

British Army opens first solar farm

Completed earlier this month and the size of almost eight football pitches, the solar farm is based at The Defence School of Transport (DST), Leconfield, and forms part of the British Army's £200 million Project Prometheus investment which is designed to see the Army using renewable energy

Built by Centrica Business Solutions, the solar farm is made up of over 4,000 solar panels and is the first of four pilot sites to officially open. Across all four sites, the project estimates £1 million in efficiency savings and 2,000 tCO₂e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) annually, with saving costs due to be reinvested into essential Army infrastructure.

Minister for Defence Procurement, Jeremy Quin said:

This multi-million pound investment reaffirms our commitment to Net Zero 2050 and developing a more sustainable service. Significant investment will result in a more efficient and environmentally-friendly estate.

Spanning approximately four hectares and with a peak capacity of 2.3Mega Watts, the solar panelled farm is projected to save 700 tonnes of carbon emissions and cut electricity bills by one third annually at DST.

A majority of the energy generated will be used onsite at DST to provide support to personnel based there. This may include powering accommodation, offices, hangars, classrooms and the gymnasium, whilst any surplus will be exported to the grid.

Outlined in the recent Defence Command Paper, innovation and green initiatives will be at the forefront of a future Army, of which Project Prometheus forms a part. This is further supported by the £24 billion increase in spending over four years, as announced by the Prime Minister last November.

The Director of Basing and Infrastructure, Major General David Southall said:

Our first operational solar farm at Leconfield marks a key milestone in the Army's go-green agenda; it showcases our firm commitment to tackle the effects of climate change, harnessing renewable energy to power our estate.

Leconfield is the first of four pilot sites to open this year; each builds on our knowledge and expertise, enabling us to upscale and deliver a total of 80 solar farms across the Army Estate within the

decade; we continue to Think Big – Start Small – Scale Fast.

To help reduce greenhouse emissions across Defence, the Army is investing the £200 million into its solar farms over the next 10 years. The initiative is designed to support the UK Government reach its target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Managing Director of Centrica Business Solutions, Greg McKenna said:

It's been a privilege to work alongside the Army to deliver its first major solar scheme here at DST Leconfield.

It will require a monumental effort to reach Net Zero, but by showing leadership on sustainability and carbon reduction, the Army has put in place a template which the rest of the public sector and industry can replicate.

Construction for the three additional pilot sites is already under way with the Duke of Gloucester Barracks in Gloucestershire, Rock Barracks in Suffolk and Baker Barracks on Thorney Island, Sussex, due to open next year. 3Ti have been awarded the contract to deliver the construction of these sites.