

Debate Pack

Number CDP 2022/0051

By Gabrielle Garton Grimwood,

Becky Mawhood,

Nikki Sutherland

7 March 2022

Large solar farms

1	Planning for large solar farms in England	3
1.1	Planning policy for solar farms	3
1.2	Planning for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects	4
1.3	Planning policy for smaller solar farms	7
1.4	Determining planning applications	9
2	Energy policy for large scale solar power	10
2.1	Contracts for Difference (CfD)	10
2.2	Smart Export Guarantee	11
2.3	Recent Government policy documents	12
2.4	Further information	13
3	Parliamentary material	14
3.1	Debate	14
3.2	PQs	14
4	News items	17

Summary

A debate on large solar farms will be held in Westminster Hall on Wednesday 9 March 2022. The debate will be opened by Brendan Clarke-Smith MP.

1 Planning for large solar farms in England

Solar photovoltaics (PV) panels, also known as solar power, generate electricity from the sun.

Large scale solar PV installations are known as solar farms.

Planning is a devolved matter. The main focus of this briefing is on planning in England. The joint briefing paper [Comparison of the planning systems in the four UK countries: 2016 update](#) provides information about planning and consenting regimes in the other UK countries.¹

Above a threshold (set out in [Section 15 of the Planning Act 2008](#)) of more than 50MW for onshore and more than 100 MW for offshore generation, solar farms will be treated as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, for which a Development Consent Order must be sought from the Secretary of State.

Below this threshold, solar farms will require planning permission from the local planning authority (LPA); under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, LPAs are responsible for renewable and low carbon energy development of 50 MW or less installed capacity.

1.1 Planning policy for solar farms

The [National Planning Policy Framework \(PDF\)](#) (NPPF) provides the framework against which LPAs draw up Local Plans and determine planning applications. It was last revised in July 2021.

The NPPF encourages LPAs to promote renewable energy development and identify appropriate sites for it. It says that - in meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change - the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future.² It goes on to identify ways in which Local Plans should help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat.³

The more detailed [Planning Practice Guidance \(PPG\) on renewable and low carbon energy](#) notes that large scale solar farms “can have a negative impact

¹ CBP 7459

² Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG, now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, DLUHC), [National Planning Policy Framework \(PDF\)](#), July 2021, paragraph 152

³ As above, paragraph 155

on the rural environment, particularly in undulating landscapes”, but “the visual impact of a well-planned and well-screened solar farm can be properly addressed within the landscape if planned sensitively”. The PPG sets out the factors to be considered when deciding a planning application and says that large scale solar farms should be focussed on previously developed and non-agricultural land, provided that it is not of high environmental value.⁴

1.2 Planning for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects

For England, the introduction of the development consent framework for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) through the [Planning Act 2008](#) (the 2008 Act, as amended by the [Localism Act 2011](#)) was intended to speed up the approval process.⁵

The [Commons Library briefing on planning for NSIPs](#) sets out the policy background.⁶ As it explains, the 2008 Act introduced a new development consent process for NSIPs. NSIPs are usually large-scale developments (relating to energy, transport, water, waste water or waste) which require a type of consent known as “development consent”. Part 3 of the 2008 Act sets out the thresholds which these projects have to meet, to be considered as nationally significant and require development consent.

A Development Consent Order (DCO) automatically removes the need to obtain several consents that would otherwise be required for development, including planning permission and compulsory purchase orders. The idea of this regime is that it is a quicker process for large scale development projects to get the necessary planning permission and other related consents that they would require, rather than having to apply separately for each consent.

Responsibility for decisions on these projects rests with the relevant Secretary of State at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). In practice the planning inspectors (known as the “examining authority” in the legislation) from [National Infrastructure Planning](#) at the Planning Inspectorate will make recommendations to help inform the Secretary of State’s decision.

