

LEP STRATEGY PROGRAMME BOARD – AGENDA ITEM 8

Subject: Sustainability - Strategy and Progress

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Meeting date: 16th November 2021

Purpose

To provide an overview of the main sustainability themed policy and delivery activity run by the LEP in 2020/21 and an indication of relevant next steps across the following programmes and activities:

- COP26
- Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Commission (SIGC)
- Local Energy Hub NW (LENW) and net zero investment
- Natural Capital Audit and Investment Plan
- Industrial Decarbonisation Cluster Plan Investment Case
- Net Zero North
- Green skills activity

Recommendations

The Strategy Programme Board is asked to: -

- i. Note the progress on delivery of the sustainability vision and strategy, providing comments as appropriate, on legacy and next steps.

Summary of strategic position

The LEP's Recovery Plan vision for sustainability is to become a world leader in zero carbon energy technology, building on decades of industry-leading experience in energy distribution systems, fuels and nuclear engineering and design; to be the first net zero industrial cluster; to keep pace and ensure we provide for green skills requirements; and to enhance our natural capital in a healthy, sustainable and green recovery for people, the environment and farming sector.

Our vision was given a major boost when HyNet was chosen as one of the industrial decarbonisation Track One clusters in October, which means it will be in the first two places in the UK with government support and funding for hydrogen generation and carbon capture and storage. This is a major vote of confidence in the scheme by both Government and industry. We worked closely with Net Zero North West, and the Leading Cheshire and Warrington Board (via SIGC) to influence government and make the case. Alongside this we were pleased that Warrington's bid for Zero Emission Buses was approved in the Chancellor's budget and spending review with a £20million commitment to the establishment of an all-electric bus fleet. Additionally, the strength and pace of the clean growth offer in Cheshire and Warrington has grown to be significant with multiple projects in delivery across the public and private sector (Appendix 3).

Key messages from COP26 include the fact that we are ready now to deliver on our targets and be an exemplar for other areas. Working locally and across the North West we must do more to raise the profile of our capacity and expertise across public and private sector that we can be the region to lead the green industrial revolution and the first region in the UK to get to net zero. Partners in the North West also noted a desire to work together more closely on getting to net zero through joined up vision, leadership and action, and promoting the region's and the North's strengths.

Our task is now to plan for the legacy of COP26 on both a C&W and North West/Northern level. On a policy and investment level we will play a critical part in the development of Net Zero North and future North West activity, and ensure we maximise investment via Invest Net Zero Cheshire schemes, the NZNW Cluster Plan Investment Case, and potentially the planned future Green Expo in Chester in June 2022. On promotion we are working on our net zero/clean growth credentials and wider awareness raising and positioning for the subregion on the energy and clean growth agenda. This will include a series of marketing and communications materials and campaigns locally, and a short film about the economic opportunities, and a set of case studies on national and LEP websites.

Alongside this we will also be working hard to finalise the output of the Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Commission (action plan and recommendations) to take out to public consultation and then implementation. These plans will also feed into future LEP/subregional strategy. And we will be progressing the next steps for the Natural Capital Audit and Investment Case and green skills.

Background

Throughout 2021 the LEP's activity programme to deliver on the sustainability vision has included:

- Representing the subregion by feeding into ongoing activity at North West and Northern level and developing specific activity in C&W (LENW, COP26, Net Zero North West, NP11). This has also included recruitment activity towards an Energy Programme Manager to work with stakeholders to develop the Invest Net Zero Cheshire portfolio as well as supporting the Local Energy Hub North West.
- Acting as Secretariat for the Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Commission which was set up by the Leaders' Board to challenge the subregion to go further faster on sustainable and inclusive growth in response to the new vision of a 'healthy, sustainable, inclusive and growing' economy.
- Commissioning and overseeing the development of plans with stakeholders which are in various stages (Natural Capital Audit; Cluster Plan Investment Case)
- The development of a Green Skills report

COP26

Overall, the LEP/subregion's contribution to the COP26 programme of activity has been to support in getting both the C&W and North West messages across to a wider regional, national and international audience. Feedback from Metro Mayors who attended the COP26 blue zone suggests that our presence was felt both nationally and internationally. Key messages taken away include the fact that we are ready now to deliver and must do more to raise the profile of our capacity and expertise across public and private sector that we can be the region to lead the green industrial revolution and the first region in the UK to get to net zero, which was significantly strengthened by the HyNet announcement. Partners in the North West also noted a desire to work together closer and more often on getting to net zero and promoting the region's and the North's strengths.

