



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

3rd May 2024

Dear Contribute,

RE: SOLAR FARMS

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your concerns about solar farms in the countryside. I have read your comments with interest.

I am assured that the Government is committed to reaching its target to eliminate the UK's contribution to climate change by achieving net-zero by 2050. I believe that solar power is a key building block in ensuring that we meet this target. However, I do recognise that, in some cases, the deployment of large-scale solar farms may impact the rural environment adversely.

Government guidance encourages local planning authorities to focus on using previously developed land and non-agricultural land for large-scale solar farm development, so long as the land is not of high environmental value. Given that many solar farms are temporary structures, local planning authorities are also advised to ensure that land is restored to its previous use.


The 'National Planning Policy Framework' - which sets out guidance to local planning authorities in England - is clear that: "When located in the Green Belt, elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development." Projects can only proceed in very special circumstances, which may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources.

Ministers have also been clear that extensive development of rooftop solar on domestic, industrial and commercial property to make effective use of available surfaces is a priority. In November 2023, the Government announced that we will expand permitted development rights to ensure more homeowners and businesses can install solar panels on their roofs, without going through the planning system. The changes will mean homes with flat roofs will be able to install panels without planning permission, bringing rules in line with those for businesses. Reforms will also make it easier for solar panels to be installed in canopies above car parks, if they are over ten meters away from people's homes. In addition, the Government will scrap current rules that require businesses to apply for planning permission if solar panels will generate more than one megawatt of electricity.

More generally, I would like to assure you that I will follow any developments and further announcements from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero on this matter very closely.



Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,


**TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**