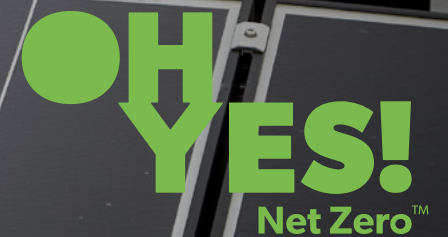


# DELIVERING NET ZERO FOR HULL

**Rachael Laughton**  
Quality Assurance Executive  
Springfield Solutions

**Matt Dass**  
Managing Director  
Springfield Solutions



# Contents

2022/23



Creating the Oh Yes! movement



Lessons so far



Case studies



# Delivering Net Zero for Hull

I am delighted to note the progress which Oh Yes! Net Zero has made since I came to launch the campaign in Hull in 2022.

What happens in our cities really matters as they account for 70% of global emissions: we all want healthier cities and healthier lives on the path to Net Zero. There is so much work being delivered on green energy in our former industrial heartlands: Net Zero will not only clean up the environment but create millions of new green jobs around the world and add to economic prosperity.

I wish the campaign success as it moves into its second year and continues to be an example of how place-based approaches can help deliver Net Zero progress.

**Rt Hon Sir Alok Sharma**

MP COP26 President



## Climate change - the challenge and opportunity

Record heat and terrible flooding - climate change is suddenly here. And it's not just a threat to faraway lands but a reality for us all as our planet gets hotter.

Hull roasted in a breathtaking record of nearly 36C during the summer of 2022. The UK's all-time high above 40C was endured down the road at Coningsby in Lincolnshire. Runways melted, rail tracks buckled, the elderly suffered.

**But there is good news: an incredible opportunity to head off future climate dangers and at the same time boost hard-pressed regions including the Humber. That's where Net Zero comes in.**

It's an approach that brings multiple benefits: new jobs in offshore wind and carbon capture; lower energy bills in better-insulated homes and workplaces; and cleaner air and lower carbon emissions making everyone's lives healthier and safer.

More than three hundred communities around the UK are now committed to some kind of action along these lines, together with a staggering 13,000 cities worldwide. So Hull is not alone. But it is at the forefront of the movement, and it was great to see Oh Yes! Net Zero singled out for praise in the international setting of the COP27 climate summit in November 2022.

Tragically, the war in Ukraine adds new urgency. Sky-high gas prices mean it's essential to use energy more efficiently and also to turn to more wind and solar power because they're cheaper and homegrown. Net Zero is key to delivering that.

No one is pretending it's easy. There are serious challenges. A recent UK review for ministers highlighted a long list of obstacles including a lack of funding, confusion around planning and uncertainty about government policy. But it concluded that local initiatives are a vital element.

And Hull is showing the way. Not many cities can boast a newly-announced council district heating scheme, an NHS Trust with its own solar park, pioneering climate classes in secondary schools and more than 150 partners from the public and private sectors, organisations large and small, coming together to push for Net Zero.

The Skidmore review suggests picking one city as a 'trailblazer' to showcase what's achievable by 2030. In my view, the choice is obvious.

### David Shukman

Former Science Editor - BBC News



Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust Solar Park - 'Field of Dreams'

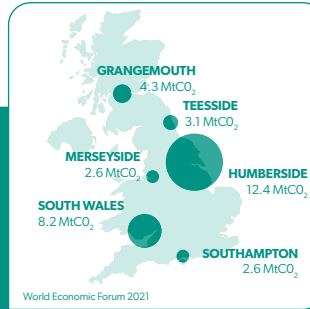
### Founding members



# Delivering Net Zero for Hull

## The challenge

Hull and the Humber is critical to the UK government achieving Net Zero by 2050. It's the UK's largest emitting industrial cluster with **12 million tonnes of CO2 emissions produced per year.**



## The opportunity

The region will flourish by leading on climate. We have the furthest to go, but the most to gain.

Public and private sectors coming together creates more than the sum of their parts - boosting local jobs and economic prosperity.

## What we need - clarity

To give organisations greater confidence to invest in Net Zero and speed up their transition, we need **clarity** on government's Net Zero priorities and policies at a national and local level.

**£150M+**

Combined climate change investment already committed by five Oh Yes! Net Zero members alone.

## Our member pledge



**REAL support**

for local organisations to achieve Net Zero

[www.ohyesnetzero.co.uk](http://www.ohyesnetzero.co.uk)  
[Hello@OhYesNetZero.co.uk](mailto:Hello@OhYesNetZero.co.uk)



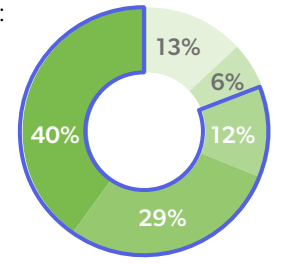
## Our progress so far

Total Oh Yes! Net Zero member organisations: **150+**

Total number of direct employees engaged through Oh Yes! Net Zero members: **46,500**

Organisation split by employees:

- Micro (1-9) **40%**
- Small (10-49) **29%**
- Medium (50-249) **12%**
- Large (250-999) **6%**
- Extra Large (1000+) **13%**



**80%** of our members are SMEs (Small Medium Enterprises <250 employees)

A recent sample survey\* of our members showed:

- 70%+** have a carbon reduction plan.
- Over 50%** will share plans publicly.
- 60%+** sharing their plans with employees.

**50%+** of member organisations actively engaged through Oh Yes! best practice events.

Climate changemakers education programme for Hull's **16,000** secondary school pupils entitled 'Protect Our Future'.

## Founding members



\*Representative sample with 80% surveyed being Small Medium Enterprises.

# Proud history leaves environmental cost



## The history

**Hull has been a centre of industry for over 700 years.**

In 1293, Edward I bought the port and “Kingston upon Hull” became a vital part of medieval Britain’s economy. Lead, bricks, wool and tiles flowed out of the city while shipments of wood, for use in the thriving shipbuilding trade, entered from the Baltics.

With the building of the canal system in the 18th century, Hull became a gateway to early industrial Britain. By the end of the 19th century, it was one of Europe’s busiest ports, with trade from Asia, Africa, the US and the Far East leaving and entering Britain via the Humber.

In the 20th century, fishing boomed, as did new kinds of manufacturing. Hull became a major maker of metal boxes, caravans and many other artefacts of modern life. Hull, more than most cities, can claim to have made the country we live in today.

## Oh Yes! Net Zero

**This industrial heritage is rightly a source of local pride. But centuries as a centre of industry have had one major cost — the environment.**

Today, the area around the Humber Estuary emits 12 million tonnes of CO2 a year, more than any other UK region, and three times the amount of industrial emissions produced by London. In Europe, only Germany’s Ruhr Valley emits more.

The UK hopes to achieve Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The rate of emissions reductions needs to increase substantially if we are to meet that goal, and this will be impossible unless the Humber’s emissions are radically reduced. Quite simply, if Hull and the Humber cannot achieve Net Zero, the UK can’t either.

With this in mind, and in recognition of the city’s vulnerability to flooding and rising sea levels, Hull City Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and at the same time set a target of carbon neutrality by 2030. It soon became clear that such an ambitious goal could only be achieved if local businesses, organisations and the wider community joined forces.

In 2021, Hull City Council, the University of Hull, Future Humber and Reckitt came together to make a plan. Then, in March 2022, at a ceremony attended by the President of COP26, Oh Yes! Net Zero was born.

The objective is to drastically accelerate Hull’s progress toward Net Zero, with the longer term mission of transforming Hull into a world leader on urban decarbonisation. The movement will encourage cooperation among local businesses and organisations, and create wider awareness among schools, public bodies and the community about ways to reduce emissions. Everyone can get involved — from households to community groups, and micro-businesses to multinationals.

## Reckitt: believing in Hull

For Reckitt, the project is the latest chapter of a story that began when two brothers opened a detergent factory in the city in 1840. Since then, Reckitt has taken an active interest in Hull’s economic and civic life. It employs 1,800 people on its Hull Campus and in 2019, invested £200 million in the area – including the single largest investment in the company’s history to build the Science and Innovation Centre. As Chief Medical Officer Bruce Charlesworth said: “We believe our business will only flourish if Hull flourishes.”



**Dr Bruce Charlesworth**  
Chief Medical Officer at Reckitt  
and Hull Campus Lead

# Creating the Oh Yes! movement



## Activity and impact

**We knew, given the scale of Oh Yes! Net Zero, that success would require buy-in from the whole city. Businesses, community groups, or local government could not do it alone.**

Instead, we would need a unified effort, in which every strand of Hull society, from schools to businesses to community organisations, played their part. As Reckitt's Peter Edwards said at the launch event: "It is only by igniting the passion of the entire community that we can move forward and build a greener, more prosperous Hull."

This vision, for a Hull renewed by a sprint into a green future, will obviously take time to fully materialise. However, progress made over the last twelve months has been hugely encouraging. Knowledge has been shared. Partnerships and networks have formed. Dozens of organisations, who before 2022 had made little progress on cutting their emissions, took their first steps on the road toward Net Zero. Though the project has just begun, the progress made in its first year, against a backdrop of enormous geopolitical and economic challenges, makes us confident we are on track.



Oh Yes! Net Zero Launch at the Reckitt Science and Innovation Centre



## STEP 1: ENGAGING BUSINESSES

### What we did – launching the network

On a sunny day in March 2022, at the Reckitt Science and Innovation Centre in Hull, a group of like-minded community and business leaders launched the Oh Yes! Net Zero movement. The event was chaired by former BBC science editor David Shukman and speakers included the Reckitt CEO and Rt Hon Sir Alok Sharma MP, President of COP26. Their words, delivered to an audience of businesses and community leaders from across Hull, reflected on the city's proud history of innovation, and on the importance of decarbonisation to the broader quest to "level up" the UK. "The campaign brings private and public sectors together and asks every individual, household and organisation to help and make a difference across the Hull and Humberside areas," said Sharma.

Nearly 100 people attended the event, including Professor Susan Lea, then Vice Chancellor of Hull University, and a group of local students from the pioneering education project "Protect our Future". For those who could not be there in person, a live stream was set up. Nearly 800 people tuned in remotely.

The launch marked the beginning of a new era of innovative collaboration between business, local government and the community in Hull. Speakers acknowledged Net Zero cannot be achieved by any one part of society. Rather, it requires the city to stand as one, with public institutions, businesses and families each contributing to the cause.

## Impact

The launch aimed to bring the city together and unite everyone behind the plan to achieve Net Zero. But it was also an opportunity to get businesses and organisations signed up to the project. Ahead of the event, we set targets, both for the launch and for our ongoing engagement with local organisations, designed to measure our reach and impact. We set targets for project signatories, social media followers and launch attendees.

**All were met. We wanted 30 companies to sign up at the launch; 70 did. We doubled our target for the number of social media followers. Our strong start has been sustained. By March 2023, we aimed to have 100 members; today we have over 150.**

Actual

70

Target

30

Launch

Actual

150+

Target

100

Year 1



**Lucy Jones**  
Marketing Executive  
Ideal Heating



**Jason Speedy**  
Chief Operations Officer  
Ideal Heating

**ideal**  
HEATING

Oh Yes! Net Zero Member

# Creating the Oh Yes! movement



## STEP 2: HELPING ORGANISATIONS CHANGE

### What we did – offering practical help

Running a business is difficult enough without worrying about Net Zero. This is especially true for smaller companies, many of whom lack the resource to measure, let alone curtail, carbon use. That's why we worked quickly to establish a series of events and activities that offered tips and guidance to encourage immediate behaviour change. Pat Coyle from law firm Rollits stated that: "Even by making small changes you can help."

When an organisation signs up to Oh Yes! Net Zero, they receive a business support toolkit, and an invitation to join one or more "workstreams," which currently give specialist advice across four categories. Signatories also receive the regular newsletter, which gives progress on the initiative, information on events, as well as case studies, tips and ideas about small changes that organisations can make to reduce emissions. In return, members are asked to make and share a Net Zero "Roadmap," and report on progress annually. They are also encouraged to become advocates for the project. Our aim is for every member to enlist staff, supply chains, customers, other local organisations and the wider community in the quest for Net Zero.

**Simon Tempest**  
Director Product and Technical  
Willerby

**Chloe Casey**  
Digital Marketing  
Apprentice  
Willerby

**Simon Abey**  
Facilities Coordinator  
Willerby

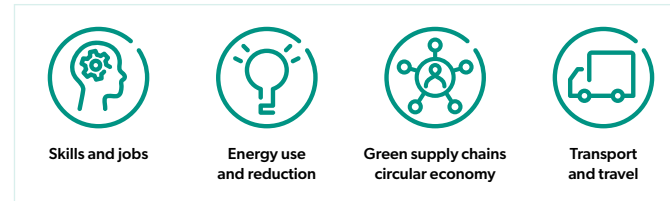


Oh Yes! Net Zero Member

### Workstreams: a forum for Hull to go green together

From the start of the initiative, we knew success would depend on a culture of innovative collaboration between local businesses, community groups and public sector organisations.

The project's four workstreams – Skills and jobs; Energy use and reduction; Green supply chains circular economy; Transport and travel - hold regular meetings where members share insights and experiences, discuss challenges, and think of new ways to achieve Net Zero within the particular theme.



Oh Yes! Net Zero Workstreams

Last year, the four groups arranged expert guest speakers, webinars, site visits and other activities to further their agendas. For example, the Skills and jobs group held sessions on green jobs and retraining opportunities. The Energy use and reduction group, meanwhile, is gearing up to launch "Carbon Clinics", where large local companies advise and mentor smaller ones on reducing carbon.