At COP26 a number of agreements were reached:

- More than 100 world leaders agreed to reverse deforestation by 2030 including Brazil. A previous similar agreement failed but it is stated that this pledge is being backed with almost £14bn of public and private funds
- An alliance of more than 90 nations (largely led by the USA and Europe), representing two-thirds of the global economy – committed to reduce methane emissions by at least 30% from current levels by 2030

- A non-binding pledge to phase out existing coal-fuelled power plants and stop building new ones. Signatories include major banks and 46 countries, 23 of which are making commitments on ending coal for the first time (China and US did not sign up)
- Nearly 500 global financial services firms agreed to align 130 trillion dollars (or 40 per cent of the world's financial assets) with the climate goals set out in the Paris Agreement, including limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees C (though there is criticism that they are allowed to continue investing in fossil fuels)
- The US and China announced that they would work together this decade to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees
- A new alliance that commits countries to setting a date to ending oil and gas use and halting new licences for exploration was launched

Alok Sharma, President of COP26, said that some progress has been made but it is not enough. The analysis shows that the world is still heading for 2.4 degrees of warming in terms of their national plans (NDC plans - nationally determined contributions). The final text of the COP26 Glasgow Agreement includes provisions on: phasing *down* coal and fossil fuel subsidies; for countries to submit their NDCs on an annual basis rather than 5-yearly; to acknowledge loss and damage (of particular importance to developing countries) with money for adaptation increased; speeding up the global transition from fossil fuelled cars to zero emissions vehicles (electric and hydrogen) – ending new car sales in leading markets by 2035 and globally by 2040 (but 4 of the world's biggest car makers didn't sign, and China and US were absent). The UK retains the Presidency for another year until COP27 in Egypt, to continue to implement the Glasgow Agreement.

Our task for now is to plan for the legacy of COP26 on both a C&W and North West level. We are working on promotion of net zero/clean growth credentials and wider awareness raising and positioning for the subregion on the energy and clean growth agenda. This will include a series of marketing and communications materials and campaigns locally, including a short film about the economic opportunities, and a set of case studies on the COP26 'carbon copy' national and LEP websites. On a policy and investment level we will build on this activity via the community led Green Expo that is planned for summer 2022, the NZNW Cluster Plan Investment Case and by driving forwards Invest Net Zero Cheshire schemes.

Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Commission

In November 2020 we set up a Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Commission to act as a catalyst for and provide advice on the delivery of a programme that will realise the new subregional vision to build a better future together post-Covid and to respond to the pressing challenges of climate change. Reporting to the Sub-regional Leaders Board and working closely with locally based bodies, the Commission draws evidence from a wide range of sources and via focused sub-groups which engage closely with subject-matter experts, and was set up to run for two years in four phases of six months each: collate; plan; engage and action.

The Commission is jointly chaired by Cllr Sam Corcoran, Leader of Cheshire East, and Robert Davies, MD of EA Technology with three further elected members, eight leading private sector and civil society figures and 6 officers, in addition to co-opting individuals onto thematic subgroups. The work is divided into themes including: roadmap to net zero; sustainable transport; climate change and land use; inclusive economy and funding and finance.

We will use the output of the Commission (it's action plan and recommendations) to feed into future LEP/subregional strategy development to ensure that stakeholder views are captured and fed in and to benefit from the wider evidence base and pool of ideas which have been developed by SIGC.

The Commission is currently in its planning phase, which began in July 2021 and is envisaged to last for approximately 6 months. This follows the 'Collate' stage which began in November 2020 where it was pulling together its ideas and evidence base. During the planning phase, the longlist of projects is being looked at more closely to consider project definition and feasibility further and establish project action plans. Each working group is reviewing the longlist of projects and undertaking a review categorising the projects into types (e.g. lobbying/policy/delivery), identification of headline costs and benefits, elimination of duplication and securing complementarity (List of Working Groups and their members in Appendix 2). Projects and proposals are being evaluated for social impact using an inclusivity toolkit and for investment potential where appropriate through an outline business case template.

