

Plans for £5m solar farm unveiled by Northumberland Estates

Northumberland Estates has submitted plans for a £5m solar farm as part of its renewable energy strategy.

The company representing the business interests of the Duke of Northumberland hopes to create the solar farm in Alnwick, marking a major development for the company, extending its offering in the renewables sector. The proposed solar farm has the potential to deliver up to four megawatts of renewable solar energy to local businesses through private wire connections.

Directors at the estates also said the scheme directly contributes toward Northumberland County Council's 2030 carbon-neutral goal, by adding to the renewable energy priority action area set out in their 2021-23 Climate Action Plan. The Alnwick-based business has also announced long-term plans to deliver roof-top solar energy and battery energy storage systems as part of moves towards clean, domestically produced, renewable energy.

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Barry Spall, development planner at Northumberland Estates, said: "Our goal is to help with the transition to a low carbon future through the development and management of new renewable energy assets, which support the delivery of more sustainable energy. Our proposed plan for a solar farm in Alnwick will not only deliver green energy but will support local businesses with their energy supply."

In the proposed scheme, Quotient Sciences is the first

business to sign up for the supply at its Alnwick facility. The drug development and manufacturing accelerator acquired the base in February 2021, where it employs more than 170 people, and it has been carrying out a £6.3m investment into the site.

Gareth Jenkins, vice president of science and technology at Quotient Sciences, said: "It's important to us to reduce our impact on the environment and we are thankful for the opportunity from Northumberland Estates to utilise green technologies locally which will reduce our energy costs as well as support our carbon reduction plan."

Northumberland Estates added that the proposed development provides biodiversity benefits, through an ecological and land management plan to create wildlife havens, and wildflower grassland encouraging bees, butterflies and birds, with some areas potentially retained for sheep grazing.

A number of assessments have also been carried out to ensure the site is suitable for solar farm development. The time-limited scheme will run for 40 years, generating renewable energy and offsetting CO2 emissions; at the end of its lifespan, the land will revert to agricultural land.

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