

[Press release: Boost to remote island wind projects as consultation launched](#)

[A consultation has been launched today](#) (15 December 2017), including proposals to enable remote island wind projects to apply for a Contract for Difference (CfD) in the next competitive auction for less established renewable technologies (subject to state aid approval).

Wind projects on remote islands (such as Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland) have great potential due to the strong winds on the islands and the opportunity to bring employment and benefit local supply chains. However, they also face higher costs due to their location and transmission requirements, which set them apart from onshore wind projects elsewhere in Great Britain.

The Government announced up to £557 million for future auctions in its [Clean Growth Strategy](#) and intends for these changes to be implemented, so that island wind projects can compete in the next auction, planned for spring 2019. The consultation will also seek views on how island communities can benefit from these projects.

The last auction proved the benefits of the Government's competitive approach and saw the cost of new offshore wind fall by as much as 50%.

If a sufficient number of projects are successful it should facilitate the construction of new transmission links, which could deliver a range of wider and longer term benefits and cost savings to the renewables industry and to the island economies.

UK Energy Minister Richard Harrington said:

We've placed clean growth at the heart of our new Industrial Strategy. We are cutting emissions while keeping costs down for consumers, creating high value jobs and growing the economy.

We are delivering on our commitment to support remote island wind projects, which have the potential to benefit local communities.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Lord Duncan said:

Wind projects in the remote islands of Scotland have the potential to generate substantial amounts of electricity and cut emissions, supporting economic growth and delivering lasting benefits for communities.

Enabling these projects to compete in future auctions will reinforce the UK's position as a world leader in renewable

generation, as well as providing Scottish jobs in any projects supported.

I urge local communities, developers and other stakeholders to work together to ensure that such projects deliver lasting benefits to the islands.

A [2013 report](#) for the UK and Scottish governments concluded that wind projects on the Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland could supply around 3% of the UK's total electricity demand.

More than 750MW of wind projects with planning consent on these islands could be eligible for the next auction.

The consultation also asks for views on other changes the government is considering making to the Contracts for Difference (CfD) scheme, to enable it to continue to support new generation and provide best value for bill payers in coming years.

These changes include proposals to increase the efficiency requirements for Combined Heat and Power (CHP) and Advanced Conversion Technologies (ACT) as technology improves. This ensures that only sufficiently advanced and efficient plants are awarded subsidy.

Changes are also proposed to ensure that costs of future projects can be accurately forecasted and that future schemes continue to drive carbon emission reductions.

1. The consultation opened on 15 December 2017 and runs until 9 March 2018.
2. Government aims to support the development of onshore wind projects on remote islands, where they benefit local communities. This consultation sets out a proposed definition of remote islands wind, as a new technology that can compete in future auctions for 'less established' technologies (also known as 'Pot 2'). The proposal is subject to state aid approval.

[News story: New phase in Golden Era for UK-China relations](#)

The Chancellor, Philip Hammond will hold talks with Chinese Vice Premier Ma Kai, where both countries will reaffirm their commitment to developing a global partnership, establishing the next steps for a deeper trade and investment relationship as the UK builds an economy fit for the future.

The Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD) involves a series of events over a two-day period, promoting the UK's world-leading expertise in trade,

financial services, infrastructure and energy. The Chancellor will be joined by the Governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, and the CEO of London Stock Exchange plc, Nikhil Rathi, along with a business delegation of high level representatives showcasing the UK's vibrant banking, investment, and insurance industries.

The Chancellor will also meet with Chinese Premier Li Keqiang and other Chinese leaders following the recent 19th Party Congress.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond said:

The UK is one of the world's largest and most dynamic economies. We are committed to working with our partners to build a truly global Britain, and our relationship with China is strong, growing, and delivering benefits for both countries.

As we move to a new phase in cooperation between our two great countries, we will be establishing an even deeper trade and investment relationship, helping British businesses and entrepreneurs to seize the opportunities now in front of us as we build an economy fit for the future.

The EFD will build on progress made through previous dialogues, which has included supporting the development of London as the leading offshore RMB trading hub, and Chinese participation and investment in the UK's civil nuclear sector. It is expected to deliver agreements on increasing trade and investment including:

- delivering on commitments to create a deeper financial services relationship and expand cooperation to innovative new areas
- creating new partnerships on industrial strategy and economic reform to support innovation, growth and employment
- next steps on how the UK and London, as a global financial and services centre, can partner on the Belt & Road Initiative
- deepen expertise-sharing and cooperation on economic reform issues

The Chancellor will be accompanied by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Greg Clark, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, Stephen Barclay, Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, Andrew Jones, and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for investment, Mark Garnier.

Business Secretary, Greg Clark, will be holding an Energy Dialogue with China's National Energy Administration to further cooperation between the UK and China on clean and renewable energy. He will also be promoting the UK's modern Industrial Strategy White Paper and the opportunities it creates for new collaborations between the UK and China in the fields of research, energy, artificial intelligence and clean growth.

Business and Energy Secretary, Greg Clark said:

China is one of our largest trading partners and as two of the world's leading economies it is vital that we work closely together to address global challenges and seize the future economic opportunities.

International research collaboration and clean growth are at the heart of our Industrial Strategy, and I will be further advancing co-operation between the UK and China on offshore technologies, where the UK leads the world, and renewable energy projects, while reaffirming our joint commitment to work together on clean energy research.

