Frodsham Solar
Outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan

April 2026

Cubico
SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENTS

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CONTENTS

TABLES

APPENDICES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of this Report

1.1.1 This document provides the outline Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan (the "Plan") for the construction, operation and maintenance of the Frodsham Solar project ('the Proposed Development').

1.1.2 This document has been prepared by of Frodsham Solar Limited ('the Applicant') as part of the information that accompanies the Development Consent Order ('DCO') for the Proposed Development. Should the Proposed Development be consented, further details of the measures put in place to achieve this would be set out in substantial accordance with this outline Plan, following consultation with stakeholders involved in skills development, employment, and the local supply chain. The final plan will describe the proactive engagement activities undertaken by the Applicant with the organisations described in this document in the preparation of the final Skills, Supply Chain and Employment Plan and how the outcome of the engagement activities influenced the final plan.

1.1.3 The Plan sets out the potential benefits of the Proposed Development. It includes potential activities for the Applicant to carry out post-consent to promote improvements related to skills, supply chain and employment ('SSEC'). It proposes how the Applicant will collaborate with local stakeholder organisations to achieve these benefits.

1.1.4 The Plan has been produced based on preliminary assessments of the local workforce, socioeconomic conditions**,** and current policy drivers in the local area. The contents of the Plan are subject to the agreement of the local planning authority, Cheshire West and Cheshire Council ('CWaCC'), and may be altered according to their recommendations.

1.2 Potential Benefits of the Proposed Development

1.2.1 The Proposed Development could provide the following benefits related to SSCE:

1.2.2 Stimulate sustainable growth of the region's industrial sector;

- Provide employment for local people;
- Improve workforce diversity and inclusion;
- Increase green skills capabilities of the workforce and young people;
- Provide opportunities for research, innovation, and education in the renewable energy and environmental sectors;
- Enforce high traceability and environmental sustainability standards across the supply chain; and
- Encourage procurement activities to benefit the local economy.

1.2.3 The Applicant proposes to work with the partners set out in Table 1-1 to agree ways that the Proposed Development could deliver these benefits. This list is indicative and will be refined when producing the full plan.

Table 1-1 Proposed partners for the production and delivery of the full Plan

Primary Public Sector Partners	Cheshire West and Chester Council (Skills & Employment Team) Frodsham Town Council Helsby Town Council Elton Parish Council Ince Parsh Council
Education and Training Providers	University of Chester West Cheshire College Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy (6th Form), Runcorn EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Green Industrial Futures
Business Sector Groups	Net Zero North West (NZNW) ORIGIN Business Forum Enterprise Cheshire & Warrington West Chester and North Wales Chamber of Commerce The Federation of Groundwork Trusts (tbc)
Research Organisations	Industrial Decarbonisation Research and Innovation Centre (IDRIC) University of Chester (eg. Thornton Science Park)

Environmental Organisations	Natural England Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Cheshire and Wirral Ornithological Society
Inclusive Employment Charities	Ambitious About Autism Energyz Black

1.3 Scope

1.3.1 The Proposed Development comprises a new solar energy generating station and an associated on-site Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) on land at Frodsham Marsh, Frodsham, Cheshire West and Chester ('the Site'). The Proposed Development also includes the associated infrastructure for connection to the local electricity distribution network, as well as a private-wire electricity connection that would enable local businesses to utilise the renewable electricity generated by the Proposed Development.

1.3.2 The Proposed Development would be situated in Cheshire, north of the town of Frodsham. The Proposed Development will connect to the nearby Frodsham Substation from which the electricity generated will be supplied to the Distribution Network Operator, SP Energy Networks, who are responsible for distributing electricity across Cheshire and Merseyside. Consequently, the Proposed Development is anticipated to provide significant benefits to the ceremonial counties of Cheshire and Merseyside, which includes the nearest cities of Cheshire and Liverpool.

1.3.3 The Applicant anticipates that the majority of the potential SSCE benefits will be concentrated within a smaller region, encompassing Cheshire West and Chester and the majority of Halton. In particular, the Plan will focus on the closest settlements to the Proposed Development, which are the towns of Frodsham, Runcorn, and Ellesmere Port; and the villages of Ince, Helsby and Elton.

1.3.4 The Order Limits of the Proposed Development cover approximately 339.5 hectares of land within the Frodsham Marshes and comprises of a series of distinct sub-areas:

i) Solar Array Development Area ('SADA')
ii) Main Site Access
iii) Non-Breeding Bird Mitigation Area ('NBBMA')
iv) Skylark Mitigation Area ('SMA')
v) Main Access Route
vi) SPEN Substation Connection
vii) SPEN Substation Access

1.3.5 The Plan focuses primarily on maximising the proposed benefits associated with the SADA, NBBMA and SMA, where the majority of opportunities relating to employment, skills and supply chain would arise.