National Infrastructure Planning has published a [series of advice notes](#), including an [overview of the NSIP planning process for members of the public](#)

⁴ MHCLG, [Guidance: Renewable and low carbon energy](#), 18 June 2015, paragraph 013

⁵ The joint Library briefing paper [Comparison of the planning systems in the four UK countries: 2016 update](#) (CBP 7459) provides information about consenting regimes in the other UK countries.

⁶ SN 6881

and others (PDF) which covers (amongst other things) the decision and what happens afterwards.⁷

Generation stations as NSIPs

The Planning Act 2008 refers to “generating stations”.

Certain generating stations may meet the threshold to be considered as nationally significant and require development consent. For England, the threshold set out in [Section 15 of the 2008 Act](#) is more than 50MW for onshore and more than 100 MW for offshore generation.

National Policy Statements

Applications for DCOs are decided in accordance with National Policy Statements (NPSs), which after a process of public consultation and Parliamentary scrutiny are formally “designated” by Government. There are [12 designated National Policy Statements](#) (NPS), setting out government policy on different types of national infrastructure development.

As the [Commons Library briefing on planning for NSIPs](#) explains on page 8, Section 105 of the 2008 Act gives the Secretary of State the power to take the decision on a DCO in the absence of a National Policy Statement (NPS).⁸ In the absence of an NPS for a particular project, decisions will be taken in accordance with the NPPF and any relevant Local Plan for the area where the development would be located.

The current [overarching NPS EN-1 for energy](#) (PDF) argues for more renewable energy.⁹ It was published in September 2021. The accompanying [consultation document \(PDF\)](#) offered background and context.¹⁰

The current [NPS EN-3 for renewable energy infrastructure](#) (PDF) covers (within certain criteria) energy from biomass and/or waste, offshore and onshore wind but does not mention solar energy.¹¹

⁷ Planning Inspectorate, [Advice Note 8: Overview of the nationally significant infrastructure planning process for members of the public and others \(PDF\)](#), December 2016

⁸ SN 6881

⁹ Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC), [Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy \(EN-1\) \(PDF\)](#), July 2011, paragraphs 3.3.11-2

¹⁰ BEIS, [Planning for New Energy Infrastructure: Draft National Policy Statements for energy infrastructure \(PDF\)](#), September 2021, page 16. This document also covered draft EN-2 (on natural gas generating infrastructure), draft EN-4 (on gas supply infrastructure and oil and gas pipelines) and draft EN-5 (on electricity network infrastructure).

¹¹ DECC, [National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure \(EN-3\) \(PDF\)](#), July 2011, page 79 onwards

Revised draft NPS on renewable energy infrastructure

A [revised draft NPS EN-3 for renewable energy infrastructure \(PDF\)](#) was published in September 2021. Section 2.2 of the revised draft NPS covered the relationship with English and Welsh renewables policies and section 2.3 covered climate change adaptation.¹²

The revised draft NPS's section on solar photovoltaic generation covered (amongst other things) irradiance and site topography, proximity to dwellings and technical considerations for the Secretary of State.¹³ The accompanying [consultation document \(PDF\)](#) summed up the draft NPS' provisions on solar generation.¹⁴

The consultation closed on 29 November 2021.

A [blog post by the law firm Pinsent Masons](#) suggested that the new NPS might “spur a greater number of ‘utility scale’ projects in the years ahead”.¹⁵

The House of Commons Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee recently held an [Inquiry](#) on the draft revised statements and [published its report \(HC1151\)](#) on 25 February 2022.¹⁶ Paragraph 58 onwards discusses solar and tidal.

Use of agricultural land

The [revised draft National Policy Statement \(NPS\) EN-3 for renewable energy infrastructure \(PDF\)](#) has a section on solar photovoltaic generation which includes guidance on land type, guiding development away from the “best and most versatile agricultural land”:

Agriculture land classification and land type

Solar is a highly flexible technology and as such can be deployed on a wide variety of land types. Where possible, ground mounted Solar PV projects should utilise previously developed land, brownfield land, contaminated land, industrial land, or agricultural land preferably of classification 3b, 4, and 5 (avoiding the use of “Best and Most Versatile” cropland where possible). However, land type should not be a predominating factor in determining the suitability of the site location.

The Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) is the only approved system for grading agricultural quality in England and Wales and should be used to

¹² BEIS, [Draft National Policy Statement for renewable energy infrastructure \(EN-3\) \(PDF\)](#), September 2021, paragraph 2.3.4

¹³ As above, page 79 onwards

¹⁴ Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), [Planning for New Energy Infrastructure: Draft National Policy Statements for energy infrastructure \(PDF\)](#), September 2021, page 19

¹⁵ Pinsent Masons, [Utility scale' solar backed in revised UK planning regime](#), September 2021

¹⁶ House of Commons Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee [Revised \(Draft\) National Policy Statement for Energy](#), HC1151, 25 February 2022

establish the ALC and identify the soil types to inform soil management at the construction, operation and decommissioning phases. This should be extended to the underground cabling and access routes. The soil survey may also inform the suitable beneficial use of the land during the operational phase. Criteria for grading the quality of agricultural land using the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) of England and Wales is decided by Natural England and considerations relating to land classification are expected to be made with reference to this guidance, or any successor to it.

Whilst the development of ground mounted solar arrays is not prohibited on sites of agricultural land classified 1, 2 and 3a, or designated for their natural beauty, or recognised for ecological or archaeological importance, the impacts of such are expected to be considered and are discussed under paragraphs 2.50 and 2.53. It is recognised that at this scale, it is likely that applicants' developments may use some agricultural land, however applicants should explain their choice of site, noting the preference for development to be on brownfield and non-agricultural land.¹⁷

For more information about agricultural land, see Natural England, [Guide to assessing development proposals on agricultural land](#).¹⁸

Flood risk

Section 5.8 of the revised draft NPS [revised draft Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy \(EN-1\)\(PDF\)](#) dealt with flood risk. It said that, where new energy infrastructure was, exceptionally, necessary in areas at risk of flooding, it should be made safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere. Energy infrastructure should also be designed and constructed to remain operational in times of flooding. Proposals that aim to facilitate the relocation of existing energy infrastructure from unsustainable locations which are or will be at unacceptable risk of flooding, should be supported where it would result in climate-resilient infrastructure.¹⁹

1.3

Planning policy for smaller solar farms

Siting of smaller solar farms

The NPPF also directs LPAs to “consider identifying suitable areas for renewable and low carbon energy sources, and supporting infrastructure, where this would help secure their development”.²⁰ The [PPG on renewable and low carbon energy](#) gives further direction about how this should be

¹⁷ BEIS, [Draft National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure \(EN-3\)](#), September 2021, page 82

¹⁸ Updated 5 February 2021

¹⁹ BEIS, [Draft Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy \(EN-1\)](#) (PDF), September 2021

²⁰ MHCLG, [National Planning Policy Framework \(PDF\)](#), July 2021, paragraph 155

done.²¹ It sets out specific considerations for solar farms and encourages the use of previously developed and non-agricultural land.²²

Solar farms in the Green Belt

In England, it is the responsibility of LPAs to define and maintain Green Belt land in their areas, and deal with planning applications for solar farms.

In relation to Green Belt land, the NPPF states that elements of many renewable energy projects are likely to be classed as “inappropriate development”, to proceed only in “very special circumstances”.