Based on the information gathered, resource requirements identified and stakeholder involvement, the Commission is creating a draft action plan which will be presented to the Leading C&W Board meeting to review in the light of priorities and wider benefits. This will also be reviewed at the subregional Growth Directors' meeting. Beyond the planning phase it is envisaged that there will be consultation and implementation phases lasting approximately 6 months each. There will be Commission meetings in November and December to continue to finalise the action plan and to create the consultation plan.

A summary of the Commission's topic areas/proposals and wider membership is outlined in Appendix 2.

Local Energy Hub NW and Net Zero Investment

The LEP is a Board member on the Local Energy Hub North West (LENW), alongside the other subregions in the North West. We have recently signed an MoU with LENW to host an Energy Programme Manager role as a 2 year FTE with possibility of 3 year extension beyond this. We have been out to recruitment, which is still in progress.

This role is critical for the LEP and subregion as it will support the Cheshire Energy Hub and wider stakeholders to remove barriers to investment and thus to help schemes (such as those highlighted in Invest Net Zero Cheshire) to be delivered to support the reaching of targets on climate change and net zero. The Invest Net Zero Cheshire programme is a £1 billion pipeline of projects at outline business case for investment from industry and Government with the Cheshire Energy Hub predicting that more than 30,000 jobs would be created. We are one of the first areas in the UK to put together such a Net Zero Investment Plan.

We are providing pump priming finance of £5k to a Green Expo and Investment Conference that is to be delivered in 2022 in Chester, led by a community organisation called CHASE.

Natural Capital Audit and Investment Plan

The need was identified for a Natural Capital Audit and Investment Plan as part of our Quality of Place Strategy, and the Strategic Economic Plan. We worked with several partners to commission the work in 2020, and the project has just been completed in October 2021. Natural capital is critical in building our resilience to climate change and as part of long-term sustainable growth.

The material has fed into the SIGC climate change and land use working group and next steps will be agreed between the SIGC, the steering group and the Local Nature Partnership. Next steps also include the publishing of the reports on the LEP's website and individual bodies reviewing and implementing specific recommendations at local and subregional levels. There is a pressing need for

the data to be hosted sub-regionally and a model agreed for parties to access. The steering group will be discussing this next week.

The work provides a detailed baseline for the provision of blue and green infrastructure and has developed case study examples of investment projects that could, amongst other things, reduce the risk of flooding, increase the amount of carbon stored in the natural environment and improve air quality. Case studies include sustainable agricultural production, carbon sequestration and biodiversity enhancement including examining the use of peatland restoration, water quality and flow improvements. The work has been beginning to identify locations where multiple strategic themes overlap with the potential to simultaneously deliver multiple benefits, and solutions exist within the data.

Net Zero North West and Industrial Decarbonisation Cluster Plan Investment Case

Net Zero North West is aiming to develop the UK's first low carbon industrial cluster by 2030. Led by industry the cluster is driving investment into the net zero economy and post COVID-19 green recovery. This will create at least 33,000 jobs and see over £4bn invested in the region. The cluster will make a significant contribution to the UK's legally binding target to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050, as well as local net zero carbon targets.

Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership appointed consultants Mace in May 2021 to undertake the development work for the Investment Case. The LEP is monitoring the delivery of the investment case through key milestones, ensuring the quality of the outputs, so that the investment case and component parts form a robust and compelling proposition for public and private investment in the region and are able to withstand rigorous scrutiny. This work is underway with the draft investment case due at the end of November.

Net Zero North

We are feeding into the production of a Net Zero North report by NP11 with the intention of socialising key concepts and ideas with Ministers to show how the north can be Government's major delivery partner on net zero as part of the Levelling Up agenda.