2.0 BASELINE

2.1 Local Industry

2.1.1 The North West region hosts a high concentration of energy-intensive industries, including the UK's highest concentration of advanced manufacturing and chemical production.[1] The Proposed Development would be located at the heart of a nationally significant industrial corridor, stretching from Ellesmere Port toward Runcorn, where over 5% of the UK's energy is consumed.[2] Within the industrial town of Runcorn (which specialises in the production of chemicals) notable developments include the INEOS Inovyn Runcorn Site, which produces industrial chemicals and includes an 800MW gas-fired power station. Encirc Glass (a glass manufacturer located in Elton) is located a short distance to the west from the development. Further west is the town of Ellesmere Port, which is home to the Stanlow Oil Refinery, centred within the HyNet low-carbon industrial cluster and in the process of becoming the UK's first low carbon refinery.[3] Other major industrial sites in Ellesmere Port include the Innospec chemicals manufacturing plant and the Vauxhall Motors car factory.

2.1.2 UK industry is currently at an economic disadvantage relative to European and G7 competitors, due to the significantly higher industrial power prices.[4] The Government has identified these high electricity costs as a significant barrier to growth and investment in the UK.[5] For example, at a site that

[1] Net Zero North West & UK Research and Innovation, (2023). *North West Cluster Plan*. Available at: https://www.netzeronw.co.uk/north-west-cluster [Accessed 8 April 2025]
[2] Protos, (2017). UK's first Energy Innovation District [online]. Available at: https://www.protos.co.uk/news/uk-s-first-energy-innovation-district [Accessed 8 April 2025].
[3] Essar (30 April 2025). Essar Energy Transition's Hydrogen-Ready Furnace now Powering EET Fuels' Stanlow Site [press release]. Available at: https://www.essar.com/inthenews/essar-energy-transitions-hydrogen-ready-furnace-now-powering-eet-fuels-stanlow-site/ [Accessed 23 May 2025].
[4] Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2024). International Industrial energy Prices. Industrial electricity prices in the IEA (QEP 5.3.1) [Statistical data set]. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/international-industrial-energy-prices [Accessed 19 May 2025].
[5] Department for Business & Trade (2024). *Invest 2035: the UK's modern industrial strategy*. [online] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/invest-2035-the-uks-modern-industrial-strategy/invest-2035-the-uks-modern-industrial-strategy [Accessed 19 May 2025].

adjoins the Order Limits for the Proposed Development, the now former CF Fertilisers Plant was decommissioned during 2022 with high fuel costs being reported as a contributing factor.[6] The closure resulted in the loss of hundreds of jobs and caused knock on effects for the sector.[7]

2.1.3 The Proposed Development would be located in an area of industry looking to lead the way in the deployment of low carbon infrastructure. The SADA overlaps the Frodsham Wind Farm, comprising of 19 large-scale wind turbines that supply renewable electricity to the surrounding area. The Runcorn Energy from Waste Plant, operated by Viridor, is north of the Proposed Development. Additionally, the Protos hub, consisting of clusters of innovative technologies in energy generation and resource management aiming towards clean growth, neighbours the Proposed Development. The neighbouring Protos development has an existing Biomass Energy Plant, as well as plans to develop a carbon capture facility. Protos has already attracted £500 million of investment into the local area, and has the potential to deliver up to £1.5 billion and 1,000 jobs over the next 15 years.[8]

2.2 Important Employment Areas

2.2.1 CWaCC has identified the ten most significant employment sectors in the authority (based on the number of people employed, revenue generated, and future growth potential):[9]

i) Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering

[6] CF Industries (2023). "CF Fertilisers UK Announces Proposal to Permanently Close Ammonia Plant at Billingham Complex". Corporate Communications. Available at: https://www.cfindustries.com/newsroom/2023/billingham-ammonia-plant [Accessed 19 May 2025].
[7] Hannah Finch (25 August 2022). "Production halted at CF Industries - the wider impact and what happens next" [online]. *Business Live*. Available at: https://www.business-live.co.uk/manufacturing/production-halted-cf-industries-wider-24853358 [Accessed 19 May 2025].
[8] Protos (2025) *Peel NRE acquires former CF Fertilisers site to drive clean energy transition* [press release]. Available at: https://www.protos.co.uk/news/peel-nre-acquires-former-cf-fertilisers-site-to-drive-clean-energy-transition/ [Accessed 23 May 2025].
[9] Cheshire West and Chester Council and NHS (2023). "Important Areas of Employment in Cheshire West and Chester" [online]. *Live Well Cheshire West*. Available at: https://www.livewell.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/Information/Employment-areas-in-Cheshire-West-and-Chester [Accessed 19 May 2025].

ii) Agriculture and Food Production
iii) Construction
iv) Creative and Digital
v) Energy
vi) Financial, Business & Professional Services (FBP)
vii) Health and Social Care
viii) Green Skills – Land Use and Climate Change Mitigation
ix) Hospitality and Retail
x) Logistics

2.3 Green skills gap

2.3.1 Despite the growing number of employment roles in the low-carbon sector, there is a shortage of workers currently possessing the required skills.[10] The global green talent pool is not growing at a fast enough rate to keep up with the projected demand for green talent (the 'green skills gap'): LinkedIn data projects that nearly one-fifth of green jobs will be unfulfilled by 2030, and this figure rises to over half by 2050.[11] The green skills gap threatens progress on both economic and environmental fronts: undermining efforts to achieve carbon reduction targets and missing to the economic growth and employment opportunities that would result from the growing low-carbon economy. As such, there is an incentive to, at the minimum, double the global green talent pool through upskilling the workforce to meet the projected demand for green skills.

2.3.2 Green talent is in the greatest demand in the United Kingdom, where 13% of roles advertised on LinkedIn required at least one green skill.[12] However, while many young people in the UK are motivated to address climate change, they lack a clear understanding of the specific green skills and career

[10] Nuala Burnett et al (2024). "The UK's plans and progress to reach net zero by 2050" [Research briefing]. House of Commons Library. Available at: https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9888/.
[11] LinkedIn (2024). *Global Green Skills Report 2024*.
[12] LinkedIn (2024). *Global Climate Talent Stocktake*.

pathways needed for decarbonisation.[13] As well as young applicants missing out on opportunities in the low carbon sector, this lack of knowledge and careers guidance contributes towards the broader risks associated with the sector not being able to meet its ambitious recruitment targets.

[13] National Learning and Work Institute and WorldSkills UK (2022). *Skills for a net-zero economy: Insights from employers and young people* [Report].

3.0 POLICY DRIVERS

3.1.1 The UK has committed to a 68% reduction in emissions by 2030 (as part of its Nationally Determined Contribution towards the Paris Agreement) and to reaching net zero by 2050.[14] To tackle power high prices, guarantee energy security and meet net zero targets, the Government has decided to accelerate the transition from fossil fuels and to domestically-produced renewable energy.[15] To meet that ambition, installed solar capacity would need to increase almost threefold from a 2024 baseline. The UK Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution sets out the government's plan to make the UK a global leader in green technologies, accelerate progress towards net zero, and create and support up to 250,000 green jobs through mobilising billions of public and private investment.[16]

3.1.2 The Clean Power 2030 Action Plan ('Clean Power 2030') is expected to play a key part in stimulating a wealth of new jobs and economic opportunities across the country. Clean Power 2030 sets out the UK's pathway to a clean power system and how the government will support the necessary infrastructure to deliver it. Clean Power 2030 aims to lower electricity costs (in a fair and equitable manner) across the country, while also growing public trust and knowledge in renewable energy, through driving investment into locally led, owned and managed energy developments.[17] Clean Power 2030 would benefit employment, skills and supply chain through providing local people with new, higher value, future-proof jobs, and businesses with direct access to locally produced energy.[17]

3.1.3 Regional economic strategies also highlight renewable energy and clean growth as priority sectors. In May 2019, CWaCC declared a Climate

[14] *SOURCE*
[15] Invest 2035: the UK's modern industrial strategy. https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/invest-2035-the-uks-modern-industrial-strategy/invest-2035-the-uks-modern-industrial-strategy
[16] HM Government (November 2020). *The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution* [Policy Paper]. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-ten-point-plan-for-a-green-industrial-revolution.
[17] Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2024). Clean Power 2030 Action Plan.

Emergency and set a target for the borough to become net zero by 2045, noting that achieving this target will require the decarbonisation of industry and a rapid expansion of renewable and low-carbon infrastructure over the next decade. The Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership's *Strategic Economic Plan and Local Industrial Strategy* identify 'Energy and Clean Growth' as one of the region's core strengths and a driver of future prosperity, while at the same time recognising that the need for significant investment into local energy networks to meet future energy demand.

