CLEAN POWER 2030 SUMMITS
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UK SOLAR ROADMAP CHARTS COURSE TO 47GW BY 2030

The UK government published its Solar Roadmap on 30 June, a government-industry paper setting out practical measures to meet solar capacity targets.

The roadmap was outlined a day before the start of the Clean Power 2030 Summits. It states that meeting the upper end of the capacity ambition set in the Clean Power 2030 (CP30) Action Plan of 47GW solar would require just 0.4% of total UK land. It would power the equivalent of nine million homes using solar energy.

It is the culmination of two years' work, with the Solar Taskforce launched per the recommendation of ex-Conservative member of parliament Chris Skidmore in his 2023 Review of Net Zero. It was reconvened by current energy secretary Ed Miliband shortly after the current government came to power.

MP Michael Shanks giving the Ministerial Address yesterday. Image: Solar Media

Shanks: Building green supply chain and skills a priority

The Solar Roadmap sets 72 actions for accelerating the efficient rollout of solar across the UK, divided into six categories: Rooftop Solar, Electricity Networks, Supply Chain and Innovations, Skills, Planning and support schemes, and Working with others.

Michael Shanks MP, parliamentary under-secretary of state for energy, discussed the government's commitment to clean power by 2030, and some of the financial benefits that the energy transition will deliver, in a Ministerial Address on Day One of the event yesterday (1 July).

"Crucially, it's the economic opportunity of the 21st Century," Shanks said. "For far too long, people across this country have faced the volatility of fossil fuel prices … for far too long we've been paying the price for our exposure to gas, and we need to do what we possibly can to remove that volatility, and this sprint to home-grown power is part of that."

He described the UK government's clean power commitment as "one of the top five priorities" for the Labour party, as he took questions on some of the challenges the UK still faces "It's also about how we invest in supply chains, in skills and jobs in this country," Shanks said.

Fellow keynote speaker Phoebe O'Hara, clean power lead at the Energy Transitions Commission, said: "Coming back from London Climate Action Week, it became really clear to me that the UK's Clean Power 2030 plan is a really exciting time for us in the UK, and for those outside the UK. The world is watching … and for my generation in particular, we've got a lot of excitement around that and we're really keen to be a part of that."

UK remains an 'attractive space for clean energy investment'

The UK is an attractive space for renewable energy investors, but the investment landscape would be de-risked by greater policy support.

These were some of the key conclusions drawn by speakers at the first panel of Day One.

"The UK is still very attractive, and we see interest from our existing pool of capital [and] Asian capital, and some other international investors, who are seeing the UK as a good place to invest," said Ingrid Edmund, senior investment director at Downing.

This idea of greater returns, but greater risk, was picked up on by a number of other panelists, including Domenico Tripodi, partner and co-head of investments at AIP Management.

"Cost of capital has gone up [due to] risk perception and reality in the sector," said Tripodi. "When I started in renewables, rates were relatively low, and renewable energy investment replaced corporate bonds. Now you can't compare renewable investment with bonds anymore; every profile is different."

Edmund continued: "We've seen a shift from bond replacement to create diversification into a standalone class by itself; it's more like private equity, [where] people expect higher returns. But those returns are reflective of the risk that we see."

Minimising risk in a complex investment space

The speakers suggested the government could do more to help minimise these perceived risks.

The panel yesterday morning. Image: Solar Media.

Keith Gains, managing director at Quinbrook Infrastructure Partners, said that ongoing uncertainty about the REMA consultation has impeded the company's appetite for new investments.

From our perspective, if we can get rid of zonal pricing and the chat around that, it would be helpful," said Gains.

By JP Casey, full version on Current± News

Largest UK solar plant Cleve Hill reaches full operations

Quinbrook Infrastructure Partners has completed construction and started commercial operations of the 373MW Cleve Hill Solar Park, the largest operational in the UK.

Cleve Hill, located in Kent, is now exporting at 100% of its capacity. Construction of the solar project began in 2023, and Quinbrook said construction is now underway on a 150MW co-located battery energy storage system (BESS).

