



north east & yorkshire  
**NET ZERO HUB**

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

# Powering growth across the North



The North East and Yorkshire Net Zero Hub is delivering national energy ambitions locally on behalf of the government and GB Energy.

We're part of a national network of Local Net Zero Hubs supporting local areas and the communities they serve to develop and deliver the energy projects they need to meet local growth ambitions.



# Powering growth across the North

Energy demand across the North East and Yorkshire is projected to double in the next decade. The North East and Yorkshire Net Zero Hub is playing a leading role in making sure our region has the energy it needs to power our homes and businesses – and our wider economy.

This year has seen our funding extended, with a new focus on identifying, developing and delivering the local renewable energy projects which will be necessary to meet the national ambition of achieving a clean energy system by 2030 and generating 8GW of clean energy through the Local Power Plan.

We have also been tasked with:

- Supporting the new publicly-owned energy company **Great British Energy** in identifying potential projects to invest in.
- Supporting delivery of the government's forthcoming **Warm Homes Plan**.

This annual report sets out our three new objectives and how we intend to meet them – as well as highlighting the impact we have had over the past twelve months.



## Introducing Great British Energy

Great British Energy is the new publicly-owned energy company. The company will invest in, develop, build and operate the energy generating projects we need to increase our energy independence, and will give communities a direct stake in the clean energy transition.

This includes delivery of the Local Power Plan which will see Great British Energy partner with local communities to develop up to 8 GW of renewable energy.





# Connections and capacity to charge our economy

The Hub is more than just a delivery vehicle for enabling, facilitating, and accelerating the development of a regional clean energy system in support of national needs and ambitions.

We have an unmatched ability to support the delivery of both local energy and economic strategy – including critical aspects of the Local Growth Plans being developed in each of our partner authorities.

Every one of these economic strategies has clean energy at its heart – from the development of the hydrogen and carbon capture on Teesside and Humberside, to the North East’s offshore economy and advanced manufacturing in Yorkshire.

All regional economic plans rely on energy as an enabler – the energy system provides the arteries for our economy while providing protection from energy price volatility for the businesses we need to attract, retain and grow.

The Hub provides additional capacity, intelligence, expertise and facilitation to

mobilise projects into investment and delivery. Energy isn’t just a growth sector – it underpins all other growth, jobs, wages and homes – as well as delivering wider economic benefits like air quality, health and an improved natural environment.

We’re a Hub as much as we’re about Net Zero, connecting people and organisations to facilitate collaboration, which in turn allows partners to address common issues, aggregate projects for investment, coordinate cross-boundary working to achieve common goals and exchange knowledge, insight and best practice – raising and balancing capabilities across the region.

We also help to provide an authoritative and independent voice when advocating for the region.

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## Clean Energy 2030 and the Warm Homes Plan

In December 2024 the government published the Clean Energy 2030 Action Plan – setting out how the UK will produce enough clean energy to meet our total energy demand by 2030.

The plan states local and community renewable energy will **“play a vital role in delivering our ambitions... delivering significant local benefits and reducing network system losses by bringing generation supply closer to electricity demand”** and that reiterates that one of Great British Energy’s functions will be to “partner with, and provide

funding and support” to Local Authorities, Mayoral Combined Authorities and community energy groups aimed at generating 8GW of clean power.

The government’s Warm Homes Plan is set to be published in late 2025 and will set out plans to help people save money on their energy bills while delivering warmer, healthier homes.



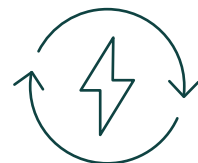
# Developing clean energy projects with and for local authorities

**Objective:** Increasing the readiness of and attracting commercial investment into local energy generation projects to support Great British Energy and to meet the Clean Power 2030 target.

Achievements to date:



**128** projects supported



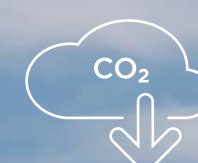
**194MW** of clean energy set to be delivered



**£144m** commercial funding potentially leveraged



**19,686** estimated jobs supported



**44%** of regional local authorities supported with estate decarbonisation plans

The Hub was founded to give local authorities free support to develop and deliver energy projects they might not have had the staffing or specialist skills to pursue alone.

