



RT. HON. SIR GAVIN WILLIAMSON CBE MP

Member of Parliament for Stone, Great Wyrley and Penkridge
Haling Dene Centre, Cannock Road,
Penkridge, Staffordshire, ST19 5DT
Telephone: 01785 847027

Andrew Mynors
Cabinet Member for Connectivity
Staffordshire County Council
2 Staffordshire Place
Stafford
ST16 2DH

Our Reference: GW72130

11th February 2026

Dear Cllr Mynors

Please find enclosed correspondence from the Minister of State for Energy. We hope this response is helpful and please do not hesitate to contact Sir Gavin should you need anything further.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C Rudge'.

Mrs C Rudge
Administrative Manager



Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

Michael Shanks MP
Department for Energy Security &
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55 Whitehall
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Rt Hon Sir Gavin Williamson MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Our ref: MCB2026/01002
Your ref: GW72130

11 February 2026

Dear Sir Gavin,

Thank you for your email of 21 January to the Secretary of State, and for forwarding the letter from County Councillor Andrew Mynors, who has also written directly to the Secretary of State, regarding solar and battery storage in Staffordshire. I am responding as this matter falls under my Ministerial portfolio.

The Government is committed to achieving Clean Power by 2030. This is an ambitious mission, with enormous potential to create good jobs, protect billpayers, ensure energy security, and reduce our exposure to volatile fossil fuel markets. The scale of this challenge is such that, as part of the rollout of various renewable energy sources, we will need to see significant increases in the deployment of both ground-mounted and rooftop solar.

All solar projects are subject to a rigorous planning process, in which the views and interests of the local community, and impacts on local amenities, landscapes, the environment, and land use, are considered, including any impact on food production.

The Government does not believe that the accelerated roll-out of solar generation poses a threat to food security. Food is already recognised as a critical national infrastructure sector, and the United Kingdom Food Security Report (UKFSR) provides a regular analysis of statistical data on food security across the UK, published at least once every three years.

Planning guidance makes clear that, wherever possible, developers should utilise brownfield, industrial, contaminated, or previously developed land. Furthermore, where the development of agricultural land is shown to be necessary, lower-quality land should be preferred to higher-quality land. The Solar Roadmap published in June 2025 sets out how much land we expect to be taken up by solar farms as part of our Clean Power 2030 commitment. Even in ambitious scenarios, we only expect up to 0.4% of total UK land, and up to 0.6% of total agricultural land, to be occupied.

Batteries have a vital role to play in decarbonising the power sector by 2030 and supporting Net Zero by 2050. They help balance the electricity system at lower cost and maximise the output from intermittent low-carbon generation such as solar and wind, minimising investment in new generation capacity and network upgrades to meet peak demand.

Grid-scale batteries are the first port of call for keeping our electricity system at the right frequency, whilst ensuring there is enough power in the right place at the right time, covering shortages from a few milliseconds to a few hours. Grid-scale batteries pose no greater danger

than other infrastructure, but it is vital that any risks are appropriately managed to maintain public safety and trust. While fires have occurred at battery sites in Great Britain, they are rare and mitigated by a robust regulatory framework overseen by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

As outlined in the Clean Power 2030 Action Plan, Defra has consulted on the principle of including grid-scale battery storage within the scope of the Environmental Permitting Regulations. If pursued, permitting will require developers to demonstrate to the Environment Agency how specific risks have been managed, and will provide for ongoing regulatory inspections of BESS sites. Defra is currently considering responses to the consultation and will publish a response in due course.

The Government values the County Council's commitment to supporting renewable energy while safeguarding local communities, food production, and biodiversity. We recognise the importance of good planning, local engagement, and appropriate regulation, and we will continue to work with local authorities and stakeholders to ensure that renewable energy deployment is managed in a balanced and coordinated way.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Shanks", with a horizontal line underneath the name.

MICHAEL SHANKS MP
Minister of State for Energy