector decarbonisation and green skills projects across the region.</p>	<p>Net Zero North East England</p>
STRATEGY/POLICY UPDATES	LINK
<p>The Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero has published the Strategic Priorities for Great British Energy – and requested the publicly-owned energy company publish a Strategic Plan within six months.</p> <p>The Priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Drive energy deployment” as a “strategic developer, investor or owner”, acting as a co-developer of projects with the public and private sector, local government and community energy groups; investing in clean energy supply chain projects and catalysing additional private sector investment. • Ensuring tax and bill payers and communities benefit from the clean energy transition by “increasing public and community ownership... so that any return can be reinvested”. <p>The paper also states that GBE is expected to put communities at “the heart of a more decentralised and resilient energy system” and to deliver a “significant increase in the deployment of Community Energy in communities”.</p> <p>Current investment activities should involve “investing in more developed projects that are entering construction... the help build GBE's development”.</p> <p>The forthcoming Local Power Plan should “Prioritise interventions to unlock the potential local and community energy pipeline” and GBE should target “renewable generation led by local government, Mayoral Strategic Authorities and community groups” through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity and capability support • A package of financial support • Promoting shared ownership. 	<p>DESNZ</p>

<i>The Hub's current Memorandum of Understanding with government sets the Hub with the objective of supporting GBE with the identification and development of local energy projects.</i>	
<p>The government has published a Clean Energy Jobs Plan, setting out how it anticipates the clean energy workforce will double to 860,000 jobs between now and 2030, requiring the recruitment of 420,000 new workers, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 180,000 in heat and buildings • 30,000 in onshore wind • 70,000 in offshore wind. <p>The plan sets out how the government intends to deliver a pipeline of skilled workers to meet the demand including by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligning the skills and employment system to support Industrial Strategy Sectors, including a £100m engineering skills package and a £625m construction skills package • Establishing 5 Clean Energy Technical Excellence Colleges to specialise in this workforce "in city regions and clusters identified as key to delivery" • Targeted recruitment incentive of £6000 for further education teachers <p>As most of the 2030 workforce is already in employment the plan also includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £20m to support transition of North Sea workers into clean energy • £2.5m to support three innovative skills pilots aimed at supporting workers to move into clean energy. The nearest of these is North East Lincolnshire and will be managed by the Midlands Net Zero Hub. • Expand the Energy Skills Passport to help workers from carbon intensive industries pivot into new opportunities in clean energy. • Developing new employment pathways for Veterans – including job-matching approaches. <p><i>The Strategy also sets out how the government will allocate funding for Local Net Zero Hubs to build a regional picture of clean energy skills and jobs with local authorities.</i></p>	DESNZ
<p>This first major project for Great British Energy has seen solar panels installed on 5 NHS sites and 3 schools, with 8 more schools due over autumn. This will save a combined total of £3.8m on their energy bills.</p> <p><i>The North East Ambulance Trust's Hartlepool Ambulance Station is one of the sites benefiting from this investment.</i></p>	GB Energy
Further to the above, more funding has been confirmed by GBE for solar panels on public buildings, now including military sites as well as schools and hospitals.	GB Energy
<p>Several amendments have been tabled to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill which is currently before Parliament.</p> <p>One change includes a new ministerial power allowing government ministers to issue "holding directions" that prevent local authorities from rejecting planning applications which may be subject to government review. Currently, this power only applies when councils are set to approve applications. It has been suggested that this change may facilitate an additional 3GW of onshore wind capacity.</p>	UK Parliament

UK Power Networks, Cadent, and SGN have agreed on a shared format ('Common Ask Template') to make it easier for local authorities to provide information which will inform network upgrades.	UK Power Networks
A new Statement of Strategic Priorities has been published for the British Business Bank, which provides funding for SMEs. Objective 1 is supporting business operating in the key growth sectors details in the national Industrial Strategy, which includes Clean Energy.	Department for Business and Trade
The National Energy Systems Operator has forecast the largest winter electricity margins in the last six years - meaning UK electricity supply will exceed demand more than any winter since 2019/20.	NESO
Plans have been announced aimed at strengthening consumer protections offered by the Energy Ombudsman including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halving the time for complaint escalation • Quicker access to redress when suppliers let customers down • Compensation for complainants if Ombudsman rulings aren't implemented quickly enough 	DESNZ