3.1.4 Industrial consumers in the North West produce 16.7 million tonnes of carbon emissions per year.[18] Net-Zero North West's (NZNW) approach to decarbonisation has three objectives: an integrated industrial cluster in the north west, securing clean energy in the north west and creating the hydrogen eco-system.[19] The Net Zero North West Cluster Plan (the 'Cluster Plan') outlines a plan to decarbonise industry and attract green investment through a £30 billion pipeline of low-carbon projects (including renewables, hydrogen, and carbon capture) in the Liverpool Bay and Cheshire area. The Cluster Plan is anticipated to save 46 million tonnes of carbon (including 17 million from industry) and create and safeguard 34,500 green jobs in the short-term and 660,000 over the long-term future.[20] The Cluster Plan identifies five key fronts for transformative change: energy efficiency, energy generation, investment, innovation, skills and the supply chain; and aims for the North West to become a leader in clean growth, as well as the world's first net zero region by 2040.[20]

3.1.5 ORIGIN, led by CWaCC, proposes a similar vision a vision: "for Ellesmere Port to become the world's first Net Zero Carbon Industrial cluster".[21] Similarly

[18] Industrial Decarbonisation Research and Innovation Centre (IDRIC). *North West Industrial Cluster* [online]. Heriot-Watt University. Available at: https://idric.org/stakeholders/north-west-cluster/ [Accessed 23 May 2025].
[19] Net Zero North West & Siemens (2021) *The Net Zero North West Economic Prospectus.* Available at: https://api.netzeronw.co.uk/uploads/Net_Zero_North_West_Economic_Investment_Prospectus_1_926bbd64b8.pdf.
[20] Net Zero North West (2024). *Net Zero North West Manifesto: Pioneering a Net-Zero Future*. Available at: https://api.netzeronw.co.uk/uploads/manifesto_e4d6d5143e.pdf.
[21] Ellesmere Port Economic Growth Team & Cheshire West and Chester Council (2023). *Origin* [online]. Available at: https://www.origin-ep.co.uk/. [Accessed 23 May 2025].

to the Cluster Plan, ORIGIN provides a blueprint to unlock £2 billion of capital investment aiming to encourage a network of world leading clean industry, power and transport companies to innovate new solutions to tackle the Climate Emergency, resulting in sustainable economic growth and the creation of a potential 30,000 of green jobs.[22]

3.1.6 As well as creating renewable energy infrastructure, various stakeholders (including the government, industry and research institutions) have recognised the importance of green skills training to ensure the workforce possesses the appropriate skillsets to be able to fill in the roles that would be created as part of the energy transition. NZNW have noted that the development of appropriate skills in the workforce are crucial for the Cluster Plan to meet its goals, while at the same time noting- that closing the green skills gap is a complex issue, and closing it requires a coordinated effort from between stakeholders in government, educational institutions, and industry stakeholders.[20] In January 2025, CWaCC was awarded £1 million to fund green skills training (the 'Energy Skills Passport' programme) after the Government identified Cheshire as one of four regions critical for the growth of the clean energy sector.[23] The Energy Skills Passport programme aims to equip local workers with the skills necessary to take on the new green jobs that are being created.

[22] Cheshire West and Cheshire Council. *Origin Ellesmere Port Investment Prospectus*. [online]. Available at: https://www.origininvestmentprospectus.co.uk/ [Accessed 23 May 2025].
[23] Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, (2025). *Support for workers to benefit from thousands of clean power jobs*. [online] Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/support-for-workers-to-benefit-from-thousands-of-clean-power-jobs.

4.0 POTENTIAL EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

4.1 Encourage sustainable growth of the region's industrial sectors

4.1.1 The Proposed Development would provide the type of renewable energy infrastructure needed to meet the ambitions of decarbonisation and sustainable economic growth from the UK government and regional stakeholders in the Cheshire and Merseyside area. By inserting renewable energy infrastructure and low-carbon investment into an existing carbon-intensive industrial area, the Proposed Development aligns with NZNW' objective of *"creating an integrated industrial cluster in the north west"* and with the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership's *Strategic Economic Plan and Local Industrial Strategy* (3.1.3 and 3.1.4).

4.1.2 The addition of a utility-scale solar farm and battery energy storage system ('BESS') to the existing technologies would improve the region's technological diversity, helping make the North West a renewable energy pioneer in the UK and a centre for green jobs.

4.1.3 By providing renewable energy to homes and businesses in the Cheshire and Merseyside areas, the Proposed Development aligns with NZNW's objective of "securing clean energy in the north west". Using locally produced electricity, as opposed to gas or energy from the grid (which contains a mixture of fossil fuels and renewable energy), would also reduce greenhouse gas emissions produced in the region without impacting regional productivity. These outcomes support Net Zero North West's vision to become the world's first net zero industrial cluster by 2040.

4.1.4 Access to affordable and reliable energy is an influential determinant of business competitiveness, and an important consideration for internationally mobile investment. Important sectors in the region, such as advanced manufacturing and digital and technologies, have cited electricity costs as a barrier to growth. The Proposed Development would help shield businesses from volatile international fossil fuel markets.

4.1.5 The Proposed Development includes provision for a private-wire connection to energy-intensive local industry. This would provide local industry with home-grown and sustainably generated electricity at a cheaper price (relative to sourcing from the grid), promoting business growth, economic competitiveness and potentially allowing them to employ more people, thereby reducing unemployment levels and potentially providing local people with the skills required to full-fill these newly created roles.