It's these projects which will give the North East and Yorkshire the energy it needs to power local economic growth – keeping energy costs down for businesses and residents alike, while guaranteeing a secure supply of locally-produced power to grow our economy and our communities.

We provide dedicated staff hosted locally within each of our Mayoral Combined Authorities – and working across the region – to work with local areas to identify potential power projects and to progress them to the stage where they are ready for investment.





Investors and local authorities came together in Sheffield at this year's Green Finance UK event

## Building relationships between local areas and investors

The Hub has played a crucial role in connecting local areas to sources private finance for local energy projects.

Earlier this year we were partners in a major conference in Sheffield called Green Finance UK which brought together private investors and local areas to better understand each other's needs and ambitions.

We've also brokered a number of roundtables and meetings between local areas and financial institutions looking to invest in local energy projects.

## Local Area Energy Planning

Local Area Energy Plans are data-driven assessments of a local area's future energy needs – alongside recommendations for the most effective ways that demand can be met.

They're often an important first step in developing pipelines and portfolios of projects which can attract private investment into local energy.

Hub staff have played a central role in the development of Local Area Energy Plans which have been completed in York and North Yorkshire and Calderdale, and which are being delivered in Hull and East Yorkshire, Tees Valley, Sheffield and the rest of West Yorkshire.

## Encouraging regional connectivity, collaboration and coordination

The Hub is increasingly acting as a vehicle for co-ordinating intelligence and activity critical to the development of the local energy system and the wider economy – and meeting regional knowledge gaps when they emerge.

We've been a vital connector, contributor and advocate for our local authorities for the National Energy System Operator as they start to develop the Regional Energy System Plan (RESP) which will shape the future of the regional energy transmission and distribution system and with Northern Powergrid as they work to reduce connection wait times and local grid congestion issues.

We've also plotted a path to a Hydrogen-fuelled region, delivering a regional Hydrogen Roadmap which sets out how hydrogen supply, distribution and demand in the North East and Yorkshire could evolve over the next 15 years.

The roadmap found that **"hydrogen will play a key part"** in meeting the region's future energy needs and is "a credible pathway for decarbonisation" for industry in the region with a **"potentially significant role to play"** in powering road transport, shipping and aviation.

As part of our new mission from government, we will also be working with our partner authorities to build a regional picture of clean energy skills. This follows a recent project Retrofit Skills Analysis which set out the retrofit skills needs of the North East and Yorkshire and piloted new approaches for meeting it.

The analysis highlights that that according to figures from the Local Government Association the size of the regional retrofit workforce will have to increase by 6.2% a year to meet demand.



Our West Yorkshire Project Manager Femi Omoniyi poses with the regional Hydrogen Roadmap by a hydrogen-powered bus outside Bradford City Hall

## Local Area Energy Accelerator

Managed nationally by the Local Net Zero Hub network, the Local Area Energy Accelerator is a national programme of pilot projects designed to drive commercial investment into local energy projects.

York and North Yorkshire is one of only three areas in the country to have secured a Local Area Energy Accelerator pilot, which is looking at innovative ways of creating public-private partnerships to bring investment into the local energy system.



## Case Study



*Solar panels will be installed at Hull's Woodford Leisure Centre with funding from the Mayoral Renewables Fund*

## Mayoral Renewables Fund

One of Great British Energy's first investments saw funding made available to mayoral authorities to deliver renewable energy projects in their localities through the Mayoral Renewables Fund.

Hub regional project managers supported each of our Combined Authorities to select suitable projects and develop applications, ensuring we secured over £4m of funding for the North East and Yorkshire. In Tees Valley alone, almost 500kw of solar power is set to be generated across three publicly owned sites.

Harry Baross, our Regional Project Manager for Hull and East Yorkshire worked with the Hull and East Riding councils to identify potential projects – which led to a successful bid for funding to install 400kw of solar power at a number of council sites, including one of Hull City Council's largest energy consumers. The sites include Woodford Leisure Centre in Hull, meaning reduced energy costs for the council and solar-powered swimming for local people.