On completion of the BESS, Cleve Hill will go from the largest solar plant in the UK to the largest co-located solar plus storage project constructed in the UK. According to Quinbrook, during the commissioning phase in May, electricity exports from Cleve Hill peaked at a level equivalent to 0.7% of the UK's national power demand.

Cleve Hill's capacity is four times higher than that of the next largest operational solar power plant in the UK, the Llanwern solar farm in Newport, Wales, with a capacity of 49.9MW.

The solar and storage plant was the first solar power project to be consented as a nationally significant infrastructure project (NSIP).

When asked about project timelines, an investor active in the UK space said that they think all of the projects necessary to begin commercial operations by 2030, to meet the government's Clean Power targets, will need to have been consented by the end of 2026.

By Molly Green & JP Casey, full version on Solar Power Portal

Turn to page 6 to read comments from Quinbrook partner Rosalind Smith Maxwell, taken from a webinar hosted by Solar Media, with participation from analyst Josh Cornes and moderated by Molly Green

Ofgem greenlights all transmission upgrade projects needed for Clean Power 2030 goals

Ofgem has given the provisional green light to an initial £24 billion investment programme to enable the transmission of clean energy from renewable sources.

"At the heart of today's announcement is the need to upgrade our electricity network. We've approved the network companies to move forward with all the remaining electricity transmission projects identified by NESO as needed for meeting the Clean Power 2030 plan," said Neil Kenward, director for strategy, economics, research and net zero at Ofgem, speaking on Day One of the CP30 event.

Kenward was giving an address just after news broke that Ofgem has published its draft framework for electricity and gas transmission and gas distribution price controls for the next period, which will run for five years from April 2026 to March 2031.

The RIIO-3 price control offers network companies incentives for innovation and securing investment so that they can develop sustainable energy networks at the lowest cost for current and future customers.

Kenward said Ofgem expects capital investment over the RIIO-3 period of up to £80 billion, a fourfold increase on current investment levels. "This funding will finance the building of new power lines, substations and cables on land and at sea, significantly increasing the grid's ability to connect and transport the growing share of GB electricity coming from renewable sources."

An initial £8.9 billion investment is being committed to the high-voltage electricity network as the first step in the £80 billion investment programme described by Kenward.

According to Ofgem's announcement, the fourfold growth in investment will allow for 80 transmission projects to be completed by 2031 that will upgrade over 4400km of overhead lines and deliver 3500km of new circuits.

By Molly Green, full version on Solar Power Portal

Fair risk allocation needed ahead of REMA zonal pricing decision

Fairly allocating risk, and making it clear where risk will be shouldered, is a key component of the ongoing Review of Electricity Market Arrangements (REMA) discussion.

This was a conclusion drawn by speakers in a panel yesterday in the Wind Power Finance & Investment Summit.

Nick Speechley, director of fund management at InfraRed Capital Partners, described himself as "zonal-sceptical" on the topic of the key pricing reform proposal under the REMA review, and said that the introduction of zonal pricing would introduce uncertainty that could discourage investment in the UK grid necessary for growth, let alone reform.

"We don't have the required detail to make a full assessment," said Speechley. "At a high level, the very obvious impact is that if we have zones and there is a saturation of wind, for example, we would see reduced capture prices; so there's a price risk there, and a volume risk, that might be greater, as there might be greater levels of curtailment as we're seeing more negative prices.

"From an investment perspective, all investments start with a financial model," he continued. "Two of the key inputs are your revenue inputs over the lifespan of a project and what will transmission charging look like. Zoning throws a serious spanner into both of those things."

This is particularly significant considering the vast sums of money that will need to be invested into the UK grid system, outlined by Ofgem on the same day.

"It raises that question of 'who is best able to best cope with those risks?'," argued Sarah Honan, head of policy at ADE: Demand, who said that the increased risks for investors are significant, but that investors are far better-equipped to deal with those risks than, say, domestic consumers, who could be more exposed to price risks without the transition to a zonal model.

