

Stonestreet Green Solar

Consultation Report, Appendix G: 2023 Statutory Consultation Materials and Consultation Responses

Appendix G-1: 2023 Statutory Consultation Information Pack, Part 1

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CONTENTS

Appendix G: 2023 Statutory Consultation Materials and Consultation Responses

Appendix G-1, Part 1

Appendix G-1: 2023 Statutory Consultation Information Pack, Part 1

1. Consultation Booklet
2. Hardcopy Feedback Form
3. Online Feedback Form
4. You Said We Did Booklet



Stonestreet Green Solar

Consultation Report
Appendix G-1: 2023 Statutory Consultation
Information Pack, Part 1



Stonestreet Green Solar

Consultation Report
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1. Consultation Booklet



EPL 001 Limited
STONESTREET GREEN SOLAR

Consultation Booklet
12 June to 17 July 2023



Introduction

Purpose

Consultation on the proposed Stonestreet Green Solar project (the "Project") was undertaken over five weeks in spring 2022 and a further five weeks in autumn 2022. Having carefully considered the responses to those consultations and made changes to the Project in light of those responses, further studies and surveys, ongoing environmental assessments and technical design work, EPL 001 Limited¹ (the "Applicant") has chosen to undertake a further five weeks of statutory consultation on the updated Project. The Applicant is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Evolution Power Limited.

This consultation booklet has been prepared to provide details of the changes made to the Project following the autumn 2022 consultation and also provides further details that are now known about the Project and its anticipated effects.

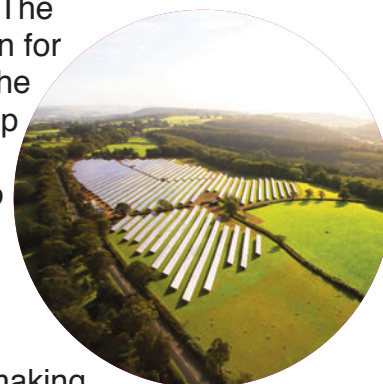
This statutory consultation is being carried out in accordance with the Planning Act 2008 between 12th June and 17th July 2023.

Once the responses to this consultation have been considered, the Applicant will finalise the Project and then submit an application (the "Application") for a development consent order ("DCO") to the Secretary of State under the Planning Act 2008.

Overview of the project

The Project comprises the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of solar photovoltaic ("PV") arrays and energy storage, together with associated infrastructure and an underground

cable connection to the existing National Grid Sellindge Substation. The agreed grid connection for the Project will allow the export and import of up to 99.9 megawatts ("MW") of electricity to the electricity grid. The Project will provide a domestic source of renewable energy for 40 years, making a meaningful addition to UK domestic energy security, contributing to the UK's climate change objectives and providing a significant improvement in local biodiversity.



The Project is located approximately 6.5km to the south-east of Ashford Town Centre and approximately 13.7km to the west of Folkestone Town Centre, in the county of Kent. The Project is situated on approximately 200 hectares (approximately 475 acres) of land to the north and west of the village of Aldington.

Key technical components of the Project include:

- Solar panel areas – including PV panels, mounting structures, converters, connecting cabling and safety and security measures;
- Inverter Stations – to convert direct current produced by the PV panels into alternating current that can be exported to the electricity network;
- Energy storage units – to provide grid balancing services and able to be charged directly by the PV panels;
- Project substation – to house switchgear, Project transformer, control equipment and site facilities; and
- Cable connection route - to connect into the existing substation at Sellindge.

We are consulting between 12th June and 17th July 2023.

Please read this booklet and then share your views by responding to the questions on page 20.

Contents

Introduction - p. 2

Our Proposals - p. 4

Illustrative Proposed Development Layout - p. 6

Environmental Impact Assessment - p. 9

Illustrative Landscape Masterplan - p.10

Construction, operation and decommissioning - p.15

Planning and Consultation - p.18

Consultation Questions - p.20

PRoW Layout - p.22

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Key landscape, ecological and amenity components of the Project include:

- Planting of new hedgerows and woodland, with additional planting in already established areas;
- Retention and management of existing grassland;
- Creation of new grassland, native wildflower meadow, wetland meadow and pond habitats; and
- Alterations to existing and the creation of new Public Rights of Way ("PRoW") to retain and improve connectivity.

At the time of writing, there are two potential points at which the Project could connect via underground cables to the electricity grid. The Applicant's preferred route, which would connect directly into the existing Sellindge Substation, lies entirely within the administrative area of Ashford Borough Council. The alternative route, which would connect into the Sellindge Substation via an existing nearby tower, would require additional land some of which would be located within the administrative boundary of Folkestone and Hythe District Council. The whole site including both grid connection options is within the administrative area of Kent County Council.

Consultation undertaken in 2022

Non-statutory consultation took place between 25 March and 29 April 2022. As part of this consultation, four local information events were held, which provided interested members of the local community with the opportunity to view the initial proposals and submit feedback.

Statutory consultation under the Planning Act 2008 was then carried out between 25 October and 29 November 2022. This provided detailed information about the Project, including a Preliminary Environmental Information Report ("PEIR"). Four local information events and a public presentation were held at which members of the Project team were available to answer questions on the Project and consultees could submit their feedback.

Since the last consultation

We are grateful to everyone who took part in the consultations in 2022. We received 168 responses overall to the statutory consultation.

Common themes raised included:

- Support for the principle of new solar energy generation
- Concern about the overall scale of development and potential loss of agricultural land
- Questions over the need for the development
- Questions regarding site suitability and the consideration of alternative sites
- Concern about impacts to PRoW
- Concern about HGV access
- A desire for all cables associated with the scheme to be buried underground
- Requests for more information about landscape and visual impact, ecology and local job creation

Since the 2022 statutory consultation, we have refined the Project, having regard to all consultation responses received, as well as the results of further studies and surveys and ongoing environmental assessments. These have included further ecological surveys and mitigation, viewpoint analysis, landscape improvements, archaeological redesign and PRoW refinement.

We have therefore:

- Developed a Book of Plans to support this consultation that shows our proposals.
- Provided further information on the need for the Project, site suitability and alternative sites;
- Developed our package of landscaping and biodiversity enhancements, to include additional hedgerow and woodland planting and habitat creation to further reduce any impact and also increase biodiversity improvements - the Project now includes over 30,000 new hedgerow plants and over 16,000 new woodland shrubs/trees;
- Reconfigured proposed PRoW diversion layouts, lengths and routes to respond to local user and Kent County Council feedback;
- Increased and enhanced setbacks from residential dwellings to reduce visual amenity impacts;
- Updated the proposals to provide additional habitat for wildlife, in particular skylark and yellowhammer, to mitigate impacts identified in the previous design;

- Relocated electrical infrastructure and provided mitigation to reduce noise, visual amenity and archaeological impacts;
- Updated the scheme boundary (Order Limits) to remove small areas not considered necessary for development and to add land at Sellindge Substation to allow installation of ducting, if required; and
- Undertaken further assessment of the potential for any cumulative effects of the Project together with other schemes in the vicinity of the Project.

The Project is an Environmental Impact Assessment development (EIA development), as defined by the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, and an Environmental Statement will be submitted as part of the Application. A PEIR was published to support the 2022 statutory consultation in order to provide preliminary information on the likely significant environmental effects of the Project. As part of the 2023 statutory consultation, a PEIR Addendum has been prepared which updates and supplements the PEIR.

Our Proposals

The Project will be a high quality and innovative solar farm. It will deliver a significant amount of renewable energy, whilst being sensitive to its surroundings. It has been carefully sited and designed, taking account of nearby receptors, and will result in significant biodiversity improvements in the area.

The Applicant has set out the vision for the Project in a number of key objectives which have informed the design. These objectives have been informed to an important degree by the previous consultation stages.

Objectives

Objective 1: Design the scheme to optimise the amount of renewable energy that can be generated in the site area to help decarbonise electricity generation and achieving net zero carbon emissions, in line with the Government's commitments.

Objective 2: Sensitively locate the Project within the landscape.

Objective 3: Minimise impacts on views from people's homes and other viewpoints. A bespoke approach has been taken to the arrangement of the proposed panels close to residential properties.

Objective 4: Enhance the local green infrastructure network.

Objective 5: Enhance local biodiversity.

Objective 6: Avoid harm to heritage assets and their setting.

Objective 7: Safeguard the water environment, be safe from flooding and ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere, taking account of the impacts of climate change.

Objective 8: Retain existing PRoW and connectivity where possible, and seek opportunities to enhance the local network.

Objective 9: Provide safe access to the site and avoid adverse impacts to the local highway network and its users (including pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders).

Why here?

The site has been selected for a number of reasons, including:

- The south east of England was identified as a suitable area due to the high levels of solar irradiation and the high level of regional energy demand. The project will contribute to meeting local demand including from High Speed 1 and Otterpool Park;
- The securing of available capacity at the Sellindge Substation provides a point of connection for the scale of energy generation proposed;
- The site is not subject to any international, national, landscape, ecological or geological designations, or to any housing allocations or

heritage designations;

- The site benefits from existing natural screening through vegetation and topography; and
- The site is approximately 80% lower-quality agricultural land or non-agricultural land.

More information on the site selection process is set out in Chapter 4 of the PEIR Addendum which forms part of this consultation.

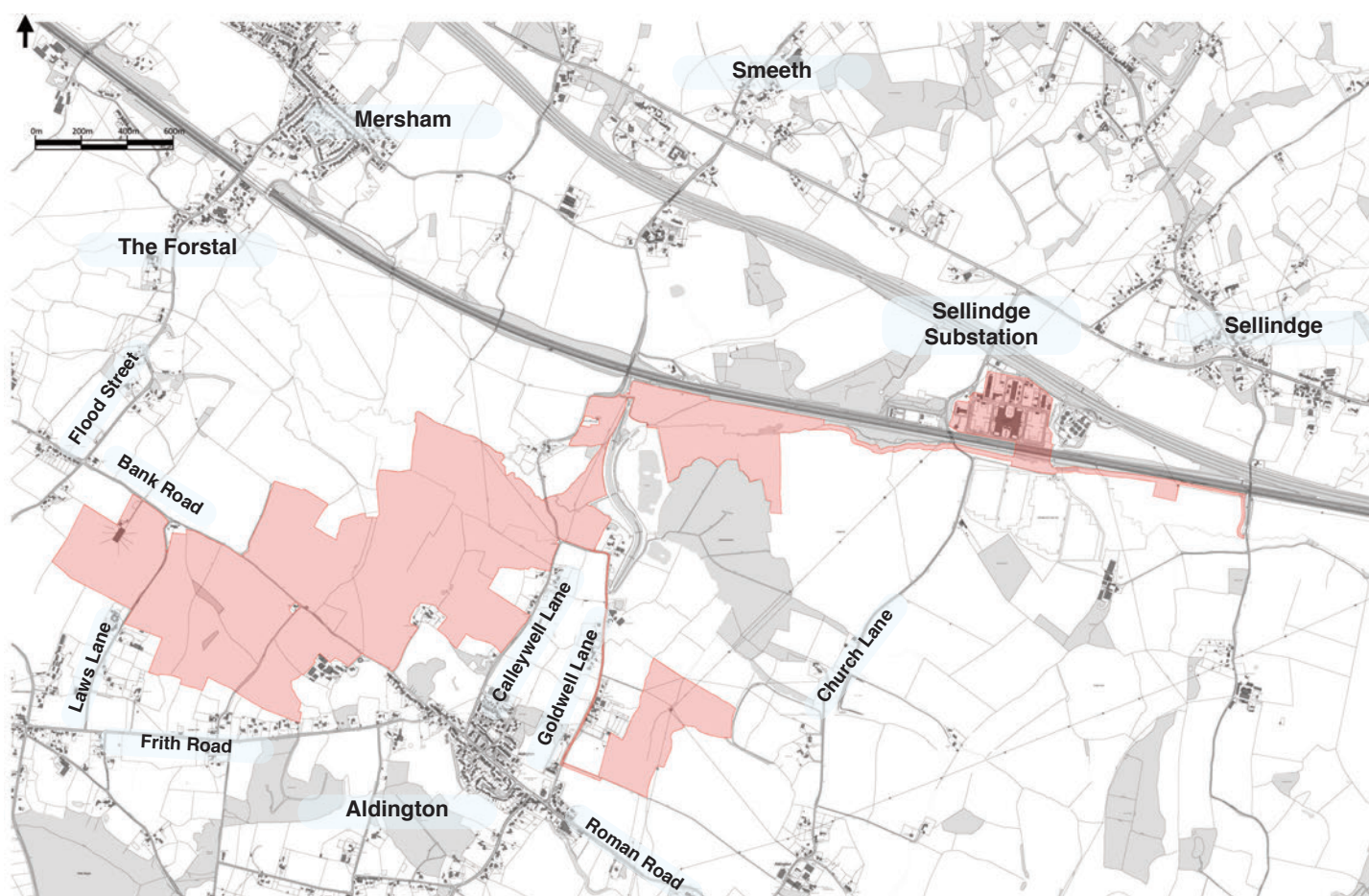
Scale and Need

The Climate Change Act 2008 requires the Secretary of State to ensure that the net carbon account for the year 2050 is at least 100% lower than the 1990 baseline in the UK (known as net zero). This is the overarching carbon reduction target for the Government.

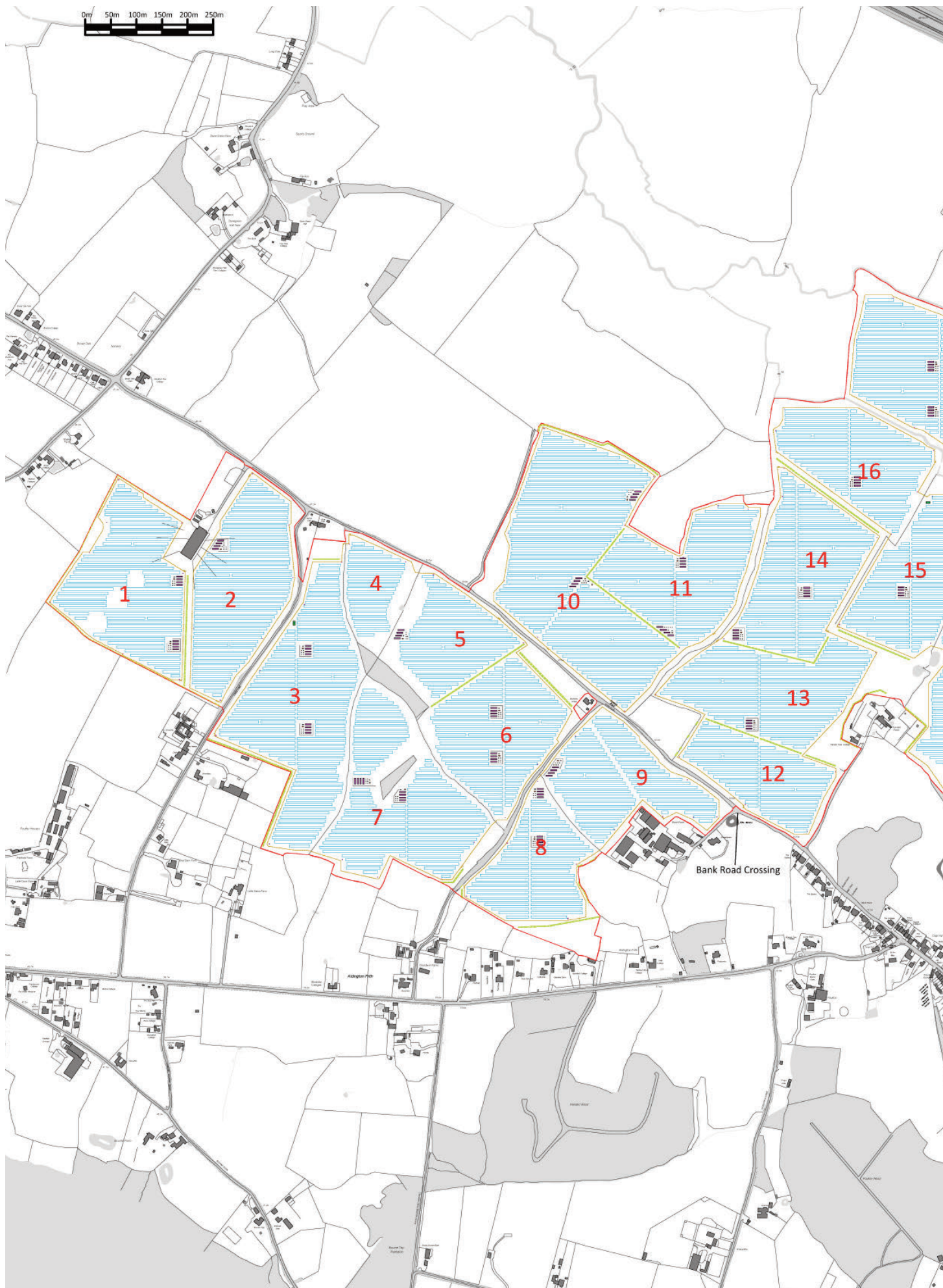
In October 2021, the Government published a report entitled 'Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener'. One of the key policies in this report is for the UK to be powered entirely by clean electricity by 2035, which would also help ensure UK security of electricity supply and result in a reduction in energy costs.