### Helping members every step of the way

Beyond the newsletter and workstream meetings, Oh Yes! Net Zero arranged regular activities for members embarking on their Net Zero path. Recently, this included a virtual panel where experts from financial institutions and Hull City Council outlined funding opportunities available to businesses committed to going green. Beth Bellingham from Helix CMS said these resources were very helpful. "It's the type of service and support firms would expect to pay for."

The movement also invites its members to attend and speak about Net Zero at local events, such as Humber Business Week, and raises awareness of its work at business events with senior policymakers. Last year, project representatives spoke to Shadow Secretary of State for Climate Change and Net Zero Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP and Rt Hon Chris Skidmore MP, the former minister who led the government's Independent Review of Net Zero. We want the country and the world to know that Hull is leading the way on decarbonisation.

### Impact

The culture of collaboration and dialogue sparked by the Oh Yes! Net Zero movement has become an important source of ideas and support for members. Even at this early stage, businesses have started to make fundamental changes. A significant number now have a Carbon Reduction Plan – a policy document that sets out how they plan to reduce their carbon over a specified time frame. Many also have a dedicated "Net Zero Champion".

Members also report that the initiative is delivering "added value" by creating a "safe space" for businesses to share problems, learn lessons, and help each other. Workstream meetings and member events have created a sense of community where members have struck up new networks and partnerships.

Ideal Heating's Jason Speedy said this collaborative approach is one of the major strengths of the project, given the nature of the challenge: "Unless we collectively get together and make a start, we're never going to change. It's critical that the region comes together to attack this problem."

It was through this collaboration that his company developed a partnership with Hull City Council to trial new heat pump technology in local houses. Adding energy efficient heat pumps to existing housing stock will be vital for the UK's Net Zero ambitions. Ideal Heating's collaboration with Hull City Council, called "Living with a Heat Pump," will test the retrofitting experience on five houses provided by the city. "We will monitor the installation experience, and also how members of the public deal with the new technology," explained Jason, who hopes the project will yield valuable insights, not just for Hull but the whole of the UK.



Ideal Heating Air Source Heat Pump



## A reflection on progress

Oh Yes! Net Zero launched in March 2022 in the midst of the UK's pandemic recovery, shortly after the invasion of Ukraine sparked a global fuel crisis. Given these economic and political conditions, we are encouraged by the enthusiastic participation from businesses and community groups across Hull. This enthusiasm has been sustained: after a much larger than expected number of businesses signed up at launch, we exceeded our targets for new members every month. This is all the more impressive given the growing cost of living crisis, which continues to affect homes and businesses across Hull.

**Our experience over this difficult year suggests a dawning realisation among Hull's businesses and organisations, that Net Zero is not a "luxury" to be sacrificed when costs rise, or demand slows. It is, in fact, fundamental to the sustainable success of business and to Hull's status as a city where we want to live and work.**



**Karl Turner MP**  
MP for Kingston upon Hull East

I am delighted to see the significant progress Oh Yes! Net Zero has made in the last year in our great city of Hull, with local community programmes driving real progress.

The commitment from all the members - from convenor Reckitt to local SMEs - further reinforces my belief that Hull can be one of the first Net Zero cities, and that this model can be an exemplar for other cities around the UK.



**Cllr Mike Ross**  
Leader of Hull City Council Councillor

The Council is proud to be a founding partner of Oh Yes! Net Zero, working alongside others in supporting the city to meet its carbon reduction targets. Oh Yes! Net Zero is playing a vital part in enabling the private and public sector to come together, learn from each other's experiences and develop carbon reduction solutions. Being part of a business-led initiative is important for the Council and helps ensure that, in our 'place-making' role, we provide the green infrastructure to genuinely support businesses and residents. Understanding the needs of the community and local organisations as we move to Net Zero will ensure a thriving green economy ready for the future.



**Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson MP**  
MP for Kingston upon Hull North

Addressing climate change requires a cross-economy approach, with businesses of all sectors and sizes working in tandem to make progress.

Oh Yes! Net Zero is the perfect demonstration of this in practice, showing how businesses in Hull are taking the lead to galvanise local action and drive Net Zero progress and green growth simultaneously.



**Emma Hardy MP**  
MP for Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle

Local public-private collaboration is fundamental to delivering a Net Zero future and Oh Yes! Net Zero shows that when businesses and organisations work together, real change is possible.

The business leadership from the member companies is vital to delivering this transformation in Hull, and I look forward to continuing to work with Oh Yes! Net Zero to deliver a new green economy for our city.

# Lessons so far

In our first year, we spurred action from thousands of people and over 150 local organisations. We are proud of what we achieved and what we've learned along the way.

In this section, we consider the toughest challenges faced in year one of the initiative. We also reflect on how these can be overcome as we move forward.



Protect Our Future Climate Changemakers Event



## THE SMALLER YOU ARE, THE HARDER IT IS

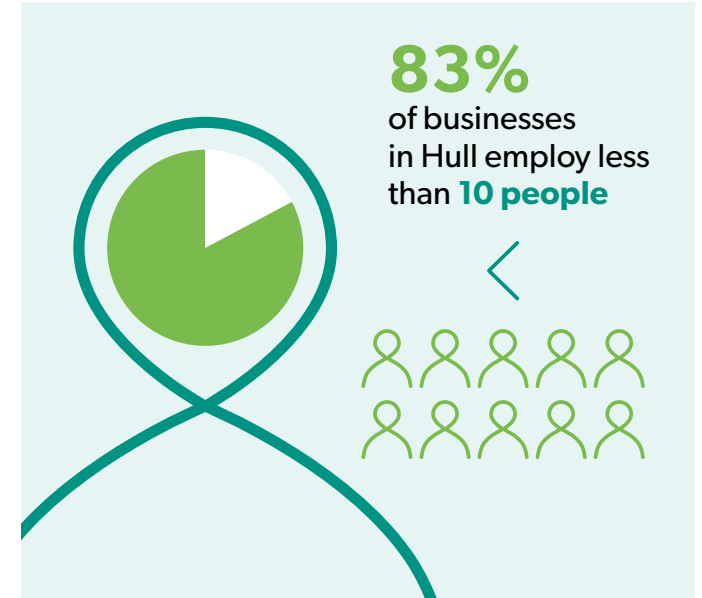
### Encompassing every kind of organisation

One of our main aims is to build a movement encompassing every kind of organisation, from the smallest businesses to medium-sized enterprises to large public sector institutions. Small businesses play a far greater role in the region than in other parts of the UK. In fact, 83% of firms in Hull employ less than 10 people. Helping all these become more sustainable is critical to the region's Net Zero ambitions — but it's also an enormous challenge.

We found that within our membership, the smallest organisations faced the greatest obstacles on the path to Net Zero. Microbusinesses lack the financial cushion of SMEs. They mostly operate day-to-day without the time or resources to make strategic decisions or plan over the longer term. For many, dedicating hours to designing and implementing a Net Zero strategy is a luxury they simply cannot afford.

