



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Councillor Alan Smith
Feckenham Parish Council
7 Droitwich Road
Feckenham
REDDITCH
B96 6JE

18 September 2023

Dear Councillor Smith

Further to my previous letter regarding Battery Energy Storage Systems, which I'm grateful was shared with local residents on social media, I wanted to write to you again following strengthened planning guidance I have introduced in my role as Planning Minister.

The Government acknowledges the concerns surrounding the potential safety and environmental impact of battery energy storage at grid scale.

I know from speaking to residents just how concerned they are about the safety of Battery Energy Storage Systems. I've listened and acted on their concerns, delivering strengthened planning guidance and conditions to ensure public safety.

I can confirm that regulations for industrial lithium-ion batteries will be updated to more properly take into account potential fire hazards. These facilities will now require an industrial installations permit.

Planning guidance has also been strengthened and it now encourages battery storage developers to engage with local fire and rescue and local planning authorities to refer to the guidance published by the National Fire Chiefs Council.

To be clear, these measures should in no way be taken as indicative of my support or opposition to this particular application or any other of this type. As Planning Minister I cannot take a position on any individual planning application because of the quasi-judicial nature of the planning system.

As you know, it will be for Redditch Borough Council to make a decision on the Battery Energy Storage System planning application in Feckenham. I as the local MP do not have any influence or control over local planning decisions.

I can assure you that the Government will continue to ensure we have in place an appropriate, robust and future-proofed regulatory framework that protects people and the environment.

Kind regards

Rachel Maclean MP