Why All BESS Planning Applications Are Now Unnecessary and Unjustified in Feckenham:

A Comprehensive Overview and Analysis of Government Renewable Energy Planning Data Compared with National and Regional Targets

15th September 2025

Feckenham is currently the focus of multiple large-scale planning applications for Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS). Since 2017, developers have brought forward proposals with a combined capacity of over 1.5 GW on more than 230 acres of farmland surrounding the Feckenham National Grid Substation. This unprecedented concentration of speculative energy schemes has raised widespread concern about the permanent loss of Green Belt and Open Countryside, risks to environmental and public safety, and the cumulative impact on the local community and its environment.

This article sets out the wider national and global context for renewable energy and the role of battery storage, before turning to the specific implications for Feckenham. It explains how BESS technology fits into the transition to Net Zero, reviews the latest government statistics and policy changes, and details the local BESS planning applications. The purpose is to assess whether there is any genuine need for the scale of development now proposed around Feckenham and to provide a clear evidence base for local decision-makers. It also evaluates recent government statistics and targets and questions the necessity of all the current BESS planning applications locally.

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1. The Need for Renewable Energy and Storage

Global Warming and Renewable Energy Transition

Global warming is a pressing reality, and its effects are becoming increasingly evident through rising temperatures, extreme weather events, and ecological disruptions. Reducing fossil fuel usage is critical to mitigating these impacts. The UK has pledged to achieve Net-Zero carbon emissions by 2050, requiring a significant transition to renewable energy sources. This includes electrifying vehicles, transitioning domestic heating systems, and decarbonizing industries—all of which will more than double the UK's electricity demand. Intermittent renewable sources like wind and solar are expected to provide up to 90% of future electricity generation. However, this shift introduces complexities with balancing supply and demand, because renewable energy generation is intermittent and varies with weather conditions and diurnal cycles. Addressing these challenges requires strategic investments in infrastructure, innovative technologies, and public engagement.

2. Role of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS)

Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) provide short-duration flexibility to the electricity grid. Their principal value lies in balancing supply and demand over hours rather than days, responding instantly to frequency changes, and supporting grid reliability during peaks in consumption. BESS systems can only deliver one to three hours of storage, making them suitable for smoothing the daily cycle of renewable generation but not for addressing prolonged shortfalls. The widespread belief that BESS can solve the intermittency of renewables—"when the sun goes down and the wind stops blowing"—is a complete misnomer. Even at the scale proposed by government targets, BESS cannot and never will be able to provide week-long cover for renewable shortages. Claims by developers that such schemes can do so are simply wrong and misunderstand the technology.

The limitations of BESS are significant. Battery units require replacement and recycling every 5–20 years, adding cost and environmental burdens. Their storage duration is measured in hours, not days or weeks, so they cannot cover multi-day periods of low wind or solar output. For these reasons, national energy policy views BESS as a transitional technology rather than the cornerstone of future energy security. Targets for BESS expansion rise only marginally between 2030 (27 GW) and 2035 (29 GW), indicating that their role is expected to plateau.

The long-term solution lies in deploying long-duration energy storage (LDES) and other zero-carbon technologies. Hydrogen, pumped hydro, compressed air, and liquid air are all being developed to provide storage over days or weeks. Small modular nuclear reactors are also expected to play a role, delivering continuous, carbon-free generation at scale. Both LDES and nuclear are likely to take longer to commercialise and deploy, however, leaving a gap in system security during the transition. In practice, gas-fired power stations will continue to provide back-up capacity in the interim, despite their carbon emissions, until low-carbon alternatives can be rolled out at scale.

Government subsidies and policy incentives are accordingly focused on long-duration storage and advanced low-carbon generation, not on expanding short-duration BESS. While BESS remains useful for near-term balancing, its strategic role is limited. Careful consideration is therefore needed when siting new BESS projects, particularly in sensitive landscapes such as Green Belt farmland, where the long-term benefits are minimal compared with the environmental cost.