## Case Study

### Hartlepool Screen Industries Production Village

The government has asked all Mayoral Combined Authorities to develop Local Growth Plans outlining how their regions can contribute to national economic goals and set out their priorities and interventions for regional economic growth.

The creative industries are central to the Tees Valley's plan and this includes the development of Hartlepool's 'Screen Industries Production Village'. Funded by the UK government, Hartlepool Borough Council are delivering production village facilities by restoring the town's historic Shades Hotel and many other vacant assets, all being brought back to life to attract more film and TV production to the region. The village will see the significant expansion of The Northern Studios in partnership with The Northern School of Art to meet increasing sector demand, through the support of the Tees Valley Investment Zone.

The Village and its film studios is aiming for the highest sustainability standards including the pursuit of Net Zero – both to attract producers and keep costs down by generating energy onsite. Our Tees Valley Regional Project Manager, Dani Southall, has worked with Hartlepool Borough Council, Tees Valley Combined Authority and other project partners to develop a plan which makes that ambition possible.



*Hub Project Manager for Tees Valley Dani Southall visits Northern Studios with Hartlepool Borough Council's Paul Taylor*



## Case Study

### Support for Public Sector Decarbonisation

This year has also seen us mobilise a Public Sector Decarbonisation Team, which works directly with regional public sector decarbonisation organisations to help them cut the energy costs and carbon emissions of their own buildings and community spaces. The team builds on our previous delivery which saw the Hub facilitate the development of heat decarbonisation plans at over 70 public buildings, and energy technology assessments at over 100 more.

Since the beginning of 2025 the team has helped almost half of our local authorities and several health, education and emergency service bodies to develop estate energy

reduction and decarbonisation strategies and identify sources of investment for improving their buildings while reducing their costs.

They've also developed their Cut Carbon, Cut Costs approach, which sets out how public organisations can reduce energy bills and emissions by up to 20% or more with no need for capital investment – and run several workshops giving staff the skills to implement the approach in their own organisations.

These workshops have supported over 120 staff members from local authorities, emergency services, NHS trusts and schools the skills to improve the financial and environmental sustainability of their organisations and their buildings.

One of the local authorities the team has supported is Kirklees.

The team has worked closely with officers from the West Yorkshire council to co-develop and implement an approach to Estate Energy Reduction and Decarbonisation, which will chart a path to an effective energy management and decarbonisation which delivers on wider organisational priorities.

Going forward the team will continue to work with public sector organisations to develop data-driven strategic approaches to estate energy reduction and develop funding models and pipelines for investment.

The team's work builds on several years of previous public estate decarbonisation activity across the North East and Yorkshire.

This includes Todmorden Leisure Centre in Calderdale, where ageing boilers used to heat the swimming pool were replaced with an air source heat pump and solar panels were installed on the roof to reduce electricity requirements for the building.

The project has single-handedly reduced the carbon emissions associated with the energy use of the Council's whole estate by around 6% per year.

Sal Kerry from Kirklees Council said:

*This collaboration has helped our team focus its resources so that Kirklees Council will hopefully have a meaningful strategy which we can use to prioritise our actions going forward concerning estate energy reduction and decarbonisation.*

*Todmorden Leisure Centre in Calderdale, previously one of the council's most energy intensive buildings, has received support to improve its energy efficiency*



# Energising communities

**Objective:** Increasing the number of energy generation projects and skills across the region in line with national targets and strategies, including supporting early stage-development.

Achievements so far:



**39** community energy groups funded this year – and over 100 supported



**£1.5m** invested in local communities through Community Energy Fund



**£1.7m** in commercial funding unlocked by Energy Project Enabling Fund

Left: York Community Energy are developing rooftop solar projects across the city with support from the Community Energy Fund.

Right: Community Energy Support Officer Sue Manson and South Yorkshire Project Manager George Lee working visiting a showcase of local community energy projects in Sheffield.

Community Energy involves local people working together to produce more energy where it is used – benefiting their neighbourhoods.

As our energy system becomes more decentralised and flexible, community energy is going to become an increasingly important means of meeting our national power needs – and it's a real success story for the North East and Yorkshire.

In 2019 there were just nine community energy organisations in our region. Today the Hub is working with over 100, and more and more town and parish councils, community organisations,

faith groups, charities and even sports teams are taking control of local energy by developing their own power generation – cutting costs, reducing carbon emissions, reducing the risk of power cuts and even generating income for their communities by selling electricity to the grid.

