

Loughborough to host green research institute

A consortium of three universities from the Midlands has won the bid to host the prime minister's proposed £1bn Energy Technologies Institute (ETI), which will research new green energy supplies.

The consortium, which is led by Loughborough University and includes the universities of Birmingham and Nottingham, will be responsible for running the institute. The ETI's hub, including its chief executive and support staff, will be based at Loughborough.

The institute, proposed by Gordon Brown in his budget at the start of last year, will aim to accelerate research and development of green technologies to help cut carbon emissions, improve energy efficiency and help secure the UK's current and future energy supplies. Mr Brown wants to put these new technologies to market within 10 years.

The ETI will be a public-private partnership backed with £500m from the government and the rest coming from big business, including BP, Caterpillar, EDF Energy, E.ON UK, Rolls-Royce and Shell. It will consist of a network of research centres undertaking R&D across the UK and overseas.

John Hutton, the business and enterprise minister, said: "The establishment of this new institute at Loughborough now gives us a truly strategic focus on research and development of low carbon energy technologies, helping make the UK a world-leader in this area."

John Denham, the innovation minister, added: "The institute will deliver solutions to help make the energy in our homes and businesses safer, cheaper and more sustainable for the future. It will do so by bringing together skills and expertise from the public sector, businesses large and small and the wider research community to transform our carbon footprint as quickly as possible."

Mr Denham also announced the appointment of David Clarke as the ETI's chief executive. Dr Clarke is currently head of technology strategy at Rolls-Royce plc, and has been involved in advanced technologies R&D for over 20 years.

Prof Shirley Pearce, vice-chancellor of Loughborough University, said the headquarters would be ideally situated at the university's science park on its Holywell Park campus, creating up to 50 new jobs in the region.

She said: "We already have a concentration of low-carbon and energy research and development activities based at the university's science and enterprise park. Locating the hub on this site will allow the consortium to maximise the effective working of the ETI."