

New LEP backed business development group to help power the West Midlands regions “Green Recovery” plans.

The Low Carbon and Environmental Steering Group (LCET) has been established by Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) to drive the implementation of the region’s first Low Carbon and Environmental Technologies Action Plan, hailed as a major component of the “Green Recovery”.

The objective of the industry-led Steering Group is to oversee the implementation of key activities to support LCET businesses with innovative ideas and products to become part of the framework driving decarbonisation and post COVID green economic recovery in the West Midlands.

Steering Group Chair Michaela Kendall says “the Group will ensure the Action Plan’s interventions promote rapid and lasting business growth opportunities within the sector. We will oversee the implementation of key interventions that will benefit Low Carbon and Environmental Technology businesses and we need their feedback to gauge the impact.” Michaela Kendall is CEO and co-founder of Birmingham-based fuel cell pioneers Adelan.

The West Midlands is host to over 700 LCET businesses who collectively employ nearly 23,000 people and contribute around 4% (GVA) to the regional economy. With countries and regions around the world increasing efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other forms of pollution, this already exciting high-growth sector looks set to expand significantly in the coming years.

Steering Group vice-Chair and CEO of PyroGenesys – a bioenergy and biofuels technology development company – Simon Ighofose credits the region’s innovation ecosystem and international reputation, for his company’s rapid growth – “with the Commonwealth Games fast approaching, levels of foreign interest in the Low Carbon Technology we developed right here in the West Midlands has increased significantly. I see the steering group playing a role in bringing lucrative Low Carbon export opportunities to the attention of LCET businesses in the region.”

The LCET sector has the potential to expand to over £9 billion or 10% of the West Midlands Combined Authority economy in future. In doing so, low carbon technologies are expected to play an essential role in transformation of other West Midland strengths such as automotive, whilst creating new employment opportunities¹.

Steering Group vice-Chair Ed Jessamine, CEO of renewable energy project developers, IPV Flexgen says “we are determined that the Steering Group will be a relevant, fully clawed, proactive body, working in a complementary way with other established regional interest groups. Our mission is to secure and maximise investments that drive forward projects in partnership with LCET businesses in the region.”

The Local Industrial Strategy for the West Midlands recognises the low carbon sector as one of the region’s key areas of strength that can enable clean growth and prosperity in the coming years. By focussing on opportunities to boost the growth and productivity of low-carbon businesses, the West Midlands can boost both domestic and foreign inward investment, scale-up its export potential and ultimately create jobs and improve the quality of life by harnessing the diversity of all those living and working in the region.

The Action plan was developed with the input of over 80 regional LCET stakeholders covering Greater Birmingham and Solihull, Coventry and Warwickshire, and Black Country LEP regions. The Action Plan will continue to be developed with a focus on recovery post-Covid.

Matthew Rhodes, the Board Member of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership responsible for innovation, comments “The LCET sector is at the heart of ensuring the recovery of the West Midlands is a clean recovery, and that the region develops an economy that is fit for the market opportunities of the future. This is one of the fastest growing sectors worldwide and critical to an effective global response to the Climate Emergency.”

“The West Midlands has a unique opportunity to develop a competitive advantage in low carbon technologies, building on our concentration of demand, the major public infrastructure investments we’re making over the next few years, and our academic assets. It’s critical that innovative businesses in the low carbon sector have a strong voice in helping the region seize this opportunity. I welcome the development of this Group and look forward to working with them to make a difference.”

Notes:

The Steering Group meets quarterly and contains members from a range of small, medium and large organisations, all based in the West Midlands and working within the low-carbon space.

For updates on the GBSLEP’s low carbon work and minutes from Steering Group meetings, please visit: <https://gbslep.co.uk/what-we-do/business/energy-low-carbon>

Steering Group members:

The Steering Group meets quarterly and contains Board members from a range of small, medium and large organisations, all based in the West Midlands. Businesses represented include: Arup, Adelan, Baxi, Bryt Energy, Cadent, Centrica, CNG Services, Ecuity Consulting, E.ON, Faraday Battery, FuturEnergy, IPV Flexgen, McCamley, Ablaze Green Energy Solutions, National Grid, PyroGenesys, Sinergia UK, Tonik Energy.

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¹West Midlands State of the Region 2019