

## **Solar Farm Information Sheet**

### ➤ **What are solar farms and what do they look like?**

A solar farm is made up of a large number of solar panels mounted on the ground. The panels are fitted in rows on racking and are connected together. Each panel typically measures 1.6m x 1m.

The panels absorb light and convert it into electricity. The racks of panels are connected together using wiring. Other equipment is housed in a building which is usually located in the centre of the site. The electricity generated is transmitted to the grid via an electricity sub-station. Fencing and/or natural barriers (hedges etc) are installed around the site.

Figure 1 shows some pictures of a solar farm of a similar size to the one that the Council is considering. This is run by Cornwall Council and gives you an idea of how such a scheme might look.

### ➤ **Why is the Council considering developing a solar farm?**

A solar farm, approximately the size of the one proposed at Wheat Leasows, would have a number of benefits, including:

- **Environmental** – it would save more than 2,300 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> and would generate enough electricity to power more than 1,000 homes. The Council would contribute towards national targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and generate more electricity from renewable sources.
- **Financial** – a solar farm would generate income, and this income would be put back into the Council to help protect services. Income would be generated from day 1 and would be guaranteed by the Government for a 20 year period.
- **Economic** – there could also be benefits for the local economy, for example use of local suppliers during the installation phase.

### ➤ **What impact would a solar farm have on neighbouring properties?**

Compared with other forms of development, the impact of a solar farm is relatively low. For example, solar panels do not:

- generate high noise levels;
- give off any heat or glare;
- pose any danger to touch.

The panels can be screened from view. Once installed, solar farms are left undisturbed apart from occasional routine maintenance.

The Council is committed to keeping any impact to a minimum. To help us identify further the impacts of a solar farm on the local area, we have carried out a wide range of supporting studies on the site.

➤ **What will happen next?**

The next step is a pre-planning public exhibition that will take place on 15 January 2014. Comments received will be considered before plans are submitted, which is likely to be early February 2014. Once submitted, the planning application will be determined within 13 weeks.

If planning permission is granted, we will then appoint a contractor to design, install and operate the solar farm. Our aim would be to install the solar farm in late Summer 2014.

➤ **How will local residents be informed and involved?**

We are committed to keeping local residents and the wider community informed and involved. Ways that we are doing this include:

- Talking to and listening to local residents and local Councillors to discuss the proposals in detail and to help understand and deal with any possible concerns or worries;
- Working alongside environmental interest groups;
- Using the Council's website for frequently asked questions and copies of reports and documents;
- Issuing regular press releases and details on social media, and;
- As part of the planning process, having a public exhibition.

We will keep a record of comments, views, ideas and feedback received prior to any potential planning process.

➤ **Who can I speak to about the proposals?**

You can speak to Fliss Mercer, who is the main person working on the project. She can be contacted on (01952) 380136, or email her on [felicity.mercer@telford.gov.uk](mailto:felicity.mercer@telford.gov.uk).

**Figure 1 – Photos of Kernow Solar Farm, Cornwall**