By JP Casey, full version on Current± News

Interview: Certainty the 'single most important thing' for achieving CP2030

Solar Power Portal heard from Fran Button, deputy CEO of British Solar Renewables, who plays a key role in shaping the company's environmental strategy and took part in a panel discussion yesterday (1 July).

What are some of the opportunities in the UK's current solar market?

One of the biggest opportunities right now is making better use of land to deliver multiple benefits. Solar projects can do more than generate clean power.

They can also support food production, improve soil health and create and increase vital spaces for nature.

By designing sites that balance energy generation with biodiversity and farming, we can deliver long-term value for people, the land and the planet.

This kind of responsible, multi-functional land use is not just good practice. It is what the future of energy needs to look like.

Fran Button, deputy CEO of British Solar Renewables

What are some of the challenges hindering the adoption and progression of solar PV in the UK?

There are several key challenges at the moment. Grid access is one of the most pressing. We need faster, more efficient connections so clean energy can reach the people who need it.

Planning is another major issue. The timescales for planning permission often do not align with the long lead times for grid connections.

We also believe that faster planning decisions should not come at the expense of the environment. It is possible to build solar projects that support nature, farming and local people.

There is also a disconnect between regulatory processes such as NESO Gate 2 and the Contracts for Difference (CfD) rounds, which adds further complexity.

Finally, the sector faces pressure around access to skilled labour. The shift to net zero is a huge opportunity for green jobs across the UK.

What policy would you advise the government implement to help support the growing UK solar sector?

Certainty is the single most important thing the government can offer right now. The solar industry is ready to deliver, but we need confidence in the long-term policy landscape to do so at scale.

This starts with DESNZ providing clarity on whether it intends to implement zonal pricing or a reformed national market model for the wholesale market. That decision is urgently needed before the application window for CfD Round AR7 opens on 7 August.

Next, we need confirmation of the CfD term. Will it be 15, 20 or 25 years? We have the timetable for AR7, and we have projects ready to bid into it, but we still do not know exactly what we are bidding for.

Finally, the industry needs certainty that AR8, the auction for delivery in 2029/30, will go ahead next year, and clarity on exactly when that will be. Without this information, developers, constructors, funders and operators cannot put concrete plans in place without taking on significant risk.

The UK government is targeting up to 47GW solar capacity by 2030–how do you see this being reached and how can the industry work together to achieve it?

The target is achievable, but it will take clear policy, strong coordination and the right investment in people and infrastructure. CfD rounds need to be announced well in advance, with auction volumes set to reflect the scale of the UK's ambition.

If we are serious about exceeding 50GW and continuing progress beyond 2030, towards 2035 and beyond, that ambition must be matched by policy delivery. In the longer term, skills and workforce capacity need real focus. This includes making sure we have enough trained professionals in the core solar supply chain, such as high-voltage electricians and grid specialists,

It also means investing in the allied sectors that enable delivery, like planning. The planning system needs sufficient capacity and expertise to keep pace with the growing demand for clean energy infrastructure.

By Molly Green, full version on Solar Power Portal

Lhyfe: how to build the UK hydrogen economy

We hear from Boris Davis, business lead UK at Lhyfe, a French hydrogen producer, who is speaking in a fireside chat today: Driving the Hydrogen Mobility Forward.

What hydrogen projects are you developing, and what breakthroughs are making these projects particularly exciting for the UK market?

Lhyfe is a European leader in the production and supply of green hydrogen, founded in 2017 with a mission to drive the energy transition. We produce hydrogen via water electrolysis powered exclusively by renewables.

In the UK, we're actively developing two green hydrogen projects to support national net zero goals and build domestic energy resilience. One of those is our proposed 20MW green hydrogen production site in Wallsend, North East England.

To be powered by renewable energy, this facility has recently secured planning permission and was recently shortlisted for the government's Hydrogen Allocation Round 2 (HAR2). Its aim is to supply industrial users and fuel cell transport fleets supporting regional decarbonisation which will, in turn, create new jobs in the area.