In March 2023, the Government published for consultation the updated draft National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) ("Draft NPS EN-3"). This explains that there is an urgent need for new renewable electricity generating capacity to meet our energy objectives. It goes on to explain that the Government has committed to sustained growth in solar capacity to ensure that we are on a pathway that allows us to meet net zero emissions and states that solar is a key part of the Government's strategy for low-cost decarbonisation of the energy sector. Draft NPS EN-3 states that solar farms are one of the most established renewable electricity technologies in the UK and the cheapest form of electricity generation.

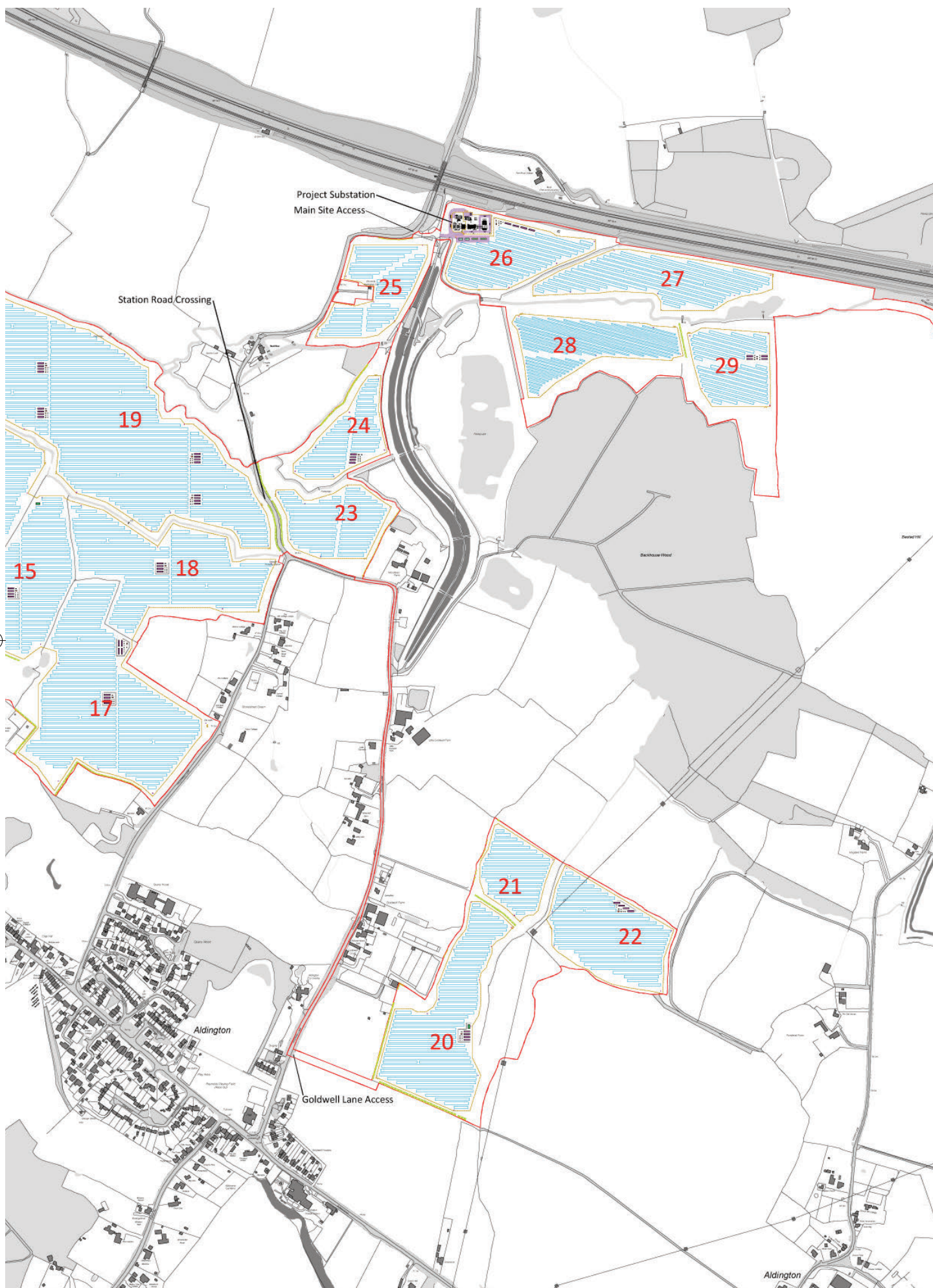
The Applicant has accepted a grid connection agreement to connect to Sellindge Substation which allows a maximum export and import of 99.9MW to the national grid. To ensure the grid connection is feasible, the Project is located close to the Sellindge Substation. There are no brownfield sites of sufficient scale within the Ashford Borough that could accommodate the Project.



Illustrative Proposed Development Layout



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Benefits

The Project is expected to deliver a number of important benefits. These are summarised as follows:

- It will make a meaningful contribution to the UK's legally binding net zero commitment;
- It will provide an additional source of domestic energy security that is not impacted by gas prices;
- It will displace the generation of electricity from other conventional power sources, including fossil-fuel reliant sources, resulting in a saving of approximately 34,500 tonnes of carbon per year;
- It will result in a biodiversity net gain of more than 100%, significantly above the 10% national biodiversity net gain target or the 20% Kent County target;
- It will provide for significant additional tree planting;
- It will result in a reduction in nitrate emissions to the East Stour river; and
- It will provide a community benefit fund to be used locally for social and environmental projects.



Community Benefit Fund

The Applicant has committed to provide a Community Benefit Fund, which is intended to help fund local social or environmental initiatives. These initiatives are separate to any mitigation or compensation that will form part of the Application – they are solely for the benefit of the local community.

It is important that the Community Benefit Fund is secured for the direct benefit of, and easily and fairly accessible to, the local groups and residents likely to experience the most change related to the Project. As such, the following principles are proposed to govern the Fund and the activities and projects supported by it:

- Community funding applications should be considered by an independent and

experienced not-for-profit body that would have a representative panel to award grants;

- The award committee would include elected local residents and representatives of bodies such as local authorities and interest groups, as well as the Applicant/contractor. The committee could be chaired by a locally-elected body; and
- Local community groups and not-for-profit organisations would be invited to bid for funding on a bi-annual basis, with awards informed by feedback from local residents.

Once the Project is operational the Applicant will provide a payment of up to £40,000 per annum (index-linked) to be awarded in the form of grants. Grants could be up to £10,000 per project (by exception) – our experience suggests that larger grants are less likely to be taken up, but there could be a separate pot for multi-year, larger funds where there is a strong business case.

The following principles for criteria of applications for funding represents industry-standard approaches to ensure independence and ties to the affected communities:

- Applicants should be a registered charity, voluntary organisation, social enterprise or public body;
- Proposals should not obviate or duplicate mitigation or compensation measures secured by the DCO or within any other legal agreement related to the Project;
- The Community Benefit Fund should not be used to fund services or projects that are the statutory duty of an organisation to provide as part of their usual operation;
- Proposals should not be inconsistent with Local Plans including Neighbourhood Plans;
- Proposals may complement or enhance physical works undertaken as part of Project;
- Proposals must be deliverable and a timescale for their delivery agreed; and
- Proposals must accord with the Equality Act 2010.

Environmental Impact Assessment

We are committed to making the local environment better than before the Project was built and operated.

We believe this scheme represents an opportunity to significantly improve the local habitat, and the Project will be supported by a long-term landscape and ecological management plan to ensure this is achieved.

We are required to carry out an environmental impact assessment ("EIA") of our proposals as part of the planning process. The preliminary outcomes from the EIA have informed the site design and content of this consultation.

On 30 May 2022, we received the formal EIA Scoping Opinion from the Planning Inspectorate ("PINS"). This confirmed the scope of work that should be included in our EIA and that should be reported in the comprehensive Environmental Statement that will accompany our Application.

In addition to this, we have considered the feedback we received through the non-statutory and statutory consultation undertaken in 2022 and have continued to engage with local authorities and other regulatory bodies, such as Natural England and the Environment Agency, on our approach to the EIA.

The topics in our EIA include:

- Cultural heritage
- Landscape and views
- Biodiversity
- Water environment
- Land contamination
- Socio-economics
- Traffic and access
- Noise
- Climate change
- Cumulative effects



Summary of effects

We have identified some potential effects as part of our EIA. A summary of the effects for each EIA topic is set out below. For further information and conclusions on residual effects please refer to the

Non-Technical Summary of the PEIR Addendum that has been published to support this statutory consultation. More detailed information can be found in the topic-specific chapters of the PEIR, as updated by the PEIR Addendum.

As a general rule for the purposes of the EIA assessment, major and moderate effects are considered to be significant, whilst minor and negligible effects are considered to be not significant. Effects are considered on a pre and post mitigation basis, with the post mitigation effect being the residual effect of the Project.

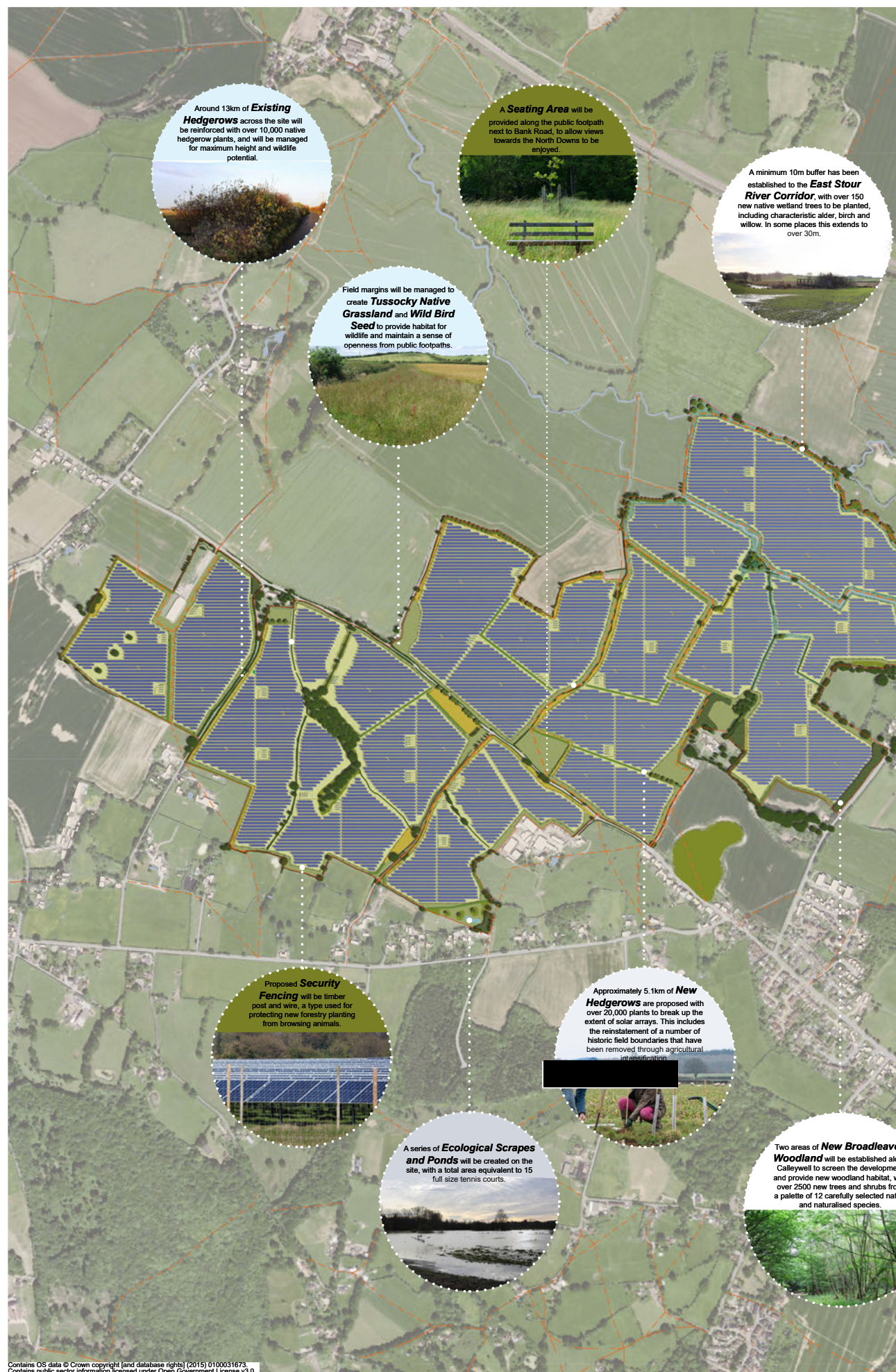
Cultural heritage

During the construction phase, prior to the consideration of mitigation, there are likely to be potential slight adverse effects on archaeological remains within the Project boundary and slight adverse effects on the historic landscape character of the area. During the operational phase, prior to the consideration of mitigation, there are likely to be slight adverse to moderate adverse effects on the setting of designated heritage assets nearby. During the decommissioning phase, there are likely to be neutral effects on the setting of designated heritage assets nearby. We have also identified a likely slight beneficial effect on historic field boundaries through the reinstatement of hedgerows during the construction phase and a likely slight beneficial effect from reinstatement of the historic landscape character during the decommissioning phase.

Mitigation during construction will include a programme of archaeological works and the use of native species for the reinstatement of hedgerows. Mitigation for the operational phase includes planting hedgerows to screen views and to minimise the potential for glint from the solar panels. No additional mitigation is required during decommissioning.

Following the implementation of mitigation, the residual effects range from slight adverse to slight beneficial, which is considered to be not significant in EIA terms.

Illustrative Landscape Masterplan



Please refer to the Book of Plans to view a larger-scale version of the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan



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Landscape and views

Prior to the consideration of mitigation, we have identified the potential for significant landscape and visual effects in EIA terms. However, mitigation to minimise adverse effects has been considered as part of the design of the Project and includes measures such as appropriate planting. Beneficial effects have also been identified, in the form of establishing new native hedgerows to reinstate historic landscape character and to encourage new habitat connectivity. The landscape buffers to the East Stour will also enhance biodiversity, and new planting across the Project will encourage new habitat establishment and resilience.

Best practice measures will be undertaken during the construction and decommissioning of the Project, and will be secured through the DCO. These will include the protection of existing vegetation on-site, limiting hours of working, ensuring that all unloading/loading of materials takes place within the Project boundary, and cleaning of construction vehicles regularly.

During operation, mitigation comprises the maintenance and management of the comprehensive landscape strategy, also to be secured through the DCO. This landscape strategy includes larger buffers to residential properties and additional planting, which we have developed following previous consultation feedback.

Taking that mitigation into account, the effects during construction and decommissioning will only relate to visual receptors and are considered to be of moderate adverse significance; operational effects on features of the landscape will be of moderate beneficial significance, effects on landscape character will be of moderate to minor adverse significance and effects on visual receptors will be of moderate to minor adverse significance. However establishment of new landscape features will result in a considerable improvement through the operational lifetime of the Project through enhanced management and reinforcement of existing hedgerows, new habitat planting for the East Stour River and new shrub planting for woodland margins.

Biodiversity

To minimise construction phase impacts, mitigation includes the tankering of foul water to a location beyond the Stour River catchment, and the implementation of protection and pollution prevention measures outlined in a Construction Environmental Management Plan ("CEMP") to avoid any impact on the Stodmarsh site. Suitable protection zones will be set up around veteran trees that are to be retained, the adjacent Backhouse Wood ancient woodland, and the East Stour River within which no construction activities will be undertaken.

During construction residual effects include a local (significant) adverse effect from the loss of habitat for yellowhammer, skylark and brown hare during construction. All other construction stage effects are not considered significant or are yet to be confirmed (at the ES stage).

Operational phase mitigation also includes tankering of foul water to a location beyond the Stour River Catchment (if required to avoid impacts on the Stodmarsh site), as well as the creation of new habitats adjacent to Backhouse Wood and the East Stour River, the enhancement of existing habitats on-Site and the design, implementation and monitoring of appropriate habitat management.

Operational residual effects include local (significant) beneficial effects on the Backhouse Wood LWS and ancient woodland, notable river habitats, ponds and hedgerows, invertebrate species, the habitat expansion and enhancement for great crested newt, common toad, reptiles, breeding birds (including yellowhammer), wintering birds (including yellowhammer), hazel dormouse, badger, otter, bats, hedgehog, harvest mouse and brown hare. There would be a local (significant) adverse effect arising from the sustained depletion of yellowhammer food and habitat, and a local adverse effect on the elevated predation risk on skylarks. All other effects would be not significant.