151. When located in the Green Belt, elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development. In such cases developers will need to demonstrate very special circumstances if projects are to proceed. Such very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources.²³

For more background, see the Commons Library briefing [Green Belt](#).²⁴

Flood risk

The [PPG on planning and flood risk](#) covers (amongst other things) taking flood risk into account when preparing Local Plans, addressing flood risk in individual planning applications and site-specific flood risk assessment. It lists the objectives of such an assessment:

The objectives of a site-specific flood risk assessment are to establish:

- whether a proposed development is likely to be affected by current or future flooding from any source;
- whether it will increase flood risk elsewhere;
- whether the measures proposed to deal with these effects and risks are appropriate;
- the evidence for the local planning authority to apply (if necessary) the Sequential Test, and;
- whether the development will be safe and pass the Exception Test, if applicable.²⁵

²¹ DLUHC and MHCLG, [Guidance: Renewable and low carbon energy](#), June 2015, paragraph 005

²² As above, paragraph 013

²³ MHCLG, [National Planning Policy Framework \(PDF\)](#), July 2021, paragraph 151

²⁴ SN 934

²⁵ DLUHC and MHCLG, [Guidance: Planning and flood risk](#), last updated 20 August 2021, paragraph 030

1.4

Determining planning applications

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions, as is any up-to-date Local Plan made by the LPA.

The PPG sets out how [applications for planning permission](#) should be determined.²⁶ The Local Government Association's [planning workbook for councillors \(PDF 1004 KB\)](#) provides further guidance.²⁷

Material considerations

Under section 70 of the [Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#), LPAs are directed to take into account any “material considerations” when taking planning decisions. This is not defined further in this Act, but the courts have held that “in principle...any consideration which relates to the use and development of land is capable of being a planning consideration”.²⁸ The scale, complexity and location of the proposed development will mean that each planning application has a unique set of material considerations that must be weighed up when each decision is taken.

The [PPG on determining a planning application](#) observes that “the scope of what can constitute a material consideration is very wide” but the courts have generally held that purely private interests such as neighbouring property values could not be material considerations.²⁹

The Planning Portal offers a [non-exhaustive list of material considerations](#), which – as well as the NPPF, adopted Local Plans and supplementary planning documents - can include traffic, design and nature conservation.³⁰

²⁶ MHCLG, [Guidance: Determining a planning application](#), 6 March 2014, updated 24 June 2021, paragraph 006 revised 15 March 2019

²⁷ Local Government Association, [A councillor's workbook on planning \(PDF\)](#), August 2017

²⁸ *Stringer v MHLG* [1971] 1 All ER 65

²⁹ MHCLG, [Guidance: determining a planning application](#), 6 March 2014 updated 24 June 2021, paragraph 008

³⁰ Planning Portal, [Frequently asked questions: what are material considerations?](#)

2

Energy policy for large scale solar power

Solar photovoltaics (PV) panels, also known as solar power, generate electricity from the sun.³¹

Large scale solar PV installations are known as solar farms. Depending on their size, solar farms may be able to access funding support through one of the following:

- Solar PV installations greater than 5 megawatts (MW) can bid for competitive Government funding through the Contracts for Difference (CfD) scheme;
- Solar PV installations up to 5 MW can receive payments from energy companies for the electricity that they export to the national grid, through the Government-backed Smart Export Guarantee.

More information on the Contracts for Difference and Smart Export Guarantee schemes, as well as recent policy statements on solar power, is set out below.

2.1 Contracts for Difference (CfD)

The [Contracts for Difference \(CfD\) scheme](#) is the Government's main mechanism for supporting large scale, low carbon power infrastructure, including solar power. It fixes the prices received by low carbon generation over a number of years, reducing the risks developers face from a fluctuating wholesale power price, and ensuring that eligible technology receives a price for generated power that supports investment.

CfDs are mostly awarded at auctions, known as allocation rounds, to allow competition between technologies and help keep prices low. The funding is set out in 'Pots' which group the technologies that can compete.

In March 2020, the Government announced that it would reopen the Contracts for Difference (CfD) scheme to 'Pot 1' established technologies, including solar power:

The [2021] round will be open to renewable technologies including onshore wind and solar, with proposals to introduce floating offshore wind. This could see millions more homes powered by clean energy by the end of the decade,

³¹ Solar thermal is a different technology, which absorbs heat from the sun to heat water. Solar thermal is typically installed at smaller scales, to provide hot water and/or space heating to buildings.

and a boost for the supply chain, adding to the 20,600 jobs and the £628 million of exports each year already supported by the renewables industry.³²

Prior to this, Contracts for Difference had not been available to ‘Pot 1’ technologies since 2015, when the then Government withdrew support.³³

The [2021 CfD allocation round 4](#) opened on 13 December 2021.