3. Energy Policy and the Direction of Change

From 2022 onwards, government reforms have steadily reshaped how energy projects are planned and approved. The **Review of Electricity Market Arrangements (REMA)** was launched in 2022 to address inefficiencies in the developer-led model and to introduce stronger locational signals for new generation and storage. In June 2023 the **Electricity Networks Commissioner's Report** recommended the creation of a Strategic Spatial Energy Plan (SSEP), to be coordinated by the National Energy System Operator

(NESO). NESO itself was established in October 2024 to take responsibility for long-term planning of the grid.

In December 2024 the Government published the **Clean Power 2030 Plan (CP30)**, which not only set technology-specific targets for 2030 and 2035 but also confirmed a move towards regionally planned capacity requirements. This was accompanied by changes to the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**, which promoted major renewable projects, introduced the concept of "Grey Belt" land, and emphasised that local authorities must give substantial weight to Net Zero delivery.

At the same time, Ofgem and NESO began implementing **Connection Reform**, with the staged **Gate 2 process** introduced in early 2025. Gate 2 gives NESO the power to decide which projects proceed to connection agreements and which are deferred or removed. This change is already reshaping the BESS landscape: speculative proposals in saturated regions are unlikely to progress, while projects aligned with regional targets have a clearer route.

Looking ahead, the draft **National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1)** published in April 2025 has underlined the limited role of short-duration BESS, pointing instead to the need for long-duration storage and flexible demand. The forthcoming **Strategic Spatial Energy Plan (SSEP)**, due in 2026/7, will mark the next decisive step. It is expected to map capacity requirements technology-by-technology and region-by-region, meaning that only projects consistent with this framework will be prioritised for connection and policy support.

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4. Feckenham BESS Developments: Past and Current

Past, Inactive, and Abandoned Applications:

1. **Statkraft Scheme: 50 MW** – Granted planning consent in Jan 2022 (20.4 acres). Designed for AC frequency stabilization using batteries coupled with synchronous condenser (flywheel) technology. Statkraft confirmed they would not proceed with the development after permission expired on 20 January 2025. Pre-Condition 21 (Fire Safety) and Conditions 6, 7, and 8 (Tree Root Protection) were **not** discharged, so construction under the original consent is now impossible. Statkraft has also acknowledged that National Grid no longer required frequency stabilisation in the Feckenham location, thereby making their consented facility unnecessary. Statkraft still have an agreed 162MW Transmission Network grid connection and may return with new plans.
2. **Immersa Scheme: 200 MW BESS** – Proposed on land north of Astwood Lane. Application withdrawn by the developer, probably due to the absence of a secure landowner agreement and lack of compliance with fire safety requirements.
3. **Innova Scheme: 400 MW BESS** – Proposed adjacent to Saltway Farm north of the B4090. Withdrawn at pre-planning stage for unknown reasons.

Current Live Applications and Pre-Planning Proposals:

1. **Grenergy Saltway BESS (25/00628/FUL) : 80 MW** – Live planning application validated 27 May 2025.
2. **BOOM Scheme (25/00888/FUL) : 400 MW BESS** – Located on Wheaten Hill. Live planning application validated 6 August 2025.
3. **Energy Cog Scheme: 100 MW BESS** – New pre-planning scheme on land north of Astwood Lane, in the field between the former Immersa site and Feckenham Primary School.
4. **Field Opposite Mutton Hall Farm: 500 MW BESS** – Pre-Planning stage, no further details known.
5. **Further potential BESS and Solar schemes are detailed in Annex 3 which list the "agreed connections" listed on the National Grid databases dated 15.9.25**. The earliest grid connection date listed on these two NG Registers for the two live Feckenham BESS planning applications confirm that Grenergy's Saltway BESS has an agreed Distribution Level connection for 73.7MW with an energization date of 5.2.2026, and likewise BOOM have an agreed Transmission Level connection for 400MW scheduled for 31.10.2033. **These databases are subject to change and do not take account of Gate 2 priorities**.

