



# EAST PARK ENERGY

**East Park Energy**

EN010141

## Consultation Report

**Document Reference: EN010141/DR/5.1**

Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and  
Procedure) Regulations 2009: Regulation 5(2)(q)

**September 2025**

Version P01

# EAST PARK ENERGY

Planning Act 2008

Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed  
Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009

## Consultation Report

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## Abbreviations

### *List of abbreviations used within the Report*

Abbreviation	Definition
AoCM	Adequacy of Consultation Milestone
BBC	Bedford Borough Council
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
BSSL	Brockwell Storage and Solar Limited
CCC	Cambridgeshire County Council
DCO	Development Consent Order
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ES	Environmental Statement
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GW	Gigawatt
HDC	Huntingdonshire District Council
MW	Megawatt
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
PEIR	Preliminary Environmental Information Report
PILS	Persons with an Interest in the Land
SoCC	Statement of Community Consultation
SoS	Secretary of State

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Consultation Report ('the Report') relates to the proposed East Park Energy project (the 'Scheme') being promoted by BSSL Cambsbed 1 Ltd ('the Applicant'). As the Scheme will generate more than 50 megawatts (MW) of power, it is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under Sections 14(1)(a) and 15(2) of the Planning Act 2008 ('PA 2008') and therefore requires a Development Consent Order (DCO).

The Applicant is seeking development consent for the construction, operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning of a solar and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), and export connection to the National Grid. The Scheme is located within the administrative area of Bedford Borough Council (BBC), which operates as a Unitary Authority; Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC), which functions as the lower-tier district council; and Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC), which serves as the upper-tier county council. These are referred to as the 'Host Authorities'.

This Report has been prepared in accordance with Section 37 of the PA 2008 and Planning Inspectorate Guidance 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the Consultation Report'. It explains how the Applicant has complied with the consultation requirements set out in the PA 2008, the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 ('APFP Regulations'), the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 ('EIA Regulations') and the Infrastructure Planning (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2024 ('Miscellaneous Provisions Regulations'). The Report also sets out the consultation process, the feedback received and how the Applicant has had regard to responses received, including how feedback has influenced or been incorporated into the Scheme.

The Scheme has been informed by consultation and engagement between the Applicant and the local community, the Host Authorities, Persons with an Interest in the Land (PILs) and prescribed consultees. The Applicant has conducted extensive pre-application consultation in preparing a DCO application. This included early



engagement with stakeholders to introduce the Scheme, a period of non-statutory consultation and a period of statutory consultation intended to meet the requirements set by the PA 2008.

A Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC), available in **Consultation Report Appendix 3-3: Final SoCC [EN010141/DR/5.2]** and setting out how the Applicant proposed to consult with people living in the vicinity of the proposals was produced for the statutory consultation. The Applicant consulted with the Host Authorities about the SoCC prior to its publication, and the statutory consultation was delivered in accordance with the SoCC.

In line with its duty to consult under Section 42 of the PA 2008, the Applicant identified and consulted with the relevant prescribed bodies, local authorities and those with a land interest. The Applicant publicised the Application in the prescribed manner in accordance with the requirements of Sections 47 and 48 of the PA 2008.

In total, 1,288 responses were received across the two stages of consultations. This included 372 submissions received during the non-statutory consultation and 916 responses received during the statutory consultation.

Feedback from the non-statutory consultation and ongoing survey works led to several changes to the proposals, which were presented at the statutory consultation alongside the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR). The key changes made following the non-statutory consultation included:

- Removing solar development from various locations, notably near Great Staughton in Site C, due to archaeology findings. To compensate, additional solar capacity was added elsewhere in Site C, while further areas were removed from Site B;
- An additional location in Site D was identified for the battery storage system and substation, alongside adjustments to underground cable alignments and access points between Sites B, C, and D, as well as between Site D and the Eaton Socon substation;

- Changes were also made to proposed access points, including the removal of two along the B645 near Hail Weston and the addition of new accesses north of Site D and west of Great Staughton, and
- Fence lines were consolidated and realigned to maintain buffers with public rights of way, reduce fencing, and avoid development in flood-prone zones.