The operational effects on skylark and brown hare were reported in the PEIR as local adverse



(significant). The Project now includes additional foraging habitat and other habitat enhancement measures.

Decommissioning phase mitigation, such as measures to prevent and control the spread of invasive species during works, and following good practice lighting guidelines, will be included in the Outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan ("DEMP").

Residual effects during decommissioning are either negligible adverse and not significant, or to be confirmed in the ES, following surveys and assessments.

Water environment

Prior to the consideration of mitigation, we identified potential negligible adverse effects (not significant) arising from change to the hydrological and hydrogeological regime and potential moderate adverse effects (significant) on degradation to water quality affecting surface water and groundwater receptors.

Mitigation incorporated into the design of the Project includes standoff distances between the Project and the East Stour River, ponds, lakes and drains. Additional mitigation during construction includes compliance with the CEMP, which will put in place good working practices such as minimising disruption to watercourses, sediment capture, secure storing of all fuels, oils and polluting substances, and pollution incident response plans.

Operational mitigation includes a surface water drainage system that accounts for climate change, and that will maintain existing greenfield rates of surface water runoff. Where there is a risk of pollution from maintenance activities, vehicles and plant will be required to carry a spill kit. Measures for the decommissioning stage will be controlled through the DEMP.

Following the implementation of mitigation, the residual effects are expected to be minor adverse / negligible neutral (not significant) during all phases.

Land contamination

Prior to the consideration of mitigation, we identified potential adverse effects during

construction, operation and decommissioning on workers (minor adverse effect), and potential impacts on the East Stour River due to contaminants from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Project (minor adverse effect – not significant).

Mitigation measures include the CEMP for best practice working measures, minimisation of dust generation by damping down working areas and machinery, and the storage of fuel, oil and chemicals within a secure bunded area or secondary containment. These measures will be carried through to the operational phase where beneficial. Mitigation during the decommissioning phases will be controlled through the outline DEMP.

Following the implementation of mitigation, the residual effects are expected to be minor adverse (not significant).

Socio-economics

Prior to the consideration of mitigation, we identified potential moderate to negligible adverse (significant to not significant) noise and visual effects on local amenity as well as moderate adverse (significant) effects on the PRoW network during construction, operation and decommissioning. The construction and decommissioning phases of the Project will also have a minor beneficial (not significant) effect of direct construction job creation (an average of 130 jobs, with a peak of 199 jobs), further indirect supply chain job creation (52-80 jobs), an economic contribution of between £8.4m and £12.9m, and a moderate beneficial (significant) effect on workforce expenditure in the local area. During the operational phase, the effects of the Project's contribution towards renewable energy generation will have a minor to major beneficial effect (not significant to significant).

For construction, mitigation will be provided by the CEMP and by a Construction Traffic Management Plan ("CTMP") and for decommissioning, mitigation will be provided by the DEMP and by a Decommissioning Traffic Management Plan ("DTMP"). For the operational phase, a Landscape Ecological Management Plan ("LEMP") will be implemented to manage the growth and maintenance of planting. We are

working with Kent County Council to identify areas where improvements can be made as part of the Project to offset any impacts on existing PRowWs.

Following mitigation, residual effects remain for visual amenity and on the PRow network but these will be minor adverse to negligible (not significant). Residual effects also remain for workforce expenditure but this is a beneficial effect which does not require mitigation. There are also residual beneficial residual effects for job creation, economic contribution and noise amenity.

Traffic and access

Prior to the consideration of mitigation, we identified potential negligible to minor adverse (not significant) effects on severance, driver delay, pedestrian delay and amenity, fear and intimidation, accidents and safety, and hazardous/dangerous and abnormal-sized loads at the construction stage.

Mitigation measures include the CTMP, which will ensure construction phase effects are avoided where possible and minimised thereafter. Measures in the outline CTMP to reduce the impact of construction traffic on the local highway network include controlling hours of site operation/access, provision of wheel washing facilities, minibus collection and drop-off arrangements and parking strategies for construction workers. Construction traffic is planned for outside of peak hours to minimise impacts in terms of traffic flow volume and highway network capacity.

A DTMP will be secured by the DCO to ensure measures are implemented at the decommissioning phase.

Following the implementation of mitigation, the residual effects that remain from construction traffic impacts will have a negligible adverse effect. The identified effects are only temporary in nature and will not last longer than 12 months.

Noise

Prior to the consideration of mitigation, we identified potential for up to moderate adverse

(significant) noise effects from construction and decommissioning traffic noise on the road network, up to minor adverse (not significant) effects from on-site construction and decommissioning, negligible (not significant) effects on PRow users from the construction and decommissioning phases and up to minor adverse (not significant) effects from plant noise during operation.

Mitigation measures during the construction phase will be controlled by the CEMP, including regular maintenance of machinery to control noise and vibration and siting of activities to avoid noise-sensitive locations. Localised noise barriers will be installed at the outset of development to shield noise-sensitive receptors as far as reasonably possible. These measures will be carried through to the operation phase where beneficial. Mitigation for the decommissioning phase will be controlled by the DEMP.

Following mitigation the residual effects from the construction, operation and decommissioning phases will be minor adverse to negligible (not significant).

Climate change

Prior to the consideration of mitigation, carbon emissions arising from construction and decommissioning vehicles are anticipated to have a minor to moderate adverse (not significant to significant) effect locally. We anticipate effects from climate change adaptation, including minor beneficial (not significant) effects from flood risk mitigation and drainage, negligible to minor beneficial (not significant) effects from cloud cover, and



negligible (not significant) effects on biodiversity and noise. Negligible effects are anticipated from climate change on the Project itself.

The generation of electricity from the Project will displace the generation of fossil fuel electricity generation. A carbon saving of 1,380,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent is predicted over the Project's lifespan, in keeping with the trajectory to net zero by 2050, resulting in a minor to major beneficial (not significant to significant) effect at a national level.

The outline CEMP and CTMP submitted alongside the Application will provide for measures to minimise vehicle movements and emissions. The CTMP will include measures for on-site delivery consolidation and promotion of the most sustainable transport methods for construction workers to access the site.

Mitigation at the operational stage will include a LEMP to detail habitat creation, enhancement and mitigation measures. Ecological monitoring will also be undertaken as part of the Ecological Mitigation and Enhancement Strategy submitted with the DCO. The DTMP will control traffic movements for the decommissioning phase.

Following mitigation, no significant residual effects are expected during the construction and decommissioning phases for construction vehicle emissions. Residual effects as a result of biodiversity enhancements will offer resilience, with no significant adverse effects expected. The Project will result in a major beneficial effect in offsetting carbon emissions through the generation of renewable electricity.

Cumulative effects

Significant residual cumulative effects in EIA terms have been identified for landscape and views (effects on receptors during construction and decommissioning, effects on landscape character and visual receptors during operation); biodiversity (construction effects on the loss of habitat for yellowhammer and skylark, operational effects on the sustained depletion of local food and habitat resource for yellowhammer and elevated predation risk for skylark); socioeconomics (construction effects on workforce expenditure, operational effects on

the contribution towards renewable energy generation, decommissioning effects on workforce expenditure); and climate change (operational effects resulting from the provision of renewable energy).

Construction, operation and decommissioning

Construction

A full description of the anticipated construction works is set out in Chapter 5 of the PEIR Addendum which forms part of this statutory consultation.

If the scheme were to receive consent, we anticipate that the total construction period would last approximately 12 months, including 3 months of site preparation.

We will work to a series of well-established principles in building the Project. Where possible, we will look to use existing infrastructure to access the site, minimise use of new materials on-site, and phase construction to reduce impacts on the wider road network.

Early in the construction period, we will establish the main site entrance, internal roads for moving around the site, construction compounds and security fencing. This will help us reduce the impact of our work on the wider area.

We expect to use the following techniques while building the scheme:

- Enabling site works: we will provide landscape planting to allow screening to establish during construction. We will also do some minor site levelling and vegetation clearance where required. We will establish perimeter fencing, lay out construction compounds and install internal access roads. At this point construction materials and equipment will start to be delivered.
- PV arrays: the mounting structures for the PV panels will be piled into the ground in some locations, but if not possible an alternative mounting solution will be used.
- Inverter stations, on-site substations and energy storage: inverter stations, on-site substations and energy storage infrastructure

will be mounted on small foundations within the Project site area.

- Cabling: we will bury cables underground. We will install the cables by digging a trench, laying the cables in sections and then covering them. We may in some instances use a horizontal directional drilling technique, where there are constraints at ground level.
- Project substation: the main Project substation will require foundations and works to install the required cabling and equipment.

Construction management

We expect to build the Project in phases which should mean that we will not be working across the whole site for the entire construction period.

There will be vehicles travelling to and from the site while we are building the scheme, which will vary day to day. These will access the site using an entrance from Station Road, where the main site construction compound will be located. We will build the majority of the Project using an internal access track, meaning we will not need to rely on public roads. The only exception to this will be the access to the southern section which will be via Goldwell Lane. We will need to provide construction areas within the site for welfare and storage but these will be temporary.

Construction activities will be carried out during the core hours of 08:00 – 18:00 on weekdays and 08:00 – 13:00 on Saturdays. There will be no construction activities on Sundays or Bank Holidays. Start-up and shut-down works will be undertaken one hour before and after normal working hours including: arrival and departure of workforce on-site; deliveries and unloading; site inspections, plant maintenance and safety checks; and site clean-up.

These hours will be secured through the CEMP/CTMP and will be strictly adhered to with the exception of emergency works, works that are necessary to comply with safety requirements or works that are unavoidable and in line with best practicable means. Approval from Ashford Borough Council will be obtained for construction works that need to be undertaken outside of the core hours defined

above. Typically, works that may need to be undertaken out of hours will be for the delivery and removal of an abnormal load.

The number of workers on site at any one point will vary during construction. Further details are provided in Chapter 5 of the PEIR Addendum.

Key measures

We recognise the potential impact of construction on our neighbours and will put in place plans designed to ensure potential impacts are managed and properly communicated.

To aid this, we will include an outline CEMP and CTMP with our Application. These will set out the principles, controls, and measures we will use to manage and mitigate potential environmental impacts during construction.

Measures we will put in place during construction include:

- Restricting HGV movements to defined routes, avoiding HGV movements during certain times of the day and implementing a delivery management system for HGV deliveries;
- Implementing temporary traffic management at the Station Road and Roman Road crossings, and along Goldwell Lane to ensure impacts on local users/residents are minimised;
- Providing clear signage for construction traffic. We will also encourage local construction staff to make use of a staff minibus, to reduce single occupancy car trips, and provide on-site car parking;
- Where PRoW may need to be diverted, or where we need to make sure the local network remains safe and convenient for public use, we will provide temporary signage for users and implement a 5mph speed limit for construction and delivery vehicles at the site access, along the shared section with AE474 and at the haul road crossing points;
- Implementing best practice construction measures to minimise noise, vibration, dust and construction lighting impacts;
- Limiting removal of existing vegetation – the Project requires very limited vegetation

removal, and we are not proposing to remove or affect any veteran trees or ancient woodland. We will put protection zones in place around the trees and hedgerows that are to be retained; and

- A community liaison manager will be appointed as a direct point of contact for any concerns or complaints.

Operations and Maintenance

The Applicant is committed to operating the Project in a responsible way. Once the Project is operational, activity across the site will be minimal and largely restricted to monitoring, maintenance and the management of the visual and ecological mitigation features.

Decommissioning

Solar farms typically have a design lifespan of 40 years. The Project has been designed so that once it has reached the end of its lifespan it can be dismantled. A decommissioning plan will be prepared in advance of decommissioning activities beginning. It will set out how the Project components could be processed to maximise material recovery but as recycling technology is expected to advance over the lifetime of the Project it is anticipated that we will be able to provide more detail at a later stage of the Project's lifespan.

Jobs and skills

The Project will create jobs and skills, as well as creating wider economic benefits. We are committed to ensuring that these advantages are felt in the local community. Overall, we expect to create an average of 130 new jobs in the construction and decommissioning phases and between 182 and 279 direct and indirect roles once the Project is operational.

The majority of the manufacturing process of the panels, batteries and related components is located overseas, but we will look to source other materials from the UK and encourage the use of domestic suppliers and of domestic skills where possible.

Health and safety

We recognise that there is interest in how health and safety will be managed. We have already engaged with the Health and Safety Executive and the Kent Fire and Rescue Service on the design of the Project, and on the safe construction and operation of the energy storage units. This is to ensure that the management of health and safety is built in from the start.

We will put in place appropriate training and codes of conduct for all staff working at the site. This will include an induction covering health and safety and how to behave on site, which all staff must complete before beginning work.



Planning and Consultation

Planning process

The Project is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project ("NSIP") pursuant to the Planning Act 2008 because its generating capacity will be more than 50MW.

Unlike applications for planning permission, which are considered by the relevant local planning authority, a DCO application is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate ("PINS"). PINS manages the application process on behalf of the Secretary of State. In this case, the relevant Government Department is the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero ("ESNZ"). The final decision on the Application will be made by the Secretary of State for ESNZ.

The Planning Act 2008 requires consultation with the local community before we submit our Application.

We are carrying out this consultation in accordance with this requirement – it is therefore referred to as a 'statutory consultation'.

You can find out more about the DCO process at PINS' website:

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>

PINS has also published guidance on the process for members of the public. This can be viewed online at:

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/advice-notes/advice-note-eight-overview-of-the-nationally-significant-infrastructure-planning-process-for-members-of-the-public-and-others/>

2023 statutory consultation

We have developed our approach to this consultation through engagement with Ashford Borough Council, Folkestone & Hythe District Council and Kent County Council.

Consultation on the Project will take place from **9:00am on 12 June 2023 until 11:59pm on 17 July 2023**.

The following documents have been prepared to support the consultation:

- this Consultation Booklet;
- a Book of Plans, including (amongst other things) a Site Location Plan and Landscape Masterplan;

- the PEIR (originally published as part of the statutory consultation that took place in October and November 2022);
- the PEIR Addendum (which updates the PEIR and includes an updated non-technical summary);
- a 'You said, we did' document outlining responses to feedback received to date;
- a consultation leaflet; and
- the exhibition boards that will be used at the local information events listed below.

These documents, together with our Statement of Community Consultation, consultation leaflets/newsletters and notices may be inspected free of charge from 12 June 2023 until 17 July 2023 (excluding bank holidays) at the deposit locations listed below.

- Ashford Library, Ashford Gateway Plus, Church Road, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1AS
- Ashford Borough Council Offices, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford TN23 1PL (Monday to Friday: 9am to 4pm; Saturday and Sunday: closed)
- Folkestone and Hythe Council Offices, Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone CT20 2QY (Monday to Friday: 10am to 4pm; Saturday and Sunday: closed)
- Kent County Council, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ (Monday to Friday: 8am to 5pm; Saturday and Sunday: closed) - by appointment only
- New Romney Library, 82 High Street, New Romney, TN28 8AU
- Lyminge Library, Station Road, Lyminge, CT18 8HS
- Hythe Library, 1 Stade Street, Hythe, CT21 6BQ

You can check the opening hours for each library on the Kent County Council website at <https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/libraries/visiting-a-library>

Electronic copies of the consultation documents will also be available to inspect free of charge from 9:00am on 12 June 2023 until at least 11:59pm on 17 July 2023 on the Applicant's website at www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk under the tab labelled 'Consultation' then 'Statutory Consultation (Summer 2023)'.

Local information events

The Applicant will host a series of local information events as part of the statutory consultation process. The local information events will provide the opportunity to view the consultation documents for the Project and provide feedback on the proposals.

The details of the events are as follows:

Sellindge Village Hall
Friday 23 June 2023, 2pm to 6pm
Mersham Village Hall
Saturday 24 June 2023, 11am to 3pm
Aldington Village Hall
Monday 26 June 2023, 3pm to 7pm
Bilsington Village Hall
Tuesday 27 June 2023, 1pm to 5pm

A full set of consultation documents can also be provided on a USB memory stick upon request, free of charge. Hard copies of the consultation documents can be obtained upon request at a cost of £500 per copy. Requests for large print, audio or braille versions of the consultation documents will be considered on a case-by-case basis and appropriate charges may apply.

Requests for documents should be made to the Applicant by telephone on 08081 698335 (free of charge) or by email at info@stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk. Reasonable postage charges may apply.

How to respond

Any person may respond to the consultation. Comments must be received by the Applicant by **no later than 11:59pm on Monday 17 July 2023**. When providing your comments please include your name and address, or if you would prefer your comments to be anonymous your postcode only, and confirm the nature of your interest in the Project.

Please submit any comments by:

- Completing an online feedback form on the Applicant's website at www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk/consultation
- Completing a hard copy feedback form (available at the local information events, the aforementioned deposit locations and upon request to the Applicant using the contact

details below) and either handing it to the Project team at the local information event or submitting it by post (free of charge; no stamp required) to FREEPOST Stonestreet Green Solar.

