

# Energy Research Accelerator unveils 'ambitious plans' to support the Midlands' recovery and create over 4,400 green jobs

*ERA unveils plans to further its world leading research into energy solutions and net zero pathways by applying for a further £155m of Government funding*

NOTTINGHAM, MIDLANDS, UNITED KINGDOM, October 26, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The



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*Mayor of the West Midlands,  
Andy Street*

Energy Research Accelerator (ERA) is embarking on an ambitious plan to support the Midlands as the region looks to recover from the pandemic and to decarbonise. Ahead of this week's Comprehensive Spending Review and the start of COP26 at the end of the month, ERA unveils plans to further its world leading research into energy solutions and net zero pathways by applying for a further £155m of Government funding. The project is representative of the regions ambitious climate agenda and stands to level up the Midlands, kickstarting employment following the pandemic through the creation of over 4,400 high skilled, green jobs.

ERA brings together nine Midlands research intensive organisations and a community of nearly 1,500 researchers, to deliver regional impact in energy and interconnected systems. With the initial government funding, ERA has delivered beyond the original expectation and created 23 new research facilities, obtained £120m of industrial funding and close to £450m of total value in terms of new investments in energy research and development. ERA has already helped to create jobs, develop skills and support over 1,000 SMEs and are seeking further funding to continue to build on these successes.

The provision of proposed funding would help the ERA generate:

- £800m in investment for the Midlands
- 4,400 Green jobs
- £0.4bn GVA

ERA has identified the major national and regional energy challenges and 'Big Ideas' which it will

focus on in the next phase. These are:

- National Centre for Energy Storage Scale-Up and Demonstration - accelerating the development of energy storage through integration into the next generation of energy from waste facilities.
- National Centre for the Decarbonisation of Heat - supporting the delivery of the decarbonisation of heat for the UK housing retrofit sector.
- City scale digital twins - establishing two regional city scale demonstrators of digital twins for energy infrastructure development.
- National Centre for low carbon alternative fuels - producing, utilising and characterising alternative fuels replacing fossil fuels for road, marine and aviation transport, plus energy production and heating.
- Hydrogen innovation support platform - creating a Midlands wide hydrogen innovation platform that supports SMEs to deploy hydrogen technologies associated with heating and transport applications.
- Hydrogen freight and logistics - establishing a series of connected programmes to develop a Midlands Hydrogen Transport System for heavy vehicles from trucks to buses and trains.

ERA has received cross-party support from the Region's MPs, who see the potential of ERA to support on the priorities of the UK, the Midlands and Parliament. ERA already has a proven track record in supporting the UK's transition to net zero and through new funding, would grow their role in supporting the post-COVID recovery, levelling up R&D spend in the UK, delivering and building on the UK's science and technology expertise, and improving air quality.

Commenting on the submission;

- Mayor of the West Midlands, Andy Street said: "The West Midlands has been hit incredibly hard by the pandemic, and we know that investing in our growth areas of the future will be key to a successful recovery that helps thousands of people back into work. One of those areas that will be absolutely pivotal to us is energy innovation. Not only has this sector gone from strength to strength in recent years, creating good quality, well-paid jobs in the process, but it also has a key role to play in the fight against climate change and our region's ambition to be carbon neutral by 2041. At the heart of the sector's growth has been the Energy Research Accelerator, which has taken £60m of Government funding to leverage a further £120m of private sector funding to create 23 new research facilities across the region. The ERA has a proven track record of delivery, and I strongly support their latest proposals."

- MP for Loughborough, Jane Hunt said: "The Government have made it clear that levelling up across the UK whilst supporting innovative ways of decarbonising are the top priority as we continue to build back better from the pandemic. I am proud of the work that Loughborough University has achieved through its work with ERA, and am delighted to support their bid for renewed funding to keep their vital work at the centre of the Region's recovery and transition. I look forward to continuing to support the ERA project and championing their work across the Midlands and here in Loughborough."

- MP for Birmingham Hodge Hill, the Rt Hon Liam Byrne said: "The Energy Research Accelerator is exactly the type of innovation project the Midlands is proud to champion. As a region, we have a proud history of industry, from the automotive sector to manufacturing. As we look to decarbonise these sectors, moving away from fossil fuels as sources of power, fuel and heating, it is essential that our region replenishes job opportunities and provides alternative, green employment for our high-skilled workers. ERA's proposals highlight the diversity of the midlands and our far-reaching expertise across a range of the sectors which are key to the UK's net zero and levelling up ambitions. I am proud to support their bid and call on the Treasury to support ERA as they look to continue their vital work"

- Director of ERA Professor Martin Freer said: "Over half a decade, the Energy Research Accelerator has demonstrated its ability to deliver. We have established 23 world-leading facilities, secured £110 million in industrial co-investment, and have brought together over a thousand researchers who are helping hundreds of businesses to innovate and to solve the problems of our transition to zero carbon. Our new proposal builds on this work and has the potential to bring significant investment and jobs to the region. I am delighted that we have received such tremendous support both from industry and parliamentarians from both Houses and across party lines for our plans. We're looking forward to continuing our work, helping the UK achieve net zero and building a sustainable, financially secure future for the Midlands and the country."

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