End Energy Poverty CIC are just one of the groups we've worked with.

They said:

*Working with the North East and Yorkshire Net Zero Hub has been a game-changer. The Hub helped us tap into key funding opportunities like the Community Energy Fund, which made our projects possible. They've also supported us by connecting us with other organisations and helping us grow our work across the region.*





## Funding for community energy projects

36 community energy groups from across our region have received funding from three rounds of the national Community Energy Fund, which was managed locally by the Hub.

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero fund provided up to £140,000 of grants to help local groups get clean energy projects off the ground.

We are now managing the new Great British Energy Community Fund – the first grant

programme for community energy projects funded by Great British Energy – the new publicly-owned energy company.

## Organisations supported through the Community Energy Fund

- Northumberland Community Energy
- Spennymoor Town Council, Durham
- York Community Energy
- South Yorkshire Ecofit
- Northam Development Trust, Northumberland
- Ouseburn Trust, Newcastle
- East Durham Community Trust
- Weardale Renewables, Durham
- Sycamore Net Zero, Northumberland
- Sheriff Hutton Village Hall, North Yorkshire
- Sheffield Renewables
- Two Churches One Town, East Riding
- Northern Community Power, North Tyneside
- Yorspace, York
- Grange Villa Community Enterprise, Durham
- School for Sustainable Living, West Yorkshire
- Sustainable Arts in Leeds
- End Energy Poverty CIC, Hull and East Yorkshire
- Sheffield and District African Caribbean Community Association
- St Andrew Housing Co-operative, East Riding
- Canopy Housing, Leeds
- The Green Estate, Sheffield
- Castle Howard Foundation, North Yorkshire
- CERT CIC, Hull and East Yorkshire
- Todmorden Community Energy, West Yorkshire
- The Rural Design Centre, Northumberland
- Circular Malton and Norton CIC, North Yorkshire
- National Coal Mining Museum for England, Wakefield



## Unlocking commercial funding

Our own Energy Project Enabling Fund has provided three rounds of capital and revenue grants to help community energy groups, public sector organisations, charities, and other eligible organisations deliver local energy projects – some of which already had at least 20% commercial investment.

Projects received grants from the most recent funding round included:

- Installation of 353kwp solar array at the Redcar Community Heart, which houses the council chamber, a swimming pool and business centre – generating 308,051 kwh of energy and reducing carbon emissions by 65 tonnes.
- Deep retrofit of a heritage building owned by the Chapter of York, set to act as a showcase for how historic buildings can be decarbonised.





## Supporting the sector

This year saw the Hub host North East and Yorkshire's first ever Community Energy Celebration event in York. The sold out event saw community energy groups from across the region come together for the first time to learn from each other and make lasting connections with organisations working on similar projects.

The event builds upon the work of the North East and Yorkshire Community Energy Steering Group, a forum for regional stakeholders which has developed an Action Plan to accelerate the recent growth of Community Energy in our region. Through the Action Plan we have delivered:

- Carbon Literacy training, giving almost 100 local people an introduction to the possibilities of community energy.
- Subsidised Energy Audits for community buildings
- Surgery Days, giving groups intensive support from industry experts in the areas they told us they needed support the most.

- Four beginner level workshops for new community energy groups.
- 10 video case studies.

This work will step up in the coming year as we launch a new programme called "Seeing is Believing" which will bring local groups together with similar organisations who have already developed community energy facilities to inspire and inform the next generation.



## Case Study

### Northumberland Community Energy

Funding from Hub-managed programmes has allowed Northumberland Community Energy Limited (NCEL) to deliver clean energy feasibility studies at almost 50 community centres across the county – and 11 have installed solar panels as a result.

The Solar-Powered Buildings project was developed during the pandemic, when a group of partners got together to work out how community centres could cut their running costs and become financially sustainable while also reducing their carbon footprint. NCEL, a not-for-profit organisation was established in 2023 to deliver the project.

Project Manager Fiona Knox told us.

