

## Solar Panels & Permitted Development

With the pressures of climate change and a desire amongst the general public to be more sustainable the issue of renewable energy has become a hot topic.

The government has acknowledged the wider public's desire to contribute towards sustainable development and has responded through the planning system to make it easier for people to generate their own clean energy through microgeneration.

This was facilitated through the creation of permitted development rights to install solar panels on dwelling houses.

### What is Permitted Development?

Permitted development rights are a set of criteria against which certain types of development can be constructed without first having to apply to the local council for planning permission.

They cover a range of things including fences, modest extensions, outbuildings and now solar panels. The development proposed must meet the criteria which normally relates to size, height, location and proximity to boundaries and roads.

*Flats and listed buildings do not benefit from permitted development rights.*

### Let There be Light >

There are a number of criteria that, if met, will allow you to install solar panels on your property (or an outbuilding within your garden) without having to apply for planning permission.

Proposed roof/wall mounted panels must **not**:

- Protrude more than 200mm beyond the wall or roof slope;
- Be higher than the highest part of the roof (excluding chimney);
- Be sited on the principle or side elevation when visible from a highway (Conservation Area only); and
- Be sited on the wall of an outbuilding which is visible from the highway (Conservation Area only).

A standalone solar panels is permissible provided it is:

- The only one standalone installation;
- No more than 4 metres in height;
- Situated more than 5 metres from the curtilage boundary;
- No more than 9sqm (or 3m wide and 3m deep); and
- Not visible from the highway (Conservation Area only)

All proposed panels (both mounted and standalone) must be:

- Sited so as to minimise the effect on the appearance of the building and the amenity of the area; and
- Removed once no longer needed.

### What Happens Next? >

Cases that comply with the above criteria may not need planning permission.

However, some of the criteria are subjective and, due to potential local restrictions imposed on your property by your Council, it is advisable that you discuss your proposals with your local authority.

You can apply for a "Certificate of Lawfulness", a legally binding document confirming that the development as proposed is permitted development. This Certificate will protect against potential enforcement action and should be retained as it may be required as evidence in the future.

**Planning Aid England provides free, confidential and independent advice on the planning process. Call: 0330 123 9244 or Email: [advice@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk](mailto:advice@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk)**

