

# Delivering Net Zero for Hull

It's been two years since Hull City Council, the University of Hull, Reckitt and Future Humber launched the Oh Yes! Net Zero movement at the Reckitt Science and Innovation Centre.

With vocal backing from The Rt Hon Alok Sharma, President of COP26, and the support and enthusiasm of business leaders, scientists, universities, political and community leaders, schools and residents of all ages, Oh Yes! Net Zero capitalises on Hull's history of innovation and the enthusiasm of its people to decarbonise our region, with the aim of achieving Net Zero by 2050.

## Why are we doing it?

Hull has been a centre of industry and a hive of activity for hundreds of years.

We've played a huge role in generating prosperity and employment for the region and provide the country with everything from fish to pharmaceuticals. And we're one of the UK's biggest ports, handling 10 million tonnes of cargo every year.

But centuries of industry have come with a cost. The area around the Humber Estuary emits 12 million tonnes of carbon dioxide every year – more than any other region in the UK, and second only in Europe to the Ruhr Valley in Germany. We're also particularly vulnerable to flooding and rising sea levels.

**If the UK is to achieve its commitment to Net Zero by 2050, our region has an outsized role to play.**

We want to accelerate our journey to Net Zero and establish Hull as a world leader in industrial decarbonisation, securing the economy of the region for the future and creating an environment where green businesses can flourish faster than anywhere else.

This report shows how far we've come in the two years since our formation and how far we still have to go. It also demonstrates how we can work with and learn from other cities around the world facing similar challenges to Hull and the Humber region.

95% of the businesses in our region have under 250 employees, so it's important that our programmes and activities are geared to ensuring that these businesses can decarbonise successfully. SMEs (small medium-sized Enterprises) make up more than 80% of the membership of Oh Yes! Net Zero and are key to meeting our Net Zero targets.

## Founding members



# Turning up the heat on decarbonisation

A foreword by David Shukman



Hottest year, hottest decade, ocean temperatures flying off the scale – there are lots of climate developments to be gloomy about.

But luckily, there's plenty of positive news around too – from all walks of life, including the worlds of music and sport.

For all big events, the challenge is helping fans to travel in the most climate-friendly ways and we're seeing some imaginative solutions to that right here.

For 2023's Humber Street Sesh, Hull Trains, a member of Oh Yes! Net Zero, encouraged the 15,000 ticket holders to ditch their cars by offering them free rail travel between Hull and Doncaster. The festival organisers are now working with train and bus companies and Hull City Council on a green travel plan for 2024. [Read more about it here.](#)

Even Formula 1 is thinking along the same lines, with 2023's Dutch Grand Prix urging fans to come by train – a very big ask for a crowd of car enthusiasts – but it went down well.

The 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Paris this summer are also discouraging car use by laying on public transport between all the venues, and dozens of miles of new cycle lanes.

So we're witnessing an extraordinary shift: from it being unusual for cities, businesses and public sector organisations to have carbon reduction plans, to being unusual for them not to.



It's part of a transformation that's faster than many thought possible.

Solar panels are less than one-tenth<sup>1</sup> of their cost a decade ago. Batteries have tumbled in price<sup>2</sup> and are set to become even cheaper. And electric cars are becoming more affordable - Geely, a Chinese company now sells one for \$6000<sup>3</sup>.

Not many years back, zero carbon technologies looked a bit implausible. Now they're not only credible but in hot demand. China, the US and the EU are racing to be dominant, because that's where growth and jobs will come from.

Not everyone gets it. Some critics feel the government has backpedalled on its green plans, as have some other countries, which misses the point about Net Zero: **the right investments will save money in the long run**, reduce our dependence on expensive imports of oil and gas, and ensure we're on the front foot of the new industrial revolution.

It means that local action is more important than ever and the number of communities and companies joining this worldwide movement is growing fast. One is Australia's second largest city, Melbourne. An estuary city, it's similar to Hull in many ways and its approach is featured in this report.

At the UN climate summit, COP28 in Dubai, Oh Yes! Net Zero was singled out for praise. Delegates wanted to know more about its partnerships and the regular sharing of experiences, good and bad, the nitty-gritty of what works and what doesn't. **No one's finding carbon reduction straightforward but they're tapping into a lot of enthusiasm and that's creating real momentum.**

<sup>1</sup> Documenting a Decade of Cost Declines for PV Systems | <https://www.nrel.gov/news/program/2021/documenting-a-decade-of-cost-declines-for-pv-systems.html>

<sup>2</sup> The Rise of Batteries in Six Charts and Not Too Many Numbers | <https://rmi.org/the-rise-of-batteries-in-six-charts-and-not-too-many-numbers/>

<sup>3</sup> Geely Panda mini Launched On The Chinese Car Market For \$5,880 USD | <https://carnewschina.com/2023/02/06/geely-panda-mini-launched-on-the-chinese-car-market-for-588-USD/>