*Nearly half the community centres in Northumberland have had solar panel feasibility studies because of the Hub – that's a huge contribution.*

One of the centres to have the panels installed is Newton and Bywell, where solar panels mean the centre is now 96% energy self-sufficient – and 100% on the day the Hub visited. The panels are also set to save 1.2 tonnes of carbon from the atmosphere.

Battery storage means the centre can also provide emergency heating, eating and phone charging for local people in the event of power cuts.

Trustee Will Witchell said:

*This is about making the centre sustainable for the future – if we make our own energy we don't need to buy it off the grid, it's as simple as that!*

Fiona Knox from Northumberland Community Energy inspects the new solar panels at Newton and Bywell Community Centre – made possible by the Community Energy Fund





## Case Study



*Solar panels at Bradford's Mayfield Centre – powered by the Energy Project Enabling Fund*

### Bradford Mayfield

Bradford Trident is a community anchor organisation which operates health promotion, early years development, childcare, training, sports, active travel, and small business facilities from five buildings. Solar panels and battery storage installed at the Mayfield Centre, with funding from the Energy Project Enabling Fund, generated almost 14,000kWh of clean power in the two months following installation – making the building almost energy self-sufficient allowing it to store energy for future use and even export spare power to the grid.

Saleem Hussain from Bradford Trident said:

*When the energy price hikes happened it affected us a lot – we were suddenly paying two to three times as much which could have been crippling. It really made us think about how we could protect ourselves from something like that happening again.*

*The more energy we generate on site, the less we have to buy in. One of our buildings was increasingly financially unsustainable, but actions like this and investing in energy demand reduction technology like LED lighting have turned things around.*

*Keeping our costs down keeps our rents competitive, which supports local organisations like Food Banks, toddler groups, services for the elderly and businesses. The dividend is financial, but the bonus is a greatly reduced carbon footprint, helping the charity move towards our net zero ambitions.*

## A direct line to government

Local heroes from our local community energy family also travelled to Westminster for a special event organised by Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to showcase the power of Community Energy to the wider civil service.

The Hub was proud to bring a delegation of North East and Yorkshire groups to present at the event and engage directly with policy makers.

- Community Action Northumberland
- Circular Malton and Norton
- East Durham Trust
- Sheffield Renewables
- York Community Energy
- Humshaugh Net Zero
- Weardale Renewables
- Acomb Community Energy
- The Green Estate (Sheffield)
- Sycamore Net Zero

*East Durham Trust is one of the project supported by the Community Energy Fund to have showcased their work at a special event in Whitehall.*





# Building partnerships and sharing knowledge

**Objective:** Supporting a national knowledge transfer programme to improve information sharing, training, and evaluation, and building networks and partnerships.

Achievements to date:



**5,402** homes made warmer, healthier and cheaper to run under SHDF



**9,270** more homes to be improved under WH:SHF



**4,000** people given innovative energy advice



**31** regional heat network projects with more in the pipeline

We are a genuine Hub – providing the connections and the platforms for partners to come together to collaborate and co-ordinate on collective action and inspire and inform individual projects. This year even saw us offering advice to Australian officials looking to replicate the

Net Zero Hub model on the other side of the world!

Nowhere is this work more important than when it comes to improving our regions homes and buildings.

## Warmer, healthier and cheaper to heat homes

There is no point in generating clean energy and heat which goes straight out the window, and the Hub is playing a leading role in delivering energy efficiency home improvements across the North East and Yorkshire.

This year saw the completion of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, a national programme improving low income and social homes. We led a consortium of 15 local authorities and housing providers to deliver a retrofit programme which raised the Energy Performance of 5712 homes to at least Band C.

Local people to have benefited from energy efficiency home improvement from the Social

Housing Decarbonisation Fund include residents of properties managed by Believe Housing in Durham.

Jane’s bungalow was moved from gas heating and hot water to an air source heat pump and had cavity wall insulation, improved loft insulation, ventilation, and energy efficient lighting installed.



She said:

*When I was told I could have work done on my home I was over the moon and when I found out I’d get an air source heat pump I said straightaway, get rid of the gas.*

*It used to be a challenge to keep warm, unless I had the heating blasting away, but now it’s much better. It’s definitely made a big difference to me.*

*Believe Homes tenant Jane has benefitted from improved insulation and a new air source heat pump*



Ralph and Sharron say their family's quality of life has improved since the work in their home, which included new loft insulation.

