



Department for Energy Security & Net Zero

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Dear Manuela,

Thank you for your letter of 7 August to the Secretary of State on behalf of your constituents in Salford Priors Parish Council regarding the regulation of grid-scale batteries. I am responding as this matter falls under my Ministerial portfolio.

As you observe, batteries have a vital role to play in decarbonising the power sector by 2030 and 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), and thus minimise investment in new generation capacity and network upgrades to meet peak demand.

They 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.

It is, of course, vital that any risks from grid-scale batteries are appropriately managed to maintain public safety and trust. While fires have occurred at battery sites in Great Britain, they are rare and are mitigated by a robust regulatory framework overseen by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). This framework requires responsible parties to take measures to ensure health and safety throughout all stages of a battery system's deployment. The fundamental principle of health and safety law is that those who create risks are best placed to control them. Designers, installers and operators of battery energy storage systems (BESS) all have a legal duty to ensure that risks are controlled and duty holders are expected to carry out appropriate assessment of risk on their sites.

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government's Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) recommends that developers of BESS installations engage with local fire and rescue services before submitting an application to the local planning authority. This is so that matters relating to the siting and location of BESS can be considered before the application is made. Developers are also encouraged to consider guidance published by the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) when preparing their application. During the formal period of public consultation, local planning authorities are also encouraged to consult with fire services and consider the NFCC guidance when making their planning decision. The NFCC guidance makes recommendations on how the local environment should factor into the choice of site, and recommends that developers produce a plan that identifies all sensitive receptors within a 1km radius of the site. Where there are concerns about potential vapour clouds, developers may wish to commission analysis of fire gas plume modelling under different scenarios.

To complement existing standardisation, the Government has consulted on the principle of including BESS within scope of the Environmental Permitting Regulations (EPR). Defra has committed to proceed with further detailed policy work on including BESS as an activity in the EPR. If pursued, permitting would require developers to demonstrate to the Environment Agency how specific risks have been managed, and will provide for ongoing regulatory inspections of BESS sites.

As you note, it is important that local planning authorities are supported to carry out their role. The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero has commissioned Regen, working with Great British Energy and the Local Net Zero Hubs, to produce guidance and training for local planning authorities on solar, onshore wind, battery storage and electricity network infrastructure. Published in March 2026, the guidance is designed to support confident, consistent and timely planning decisions and sits alongside national planning policy and planning practice guidance. The guidance is available at: www.regen.co.uk/insights/new-guidance-for-assessing-clean-energy-projects-supports-planners-in-delivering-the-transition.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Shanks', followed by a period. The signature is fluid and cursive.

MICHAEL SHANKS MP
Minister of State for Energy