Feedback from the statutory consultation and further design and assessment work led to a series of further changes to plans for the Scheme. These changes include:

- Removing solar development from various locations, including one location in Site A, various locations in Site B and one location in Site C;
- Confirming the Applicant's intention to proceed with Site D for the location of the BESS and internal substation;
- Realignment of some site access points, including north west of Little Staughton and on Great Staughton Road;
- Increasing the value of the proposed Legacy Fund;
- Consolidation and realignment of fence lines; and
- Minor changes to the alignment of underground cable corridors.

More information summarising the responses received across the two stages of consultation, in addition to an explanation as to how the Applicant has had regard to those responses, is explained in the Report.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Purpose of this Report

1.1.1 BSSL Cambsbed 1 Ltd has commissioned this Consultation Report in relation to an application for a Development Consent Order for the East Park Energy project.

1.1.2 The Scheme is defined as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under Sections 14(1)(a) and 15(2) of the PA, as it comprises:

- The construction or extension of an electricity generating station (Section 14(1)(a));
- Is in England;
- Does not generate electricity from wind;
- Is not an offshore generating station, and
- Its capacity is more than 50 MW (Section 15(2)(c)).

1.1.3 Therefore, an application for development consent for the Scheme has been made to the Secretary of State for the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero ('the SoS') pursuant to the PA 2008. The draft DCO includes the necessary rights and powers to ensure delivery, operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning of the Scheme, including compulsory acquisition powers (if required).

1.1.4 This Report has been submitted in accordance with Section 37(3)(c) of the PA 2008, which requires that any application for an order granting development consent must be accompanied by a consultation report that provides details of:

- How the Applicant has carried out consultation in compliance with statutory requirements (namely Sections 42, 47 and 48 of the PA 2008);
- Any relevant responses to consultation or publicity;
- How any relevant responses have been taken into account (as per Section 49 of the PA 2008); and

- How the Applicant has had regard to pre-application guidance (as per section 50 of the PA 2008).

1.1.5 This Report provides detail of the pre-application consultation activities carried out by the Applicant and demonstrates that the relevant statutory requirements have been complied with, including:

- The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedures) Regulations 2009 ('APFP Regulations');
- The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 ('EIA Regulations'); and
- The Infrastructure Planning (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2024 ('Miscellaneous Provisions Regulations').

1.1.6 As evidenced throughout this Report, the Applicant considers that all statutory pre-application requirements have been met, and the Applicant has had due consideration to the relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

1.1.7 Copies of consultation documents, notices and materials produced in accordance with the PA 2008 or to support the consultation are included in a series of appendices to this Report.

## 1.2 The Scheme

1.2.1 The Scheme comprises a new ground-mounted solar photovoltaic energy generating station and an associated on-site BESS on land to the north-west of St Neots. The Scheme also includes the associated infrastructure for connection to the national grid at the Eaton Socon National Grid Substation.

1.2.2 The Scheme would allow for the generation and export of 400 MW of renewable electricity, as well as the storage of up to 100 MW of electricity in the BESS. The precise generating capacity and storage capacity will be subject to detailed design, but it should be noted that the Applicant has a grid connection agreement with National Grid for 400 MW export and 100 MW import.

- 1.2.3 A detailed description of the Scheme design can be found in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 2: The Scheme [EN010141/DR/6.1]**.
- 1.2.4 Subject to the Scheme securing a DCO in Winter 2026/27, it is anticipated that works would start on-site in early 2028 and be completed by mid-to late 2030 (although initial energisation of the Scheme is likely to commence prior to 2030).