Key Details:

1. Existing National Grid Substation occupies 37.6 acres.
2. The total area designated for energy infrastructure in Feckenham is now 232 acres.
3. Any additional BESS facilities or infrastructure would require underground cables connecting to the substation, upgrades to the substation, and potentially new pylons and overhead cables.

Policy Context:

The emerging Gate 2 process and the forthcoming Strategic Spatial Energy Plan (SSEP, due 2026/7) mean that speculative siting next to Feckenham Substation is increasingly unlikely to carry weight. Gate 2 operates on fixed deadlines: only projects that had secured planning consent or had applications validated before the qualifying date of **20 December 2024** were prioritised under the "protection clause." A further evidence submission window for all transmission-connected projects ran from **8–29 July 2025** (later extended slightly), requiring developers to demonstrate readiness and alignment with regional and national need. Projects failing to meet these deadlines risk losing their queue position.

Crucially, this process interacts directly with the oversupply already evident in the Renewable Energy Planning Database (REPD) figures. As shown later in this article in the national and regional REPD analysis, the Midlands already exceeds its 2030 and 2035 BESS targets by a wide margin. Under Gate 2, this oversupply means further Feckenham

schemes are highly unlikely to be prioritised, since NESO will channel connections only to regions and technologies where gaps remain. In practice, the combination of Gate 2 deadlines and the REPD-confirmed oversupply creates a powerful policy context against additional approvals in Feckenham. The validation dates are also relevant: the Grenergy Saltway (80 MW) application was validated on 27 May 2025, while the BOOM (400 MW) application was validated on 6 August 2025. Because both were submitted after the December 2024 qualifying date, they probably fall outside the protection clause and will be judged under the new Gate 2 process and will not be preauthorized. This makes it unlikely that either scheme will secure a guaranteed early grid connection given the oversupply already demonstrated in the REPD figures.

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5. National Grid Overview: Two Types of Network

Transmission Network: Moves electricity from power stations to substations using 275kV or 400kV high-voltage cables. Spans the UK with cables and pylons. Can include Transmission-level BESS facilities where there's a 275kV or 400kV supply.

Distribution Network: Operates at lower voltages. Distributes electricity from substations to consumers (domestic/industrial). Can integrate locally generated electricity, e.g., from solar farms. May include embedded BESS facilities at generation sites (e.g., solar farms) rather than at substations.

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6. Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS): Two Possible Siting Levels

- **Transmission-Level BESS:** Typically connects at 275kV or 400kV points in the transmission network. This type of BESS can go anywhere in the National Grid but is most efficiently situated next to power stations or major generating facilities.

- **Distribution-Level BESS:** Embedded at generation sites like solar farms. The best location for this is nearest to local generating facilities – e.g., next to solar or wind farms. Example: Roundhill Solar Farm, which contains an embedded 50 MW BESS with a planned 5 km connection cable to Feckenham Substation.

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7. Feckenham Substation

Functions as both a 275kV and 400kV transmission network and a lower-voltage distribution network. Potential for new Transmission Network BESS facilities exists but requires significant upgrades. Most standalone BESS facilities at Feckenham would connect to the transmission network.

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8. Alternative Substations and Key Points

There are twelve National Grid Transmission-rated Substations within a 50-mile radius of Feckenham; all can house transmission-level BESS facilities. Collectively, they could

perform exactly the same energy storage function as all the currently proposed Feckenham BESS schemes without negatively impacting the Grid. Some of these other sites already have operational or consented BESS schemes, which obviate the need for further BESS facilities in Feckenham. This demonstrates that alternative locations are available, potentially reducing environmental concerns and offering greater flexibility in planning and development.