### A "finance-first" approach - with mentoring, too

Members believe a "finance-first" approach is the best way to include micro-businesses in the Net Zero conversation. For companies with a small number of employees, it's a question of selling them on how much money they can save. Of course, being convinced is just the start. They then need to muster the resources and energy to actually change. One way to encourage this is through schemes like the "Carbon Clinic", where the smallest businesses are set to be helped by larger companies further on with Net Zero. Over the last year, this mentoring approach proved popular and effective, so we recommend widening and formalising it. Large companies could include these activities in their societal impact commitments, with skilled staff lending expertise and time to help micro-companies calculate carbon footprints and make carbon reduction plans.



**Caroline Morris**  
Head of Wellbeing, Health,  
Safety and Sustainability  
KCOM

**KCOM**

Oh Yes! Net Zero Member



**Pat Coyle**  
Director of Marketing  
and Client Relations  
Rollits

**Rollits** <sup>LLP</sup>

Oh Yes! Net Zero Member

# Lessons so far



## COLLABORATION KEY TO SCOPE 3

A common quandary in our first year was measurement of emissions. To reduce carbon, you first need to know how much you're emitting. But arriving at an accurate figure is complex. As Matt Dass from packaging company Springfield Solutions said, "It can be hard for [businesses] to set an improvement if they don't know where they are."

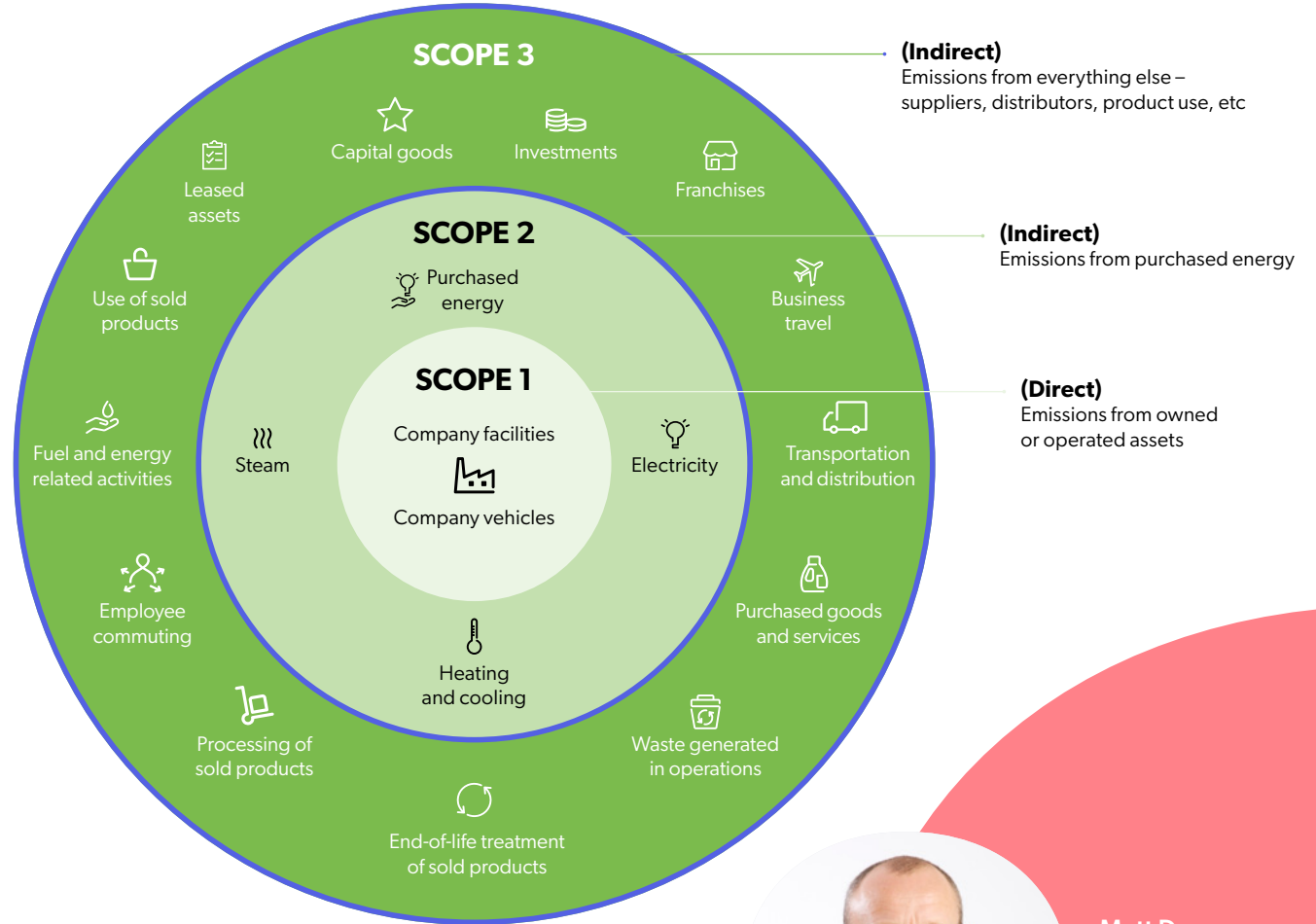
Businesses hoping to reduce emissions usually follow the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol. The global standard for managing emissions, this distinguishes between Scope 1 emissions (emissions directly caused by your business); Scope 2 (indirect emissions from the energy you buy); and Scope 3 (indirect emissions throughout your supply chain). Scope 3 typically makes up three quarters of a company's emissions, and can reach close to 100 percent in some industries, for example financial services.

Measuring Scope 3 emissions is challenging because it relies on data beyond the reach of most businesses. For some members, uncertainty over Scope 3 was the one thing that stood in the way of setting a Net Zero target. As Matt said: "We don't know our Scope 3 emissions, so how can we commit to a figure?" Others, such as Caroline Morris from KCOM, reported setting different timelines for cutting Scope 3 emissions, in part because of measurement issues.

### Local supply chains are easier to measure

"Buying local" reinvigorates local economies and reduces risk of supply disruption, but it also limits carbon. For example, the Hull NHS Trust is looking to source a far greater proportion of patient meals locally. Currently, thousands of these are produced and delivered from Wales.

Local councils could publish the average footprint for a range of local business sectors, and demonstrate how these local suppliers have smaller footprints than non-local or international equivalents. This would also help companies calculate, and therefore reduce, their Scope 3 footprints.



**Matt Dass**  
Managing Director  
Springfield Solutions



Oh Yes! Net Zero Member

# Lessons so far



## GOVERNMENT CLARITY WILL SPEED TRANSITION

Many Oh Yes! Net Zero members said the initiative offered useful insights and access to local decision makers. For example, KCOM's Caroline Morris said, "It is important we have connections within the city and region, to understand the pace of change, hearing ideas and sharing our thoughts on how we can support it."