### 1.3 Relevant Legislation and Guidance

- 1.3.1 As the Scheme is an NSIP, the Applicant is required to make an application for development consent before it can lawfully construct, operate, maintain and decommission the Scheme. The PA 2008 provides that the SoS is responsible for determining the application for development consent. The Planning Inspectorate, on behalf of the SoS, has responsibility for administering the examination of DCO applications and supporting the Examining Authority ('ExA'). The ExA will be appointed to make a recommendation to the SoS as to whether to grant development consent. If granted by the SoS, the DCO will provide the necessary authorisation to allow the Scheme to be constructed, operated, maintained and decommissioned.
- 1.3.2 The relevant SoS for the Scheme is the SoS for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero.
- 1.3.3 The Scheme also falls within the definition of 'Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development' as defined within the EIA Regulations, meaning that before consent is granted for the Scheme an EIA must be undertaken. The Report sets out how the Applicant publicised and consulted on the preliminary environmental information, in accordance with Regulation 12 of the EIA Regulations.
- 1.3.4 The pre-application consultation for the Scheme, and the preparation of this Report, has been carried out having had regard to:

- Planning Act 2008: Pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects ('the Pre-application Guidance') (published 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024);
- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the Preparation and Submission of Application Documents (July 2025);
- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the Consultation Report (March 2025);
- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on EIA Notification and Consultation (March 2025); and
- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus ('the Prospectus') (published June 2025).

1.3.5 Table 1 outlines the legislative requirements for statutory consultation as outlined in the PA 2008.

**Table 1 - Legislative requirements for statutory consultation**

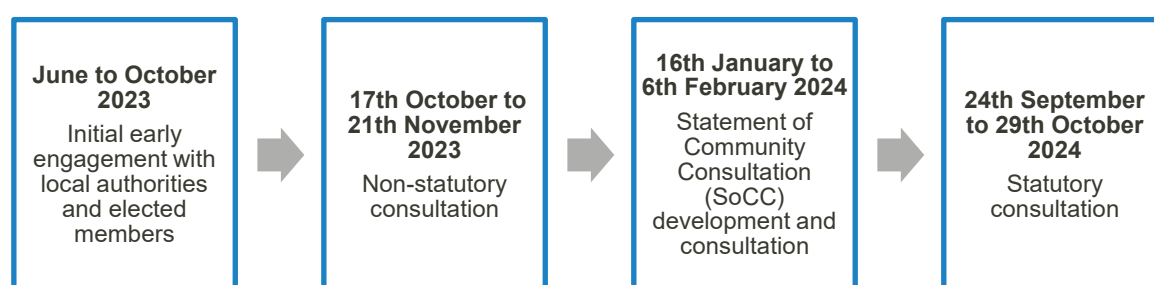
Statutory requirement	Details
Section 42 of PA 2008	Consult with prescribed parties (including environmental bodies, statutory undertakers etc.), local authorities hosting and bordering the proposed scheme and Category 1, 2 and 3 parties identified under Section 44 of the PA 2008 (interests in the land affected by the proposed scheme, and those who may have a relevant claim for compensation).
Section 46 of PA 2008	Notify the Secretary of State and supply with information supplied to Section 42 consultees.
Section 47 of PA 2008	Consult with the local community in accordance with the Statement of Community Consultation (this might include events, leaflets, website, letter drops and deposit points)
Section 48 of PA 2008	Publish notices in newspapers as required in the PA 2008.
Section 49 of PA 2008	Take account of responses to the consultation and publicity about the proposed scheme.
Section 37(3)(c) of PA 2008	Prepare a Consultation Report demonstrating compliance with Sections 42, 47, and 48 of the PA 2008 and include details of any relevant responses, and the account taken of any relevant responses.