- Submitting comments by email to info@stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk, by post (free of charge; no stamp required) to **FREEPOST Stonestreet Green Solar** or by telephone (free of charge) at **08081 698335**.

The Applicant will have regard to all responses received by the above deadline when finalising the proposals and submitting the Application. A Consultation Report will be submitted as part of the Application that will provide the details of the pre-application consultation undertaken by the Applicant, summarise any relevant responses received by the Applicant and explain the account taken by the Applicant of those relevant responses.

The Applicant may be required to submit copies of the consultation responses to the Planning Inspectorate and if so the Applicant will comply with all applicable data protection legislation.

Further details in relation to the Project can be found on the Applicant's website at www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk

For further information or queries about the consultation, the consultation documents or the Project, please contact the Project team by calling 08081 698335 (free of charge); writing to FREEPOST Stonestreet Green Solar (free of charge; no stamp required); or emailing info@stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk



Consultation Questions

We are seeking your views on the following questions as part of the consultation:

- 1) Do you have any comments on our proposals for the solar energy generation element of the scheme?**
- 2) Do you have any comments on our proposals for the energy storage element of the scheme?**
- 3) Do you have any comments on our proposals for connecting to the national electricity system?**
- 4) Do you have any comments on the potential environmental impacts and our proposals for enhancements and mitigation during:**
 - **The construction of Stonestreet Green Solar Farm?**
 - **The operation of Stonestreet Green Solar Farm?**
 - **The decommissioning of Stonestreet Green Solar Farm?**
- 5) Do you have any comments on the contribution that the scheme will make to the local community?**
- 6) Do you have any comments on the landscape strategy and the proposed biodiversity enhancements set out in the Consultation Booklet, the PEIR and PEIR Addendum?**
- 7) Do you have any comments on the changes made to the Project following the previous statutory consultation in 2022?**
- 8) Do you have any comments on the information presented in our Preliminary Environmental Information Report (“PEIR”) as updated by our PEIR Addendum?**
- 9) Do you have any comments on potential projects that the Community Benefit Fund could contribute towards?**
- 10) Do you have any further comments?**

As part of our previous statutory consultation in 2022, we asked questions around the use of solar energy generation in the UK. A data error in our online consultation form meant that answers to the following question were not recorded, and we would be grateful for your response as part of this 2023 statutory consultation:

Please explain why you support/do not support the use of solar energy as part of the UK energy mix?

Data privacy

We are committed to safeguarding the personal information collected from this consultation and we recognise our data protection obligations. By providing your feedback and any contact details, you are consenting to the use of this data in connection with the Stonestreet Green Solar project. Your data will be stored in a safe and secure place and will be deleted when no longer required.

Your data and any information provided to us will be used for the following purposes only:

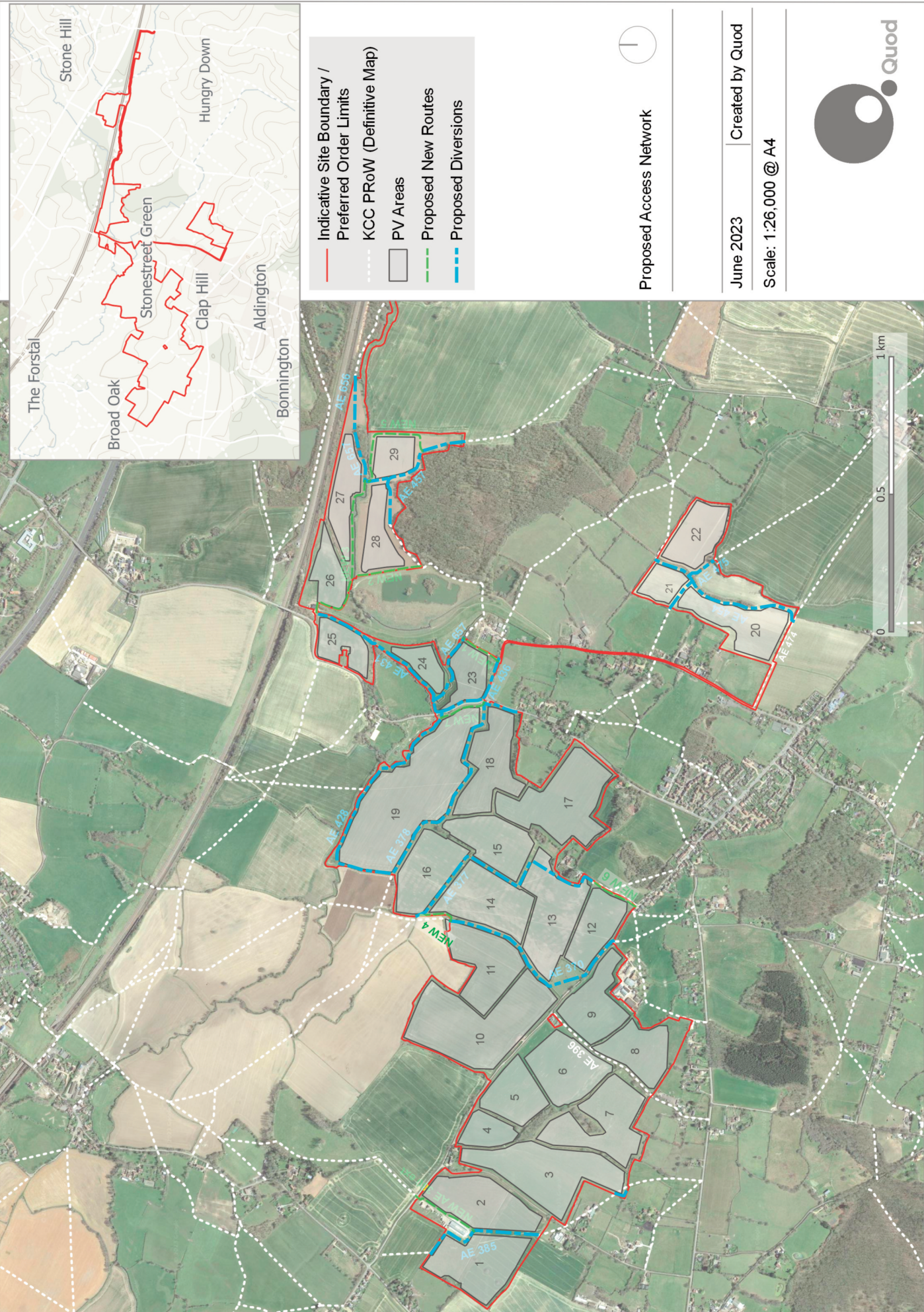
- Analyse your feedback to the consultation
- Respond to specific questions or enquiries submitted during the consultation
- Send you updates about the project (where you provide us with your contact details)
- Keep up to date records of our communications with consultees
- Develop a Consultation Report about this consultation that will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate and other relevant planning bodies and will be a publicly available document (individuals will not be named in the report)

Any information you include in this form will be handled and used by (or made available to) the following recipients to record, analyse and report on the feedback we receive:

- Evolution Power Limited and EPL 001 Limited
- The Planning Inspectorate (which will examine our application for Stonestreet Green Solar)
- The Secretary of State (who will make the decision on our application for Stonestreet Green Solar)
- Our legal advisers
- Consultants working on the Stonestreet Green Solar project

Please refer to our privacy policy at <https://www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk/Privacy+Policy>

Public Rights of Way Layout





Contact details

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like to find out more information about Stonestreet Green Solar or to provide your feedback on the proposals. You can contact our Community Relations Team by using the details below.

Email: info@stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk

Call our Freephone information line: 08081 698335

Visit our website: www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk

Send us a letter: FREEPOST Stonestreet Green Solar

You can also follow us on Twitter: @SGS_solar





Stonestreet Green Solar

Consultation Report
Appendix G-1: 2023 Statutory Consultation
Information Pack, Part 1

2. Hardcopy Feedback Form



Statutory Consultation Feedback Form June / July 2023

EPL 001 Limited¹ ("EPL 001"), which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Evolution Power Limited, is intending to apply for a Development Consent Order ("DCO") through the Planning Act 2008 process for a renewable energy generating project, together with on-site energy storage, associated infrastructure and an underground cable connection, on land at Aldington, near Ashford in Kent. Details of the project can be found at www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk

Following a round of non-statutory consultation on the initial proposals for the project undertaken during March and April 2022, EPL 001 undertook a round of statutory consultation pursuant to the Planning Act 2008 during October and November 2022 (the "2022 Statutory Consultation").

Since the end of the 2022 Statutory Consultation EPL 001 has been reviewing all of the feedback received to consultation and has made amendments to the proposals. EPL 001 is now intending to carry out a round of statutory consultation (the "2023 Statutory Consultation") on the updated proposals, in advance of submission of a Development Consent Order application for the project.

The purpose of the 2023 Statutory Consultation is to inform statutory consultees, the local community and the general public about the project and to gain feedback on the proposals.

The statutory consultation will begin at 9:00am on Monday 12 June 2023.

The deadline for responses to the consultation to be received by EPL 001 is 11:59pm on Monday 17 July 2023.

Giving your feedback

Please refer to the Consultation Booklet for additional information to help you provide us with your feedback on our proposals.

You may also wish to refer to the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), the PEIR Addendum (which includes an updated non-technical summary), the You Said, We Did document, the Book of Plans, or to the exhibition boards that will be used at local information events for more detailed information.

Electronic copies of all the consultation documents and this feedback form can be found online on the project website until at least 11:59pm on Monday 17 July 2023 at www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk/consultation

You can return this form in one of the following ways:

- Handing it to a member of the project team;
- Posting it to FREEPOST Stonestreet Green Solar (free of charge, no stamp required);
- Or, you can complete the form online via the project website:
www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk/consultation

Alternatively, you can provide comments by email to info@stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk, by post (free of charge; no stamp required) to **FREEPOST Stonestreet Green Solar** or by telephone (free of charge) at **08081 698335**.

EPL 001 will have regard to all responses received by the above deadline before finalising the proposals and submitting the DCO application later in 2023. EPL 001 may be required to submit copies of the consultation responses to the Planning Inspectorate and if so it will comply with all applicable data protection legislation.

¹Company name: EPL 001 Limited; company number: 12444050; registered office address: 2nd Floor, Regis House, 45 King William Street, London, United Kingdom, EC4R 9AN; registered in England and Wales.

About you

Name: _____

Organisation (if any): _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

If you would prefer your response to be anonymous, please provide your postcode only.

We are seeking your views on the following questions as part of the consultation:

1. Do you have any comments on our proposals for the solar energy generation element of the scheme?

2. Do you have any comments on our proposals for the energy storage element of the scheme?

3. Do you have any comments on our proposals for connecting to the national electricity system?

4. Do you have any comments on the potential environmental impacts and our proposals for enhancements and mitigation during:
- The construction of Stonestreet Green Solar Farm?
 - The operation of Stonestreet Green Solar Farm?
 - The decommissioning of Stonestreet Green Solar Farm?

[illegible]

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

7. Do you have any comments on the changes made to the project following the previous statutory consultation in 2022?

[illegible]

8. Do you have any comments on the information presented in our Preliminary Environmental Information Report ("PEIR") as updated by our PEIR Addendum?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with ten horizontal green dashed lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a guide for handwriting practice. There is no text or other markings on the paper.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with ten horizontal green dashed lines, resembling notebook paper. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with ten horizontal green dashed lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a guide for handwriting practice. There is no text or other markings on the paper.

Additional space

Please use the following space to provide any additional comments:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with ten horizontal green dashed lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a guide for handwriting practice. There is no text or other markings on the paper.

As part of our previous statutory consultation in 2022, we asked questions around the use of solar energy generation in the UK.

A data error in our online consultation form meant that answers to the following question were not recorded and we would be grateful for your response as part of this 2023 statutory consultation.

Please explain why you support/do not support the use of solar energy as part of the UK energy mix?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with seven horizontal green dashed lines spaced evenly apart, resembling notebook paper. The lines extend across the entire width of the page.

Thank you for taking the time to provide your feedback, your views on our proposals are important to us.

Please note that the deadline for responses to the consultation to be received by EPL 001 is 11:59pm on Monday 17 July 2023.

Data privacy

We are committed to safeguarding the personal information collected from this consultation and we recognise our data protection obligations. By providing your feedback and any contact details, you are consenting to the use of this data in connection with the Stonestreet Green Solar project. Your data will be stored in a safe and secure place and will be deleted when no longer required.

Your data and any information provided to us will be used for the following purposes only:

- Analyse your feedback to the consultation
- Respond to specific questions or enquiries submitted during the consultation
- Send you updates about the project (where you provide us with your contact details)
- Keep up to date records of our communications with consultees
- Develop a Consultation Report about this consultation that will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate and other relevant planning bodies and will be a publicly available document (individuals will not be named in the report)

Any information you include in this form will be handled and used by (or made available to) the following recipients to record, analyse and report on the feedback we receive:

- Evolution Power Limited and EPL 001 Limited
- The Planning Inspectorate (which will examine our application for Stonestreet Green Solar)
- The Secretary of State (who will make the decision on our application for Stonestreet Green Solar)
- Our legal advisers
- Consultants working on the Stonestreet Green Solar project

Please refer to our privacy policy at <https://www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk/Privacy+Policy>



Stonestreet Green Solar

Consultation Report
Appendix G-1: 2023 Statutory Consultation
Information Pack, Part 1

3. Online Feedback Form



Consultation Feedback Form

EPL 001 Limited ("EPL 001"), which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Evolution Power Limited, is intending to apply for a Development Consent Order ("DCO") through the Planning Act 2008 process for a renewable energy generating project, together with on-site energy storage, associated infrastructure and an underground cable connection, on land at Aldington, near Ashford in Kent. Details of the project can be found at www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk

Following a round of non-statutory consultation on the initial proposals for the project undertaken during March and April 2022, EPL 001 undertook a round of statutory consultation pursuant to the Planning Act 2008 during October and November 2022 (the "2022 Statutory Consultation").

Since the end of the 2022 Statutory Consultation EPL 001 has been reviewing all of the feedback received to consultation and has made amendments to the proposals. EPL 001 is now intending to carry out a round of statutory consultation (the "2023 Statutory Consultation") on the updated proposals, in advance of submission of a Development Consent Order application for the project.

The purpose of the 2023 Statutory Consultation is to inform statutory consultees, the local community and the general public about the project and to gain feedback on the proposals. The statutory consultation will begin at 9:00am on Monday 12 June 2023. The deadline for responses to the consultation to be received by EPL 001 is 11:59pm on Monday 17 July 2023.

Giving your feedback

Please refer to the Consultation Booklet for additional information to help you provide us with your feedback on our proposals.

You may also wish to refer to the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), the PEIR Addendum (which includes an updated non-technical summary), the You Said, We Did document, the Book of Plans, or to the exhibition boards that will be used at local information events for more detailed information. Electronic copies of all the consultation documents and this feedback form can be found online on the project website until at least 11:59pm on Monday 17 July 2023 at www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk/consultation

EPL 001 will have regard to all responses received by the above deadline before finalising the proposals and submitting the DCO application later in 2023. EPL 001 may be required to submit copies of the consultation responses to the Planning Inspectorate and if so it will comply with all applicable data protection legislation

1 ABOUT YOU

Name	<input type="text" value="Enter your full name"/>
Organisation	<input type="text" value="Enter your organisation (if any)"/>
Address	<input type="text" value="Enter your address"/>
Town	<input type="text" value="Enter your town / village"/>
Postcode	<input type="text" value="Enter your postcode"/>
Email	<input type="text" value="Enter your email"/>

Your data will be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act and will not be passed on to any third parties.

If you would prefer your response to be anonymous, please provide your postcode only.

[Continue to Project Feedback](#)

You are here: [Home](#) > [Consultation](#) > [Statutory Consultation Summer 2023](#) > [2023 Feedback Form](#)

EPL 001 Limited
Registered in England and Wales
Company number: 12444050
Registered office address: 2nd Floor,
Regis House, 45 King William Street,
London, United Kingdom, EC4R 9AN

Information

- [About Stonestreet Green Solar](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Consultation and Resources](#)

Legals

- [Terms and Conditions](#)
- [Privacy and Cookie Policy](#)
- [Accessibility Policy](#)

© 2023 EPL 001 Ltd

2 PROJECT FEEDBACK

We are seeking your views on the following questions as part of the consultation:

1) Do you have any comments on our proposals for the solar energy generation element of the scheme?

Please add your comments

2) Do you have any comments on our proposals for the energy storage element of the scheme?

Please add your comments

3) Do you have any comments on our proposals for connecting to the national electricity system?

Please add your comments

4) Do you have any comments on the potential environmental impacts and our proposals for enhancements and mitigation during:

a) The construction of Stonestreet Green Solar Farm?