4.1.6 This opportunity which is bespoke to the Proposed Development is an additional benefit, supplementing the conventional arrangement which will see the electricity generated by the solar farm being exported onto the local distribution network from where it will be supplied to users, including homes and businesses. This will provide economic benefit in the context that generating most of the UK's electricity supply from home-grown and renewable sources, such as wind and solar, as opposed to being reliant on international gas prices, will reduce energy bills for everyone in the long-term.

4.1.7 The contribution of the Proposed Development to carbon reduction enhances the borough's appeal for investors and businesses, as companies are prioritising clean energy availability for location decisions. The Proposed Development could attract businesses looking to power their facilities with renewable electricity or to site themselves near sources of clean energy (for instance, advanced manufacturing or data centres seeking renewable power purchase agreements). In this way, the Proposed Development could indirectly result in further job-creation locally by improving infrastructure for sustainable growth.

4.2 Provide employment for local people

4.2.1 The Proposed Development would provide employment across a variety of sectors and skills levels, potentially including engineering, design, welding, mechanical trades, and managerial roles (such as project and delivery managers).

4.2.2 The Applicant will strive to maintain or improve revenue and employment for the ten most significant employment sectors in the authority (as identified by CWaCC and listed in 2.2.1). It is expected that the Proposed Development would contribute, directly or indirectly, to the growth of most of these sectors. For example, new jobs would be created in the construction and logistics sectors, relating to the construction and operation of the proposed SADA, BESS and balance of plant works (e.g. new access tracks).

4.2.3 The SADA, NBBMA and SMA sub-areas could contribute to the burgeoning local green skills sector through providing employment, education and training opportunities to surrounding communities, related to solar energy, BESS, and environmental conservation. Meanwhile, the hospitality and retail sectors in surrounding towns could benefit from increased customers, owing to the influx of workers during the construction period. Once operational, the Proposed Development may still result in modest benefits to these sectors, resulting from interest groups, as well as operations and maintenance workers visiting the Proposed Development.

4.3 Construction phase

4.3.1 It's estimated that approximately 109 full time (or equivalent) jobs would be created over the construction period, which is expected to last approximately 30 months. Employment opportunities would include civil and electrical engineering, groundworks, landscaping, transportation, security services and consultancy services.

4.3.2 The Applicant aims to prioritise procuring the services of local businesses and contractors and the use of local employees, where possible. For example, a local storage facility located in Ellesmere Port has already been used for storage of equipment, as part of pre-construction works. Furthermore, a local contractor was also used for the installation of fencing to secure the equipment once it was installed.

4.3.3 The principal work packages during construction will comprise of the following:

i) Enabling Works
ii) Construction of Western Array
iii) Construction of Eastern Array
iv) Construction of the BESS and Frodsham Solar Substation
v) Construction of the 132kV SPEN Substation Grid Connection
vi) Construction of the 132kV Private Wire Grid Connection

A full description of the development proposals is contained in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: Proposed Development [*EN010153/DR/6.1*].**

4.3.4 It is anticipated that the average number of workers on site across the construction phase would be 109 per day, with a peak workforce of approximately 243 staff per weekday in the twelfth month. The workforce would be distributed across the Site with work happening in parallel across the sub-projects and packages described in 1.3.4.

4.3.5 The Proposed Development includes installation of perimeter fencing around all the solar array areas, which would be a significant undertaking and particularly well suited to be undertaken by local contractors, given the presence of various construction businesses in the borough of Cheshire West and Chester.

4.3.6 The temporary jobs created during the construction phase of the Proposed Development would support the career growth of those employees by providing them with relevant work experience in the green skills sector, allowing them to take on future green jobs in the region.

4.4 Operational phase

4.4.1 Once operational, the Proposed Development would support a number of permanent jobs and long-term contracted positions over its operational life of approximately 40 years.

4.4.2 Most of the jobs created would relate to the ongoing operations, maintenance, and security of the solar PV and BESS facility, as well as landscaping/grounds maintenance. For example, inspection and cleaning of solar panels, operation of security systems, and vegetation/grounds maintenance. The Applicant will encourage local businesses to participate in the tender for the operation and maintenance phase of the project and will communicate details on how they can do that at the appropriate time.

4.5 Conservation and Environment

4.5.1 The NBBMA and SMA areas of the Proposed Development would require ongoing management, maintenance and monitoring after their initial construction. This would result in the creation of jobs related to conservation and landscaping, which aligns with CWaCC's ambition to grow the local land use and climate change mitigation sector.[9]

4.5.2 Given that 5,500 people are working in the 'Green skills – Land Use and Climate Change Mitigation' sector in Cheshire and Warrington,[24] there is a large pool of local workers which can be considered for some of these roles. The habitat improvement measures would include nearly 15km of tree and hedgerow planting to boost biodiversity on site, which would be a job suitable to be undertaken by a local contractor.