How are your projects addressing specific challenges in the UK's energy transition, and what tangible benefits could attendees gain from connecting with you at the summit?

Our projects target major challenges in the UK energy transition – particularly decarbonising heavy industry and transport and enabling grid flexibility and long-term renewable energy storage.

What sets us apart is our ability to develop modular production sites at scale, de-risk projects with real-world experience, and support end users across the entire lifecycle from feasibility to delivery.

What does the UK need to do to stay competitive in the global hydrogen economy?

The UK has made strong early commitments, with a clear hydrogen strategy and introduction of support schemes like HAR. However, staying globally competitive requires swift action to turn strategy into scaled delivery.

We need continued investment in infrastructure, especially storage, pipelines, port hubs, refuelling stations and a faster, clearer regulatory pathway. Policy mechanisms must offer certainty and simplicity to both producers and offtakers. Importantly, green hydrogen must be supported at scale, with concrete funding decisions and long-term visibility to attract investment.

How effective has the Hydrogen Allocation Round process been in supporting early projects?

The HAR process is a valuable framework, offering structure and clarity that help de-risk early-stage projects and give investors greater confidence.

That said, the effectiveness of HAR depends on how quickly and consistently projects can progress. We're optimistic that as the process evolves, it will become faster, more transparent, and more predictable, which are crucial factors in unlocking large-scale investment.

By George Heynes, full version on Solar Power Portal

‘We’ll need another 85 Cleve Hills’

“It has been an experience of a lifetime to have everybody look at you as you take something on first,” says Rosalind Smith Maxwell, director of Quinbrook Infrastructure Partners, of working on the Cleve Hill solar plant.

The UK’s first solar nationally significant infrastructure project (NSIP), the 373MW Cleve Hill solar site has been the first of its kind to reach every milestone along its realisation.

Maxwell explained that the company knew it had the expertise to take on something of this scale: “But when you’re delivering 373MW or 560,000 panels, it takes a village–you’re raising that child.”

Maxwell says everyone involved in the project has had to be brave and patient throughout the process.

It has taken five years since being granted a development consent order (DCO) in May 2020 to reach near completion of the solar power plant’s construction.

Cleve Hill is the only NSIP under construction. Maxwell says that, by her maths, we will need roughly 85 Cleve Hills, and with less than five years until 2030, “there’s an awful lot of knowledge sharing to be done and a lot of construction to get underway with”.

Of the government’s Clean Power 2030 goal, which includes an ambition of having 47GW of solar generation installed, Maxwell says: “We have to think of them as ambitious targets that will not be achieved.

“By having a very strong and ambitious target I hope to see significant investment in the supply chain because I do not currently believe we have enough skilled labour to deliver the projects.”

Maxwell says we are in a “strange moment of flux”, with the government’s strong ambition not changing the fact that “we have real world challenges on delivering on that ambition”.

“Without sharing the knowledge I think we are going to find it very hard to avoid repeating a series of missteps that will lead to a suboptimal delivery of the target.”

By Molly Green, full version on Solar Power Portal

The Cleve Hill solar and BESS project under construction. Image: Quinbrook Infrastructure Partners.

Clean Power 2030 a ‘tremendous opportunity’ for the solar industry

The upcoming seventh auction round (AR7) of the government’s Contracts for Difference (CfD) scheme is pegged to be the biggest yet.

Neil McDermott, CEO of the Low Carbon Contracts Company (LCCC) and Electricity Settlements Company (ESC), is delivering today’s keynote AR7: Impacts and Expectations, addressing the impacts on the UK’s solar landscape, and the role of emerging technologies such as long-duration storage.

LCCC and ESC manage CfD contracts and the Capacity Market (CM) respectively, with pivotal roles in contract management, settlements and development of the these key markets. Solar Power Portal spoke to McDermott ahead of the event.

What are some of the opportunities you are seeing in the current UK solar market?

The predicted growth of solar over the next five years, particularly with the Clean Power 2030 ambition that government has, means that I think there’s tremendous opportunity for the solar industry.

What are the challenges to that opportunity?