Green Skills

A green skills report was commissioned and undertaken as part of the LEP's Skills and Employment Board and Data and Labour Market Group: [Data and Labour Market Reports - Cheshire and Warrington](#). The data and labour market information is used to inform the development of the curriculum across Cheshire and Warrington as well as the activities of the Pledge in inspiring and informing young people about new technologies and career opportunities.

Recent investments of Local Growth Fund skills funding has focused on specialised equipment to support digital, science, technology and engineering and has included a focus on sustainability including investments in vertical farming and automated dairy farming at Reaseheath.

Appendix 1 – NW COP26 Events

Overview of COP26 activity

The LEP has been representing the subregion on the COP26 North West steering group which has been part-funded by BEIS channelled via the Local Energy Hub NW and in partnership with the NW City Regions and LEPs. The LEP, HyNet and others have also sponsored the programme.

The regional activity has included:

- [Zero Carbon Tour](#) - Flagship Events and Site Visits 29th and 30th September
- NW Regional roadshow events on 4th and 9th November
- COP26 Fringe events and an official Green Zone event in Glasgow 9th – 11th November 2021

Zero Carbon Tour

The Zero Carbon Tour visited the Hydrogen Refuelling Station in Middlewich, Protos and Encirc in Ellesmere Port and, later, Warrington's Own Buses. It also attended the Flagship Event at Thornton Science Park on 29th September which was an opportunity to bring together all stakeholders involved in the Net Zero challenge together in person.

Regional Roadshows

COP26 Regional Roadshows are designed to promote the North West's ambition to become the first net zero region by 2040, and featured both civic and business leaders from across the NW.

The regional roadshow event of key interest to Cheshire and Warrington was the 'Powering the Green Industrial Revolution' event at The Heath, Runcorn, on 4th November, which aligns strongly with the subregional vision and strategy for energy and clean growth. It showcased the green industrial revolution projects which are in the pipeline that will make the vision a reality and ensure that the NW is seen nationally as a leader in innovation and at the epicentre of the transition to low-carbon energy. It was live streamed and included projects like tidal power and nuclear, hydrogen production, carbon capture and storage and offshore wind with a primarily business audience. The LEP Chair was on a Leaders' Panel about Net Zero priorities and facilitated a Hydrogen panel.

The second regional roadshow event was entitled 'Power to the People: Enabling a Smart Energy Transition' at the Mayfield Depot in Manchester on 9th November. This event was focused on smart energy complementing The Heath event which was focused on energy production and was open to all. Panel sessions covered Transport, Energy, Buildings and Smart Networks. EA Technology was on a panel and the LEP were on a Leaders' Panel.

Glasgow events

These included one official COP26 Green Zone event on 9th November and a series of smaller public private breakfast, dinner and drinks reception on 10th and 11th November. Further details in table below.

Date	Event	Notes
Tues 9th November	NW Youth Event in Green Zone – ‘Talkin bout my generation’ 4pm Panel session 2x45 mins (Organised by The Good Business Festival, led by NZNW for EoI).	COP26 Green Zone Glasgow Science Centre
Weds 10th November	Transport in the Northwest: A Vision for future travel Royal College of Physicians: dinner 6-8.30pm Selected sponsors and partners 30 pax Hosts: Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram, Cllr Louise Gittins (TfN) and Metro Mayor Andy Burnham Guest Speakers: Alstom, VOI, Chris Boardman	Louise Gittins to speak Attendance: Louise Gittins Clare Hayward (Officer - Melissa Crellin)
Thurs 11th November	9am – 10.30am Breakfast event to prepare a strategic legacy for COP26 for the NW 30 pax	Clare Hayward to speak. Attendance: Clare Hayward Louise Gittins (Officer - Melissa Crellin)
Thurs 11th November	M4 Industrial Cities Panel (plus International Mayors)	International Mayors Panel session at COP26 Tickets, Thu 11 Nov 2021 at 15:15 Eventbrite
Thurs 11th November	Drinks Reception: COP26 Legacy: Host: SP Energy Networks Cities and Regions Day 125 pax 6-8.30pm Generation Green – how do we empower young people to lead the Green Revolution. And COP26 Legacy.	Clare Hayward to speak In attendance: Clare Hayward Louise Gittins (Officer - Melissa Crellin) Additional C&W reps: Stephen Gleave Helen Boyle Rachel Shorney Eunice Simmons Adrian Curry Henry Brooks Rupert Collis

