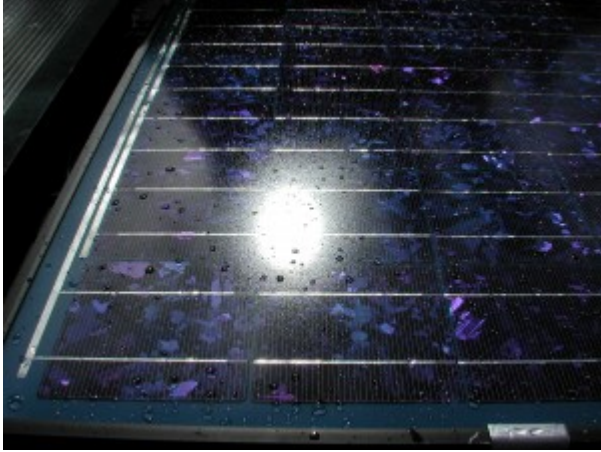


One thing we have learnt this week – solar social model

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This week I learnt of a solar social model for PV. One of the

problems with PV has been its perceived cost. The installed cost and hence generation costs have fallen drastically over the last 5 years or so until its becoming cheaper than nuclear and will be cheaper than most other if not all other forms of generation in another 5 years or so. Despite this for those on low incomes the up front cost the kit is still high. The problem is of course more acute if you do not own your own roof. Yet those on low incomes are the most hit by the steep rise in energy costs over the last 10 years and need the most help. One company thinks its found a solar social model that will allow it to fit housing association properties with solar PV at no cost to the residents. I do wonder whether it will end being controversial though. The model involves the company fitting out the property and then selling all the electricity to the tenants at a discount rate. There is some contradiction here though, their solar social model involves the householder using 80% of the electricity they use but at the same time fitting the properties with LED bulbs to reduce energy use. They become the general energy supplier saving the tenants about £100/year. There are two problems with this approach. First as I know its very difficult to self consume more than about 50% especially with bigger systems. Second the tenants are locked into a deal which may in time not be the best one. I'm all for putting PV on social housing but not sure this solar social model is the best one. Neil

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