NESO identified in its CP2030 report that there are challenges including planning reform and grid connection reform.

Connection reform is a key part, and NESO is working on a system prioritising technologies and locations for connection and the buildout of the grid which is linked to that.

NESO and the government are working on critical aspects from planning through grid build out through connections reform, and all these need to go in the right direction for CP2030 to be achieved.

From LCCC's perspective, the CfD policy is strong.

It's a policy that's been in place for over ten years, and we are seeing solar grow in terms of the number of contracts that are coming out of the auctions: in allocation round six (AR6), we got 130 contracts, of which some 90 were solar.

CfD is an important route-to-market for solar and other technologies. It's providing a 15-year fixed price for the output from solar farms, and that gives confidence to the market.

There are multiple options for solar, of which CfD is one, like selling into the corporate power purchase agreement (PPA) market as well.

Coming out of allocation rounds 5 and 6 (AR5, AR6), we are seeing the evidence of solar growth. We are working with those developers awarded contracts now to support them through the process of realising these projects–we work to support generators to get these projects built and operating.

How can the industry work together to meet the CP30 target of 47GW solar capacity by 2030?

Because we are owned by the government, we triangulate between developers, trade bodies and the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ).

From our perspective, as a nonprofit organisation and commercial counterparty to the CfD scheme, our main motivation is to see these projects go ahead.

Where there are challenges, be they from policy or consultation or other areas of the supply chain, we can triangulate between trade bodies, developers and government to find solutions.

Ultimately, we all want to see these projects get built and ensure that we can reach clean power by 2030 and net zero by 2050.

By Molly Green, full version on Solar Power Portal

Thrive Renewables: Clean power 'a regional growth issue, not just a climate issue'

Monika Paplaczyk, chief investment officer at Thrive Renewables called 2024 "a transformational year in terms of energy policy".

Paplaczyk is speaking on day two of the Wind Finance and Investment Summit.

"The government [has announced] its ambitions to double onshore wind, triple solar and quadruple offshore wind by 2030," said Paplaczyk.

"Importantly, we saw immediate action – with the removal of the de-facto ban on onshore wind in England and positive planning decisions on some large solar projects that had been previously stalled."

However, Paplaczyk points to a number of challenges for the UK energy sector in adjusting to these changes, namely that the country's grid infrastructure will struggle to accommodate all of this new renewable power capacity, and the sustained deployment of solar projects in particular will saturate the market, and diminish the strong business case for solar that has been a key component of its popularity.

"Instead of looking solely for new wind or solar opportunities, we're increasingly focused on hybrid and co-location models – for example, a wind site that could also host a battery or solar array," she says, reflecting a growing interest in hybrid and co-located projects in European power. "This ensures projects make the most of the grid connection available and builds financial resilience."

"Access to clean, secure and affordable energy is now a regional growth issue, not just a climate issue," Paplaczyk explains. "What we really want to see is the definition of energy infrastructure broadened to include the concept of community ownership and local benefit.

By JP Casey, full version available with a premium subscription to PV Tech.

UK solar and wind start 2025 strongly

The Solar Media Market Research team rounds up the latest with deployments and pipelines for UK solar, wind, battery storage and green hydrogen.

Solar

UK solar got off to an expected quick start in 2025 with over 1GW completed and a further 4GW approved.

The UK has tipped over 21GWp of operational capacity, with 2025 getting off to the quick start we expected. With almost 100 ground mount projects currently under construction, the UK is expected to add around 3.5GWp in 2025.

The end of 2024 saw an influx of applications submitted, with almost 40 submitted in December alone due to the Clean Power 2030 deadline.

Due to this large volume being pushed through, 2025 has been slower with only 50 projects submitted within the last five months, totalling almost 5GWp.

This capacity is largely boosted by the number of NSIP projects, with the likes of Beacon Fen Solar Farm, Steeple Renewables project, and Green Hill Solar Farm all submitted within the last two months.

This has added to the 150 projects already awaiting a decision, taking the total to almost 200, and 13GWp in capacity.

