
From: *David Wimble, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Special Projects*

Simon Jones, Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport

To: *Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee - 5 May 2026*

Subject: Position Statement on Solar Generation

Decision no: 26/00026

Key Decision :

- *It affects more than 2 Electoral Divisions*

Classification: *Unrestricted*

Past Pathway of report: *N/A*

Future Pathway of report: *Cabinet Member Decision*

Electoral Division: *All*

Is the decision eligible for call-in? *Yes*

Summary: This report summarises Kent County Council's (KCC) proposed approach to photovoltaic (PV) development and should be read in conjunction with the 'Position Statement on Solar Developments'.

Recommendation(s):

The Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to **CONSIDER** and **ENDORSE** or make **RECOMMENDATIONS** to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Special Projects on the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A).

1. Introduction

1.1 Kent County Council (KCC) is in principle supportive of solar generation. However, KCC considers that Solar Developments:

- (a) should be well-designed and appropriately located, which is consistent with its commitment to protecting valued landscapes, habitats, heritage, and agricultural land.
- (b) require careful consideration and should not be located on Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land (grades 1 to 3a).

- 1.2 KCC acknowledges that co-located Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) storage is generally necessary to make solar farms viable; however, KCC does not support grid-scale BESS.

2. Key Considerations

- 2.1 The Position Statement on Solar Developments that accompanies this report updates the 2014 document. It supports the Council's current priorities, expressed in the 'Reforming Kent 2025-2028' Strategic Statement, to:

- Stand firm against excessively large housing and solar farm developments
- Protecting our land from excessively large solar farms
- Push back on inappropriate solar farm development planned for Kent

- 2.2 The Position Statement on Solar Developments sets out KCC's strategic approach for Solar Developments in Kent and is not part of the development plan

- 2.3 The Position Statement is intended to support consistent engagement, whilst allowing flexibility to respond proportionately to circumstances of individual developments.

3. Background

- 3.1 KCC's (2014) Position Statement on Development – Large Scale Solar Arrays, remains in the public domain and is available online at [KCC Solar Policy Position Statement August 2014 FINAL.pdf](#). However, it references outdated national policy and does not represent the current KCC administration's position on solar generation.

4. Options considered and dismissed, and associated risk

- 4.1 Retract, without replacing, the 2014 position statement 'Development of Large-Scale Solar Arrays'. Risk: KCC would have no clear position on solar generation that elaborates on the organisation's stated priorities regarding deployment of the technology set out in the Strategic Statement.
- 4.2 Retain the 2014 position statement. Risk: KCC's position on solar generation would be based on outdated national policy and not reflect the current administration's position on solar development.

5. Financial Implications

None

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 This Position Statement provides non-statutory views on KCC's approach to applications for Solar Developments in Kent and is not part of the development plan. It does not constitute policy and does not prejudice KCC's consideration of

individual planning applications for Solar Developments as a statutory consultee.

- 6.2 The Position Statement is intended to inform, not to pre-determine responses. Accordingly, it does not bind KCC to a fixed position, and its consultation responses should be understood as being capable of departing from the broad principles set out in this document where justified by the circumstances of a particular case.

7. Equalities implications

- 7.1 *None*

8. Data Protection Implications

None

9. Other corporate implications

- 9.1 The position statement provides corporate clarity on KCC's approach to solar farm development

Governance

10. The Corporate Director for Growth, Environment and Transport will inherit the main delegations under the Officer Scheme of Delegation, with provision for onward sub-delegation to Directors or Heads of Service as appropriate under the Constitution.

11. Conclusions

- 11.1 Kent, with its high levels of solar irradiance, is a favourable site for solar generation and the cumulative impacts of multiple projects across the county must be carefully considered. The collective impact on food security of using high grade agricultural land for energy generation, which the County Council discourages, may also become significant as deployment of ground-mounted solar accelerates. KCC therefore encourages solar generation to be prioritised on rooftops, car parks, and brownfield land over ground-mounted installations on greenfield and agricultural land.

12. Recommendation(s):

- 12.1 The Growth, Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to **CONSIDER** and **ENDORSE** or make **RECOMMENDATIONS** to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Special Projects on the proposed decision as detailed in the attached Proposed Record of Decision document (Appendix A).
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13. Background Documents and appendices

- Equality Impact Assessment
- *Position Statement on Solar Developments*
- Appendix A Proposed Record of Decision

14. Contact details

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