

Queue for built environment projects in Britain reaches 27 GW, but Savills research reveals 37 GW of unused capacity

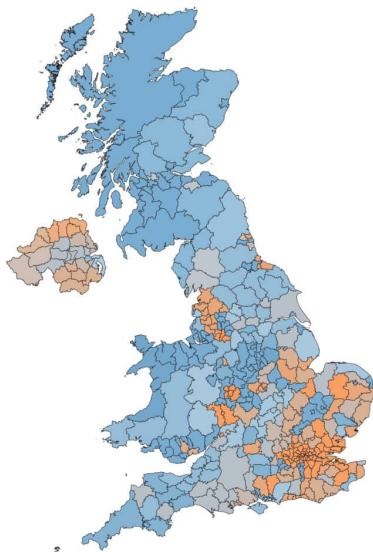
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The latest research from international real estate advisor Savills reveals an imbalance in Britain's power infrastructure. Analysis of network data by the firm's Savills Earth division indicates that around 37 GW of headroom is available across the UK. However, at the same time, 27 GW of projects are caught in connection queues and unable to connect to the grid. To contextualise this, 1 GW could power up to 500,000 homes.

Most new developments require power, and some require a significant amount. As houses, warehouses, data centres and other projects connect to the grid, they accelerate the demand for power. This means the grid's capacity must be increased to transfer power from where it is generated to where it is consumed. However, grid capacity has not kept pace with demand, and the consequences are being felt in delays to the delivery of new developments.

This has led to a triple threat of pressures on the grid, that are straining power availability, hindering development and contributing to a growing queue for connection. Savills Earth highlights that achieving net zero will require a shift in how to deliver power infrastructure to address these pressures. This will require regulatory reform, innovation and investment.



Grid IQ* by Savills Earth shows that while capacity exists, it is often in the wrong locations.* For instance, urban local authorities have an average of 126 MW available, with some areas having upwards of 1,000 MW. However, this power is dispersed and often insufficient for larger developments. Even small-scale housing projects usually demand more power than the most constrained substations can provide. According to the National Grid, 1 MW is needed for 500 houses, yet 11% of substations lack this capacity.

Additional constraints include the proximity of developments to grid supply points. The spatial distribution of rural substations can lead to underutilisation of certain grid connection points due to their location, increasing the cost and complexity of connections. Additionally, network capacity often limits power flow, creating a false impression of available power.

Joe Lloyd, Research Analyst, Savills Earth, says: "Our research provides a glimpse into a crucial segment of our electricity infrastructure, which is essential for driving economic growth, sustainable development, and energy security. By investing in the right infrastructure and implementing effective regulatory frameworks, we can achieve these goals and ensure that power is available where it is needed most."

Phil Pearson, Director, Savills Earth, says: "Ultimately, a coordinated effort will be required to balance generation capacity and demand effectively. This will involve collaboration between government, industry, and local communities to create a resilient and future proof power grid."

* Amongst other sources, Grid IQ uses data provided by Distribution Network Operators to evaluate the availability of grid headroom at given points in the electricity grid infrastructure across Great Britain.