Nearby substations include: Feckenham (Worcestershire, 400/275 kV), Berkswell, Ocker Hill, Bushbury, Bustleholme, Nechells, Penn, Hams Hall, Drakelow, Ratcliffe-on-Soar, Enderby, and Staythorpe.

Key Points:

1. **Alternative Sites for BESS:** Other locations are available that could accommodate all the proposed BESS facilities at Feckenham and still meet the 2030 Renewable Energy Action Plan targets for the Midlands Region. Feckenham is only one of many possible locations for Transmission or Distribution level BESS storage. To claim it is uniquely suitable is to misunderstand the functionality of the National Grid and misinform decision-makers.
2. **Reason for Feckenham Proposals:** Developers prefer sites adjacent to the Substation where landowners are willing to lease farmland and can save on cable connection costs. These are economic reasons, not logistical necessities.
3. **Planning Considerations:** Economic factors should not influence planning decisions, as they are not part of planning laws or regulations. Many alternative sites are not located on Green Belt land, making them more suitable for energy infrastructure development.

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9. Latest Analysis of BESS Provision (UK & Midlands) from July 2025 REPD released September 2025

The statistics in this section are taken directly from the Government's Renewable Energy Planning Database (REPD). The April 2025 figures are based on the January 2025 REPD dataset, and the July 2025 figures are based on the Q2 2025 REPD dataset published in September 2025.

UK National BESS Capacity (GW)

Planning Category	**April 2025**	**July 2025**
Operational	2.60	2.85
Under Construction	4.85	7.16
Consented (incl. Appeal/SoS)	37.58	58.04
Application Submitted – Not Yet Determined	33.68	45.86
Combined Deliverable (Op + UC + Consented)	**45.03**	**68.05**

Midlands Regional BESS Capacity (GW)

Planning Category	April 2025	July 2025
Operational	0.244	0.25
Under Construction	0.170	0.33
Consented (incl. Appeal/SoS)	5.86	7.41
Application Submitted – Not Yet Determined	5.21	10.03
Combined Deliverable (Op + UC + Consented)	**6.26**	**8.0**

Government Targets for BESS facilities (GW)

- UK 2030 target: 27.1 GW
- UK 2035 target: 28.7 GW
- Midlands 2030 target: 4.3 GW
- Midlands 2035 target: 4.9 GW

Excess over Government Targets (Deliverable vs Target)

Region	July 2025 Deliverable (GW)	2030 Target (GW)	Excess vs 2030	2035 Target (GW)	Excess vs 2035
UK	68.05	27.1	+40.95 (+151%)	28.7	+39.35GW (+137%)
Midlands	8.0	4.3	+3.7 (+86%)	4.9	+3.1GW (+63%)

These updated figures confirm the scale of oversupply. In the UK, deliverable capacity is already more than double the 2030 and 2035 targets. In the Midlands, deliverable capacity is approaching twice the 2030 target and more than 1.5 times the 2035 target. Even without including the undecided pipeline, consented and in-construction projects alone demonstrate significant oversupply relative to need.

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10. Attrition and New Consents – No Case for a Buffer

Analysis of the REPD over time shows that attrition rates are negligible compared with the rapid growth of new consents. Between April 2025 and July 2025 the UK deliverable total (operational + under construction + consented) rose by **23.02 GW**, from 45.03 GW to 68.05 GW. In the Midlands region the increase was **1.74 GW**, from 6.26 GW to 8.0 GW.

These figures demonstrate that new consents are accelerating at a rate far greater than any losses from withdrawn or expired schemes. The "buffer" sometimes claimed by developers—arguing that more schemes must be approved to compensate for attrition—has no basis in fact. The REPD data confirm that the pipeline is expanding strongly and consistently, with the pace of approvals easily outstripping any attrition.

Therefore, there is no justification for approving further speculative schemes in Feckenham or elsewhere on the grounds of maintaining a buffer. National and regional targets are already surpassed, and the Gate 2 process ensures that only consented projects aligned with regional need will proceed to connection.

