

Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP  
Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero  
Department for Energy Security and Net Zero  
55 Whitehall London  
SW1A 2HP

28th April 2026

Dear Secretary of State,

As a collective of hydrogen customers, regional governments and supporting organisations, we write to urge the Government to select HyNet in the North West of England as the first regional hydrogen network.

The £500 million commitment in the 2025 Spending Review to establish the UK's first such network was strongly welcomed across the North West and in neighbouring North Wales. This initial funding represents a decisive opportunity to protect jobs, stimulate investment and secure growth in one of Britain's most historic, and strategically important, industrial heartlands.

The North West has the largest concentration of advanced manufacturing employment in the UK, and already hosts nationally significant low-carbon energy, carbon capture, maritime and aviation infrastructure, making it a natural location for early deployment. Investment in HyNet would build on these foundations and let Government deliver its strategic priorities – energy security, economic growth, clean power, sustainable aviation fuels, the clean jobs plan and the modern industrial strategy – with a single decision.

### **A region demanding hydrogen – and ready to use it**

Over 30 companies, employing over 9,000 people across nine sectors, are seeking to connect to HyNet, to give themselves a competitive edge in the global market for low carbon-products, and to deliver the Government's Clean Power 2030 Mission.

Hydrogen-fuelled manufacturing will differentiate UK sites in competitive international markets. Companies in priority sectors for hydrogen deployment – glass, chemicals, refining, sustainable aviation fuels and advanced materials – will secure valuable market share thanks to low-carbon products, while early adopters will mitigate exposure to Emissions Trading Scheme costs. In doing so, hydrogen safeguards existing high-value employment while creating a platform for future growth.

For 200 years Pilkington UK has been making glass in St. Helens within Liverpool City Region. In 2021, backed by Government funding, Pilkington UK became the first company globally to fire hydrogen at scale into a 1,600° glass furnace, demonstrating that emissions can be drastically reduced without compromising product quality. In the first months of this year, hydrogen has flowed again in the town, with the Glass Futures research centre undertaking trials for Cheshire-based Encirc, who produce approximately 6 million bottles each day.

Hydrogen has also been successfully demonstrated at Unilever's boilers in Birkenhead, Kellogg's research oven in Trafford Park and Novelis's aluminium recycling furnace in Warrington, supported through the Government's Industrial Fuel Switching Competition. This real-world experience has given North West manufacturers an understanding of what hydrogen looks like at scale, whilst gaining international attention.

As investment into the region's industrial base continues, low-carbon energy sources will be vital. Novelis is currently investing over £70m to produce more high-recycled aluminium, whilst JLR is investing £500m at Halewood in Liverpool, where hydrogen offers a credible and scalable route to decarbonising manufacturing operations. Companies such as these are foundational to the North West's wider manufacturing ecosystem; their long-term competitiveness depends upon access to low-carbon infrastructure.

To satisfy demand for hydrogen, a range of producers are progressing network-connected projects. Both large-scale blue projects, such as EET Hydrogen's Production Plant 2 linked to the under-construction Liverpool Bay CCS, and large-scale green production, such as RWE's project, will enable lower average cost hydrogen and more flexible system operation.

Since HyNet launched in 2018, the region has demonstrated sustained ambition and patience. However, in the past five years alone, ten manufacturing sites have closed, with the loss of more than 500 jobs. Access to low-carbon infrastructure earlier may have altered those outcomes. The case for timely delivery is therefore immediate and economic.

### **Backed by growth-focused regional leadership**

HyNet has the potential to span two countries and four strategic authorities, serving millions of people. Regional leaders see hydrogen infrastructure as a catalyst for attracting Industrial Strategy aligned growth investment, and are actively working so their residents benefit.

Cheshire & Warrington is home to the heart of HyNet infrastructure with a 26,000-strong energy workforce centred on Stanlow Manufacturing Complex in Ellesmere Port, one of only four oil refineries left in the UK. The energy transition is central to the region's economic future. Stanlow's pipeline access to Manchester Airport, plus a further nine sites through the UK Oil Pipeline, road and vessel, positions it as a natural hub for the growth of Sustainable Aviation Fuel production, with global export potential. Two local projects received funding from the Department for Transport's Advanced Fuel Fund last year to accelerate commercial deployment, collectively generating 15% of the UK's SAF Mandate.

Greater Manchester is home to ESB's 880MW Carrington Power Station, which provides reliable dispatchable power to approximately one million homes during periods of peak demand and lower renewable generation. ESB intends to transition this highly efficient plant to hydrogen, directly supporting the Government's Clean Power Mission. The prospect of a regional hydrogen network is also driving exploration, including by ESB, of smaller-scale 100% hydrogen-to-power peaking assets, bringing potential total low-carbon dispatchable generation to almost 1.3GW, meeting 45% or more of the Clean Power 2030 requirement.