Appendix 2 – Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Commission list of investible projects

Co unt	Group	Prior ity	Theme	Projects
1	Net Zero Roadmap	1	Decarbonisation and retrofitting of housing stock	A study to assess the scale of investment needed and develop a roadmap
2		2	Developing a Circular Economy	To be developed
3		2	Decarbonisation of energy distribution systems	Build the UK’s first net zero carbon industrial cluster
4				Develop our energy R&D and innovation infrastructure/eco-system
5				Attract low carbon/net zero investment
6	Transport	1	Encouraging zero-emission Vehicles	Creation of a zero-emission transport Plan
7		2		Strengthening the second-hand EV market
8		1	Encourage Bus Use	Integrated electric ticketing/timetabling study
9		2		Create a shared transport pilot study (town to rural areas) for young people
10		1	Liveable city and town centres	A step by step guided develop streets for all
11		2	Alternative Fuels	Waste Plastic to Fuel
12	Sustainable Land Use	1	Insetting-Offsetting/ Natural Capital	Study to identify investment opportunities from the Natural Capital Audit
13				Create new natural and biodiverse green spaces and encourage use
14		2	Agriculture	To be developed
15		2	Energy generation	Renewable energy generation study
16	Inclusivity	1	Ensuring Inclusive Growth	Data hub/Coordination forum
17				Positive Action Toolkit
18				2
19		Supporting Social Enterprises		
20		Anchor network (and social value)		

Appendix 2 - SIGC Working Groups and Membership

During recent months the support around the Commission has changed significantly. The working groups are supported by the SIGC Secretariat overall (Melissa Crellin and Norbert Magos) and additional officer policy support and expert support has been identified for each subgroup according to specialist areas. Commissioners are shown in italics.

Name of group	Chair	Group members	Officer support	Expert support	Inclusivity Rep
Net Zero Roadmap	<i>Cllr Sam Corcoran, CEC</i>	<i>Cllr Sam Corcoran, CEC</i> <i>Adrian Curry, Encirc</i> <i>Mark Howden, Peaks & Plains</i>	Ralph Kemp, CEC	Karen Whitehead, CEC Helen Boyle, Cadent Alec Gaston, Peaks & Plains	Clare Latham, CWCC
Transport	<i>Robert Davis, EA technology</i>	<i>Robert Davis, EA technology</i> <i>Rachel Shorney, SPEN</i> <i>Annette McDonald, Tatton Group</i>	Roy Newton, C&W LEP	Elaine Meskhi, Cenex	TBC
Climate Change and Land Use	<i>Annette MacDonald, Tatton Group</i>	<i>Annette MacDonald, Tatton Group</i> <i>James Hall, Cholmondeley Estate</i> <i>Cllr Matt Bryan</i>	Melissa Crellin, C&W LEP	Niall MacFayden, CWCC Paul Nolan, CWCC Matthew Clegg, Binnies	<i>Chantal Davies, University of Chester</i>
Inclusive Economy	TBC	<i>Cllr Richard Beacham</i> <i>Chantal Davies, University of Chester</i>	Charles Jarvis, CEC Eleanor Blackburn, WBC Catherine Walker Clare Latham, CWCC Pat Jackson, C&W LEP	Cllr Nick Mannion, CEC Hannah Cotton, Equalies David Perfect, Retired	N/A
Funding and Finance	<i>Helena Anderson, Ikigai Capital</i>	<i>Clare Hayward, C&W LEP</i>	Ian Brooks, C&W LEP	Lauren Pamma, Green Finance Institute	N/A

The Funding and Finance Group will not be generating independent proposals but rather supporting the other working groups with their investable projects.