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10. Conclusion

The latest analysis of Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) provision across both the UK and the Midlands Region reveals a **significant oversupply relative to Government targets for 2030 and 2035.**

At the national level, as of July 2025, the UK's BESS capacity included **2.85 GW operational, 7.16 GW under construction, and 58.04 GW with planning consent**, giving a combined total of **68.05 GW**—far exceeding the Government's national targets of 27 GW by 2030 and 29 GW by 2035. Even if a fraction of these consented schemes do not proceed, the oversupply margin is so high that no new planning approvals are needed.

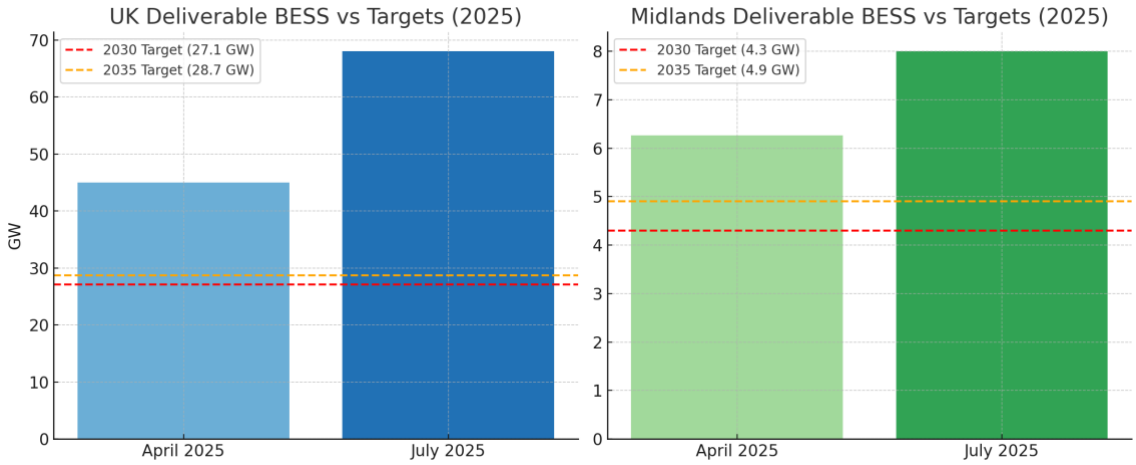
At the regional level, the Midlands has similarly surpassed expectations. By July 2025, the region had **0.25 GW operational, 0.33 GW under construction, and 7.41 GW with planning consent**, giving a combined total of **8.0 GW**—well above the region's targets of 4.3 GW (2030) and 4.9 GW (2035). This represents oversupply levels of **186% and 163%, respectively.**

Furthermore, the Midlands pipeline of undecided BESS applications has doubled since January 2025, rising from 5.21 GW to 10.03 GW. This excludes a further 5–10 GW of known pre-planning projects in the Midlands, which include the EnergyCog and further potential scheme on land north of Astwood Lane Feckenham.

This results in a potential regional BESS “planning pipeline” of 15–20 GW, more than three to four times the Government’s requirement. Clearly the market for BESS development is oversaturated and oversubscribed. If left unchecked, this could result in unnecessary and inappropriate development in areas such as Feckenham, putting valuable Green Belt farmland at risk for the next 40 years—despite there being no strategic need.

In light of these facts, the “Very Special Circumstances” frequently cited by developers to justify building on protected Green Belt land are no longer valid. Likewise, BESS development in land designated Open Countryside remains superfluous and inappropriate. The huge oversupply evidenced in the REPD figures also aligns with the latest government policy, whereby Gate 2 is now restricting grid connections to projects that already have planning consent and fit within defined regional requirements. Crucially, the only two live Feckenham schemes—Grenergy Saltway (80 MW) and BOOM (400 MW)—were both validated after the qualifying dates. As a result, they fall outside Gate 2 protections and are unlikely to be given regional priority. Planners should take careful note of this.