Please add your comments

b) The operation of Stonestreet Green Solar Farm?

Please add your comments

c) The decommissioning of Stonestreet Green Solar Farm?

Please add your comments

5) Do you have any comments on the contribution that the scheme will make to the local community?

Please add your comments

6) Do you have any comments on the landscape strategy and the proposed biodiversity enhancements set out in the Consultation Booklet, the PEIR and PEIR Addendum?

Please add your comments

7) Do you have any comments on the changes made to the project following the previous statutory consultation in 2022?

Please add your comments

8) Do you have any comments on the information presented in our Preliminary Environmental Information Report ("PEIR) as updated by our PEIR Addendum??

Please add your comments

9) Do you have any comments on potential projects that the Community Benefit Fund could contribute towards?

Please add your comments

10) Do you have any further comments?

Please add your comments

[Go back to Personal Details](#)

[Continue submission](#)



Stonestreet Green Solar

Consultation Report
Appendix G-1: 2023 Statutory Consultation
Information Pack, Part 1

4. You Said We Did Booklet



EPL 001 Limited
STONESTREET GREEN SOLAR

You said, we did
12 June to 17 July 2023



Introduction

The Project

This document has been prepared in connection with the Stonestreet Green Solar project (the 'Project'). EPL 001 Limited¹ (the 'Applicant'), which is a subsidiary of Evolution Power Limited, is carrying out pre-application consultation on the Project in advance of submitting an application (the 'Application') for a Development Consent Order ('DCO') for the Project.

The story so far

Consultation and engagement have been important in the scheme development process. We initially held a five-week non-statutory consultation in spring 2022 followed by a five-week statutory consultation in autumn 2022 (the "2022 Statutory Consultation"). We have also held numerous direct meetings with members of the local community and interested groups and setup a Community Liaison Panel that includes a number of local stakeholders and has met on three occasions to date. The consultation and engagement to date has allowed us to refine and improve our proposals.

Since the 2022 Statutory Consultation we have further developed the Project, including carrying out further environmental surveys and design work to evolve the scheme. The Applicant is therefore carrying out statutory consultation on the updated

Project that will begin at 9am on Monday 12 June 2023 and run for a total of five weeks until 11.59pm on Monday 17 July 2023 ('2023 Statutory Consultation').

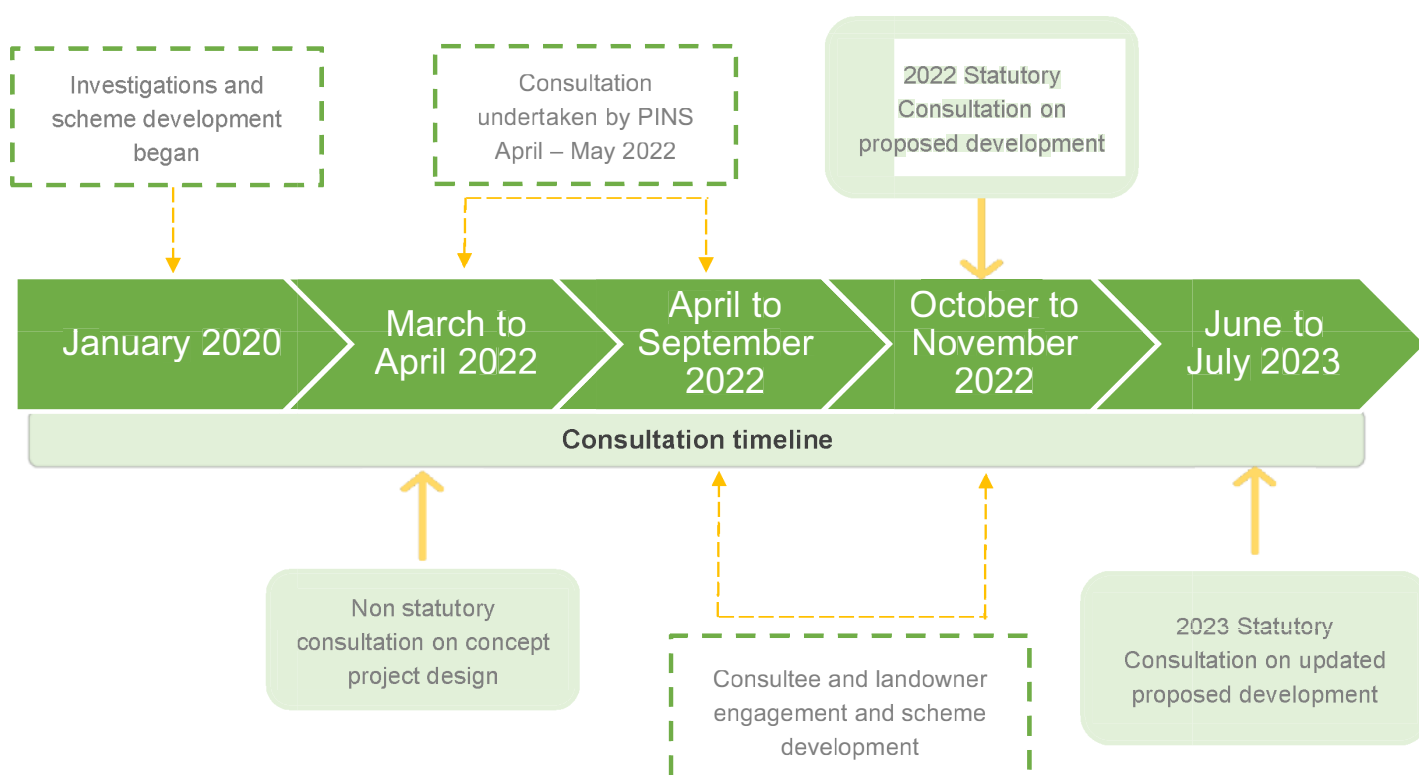
Consultation with the local community has been carried out in accordance with a Statement of Community Consultation ('SoCC'). An initial SoCC was published on the Project website on 22 March 2022 in advance of the non-statutory consultation. That was superseded by an updated SoCC that was published on 28 September 2022 in advance of the 2022 Statutory Consultation. In turn, that updated SoCC was superseded by a further updated SoCC that was published on 24 May 2023 in advance of the 2023 Statutory Consultation. A draft of each SoCC was consulted on with Ashford Borough Council, Folkestone and Hythe District Council and Kent County Council prior to it being finalised. The SoCCs are available on the Project website at www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk.

The diagram below shows the timeline of consultation:

Purpose of this report

This report sets out a summary of the feedback received during the 2022 Statutory Consultation and explains how we have had regard to that feedback.

The feedback received has informed key changes to the Project design.



¹Company name: EPL 001 Limited; company number: 12444050; registered office address: 2nd Floor, Regis House, 45 King William Street, London, United Kingdom, EC4R 9AN; registered in England and Wales.

Overview of the 2022 Statutory Consultation

How we carried out the consultation

The 2022 Statutory Consultation on the proposed development took place from 25 October to 29 November 2022. The consultation sought feedback on the proposed development from the local community, statutory consultees (including local authorities) and the general public.

Activities undertaken in connection with the 2022 Statutory Consultation included:

- Posting leaflets to 2,200 homes and businesses
- Providing copies of the consultation documents for inspection at public buildings and libraries ('Deposit Locations')
- Holding four local information events
- Hosting a public presentation
- Keeping the Project website up to date for the duration of the consultation
- Emailing Parish Councils and other interested consultees information about the Project
- Emailing consultation posters to Parish Councils for them to display on notice boards
- Placing consultation adverts in the local newspaper
- Providing lines of communication to all consultees during the consultation period, including online and hardcopy feedback forms, email, telephone and post
- Updating our Twitter account about the consultation
- Establishing a Community Liaison Panel for the Project to facilitate communication, share information and engage in balanced discussions about the proposed Application
- Writing to statutory consultees about the 2022 Statutory Consultation
- Publicising the 2022 Statutory Consultation in notices published in local and national newspapers and displayed at the Project site.

Consultation materials

The following documents were prepared to explain the 2022 Statutory Consultation process and show the nature and location of the Project:

- Consultation Booklet
- Exhibition Boards
- Preliminary Environmental Information Report ('PEIR') Vol. 1 - Non-Technical Summary
- PEIR Vol. 2 - Main Text
- PEIR Vol. 3 - Appendices

Consultation comments

Responses to the 2022 Statutory Consultation could be provided by:

- Completing an online feedback form on the Project website at www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk/consultation
- Completing a hard copy feedback form (available at the local information events, the Deposit Locations and upon request from the Applicant) and handing it to the Project team at the local information event or submitting it by post to FREEPOST Stonestreet Green Solar
- Sending comments by email to info@stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk, by post to FREEPOST Stonestreet Green Solar or by telephone at 08081 698335

The online feedback form and the hard copy feedback form asked the following questions:

1. Do you support the use of solar energy to generate electricity in the UK?
 - a. Yes / No / Unsure
 - b. Please explain why you support/do not support the use of solar energy as part of the UK energy mix?
2. Are you in favour of the proposals for Stonestreet Green Solar in principle?
 - a. Yes / No / Unsure
 - b. Please explain why you support/do not support the proposals in principle?
3. Do you have any comments on the proposed siting or layout for the solar generation and energy storage scheme?
4. Do you have any comments on the proposals for connecting to the national electricity system via underground cable at Sellindge?
5. Do you have any comments on the assessment of any likely environmental impacts of the proposals with regard to landscape and visual impact and the proposed mitigation to address any such impacts?
6. Do you have any comments on the assessment of any likely environmental impacts of the proposals with regard to water environment, land contamination, socio-economics, cultural heritage, noise, climate change or cumulative impacts and the mitigation measures proposed to address any such impacts?
7. Do you have any comments on the assessment of any likely environmental impacts of the proposals with regard to traffic, transport and construction?

8. Do you have any comments on community benefits that the scheme could contribute to the local community and any suggestions on how a community benefit fund provided by the project could be used within the local area?

9. Do you have any comments on the assessment of any likely environmental impacts of the proposals with regard to ecology, biodiversity and land use and the mitigation measures proposed to address any such impacts?

10. Do you have any comments on the proposed approach to footpaths and Public Rights of Way that could potentially be delivered as part of the project, including redirection within fields, connectivity of the “River Walk” and the proposed off-road cycleway that could become part of a future route between Aldington to Mersham?

11. Do you have any further comments about the proposals for Stonestreet Green Solar?

Have you found this consultation exercise informative?

Any Additional Comments?

Unfortunately, there was an error in the collection of data from the online feedback form. This meant online responses to Question 1b (a question seeking general views on solar as part of the UK energy mix and not a specific question in relation to the Project), were not received. Those referred to below therefore only relate to the hard copy feedback form responses. To correct this error, the same question has been included again in the feedback form for the 2023 Statutory Consultation (and included in the Consultation Booklet published in support of the consultation).

Consultation responses

168 responses were received from the 2022 Statutory Consultation². These responses included hardcopy feedback forms collected at in person local information events or received through the post, online feedback forms and emailed comments sent to info@stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk.

A breakdown of the responses received were as follows:

- 48 feedback forms (online)
- 25 feedback forms (hardcopy)
- 95 responses received via email.

Key themes from your comments

We received a large mixture of comments, with some people supporting the Project and recognising the need for the Project. Some comments related to requests for further information, additional consultation, along with clarifications of the proposals. A summary of the key themes from the 2022 Statutory Consultation is below:

- Need for the Project, including the size / scale of the development
- Suitability of the site for solar
- Consideration of alternatives
- Loss of farmland and impacts to food security
- Impacts to local wildlife and habitats
- Visual, noise and financial impacts to property
- Landscape and visual impacts to and from the nearby villages, when driving into the village and from the Kent Downs Area of Natural Beauty ('AONB')
- Cumulative impacts of the Project
- Changes to Public Right of Ways ('PRoW')
- Traffic disruption to the nearby community and HGV access
- Flooding impacts and considerations of nearby property
- Impacts to nearby historic assets
- Undergrounding of cables
- More and better consultation information

²The Community Information Leaflet (June 2023) noted that more than 170 responses had been received, when in fact the number was 168 responses. This figure has therefore been corrected in the consultation material.

What you said and how we had regard to that

To provide an overview of the different types of consultation comments, this section has been split into the following three parts:

- an overview of feedback form responses and responses received by email;
- a summary of your suggestions and how we had regard to those suggestions; and
- a summary of key themes raised and how we had regard to those key themes.

Overview of responses

Overall, we received 73 feedback forms, 48 of these were received online and 25 were hardcopy. We have highlighted the main responses to each question of the feedback form below and included a more detailed breakdown of the responses in Appendix 1.

Question 1 (a) - Do you support the use of solar energy to generate electricity in the UK (Yes / No / Unsure)?

More than half of respondents said that they supported the use of solar energy to generate electricity in the UK. Some respondents stated that this is subject to solar energy development being in appropriate locations.

Question 1 (b) - Please explain why you support/do not support the use of solar energy as part of the UK energy mix?

As noted above, we are re-asking this question as part of the 2023 Statutory Consultation because there was an error collecting information from the online feedback forms.

The most frequent responses to questions from hardcopy feedback forms were:

- supports solar energy;
- does not support solar energy because of the loss of farmland;
- supports solar energy but not on farmland;
- support solar energy, but on brownfield/industrial/rooftops;
- no comment; and
- does not support solar energy due to the cumulative impacts.

Question 2 (a) - Are you in favour of the proposals for Stonestreet Green Solar in principle? (Yes / No / Unsure)?

More than half of respondents stated that they were not in favour of the proposals for the Project, while 28% of respondents indicated they were in favour of the Project.

Question 2 (b) - Please explain why you support/do not support the proposals in principle?

The most frequent responses to this question were:

- concern about the loss of agricultural land;
- that the proposed scheme is too large;
- that there will be landscape and visual impacts;
- impact to biodiversity, habitat and wildlife; and
- concern about changes and impact to the PRow network.

Other responses included in principle support for the Project and UK needs energy security.

Question 3 – Do you have any comments on the proposed siting or layout for the solar generation and energy storage scheme?

The most frequent responses were:

- that the proposal is too large;
- concern about visual impact, particularly in to the AONB;
- concerns about the loss of valuable agricultural land / food production;
- concerns about the proposals' proximity to property; and
- that alternative sites are available.

Other responses included support for the scheme, energy storage is necessary, the Project is located on an appropriate site and there a few residential properties affected.

Question 4 - Do you have any comments on the proposals for connecting to the national electricity system via underground cable at Sellindge?

The most frequent responses were:

- no comment;
- opposition to the proposal; and
- agree with the underground cable at Sellindge.

Question 5 - Do you have any comments on the assessment of any likely environmental impacts of the proposals with regard to landscape and visual impact and the proposed mitigation to address any such impacts?

The most frequent responses were:

- concerns about landscape and visual impact;
- inadequate mitigation;
- impact to biodiversity, habitat and wildlife; and
- that the proposal is too large.

Other responses included support for Biodiversity Net Gain, comments about improved water quality and support for the proposed mitigation plans.

Question 6 - Do you have any comments on the assessment of any likely environmental impacts of the proposals with regard to water environment, land contamination, socioeconomics, cultural heritage, noise, climate change or cumulative impacts and the mitigation measures proposed to address any such impacts?

The most frequent responses were:

- noise impacts; and
- concerns about flooding, drainage and runoff.

Other responses noted that the site and proposed mitigation is appropriate, along with support for farm traffic to be reduced.

Question 7 - Do you have any comments on the assessment of any likely environmental impacts of the proposals with regard to traffic, transport and construction?

The most frequent responses were:

- traffic and congestion concerns; and
- that roads are too narrow and access to the site will be difficult.

Other responses noted that Laws Lane should not be affected.

Question 8 - Do you have any comments on the assessment of any likely environmental impacts of the proposals with regard to ecology, biodiversity and land use and the mitigation measures proposed to address any such impacts?

The most frequent responses were:

- loss of agricultural land;
- impact to biodiversity, habitat and wildlife;
- inadequate mitigation; and
- opposition to the proposals.

Other responses included support for the proposed Biodiversity Net Gain, support for solar energy generation and the UK needs energy security.

Question 9 - Do you have any comments on the proposed approach to footpaths and Public Rights of Way that could potentially be delivered as part of the project, including redirection within fields, connectivity of the “River Walk” and the proposed off-road cycleway?

The most frequent responses were:

- opposition to the proposed diversion of PRowWs;
- concerns about the visual impact to PRowWs;
- that the proposed 10m wide paths are too wide and may encourage vehicles; and
- opposition to the proposals.

Other responses included support for potential cycle infrastructure improvements and PRowW improvements, general support for the Project and support for the proposed Biodiversity Net Gain.

Question 10 Do you have any comments on community benefits that the scheme could contribute to the local community and any suggestions on how a community benefit fund provided by the project could be used within the local area?

The most frequent responses were:

- opposition to the Project; and
- that the proposed community benefit fund is insufficient.