We have seen 80 projects approved so far in 2025, almost 20 more than during the same period last year, and double the capacity.

Notable examples include Heckington Fen, East Yorkshire Solar Farm, and West Burton Solar Farm, each exceeding 400MWp in capacity.

With the July deadline for CP30 looming, there'll be a final push to prove projects' 'strategic alignment' and feasibility. Then things will be quiet until September when grid offers are given, when the market will pick back up again.

Wind

A total 15GW of wind capacity was submitted for planning during 2024.

That was the highest in UK history, largely driven by offshore applications.

Over 800MW of onshore was submitted in Q1 2025, the highest since Q1 2021.

The UK now has over 30GW of operational wind capacity with an even split between offshore and onshore, both being just over 15GW.

Battery energy storage systems (BESS)

The UK currently has 6.6GW/9.6GWh of BESS online, with another 2GWh set to come online over the rest of 2025. There has been a strong buildout with over 1.5 GWh completed so far in 2025.

Similarly to solar, planning consent applications peaked in December 2024, with slightly fewer applications in 2025 so far compared to the same period last year (down 3%). But, there was still over 17GWh submitted, and projects on average are now larger.

There has been 28GWh approved so far this year, over double the capacity of approvals of H1 2024.

Green Hydrogen

UK green hydrogen will be crucial to decarbonise heavy industries going towards the Clean Power 2030 targets.

The government has supported it with subsidies through the hydrogen allocation round (HAR) schemes. There is currently 3768MW in planning with a further 19MW operational.

Three things to note: the HAR 2 shortlist came out in early April, the largest site in the UK was submitted at the start of October (Kintore Hydrogen), and the government just committed £500 million for hydrogen infrastructure.

By Josh Cornes, Joe Hennessy, Charlotte Gisbourne, Cameron Murray

Data from Solar Media Market Research reports:

- Utility-Scale Solar: UK Pipeline Database
- Utility-Scale Solar: UK Completed Assets Database
- Battery Storage: UK Pipeline & Completed Assets Database
- Onshore & Offshore Wind: UK Pipeline & Completed Assets Database
- Green Hydrogen: Global Completed Assets & Pipeline Database

Government to mandate rooftop solar for new builds

Ministers have confirmed the Future Homes Standard (FHS), to be published in Autumn, will include provision that all new build properties have solar PV installed.

Energy secretary Ed Miliband said the "common sense" change to the standard marks a "monumental step" in the government's pledge to unleash a "rooftop revolution".

The proposed FHS will see building regulations explicitly promote solar for the first time, subject to practical limits, with flexibility in place for new homes surrounded by trees or with lots of shade overhead.

The FHS will state that if developers cannot meet requirements to install rooftop solar PV coverage equivalent to 40% of a building's floor area, a "reasonable amount" of coverage is still required.

As such, it would be a functional requirement of the Building Regulations that new homes, with rare exceptions, are built with renewable electricity generation. The government states that "in the vast majority of cases" this would be solar generation.

Miliband cited the government's Home Energy Assessment tool estimate that households could see £530 annual savings on energy bills with a rooftop solar installation.

Chris Hewett, chief executive of trade association Solar Energy UK said the industry is "very glad" to hear the news.

UK government invests in offshore wind

The UK government and its Great British Energy company will work with industry and the Crown Estate to invest £1 billion in offshore wind supply chains.

The investment will back manufacturing of turbines, floating platforms, HVDC cables and other technologies supporting offshore wind generation. It will also go toward upgrading port infrastructure at key industrial zones from Leith and Teesside to Great Yarmouth and Port Talbot.

Funding is made up of the £300 million announced by GB Energy in April, £400 million from the Crown Estate and £300 million being developed by the offshore wind industry to match fund government through the Industrial Growth Plan.

It will support thousands of additional jobs in the sector, as well as giving long-term industrial certainty to areas that might otherwise be hit by the loss of North Sea industry as oil and gas activity winds down.