- 1.3.6 Both the Pre-application Guidance and the Prospectus set out the requirements and expectations in the preparation of an application for development consent.
- 1.3.7 The Pre-application Guidance and Prospectus introduce a new requirement for an Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AoCM). This is designed to give the Applicant an opportunity to provide the Planning Inspectorate with a written submission establishing the consultation undertaken to date, that the approaches set out in the SoCC have been met, and a summary of consultation responses and how these responses have shaped the proposed application.
- 1.3.8 To inform the AoCM, a written submission was prepared by the Applicant and submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2025. This enabled the Planning Inspectorate to give early consideration of the adequacy of consultation undertaken to date on the Scheme. The AoCM Statement provided an overview of the engagement and consultation activity to date and how it has met with the requirements of the PA 2008. Section 51 advice was received from the Planning Inspectorate on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2025 regarding the AoCM Statement. A copy of the AoCM can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 6-1: Adequacy of Consultation Milestone Statement [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.
- 1.3.9 Under Section 55(4)(b) of the PA 2008, at the acceptance stage the Planning Inspectorate will seek the formal views from local authorities about the adequacy of consultation. Prior to this, the Applicant shared a copy of the AoCM with the Host Authorities on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2025. No comments were received from the Host Authorities prior to the submission of the AoCM to the Planning Inspectorate.

## 1.4 Summary of consultation activities

- 1.4.1 The Applicant took a proactive approach to engagement with key stakeholders, landowners and statutory bodies throughout the pre-application process.
- 1.4.2 Figure 1 provides a summary of the consultation activities carried out and the dates these took place.

Figure 1 Summary of consultation activities carried out



## 1.5 Covering Letter and Self-completed Section 55 Checklist

- 1.5.1 A **Covering Letter [EN010141/DR/1.2]** and self-completed **S55 Checklist [EN010141/DR/1.4]** have been included within the DCO application for the Scheme. The checklist outlines compliance with the EIA Regulations, APFP Regulations and the PA 2008.

## 1.6 Structure of this report

- 1.6.1 This Report is set out in chronological order in so far as it is possible, detailing the pre-application engagement and consultation activities that the Applicant has carried out in relation to the Scheme.
- 1.6.2 This Report is organised into Chapters; a short summary of what can be found in each is provided below:
- **Chapter 1 Introduction** – provides an introduction to the Report and the Scheme;



- **Chapter 2 Non-statutory consultation and early engagement process** – provides details of the non-statutory consultation and early engagement;
- **Chapter 3 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) consultation** – provides an overview of the consultation and engagement activities undertaken with regard to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process;
- **Chapter 4 Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC)** – provides details of the development of the SoCC in advance of the statutory consultation;
- **Chapter 5 Statutory consultation** – reports on the activities undertaken in respect of the statutory consultation in accordance with the SoCC and the requirements of Sections 42, 46, 47 and 48 of the PA 2008;
- **Chapter 6 Summary of responses to statutory consultation** – provides a summary of feedback received in response to the statutory consultation and explains how the Applicant has had regard to this feedback in accordance with Section 49 of the PA 2008. This includes a summary of key changes made to the design of the Scheme following the consultation and why;
- **Chapter 7 Approach to engagement between statutory consultation and application submission** – provides a summary of the engagement undertaken between statutory consultation and the submission of the development consent application. It also includes a section on how section 51 advice and Pre-application Guidance has been considered, alongside details of how new interests in land have been identified and managed;
- **Chapter 8 Conclusion** – sets out the conclusions of this Report, and how the Applicant has undertaken a compliant, comprehensive and proportionate approach to pre-application consultation and engagement; and
- **Appendices** – provides supporting evidence.

## 1.7 Data protection

- 1.7.1 In accordance with Planning Inspectorate Guidance 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the Consultation Report', the Applicant is aware that the Report will be published on the National Infrastructure Planning website. As such, the Applicant has avoided the inclusion of personal data relating to individuals.
- 1.7.2 The Applicant must ensure that it complies with the Data Protection Act 2018, which came into force on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018 following the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation in 2016 (now the UK General Data Protection Regulation).
- 1.7.3 This means that information such as individuals' names and addresses in this Report have been replaced by a number for each consultee.
- 1.7.4 Personal details in this Report have been handled responsibly and where necessary redacted to ensure that the Applicant complies with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 in the production and publication of this Report.
- 1.7.5 Details of the Scheme's Privacy Policy can be found here: [eastparkenergy.co.uk/privacy-policy](http://eastparkenergy.co.uk/privacy-policy).

