

Energy Capital

CASE STUDY

Energy Capital is a regional energy partnership for the West Midlands, bringing together the public and private sectors to work on delivering place-based energy solutions.

It unites energy infrastructure providers, local authorities, academic expertise, innovation support and energy entrepreneurs, creating a single point of contact for government, regulators, funders, investors and partners across the West Midlands region.

Through Energy Capital, the ambition is to create an attractive environment for energy innovation to thrive across the West Midlands, positioning the region as a leader in the global transition to net zero.

As part of this, Energy Capital is leading the West Midlands Regional Energy System Operator (RESO) project, which strives to explore the advantages that a new kind of energy system operating at a city scale would offer. This new system would include local low-carbon energy generation, storage and management, and full integration of mobility assets, including electric vehicles.

Through modelling, the project has been able to uncover that a more localised smart energy system could generate £720 million for the region because of the opportunities it would bring, helping to balance the grid, ensuring value is captured and distributed at a local level. This will help citizens by lowering their bills, creating jobs and bringing local economic benefits. Energy Capital has also identified local data, collaboration, regulatory change and governance as key enablers to unlock the opportunities of a RESO.

Elsewhere, Energy Capital is also delivering SMART Hub projects and energy infrastructure and systems initiatives.

A "SMART Hub" was established to create a Sustainable Market for Affordable Retrofit Technologies, by building capacity and expertise across local authorities and housing association partners in the West Midlands to attract funding and deliver retrofit and fuel poverty alleviation programmes. This includes pioneering Net Zero Neighbourhood Demonstrators and undertaking market development activities - laying the foundations for long-term growth in the home retrofit market.

Energy Capital's Energy Infrastructure and Systems team is also working to shape underlying energy networks in the West Midlands. This includes coordinating local area energy plans (LAEPs) across the region, which are key in reducing risk for investors, ensuring underlying infrastructure is available to support decarbonisation, and ensuring the best value outcomes for communities.

Energy Capital's work strives to broaden understanding of how to decarbonise the West Midlands and build internal support, bringing external stakeholders together to collaborate, achieve net zero and inform local government decision-making, including local and transport plans; influence investment by energy networks, identifying and prioritise local net zero projects, and provide data to help develop business cases and complete funding bids.

Credit: <https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/environment-energy/energy-capital>

<https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/environment-energy/energy-capital/delivery-programmes/>

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/climate-change/reso>