Liverpool City Region continues to strengthen its advanced manufacturing and maritime assets, whilst the benefit of HyNet could be extended into North Wales with a connection to Wales & West Utilities' HyLine Gogledd project. This link would serve the new Flintshire & Wrexham Investment Zone, backed by Ambition North Wales and Welsh Government. The Zone encompasses Kellogg's Wrexham facility – the largest cereals production site in Europe following a £75m investment – Triton Power's future hydrogen-ready peaking plant at Deeside Power Station, and significant new paper-manufacturing capacity.

The build-out of the hydrogen network and leading connecting projects could see billions of private sector investment in the region over the next decade. This new infrastructure will generate over 3,000 construction jobs – across vital trades identified in the Clean Energy Jobs Plan – and hundreds of high-value roles once in operation.

## With a supply chain ready to deliver

The North West clean energy supply chain has supported HyNet over the last nine years to become the UK's most advanced hydrogen system. Over £100m has been invested to date, predominantly by the private sector, catalysed by public sector support, to complete detailed engineering design and advance planning consents, materially reducing delivery risk.

Since 2020, the North West Hydrogen Alliance has connected the supply chain with developers through structured engagement and workshops. Over 350 companies attended the HyNet Supply Chain Summit last year, demonstrating the depth of capability and readiness. HyNet is working with Welsh Government to stage the 2026 Summit in Wrexham, ensuring the nation's businesses have access to the full range of contracts throughout the cluster.

UK businesses are already scaling because of regional low-carbon investment. Warrington-based United Living is constructing HyNet's £250 million onshore carbon dioxide pipeline. Across engineering, environmental services, planning and infrastructure delivery, regional firms are investing, expanding, and exporting expertise.

Skills provision is similarly advanced, with the North West selected for two Government-backed programmes. Cheshire West & Chester is participating in the Office for Clean Energy Jobs' Regional Skills Pilot, while Cogent Skills' Hydrogen & Carbon Capture Skills Accelerator has developed industry-specific hydrogen training programmes. Trade unions and employers alike recognise the opportunity to secure high-quality, skilled employment for the long term.

### HyNet: Preserving our industrial heritage, leading our low carbon future

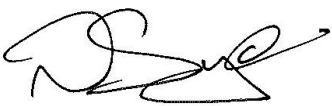
Our hydrogen story began in 1887, when the world's first large-scale electrolyser plant was built in Runcorn to serve the growing chemical industry. Today, the region is ready to lead again.

HyNet offers Government a mature, investable, regionally backed project that can deliver rapid emissions reduction, secure high-value employment, crowd in private capital and demonstrate global leadership in integrated hydrogen infrastructure.

We would welcome the opportunity to host you in the North West to demonstrate first-hand the region's readiness to deliver the Government's low-carbon ambition as the UK's first hydrogen network.

Your sincerely,

### Hydrogen Customers



Neil Syder, Managing Director



Adrian O'Shea, Managing Director



Martin Doherty, Energy Transition Director



Andrea Debbane, Chief Sustainability Officer



David Brewster, Industrial Planning Manager



Justin Kelly, Chief Operating Officer



C. Woodroffe

Chris Woodroffe, Managing Director



John Irving

John Irving, Chief Executive



Deepak Maheshwari

Deepak Maheshwari, Chief Executive



M. I. Benson

Matt Benson, Station Manager



Dave Farrell

Dave Farrell, Head of Asset Development



Scott Keen

Scott Keen, Chief Executive Officer



Adrian O'Shea

Adrian O'Shea, Managing Director



P. Owen

Paul Owen, UK Operations Manager



Kate Prince

Kate Prince, Head of Public Affairs



Brian Pinkerton

Brian Pinkerton, Chief Operating Officer



Louise Calviou

Louise Calviou, Chief Executive



Mike Gaynon

Mike Gaynon, Chief Executive



Paul Hubert

Managing Director



Rod Nicholls

Rod Nicholls, President and Chief Executive



Alex Miles

Alex Miles, VP Commercial Development



Novelis



## Hydrogen Producers



Joe Seifert, Chief Executive



Steve Boughton, H2 Development Director



Eric Adams, Hydrogen Director



Adam Baddeley, Chief Executive



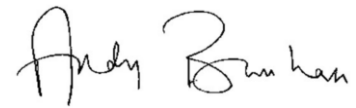
## Regional Leaders & Government



Louise Gittins, Leader

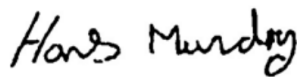


Steve Rotherham, Mayor of Liverpool City Region



Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester

**ANDY BURNHAM**  
**MAYOR OF**  
**GREATER**  
**MANCHESTER**



Hans Mundry, Leader



Mark Pritchard, Chair



## Supporters



Emma Degg



Jane Gaston, Chief Executive



David Richardson, Chair



Ben Burggraaf, Chief Executive



Matthew Hindle, Head of Net Zero



Steve Purdham, Chair



Andrew Hockey, Chief Executive



Justine Fosh, Chief Executive



Sarah Bailey, Chief Executive



Mercedes Maroto-Valer, Director



Elizabeth de Jong, Chief Executive Officer



Ruth Wood, Chief Executive