- The Library briefing [Support for low carbon power](#) provides more information on the Contracts for Difference. Please note this was published in April 2020 and so does not cover more recent developments.

2.2 Smart Export Guarantee

The Smart Export Guarantee (SEG) was introduced in Great Britain on 1 January 2020. Under the SEG, small scale renewable energy generators can receive payments for the surplus (not used on site) low carbon electricity that they export to the national grid.

The key points of the SEG are:

- Electricity suppliers must offer a tariff for the surplus power that renewable generators export to the grid
- It is available for technologies up to a capacity of 5MW, including solar PV, hydro, wind, and anaerobic digestion (subject to sustainable feedstock criteria)
- Suppliers with more than 150,000 domestic customers must offer tariffs as part of the SEG
- Suppliers can set their own tariffs, so long as they offer generators more than £0
- Exported power must be metered, with a meter capable of reporting exports on a half hourly basis (Feed-in Tariff or FIT payments could be unmetered and paid based on estimates).

The Solar Energy UK (an industry trade body) have produced a [‘Smart Export Guarantee League table’ showing the tariffs different suppliers are offering](#). There are two types of rates; fixed or variable, the latter meaning the value ranges based on the time of day the electricity is exported, and the demand for electricity at that time.

In April 2021 the Environmental Audit Committee held an [inquiry on Community Energy](#), which scrutinised the Smart Export Guarantee, amongst other issues. In a [letter to the BEIS Secretary of State](#) the Committee Chair, Philip Dunne, said: “The Smart Export Guarantee is flawed because it provides

³² HCWS139, [Energy Policy Update](#), 2 March 2020

³³ For more information, see the Library briefing [Support for Low Carbon Power](#) (CBP 8891), page 5

no minimum export price, and no long-term certainty beyond 12-month periods”. The Committee recommended “that BEIS swiftly introduces a minimum Smart Export Guarantee floor price above zero, and extends the guarantee on the energy export price.”

The Commons Library briefing [Support for small scale renewables](#) provides more information on the Smart Export Guarantee, and the Government’s previous support scheme for small-scale renewable electricity, the Feed-in Tariff. Please note (This was published in January 2020 and so does not cover more recent developments).³⁴

2.3 Recent Government policy documents

The [Energy White Paper \(PDF\)](#) in December 2020 referred several times to solar photovoltaic generation.³⁵ For example, it remarked that “[a] low-cost, net zero consistent [electricity] system is likely to be composed predominantly of wind and solar”.³⁶ The white paper also explained why solar is again included in Contracts for Difference. It also discussed affordability and fairness, noting that “Gas will set the electricity price for some years to come but, over time, will do so less frequently, as more and more wind and solar connect to the electricity system. These are technologies which do not have a fuel cost. What we are paying for is the cost of building and operating the wind or solar farms, not the fuel cost.”³⁷

In October 2021 the Government’s [Net Zero Strategy](#) said that one of the Government’s key policies for power is “40GW of offshore wind by 2030, with more onshore, solar, and other renewables – with a new approach to onshore and offshore electricity networks to incorporate new low carbon generation and demand in the most efficient manner that takes account of the needs of local communities like those in East Anglia”.³⁸ One of the Government’s stated key commitments was to “Accelerate deployment of low-cost renewable generation, such as wind and solar through the Contracts for Difference scheme by undertaking a review of the frequency of the CfD auctions.”³⁹