Energy secretary Ed Miliband said the news marks "an unprecedented collaboration between public and private investors" that will "ensure that British companies and workers win the global race for clean energy.

"We are witnessing the coming of age of Britain's green industrial revolution as we build this new era of clean energy abundance, helping deliver new jobs, energy security and lower household's bills through our Plan for Change."

Energy secretary greenlights 140MW South Derbyshire solar project

Energy secretary Ed Miliband has granted a development consent order (DCO) for a solar and storage project put forward by BayWa.r.e.

The Oaklands Farm Solar project in South Derbyshire will cover 400 acres, with an export capacity of 162.3MW and import of 37.5MW, the capacity of the energy storage system on the site. The solar PV element of the project will have 138MW of generation capacity.

BayWa.r.e submitted its application for the project on 8 February 2024. The Examining Authority recommended the project for acceptance on 19 March 2025.

The secretary of state considered the overall planning balance and concluded that the proposed development's public benefits outweigh the harm identified, and thus granted the DCO.

Clean energy industries the 'frontier' in UK Industrial Strategy

The UK government has released its Industrial Strategy, which states its commitment to doubling investment in clean energy industries.

The government's strategy is broken into eight sectors which the government said are already strong and therefore should have the potential for faster growth.

One of these is clean energy industries, within which the government has most focus on what it calls 'frontier' industries.

Those frontier industries are onshore, offshore and floating wind, nuclear fission, fusion energy, carbon capture utilisation and storage (CCUS) including greenhouse gas removals (GGRs), hydrogen and heat pumps.

It does add that solar, bioenergy, storage including Long Duration Energy Storage, heat networks, and smart technologies are "also vital" for the clean energy mission but are not among the frontier industries.

Notably, another of the identified 'growth-driving' sectors, Advanced Manufacturing, includes batteries alongside areas such as aerospace and automotive.

The government will spend £2.5 billion over five years to lead the global race for fusion energy as part of its move to double investment in clean energy industries.

State-owned energy company Great British Energy has been allotted a further £700 million to help build manufacturing facilities here at home for key components for the clean power revolution, like floating offshore platforms, electric cables and hydrogen infrastructure.

Energy secretary Ed Miliband said: "For too long high electricity costs have held back British businesses, as a result of our reliance on gas sold on volatile international markets."

Island Green Power launches second consultation for 500MW solar NSIP

Island Green Power has opened the second round of community consultation for the East Pye Solar project, a proposed 500MW solar PV power plant with a co-located BESS.

The project, which is classified as an NSIP due to its solar generation capacity, will be located on land near Long Stratton in South Norfolk if a Development Consent Order (DCO) is granted. The proposed capacity for the onsite BESS has not yet been revealed by Island Green Power.

Part of the development process for the scheme will include a new National Grid substation, to be operated by National Grid Electricity Transmission, alongside works to existing 400kV overhead lines in the area and biodiversity enhancements.

Island Green Power is currently considering two different options for the mounting of the PV panels.

One option includes the use of trackers, which rotate from east to west to follow the sun throughout the day and are aligned in north-south rows; or fixed panels that are aligned in east-west rows and face a fixed angle of between +10 and 35 degrees from horizontal, with a maximum height of up to 3.5 metres.

The developer has stated that it plans to submit an application for a DCO to the Planning Inspectorate in winter of this year.

Octopus Energy partners with BYD to offer free EV charging in UK's first V2G bundle

Octopus Energy has partnered with Chinese EV giant BYD to offer the UK's first vehicle-to-grid (V2G) bundle offering 'free' home charging.

The Power Pack Bundle, which will have a monthly price under £300 (though an exact figure is not confirmed, and subject to change under leasing conditions), builds on Octopus Energy's V2G tariff Octopus Power Pack, launched in 2024.

The bundle offer includes a leased BYD Dolphin, which has built-in V2G capability, a bi-directional Zaptec Pro EV charger and a home electricity tariff that means drivers do not have to pay for charging.

