

Carbon capture Budget pledge could put the fizz in Humber Net Zero industrial ambitions

A big boost to the Humber's ambitions to lead the world in cleaning up heavy industry could emerge from Wednesday's Budget.

Carbon capture and storage is to net an "unprecedented investment" with a figure of £20 billion over 20 years touted. The Energy Estuary is home to two huge projects that could meet government targets for deployment on their own.

Zero Carbon Humber and the wider East Coast Cluster project linking up with Teesside, alongside the Humber Zero and Viking CCS plans, are set to transform the region from worst polluter to a beacon for hard-to-abate areas globally. Funding and policy commitments have been sought, with the momentum reaching fever pitch with calls from energy giants and the release of the [Humber Industrial Cluster Plan](#) this past week.

Read more: ['Groundhog Day' carbon capture briefings stall vital Net Zero development – CCSA](#)

All point to the Humber being the biggest prize and easiest win when it comes to the sector, with the scale impressing the likes of the Carbon Capture and Storage Association and UK Research and Innovation. From Drax to Saltend, taking in Keadby's SSE power cluster, Scunthorpe steelworks and Immingham's refining complex, the pipeline-based plans also involve potential import options by sea, while also supporting hydrogen distribution to aid fuel switching. Now, ahead of the highly-anticipated fiscal event, a "reset" to clean up domestic energy supply and ensure long term security is being promised, with commitments to "spades in the ground" from next year.

It is building on a previous £1 million commitment to deliver four hubs by 2030 “providing industry with the certainty required to deploy CCUS at pace and at scale”.



How the East Coast Cluster maps out for carbon capture and storage, connecting the Humber and Tees industrial regions.

(Image: East Coast Cluster)

Small scale nuclear is also being furthered, with 50,000 jobs eyed across the two. The Humber alone is forecasting upwards of 22,000.

Previewing the announcement, the Treasury told how no one country has yet captured the carbon capture market, stating how the UK has the capacity to store over a century and half of CO2 emissions, “making it one of the most attractive carbon

capture markets on earth, creating high-paid jobs of the future across the UK and growing our economy”.

A spokesperson said an unprecedented £20 billion in investment over the next 20 years will drive forward projects that aim to store 20 to 30 million tonnes of CO₂ a year by 2030, equal to the emissions from 10 to 15 million cars.

Reflecting on the soaring energy costs that saw government step in this past year to stop them hitting a potential £4,300, Chancellor Jeremy Hunt said: “We don’t want to see high bills like this again, it’s time for a clean energy reset. That is why we are fully committing to nuclear power in the UK, backing a new generation of small modular reactors, and investing tens of billions in clean energy through carbon capture.

“This plan will help drive energy bills down for households across the country and improve our energy security whilst delivering on one of our five promises to grow the economy.”

Individual projects may not yet be identified, with the government stating it will update on next steps in “due course” ahead of Wednesday. Funding will come from future levies and the tax pot, with a Green Finance Strategy set to update the fiscal operations, to be published in the coming months.



The Viking CCS project.

Richard Gwilliam, who chairs the Humber Energy Board, said: “We welcome the certainty of the scale of the investment and the timing around it. For a while now we have had major international companies hoping to invest in the Humber and have seen opportunities emerging elsewhere. This is a timely and much-needed announcement that gives a great deal of investment certainty.”

The Inflation Reduction Act in the US and RePower in Europe have turned heads as policy has been awaited in the UK.

Energy Security Secretary Grant Shapps said: “Putin’s illegal invasion of Ukraine has demonstrated to the world the vital importance of increasing our energy security and independence – powering more of Britain from Britain and shielding ourselves from the volatile fossil fuels market.

“Already a global leader in offshore wind power, we now want to do the same for the UK’s nuclear and carbon capture industries, which in turn will help cut the wholesale electricity prices to amongst the lowest in Europe. Today’s funding will play an integral role in delivering that, helping

us further towards our net zero targets and creating green jobs across the country.”

It comes as a business from another industry that follows [the Budget](#) closely, brewing, has brought a beer forward after hosting the [Humber Industrial Cluster Plan launch](#) to raise greater awareness. Grimsby’s Docks Academy hosted the release, an events venue created above Docks Beers, and has produced a special low carbon beer alongside industry organisation and plan-leader, Catch, to bring wider attention to the efforts. Carbon Crush plays on a superhero theme to get people talking.

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