CONSULTATIONS AND REVIEWS	LINK
Ellexon have launched a consultation on new regulations for complex site classes. The proposals may allow more community energy groups and small-scale renewable generators to combine outputs and develop local energy markets – potentially increasing local benefits and revenue.	Ellexon
DESNZ are seeking views on the design of the Warm Homes Discount scheme – which lowers heating bills by £150 for low-income households - from winter 2026 to 2027 to 2030 to 2031. Proposed qualifying benefits in this period are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 'Savings Credit' element of Pension Credit • The 'Guarantee Credit' element of Pension Credit • Housing Benefit • Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) • Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) • Income Support • Universal Credit <i>The consultation is open until November 20th.</i>	DESNZ
NESO have launched a consultation on the transitional Regional Energy Strategic Plan (tRESP). tRESP has been developed to act as a bridge between the current approach to local energy network planning, and the new RESPs, which will set out the future development of the local energy system. <i>The consultation is open until November 3rd.</i>	NESO
York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority has opened a consultation on its draft Retrofit Strategy. <i>The consultation is open until December 3rd.</i>	YNYCA

FUNDING ANNOUNCED	LINK
The National Wealth Fund (NWF) has invested £200m into Fidra Energy's battery storage project at Thorpe Marsh in Doncaster.	National Wealth Fund
The Department for Transport will invest £448m in reducing emissions from UK shipping. The funding will support the UK SHORE programme, which supports the research and development of new clean maritime technologies and fuels, including electric, hydrogen, ammonia, methanol and wind power.	DfT
A £27m loan from the NWF will help fund Hull City Council's heat network project, alongside a £15m grant from the Green Heat Network Fund (via Triple Point) and £1.5m of Levelling Up Partnership funding. The Hull District Heat Network is estimated to deliver 110,000 tCOe of carbon savings over 40 years.	National Wealth Fund

RESEARCH AND STATISTICS	LINK
Energy think tank Ember forecasts that solar energy overtook coal as the world's leading source of electricity earlier this year. Most solar generation is in lower-income countries, whereas as in some more developed countries there was an increase in reliance on fossil fuels due to electricity demand growing faster than clean energy output.	Ember
Carbon Brief has forecast that as of late September, Britain has run on 100% clean power for 87 hours in 2025. <i>The government's Clean Energy 2030 ambition is for Britain to run on entirely clean power by 2030.</i>	Carbon Brief
The Climate Change Committee – the government's independent advisors on climate change - have warned that the UK must prepare for at least 2°C of global warming by 2050, and that the country has not yet adapted to current climate extremes.	CCC
Research commissioned by the government suggests British households are more airtight than previously thought.	DESNZ
3Ci have published new research into Community Municipal Investments, a way for local authorities to raise finance from residents and institutions, providing low-cost finance while giving communities a chance to invest in and shape their local environment and climate goals.	Catapult / 3Ci

MISCELLANEOUS	LINK
Schneider Electric has opened a new plant in Scarborough to produce electrical equipment vital for the UK's transition to clean energy.	Schneider Electric
The Tees Valley Combined Authority has launched a Net Zero Industry Scholarship, providing learners aged 16 and above with up to two years' training in trades such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welding • Instrumentation • Pipefitting • Electrical Engineering • Civil Operations 	Tees Valley Net Zero Industry Scholarship

<p>An agreement has been secured between NatPower UK and Sembcorp Utilities for a 32-acre site at Wilton International in Redcar to deliver a 1GW / 8GWh lithium-ion Battery Energy Storage System.</p> <p>The privately funded project will be one of the UK's largest long-duration battery storage systems.</p>	NatPower
<p>A 230-acre redevelopment project with new deepwater quayside has been launched at Port of Tyne. This development will support the North East's Local Growth Plan, focusing on supporting offshore renewables, clean energy, and advanced manufacturing sectors.</p>	Energy Global
<p>The UK's first 'hydrogen blending' has been completed in North Lincolnshire, where a 2% blend of green hydrogen was injected into the gas grid and blended with traditional gas to fuel Brigg power station.</p> <p>This was the first 'real-life' test of blending hydrogen in the UK, carried out by Centrica and National Gas.</p>	Centrica