

Solar for Business FAQ's

Question	Answers
Roof Questions	
What roofs will be considered?	We will consider roof types of metal or flat roof construction, or concrete tile. Roofs of fibrous cement type (including asbestos sheets) will not be considered due to their fragile nature and increased ongoing risk of weather-tightness. Roofs with clay or slate tiles will not be ruled out immediately, but will come under closer financial scrutiny due to increased install costs. Roof orientation is a minor consideration as whilst due South will give the most potential output per kWp installed, systems with an East and West pitch can allow for a larger potential system size.
What about structural integrity?	A full structural survey will be carried out, this will be via a site visit from a structural engineer. If the roof requires strengthening works this may make the system unviable.
What is the installation method?	Only fixing methods that comply with MCS012 will be acceptable for all pitched roofs. Flat roofs will be of a self-ballasted type and non-penetrative to roof structure.
What about bird nesting risk?	Any installations on pitched roofs will require bird proofing to be fitted to the perimeter of the array. Flat roofs will need to be an enclosed structure (not open sides), and will require bird proofing to the lower edge of the panels. Flat roofs in an E/W configuration where the gap between the panels is greater than 50mm will require bird proofing between the peaks of the panels.
Electrical Questions	
Where will equipment be mounted?	The main equipment associated with a PV install is the inverter, this takes the DC power from the panels and converts it to AC. The location of the inverter will be building specific, but will need to be accessible in the future without requiring access equipment. Additionally a PV generation meter and building export meter will need to be located with easy access. These will normally be within the electrical mains incoming cupboard.
What will be the cable routes?	The main aim for safety is to keep the DC cable routes as short as possible (as this is normally unfused), ideally if the inverter cannot be mounted externally, then it will be on point of entry to the building to keep DC routes short internally. Where this is not possible we will investigate the use of firefighter switches, or string fuses to reduce the shock potential of the DC cables. Any cable that passes through a firewall will be fire sealed using appropriate measures.
What about shut down for connection?	Where a shut down of the electrical services is required for the connection of the PV system, we will ensure this is carried out outside of normal operation hours to minimise disruption. We will also obtain as much notice as possible and liaise with relevant parties (IT, security etc) to ensure a smooth process.
What are the maintenance and monitoring requirements?	Hastings Borough Council will arrange all maintenance and monitoring of the system for the duration of the PPA. Once a year we will arrange a suitable day and time for the maintenance engineers to visit, and we ask that they are given full access to the system and its components.
Lease Questions	

What is an AirSpace Lease?	An AirSpace Lease allows the Renewable Energy Solutions team to rent the space above the roof from the building owner/tenant to install solar panels. As the panels will continue to be property of HBC the AirSpace Lease is required to differentiate between the ownership and maintenance of the building and the solar panels.
What is the duration of the AirSpace Lease?	The AirSpace Lease will normally run for 25 years alongside the PPA, however for tenants of a building we will consider reducing this term to match the remaining time on the tenancy.
What agreements are needed with the Landlord? (if applicable)	As our Lease and PPA is with the tenant, the landlord will only need to give approval for the system to be installed. Depending on the remaining lease period we may enter into discussions with the landlord about what happens at the end of the lease.
What about roof repairs?	The solar installation will have no impact on the repair and maintain leases. If damage has been caused by the solar installation then the repair of this will either come from our own insurance or be recovered via the installer. If panels need to be removed to complete roof upgrade works, then the costs for this are built into our model and we have allowed for one removal and replacement of the system in its life.
PPA questions	
What is a Power Purchase Agreement?	A Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) is an agreement between the generator (HBC) and user (Tenant) of the electricity generated from the solar panels. This agreement is usually for 25 years and sets out the purchase price per kWh of the generated electricity, and the rate it will increase over the 25 years, usually in line with the Retail Price Index (RPI). The PPA also details out any default charges, maintenance access provision and the potential for the user to buy the system from HBC. If the user is a tenant then we will look to mirror the term left on their lease for the PPA.
What rates will be offered?	This will vary depending on the expected output and consumption of the system and building, and will be calculated individually for each system. We will aim to offer a discount to the current supply of at least 1p/kWh, but in some cases this will not be achievable. The PPA cost per kWh normally increases in line with RPI each year (average of 2.5% increase, compared to average 5% increase in electrical supply cost).