4.5.3 These newly enhanced habitats are expected to require the services of an environmental management company or nature charity to ensure their long-term effectiveness. The Applicant would consider location as a selection criterion for this contractor; ensuring that said entity has the required specialist

[24] Cheshire West and Chester Council & NHS (2023). "Green skills – Land Use and Climate Change Mitigation Overview". "Important Areas of Employment in Cheshire West and Chester" - *Live Well Cheshire West*. Available at: https://www.livewell.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/Information/Employment-areas-in-Cheshire-West-and-Chester [Accessed 19 May 2025].

and local knowledge will also be important for the success of these habitats and the species they support.

4.5.4 There will also be a requirement for long term ecological monitoring of the site and the Applicant will seek to prioritise procuring such services from environmental specialists in the Cheshire and Merseyside area. For example, the Applicant has already engaged the services of Avian Ecology (based in Cheshire) for ornithological and ecology services.

4.5.5 Additionally, the Applicant proposes to reach out to local research groups and academics from the nearest universities, with a view of these habitat projects being available to be used for research and education purposes and thereby providing added value to local institutions. This proposal is elaborated on in **7.6** of the plan.

4.5.6 The Proposed Development includes the creation of over 4.5 km in new permissive paths to improve public access to across site. These would also require regular maintenance such as cutting verges to prevent vegetation overgrowing onto the paths, which could provide work for local grounds maintenance contractors. A full description of the proposals related to public rights of way is contained in the **Outline Public Rights of Way Management Plan *[EN010153/DR/7.9].***

4.6 Providing a stimulus for local businesses

4.6.1 The influx of construction activity during the construction phase is expected to benefit local businesses (such as equipment suppliers, transport and logistics firms, and hospitality venues for workers), providing a temporary economic stimulus. It's expected that a collection and drop-off service using minibuses will be implemented as a way of transporting construction workers to site. This service will facilitate the transportation of construction staff to and from pre-arranged collection and drop-off points, which may include nearby public transport hubs, town centres, and accommodation facilities. By increasing footfall in these areas, this service has the potential to generate

additional revenue for local high street businesses, as construction workers may patronise local shops and services.

5.0 SKILLS BENEFITS

5.1 Enhancing proficiency in green skills

5.1.1 Interventions relating to relevant skills training and education would benefit local people, while also promoting the supply of an appropriately skilled workforce to deliver the project. In the UK, the hiring rate for green talent is 72% greater than for overall talent.[12] Furthermore, construction, utilities and manufacturing (as well as being important employment sectors in Cheshire) are the sectors with the highest demand for green skills, with 23.1%, 20.6% and 13.2% of LinkedIn job postings in each sector, respectively, requiring green skills.[12] As such, through providing training opportunities and work experience relating to green skills (especially within the construction and utilities sectors), the Proposed Development has the potential to significantly improve the hiring prospects of local workers.

5.1.2 The Applicant will work with the partners set out in Table 1-1 to explore ways in which the Proposed Development could help to address the green skills gap. A proposed initiative to address this issue is outlined in **7.3** of the Plan.

5.2 Supporting Research, Innovation and Education

5.2.1 It's the aim for the benefits of the Proposed Development to go beyond its primary purpose as critical infrastructure. This includes by it providing a resource for the purpose of research and education in the renewable energy and environmental sectors, thereby supporting innovation and conservational and contributing towards wider environmental and industrial targets. More focused research programmes by higher education facilities could also be accommodated. Potential avenues through which the Applicant can achieve these objectives are outlined in **7.5** and **7.6** of the Plan.

5.2.2 Should the Proposed Development be consented, the Applicant would support STEM education in the local area through collaborating the local education stakeholders listed in Table 1-1. The Applicant already has plans to engage with STEM Learning UK. The Applicant has the right people to

support STEM education, as one member of the team is a registered STEM ambassador, while another is a former university lecturer.

5.3 Funding

5.3.1 The Proposed Development will generate business rates revenue over its operational lifetime, to be paid to the local authority. This revenue could be invested in the authority's established skills and training programmes, making a notable contribution to achieving objectives. The revenue could supplement the £1 million that CWaCC was awarded in January 2005 to fund green skills training under the 'Energy Skills Passport' programme.

5.3.2 The 'Frodsham Community Fund', although not a matter to be taken into account in the planning balance, will also take some of the revenue generated by the Proposed Development and make it available to support community initiatives. This funding will be into the millions of pounds over the life of the project, and community groups may be able to apply for funding to support skills and training initiatives in the local area.