Other responses included suggestions for how the community benefit fund could be used.

Question 11 Do you have any further comments about the proposals for Stonestreet Green Solar?

The most frequent responses were:

- opposition to the Project; and
- no comment.

Other responses included strong support for the scheme, the proximity of the site to the grid connection is beneficial and impressed with the open dialogue from the developer.

Have you found this consultation exercise informative? (Yes / No / Unsure)

Most respondents indicated they found the consultation informative.

Please explain your answer

Of the respondents who did choose to provide more information about their response, the three most frequent responses were:

- consultation material was inadequate;
- that the proposal is too large; and
- consultation was inadequate.

Other responses included general support for the Project and noted that the developer has been approachable, flexible and helpful with answering questions.

Please let us know any additional comments

Most respondents did not provide additional comments. For those who did, the most frequent responses were:

- concerns about ownership of the land to justify site selection; and
- the proposal is too large.

Summary of feedback received by email

The most frequent responses were:

- concerns about the loss of valuable agricultural land;
- that the proposal is too large;
- the visual impact in particular to the nearby AONB;
- impact to biodiversity, habitat and wildlife;
- that there are alternative sites available; and
- concerns about the impact to the PProW network.



Your suggestions and how we had regard to them

We received a material amount of feedback on the Project. We have summarised the most common suggestions and how we had regard to those suggestions below. Where appropriate, reference is made below to the PEIR that was published as part of the 2022 Statutory Consultation and to the PEIR Addendum, which supplements and updates the PEIR, which has been prepared in support of the 2023 Statutory Consultation.

Summary of suggestion	How we had regard
Alternatives	
Consider alternative sites for the proposed solar farm, including land between A20 and M20 and along the M20 motorway	<p>Chapter 4: Alternatives & Design Evolution of the PEIR Addendum includes information about how alternatives have been considered to date, supplementing the information included in Chapter 4 of the PEIR.</p> <p>The land between the A20 and M20 was considered by the Applicant, but it does not have sufficient land for solar panels to meet the Project requirements, as set out in Chapter 4 of the PEIR Addendum.</p> <p>We have undertaken sequential testing of the site to ensure its suitability, as explained in Chapter 4 of the PEIR Addendum.</p>
Agricultural land	
Remove Best and Most Versatile land from the red line boundary of the Project	<p>We undertook a comprehensive agricultural land quality analysis. This analysis confirmed that approximately 80% of the site is Grade 3b or non-agricultural, which is outside the “Best and Most Versatile” category (Grades 1, 2, 3a). Around 19% is Grade 3a, about 1% is Grade 2 and none is Grade 1. This is lower than the average land in the area near to the Sellindge Substation where there is grid capacity to connect the Project.</p> <p>See Appendix 2.4 of Chapter 2: EIA Methodology of the PEIR Addendum for the Soils and Agricultural Land Report, June 2023, prepared for the Project.</p>
Provide more granular and plain English information on the soil expert’s field notes for Grade 3b	<p>As part of the 2023 Statutory Consultation, we have published an updated version of the Soils and Agricultural Land Report which provides more information about the quality of the soil at the site - see Appendix 2.4 of Chapter 2: EIA Methodology of the PEIR Addendum, which supersedes Appendix 2.4 of the PEIR.</p>

Principle of development

Justify the use of the land for the development	<p>The selected site was determined by the Applicant to be suitable for the Project as, amongst other things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• it is not subject to any international, national, ecological or geological designations;• it is not within a nationally designated landscape and is not subject to any statutory cultural heritage designations;• it is not subject to any allocations for housing or other planned development which would impede delivery;• there is a significant amount of existing developed vegetation surrounding large areas of the site which limit close views;• there are a low number of residential dwellings that could potentially be impacted for a project of this scale in the South-East of England;• approximately 80% of the Site is Grade 3b or non-agricultural, being land that is not classified as Best and Most Versatile land;• there are no listed buildings within the site area and a limited number outside the site area where the potential impact on the setting is not significant;• a good portion of the site sits within a 'bowl' in the landscape which will aid in screening long range views; and• the elevation changes within the site are gentle enough that there will be little significant landscape shading of solar arrays within the site.
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Landscape and visual impacts

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment ('LVIA') should consider long views	<p>Long distance views of the Project have been considered, including from the North Downs. The viewpoints used in the LVIA were discussed and agreed with Ashford Borough Council and it is understood the Folkstone and Hythe District Council are in agreement. The viewpoints considered has also been informed by a review of those used for nearby schemes, including the Otterpool Park, to ensure that all relevant viewpoints have been considered. The PEIR and PEIR Addendum predicts that due to distance, intervening landform and vegetation, and the nature of existing views, the impact of the Project on long range views is not expected to be significant.</p>
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	<p>The LVIA is in Chapter 7: Landscape and Views of the PEIR and PEIR Addendum.</p>
<p>Provide a 5m buffer of vegetation for biodiversity</p>	<p>We propose a vegetation buffer from all security fencing and along the East Stour. The Landscape Masterplan in the Book of Plans shows more information about what type of vegetation is proposed in the buffer areas.</p> <p>Further information is in Chapter 7: Landscape and Views of the PEIR Addendum.</p>
<p>Provide an annual maintenance plan to ensure new planting is properly established</p>	<p>We will submit an Outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan ('OLEMP') and an Outline Ecological Mitigation and Enhancement Strategy ('OEMES') as part of Application. The OLEMP would ensure appropriate maintenance of landscaping at the site and ensure planting is established in a reasonable timeframe. The OEMES would include detailed ecological mitigation proposals, programmes and timescales for subsequent species monitoring.</p> <p>Chapter 3: Site and Description of the Proposed Development and Chapter 7: Landscape and Views of the PEIR Addendum provide further information about the proposed landscape enhancements.</p>
<p>Avoid or minimise removal of hedgerows</p>	<p>The Project has limited impacts on existing hedgerows, with approximately 150m of hedgerow being removed. The Project will lead to a significant increase in hedgerows, both in terms of quantity and quality. Retained hedgerows will be retained and enhanced through additional planting and enhanced maintenance. A further 5.09km of new hedgerows is also proposed.</p> <p>Chapter 3: Site and Description of the Proposed Development and Chapter 7: Landscape and Views of the PEIR Addendum provides further information about the proposed landscape enhancements.</p>

Site layout / scheme evolution

<p>Explain how the layout has been amended to reduce impacts</p>	<p>Information on the changes made to the proposed layout has been provided in Chapter 1: Introduction of the PEIR Addendum. This includes (amongst other things) removing panels close to residential properties to reduce visual impacts and removing panels from the edge of Field 25 to allow for further landscaping and to reduce visual impacts to users of Station Road.</p>
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PRoW

Provide a circular PRoW route and reduce the length of the proposed diversions	<p>We have made a number of changes to the PRoW and access diversions originally proposed in 2022 Statutory Consultation. This includes (also refer to the Proposed Rights of Way and Access Strategy Plan in the Book of Plans):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing the distance of diversions to AE 385, AE 377, AE 370 and AE 657 routes; • a new route to Field 19 to allow for a full loop of the field and to use AE431; and • a new circular route east of Goldwell Lane (incorporating part of the River Walk).
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Community benefits

Consider potential for discounted electricity to the local community and for the local school	Discounted electricity to specific areas is not currently possible in the UK due to electricity regulations.
Consider other comparable scheme benefit packages, such as those set out by the Scottish Government's <i>Guidance on good practice principles for communities, businesses, local authorities and others</i>	As set out in the PEIR, a community benefits package is being proposed by the Applicant. A proposed set of principles for criteria of applications for funding is in the Consultation Booklet that has been published in support of the 2023 Statutory Consultation.

Property

Provide more vegetation/buffer to residential properties	Changes have been made to the location of solar photovoltaic ('PV') areas and landscape proposals to further reduce impacts on the visual amenity, responding to issues raised by consultees in regard to residential dwellings.
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Biodiversity

Provide more natural grassland habitat around the edge of the development	<p>Since the Statutory Consultation 2022, we have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • added hedgerow planting with proposed hedgerow trees to the western boundary of Fields 20 and 21 to strengthen visual screening from the west; • added a new hedgerow to partially screen views from PRoW AE 475 between Fields 20 and 21; • added a new hedgerow to partially screen views from PRoW AE 385 between Fields 1 and 2;
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allow for additional planting;

- increased width (from 2m to 3m) and height (from 3m to 5m) of the proposed hedgerow on the southern boundary of Field 20 to reduce the impact of proposed PV panels in this field from the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty ('AONB') to the south of the Site;
- added tree planting along the north-western edge of Field 24 and the north-eastern edge of Field 19 to reinforce existing vegetation and enclosure of the Site in views from the Grade II listed Evegate Mill. This improvement consists of a combination of 'Woodland Carr' dense woodland tree planting, and individual feathered wetland trees;
- added a new enhanced planting strategy for the northern edge of the Site, including increased hedgerow reinforcement with proposed hedgerow trees on the northern boundary of Fields 10 and 11, and additional wetland tree planting along the northern edge of Fields 16 and 19. Planting in these areas has been strengthened to provide enhanced filtering and assimilation of the Proposed Development in views from the north;
- expanded the meadow area in Field 20 to its southern boundary and removed proposed scrub patches from this area to create more suitable habitat for skylark and brown hare;
- increased the area of native woodland planting along Callywell Lane on the eastern edge of Field 17 to provide additional biodiversity habitat and visual screening for the residential dwelling Elmsvale;
- added 43 (4m x 4m) (16m²) skylark nesting plots across fields throughout the Proposed Development. These will be located centrally within the fields;
- field boundaries in numerous locations now include seed rich habitats, such as wheat, barley and oats, to benefit yellowhammer and other seed eating farmland birds during winter; and
- added of a new biodiversity enhancement area in the northern corner of Field 15 through the relocation of an internal substation, PV panels and security fence.

Further information about these new changes is in Chapter 1: Introduction of the PEIR Addendum.

Provide a recovery scheme for brown hares and more habitat for other species	<p>Further information about these new changes is in Chapter 1: Introduction of the PEIR Addendum.</p> <p>Application. As part of this, we will consider opportunities for a recovery scheme for brown hares. We have also spoken to Kent Wildlife Services and are considering management and research options.</p> <p>The Project has been updated to improve habitat areas for open field species by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> including large flower rich and rough grassland areas for skylark nesting and for brown hare; planting winter seed crop strips on the boundaries of solar panel areas to provide food sources for farmland birds (particularly yellowhammer and skylark) but also benefiting brown hare and other species; and incorporating skylark plots within solar panel areas which provide open areas for skylarks to nest and forage. Plots are part of a wider combined suite of further mitigation measures for skylark, yellowhammer and brown hare. <p>Further information about species habitat is in Chapter 8: Biodiversity of the PEIR Addendum.</p>
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Water quality

Consider how the Project could improve the water quality of the East Stour river	<p>The Project would remove approximately 190ha of land from agricultural use for a period of 40 years. This is expected to result in an improvement to the water quality of East Stour River, as there would be no requirement to fertilize the land over this period thereby reducing nitrate and other pollution.</p>
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Noise and air quality

An assessment of every property affected by noise should be undertaken	<p>Further noise assessment work has been undertaken which has informed the location of infrastructure that can generate noise (typically heating, ventilation and air conditioning elements of inverters/energy storage). Acoustic fencing is also proposed in certain locations to minimise potential noise impacts to nearby receptors.</p>
Confirm that air quality monitoring would be undertaken during the construction stage	<p>Standard mitigation measures to control dust generation impacts associated with the construction site activities will be outlined in the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan ('CEMP'). The Outline CEMP will ensure construction practice is carried out to minimise impact on</p>

	<p>Standard mitigation measures to control dust generation impacts associated with the construction site activities will be outlined in the Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan ('CEMP'). The Outline CEMP will ensure construction practice is carried out to minimise impact on existing sensitive receptors and the environment in terms of air quality and dust impact such that there should be no significant air quality impacts and therefore no air quality monitoring will be required.</p> <p>Further information on dust emissions is set out in Chapter 5: Construction and Decommissioning of the PEIR Addendum.</p>
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Historic environment

Undertake further heritage assessments of heritage assets	<p>An assessment of the potential indirect impacts to non-designated heritage assets within 1km of the site boundary will be set out in the Application.</p> <p>The further assessment will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> archaeological / Historic Landscape Assessment; targeted pre-determination trial trench evaluation and reporting; archaeological Management Strategy; updated Archaeological Desk Based Assessment; and updated Heritage Statement. <p>Further information about the updated cultural heritage assessment is included in Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage of the PEIR Addendum.</p>
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Consultation

Extend the period for consultation	<p>The non-statutory consultation was undertaken over a period of five weeks in spring 2022. The 2022 Statutory Consultation was undertaken over a further period of five weeks in autumn 2022. The 2023 Statutory Consultation will be undertaken for a further five weeks in summer 2023. This will mean a total of 15 weeks of consultation will have been undertaken for this Project, of which 10 weeks will be statutory consultation, significantly higher than the minimum 28 days required by law.</p>
Provide better information, plans and maps	<p>A Book of Plans has been published to support the 2023 Statutory Consultation, which is intended to provide further information.</p>
Undertake further engagement with nearby landowners	<p>We have continued to engage with the local community, including local landowners and stakeholders.</p>

Your feedback and how we had regard to it

We have summarised the key themes raised in your feedback and how we had regard to your feedback. A more detailed response to your feedback will be included in the Consultation Report, submitted with the Application.

Summary of feedback	How we had regard
Need for the Project	
Questions about the scale and need for the proposed development in this location	<p>The Applicant has secured a grid connection agreement to connect to the existing Sellindge Substation that will allow the import and export of up to 99.9MW of electricity to the national grid. The site is located close to the Sellindge Substation, which ensures that the grid connection is feasible. There are no brownfield sites of sufficient scale in the area of search that are able to meet this need.</p> <p>An updated version of the Government's draft National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) ('Draft NPS EN-3') was published for consultation in March 2023. That explains that the Government has committed to sustained growth in solar capacity to ensure that the UK is on a pathway that allows it to meet net zero emissions and confirms that solar is a key part of the Government's strategy for low-cost decarbonisation of the energy sector. Reducing the scale of the Project beyond that currently proposed is not considered by the Applicant to be a viable option because a smaller extent of solar arrays would not be capable of delivering the same generation capacity as the current proposals and would therefore not meet the objectives of the Project or of Draft NPS EN-3.</p> <p>Chapter 4: Alternatives & Design Evolution of the PEIR Addendum sets out the Project objectives and explains the site selection process.</p>
Site selection / alternatives	
Questions about the site location, with comments suggesting it is not a suitable location, or there are other more suitable sites	<p>The Project is located on a site that does not have any national or international landscape designations. The Project has sought to maximise the use of low lying land and existing vegetation and hedgerows to reduce potential visual impacts. In addition, a significant amount of new hedgerow and tree planting is proposed to further reduce potential landscape visual impacts.</p> <p>Two parcels of land between the A20 and M20 were suggested by consultees as potential alternative sites. However, these sites do not have sufficient available land for solar panels to meet the Project requirements, as set out in Chapter 4:</p>

Alternatives & Design Evolution of the PEIR Addendum.
Consultees also suggested industrial areas near the M20 and Ashford, however they are too far from a viable point of connection to the national grid. These alternative sites have therefore been discounted by the Applicant.

Loss of agricultural land

The impact to farmland, the loss of agricultural land, including Grade 2 and 3a land and food security in the UK

Draft NPS EN-3 notes that the scale of solar electricity needed in the UK means that it is likely that applicants may use some agricultural land. It explains that the development of ground mounted solar arrays is not prohibited on agricultural land classified as Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3a, and if it is then the impacts of such are expected to be considered. Draft NPS EN-3 also states that where sited on agricultural land, consideration may be given as to whether the proposal allows for continued agricultural use and/or can be co-located with other functions (e.g. storage) to maximise the efficiency of land use.

There are no brownfield sites of sufficient scale to meet the Project's requirements in the search area. The Project has sought to maximise the use of poorer quality agricultural land, with approximately 80% of the land having been assessed as being Grade 3b or non-agricultural land. The grazing / mowing regime for management of the proposed Project landscaping is yet to be finalised but may include allowing for grazing by appropriate livestock where appropriate. The Project also proposes on-site energy storage, which seeks to maximise the use of the land.

Landscape and visual

Comments about the potential landscape and visual impacts of the Project, including change of village character, industrialising the area, visual impacts to property and impacts to the AONB

The Project seeks to avoid impacts to the wider landscape character. The landscape strategy seeks to mitigate impacts through a comprehensive planting scheme. The proposed landscape planting will help screen the proposed PV panels, which minimises impacts on both close and long distant views.

