



Media release: EMBARGOED until 12 November 2021

Black Country LEP launch Black Country Industrial Decarbonisation Programme

- The Black Country LEP and West Midlands Mayor Andy Street have, today, launched the nationally-leading Black Country Industrial Decarbonisation programme.
- Delivered via the Repowering the Black Country Programme, this is one of only six industrial cluster decarbonisation projects funded by Government.
- Find out more at: <https://www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/our-strategy/place/repowering-the-black-country/>

The Black Country LEP and West Midlands Mayor Andy Street have, today – 12 November 2021 – launched the **Black Country Industrial Decarbonisation Programme** at a manufacturing facility, **Servosteel, in Dudley**, timed to coincide with the end of COP26.

The Black Country Industrial Decarbonisation programme will be delivered via Repowering the Black Country which is a programme of initiatives supporting Black Country businesses to take advantage of global clean growth opportunities and to make the transition to a net zero industrial future.

The project will initially develop four pilot zero carbon industrial hubs in the Black Country. Within the next 10 years, the programme aims to reduce industrial carbon emissions by around 1.3M tCO₂ while keeping Black Country energy costs competitive and attracting high quality manufacturing jobs to the region.

Matthew Rhodes, Project Director Repowering the Black Country said: “This project is critical to maintaining and growing a competitive manufacturing base in the Black Country for the 21st Century. We need to adapt our infrastructure to the clean future set out by governments worldwide at COP26 in Glasgow this week, and to ensure our industry is ready to seize the opportunities for clean growth created by the transition to a zero-carbon world.”

Andy Street, the Mayor of the West Midlands, commented: “This is an important programme for the West Midlands and the UK as a whole as we look to tackle the climate emergency. I’ve just returned from COP26 where I’ve been talking about the opportunity for green industries to transform industrial heartlands like the West Midlands – and this programme is a case in point.

“I’m delighted to see the Black Country at the forefront of our efforts to respond to the global climate crisis, and repowering the Black Country shows that we can create jobs and opportunities through decarbonisation.”

Mark Anderson, Director at Servosteel, Dudley added: “Servosteel was delighted to be invited to join this programme because the transition to a zero-carbon economy creates significant challenges and opportunities for all businesses. By working with Repowering the Black Country team, we are getting a head start in accessing the markets of the future and keeping our energy costs low. We all need to work together to ensure we can survive and prosper through this climate challenge.”



Repowering the Black Country is one of six industrial cluster decarbonisation projects funded by BEIS and UKRI. The Black Country Industrial Cluster consists of more than 3000 energy-intensive manufacturing businesses. Our project is supporting the national industrial decarbonisation strategy by developing approaches which work in the Black Country and can then be applied more widely.

The project is about providing cost-efficient energy infrastructure across the Black Country; helping companies benefit from new supply chain opportunities in the circular economy; and supporting resource efficiency initiatives in manufacturing operations.

The UK government has committed to the country having net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Decarbonisation of industry is key to achieving this goal, and is a top priority for the current government, who have committed over £20bn to industrial decarbonisation investments over the next 10 years. This may include the phasing out of gas as a fuel, development of a hydrogen infrastructure, and fundamental changes in the way electricity is charged. They are also considering carbon labelling of manufactured products and extending emissions trading schemes to smaller businesses.

Led by the Black Country LEP, the Repowering the Black Country partnership includes local businesses Kew Technology, Pro Enviro and CR Plus, supported by specialists from the University of Birmingham and WMG, University of Warwick, as well as companies specialising in urban agriculture (District Eating) and energy investment (M3MAS).

Find out more about Repowering the Black Country at: <https://www.blackcountrylep.co.uk/our-strategy/place/repowering-the-black-country/>

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About the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

1. The Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) aligns activity across private and public sectors to create the right environment for businesses with a remit to tackle barriers to business growth and create a globally competitive local economy.
2. Programmes to deliver our vision are structured around three areas of activity:
 - Business: supporting skills and competitiveness
 - People: raising skills and employability, for example through our City Deal and Skills Factory;
 - Place: including the provision of more high-quality employment land through our Enterprise Zone and City Deal.
3. The LEP Board has identified seven priority areas where action will have the most impact on the Black Country and its contribution to the national economy:
 - Exploiting the potential of the Black Country as a place to live, do business and invest; focusing on our housing offer, the quality of employment land, and the distinctive role of our four strategic centres.
 - Using supply chains to build business commitment to skills and growth

- Supporting innovation at our major science and business parks
 - Building a close relationship with our top 600 companies
 - Raising our skills levels
 - Securing inward investment
 - Developing a more entrepreneurial culture
4. The Black Country located at the heart of the national transport network, comprises the metropolitan boroughs of Dudley, Sandwell and Walsall and the City of Wolverhampton. It covers 356 sq kilometres, is home to 1.18 million people, with 23 per cent ethnic minority residents and 463,000 jobs in 37,490 companies.

For more information on the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership visit www.blackcountrylep.co.uk or follow on Twitter: @blackcountrylep