Annex 1: REPD Deliverable Capacity vs Government Targets (April and July 2025)



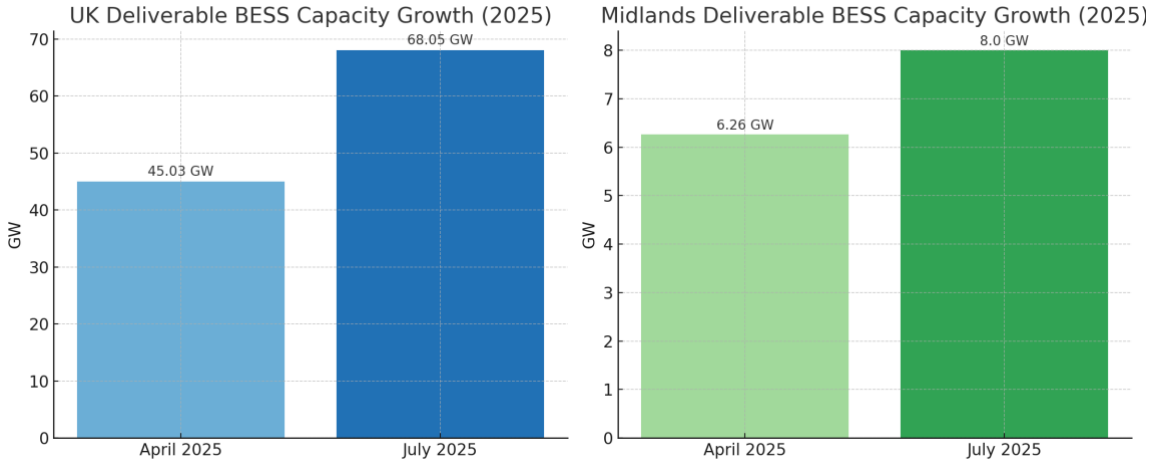
The graphs above show the Deliverable BESS capacity consisting of the combined operational, under construction, and consented BESS capacities for the UK and the Midlands as of April and July 2025, compared against Government targets for 2030 and 2035.

- **UK**: Deliverable capacity rose from **45.03 GW in April** to **68.05 GW in July 2025**, already exceeding the 2030 target (27.1 GW) by 251% and the 2035 target (28.7 GW) by 236%.

- **Midlands**: Deliverable capacity rose from **6.26 GW in April** to **8.0 GW in July 2025**, exceeding the 2030 target (4.3 GW) by 186% and the 2035 target (4.9 GW) by 163%.

This confirms that both national and regional targets are already far surpassed, even before considering the large volume of additional schemes awaiting decision.

Annex 2: Attrition and New Consents – No Case for a Buffer



The graphs above track the increase in deliverable capacity (operational, under construction, and consented) between April and July 2025.

- **UK**: Deliverable capacity increased by **23.02 GW in just two quarters**, from 45.03 GW in April to 68.05 GW in July.

- **Midlands**: Deliverable capacity increased by **1.74 GW**, from 6.26 GW in April to 8.0 GW in July.

These figures demonstrate that new consents are consistently outstripping any attrition. The argument that additional "buffer" schemes are required to compensate for attrition is not supported by evidence. Instead, the REPD confirms a rapidly expanding pipeline, well above regional and national requirements.