But many members found their Net Zero efforts were hampered by a lack of clarity over government priorities, or conflicting policies and regulations. For example, when Springfield Solutions installed electric vehicle charging points in the company car park, energy providers would only negotiate if the company building was included in the package, surging electricity costs made this prohibitively expensive. At the time of publishing this report, the charge points remain installed but not in use.

Several of our members wanted to install energy saving solutions to their business properties but have been thwarted through planning or Conservation Area restrictions.

Jason Speedy from Ideal Heating said business planning and R&D investment was hampered by uncertainty over the government's ambitions on electrification and hydrogen. The national shortage of skills in the thermodynamics sector was a problem, too. He also mentioned the challenge of transitioning from traditional boilers to environmentally friendly heat pumps without knowing more about how these new technologies are likely to be regulated.

## A clearer path to Net Zero

These are no doubt typical of businesses UK-wide, where conflicting policies at a national and local level are hampering Net Zero ambitions. The government should consider a stronger role for local authorities and regions in creating tailored Net Zero plans linked to the high profile Levelling Up strategy. A locally administered Net Zero Statutory Duty, with authority and funding, would be a bold step. Here local authorities would be tasked with creating place-based energy reduction plans encompassing street lighting, public transport, electrification and council buildings. These could include Net Zero incentives linked to business rates and council tax, and reforms of local planning and conservation guidance to encourage renewable energy and insulation. A more locally-focused Build Back Greener strategy might also include local economic growth plans that support the sustainability agenda, with local skills, business and capital investment initiatives that promote Net Zero industries, technology, building methods, and skills requirements.

Clarity and localisation of the national Net Zero strategy would certainly help to overcome challenges encountered by businesses. However, the government may also need to look again at the funding available for these plans. Bold subsidisation for carbon reduction could jump-start progress, particularly when businesses and households are feeling financially squeezed.



## GREEN FUNDING NEEDS SIMPLIFICATION

Amid economic uncertainty, carbon reduction can seem like an unaffordable luxury, and peripheral to everyday business concerns. Future Humber MD Diana Taylor believes Net Zero can be sold to businesses as a cost saver, but warns the short-term costs of transition could be prohibitive in this economic environment. "Long term savings will come out of it," she said. "But short term, it costs money and headspace." Louise Smith from the Aura, at University of Hull said "economic and social struggles" make it more difficult to attend meetings and take steps to reduce emissions. "It's a lot to expect from people," she said, especially when they barely "have time to do their day job." Interviews with other members back this up. Pat Coyle from Rollits, for example, said "the cost of changing to more sustainable infrastructure is rarely straightforward."

## A leg up into the green future

The government needs to give more support to businesses trying to do the right thing. The Oh Yes! Net Zero movement hosted a workshop outlining the sources of funding available to help businesses reduce waste and emissions, but the grant landscape is complicated and limited in scope. The government could both increase the grant funding available and merge it into a single pot, as well as offer social investment loans, for small businesses seeking to implement their Net Zero plans.

This would not only accelerate the progress towards the national Net Zero target, it would also be an important investment in business infrastructure nation-wide. Funding the transition to energy efficiency and sustainable energy is a better use of government resources than giving lump-sums to businesses to meet the spiralling cost of carbon-based energy.



**Diana Taylor**  
Managing Director  
Future Humber



**Oh Yes! Net Zero**  
Founding Partner



**Louise Smith**  
Director  
Aura University of Hull



**Oh Yes! Net Zero**  
Founding Partner

# Ideal Heating

## Pump-priming a Net Zero future – how an important local employer is transforming its business from traditional boilers to air source heat pumps.

Ideal Heating, the UK's leading heating manufacturer, was founded in Hull in 1906. Although the company had "been on a decarbonisation mission for a long time," **it was only after joining the Oh Yes! Net Zero movement that they recognised the importance of setting a Net Zero target**, says Chief Operating Officer Jason Speedy.

Today, the company is working towards becoming Net Zero by 2035, supported by a 3-yearly strategic plan. This short planning cycle is necessary given the rapidly changing technology and business environment. "Each year brings new challenges," says Jason, who eventually wants to replace gas boilers with energy efficient heat pumps.

For instance, these pumps cost more to store and transport than traditional boilers. Ideal has "literally tripled the size of our logistics warehouse" to make the transition possible. There's also the issue of the long term uncertainty of the government's ambitions on electrification and hydrogen, and the national shortage of skills in the thermodynamics sector hampering its R&D growth.

Jason chairs the movement's energy use and reduction workstream, where Hull businesses meet to support each other on Net Zero. He explains: "We didn't want it to be a talking shop. We wanted to create real action. We wanted businesses to take the lead and really drive this change."

As Chair, Jason has seen how the project has helped his business and others in the region. It enabled Ideal and Hull City Council to come together to pilot Heat Pump technology in five volunteer homes, testing the installation process and user experience. It also created the "Carbon Clinic" where SMEs at the start of their decarbonisation journey get practical help and advice from the region's larger companies who are further along.

Oh Yes! Net Zero has created a community where lessons can be shared and help offered. "Unless we collectively get together and make a start, we're never going to change anything," he says. "I think it's critical that the region comes together to attack this problem." So, for Ideal Heating, helping other local businesses is not just a way of supporting their local supply chains. It also reflects their commitment to the economic prosperity of the region.

**Jason Speedy**  
Chief Operations Officer  
Ideal Heating



**We wanted to create real action.**

Proud to support



# KCOM

## Rewiring a business - powering the city's digital revolution by switching from copper to fibre.

KCOM is one of the best-known brands in Hull. Beginning life as the telephone department of the Hull Municipal Corporation in 1904, KCOM has long been the primary telephone provider to households and businesses in the city. Having launched "fast internet" in 1998 and fibre broadband in 2012 it remains the main landline and internet provider in Hull and East Yorkshire.

The company was involved in Oh Yes! from the very start, explains Caroline Morris, KCOM's Head of Wellbeing, Health, Safety and Sustainability. It was immediately recognised as an important opportunity to connect with other local businesses and the Local Authority. As a company in almost every home in Hull, it also realised the importance of being a sustainable and responsible business.

KCOM has already pledged to cut 90 percent of Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions by 2030, and to reach Net Zero by 2040. It has also committed to switching from copper to fibre networks, a move that would reduce energy use by 35 percent. And it has already installed solar energy in one site, and begun a trial of electric vans.

Caroline has been busy working on bringing all of their sustainability projects together into a coherent plan and identifying what they need to do to keep on track. The Oh Yes! Net Zero initiative has helped with this, she says.

The company has been able to keep abreast of plans for a local district heating network, which could be an important step in their Net Zero roadmap. She says this is an example of a project that needs lots of organisations to come together, and Oh Yes! enables this:

"Oh Yes! does bring benefits – it helps get a critical mass of people together to do something that individually as companies we would struggle to do. That's where the movement is really helpful, bringing partners together. If we all sign up to something, there are things we can do as a bigger body of people and businesses that will benefit the city."