The strategy also noted that “CB6 [Carbon Budget 6] also requires a sustained increase to the deployment of land-based renewables such as locally supported onshore wind and solar in the 2020s and beyond. We will seek to ensure a facilitative environment for the deployment of unsubsidised rooftop solar to complement our market-based approach of ensuring

³⁴ CBP 8624

³⁵ HM Government, [Energy White Paper: Powering our Net Zero Future \(PDF\)](#), CP 337, December 2020

³⁶ As above, page 43

³⁷ As above, page 30

³⁸ HM Government, [Policy paper: Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener](#), 14 December 2021 (links to PDF), page 19

³⁹ As above, page 94

exporters receive a fair price through the Smart Export Guarantee.”⁴⁰ The strategy also mentioned Green Skills Bootcamps, to deliver skills, including for solar.⁴¹

2.4 Further information

The following Library briefings provide more information:

- [Support for small scale renewables](#)⁴²
- [Renewable Heat Incentive](#) (covers support for solar thermal).⁴³ Note that the non-domestic RHI closed last year and the [domestic RHI](#) will close on 31 March 2022.
- [Support for low carbon power](#) (covers the Contracts for Difference)⁴⁴
- Debate pack on [Empowering Community Energy Schemes](#)⁴⁵

⁴⁰ HM Government, [Policy paper: Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener](#), 14 December 2021, page 103

⁴¹ As above, page 224

⁴² [Support for small scale renewables, CBP 8624](#)

⁴³ [The Renewable Heat Incentive, SN06328](#)

⁴⁴ [Support for low carbon power, CBP 8891](#)

⁴⁵ [Empowering Community Energy Schemes, CDP 2021-0200](#)

3 Parliamentary material

3.1 Debate

Lords motion: [Revised Energy National Policy Statements](#)

HL Deb 22 February 2022 | Vol 819 c55GC-

3.2 PQs

[Solar Power: Environment Protection](#)

Asked by: Clarke-Smith, Brendan

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what assessment he has made of the impact of (a) the solar plant proposed by West Burton Solar between the villages of Gringley on the Hill and Clayworth in Bassetlaw and (b) other large solar farms on connecting small rural villages.

Answering Member: Greg Hands | Department: Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

Due to its proposed size (over 50MW), West Burton Solar will be a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project. It is currently at the pre-application stage. When the application is ready, it will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. The Inspectorate will evaluate whether the application meets the necessary legal requirements. If it does, the Inspectorate will undertake a formal examination of the project in which the public will be able to participate and then provide a report to the Secretary of State to inform his decision-making.

The Government recognises that solar farms can affect the local environment. Applicants must complete an Environmental Statement as part of their planning application as well as a public consultation allowing for local concerns to be considered.

HC Deb 01 March 2022 | PQ 126822

[Solar Power: Environment Protection](#)

Asked by: Clarke-Smith, Brendan

To ask the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, what steps he is taking to minimise the impact on the countryside and environment of the development of (a) large solar farm sites, including the one proposed by West Burton Solar between the villages of Gringley on the Hill and Clayworth in Bassetlaw and (b) other Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.

Answering Member: Greg Hands | Department: Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy

Given this Department's statutory responsibility for determining individual planning applications for energy projects, Ministers are unable to comment on the specifics of individual applications. Energy National Policy Statements set out the justification for certain types of nationally significant energy infrastructure developments and clear criteria which developers are required to address when preparing their applications, and these cover the impacts on the countryside and wider environment.

Although solar farms are not covered in the existing suite of National Policy Statements, the draft National Policy Statement for renewable energy infrastructure covers solar farms at the scale of nationally significant infrastructure. The draft National Policy Statements are currently undergoing Parliamentary scrutiny.

HC Deb 01 March 2022 | PQ 126821

[Solar Energy: Agricultural Land](#)

Asked by: Sir Edward Leigh

A planning application has been submitted for a giant solar farm around Gainsborough, with an area equivalent to 5,000 football pitches. It is designed to be a so-called national infrastructure project

in order to bypass all local planning. Local people will have no control; this development will enrich a few local landowners, and some entrepreneurs in London. Is it not time for an urgent discussion throughout Whitehall about how we can stop these companies bypassing local planning and secure proper community gain and the protection of agriculture, and, for instance, ensure that there are buffer zones around villages?