Annex 3 National Grid Connection Registers Sept 15th, 2025

National Grid TEC Register for Feckenham

Projects Connecting to Transmission Network

	Project Name	Customer Name	Connection Site	Stage	MW Connected	MW Increase / Decrease	Cumulative Total Capacity (MW)	MW Effective From	Project Status	Agreement Type	HOST TO	Plant Type	Project ID	Project Number
234	Boom Power Feckenham Generation Hub	Wheaten Hill BESS Limited	Feckenham 400kV Substation		0.0	400.0	400.0	2033-10-31	Scoping	Direct Connection	NGET	Energy Storage System;PV Array (Photo Voltaic/solar)	a0l4L0000005iv8QAA	PRO-002312
778	Feckenham	ENSO GREEN HOLDINGS X LIMITED	Feckenham 400kV Substation		0.0	400.0	400.0	2036-10-31	Awaiting Consents	Direct Connection	NGET	Demand;Energy Storage System;PV Array (Photo Voltaic/solar)	a0l4L0000005ikrQAA	PRO-002189
779	Feckenham	IGP SOLAR 14 LIMITED	Feckenham 400kV Substation		0.0	500.0	500.0	2029-07-21	Scoping	Direct Connection	NGET	Energy Storage System;PV Array (Photo Voltaic/solar)	a0l4L0000005iOwQAI	PRO-001600
781	Feckenham Energy Park	GREEN ENERGY MAB LTD	Feckenham 400kV Substation		0.0	500.0	500.0	2033-10-31	Scoping	Direct Connection	NGET	Energy Storage System	a0l4L0000005iM7QAI	PRO-002378
782	Feckenham Green Energy Centre	FECKENHAM GREEN NG LIMITED	Feckenham 400kV Substation		0.0	1025.0	1025.0	2032-10-30	Scoping	Direct Connection	NGET	Demand;Energy Storage System;PV Array (Photo Voltaic/solar)	a0l4L0000005iitQAA	PRO-001767
783	Feckenham Greener Grid Park	Statkraft UK Ltd	Feckenham 400kV Substation	1.0	0.0	12.0	12.0	2028-10-31	Scoping	Direct Connection	NGET	Energy Storage System	a0l4L0000005ibTQAQ	PRO-001008-1
784	Feckenham Greener Grid Park	Statkraft UK Ltd	Feckenham 400kV Substation	2.0	0.0	138.0	150.0	2032-10-31	Scoping	Direct Connection	NGET	Energy Storage System	a0l4L0000005ibTQAQ	PRO-001008-2
785	Feckenham PV & BESS Station	IB VOGT UK LTD	Feckenham 400kV Substation		0.0	400.0	400.0	2033-10-31	Scoping	Direct Connection	NGET	Energy Storage System;PV Array (Photo Voltaic/solar)	a0l8e000000TPHOAA4	PRO-003233
780	Feckenham 100MW BESS	ENERGYCOG LTD	Feckenham GSP		0.0	100.0	100.0	2037-10-30	Scoping	Embedded	NGET	Energy Storage System	a0U9000000PDz7IAG	PRO-005111
1758	Redditch	CINERGY GLOBAL POWER (UK) LIMITED	Feckenham GSP		29.0	0.0	29.0		Built	Embedded	NGET	CCGT (Combined Cycle Gas Turbine)	a0l4L0000005iViQAI	PRO-000198

National Grid Embedded Capacity Register for Feckenham as of 15.9.2025

Projects Connecting to Distribution Network

Developer / Operator	Agreed Capacity (MW)	Site Address
RWE Renewables UK Solar and Storage Ltd	49.9	Roundhill, Near Salt Way, Redditch, Worcestershire, B96 6JR
Feckenham battery storage Ltd (Immersa)	99.4	Astwood lane field, Astwood Lane, data not available, Redditch, Worcestershire, B96 6JR
Feckenham battery storage Ltd (Immersa)	99.4	Site at Astwood lane field, Astwood Lane, Feckenham, Redditch, B96 6JR
EnergyCog Ltd	100	Feckenham Bess, Feckenham, Astwood Bank, Redditch, data not available, B96 6HP
Battery storage projects Ltd	49.9	Feckenham Road, Hunt End, Redditch, B97 5QG
Grenergy Ltd	73.7MW	Saltway, Feckenham, Redditch, B96 6JT. Target Energisation Date: 5 February 2026