KCOM has also been able to keep up to date with, and contribute to, plans about local EV charging infrastructure, which will be vital to the expansion of its electric van fleet. Caroline explains: "Being part of local conversations [e.g. on local infrastructure] is vital to companies like KCOM. It is important we have connections within the city and region, to understand the pace of change, hearing ideas and sharing our thoughts on how we can support it."

Being part of a joint effort is also important when tackling Scope 3 emissions, which for KCOM (like most other businesses) is the largest source of emissions. Helping other local businesses reduce their Scope 1 and 2 emissions and creating a greener local environment will help KCOM reduce its own Scope 3 emissions – thereby keeping the business on track for Net Zero in 2040.

**Caroline Morris**  
Head of Wellbeing, Health, Safety and Sustainability  
KCOM

# KCOM



Oh Yes! brings benefits – it helps get a critical mass of people together to do something that individually as companies we would struggle to do.

Proud to support

**OH YES!**  
Net Zero™

# Springfield Solutions

**Profiting from Net Zero – small companies must stay resilient and enthuse employees behind their carbon reduction plans.**

Springfield Solutions designs and makes packaging for household, food and beauty brands. Founded in Hull in 1975, it employs 96 people and turns over £10.5m per year. When the company first took steps toward energy efficiency in 2019, the motivation was purely commercial. “Back then we weren’t clued up about Net Zero or climate change,” explains Managing Director Matt Dass. “We just knew we had to save money.”

That changed in March 2022, when Matt attended a three day course on climate change run by Hull University. “It really hit me that this isn’t something that might happen. It will definitely happen. And it will directly affect our children and grandchildren.”

That month also saw the launch of the Oh Yes! Net Zero movement, and Matt joined the steering committee. He had valuable lessons to share. Between 2019-2022 his company had invested in efficient LED lighting, switched to a completely renewable energy plan, installed 96 solar panels on the roof and added submeters to 49 pieces of equipment - all part-funded by local government grants.

Matt has become acutely aware of the challenges faced by businesses seeking to decarbonise. The biggest, he says, is getting employees engaged enough to change their behaviour. “You can’t just tell people to change. You have to make them understand why it’s important.”

Matt says the smallest companies face the biggest obstacles to going green. “For companies with 4-5 employees, it’s a question of selling them on how much money they can save. But also making them aware that if you’re not focusing on Net Zero now, by 2050 you’re not going to have a business.”

During the first year of Oh Yes! Net Zero, good intentions were occasionally thwarted by economic reality. When Matt used government funding to install electric vehicle charge points in his company car park, energy providers initially refused to quote the charge points alone and would only negotiate if the building rates were included too. As his building was already on an extremely competitive fixed rate, still with several years to run, Matt refused to negotiate. The energy provider would later return, offering a rate for the charge points that was 500% more than Matt was already paying for the whole of the main building.

Matt could not justify this financial hit and at the time of publishing this report, the charge points remain installed but sadly not in use. If business owners are to make investments in energy efficiency, they need support from the government to ensure the full process is addressed and connected.

**Matt Dass**  
Managing Director  
Springfield Solutions



Springfield  
Solutions

**You can't just tell people to change. You have to make them understand why it's important.**

Proud to support



OH  
YES!  
Net Zero™



**We didn't have some of the huge changes that others have had to make, but even by making small changes you can help.**

Proud to support

**OH  
YES!**  
Net Zero™

# Rollits

**The service sector is crucial to Net Zero too – local service firms should not underestimate the critical role they have to play.**

Rollits is one of Yorkshire's leading law firms, with offices in Hull and York. With around 100 employees, it is also one of the larger businesses in Hull, but as a primarily office based service, its Net Zero approach looks quite different to some of its local counterparts in manufacturing and production.

"We didn't have some of the huge changes that others have had to make," explains Pat, "but even by making small changes you can help." Rollits' employees have long been interested in sustainability and supportive of more environmentally friendly working practices. Even before Oh Yes! Net Zero, the company had switched to LED lighting and staff had organised a beach clean.

Rollits was involved with Oh Yes! Net Zero from the beginning. The firm wanted to be involved in something that would "give tips and signpost ideas, initiatives, suggestions." In addition to energy efficient lighting, Rollits now uses eco-friendly printing materials and has adopted a "paper lite" approach, using electronic documents and signatures as much as possible. Meanwhile, movement sensors in meeting rooms ensure lights are turned off when everyone leaves the room. Pat explains that Oh Yes! "Made us question and think outside the box about the things we could do."

They have considered bolder initiatives, such as solar panels on office roofs, and EV charging points in the car park. They also wanted to remove their boilers and install heat pumps, however, the cost was prohibitive so instead opted for more efficient traditional boilers. Pat says "the cost of changing to a more sustainable infrastructure is rarely straightforward."

Rollits recognises that sustainability will become a more important factor in tender and accreditation applications. In this sense, aiming for Net Zero is not just the right thing to do, it's also the right thing for the business. Rollits hopes the movement continues to stretch the company's thinking on the sustainability steps they can take as a mainly office-based organisation.

**Pat Coyle**

Director of Marketing and Client Relations  
Rollits

Rollits <sup>LLP</sup>





# Climate changemakers

**A new generation of Net Zero leaders – how Hull’s secondary school pupils are picking up the climate change mantle.**

Today’s schoolchildren did not cause the region’s significant carbon emissions. But they will be behind the ideas that rectify the challenges caused by previous generations.

The Oh Yes! Net Zero launch event in March 2022 marked the beginning of the ‘Protect Our Future’ schools education programme, delivered in partnership with the 1851 Trust and Hull City Council. Students attending from Malet Lambert School took part in a recycling workshop that has subsequently been rolled out to all the city’s secondary schools.

“When we launched Oh Yes!, we knew we had to engage the whole community,” explains Oh Yes! Net Zero Community Engagement Manager, Melissa Rackham. “Through the ‘Protect Our Future’ programme we can reach up to 16,000 pupils and their families, encouraging them to take local climate action.”

After March’s launch event, Hull secondary schools nominated a group of year seven students as “climate changemakers” - tasked with promoting sustainability initiatives within their schools. In July 2022, over 100 of these students and their teachers attended a day of workshops at the University of Hull. Topics covered included: science communication skills, co-creation of climate education resources, and climate myth busting with Oh Yes! industry partners.

Using materials created by students at the university workshops, four free sustainability education resources were developed for Hull secondary school teachers. “All the stats show pupils want to learn more about climate change at school, but their teachers often don’t feel equipped to teach the topic,” says Melissa. “We wanted to create a climate change curriculum resource pack for them to use.”

Then in October 2022, ‘Protect Our Future’ set the “changemaker challenge,” tasking Hull students with creating a two-minute video showcasing their sustainability work in the community.

Pupils received advice from industry experts EON Visual Media on how to create their short films. Following the workshop, over 90% of the student attendees felt more confident suggesting climate changes their school could make. In April 2023, the videos were screened at a premiere event in front of an audience of their teachers, their families and representatives from Oh Yes! Net Zero member organisations.

