

United call for Humber to regain its leading role in Net Zero as key minister visits

The Humber has put a unified and urgent decarbonisation case to a key government minister as it aims to realise Net Zero plans and unlock billions of pounds of investment.

Leading businesses operating across energy and heavy industry spheres presented the scale of opportunity and well-developed proposals to Lord Callanan, Minister for Energy Efficiency and Green Finance, on a day-long visit to the region. They are seeking transformational investment to provide the stimulus required for the private sector, while setting out the regulatory framework required.

Carbon capture use and storage is the central element, with thousands of jobs to be protected and created, should it get the backing required. And there's a strong desire to get back on the front foot after March's set back of no scheme selection, effectively putting proposals on hold.

Read more:

- [Hull delegation meets Rail Minister over PM's electrification pledge](#)
- [Change at helm of Lindsey Oil Refinery](#)

South Bank element [Viking CCS was supported in July](#), with the southern section of the Tees and Humber's joint East Coast Cluster also in the running.

A morning tour of Drax – the western entry point to the regional scheme – was followed by the key meeting with Humber

Energy Board at Port of Immingham, ahead of a convening of the 11 northern local enterprise partnerships at Reckitt in Hull.

Richard Gwilliam, chair of Humber Energy Board, said: “Climate change is the defining challenge of our time, compelling us to decarbonise our economy, develop energy resilience and invest in new green technologies.

“The Humber Energy Board is determined to make the Humber the world’s leading net zero industrial cluster. By working together under the shared banner of the Humber 2030 Vision, we’re ready to grasp this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and deliver the UK’s green revolution.



Lord Callanan, Minister for Energy Efficiency and Green Finance, meeting with representatives from the Humber Energy Board.

(Image: Hull News & Pictures Limited)

“We have the platform, infrastructure and collective will to make this happen – but we need clarity and certainty from the Government, most urgently on pathways to deploy carbon capture

and storage technologies.

“It’s essential we have a pipeline network to remove CO₂ from traditionally carbon intensive industries like power generation, steelmaking, chemicals and refinery, and deliver hydrogen to enable the switch from fossil fuels at scale. The simple fact is that now is the time to deliver.”

November’s [Autumn Statement](#) is seen as key, with fears significant parts of a £15 billion portfolio could be lost overseas if investment doesn’t come. And the face-to-face meeting, and visualisation of the connectivity possible, was seen as key.

“The Minister said there was nothing better than coming to experience the region first hand,” Mr Gwilliam said. “He was driven from Drax to Immingham, past the largest onshore wind farm, the most efficient gas-fired power station in Europe, British Steel, and two refineries. That corridor from Drax is strategically important for the UK’s energy security. Decarbonising that creates a secure, long-term future.”

Senior council officials, MPs and representatives of board member companies Equinor, Harbour Energy, Humber Freeport, Phillips 66, Prax, RWE, SSE Thermal and Uniper were present, with the joined up presence enthusing Lord Callanan.

He described how “well advanced the Humber is and the great plans they have got for decarbonisation in the future,” following the closed meeting, underlining how it would be central to the UK’s journey.



Lord Callanan meets Drax apprentices at the power station.
(Image: Drax Group)

Lord Callanan said: “The Humber has to be central to it, there are so many industrial plants, legacy industries, power stations, refineries, all of which can contribute to the decarbonisation journey and all were represented at the meeting. It is great to see the whole region working together on this exciting agenda.

“We are in negotiations with [SSE for more support for their hydrogen production plant in the area](#), the Viking cluster is part of our next phase of carbon capture and storage roll-out, and we are going to be working with them to bring those plans to fruition.

“We haven’t changed our climate targets. The Net Zero ambition still remains, and given the size of the Humber, the amount of emissions, it is absolutely central to our plans, and we are going to be working with them to bring their plans to fruition.

“We are rolling it out as fast as we possibly can. The Chancellor announced £20 billion of funding over the next few years for our CCUS ambitions. We are hugely encouraged by the ambition of many regions, and the Humber in particular.”