Key proposals include:

- reinforcement of 11.42km of existing hedgerows with 11,310 plants (40-100cm height);
- 5.09km of new native hedgerows with 20,230 plants (40-100cm height);
- all hedgerows to be managed to a height of 2.5 – 3m and hedgerow used for screening of visual effects and glint and glare to be managed to 4.5-5m;

- 1.84ha of new woodland planting, comprising 9,485 new trees;
- 0.91ha of 4,618 new scrub/woodland edge planting;
- 0.60 ha of carr woodland comprising 2,708 plants;
- 163 native wetland trees along the East Stour River;
- 51 hedgerow trees and 17 small hedgerow trees;
- 0.65ha of new orchard including 262 orchard trees of UK origin;
- 4.01ha of existing grassland retained as grazing pasture;
- 3.44ha of seed-rich field margins to benefit farmland birds;
- 138.52ha of proposed grassland seeding to be maintained by grazing;
- 13.16ha of grassland (existing and proposed) outside proposed perimeter fence to be managed as a tall grassland sward;
- 1.55ha of proposed native wildflower meadow;
- 9.05ha of proposed wetland meadow; and
- 0.11ha of proposed habitat ponds and 0.26ha of proposed scrapes.

In the longer term, the establishment of the proposed planting strategy will result in significant benefits to the landscape features and physical character of the site, and will assist in integrating the scheme within the existing landscape framework.

Further information about how we have considered landscape character is in Chapter 7: Landscape and Views of the PEIR Addendum.

PRoW

Questions about the diversions and impacts on the ProW footpaths, noting the footpaths are ancient routes that should be maintained and some of the diversions increase the route length

An Outline Rights of Way and Access Strategy will be submitted with the Application, which will explain how ProW and access through and around the site will operate as part of the existing network and how we will maintain and manage these. Further information is in Chapter 11: Socio-economics of the PEIR Addendum.

We have made a number of changes to the ProW and access diversions originally proposed in 2022 Statutory Consultation.

	<p>This includes (also refer to Chapter 1: Introduction of the PEIR Addendum):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing the distance of diversions to AE 385, AE 377, AE 370 and AE 657 routes; • a new route to Field 19 to allow for a full loop of the field and to use AE431; and • a new circular route east of Goldwell Lane (incorporating part of the River Walk).
Concerns that the proposed 10m wide ProW routes would encourage vehicle usage	<p>The proposed 10m ProW corridor is the total distance between the fence and the relevant landscape feature, such as a hedge or a river. The Landscape Sections in the Book of Plans provides illustrations of the proposed ProW pathways. We are currently in discussion with Kent County Council's ProW officer to mitigate the risks associated with the width of the PROWs enabling vehicle use.</p>

Flood risk

Questions about the potential flood risk from the Project and requests for further information about how potential impacts will be mitigated and whether solar panels will cause further flooding	<p>The Project is not expected to increase the risk of flooding. An initial Flood Risk Assessment ('FRA') was undertaken in 2022 using the Environment Agency's flood mapping information to inform project design. A full hydraulics modelling and FRA will be undertaken for the Environment Statement to be submitted with the Application. Further detail is in Chapter 9: Water Environment of the PEIR Addendum.</p>
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Cultural heritage

Concern about the impacts to heritage, including the heritage of the village and nearby heritage assets	<p>We have included additional information in Chapter 6: Cultural Heritage of the PEIR Addendum about existing heritage assets and how these have been taken into account in the assessment of significant environmental effects.</p>
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Community impact

Concern about the impacts to nearby villages including Aldington, Mersham and Smeeth	<p>The PEIR identified there are no views of the Project from the core of local villages. The impacts on the setting of villages will be assessed in the Environmental Statement to be submitted with the Application. We have proposed mitigation measures to mitigate impacts through comprehensive landscape and biodiversity proposals.</p> <p>The impact of the Project on residents in the north of Aldington was assessed in the PEIR, with medium to long distance partial views of the Project in Parcel D (Fields 17,18, 19, 23, 24 and 25) likely to be experienced with strong filtering as a result of existing intervening vegetation. Views of the North Downs and Mersham will not be interrupted by the Project.</p>
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The PEIR and PEIR Addendum have not identified significant impacts on nearby villages including Aldington, Mersham and Smeeth. The PEIR Addendum has taken into account the additional landscape planting and notes the significant effects to visual receptors is unlikely to change. Further information is in Chapter 7: Landscape and Views of the PEIR Addendum.

Community benefit

Questions relating to the community benefit and whether it is sufficient, and a perceived lack of community benefit

The Project will provide public benefits including generation of renewable energy and improvements in biodiversity. The Project is not expected to cause significant adverse effects on the local community. Nevertheless, the Applicant has offered to provide a community benefit fund that it anticipates will be developed in conjunction with local stakeholders and in line with good practice. Further details of the community benefits are set out in the Consultation Booklet that has been published in support of the 2023 Statutory Consultation.

Transport

Concern about impact on the roads, including some of the roads being too small for the construction vehicles and causing unsafe conditions

During operation, the Project will generate very little traffic per day. The effect of the construction traffic over the approximately 12-month construction period will be mitigated by a series of measures outlined in the Construction Traffic Management Plan which will be agreed with the local highway authority. There will be no traffic travelling through the cores of local settlements, with the only traffic using the local highway network likely to be the Goldwell Lane access to the southern fields. The assessment shows that the construction phase would result in a temporary negligible (not significant) adverse effect on the highway network, in line with nationally recognised assessment criteria.

Ecology

Comments about impact on ecology / protected species within the site and biodiversity net gain

We will produce a detailed Biodiversity Net Gain assessment (utilising Metric 4.0) to be submitted with the Application, with outline, preliminary calculations provided as part of the PEIR Addendum to inform design iteration, taking into account consultee feedback. This is expected to show a Biodiversity Net Gain in excess of 100%, which is significantly above the national requirement of 10% and the Kent County target of 20%.

The majority of the PV solar arrays will include creation of extensive grassland and flower rich areas, which will be a significant biodiversity enhancement from the existing arable and pastureland uses.

The OLEMP and the OEMES will be submitted as part of the Application which will explain the proposed monitoring and management approach to biodiversity of the site.

Opportunities for enhancement have been reviewed as part of layout and landscape design iterations and the following key principles have been factored into the landscape design:

- Creation of extensive biodiverse grassland areas within the solar array areas;
- Tree planting and hedgerow enhancement to improve local boundary habitat connectivity;
- Inclusion of ecological enhancement areas as a mixture of open meadow, wetlands, orchards, scrub and tree planting free of solar panels;
- Appropriate management and creation of species-specific enhancement features within the above areas to benefit invertebrates, great crested newt, reptiles, birds, brown hare and other species;
- Additional ecological enhancements along the East Stour River (riverside tree planting and additional waterbodies); and
- Rough grassland margins and bird crop strips to increase the size and value of boundary habitats.

Further information about biodiversity and the changes we have made since the 2022 Statutory Consultation is included in Chapter 8: Biodiversity of the PEIR Addendum.

Cumulative effects

Comments about the cumulative effects of the Project in conjunction with other nearby projects including the Otterpool Park development, the East Stour Solar Farm and the Sellindge Battery Storage Facility

We have provided further information about the consideration of cumulative effects of the Project in Chapter 2: EIA Methodology and Chapter 15: Cumulative Effects of the PEIR Addendum.

As part of the environmental impact assessment for the Project, a full cumulative effects assessment is being undertaken, to assess the effects of the Project together with other cumulative schemes in the vicinity of the site. This cumulative effects assessment includes the Otterpool Park development, the East Stour Solar Farm development and the Sellindge Battery Storage Facility. If required, mitigation measures would be identified to address any significant cumulative effects.

Glint and glare

Concern about potential glint and glare impacts to residents, ProWs users and from certain viewpoints	An assessment of the potential for glint and glare has been undertaken (see Appendix 2.6 of the PEIR Addendum), which has concluded that the Project is not expected to give rise to significant adverse effects on residents or PRow users. A range of mitigation measures have been proposed that will ensure that nearby residential and ProW receptors are not adversely effected by the Project.
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Socio-economics

Comments suggested there would be impacts to local jobs and the local tourism industry	<p>The Project is not expected to lead to any significant adverse effects on the local economy but will lead to a number of positive effects, including contribution to renewable energy (regionally), contribution to the agenda for green skills, new strategic recreational and ProW routes and an annual community benefit fund.</p> <p>Chapter 11: Socio-economics of the PEIR Addendum sets out the potential socio-economic effects of the Project.</p>
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Ground conditions

Ground stability and land contamination from the Project	<p>We have undertaken a ground condition assessment and there are no identified ground stability risks associated with the Project.</p> <p>The Outline CEMP will set out measures that will be put in place during construction to ensure that the Project does result in any contamination to the land.</p>
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Project changes following the 2022 Statutory Consultation

Scheme development

Following feedback from the consultation, we have made a number of changes to the scheme that are summarised below, including adding significant enhancements to the landscape and biodiversity proposals and refining the changes to the ProWs. We have had discussions with relevant statutory consultees, including Ashford Borough Council and Kent County Council, to ensure we are making the right changes in the right places. More detail on the Project is set out within the Consultation Booklet, the Book of Plans and within Chapter 1 (Part B) of the PEIR Addendum published in support of the 2023 Statutory Consultation.

- Further enhancement of landscaping, including a new biodiversity enhancement area to Field 15, additional hedgerows and hedgerow planting and an additional woodland belt on Field 25, resulting in a total of over 48,000 trees/shrubs proposed as part of the Project
- Approximately 5km of new hedgerows have been added in locations where historically present along with significant enhancements to existing hedgerows
- Removal of PV panels and additional landscaping where the preferred order limits adjoin Handen Farm and Bow Cottage
- The meadow area in Field 20 has been expanded to create more habitat for skylark and brown hare
- 43 new skylark nesting plots have been added across fields with the design updated to include over

3.44ha of new seed rich habitat areas for farmland birds, including the locally present yellowhammer species

- The number of PV panels has been reduced and landscaping enhanced near residential properties
- A new ProW route has been added to Field 19, the length of multiple ProW routes has been shortened with improved connectivity and the ProW route on Field 12 has been moved away from the road
- The inverter stations and energy storage units have been relocated on Fields 8, 14 and 17 to avoid areas of potential archaeological significance
- The alignment of PV panels in Fields 26, 27, 28 and 29 has been adjusted to mitigate potential glint and glare impacts on rail receptors
- Acoustic fencing has been added to some inverter stations and energy storage units to reduce noise impacts.

Next steps

Following the 2023 Statutory Consultation we will consider your feedback to identify any additional amendments that should be made to further improve the scheme.

We will continue to engage with statutory consultees and affected landowners throughout the pre-application process before we submit the Application, which we currently expect to submit in autumn 2023.

We will explain how we have had regard to your feedback in the Consultation Report that will be submitted as part of the Application.



Appendix 1 What you said – Overview of feedback form comments

This appendix gives a detailed breakdown of the feedback form responses.

Overall, we received 73 feedback forms. 48 of these were received online and 25 were hardcopy. Where reasons are provided in response to questions there are cases where a consultee's response included one or more reasons and we have looked to ensure all are included. This means that the sum of responses on reasons may be greater than the total number of respondents.

Question 1 (a) – Do you support the use of solar energy to generate electricity in the UK?

Table 1 Summary of comments Question 1(a)

Theme	Frequency
Yes	42
No	13
Unsure	13
No Answer	5

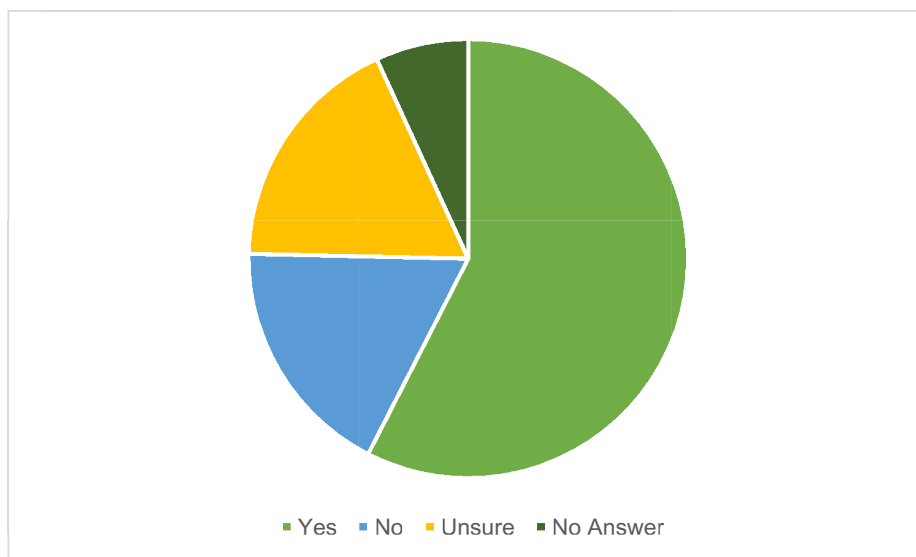


Figure 1 Summary of comments Question 1(a)

Question 1 (b) – Please explain why you support/do not support the use of solar energy as part of the UK energy mix?

Table 2 Summary of comments Question 1(b)

Theme	Frequency
Support solar	8
Do not support, loss of farmland	7
Support solar, but not on farmland	4
Support solar, but on brownfield/industrial/rooftop	3
No comment	2
Do not support, cumulative impact	2

**Question 2 (a) – Are you in favour of the proposals for Stonestreet Green Solar in principle?
(Yes / No / Unsure)?**

Table 3 Summary of comments Question 2(a)

Theme	Frequency
No	50
Yes	14
Unsure	5
No Answer	4

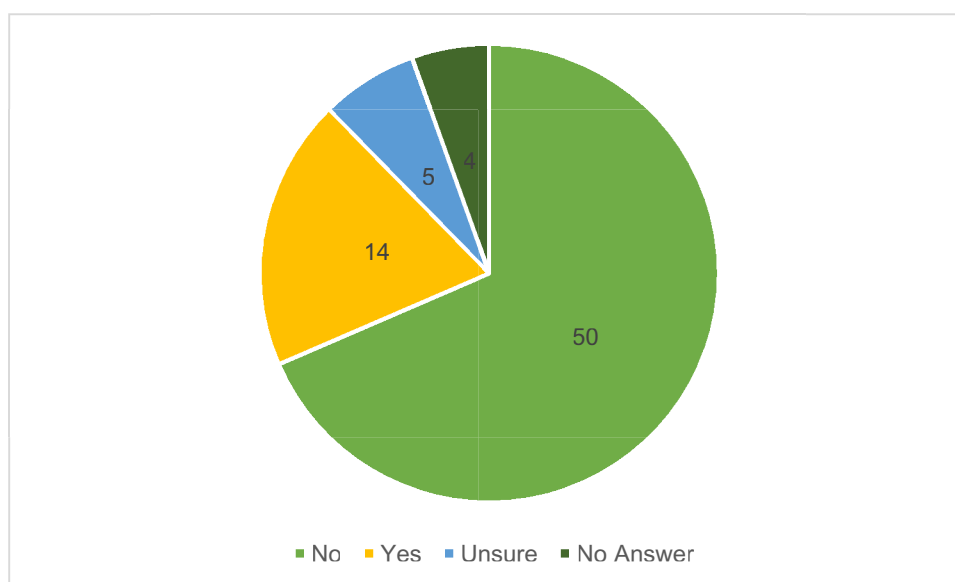


Figure 2 Summary of comments Question 2(a)

Question 2 (b) – Please explain why you support/do not support the proposals in principle?

Table 4 Summary of comments Question 2(b)

Theme	Frequency
Loss of valuable agricultural land	26
The proposed scheme is too large	25
Visual impact	20
There are alternative sites available (e.g., brownfield, other locations)	11
Impact on biodiversity / impact on habitats and wildlife	11
Oppose changes to / impact on PROW network	9
Solar panels should be on rooftops	6
Cumulative impact of solar developments in village is too great	5
Support for solar energy generation	5
Impact on road network / traffic	4
Increased risk of flooding	4
Impact to property market/prices	4
Don't believe solar is a viable solution / technology	4
Support the scheme in principle	4
No comment	3
Proposals are for greed/profit	3

Construction disruption	3
Impact on mental / physical health	3
Impact from glare	3
Topography of Aldington is unsuitable	3
Site safety concerns	2
Solar farms kill / harm birds	2
Support the scheme in principle, but it is in the wrong location / not here	2
Panels coming from abroad / China	2
General opposition to the scheme	2
UK needs energy security	2
Too close to houses / my property	1
Impact on local infrastructure	1
Noise pollution concerns	1
Construction process will be polluting	1
Mitigation is insufficient	1
Site will become brownfield	1
ProW use survey inadequate	1
Proposed facility will not last 40 years	1
Risk to historical sites from groundworks	1
Light pollution concerns	1
Impact on air quality / air pollution	1
Soil contamination concerns	1
Support the scheme in principle, but it is too large	1
Panels cannot be recycled	1
Decommissioning causes environmental damage	1
Panel production creates greenhouse gases	1
Don't believe the climate / irradiation in Aldington is suitable	1
Oppose UK's green energy targets	1
Mitigation is appropriate	1
Few residential properties affected	1
Impact on visitor economy	1

Question 3 – Do you have any comments on the proposed siting or layout for the solar generation and energy storage scheme?

