

Network Rail signs solar power agreement with EDF Renewables UK

August 10, 2022



Network Rail has signed an agreement with EDF Renewables UK which will see enough solar energy to power 20,000 homes used in offices, depots and railway stations across the country.

The agreement will mean 49.9 MW of renewable energy capacity will be made available – and will cover around 15% of Network Rail's annual consumption of non-traction energy.

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It will be provided from EDF Renewables UK's Bloy's Grove solar farm between Swainsthorpe and Mulbarton in Norfolk, which received planning consent in June this year. This builds upon the existing traction supply partnership between Network Rail and the wider EDF Group in the UK.

Network Rail says it is committed to sourcing all non-traction energy from renewable sources by 2030 as part of its Environmental Sustainability Strategy.

EDF Renewables UK company will build, own and operate the solar farm for the lifetime of the project, and is offering a £20,000 per year community benefit fund which starts when the site is operational.

Network Rail says there will also be significant biodiversity improvements on site, including a community orchard, and the EDF team will liaise with local residents on these matters.

Jo Lewington, Network Rail's chief environment and sustainability officer, said: "Rail is already in a strong position in terms of its green credentials, but it's crucial that we do everything we can as a business to improve air quality, minimise our use of fossil fuels, and transition to an industry powered by green, renewable, low-carbon energy.

"Our vision is to serve the nation with the cleanest, greenest form of public transport and this agreement marks another important step towards achieving our aims."

Matthieu Hue, CEO of EDF Renewables UK, said: "We are very pleased to be working with Network Rail to help them on their journey to decarbonisation. This project shows the ability of EDF Renewables UK to provide diverse solutions for customers in terms of low-cost renewable electricity.

"This also demonstrates our ability to develop competitive and affordable renewable power projects in the UK as well as underpinning the importance of all renewable technologies in de-carbonising the UK electricity system to reach the country's net zero targets by 2050."

Rail Minister Wendy Morton said: "Our railway has long been the backbone of travel across the UK and, as one of the greenest forms of transport, it is set to play a central role in slashing emissions and helping us achieve our world-leading decarbonisation goals.

"This first of its kind agreement is a huge moment not just for Network Rail but the rail industry as a whole, setting in motion a journey which will see Britain's favourite transport become even greener, cleaner and more sustainable."

Network Rail's 30-year Environmental Sustainability Strategy document can be found here: [Environmental Sustainability Strategy](#).