“The energy in the room at each of the workshops was amazing.” says Melissa. “All their hands were going up to take part, they were very passionate about their role as climate changemakers.”

**Melissa Rackham**  
Community Engagement Manager  
Oh Yes! Net Zero/Reckitt



Proud to support



# Reckitt

## Marrying the old and the new – making Reckitt’s complex Hull site more sustainable.

The Reckitt campus in Hull spans a new R&D-focused Science and Innovation Centre and a long established manufacturing facility. James Holden, the site’s electrical manager, is part of the team that has been tasked with making the whole operation more sustainable.

“It’s a complex site with two very different challenges,” he explains. The Science and Innovation Centre, which opened in 2019, was built to the highest sustainability standards, with roof-mounted solar cells and technology for harvesting rain-water. Given it is already Gold LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) accredited, the challenge has been to fine-tune and optimise, rather than overhaul.

The manufacturing site, meanwhile, is older, meaning there is much more room for improvement. The factory uses large amounts of electricity and compressed air, but the thing most in need of a sustainable upgrade, says James, is the site’s use of hot water. He explains: “Cleaning things like production suites requires a lot of thermal energy for heating water... At the moment we use gas boilers. If we could replace these with an energy efficient solution, that would make the biggest difference to our site.”

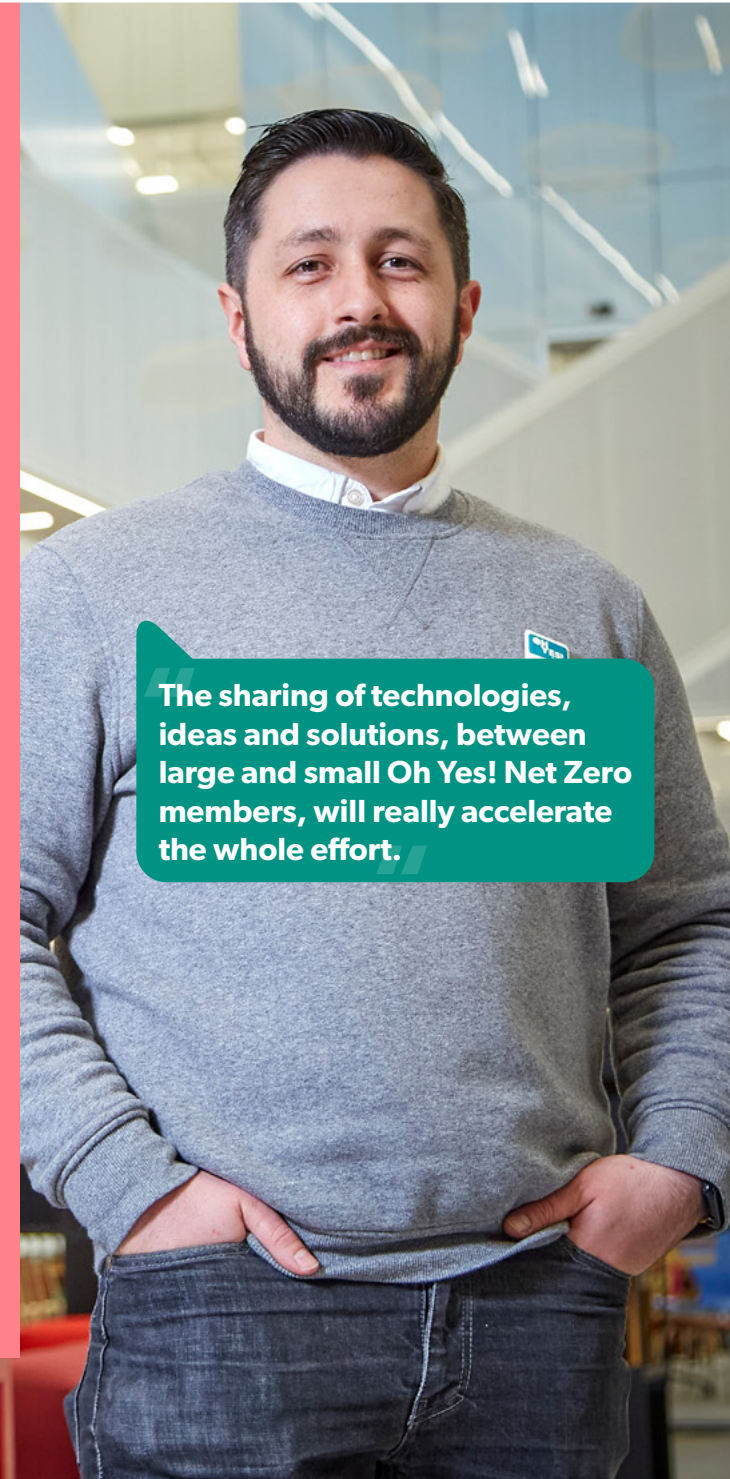
Thanks in part to Oh Yes! Net Zero, these changes are starting to happen. “Off the back of Oh Yes! we hired a consulting firm to write a report about the factory’s energy use, to see where the losses and inefficiencies are. This has made it easier to take the results to management and make the case for action.”

James divides his projects into two workstreams, “internal” and “external.” Internal includes any factory improvements, such as the use of LED lights and energy efficient fans. External refers to utilities and harder to implement technologies, such as ground source heat pumps and air source heat pumps.

One of the biggest challenges is making the case to secure funds for the bigger interventions. “For any large company, even if you know you’re proposing the right thing, you still need to make the case and obtain the approvals to do it. It’s still got to go through financial governance, and we’ve got to make sure it’s a sound investment, whether in the long or short term.”

Looking ahead to the second year of Oh Yes!, James wants to see more sharing of knowledge and best practice. “The solutions that one site may do, others may not have thought of. It’s why [at Reckitt] we’re sharing experiences between factories around the world. The exchange of technologies, ideas and solutions, between large and small Oh Yes! members, will really accelerate the whole effort.”

**James Holden**  
Site Electrical Manager  
Reckitt



**The sharing of technologies, ideas and solutions, between large and small Oh Yes! Net Zero members, will really accelerate the whole effort.**

# Helix CMS

## How a local construction firm is taking an innovative approach to carbon reduction - not letting business expansion get in the way of Net Zero plans.

Helix Construction Management Services is a Hull-based healthcare construction company. Helix adopted carbon reduction initiatives and started their road to Net Zero in 2021.

It's been a "steep learning curve", says business development manager Beth Bellingham. Helix was founded as an eco-conscious company, and quickly decided to match the Net Zero target of 2030 set by their primary NHS partner - Hull University Teaching Hospital Trust.

Beth says Oh Yes! Net Zero has helped the business toward this ambitious target: "Joining was a really good way to support us on that sustainability learning path. We've been able to jump in, obviously as novices, but have been able to get up to speed very quickly."

