

1.1.1 The emerging policies describe a typical solar farm as 250 acres but the one proposed is ten times that size. The scale of the proposal is clearly more than that envisaged by policy makers and that fact should be considered during this process. The proposal should not be approved because of its excessive size.

1.1.11 Solar is an inefficient way to generate power – it supplies peak energy at times that it is not required. The developer's solution is to store energy using battery technology and release it when the demand is there, however this comes at a cost because the batteries will not last the life time of the project and need to be replaced three to four times during the forecast life of the project. Batteries that are suitable for this use are created in ways that are not good for the environment and are far from being carbon neutral. There is also a risk to the local population in the event of a fire in the battery storage unit. Such an event would release noxious chemicals and be difficult to extinguish. The government's net zero commitment would be better met by a series of smaller solar farms, mixed with other forms of energy generation, such as tidal, wind, hydro and nuclear. The government has not been proactive enough in its investment of the past decade and has fallen behind in its nuclear power generation plans. It cannot plug the gap with solar because of its inefficiencies.

1.3.8 I am not a spokesperson for 7000 Acres, however:

The paper Potential ecological impacts of ground-mounted photovoltaic solar panels by BSG ecology concludes that "in 2014... the ecological impacts of ground mounted solar panels in the UK were relatively limited. Five years on, the evidence base has not increased significantly (particularly with regard to UK studies)...". Whilst developers claim biodiversity net gain, there is little evidence to support that this is being achieved.

The <https://community.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/b/science/posts/bird-use-on-solar-farms-final-results> concludes that "There is huge potential for solar farms to replace the grassland lost due to the intensification of farming in the later part of the twentieth century. Solar farms have demonstrated their value in the farmed landscape with little evidence to suggest that solar farms are having a negative impact on farmland birds. While it is positive that birds are using solar farms at a similar level to arable, pasture and meadows. Changes to management such as mowing later in the year and leaving margins to set seed where possible would benefit both stakeholders and nature."

"However, it must be remembered that the primary function of the solar farm is to produce low carbon electricity, rather than being nature reserves. Consequently, management to increase a sites biodiversity value could increase costs by encouraging large flocks of birds to nest in and forage within the site. Solar farms need careful management to ensure that the fragile state of our farmland birds is not made worse and with the suitable management systems in place for each site and, with time solar farms can be a place in which both its value to biodiversity is increased and management costs are reduced."

Unfortunately the developers make claims that are not substantiated by research and whilst the papers state that it is possible for biodiversity net gain, this isn't what is being observed in sites of ground-mounted solar PV.