

Solar Council 9th December 2025

Date and Time: 12:30-14:00, Tuesday 9th December 2025.

Attendees

- Michael Shanks MP (Chair), DESNZ
- Chris Hewett, Chief Executive (Chair), SEUK
- Sarah Redwood (Deputy Chair), DESNZ
- Gemma Grimes (Deputy Chair), SEUK
- Jonathan Bates, Photon Energy
- Alex De Souza, Lightsource BP
- Matt Black, Innovo Renewables
- Alice Etheridge, NESO
- Ed Bratt, Unison
- Clare Bottle, UK Warehousing Association
- (With support from SEUK and Officials from DESNZ, Ofgem, Scottish Government, Welsh Government and the Northern Ireland Executive)

Summary

- Minister Shanks and Chris Hewett opened the meeting – points raised around AR7 budget publication, Connection Reform notifications, and the RO and FIT consultations.
- DESNZ presented the Solar Dashboard and Council members provided views on the information captured within it. Industry presented their views on the key blockers to solar deployment, and discussed the Strategic Spatial Energy Plan, Reformed National Market and reiterated considerations regarding Connections Reform and the Renewable Obligation and Feed in Tariff consultation.
- DESNZ provided updates on the Solar Sprint and Community Benefits, and an industry update was provided regarding solar deployment on commercial buildings.
- SEUK presented their work on routes to competence for vital core occupations for solar sector, followed by a discussion regarding next steps for building on the action and supporting the solar workforce more broadly. Key messages included the lack of solar apprenticeships which means entry routes into the industry can be fragmented; the need to address gaps in training provision for certain roles such as a utility-scale site technician; the opportunities provided by Technical Excellence Colleges in the Clean Energy Jobs Plan; and high demand for electrically qualified workers across the renewables industry.
- SEUK presented its work with other organisations on communications, their current communications activity, and how the solar industry proposes working with Government on communications moving forward. Key messages included the need for industry and government to work together on speaking clearly, with one voice, on lowering energy bills, joining up existing Government schemes into a simple, visible public message and establishing a joined-up approach to tackling misinformation.
- Minister Shanks and Chris Hewett closed the meeting. The next meeting will be held in Spring 2026.