Key Proof Points for C&W Low Carbon / Net Zero Industry Technology and Innovation Credentials

November 2021

- **First large-scale hydrogen production plant in the UK – HyNet**

[HyNet Hydrogen Production Plant – the UK’s first large-scale low carbon hydrogen facility \(h2-view.com\)](https://www.hy-net.com/news/hynet-hydrogen-production-plant-the-uk-s-first-large-scale-low-carbon-hydrogen-facility-h2-view.com)

The HyNet hydrogen production and carbon capture and storage project based around the Ellesmere Port Industrial Area was chosen as one of the industrial decarbonisation Track 1 clusters, which means they will be one of the first two industrial clusters in the UK with government support and funding to get carbon capture and storage operational. HyNet claims it is the first large-scale low carbon hydrogen facility in the UK.

- **One of the first glass furnaces in the world to use hydrogen and green electricity – Encirc**

First ultra low carbon glass by 2025

[Encirc move towards hydrogen melting | Glass Worldwide Magazine](https://www.glassworldwide.com/news/encirc-move-towards-hydrogen-melting)

- **First to have an all-electric vehicle manufacturing plant in the UK – Vauxhall**

https://www.bing.com/search?q=vauxhall+all+electric+vehicle+manufacturing+ellesmere+port&gs=n&form=QBRE&msbrank=1_1_0&sp=-1&pg=vauxhall+all+electric+vehicle+manufacturing+ellesmere+por&sc=1-57&sk=&cvid=4D0B577D4F364A7A83499DFA5424A3F8

- Cheshire and Warrington LEP very much welcomes Stellantis/ Vauxhall’s decision to investment in a new model at Ellesmere Port, one of the largest and best known manufacturers in our region, securing hundreds of jobs and thousands more in the supply chain
- The decision to invest in a new electric van fits with the LEP’s ambitions for Ellesmere Port to be the UK’s first net zero carbon industrial cluster
- Local partners (LEP, CWAC, Cheshire College) have worked hard to create a local investment package that complements the Government’s support
- Our local investment package includes business rate discount, a skills and training package through the College and crucially an energy investment programme* that will help the plant to achieve net zero carbon by 2030.
- This means that not only will the vehicles coming out the Vauxhall plant in Ellesmere Port be green, the plant itself will be green

*Note – the energy investment package will support the plant to improve its energy efficiency and switch to green energy sources and includes a range of investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency measures that will help the plant to reach a net zero carbon position by 2030.

- **First hydrogen refuelling station in the NW – Storengy/CEC**

Project Vanguard - Storengy UK, in partnership with Cheshire East Council, has built the first green hydrogen refuelling station of its kind in the NW in Middlewich, Cheshire. The facility produces hydrogen in the greenest way possible – using an electrolyser connected to solar panels. This will provide safe, clean hydrogen fuel, which will be pumped into dual-fuel bin trucks used by the Council and a Storengy works vehicle. The project will see a reduction of diesel usage by more than 10,000 litres per year, reducing CO2 emissions and improving local air quality benefits.

- **First plastic to hydrogen recycling unit consented in the UK – Protos (Peel) and associated low carbon projects**

[Planning Consent for UK's First Waste Plastics to Hydrogen Facility at Protos Site | Waste Management World \(waste-management-world.com\)](#)

[UK's First £165m Plastic Park to Recycle 367,500 Tonnes of Plastic \(energyindustryreview.com\)](#) (in planning currently)

BECCS Project [Ince Biomass plant chosen as site for innovative carbon capture technology project \(protos.co.uk\)](#)

- **First most densely monitored low voltage network in the UK (and possibly the world) for smart energy innovation – EA Technology/SPEN/Energy Innovation District**

Delivering Network Visibility in Cheshire's Energy Innovation District ([Delivering Network Visibility | Net Zero Cheshire \(eatechnology.com\)](#))

As we continue on our transition to Net Zero, data, particularly from the low voltage network, will become increasingly important. Historically, there has been little requirement for detailed data relating to this part of the electrical network, but new demands on the network, from our cars, to the way we heat/cool, or power our homes and the ways (and locations) we generate electricity will change the traditional power flows, creating the need to monitor and manage it.

Led by EA Technology in partnership with SP Energy Networks, this project is facilitating secure, low carbon and equitable energy in the region – promoting indigenous growth, encouraging inward investment and stimulating innovation. We have installed our VisNet monitoring equipment into 673 Low Voltage (LV) substations within the Energy Innovation District sub-region (Chester, Ellesmere Port, Frodsham). This has created one of, if not the most monitored LV electricity networks in the world. We are providing near real-time data streams from the LV network, improving network reliability, and providing the visibility to facilitate active consumer engagement.