Sharron says:

*We couldn't keep it warm, then the bills started coming in.*

*We had no insulation in the loft, but within two weeks everything got done and we've seen a big difference!*

*It's lovely and warm and cosy and our bills have already come down.*



*Durham residents Ralph and Sharron say that their bills have come down after home improvements from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund*

We are now leading an ever larger consortium for the fund's successor programme the Warm Homes Social Fund.

Our Warm Homes consortium is made up of 22 local authorities and housing providers and has secured almost £44m of national funding –

matched by £53m of additional partner funding – to improve close to 10,000 properties. The consortium stretches the breadth of our region, from Northumberland to Sheffield, with individual partners upgrading between 17 to 1,713 properties.



*The North East Combined Authority's Home Energy Advice North East project was one of our Local Energy Advice Centre projects.*

## Energy advice for hard-to-reach communities

This year saw the completion of the two-year Local Energy Advice Demonstrator programme. This nationally funded scheme saw the Hub oversee delivery of six projects testing new approaches to giving in-person energy advice to hard to reach communities and residents in hard-to-treat properties.

The UK has the oldest building stock in Europe, and in-person visits can better capture the complexities of older homes compared to digital and telephone advice. Some communities have also traditionally missed out on energy advice – including the elderly, people with limited internet access and residents with limited English-language skills.

The programme saw over 5000 people get advice on lowering their energy bills which keeping their homes warmer and healthier, and over 1000 of them went on to improve their homes as a result. The learning from the project will inform future national and local advice schemes.

As one Northumberland resident put it:

*We were so grateful to receive free, independent and helpful advice about our home. It can be difficult to know where to start, but our advisor was so helpful. This is an amazing service.*



# Getting local areas ready for Heat Network Zoning

Heat networks see underground pipes carrying heat from centralised sources to nearby buildings – removing the need for individual boilers or heaters in those buildings by utilising heat which would otherwise go to waste.



The Energy Act 2023 introduced Heat Network Zoning, which will see government and local authorities working together to designate areas where heat networks can provide the lowest cost, low carbon heating. Certain buildings will then be required to connect to the networks.

To support local areas with the introduction of Heat Network Zoning, the Local Net Hub now hosts local zoning implementation support for local authorities.

As part of our work sharing best practice around the country, Heat Network Zoning leads from around the country recently visited North Yorkshire, to see a local project where underground hot water accessed from redundant gas infrastructure is being repurposed to heat local homes.

Hub Heat Network Zoning Leads from around the country came to North Yorkshire to learn from a project in Kirby Misperton.

# Net Zero Go

The Local Net Zero Hub network has also commissioned Net Zero Go, an online resource of case studies, templates, training and step by step guides for local authorities working on energy projects.

The resource is available at [www.netzerogo.org.uk](http://www.netzerogo.org.uk)



The site also includes learning from the completed Innovate UK Net Zero Living programme, which saw several authorities from our region piloting new approaches to addressing non-technical barriers to Net Zero.



## The members of the NEY Net Zero Hub Warm Homes Social Housing Fund consortium are:

- Believe
- Bernicia
- Broadacres
- Darlington Council
- Doncaster Council
- Durham Aged Mineworkers' Homes Association
- Gateshead Council
- Gentoo
- Golden Lane Housing
- Great Places
- Hartlepool Council
- Joseph Rowntree Housing
- Karbon Homes
- Keelman Homes
- Livin
- Northstar
- Northumberland Council
- Railway Housing
- Sheffield City Council
- South Yorkshire Housing Association
- Thirteen Housing Group
- Tyne Group



South Yorkshire Combined Authority's Let Zero project, supporting energy efficiency improvements in the Private Rented Sector, was showcased at the national Net Zero Living conference in Edinburgh







You can find out more about the work of the Hub at [www.neynetzerohub.com](http://www.neynetzerohub.com) or by scanning the QR code.



You can also get in touch – and sign up for our regular news, community energy and policy updates – at [enquiries@neynetzerohub.com](mailto:enquiries@neynetzerohub.com)