## 2.0 NON-STATUTORY CONSULTATION AND EARLY ENGAGEMENT

### 2.1 Overview

- 2.1.1 **Chapter 2** provides an overview of the launch of the Scheme, the non-statutory consultation undertaken, along with an overview of the main themes and summary of the feedback received and the engagement which took place.
- 2.1.2 This Chapter is best read alongside **Consultation Report Appendix 1-1: Non-statutory consultation report [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.
- 2.1.3 Prior to the non-statutory consultation, early engagement took place between June 2023 and October 2023, further outlined within this chapter.
- 2.1.4 The non-statutory consultation undertaken by the Applicant marked the initial step in engaging with the community and stakeholders regarding the Scheme whilst the proposals were at a formative stage. Although delivering a non-statutory consultation is not mandatory, the Applicant chose this approach to provide local communities with an early opportunity to influence the development before the formal statutory consultation.
- 2.1.5 The primary objective of this early non-statutory consultation was to introduce the Scheme and offer local communities and other stakeholders an understanding of the project and its potential impacts. It aimed to empower the community to voice their opinions and contribute to the development of the Scheme while in its initial phases.
- 2.1.6 The non-statutory consultation period ran for five weeks, from 17<sup>th</sup> October to 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023. To coincide with the launch of the consultation, a leaflet was distributed to local residents to encourage participation in the consultation through attendance at public events or by submitting feedback via the dedicated consultation website.

- 2.1.7 Throughout the consultation period, a community information line, email address and postal address were made available for those wishing to contact the development team. These contact channels have remained open throughout the pre-application stage of the project.
- 2.1.8 Letters were sent to key stakeholders to notify them of the consultation, as set out in the **Consultation Report Appendices [EN010141/DR/5.2]**:
- **Consultation Report Appendix 1-2: List of stakeholders of contacted during non-statutory consultation [EN010141/DR/5.2];**
  - **Consultation Report Appendix 1-3: Letter notifying stakeholders of non-statutory consultation [EN010141/DR/5.2]; and**
  - **Consultation Report Appendix 1-4: Letter notifying Section 42 consultees of non-statutory consultation [EN010141/DR/5.2].**
- 2.1.9 Additionally, the Applicant held a series of briefings with stakeholders before and during the consultation.
- 2.1.10 The consultation was promoted through a range of channels, as set out in the **Consultation Report Appendices [EN010141/DR/5.2]**:
- **Consultation Report Appendix 1-5: Non-statutory consultation newsletter [EN010141/DR/5.2];**
  - **Consultation Report Appendix 1-6: Non-statutory consultation press release [EN010141/DR/5.2];**
  - **Consultation Report Appendix 1-7: Non-statutory consultation press notice [EN010141/DR/5.2];**
  - **Consultation Report Appendix 1-8: Non-statutory consultation social media adverts [EN010141/DR/5.2]; and**
  - **Consultation Report Appendix 1-9: Screenshots of project website during non-statutory consultation [EN010141/DR/5.2].**

## 2.2 Engagement prior to launch of non-statutory consultation

### Engagement with Host Authorities

- 2.2.1 Ahead of the non-statutory consultation, an introductory meeting was held with Cambridgeshire County Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, Bedford Borough Council and the Applicant on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2023 to introduce the Scheme, the project team, the site and the proposed consultation approach.
- 2.2.2 The Host Authorities were supportive of the general approach to non-statutory consultation and agreed to help facilitate meetings with local councillors.