Table 5 Summary of comments Question 3

Theme	Frequency
The proposed scheme is too large	28
Visual impact / AONB	21
Loss of valuable agricultural land / food production	13
Too close to houses / my property	11
There are alternative sites available (e.g., brownfield, other locations)	11
Topography of Aldington is unsuitable	8
General opposition to the scheme	5
No comment	4
Concerns over flooding / runoff	4
Opposed to cumulative impact of development in area	4
Impact on biodiversity / impact on habitats and wildlife	3

Impact to property market	3
ProWs should not be moved/extinguished	2
Concerns over noise	1
Concerns over traffic impact	1
Concerns over ownership / proposal is just to make money / greed / profit	1
Disruption from construction	1
More planting / visual mitigation required	1
Site won't be used for grazing	1
Health concerns – Electromagnetic radiation	1
Solar should be rooftop	1
Location due to proximity to substation / does not need to be so close to substation	1
Support the scheme in principle, but it is too large	1
Don't believe ground mounted solar is viable / appropriate	1
Energy storage is necessary	1
Support the scheme to a degree	1
Strongly support the scheme	1
Site location is appropriate	1
Few residential properties affected	1

Question 4 – Do you have any comments on the proposals for connecting to the national electricity system via underground cable at Sellindge?

Table 6 Summary of comments Question 4

Theme	Frequency
No comment	14
General opposition to scheme	6
Agree / the approach makes sense	5
Use land by substation / alternative sites available (e.g., brownfield)	4
Cable to Sellindge is not necessary / connection could be made elsewhere	4
Traffic concerns – disruption	3
Concerns about disruption (other)	3
Inappropriate development	2
Proposed facility is too large	1
Free / discounted electricity for local residents	1
Location is for profit / financial reasons	1
The proposed scheme is too large	1
Underground cables preferable to overground	1
Questions about cable routing	1
Impact on biodiversity / impact on habitats and wildlife	1
Project will create emissions	1

Question 5 – Do you have any comments on the assessment of any likely environmental impacts of the proposals with regard to landscape and visual impact and the proposed mitigation to address any such impacts?

Table 7 Summary of comments Question 5

Theme	Frequency
Visual impact	33
Mitigation is inadequate	15
Negative impact on biodiversity / impact on habitats and wildlife	12
The proposed scheme is too large	9
General opposition to the scheme	7
Loss of valuable agricultural land	5
Oppose impact on ProW network	3
More planting / mitigation required	3
Consultation inadequate – inadequate information (e.g., visuals, viewpoints, plans)	3
Don't believe the topography of Aldington is suitable	3
General opposition to cumulative impact of development in area	2
Concerns over light pollution / CCTV	2
Impact on mental health	2
Support Biodiversity Net Gain	2
No comment	1
There are alternative sites available (e.g., brownfield, other locations)	1
Impact to property market	1
Noise impact	1
Risk to historical sites from groundworks	1
Existing flora and fauna must be safeguarded during project	1
Question rationale for distributed energy storage facilities	1
Not clear where energy storage / substations will be located	1
Improved water quality	1
Support visual mitigation plans	1
Support for solar energy generation	1
UK needs energy security	1
Impact on visitor economy	1

Question 6 – Do you have any comments on the assessment of any likely environmental impacts of the proposals with regard to water environment, land contamination, socioeconomics, cultural heritage, noise, climate change or cumulative impacts and the mitigation measures proposed to address any such impacts?

Table 8 Summary of comments Question 6

Theme	Frequency
Noise disruption	17
Concerns about flooding / drainage / runoff	14
Impact on biodiversity / impact on habitats and wildlife	7
Loss of valuable agricultural land	6
Traffic disruption	6
The proposed scheme is too large	5
Concerns about land contamination	5
Object to redirection of ProWs	5
General opposition to the scheme	5
Mitigation is inadequate	4
Light pollution / glare concerns	4
Visual impact	4
No comment	3
Construction disruption	3
Impact on soil condition	3
Site will become brownfield after project	3
Opposition to cumulative impact of development in area	2
Impact on residents' mental health / wellbeing	2
Improved water quality	2
Concerns addressed by consultation / proposal	1
The developer will follow relevant environmental legislation	1
Developer has not provided details on funding for proposal	1
Impact on cultural heritage	1
Impact to property market	1
No local jobs	1
Does not help village electricity resilience during power cuts	1
Oppose working on site at weekends	1
Panel production safety / environmental concerns	1
Impact on visitor economy	1
Risk to historical sites from groundworks	1
Site location is appropriate	1
Mitigation is appropriate	1
Hope farm traffic will reduce	1

Question 7 – Do you have any comments on the assessment of any likely environmental impacts of the proposals with regard to traffic, transport and construction?

Table 9 Summary of comments Question 7

Theme	Frequency
General traffic / congestion concerns	31
Roads are too narrow / access will be difficult	20
Damage to road network from vehicles / mud	8
Concerns about road safety	7
No comment	6
Mitigation measures should reduce impact	3
Mitigation measures are appropriate	2
Expect minimal impact	2
Proposed facility is too large	2
Concerns about light / noise pollution	2
Disruption to Goldwell Lane	2
Mitigation measures are inadequate	1
Delays to emergency services	1
Construction timetable 12-hour day is excessive	1
Use of Station Road should be restricted	1
Concern about visual impact	1
The proposed scheme is too large	1
Bank Road should be kept open during construction	1
Environmental impacts need to be managed during construction	1
Laws Lane should not be affected	1
Opposition to cumulative impact of development in area	1
Consultation inadequate – inadequate information (e.g. visuals, viewpoints, plans)	1

Question 8 – Do you have any comments on the assessment of any likely environmental impacts of the proposals with regard to ecology, biodiversity and land use and the mitigation measures proposed to address any such impacts?

Table 10 Summary of Responses Question 8

Theme	Frequency
Loss of valuable agricultural land	14
Impact on biodiversity / impact on habitats and wildlife	12
Mitigation is inadequate	8
General opposition to the scheme	7
No comment	5
Support Biodiversity Net Gain	5
Visual impact	3
Site will become brownfield after project	3
Don't believe Biodiversity Net Gain report	2
Concerns about flooding / drainage / runoff	2
Decommissioning / panels are not recyclable	2
Offer is a carrot / bribe / greenwashing	2

The proposed scheme is too large	1
There are alternative sites available (e.g. brownfield, other locations)	1
Security fencing – limits animals' movements	1
Impact on traffic / local road network	1
Impact to property market	1
Concerns about land contamination / soil quality	1
Light pollution	1
More planting / mitigation required	1
Oppose loss/redirection of ProW	1
Question Biodiversity Net Gain figures	1
Area for public access orchard includes protected species	1
Proposed cable route runs through areas of ecological value	1
Opposition to cumulative impact of development in area	1
Support for solar energy generation	1
UK needs energy security	1

Question 9 – Do you have any comments on the proposed approach to footpaths and Public Rights of Way that could potentially be delivered as part of the project, including redirection within fields, connectivity of the “River Walk” and the proposed off-road cycleway?

Table 11 Summary of Responses Question 9

Theme	Frequency
Oppose relocation of ProWs	21
Visual impact – walking routes with panels will not be attractive	15
Proposed 10m ProWs are too wide / may encourage vehicles	9
General opposition to the scheme	9
Relocation of ProWs should be minimised	5
Support cycle infrastructure improvements	5
Support the proposed ProW improvements to a degree	3
General support for scheme	3
Offer is a carrot / bribe / greenwashing	2
Support increased number of ProWs	2
Support River Walk	2
No comment	1
Impact on mental health	1
Mitigation is inadequate	1
Concerns about glare	1
Parish Council has alternative / better plan for ProW network	1
Consultation inadequate – inadequate information (e.g. visuals, viewpoints, plans)	1
Concerns about flooding	1
Support Biodiversity Net Gain	1

Question 10 Do you have any comments on community benefits that the scheme could contribute to the local community and any suggestions on how a community benefit fund provided by the project could be used within the local area?

Table 12 Summary of comments Question 10

Theme	Frequency
General objection to project	16
Community Benefit Fund is insufficient	16
No comment	6
Community benefit fund could be used to provide facilities for primary school (all weather pitch, playgrounds, etc)	3
Financial contribution to residents' energy bills	3
Offer is a carrot / bribe / greenwashing	3
Impact on visitor economy	3
Community benefit fund could be used to provide visits / outdoor education areas for primary school	2
Community benefit fund could be used to provide solar panels on the village hall	2
Mitigation is insufficient	2
No jobs offered for local people / offer locals jobs	2
Community benefit fund could be used to provide cycle infrastructure improvements	1
Ashford station is not operated by Govia Thameslink Railway Suggest speaking to Southeastern trains	1
Somewhat support community benefits	1
Community benefit fund could be used to provide grants to residents to install rooftop solar	1
The proposed scheme is too large	1
Community benefit fund could be used to provide vehicle charging points	1
Community benefit fund could be used to provide general improvements to local facilities (village hall, school etc)	1
Community benefit fund could be used for general community benefit	1
Provide free electricity to the local community	1
Impact on local economy	1
Impact on property market / values	1
Community benefit fund could be used to provide regular litter collections	1
Community benefit fund could be used to support local schools	1

Question 11 Do you have any further comments about the proposals for Stonestreet Green Solar?

Table 13 Summary of comments Question 11

Theme	Frequency
General opposition to the proposals	15
No comment	9
The proposed scheme is too large	6
Cumulative impact of solar developments in village is too great	4
Visual impact	4

Solar should be on rooftops	4
Loss of valuable agricultural land	3
Too close to houses / my property	3
Offer is bribe / greenwashing	2
Panels cannot be recycled	2
Topography of Aldington is unsuitable	2
Consultation period too short	2
Alternative / brownfield sites available	2
Impact to property market/prices	2
Strongly support the scheme	1
Questions over long term impact	1
Site location selected only for proximity to converter station	1
Can the developer use less of the site	1
Impressed with open dialogue from developer	1
Food production should be prioritised	1
Impact on rural community	1
We need more solar energy	1
Invest in supporting residential solar panels instead	1
Don't believe solar is a viable solution / technology	1
Expand existing energy facilities instead (e.g. nuclear)	1
Proximity to grid connection is beneficial	1
Consultation inadequate - inadequate information (e.g. visuals, viewpoints, plans)	1
Developer has access to more financial resources	1
Traffic concerns - roads not suitable	1
Impact on PRow network	1

Have you found this consultation exercise informative? (Yes / No / Unsure)

Table 14 Summary of comments final question

Theme	Frequency
Yes	34
No	14
Unsure	14
No Answer	11

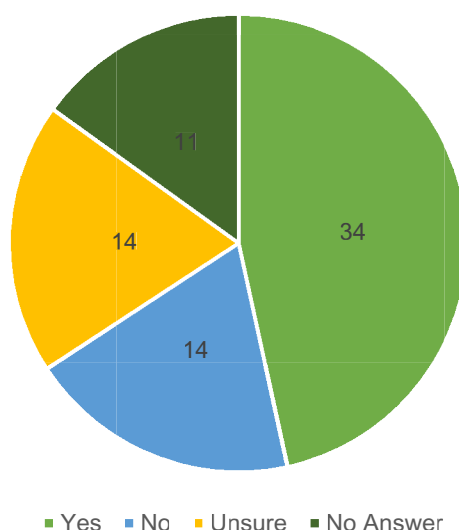


Figure 3 Summary of Comments Final Question

Please explain your answer

Table 15 Summary of Responses Unnumbered Question

Theme	Frequency
Consultation inadequate - inadequate information (e.g. visuals, viewpoints, plans)	6
Scale of development is unacceptable / inappropriate	3
Consultation inadequate - box ticking exercise	3
No comment	2
Profit / greed motivation for project	2
Developer has been approachable / flexible	1
Developer must reflect feedback in final plans	1
Visual impact	1
No consideration for residents living adjacent to site	1
The consultation was helpful in answering some questions	1
Consultation events coincided with other events, including firework displays	1
Loss of valuable agricultural land	1
Too close to houses / my property	1
Charging £500 for printed copies of full consultation materials is unacceptable	1
Value opportunity to comment	1
Generally support the scheme	1

Please let us know any additional comments.

Table 26 Summary of Responses Additional Comments

Theme	Frequency
No comment	4
Concerns over ownership / proposal is just to make money / greed	4
The proposed scheme is too large	3
Too close to house / my property	2
Damages the natural environment of the village	1
Negative impact on views	1
Negative impact on mental health/wellbeing	1
Solar energy is inefficient/ineffective	1
Alternative technologies should be used (wind, nuclear)	1
Land quality has been reclassified down to make scheme viable	1
Solar farms should not be situated on arable farmland	1
Decision should be based on detailed sequential planning based assessment	1
Panels cannot be recycled	1
Consultation inadequate - documents too complex / off-putting	1
Adjacent property owners should be consulted on additional mitigation	1
Visual impact	1
Mental health impact	1

Breakdown of most common email responses

Table 17 Summary of Responses Non-feedback form format

Theme	Frequency
Loss of valuable agricultural land / rural land	41
The proposed scheme is too large / surrounds village	40
Visual impact / AONB	37
Negative impact on biodiversity / environment / impact on habitats and wildlife	37
There are alternative sites available (e.g. brownfield, other locations, motorway embankments)	34
Oppose impact on PoOW network	25
Traffic - disruption / road damage	16
Solar should be on rooftops / new build developments	15
Oppose cumulative impact of solar developments on area	11
Noise impact	11
Community Benefit Fund is insufficient	10
Don't believe the topography of Aldington is suitable	10
Concerns over ownership / proposal is just to make money / greed / profit	9
Proposed 10m PRoWs are too wide / may encourage vehicles / trespassing	8
Location due to proximity to substation / does not need to be so close to substation	8
Consultation inadequate - inadequate information (e.g., visuals, viewpoints, PRoW plans etc)	8
Impact to property / value of property	7
Concerns about soil / land contamination	7
Mitigation is inadequate / inappropriate	7
Light pollution concerns	7
Flooding concerns	7
Impact on heritage / listed buildings	6
Visual impact - walking routes with panels will not be attractive	6
Construction disruption / delays	5
Impact on mental / physical health	5
Site will become brownfield / housing after project	5
Impact on visitor economy	5
Proposed hedging / planting inappropriate / too tall	4
Traffic - Road safety concerns	4
Goldwell Lane area of site should be removed from proposals	4
Solar technology is inappropriate / inefficient / outdated	4
PRoW survey inappropriate / incomplete	3
Proposed 40-year life of scheme is too long / against planning guidance	3
Proposal does not comply with National Policy Statements / guidelines	3
Residents should benefit from cheaper electricity	3
Air pollution / dust / emissions concerns	3
Solar panels imported from China - increases carbon footprint of scheme	3
Panels cannot be recycled	3

Risk to historical sites / scheduled monuments from groundworks / project	3
General opposition to the scheme (non-specific)	2
Panel mountings are too high	2
Glint and glare concerns	2
Questions whether the applicant has agreement to connect to National Grid	2
More planting / mitigation required	2
Developers plan to sell / flip the project	2
Not clear where energy storage / substations will be located	2
Biodiversity Net Gain claims are incorrect / greenwashing	2
Consultation inadequate - poor organisation / delivery	2
Consultation inadequate - ignores cumulative impact	2
Battery storage too large	1
Concerns about electromagnetic interference / electromagnetic radiation	1
Concerns over CCTV	1
Fire safety concerns	1
Existing hedgerows, flora and fauna must be safeguarded during project	1
Jobs will not go to local people	1
Concerns over energy storage	1
Support Community Benefit Fund	1
Community Benefit Fund is a bribe	1
Community Benefit Fund - proportionally more should go to Aldington	1
Community Benefit Fund - use to improve energy use at village facilities (school village hall)	1
Community Benefit Fund - additional roadside electric vehicle charging points should be considered	1
River Walk is greenwashing	1
Consultation inadequate - not clear who the applicant is	1
Consultation inadequate - financial details not disclosed	1
Consultation inadequate – Community Liaison Panel chair selection was appointed by the developer	1
Consultation inadequate - unlawful	1
Size of site has changed / increased during consultation	1
Consultation inadequate - box ticking exercise	1



Contact details

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like to find out more information about Stonestreet Green Solar or to provide your feedback on the proposals. You can contact our Community Relations Team by using the details below.

Email: info@stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk

Call our Freephone information line: 08081 698335

Visit our website: www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk

Send us a letter: FREEPOST Stonestreet Green Solar

You can also follow us on Twitter: @SGS_solar