Over the last six months Helix has implemented an entirely new waste management programme. It now segregates and categorises all waste on site, and works with a local waste management company to recycle and remanufacture the materials that are taken away. Each kilogram of waste is tracked, and between 99-100 percent of their waste is diverted from landfill. Helix has also eliminated single use plastic from its sites, and works with partners to offset emissions. In December 2022, Helix's operational business was certified as a carbon neutral company in partnership with Carbon Neutral Britain.



Beth believes being a new business, without a legacy of carbon intensive infrastructure or procedures, has been an advantage. "We've been able to be agile and dynamic," she says. "The team is responsive to sign off initiatives to support our Net Zero Journey." However, being a new and growing business has its own challenges too. Helix-CMS is starting from a low emissions baseline, but it is growing quickly and will soon expand from a local to a regional company. With growth comes a bigger carbon footprint.

The company is working hard on a strategy of growing "consciously," ensuring every new step they take has been considered from a sustainability angle. The new office, for example, will manage heat transfer, smart metering and solar energy. A second big challenge for Helix is the nature of the business. Being project based, monitoring emissions is a complex endeavour. Every construction project requires a different mix of materials and procedures, some are more carbon intensive than others, and moreover, the design and plans are dictated by the client. This makes tracking carbon usage, and reducing it, complicated.

Nonetheless, Helix has taken big steps in a very short time to get to grips with the Net Zero agenda, and Oh Yes! has supported that. As Beth explains: "There are some really knowledgeable experts in the movement. People sharing their ideas throughout the group is amazing."

**Beth Bellingham**  
Business development manager  
Helix CMS



**Joining was a really good way to support us on that sustainability learning path. We've been able to jump in, obviously as novices, but have been able to get up to speed very quickly.**

# Asking the experts

## David Shukman quizzes Andy Goulsdon and Laura Frost on the broader issues surrounding Net Zero.

**Q:** How do you convince people to prioritise Net Zero when they're worried about the cost of living crisis?

**Andy Goulsdon:** There's a massive overlap between the cost of living crisis and the climate agenda. We're living in houses that are too expensive to heat, and living lifestyles which are inefficient in other ways. Reducing our bills in response to the energy crisis also delivers on Net Zero. It's a shame we didn't do much of that years ago; then we wouldn't be so exposed to this crisis. But I think people can intuitively see that investing in energy efficiency for the future makes us more resilient, and less vulnerable to future shocks. And that helps us with the Net Zero crisis so the two are entirely aligned in my mind.

**Laura Frost:** Some solutions to Net Zero improve cost of living. So, for example, if we had a less centralised energy infrastructure, more investment in local renewables, and a more diverse energy supply network as a result, then we wouldn't be quite so exposed to changes in global energy prices.

**Q:** What schemes are really making a difference?

**Andy:** We live in leaky homes. 70% of homes in Yorkshire and the Humber were in fuel poverty in January of 2023. A shocking statistic. We can leave this to individuals to fix, or we can find another way. Councils and housing associations are doing ambitious things in this space. They can say [to private landlords] 'we're going to be in this area doing good quality work on our housing stock, do you want to get in on it?' If someone takes that hassle, or uncertainty, away, it makes it easy.

**Laura:** Retrofit of social housing can improve comfort for people living there, and it can save management and maintenance costs in the long run too. And it offers a really strong market signal about what technology is required, and what skills are required, from different trades, for the building energy retrofit movement. So social housing can be one area where a local authority can immediately start to take action and make a really big impact.

**Q:** Hull is itself vulnerable to climate change. Does that motivate people to achieve Net Zero?

**Andy:** Climate change has become a starker reality for most people, in recent years. It now feels like a personal reality, rather than an abstract reality somewhere distant or off in the future. And yes, I think that then connects to people's sense of needing to change their behaviour.

**Laura:** It's worth pointing out cities are in general very exposed to future climate risks, whether that's direct risks, such as severe heat or major storms that cause damage in a city, or indirect risks, for example to supply chains that feed cities, or the infrastructure that supports services in cities. Cities are very vulnerable to climate change.

**Q:** But cities are also leading the way on climate - can you talk about that?

**Laura:** City governments work so directly with communities that they often understand the issues on the ground in far greater detail than national governments. And they are better placed to take action that addresses local issues and local risks in a more direct and often more effective way... over 300 local authorities across the UK have declared a climate emergency. The majority of those now have a climate action plan in place. So there is movement on this now. And there's a definite trend towards those local authority climate action plans being community wide action plans.



**David Shukman**  
Former Science Editor  
BBC News



**Laura Frost**  
Associate Director  
Climate Change & Sustainability  
Consulting at Arup



**Andy Goulsdon**  
Professor of Environmental  
Policy Company  
Leeds University

# Asking the experts

**Q:** Can you give an example of a green initiative in a city that engaged the local population?

**Laura:** Barcelona has taken small micro neighbourhoods in the city and installed solutions such as pedestrianisation, local urban greening, improvements to key services, car-free neighbourhoods, improved digital services, for example. And it's demonstrated a lower carbon lifestyle, and helped to emphasise how people can make low carbon choices in their day to day lives. This helps to reduce emissions at the city scale, but also builds resilience through improved green infrastructure, improved thermal comfort in buildings and so on.

**Q:** What could off-shore wind mean for communities in the Humber?

**Andy:** The opportunity [off the coast of Yorkshire] is already massive, and I think it's going to treble by 2030. The opportunities that come with it will be really tangible, and they will get bigger and bigger. [The UK] is genuinely a world leader in offshore wind power. 30 odd percent of our electricity comes from offshore wind, and that's a huge success story — and hopefully one that's felt very tangibly in Hull.



Pedestrian-first areas have proliferated around Barcelona since 2016. But the latest "superblock" plan involves a bigger part of the city. Photographer: Thiago Prudêncio/SOPA Images/LightRocket via Getty Images.



Over 70% of public space in Barcelona was allocated to cars. The city is now flipping this in favour of pedestrians.

**Q:** Are you optimistic about the potential to find solutions that improve ordinary people's lives while reducing carbon?

**Laura:** Yes, very. We've done a lot of work through the C40 that seeks to quantify the benefits of action on climate change, and demonstrates the social benefits, whether that's health or access to employment, economic benefits such as increased productivity, skills and job opportunities, and wider environmental benefits such as improved air quality and improved biodiversity. And when you take all of that together, it really demonstrates how climate action can achieve so many other urban agendas at the same time, and I think that realisation is starting to be understood more at the local government level, and it can add weight to the investment case for action on climate change by achieving more bang for your buck.

**Andy:** We need systemic change across the way we live, work and travel - and all those things need to be joined up... A good example of that is when we build a short section of cycle lane that isn't connected to a wider network of cycle lanes. Perhaps not many use it. And perhaps the tipping point happens when suddenly it's all joined up, and you can cycle from home to work without going on a dangerous road, for example. Then people will get out of their cars and start cycling. But until we get to that point, you have individual links in the chain, which are all in place, but the whole thing hasn't clicked together. And therefore it doesn't seem to be working as well as it will in the end.

