Battery maker Britishvolt bought by Australian firm

Britishvolt, the company behind a planned battery factory to power electric cars, has been bought out of administration by Australian firm Recharge Industries.

The UK firm **entered administration** in January after months of funding problems which resulted in more than 200 job losses.

Recharge Industries had been **selected as the preferred bidder** by administrators EY earlier this month.

Its chief executive David Collard said the Britishvolt brand name would remain, as well as the ambition to complete Britishvolt's electric vehicle battery factory in Blyth, Northumberland.

But the business will focus on making batteries for energy storage before moving to manufacture batteries for high-performance sports cars.

"I spent a lot of time with Northumberland County Council. They genuinely want a gigafactory and the best thing for their people," Mr Collard told the BBC.

The future of the large scale battery factory had been uncertain after £100m of government **funding did not emerge**.

Billions of private funding for the project was contingent on the payment of state funds.

Government funding would be welcomed by the new owners but Mr Collard said he wanted broad political support for the factory.

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“The government is ready to stand behind the right company with the right investment because we do believe that a gigafactory here in Blyth would be an appropriate way of building on the skills that local people have, and indeed the edge that this town has already displayed when it comes to renewables and the future of energy,” he said.

“Anyone will take free money but at the end of the day what we want is bi-partisan support and we have that in Australia and the US.”

Works are to begin in six to 12 months, Mr Collard estimated. He hoped 8,000 jobs would be created from the factory and associated supply chain employment.

Britishvolt had intended to manufacture power cells for 300,000 electric vehicle battery packs a year at the factory planned on the site of the former coal-fired Blyth Power Station and eventually employ 3,000 people.

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The amount the business was bought for was not disclosed.

Staff who were retained during the administration process – the number is understood to be 26 – will be kept on by the new owner, administrators EY said.

“The sale of the business will help to support the development of technology and infrastructure needed for the UK’s energy transition,” it said.