

Sustainable Hayfield

RCEF Stage: 1

The Story

A potential site of 23 acres of agricultural land at Lower Cliffe Farm was identified in 2019, and subsequent discussion with the landowner indicated that he was in favour of the scheme and willing to lease the land. The site has been assessed for technical and planning constraints and approximately 50% has been selected for the proposed solar array, giving a potential generation capacity of 2.4MWpeak (2.4MWp). A grid connection application was submitted to Electricity North West (ENW) at generating capacities between 1.5 and 4MW. Unfortunately, and contrary to expectations, this application resulted in a connection cost estimate of £887,000 at all generating capacities, which is not economically viable. (For comparison, commercial developers aim for £50,000 per MW). The ADAS Planning Team has produced three reports (attached as Appendices 1 – 3) to assess the likelihood of achieving planning consent for the proposal. Two of these form a Pre-application Request Supporting Statement which has been submitted to High Peak Borough Council and are awaiting a response. A negative response would mean that Council planning officers have judged that it would be most unlikely to gain planning consent and further work is almost certainly not justified. A positive (or qualified positive) response would mean that further work on the project could be continued as long as all other hurdles (notably grid connection) were overcome. A community consultation exercise has been undertaken by Sustainable Hayfield, which has provided good evidence of support from the local community. 16% of local households responded, of these, 88% said that they supported the creation of a solar farm within Hayfield Parish, and 79% said that they would consider investing in a share offer. The report includes some research results on governance structures and fundraising of community solar PV schemes. It also includes details of organisations set up specifically to provide support for community energy enterprises, from commencement to operation. Finally, the report sets out the next steps to be completed once responses are received from High Peak Council (Pre-application submission) and from Electricity North West (grid connection application). At this stage, should Sustainable Hayfield conclude that the project is feasible, further funding may be available via the Rural Community Energy Fund to pay for these next steps. 01/03/2021: unsuccessful discussion with United Utilities was concluded in January 2021 for an alternative connection via Hayfield Water Treatment Works. 01/03/2021: further discussion took place with ENW in February 2021 during which the possibility of an “enhanced connection application” was suggested at 1.5MW. A new application was submitted on 12/02/2021 . Project was discontinued in July 2021 as planning will not support.

Challenges & Risks

Lessons Learned

Key Facts

Key Figures

RCEF grant	

Further Notes

LEP area:

Link for further info: