



3,000 solar panels start generating clean electricity in Oxfordshire . 27/06/2011

The UK's first solar business park has been connected to the National Grid, with 3,000 solar panels now powering Howbery Business Park in Wallingford Oxfordshire. The ground-mounted solar array is expected to generate over 682 MWh of clean electricity a year for the park; an engineering, environmental and water research and development centre. Howbery Business Park accommodates nearly 1,000 employees working for more than 20 organisations.

The solar installation, 748kWp in size, is one of the first large scale ground-mounted systems of its kind to be connected to the National Grid under the Government's Feed-in tariff (FIT) scheme. The installation will power over a quarter of the business park and save over 350 tonnes of CO2 emissions a year.

Developed by HR Wallingford Ltd., based at Howbery Business Park, and Lightsource Renewable Energy; the solar installation was funded by Octopus Investments and local private investor Andrew Troup. The engineering, procurement and construction was carried by British company Solarcentury, who has built similar parks in Europe, this is its first to be built in the UK after the government introduced a solar FIT in 2010.

John Ormston, Chief Executive, HR Wallingford said: "Howbery Business Park is proud of its green credentials. A centre of excellence with two highly sustainable, BREEAM Excellent rated office buildings and an operational Green Travel Plan, we are committed to leading the way in renewable energy and are proud to be showcasing the UK's first solar business park. Howbery BusinessPark will be one of only a few business parks in the UK where occupiers are able to secure a direct electrical supply from a solar array."



Derry Newman, CEO, Solarcentury said: “The solar at Howbery Business Park provides a glimpse of how this technology can contribute to our clean energy future, hinting at the serious role solar power can play in our energy mix. It’s fantastic that such a progressive and world class R&D centre continues to lead the way, now powered by 21st Century energy. Solar is not to be underestimated; it is the fastest growing energy technology in the world, simply because it is clean, reliable and a readily available alternative to fossil fuels.”

There are many hundreds of solar parks now in existence across the world, together with solar on buildings; they are an increasingly common way of generating renewable power. Solarcentury and its partners are currently building two additional solar arrays of significant size, due for connection within the next month.