The tariff is possible because of how V2G enables power stored in an EV battery to be sold back onto the grid. Octopus Energy Group's tech platform, Kraken, will be used to automate EV charging at times when electricity is cheap and sell it back to the grid when needed; drivers are required to plug in their vehicles overnight.

Founder of the Octopus Energy Group Greg Jackson explained: "Bi-directional charging is the game-changer for drivers and the grid. By using some of the battery's spare capacity to help balance the grid, we can offer free driving."

Launching the offer at the Octopus Energy Tech Summit in London, Jackson said that customers that plug in their EV about 20 times a month, for 12 hours at a time, will benefit from electricity that is essentially free.

Octopus and BYD have also partnered with Motability Operations, the UK's largest leasing company, to make the V2G technology available to disabled people across the country, ensuring low-cost electric driving is accessible to all.

'You said, we did': How a UK solar developer acted on community feedback

About 50 people gathered in the centre of Lincoln on a Saturday morning in March, calling for "solar on roofs, not farmland" in the East Midlands, an area slated to host hundreds of megawatts of utility-scale solar developments in the coming years.

The National Infrastructure Planning portal lists 29 large solar projects in the East Midlands region that have been approved, are awaiting consent, or are in early development.

The protestors represent but a portion of the vocal groups pushing back against renewable energy developers lodging planning applications for large-scale solar PV plants UK-wide.

Many of these projects are NSIPS meaning the planning process is taken to a governmental level for a DCO.

This means that the decision to approve (or deny) a solar plant is out of the local planning authority's hands. While this incites a feeling of powerlessness, developers are at pains to demonstrate how solar can be tailored to benefit the community.

Developer Elements Green has been working on convincing the Newark community of this fact since unveiling early-stage plans for an 800MW solar and BESS project in Nottinghamshire, which is set to cover 2,900 hectares to the northwest of Newark.

A second round of statutory consultation for the project closed in February 2025, concluding a long process undertaken by Elements Green to establish what locals opposed about the project and changes it could feasibly make to the development.

Explaining the developer's approach, Marke Noone, Elements Green's project director for GNR Solar, says: "For every topic that people raised, we didn't think, 'How do we respond to this', we thought, 'How do we do something about that?'"

What's in a name? Embracing biodiversity

Perhaps most emblematic of the developer's response to local concerns was renaming the development the Great North Road Solar and Biodiversity Park to reflect an advocacy of ecological principles.

Beyond the rebranding, Elements Green forged industry-first partnerships with various conservation bodies to make good on the developer's environmental commitments.

A total of 850 acres of the site will be dedicated solely to positive ecological management through the planting of native wildflower meadows, grasslands and wetlands, and 50,000 new trees will be planted across the site.

Renaming the development is one way to communicate to the local community that biodiversity will be central to the solar park; in the first round of consultation, the ecological damage caused by such developments was a common criticism of Elements Green's plans.

This is something that, almost universally, developers come up against. As well as adapting plans to meet this criticism head-on, there is an opportunity to actively counter the commonly held misconception that local ecology suffers when solar arrays are installed.

Since February 2024, the UK Environment Act has required that all proposed solar farm projects deliver a biodiversity net gain of at least 10%, a figure that is far exceeded in many cases. Numerous studies have proven that solar farms deliver significant biodiversity gains.

Land use and farming

A closely linked issue is the impact of solar development on agricultural land. A National Policy Statement issued last year, making it harder to build on the highest quality land (with a grade of 1 to 3a), ensures solar PV development does not undermine the UK's food security.

Locals who fed back to Elements Green still felt that the use of 'local farming land' for the GNR development was "unacceptable." The developer reiterated that a solar installation is temporary, so the land is not permanently lost.

Further than this, though, Elements Green signed an agreement with two local farmers under which GNR will become the largest UK solar park to embrace grazing. When the development comes online, which Elements Green estimates will be in 2027, a flock of almost 4,000 sheep will graze the solar park's fields, which could increase up to 9,000 once lambing begins.

By Molly Green, full version on PV Tech and in PV Tech Power vol.42 (Q2 2025) Solar Media's quarterly journal covering the downstream solar and storage industries

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