

## Solar Energy - Central to Renewables Expansion

**DLP BRIEFING NOTE 140**

Prepared by  
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# **Solar Energy - Central to Renewables Expansion**

## **Introduction**

The Government has announced the publication of its Solar PV Roadmap for Britain. *Solar PV Strategy Part 1: Roadmap to a Brighter Future* sets out the guiding principles for the deployment of solar PV and builds on the UK Renewable Energy Roadmap Update 2012. It covers what progress has been made to date, and areas of future development ahead of its final strategy for Spring 2014.

## **Background Information**

The Climate Change Act 2008 sets out a national requirement for an 80% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The UK also has a statutory obligation to achieve 15% of our energy demands from renewable sources by 2020. Renewable energy projects need to be framed as strategic, long term investments where practical gains can be made. Solar photovoltaics (PV) have an important part to play alongside other forms of renewable energy and small scale micro-generation.

Solar PV accounts for 12% (2.5 GW) of our renewable electricity capacity and 2.9% of total renewable electricity generation. Since 2010 the total installed capacity has grown 25 fold from 94 MW to 2,413 MW. The UK National Solar Centre estimates that the UK solar market is worth £1.5 billion and a recent survey by the DECC showed that solar PV is the most favourable of all renewable energy sources with 85% public approval.

The benefits of solar PV include emission free energy, visually less intrusive, high performance, versatility and low maintenance. Issues cited by the industry are the micro-management of subsidies (feed in tariffs and renewable obligation certificates), grid connection and capacity, heritage assets and the cumulative effects on landscape amenity.

## **Our Experience: Former Wymeswold Airfield**

On the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2012, DLP Planning Consultants secured planning permission on behalf of Lark Energy for Britain's largest solar photovoltaic farm at the former Wymeswold Airfield in Leicestershire. The £35m scheme consists of over 130,000 panels has now been completed and can generate up to 34 MW – equivalent to the demand from 7,500 homes over a period of at least 25 years. It is just one of a number of large scale solar projects for which DLP has secured planning permission.



The solar photovoltaic farm at Wymeswold Airfield

### **Guiding Principles**

The Government has set a solar PV energy target of 20GW by 2020. In order to achieve this target, the Roadmap outlines four guiding principles:

- 1. Cost effective schemes for solar PV should be brought forward efficiently and considered in the context of the UK's renewable energy commitments.*
- 2. Solar PV should make an effective contribution towards the UK's target of 15 % renewable energy by 2020 and support our transition to a low carbon economy.*
- 3. Solar PV schemes should be sustainability located and take into account a wide range of social, environmental and economic material considerations.*
- 4. Solar PV schemes should be practical and viable. They should actively respond to the impact of development on grid systems, connectivity and financial incentives.*

### **Conclusion**

A transition to a low carbon economy is an incremental process which involves balancing a wide range of interests. Part 1 of the Road Map outlines that solar PV is one many sources of renewable energy that can be used strategically to tackle climate change. Part 2 will provided further details of the action required and is due for publication in Spring 2014.

DLP have experience and a proven track record in the promotion of solar PV through the planning system having secured permission for a wide range of field scale solar development, including those located in areas of landscape quality, established biodiversity value and other nationally recognised environmental constraints. If you would like to utilise DLP's considerable planning expertise to your opportunity, please contact us. Senior staff within the Practice will be very happy to explore its potential implications for you.

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