Answering Member: Greg Hands | Department: Business, Energy and Industrial strategy

As my right hon. Friend knows, I am unable to comment on potential planning applications. Solar projects developed through the nationally significant infrastructure project planning process are subject to strict controls to protect local communities and the environment, including requirements for environmental impact assessments and public consultations. The Government recognise the importance of preserving the most productive farmland. Planning guidance is clear: where possible, large solar farms should use previously developed land, and projects should be designed to avoid, mitigate, and where necessary compensate for impact.

HC Deb 22 February 2022 | Vol 709 c162

Solar Power

Asked by: Lord Tebbit

To ask Her Majesty's Government what studies they have made of the effects of large solar energy plants upon plant and animal wildlife.

**Answering Member: Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth | Department:
Department for Energy and Climate Change**

In 2014 the National Solar Centre of the Building Research Establishment published *Biodiversity Guidance to Solar Developments* in order to support developers in managing the effect of generating stations on plants and animal wildlife. This can be found at:

<http://www.bre.co.uk/filelibrary/nsc/Documents%20Library/NSC%20Publications/National-Solar-Centre---Biodiversity-Guidance-for-Solar-Developments--2014-.pdf>

HL Deb 21 Oct 2015 | PQ HL2650

4

News items

Falmouth Packet

7 March 2022

[Solar farms in Cornwall threaten farming claims CPRE](#)

Observer

5 March 2022

[Light ... or blight? Anger rises at plan for Britain's biggest solar farm](#)

East Anglian Daily Times

25 February 2022

[Giant solar farm 'the size of 108 football pitches' rejected for West Norfolk](#)

Farmers' Weekly

21 February 2022

[Strong opposition over plans to build UK's biggest solar farm](#)

Lincolnshire Live

20 February 2022

[Plans for UK's biggest solar farm in Lincolnshire attract high level of opposition](#)

East Anglian Daily Times

20 February 2022

[Plans for huge solar farm 'seriously flawed' say council leaders](#)

Large solar farms

Solar Power Portal

17 February 2022

[UK installed 730MW of solar PV in 2021](#)

ITV News Online

12 February 2022

[Campaign groups band together to fight 'tidal wave' of solar farm proposals in countryside](#)

PV Tech website

8 September 2021

[UK government eyeing changes to its planning regime for 50MW+ solar sites](#)

Disclaimer

The Commons Library does not intend the information in our research publications and briefings to address the specific circumstances of any particular individual. We have published it to support the work of MPs. You should not rely upon it as legal or professional advice, or as a substitute for it. We do not accept any liability whatsoever for any errors, omissions or misstatements contained herein. You should consult a suitably qualified professional if you require specific advice or information. Read our briefing [‘Legal help: where to go and how to pay’](#) for further information about sources of legal advice and help. This information is provided subject to the conditions of the Open Parliament Licence.

Feedback

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publicly available briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email papers@parliament.uk. Please note that authors are not always able to engage in discussions with members of the public who express opinions about the content of our research, although we will carefully consider and correct any factual errors.

You can read our feedback and complaints policy and our editorial policy at commonslibrary.parliament.uk. If you have general questions about the work of the House of Commons email hcenquiries@parliament.uk.

The House of Commons Library is a research and information service based in the UK Parliament. Our impartial analysis, statistical research and resources help MPs and their staff scrutinise legislation, develop policy, and support constituents.

Our published material is available to everyone on commonslibrary.parliament.uk.

Get our latest research delivered straight to your inbox. Subscribe at commonslibrary.parliament.uk/subscribe or scan the code below:



 commonslibrary.parliament.uk

 [@commonslibrary](https://twitter.com/commonslibrary)