

DOMESTIC MICROGENERATION FACTSHEET

This factsheet sets out the situations in which planning permission is required for domestic microgeneration equipment.

The information provided here is not formal advice, as every situation is different. It is always advisable to seek professional advice before installing new equipment.

SOLAR PV AND SOLAR THERMAL SYSTEMS



Solar PV v Solar Thermal

There are two types of solar power systems:

- Solar photovoltaic (PV) capture the sun's energy within cells, which convert sunlight into electricity.
- Solar Thermal systems capture the sun's energy in order to heat hot water.

Dwellings

Generally, solar panels do not require planning permission if the installation, alteration or replacement is mounted on a house or block of flats, or mounted on a building within the grounds of either a house or block of flats.

There are however certain exceptions. Solar panels require planning permission if they would:

- a. protrude more than 200mm from the plane of the wall or roof slope;
- b. be higher than the highest part of the roof (excluding the chimney); or
- c. be installed on a building within the grounds of a listed building.

Conservation Areas

Where a house is within a Conservation Area then panels require planning permission if they are to be installed:

- a. on a wall which fronts a highway; or
- b. on a wall of a building within the grounds of the dwelling that is visible from a highway.

Standalone Systems

Installation, alteration and replacement of a standalone system within the grounds of a house requires planning permission if:

- a. it would result in more than one standalone system; or
- b. any part of the standalone system:
 - would exceed in height four metres above ground level;
 - would be within five metres of the boundary of a curtilage;
 - would exceed nine square metres or any dimension would exceed three metres (including any housing); or
 - it would be located within the grounds of a listed building.

Within a Conservation Area, on a designated scheduled monument site or in a World Heritage Site, a standalone system requires planning permission if it would be nearer to a highway than the part of a house or block of flats which is nearest to a highway.

General Principles for Panels

In all instances, the following conditions apply:

- a. Panels should be sited to minimise the effect on the external appearance of the building;
- b. Panels should be sited so as to minimise the effect on the amenity of the area; and
- c. Panels no longer needed should be removed as soon as reasonably practical.

HEATING SYSTEMS

The installation, alteration or replacement of a ground source heat pump or a water source heat pump does not normally require planning permission within the grounds of a house.

The installation, alteration or replacement of a flue, forming part of a combined heat and power system or biomass heating system, planning permission is required if:

- a. the height of the flue exceeds the highest part of the roof by one metre or more;
- b. within Conservation Areas or World Heritage sites, the flue would be installed on a wall or roof slope which fronts a highway.

HEAT PUMPS

The installation of an air or water source heat pump does not require planning permission if it is within the curtilage of a house or block of flats.

WIND TURBINES

Standalone wind turbines on detached houses, blocks of flats and on buildings within the curtilages of houses now benefit from permitted development rights, subject to meeting certain requirements.

It is therefore necessary to check if planning permission is required before installing a wind turbine.

CONTACT DETAILS



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THE BENEFITS OF RENEWABLE ENERGY

The UK needs to produce more energy from renewable and low carbon sources. This is in order to secure an energy supply that relies less upon imported gas and oil, and because it is simply better for the environment.

The Government is encouraging home owners to install renewable technologies through incentives, which include the Feed in Tariff. The Feed in Tariff provides an income over a set period of time for small and medium scale generators of energy linked to the amount of energy produced (measured in kW). This is in addition to renewable technologies delivering the opportunity for homeowners to reduce the cost of energy bills by the value of the amount of the generated electricity used. The Feed in Tariff was reduced in December 2011, but savings on the cost of energy are expected to increase in time.

Directions Planning Consultancy has experience of advising clients on a range of renewable technology proposals with examples including rooftop installations and ground mounted solar 'farms'.

Validation requirements for planning applications throughout the UK vary from district to district, and depend on the nature of the proposal. In certain instances supporting documents may be required.

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