They are also working with SP Energy Networks to monitor power usage at COP26 in Glasgow using the same technology.

- **(subject to planning) First sustainable aviation fuel pipeline direct to airport in the UK – Fulcrum Northpoint**

Manchester Airports Group (MAG) and Fulcrum BioEnergy recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishing a partnership committed to develop and deliver Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) in the UK. The transport of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) direct from the proposed production plant in Stanlow, Cheshire, Fulcrum Northpoint, to Manchester Airport via an existing pipeline will be a first for the UK. The MOU looks to maximise the opportunities SAF can bring to the North West and the UK by decarbonising aviation, promoting the circular economy, supporting a sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and promoting green skills and green jobs.

And the announcement last week that Fulcrum will create its first bio-refinery facility outside the US in a deal with Essar's subsidiary company Stanlow Terminals Limited.¹

¹ <http://www.essaroil.co.uk/news/sustainable-aviation-fuel-plant-set-for-take-off-at-stanlow/>

- **One of the first areas in the UK to put together a comprehensive decarbonisation investment plan. *Net Zero Blueprint* ([Invest Net Zero Cheshire | Net Zero Cheshire \(eatechnology.com\)](#))**

This will help to unlock £1bn of capital investment in a net zero carbon industrial cluster, via Invest Net Zero Cheshire. This forecasts more than 30,000 green jobs in low carbon industries and the projects offer long-term, sustainable investment opportunities in net zero.

Our local Ellesmere Port industrial region faces very significant challenges in meeting the UK government's legal commitments to reducing industrial CO2 emissions, providing opportunities for external investment to decarbonise industry and create more jobs from further renewable / low carbon schemes. This first-of-its-kind scheme is delivering a blueprint for unlocking capital investment to achieve a net zero carbon industrial cluster in the Ellesmere Port region and will define a range of future local energy system designs to inform a range of investment opportunities. This included 18 projects which total some £1.5bn capex between now and 2030 in infrastructure, energy generation / distribution / storage, control systems, and related products and services.

- ***Net Zero Cheshire Project* ([Building Decarbonisation | Net Zero Cheshire \(eatechnology.com\)](#))**

EA Technology: Originally inspired by our desire to decarbonise our own headquarters, we are working on the delivery of what will be a fully operational demonstration of an integrated net carbon-zero smart energy building. It is actively complemented by energy storage and an electric vehicle charging system, but crucially applied to an existing building, not a greenfield site.

We have built an interactive website as a portal for companies to learn how to apply these systems to their own premises. Its smart tools will show, amongst many features, where to make your fastest carbon reductions, how to improve energy efficiency, the source of electricity supply and understanding and taking control of energy usage. Our downloadable 'Installation and Operating Manual' guidebook will aid replication elsewhere, for anyone interested in delivering a similar system.

- **Warrington's Own Buses**

Warrington Council were successful in their bid to Government on Zero Emissions Buses, winning over £20m from the **ZEBRA (Zero Emission Bus Regional Area) Fund**, as one of 6 shortlisted authorities submitting full business cases. The project will see all 120 buses in the Warrington Own Buses fleet replaced with new electric vehicles by Summer 2023, and will run in parallel with the new bus depot project in the town centre. **The project cost is £50m, of which there is £20m in grant funding.** The project will enable Warrington's Own Buses (WOB), the Council's arm's length bus company, to roll out an electric fleet as well as providing associated charging infrastructure which would be available to all other bus operators in the town.

The Council is currently in the process of relocating the WOB's existing depot to free up a prime site for regeneration as part of the Southern Gateway plans and we are using the Getting Building Fund to enable provision to be made for it to become an electric bus depot. It will be powered by electricity generated by Warrington Borough Council's investments in Solar Farms, thereby maximizing its green credentials. The scheme is a key component in supporting the town's sustainable growth by encouraging attractive alternatives to the car as well as halting the decline in bus patronage which Cheshire and Warrington has experienced over the last few years.