### Engagement with the Planning Inspectorate

- 2.2.3 An introductory meeting with the Planning Inspectorate took place on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2022, with a follow-up meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023. Under Section 51 of the PA 2008, the Planning Inspectorate makes available a copy of the advice provided in meetings with the Applicant. This can be found on the East Park Energy page on the Planning Inspectorate's website: [national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN010141](https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN010141).
- 2.2.4 Details of how Section 51 advice has been addressed through the pre-application process is outlined in Table 19.

### Engagement with landowners

- 2.2.5 As part of its initial works, the Applicant identified and engaged with landowners regarding land that could host the Scheme. Details of this are set out in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-2: Land Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]**, **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-2: Land Identification Report: Addendum [EN010141/DR/6.2]** and **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-2: Land Identification Report: Further Addendum [EN010141/DR/6.2]**.

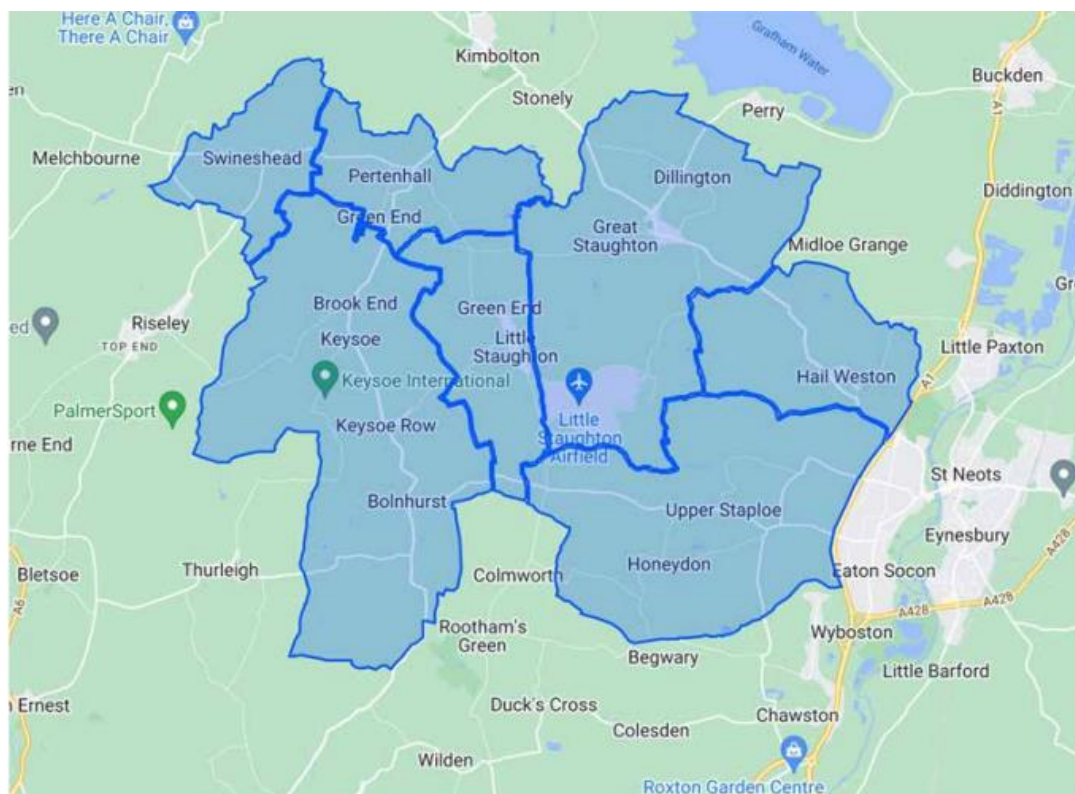
- 2.2.6 Following this, the Applicant has engaged with landowners through the referencing process to identify all parties potentially impacted by other aspects of the Scheme.
- 2.2.7 Following the identification of land interests, the Applicant maintained close communication with landowners. The Applicant engaged with landowners across the cable route corridor to try and reach voluntary agreements, discuss any matters of concern, provide project updates and arrange project meetings.
- 2.2.8 Engagement was carried out through Land Interest Questionnaires (LIQs), site visits, erection and monitoring of site notices, land interest follow-ups via phone or email, consultation invitations and confirmation schedules.
- 2.2.9 Throughout the consultation process, the Applicant ensured landowners were informed of any ongoing environmental assessments and surveys. More information about the Applicant's engagement with landowners can be found in the **Land and Rights Negotiations Tracker [EN010141/DR/4.4]**.