6.0 SUPPLY CHAIN BENEFITS

6.1 Enforce high traceability and sustainability standards across the supply chain

6.1.1 The Applicant is part of Cubico Sustainable Investments Limited ('Cubico'). As such, all suppliers, joint venture partners, sellers, developers, consultants, contractors and other types of third parties ('Suppliers') engaged to provide goods and services for the Proposed Development must adhere to Cubico's Supplier Code of Conduct ('SCoC') (**Appendix A**) and promote the same standards within their own organisations and their supply chains. Suppliers are expected to maintain policies and procedures which ensure they meet the standards contained within the SCoC. The Applicant will seek assurance from its Suppliers that they comply with this Code as part of the tendering process and through periodic compliance reviews.

6.1.2 The Applicant expects their Suppliers to comply with the following principles in particular:

i) Respect for human rights
ii) Prioritise health, safety and environment ('HSE')
iii) Compliance with environmental legislation
iv) The right to speak up

6.1.3 The Applicant's Procurement and Know Your Customer (KYC) Policy (**Appendix B**) sets high standards for ethical and responsible practice, which applies to all of its employees and third parties and would therefore be applied to the Proposed Development. This policy prohibits the use of modern slavery in all of the Applicant's own operations and supply chains, ensuring the Proposed Development does not benefit (either directly or indirectly) from any practices amounting to modern slavery. Employees and suppliers are required under the Procurement and KYC Policy to understand the business needs, resolve queries satisfactorily, demonstrate fairness and integrity,

comply with relevant laws and regulations, keep relevant information confidential and secure, and be responsible for procurement best practice.

6.1.4 The Applicant's procedure for monitoring Suppliers involves an initial compliance check to screen for red flags using an external software (Moody's Compliance Catalyst). The chosen Suppliers are then monitored on a daily basis, and the Applicant would receive an email alert if a new compliance red flag is discovered. This ensures the Applicant will become aware of any compliance breaches within 24 hours.

6.1.5 The Applicant's 'Speak Up Procedure' (**Appendix C**) encourage employees and third parties to report any unethical business practices or violations of any policy within its own business or by Suppliers. The Speak Up Procedure provides multiple ways for a report to be made by contacting a manager, Cubico compliance, or using the independent service provided by Safecall to make reports anonymously. This provides multiple avenues for internal and external people to report concerns, including modern slavery in the supply chain. The Applicant's Speak Up Procedure encourages employees to report wrongdoings, while the Applicant's Code of Conduct makes it clear that taking negative action against an employee for having sent a Speak Up report is strictly prohibited. For further information, please see the 'Whistleblowing' webpage on Cubico's website.[25]

6.1.6 The Applicant would aim to reduce carbon emissions throughout the supply chain for the Proposed Development, as far as practical. The Applicant would consider the carbon emissions of potential Suppliers during the tender process and would encourage preferred Suppliers to have a carbon reduction plan through including this as a selection criterion.

[25] Cubico Sustainable Investments. *Whistleblowing*. Available at: https://www.cubicoinvest.com/esg/whistleblowing/ [Accessed 23 May 2025].

6.2 Encourage procurement activities to benefit the local economy

6.2.1 Through generating and exporting energy locally, the Proposed Development would support regional self-sufficiency, thereby reducing reliance on outsourcing and fostering sustainable economic growth. For instance, the proposed private-write connection (described in **7.1** of the Plan) will enable some of the high electricity demand from local industrial businesses to be met with electricity generated locally and sustainably by the Proposed Development.

6.2.2 Wherever possible, the Applicant would seek to procure the services of local businesses. The Applicant has already engaged the services of local consultancies and contractors as part of the design and environmental assessment processes.

6.2.3 Should the Proposed Development be consented, the Applicant would aim to include qualified local suppliers within the selection pool during tender processes. The Applicant would include social value as a selection criterion (which could include commitments to local employment) and would thus incentivise the winning bidder to partner with, or subcontract to, local businesses.

6.2.4 The Proposed Development also complements other clean energy initiatives in the area (such as the existing Frodsham Wind Farm and the emerging HyNet hydrogen project), helping to form a cluster of low-carbon energy assets in the area. Such clustering can yield synergies, spur innovation, and support supply-chain development – all hallmarks of a growing green economy.

7.0 INTERVENTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

7.1 Private-wire connection to local industry

7.1.1 The Proposed Development's immediate proximity to complementary infrastructure and demand centres enables the possibility of its direct integration into local networks through a private-wire connection. This allows the Proposed Development to supply renewable electricity directly to energy-intensive local industries at cheaper prices relative to the grid, thus reducing their energy costs and freeing up capital for business growth and employment.

