

Glebe Farm Solar

1. Who is the developer / builder? If your answer is Glebe Farm Solar Ltd, who are the ultimate owners of this new company and what is their track record for the generation of energy?
2. Who is providing the finance?
3. Will this developer / builder be the operator of the solar farm, or will it be flipped?
4. Provide the name / location of a solar farm that has been built / commissioned / and is being operated by this developer.

Questions 1 – 4:

We are one step removed from the commercial details being queried here. Our primary role is to manage the planning application process. However, the intention is that the scheme would be delivered in full and even the planning application stage represents a significant investment demonstrating the commitment to delivering the project.

It should be noted, too, that these are not material planning considerations and not matters that can be taken into account by the LPA in arriving at a decision on the planning application.

5. How is de-commissioning and return to agriculture (following asset redundancy and / or expiry of operations) to be funded? When will the necessary financial arrangements be made – from the beginning of construction or later?

A planning condition would secure the reinstatement of the land. The planning consent (and therefore also planning conditions) run with the land, with the developer holding responsibility for compliance. The reinstatement costs are factored into the delivery of the project and failure to comply could result in enforcement action by the LPA and, ultimately, criminal proceedings against the developer.

As above, we are one step removed from the commercial/financing details being queried, with our primary role being to manage the planning application process, and these questions about funding are outside the scope of planning considerations for the decision making process.

6. If the Glebe Farm Solar Ltd becomes insolvent, will Ropsley Farms be left with the responsibility for decommissioning and returning the fields to agricultural use?

As above, compliance with the detail and planning conditions of an approved planning consent is generally the responsibility of the landowner. If a landowner leases land to another company to construct/build/operate a solar farm, responsibilities will be set out in other legal documents. The detail of which are outside the scope of consideration by an LPA when they are determining a planning application.

7. The cable route to the Londonthorpe sub-station is shown as under the Main Street of Welby village. How long will traffic access be disrupted due to the laying of cables?



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We cannot say for certain as there are many factors which affect timing and duration of highway works e.g. weather, other works that might be programmed in or adjacent to the highway. Programming of highways works is determined by the Highway Authority through licencing.

8. We note that photo 03 submitted as part of the landscape assessment was taken from Pastures Farm. That photo point is included in an already consented solar farm development. Given that there are a total of four solar farm proposals for the catchment area, that you define as a 6km radius of the Glebe farm site, how have you assessed the cumulative effect of the four developments, totalling 900 acres, on the landscape and rural character of the area?

Cumulative impacts have been considered in the relevant individual reports that accompany the planning application. The LPA will also consider cumulative impacts of (consented) planning applications and existing developments in their decision making, as required in the National Planning Policy Framework.

9. Given the richness of the flora and fauna of this area (deer, fox, badgers, hare, rare limestone meadow plants etc) how does the developer plan to increase bio-diversity over the lifetime of the solar farm?

This is covered in the Ecology Report, the Biodiversity Net Gain data submitted to the LPA and the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan which is being finalised for submission to the LPA also.

10. Continuous security fencing around the Glebe Farm and Pastures Farm developments, will block the habitual passage of deer across local fields as they seek shelter in the remaining pockets of woodland, including Heydour Warren and the woods behind and beyond Quarry Farm. Faced with fencing, deer will be pushed onto the roads, causing a significant traffic hazard. What is proposed by the developer to reduce this risk?

The boundary fencing will be what is referred to as 'deer fencing' which is post and wire construction as shown in the image below. The image is taken from the Planning Design and Access Statement submitted as part of the planning application.



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Figure 10 Photograph showing the typical specification of a stock proof security fence and security cameras

11. The Historical and Archaeological Report states that the old quarries near the fields of the proposed solar farm, specifically Heydour Warren, “possibly go back 500 years”. The British Geological Survey state that limestone has been quarried at Heydour since Roman times. A local historian (now decd) who had family ties to the ownership of the old Heydour Quarries stated that Heydour Warren adjacent to the solar farm site is the location of the original Roman stone quarry and associated settlements. Has this been investigated?

Yes it has - the Heritage Assessment considered potential impacts on cultural heritage and archaeology, this included Heydour Warren which is specifically mentioned in that report.

12. The developer is required to show an estimate of the possible transmission of electricity from the development – not solely the designed / peak capacity. Given the variability of UK weather, and the consequent low reliability of solar generation, what percentage of the design capacity is actually ‘probable’ from the installation?

a. At this level of electricity generation and transmission, is the business case for the proposed solar farm based upon sale of generated electricity alone OR is profitability dependent upon continued government distortion of the energy market by the payment of subsidies?

b. Governments, we are told, cannot control the markets but they can end subsidies. If those subsidies end, under a new government (as has been promised by the leading contender), will the solar farm be financially insolvent?

The stated MW in the development description is the transmission measure.

The Applicant has undertaken modelling of the site and proposed technology that takes into account factors such as weather conditions. The generation figure is, of course, an important matter for the developer when establishing whether a particular location will be viable for a solar farm.

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Most subsidies for renewable energy projects ceased several years ago. Renewable energy developments are now generally funded entirely by the private sector. The funding of a development is not a material planning consideration and not something the LPA can take into account in its decision making. However, should planning consent be achieved, and the solar farm cease to operate (for whatever reason) before the end of the consented term, a planning condition requiring the development to be decommissioned would ensure the site is returned to its current use. Failure to comply with a planning conditions would be an enforcement matter for the LPA.

13. Will this development include co-located battery storage?

No. For clarity the plans do not show batteries and the application description does not mention batteries.

14. Planning applications for solar farms frequently refer to 'low-carbon', 'renewable energy', 'sustainable energy' and 'clean energy' sometimes inter-changeably. Academic studies have suggested that when manufacturing of panels is taken into the account, a solar farm has to produce 'clean electricity' consistently for 15 years before it can be regarded as carbon neutral. Would you describe ground mounted solar panels of the type you hope to instal at Glebe Farm, as 'low carbon' 'clean renewable energy'? What are your criteria for making that judgement?

This is not a material planning consideration. The National Planning Policy Framework also states that (paragraph 168):

“When determining planning applications for all forms of renewable and low carbon energy developments and their associated infrastructure, local planning authorities should:

a) not require applicants to demonstrate the overall need for renewable or low carbon energy, and give significant weight to the benefits associated with renewable and low carbon energy generation and the proposal's contribution to a net zero future;”

Renewable and low carbon energy is defined in the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework as:

“Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).”

15. The current government in its 'wisdom' removed the requirement upon developers to show community support for renewable energy proposals. Do you, as agent for the developer, believe that as a consequence of this statement from government, it is now unnecessary to engage with the community as part of the planning procedure even if an engagement is requested by the community?



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I think you are referring to the test that was required for wind development only¹. The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 still requires that letters of representation made by members of the public are taken into consideration where they relate to material planning considerations.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/onshore-wind-strategy/onshore-wind-taskforce-strategy-accessible-webpage>