## 2.3 Non-statutory consultation

- 2.3.1 The non-statutory consultation was launched on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023 and concluded on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023, spanning a five-week period. This consultation welcomed comments from both the local community and political stakeholders regarding the Scheme. To ensure inclusivity and accessibility for all interested parties and groups within the area, diverse methodologies were implemented.
- 2.3.2 To announce the public consultation, leaflets were sent to 1,492 residential and business addresses within the host parish council areas. The leaflets were posted on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023, with the intention that they would arrive at the latest on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023, the day of the consultation launch. The distribution area included the Parish Council boundaries of Pertenhall & Swineshead Parish Council, Little Staughton Parish Council, Hail Weston Parish Council, Staploe Parish Council, Great Staughton Parish Council, and

Bolnhurst & Keysoe Parish Council. A copy of the leaflet can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 1-5: Non-statutory consultation newsletter [EN010141/DR/5.2]**, while the distribution area can be viewed in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Non-statutory consultation newsletter distribution area map



## Engagement with MPs, elected members and parish councils

- 2.3.3 On 13<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023, shortly prior to the launch of the non-statutory consultation, briefings were held for political stakeholders at the Host Authorities the Scheme is located within: Cambridgeshire County Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and Bedford Borough Council. Following on from this, a letter was sent on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023 to advise of the imminent public consultation.
- 2.3.4 **Consultation Report Appendix 1-3: Letter notifying stakeholders of non-statutory consultation [EN010141/DR/5.2]** includes a copy of the letter issued to stakeholders. **Consultation Report Appendix 1-2: List of**

**stakeholders contacted during non-statutory consultation [EN010141/DR/5.2]** includes the list of stakeholders the letter was issued to.

2.3.5 Letters were issued to the Member of Parliament (MP) for North East Bedfordshire and the MP for Huntingdon on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023. A copy of the letter can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 1-3: Letter notifying stakeholders of non-statutory consultation [EN010141/DR/5.2]**. MPs were also extended an invitation to meet with the Applicant for a comprehensive briefing about the proposals and the forthcoming consultation process.

2.3.6 By meeting these stakeholders at a preliminary stage, the Applicant was able to provide early information on the Scheme and consultation programme, while opening an ongoing communication channel with local representatives.

2.3.7 The parish and town councils, expected to encompass the site location and its adjacent areas, were duly notified about the consultation proceedings and were extended an invitation to engage in discussions with the development team. Correspondence, a copy of which can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 1-4: Letter notifying Section 42 consultees of non-statutory consultation [EN010141/DR/5.2]**, was dispatched to the following Councils on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023:

- St Neots Town Council;
- Staploe, Duloe & Honeydon Parish Council;
- Hail Weston Parish Council;
- Great Staughton Parish Council;
- Little Staughton Parish Council;
- Pertenhall & Swineshead Parish Council;
- Bolnhurst & Keysoe Parish Council; and
- Kimbolton & Stonely Parish Council.



2.3.8 Letters, a copy of which can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 1-4: Letter notifying Section 42 consultees of non-statutory consultation [EN010141/DR/5.2]**, were also issued to the neighbouring local authorities:

- Central Bedfordshire Council;
- Milton Keynes City Council;
- City of Peterborough Council;
- Fenland District Council;
- East Cambridgeshire District Council;
- Norfolk County Council;
- Suffolk County Council;
- Essex County Council;
- Hertfordshire County Council; and
- South Cambridgeshire District Council.