7.2 Collaborate with inclusive organisations to ensure inclusive hiring practices

7.2.1 The Applicant is committed to improving diversity and inclusion in the workforce through inclusive training and hiring practices. The Applicant proposes collaborating with local stakeholders working to improve diversity. This could include collaborating with CWaCC (who were awarded the Disability Confident Employer standard) to ensure disabled people are included in the hiring process, and appropriate accommodations are made.

7.2.2 The Applicant would also consider advertising some opportunities related to the Proposed Development on job boards specifically targeting minority groups of people. For example, Cubico has already collaborated with Ambitious About Autism to provide internship opportunities for young autistic people within the company and worked out how best to support these interns.

7.3 Coordinate green skills training with local education and skills providers

7.3.1 The Applicant proposes to engage with the local educational providers set out in Table 1-1 to explore the ways in which the Proposed Development could be used to deliver training to young people and unemployed adults, to help them develop the skills needed to fill the green jobs being created as part

achieving Net-Zero. In particular, the Applicant would like to explore the idea of delivering training in schools located in low-income areas with the aim of contributing to the social mobility of economically disadvantaged children and inspiring them to consider a career in the renewable energy sector.

7.3.2 The Applicant plans to participate in career training events. For example, the Applicant has already committed to attending the STEM Symposium at Chester Zoo, on 30th June 2025, where the Applicant would support STEM curriculum leaders and teachers across Cheshire and Warrington with integrating industry-relevant skills and experiences into their curriculum planning. This intervention would improve young people's knowledge about green skills, through receiving quality careers guidance from schools, thus empowering young people to pursue a career in the low-carbon sector and contributing towards closing the green skills gap.

7.4 Target job adverts to locally trained workers

7.4.1 The Proposed Development could provide employment to local workers trained under the Energy Skills Passport programme, which would give them the opportunity to put their new green skills into practice. The Applicant proposes liaising with CWaCC to find the best way to ensure that any jobs adverts are seen by these workers, and will agree this as part of the final Plans for the construction and operation phases.

7.5 Permit educational visits to the site

7.5.1 The Applicant proposes to install information boards along the existing and new permissive footpaths that provide relevant information relating to solar power, BESS and ecological conservation. In addition, the Applicant will seek to facilitate organised visits to the solar farm and, where appropriate, to the enhanced natural habitat areas. It is envisaged that such visits would be hosted by trained operations staff, allowing visitors to learn about the electrical engineering of solar power generation and the ecology supported by onsite habitats. The Applicant would consider inviting groups from local

schools and colleges in particular, with the aims of educating students about renewable energy and nature conversation and inspiring them to consider a green career path.

7.6 Support research on habitat improvement

7.6.1 The Proposed Development provides the opportunity for researchers to evaluate the effectiveness of habitat improvement measures through monitoring bird populations in the NBBMA and SMA throughout the life cycle of the development. Through this, researchers would be able to conclude the effectiveness of the habitat mitigation measures.

7.6.2 The Applicant proposes to build on an existing relationship with the RSPB and collaborate with local University researchers, facilitating site access for the purpose of monitoring the habitats and bird populations in the NBBMA and SMA. This research can provide vital information for future conservation projects, through allowing researchers to conclude on what has been effective and what can be improved on the project. The output of this research, if applied by other developers, can contribute to improving biodiversity and bird populations, helping to tackle the UK's biodiversity crisis. As part of their commitment to environmental improvement, the Applicant has consulted with Natural England and agreed to take on a flexible approach to habitat management, where they would adapt their practice in response to research and expert recommendation. This provides researchers with the opportunity to measure the impact of changes made on biodiversity.

8.0 TIMELINE

8.1.1 Subject to obtaining the necessary consents, construction is anticipated to commence in early 2028 and be completed in mid-2030. The Proposed Development comprises a temporary development with an operational phase of up to 40 years. Decommissioning activities would therefore commence in 2070, 40 years after final commissioning.

8.1.2 Pursuant to the Requirements of the DCO, the Applicant will engage with relevant partners to turn this outline plan into a full plan. The full Plan would be prepared in a two phases: the first (relating to the construction phase) would be produced prior to the commencement of the authorised development and the second (relating to the operation phase) would be produced prior to commencement of operation of the SADA.

9.0 MONITORING AND FEEDBACK

9.1.1 It is important that the objectives and activities of the Plan are effectively monitored, measured and reported. This enables an understanding of whether the Plan is achieving its goals and contributing to the over-arching vision and provides feedback accordingly. The monitoring and reporting plan will be developed as part of the full Plan, which will include a periodic review with CWaCC. Due to the different opportunities presented during construction and operation, the timing for these periodic reviews will be agreed as part of the full Plan.

Appendix A – Cubico Supplier Code of Conduct

Appendix B – Cubico Procurement and KYC Policy

Appendix C – Cubico Speak Up Procedure