

Portsmouth's port makes the switch to solar power

The installation of the cutting-edge solar and battery system at Portsmouth's port has passed a final milestone and is now fully operational.

Managed by the in-house energy services and building services teams of Portsmouth City Council installed by Custom Solar and assisted by engineers at the port, the project began with installing roof-mounted solar panels across several buildings, large battery storage, and the first solar canopies at a UK port.

The last piece of the project was finalised in July 2023, where an upgraded connection to the national grid allowed the full potential of the 1.2 megawatt peak system to be realised.

This ground-breaking system, comprised of 2,660 solar panels, provides an impressive 35% of the site's electricity. With this, the council-owned Portsmouth International Port is one step closer to becoming one of the UK's first net carbon neutral ports.

The solar system is complimented with an onsite battery with a capacity of 1.3 megawatt hours, which can power a typical home for four months. It captures renewable energy, which would otherwise be exported to the local electricity network, and redirects it to the port's buildings when required.

The battery and new solar system work in conjunction with each other, providing balancing services to the national grid and storing power during periods of lower pricing.

Cllr Kimberly Barrett, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment, said:

"It's great to see this project switched on and using greener energy to power such an important part of Portsmouth. This will reduce carbon emissions by 239 tonnes, a huge step in the right direction for our Net Zero Carbon by 2030 target."

Elly Howe, environmental and sustainability coordinator at Portsmouth International Port added:

"This huge solar installation and battery storage facility will help the port reach our ambitious sustainability goals. Energy consumption at the port is already down 33% on last year so I'm excited to see what we can achieve in the future.

"Along with our project partners, I'd like also like to thank Brittany Ferries, the port's biggest customer, for helping to accommodate the work throughout some of the busiest times of the year."

Gary Sucharewycz, Development Director at Custom Solar said:

"Portsmouth City Council are very forward thinking in their renewable ambitions and we are very proud to have supported them by developing and delivering this major solar and storage project. The project demonstrates how solar can be integrated into areas of land in busy operational sites such as this and we look forward to working with the council on future projects."