

## Solar Farm information sheet



### ABOUT RETHINK ENERGY

We are a team of renewable energy experts and enthusiasts, dedicated to assisting Britain in its fight against climate change through the development of considered, appropriate renewable energy projects around the United Kingdom.

Under the guidance of local planning experts and with advice from the Local Authorities, our team of experienced project planners and renewable energy engineer's work together to develop green electricity projects that will provide a lasting supply of environmentally friendly electricity to communities across the country.

At **RE**think, we prioritise local knowledge and local people as we believe that, whilst the fight against climate change is a global issue, it should be local communities that benefit first.



### SOLAR FOR BRITAIN

In a recent YouGov poll commissioned by the Solar Trade Association (STA), the level of public support for solar farms developed in accordance with its defined 'best practice' hit 71%. REthink Energy is committed to the STAs best practice.

Solar farms that adopt best practice are strongly backed by The National Trust, RSPB, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth, Forum for the Future, Plantlife, Co-Operatives UK, Pure Leapfrog and The Bumblebee Trust

### BENEFITS OF A SOLAR FARM

**FINANCIAL** –The land owner benefits from a secure guaranteed rental income for the life of the project (which is not subject to typical farming and weather related risk).The local community will also benefit as REthink will identify local projects with the Parish Council that the solar farm can help to fund.

**ECOLOGICAL** – Solar farm construction involves very little ground penetration so 99% of the land will be left open. The panels themselves are raised 1 metre off the ground and only cover one third of the land. The entire field will be freed from inputs such as pesticides and herbicides, the soil will be allowed to recuperate and breathe and the cover of grasses and wild flowers will attract wildlife and provide a safe haven for it. Locally appropriate hedgerow and tree species can be planted to provide additional screening and to further enhance the habitat for British wildlife. At **RE**think Energy, we aim to provide a dual use for the solar farm so that the land retains its agricultural use. A variety of dual use techniques are available such as grazing sheep, keeping bees, rearing pheasants or simply planting the appropriate mix of rare breed grasses and wild flowers. Dual use further enhances biodiversity and consequently there will be more insect, invertebrate, small animal and bird species living on the land.

**ENERGY SECURITY** – the UK faces an energy catastrophe due to increased usage and decreased British production. It increasingly relies in expensive imports which means it imports inflation that has to be met by British energy consumers. Local decentralised electricity generation plants such as solar farms secure a local area's electricity supply and contribute to the Governments local generation targets.

## Solar Farm criteria and development process

**THE CRITERIA:** There are several key elements needed for a successful solar farm development. All are essential for a viable, fundable project:

- Grade 3 or lower agricultural land or a brownfield site
- Minimum 20 acres, up to 300 acres
- Proposed plot must be naturally well screened from residential housing and public view
- Land must not be in a protected area or subject to planning restrictions due to environmental or archaeological constraints
- Land should be level or have a gentle south facing slope
- Close to a significant electrical Point of Connection (REthink will assess this for you)
- Land owner willing to lease the proposed land for a term of 25 years

**THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS: total duration 9-14 months**

### Pre Development phase – 2 to 3 months

- Exclusivity agreement signed between land owner and REthink Energy
- REthink begin initial site screening for planning permission
- REthink apply to DNO for electricity export capacity
- Heads of Terms agreed outlining the key elements of land rental agreement
- Offer received from DNO to connect the solar farm to the National Grid

### Planning phase – 4 to 6 months

- Land owner and REthink negotiate and sign Lease Option Agreement
- Substantive planning application preparation begins, including but not limited to:  
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments; ecological assessments and wildlife surveys and archaeological Assessment
- Planning Application submitted

**Planning permission granted. Lease begins.**

**Construction phase – 3 to 5 months (size dependent)**

**Operational phase – 25 years**