International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox said:

Britain is a key partner for Chinese trade and investment, and is one of China's most important trading partners in Europe. The growth in bilateral trade and investment – from autonomous pods providing transport solutions, to top quality schools – has seen Britain working with Chinese businesses to secure a share of one of the most vibrant markets in the world.

As an international economic department, DIT are supporting further bilateral opportunities through the UK-China Economic Financial Dialogue to build on the £16.8 billion of goods and services we already export to China.

The business delegation includes representatives from Arup, Barclays PLC, BlackRock, City of London Corporation, China Britain Business Council, Clifford Chance, Deloitte, HSBC Holdings, KPMG, Linklaters, Standard Chartered Bank, Standard Life Aberdeen, The CityUK, Virgin Money, and Eastpring Investments & Prudence Foundation.

Press release: Welsh Secretary: “Cross-border working can be the catalyst to Wales’ future prosperity”

- 1st UK Government Severn Growth Summit to be held at Celtic Manor Resort in Newport on 22 January 2018
- Alun Cairns makes clarion call for Welsh businesses to capitalise on cross border opportunities at Cardiff Breakfast Club event.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will challenge industry on both sides of the Wales-England border to “think big to shape and transform our economic future” when he addresses an audience of business leaders in Cardiff this morning (Friday 15 December).

Speaking at the Cardiff Breakfast Club event, Mr Cairns will say “economic opportunities do not stop at political or administrative boundaries” and that the “development of growth corridors will spread prosperity across Wales and enable the nation to compete on a global stage”.

The Secretary of State will announce that he will host the first cross-border, Severn Growth business summit on 22 January at the Celtic Manor Resort. He will call on local partners and businesses from across the South West of England and the South East of Wales to come together to explore how links between the two economies can be strengthened following the announcement of the abolition of the Severn Tolls.

The speech comes following the launch of the UK Government’s Industrial Strategy last month which included the goal of developing growth corridors spanning the Welsh and English border to spread prosperity and enable Wales to compete on a global stage.

Mr Cairns will say that these corridors, coupled with the City Deals for Cardiff and Swansea and Growth Deals for North and Mid Wales will be the “building blocks needed to enable businesses and people to transform their local communities, their economies and their lives”.

During his speech, the Secretary of State will also take the opportunity to highlight the Cardiff’s “remarkable economic heritage” and its status as “a powerful engine of economic growth” for the whole of the UK.

Mr Cairns will say:

Cardiff is connecting itself to the rest of the country like never before, and having a powerhouse of industry, innovation and skills right here in our Capital City, is beneficial to the whole of Wales and the rest of the UK.

To achieve all of its potential, Cardiff must be competing in the premier league of European cities. From our outstanding universities, the improvements being made to its infrastructure and its credentials as a go to destination for major events, the city has the talent, the opportunities and the determination to rival the best in Europe, if not the world.

The Severn Growth Summit will bring a panel of speakers from leading global businesses, and higher education institutions together from either side of the border to highlight the opportunities that await from closer collaboration.

Those interested in attending the Severn Growth Summit will be able to sign

up through the Eventbrite website from Friday onwards. A full list of panel speakers will be announced shortly.

[Press release: New raptor persecution maps to help tackle wildlife crime](#)

[Raptor persecution maps for England and Wales](#) have been published to enable the police to clearly see where the highest incidents are taking place and focus enforcement efforts in the areas that need it most.

The maps present the number of shootings, trappings, poisonings and nest destructions that took place across England & Wales between 2011 and 2015 and will be updated annually, providing an invaluable intelligence tool to help fight crimes against birds of prey.

North Yorkshire will be a priority area as the most incidents occurred there (39), followed by Norfolk (17), Cumbria (11), Derbyshire (11), Lincolnshire (10), Suffolk (8) and Northumberland (8).

Wildlife Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Birds of prey are a vital part of our animal landscape, icons of our cultural heritage and key to boosting local economies by attracting visitors to England and Wales.

These maps highlight hotspots across the country for crimes against these precious birds, enabling the police to crack down with increased enforcement in areas where it's needed most – building on the valuable work land management, conservation and shooting organisations are already doing to help protect iconic birds of prey.

There are already strong penalties in place for committing offences against birds of prey and the unlawful use of traps and all wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

The Government takes all wildlife crime very seriously and raptor persecution has been identified as a UK wildlife crime priority. Each priority has a delivery group to consider what action should be taken, develop a plan to prevent crime, gather intelligence on offences and enforce against it.

The [National Wildlife Crime Unit](#) also monitors and gathers intelligence on illegal activities affecting raptors and provides assistance to police forces when required.

These maps build on this valuable work and will help boost the fight against those who continue to commit crimes against raptors. In the five year measurable period there have been 262 incidents in England and Wales: 146 of these caused by shooting and 66 by poisoning.

The majority of incidents took place against buzzards (108), followed by owls (40), red kites (39) and peregrine hawks (34).

In January 2016 the government published the [Hen Harrier Action Plan](#) and the new maps will help support the six positive actions outlined in the plan, which are already underway. Today's maps show one incident involving Hen harriers.

The maps were developed by the [Raptor Persecution Priority Delivery Group](#), which includes Defra, the Devolved Administrations, [Natural England](#), National Wildlife Crime Unit, the police, [British Association for Shooting and Conservation](#), [RSPB](#), [Country Land and Business Association](#), [Moorland Association](#), [National Game Keepers' Organisation](#), [National Parks England](#), [Crown Prosecution Service](#) and [the Countryside Alliance](#).

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Updated: Photo change

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Image credit Allan Drewitt, Natural England