2.3.9 Letters were also issued to consultees that would later be statutory under Section 42 of the PA 2008 in the next phase of consultation. A copy of the letter can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 1-4: Letter notifying Section 42 consultees of non-statutory consultation [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

2.3.10 Meetings were conducted from 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023, throughout the non-statutory consultation period until 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023. A full list of meetings held can be found in Table 2.

***Table 2 Meetings held before and during the non-statutory consultation***

Stakeholder	Date
Elected members and officials from both Cambridgeshire County Council and Huntingdonshire District Council	13 <sup>th</sup> October 2023, with a follow up meeting on 16 <sup>th</sup> October 2023 for those who could not make the original date
Officers and elected members of Bedford Borough Council	18 <sup>th</sup> October 2023
Mayor of Bedford	18 <sup>th</sup> October 2023
Member of Parliament for North Bedfordshire	8 <sup>th</sup> November 2023

## 2.4 Non-statutory consultation

2.4.1 As part of the technical design and environmental assessment work, the Applicant engaged with a number of statutory parties since November 2023, including Historic England, the Environment Agency, county archaeologists and Natural England. Chapter 3 includes more information about engagement with these bodies.

2.4.1.1 To inform the wider area of the public consultation, a press release was issued on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023 to Cambridgeshire Live, Cambridge Independent, the Hunts Post, Bedford Today, Bedford News UK and the Bedford Independent. The press release was covered by Bedford Today on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023. A copy of the press release can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 1-6: Non-statutory consultation press release [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

2.4.2 An advert regarding the Scheme was also published in the local news outlet, the Hunts Post, for one week during 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023 to 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023. This notice outlined the Scheme and extended an invitation to readers to participate in the consultation process by visiting the dedicated website and attending physical exhibitions to offer their feedback. Additionally, the notice included the consultation contact information, highlighting the phone number, email address, and mailing address for written correspondence. The press notice can be viewed in **Consultation Report Appendix 1-7: Non-statutory consultation press notice [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

2.4.2.1 Social media was used to engage with residents across the community. Facebook and Instagram adverts were published at a 10-mile radius from the site to ensure strong public awareness of the Scheme. The Facebook adverts informed residents of the consultation and directed users to the consultation website, <https://www.eastparkenergy.co.uk>. During the consultation, the adverts were seen by 10,324 people with 3,184 visitors clicking through to the consultation website. Copies of the social media adverts can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 1-8: Non-statutory consultation social media adverts [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

2.4.3 The dedicated consultation website, [eastparkenergy.co.uk](http://eastparkenergy.co.uk), went live on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2023. It served as a comprehensive platform presenting an overview of the proposed plans, featuring a masterplan, and hosting a virtual exhibition room with details of the Scheme. Screenshots of the website during the non-statutory consultation can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 1-9: Screenshots of project website during non-statutory consultation [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

2.4.4 The consultation materials that were published during the non-statutory consultation remain available online on the project website. These materials can be found in the appendices as follows:

- **Consultation Report Appendix 1-5: Non-statutory consultation newsletter [EN010141/DR/5.2];**
- **Consultation Report Appendix 1-10: Non-statutory consultation exhibition banners [EN010141/DR/5.2];**
- **Consultation Report Appendix 1-11: Non-statutory consultation draft masterplan [EN010141/DR/5.2]; and**
- **Consultation Report Appendix 1-12: Non-statutory consultation plans and drawings [EN010141/DR/5.2].**

2.4.5 To allow local residents the opportunity to view the plans in person and speak with members of the technical team, the Applicant hosted three public exhibitions during the consultation period. Details of these events can be found in Table 3.

***Table 3 Details of in-person events at non-statutory consultation***

Date	Time	Location	Number of attendees
Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	2pm-7pm	Keysoe Village Hall	112
Monday 30 <sup>th</sup> October 2023	2pm-7pm	Hail Weston Village Hall	46
Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> November 2023	2pm-7pm	Little Staughton Village Hall	125

2.4.6 Residents were offered multiple methods to provide feedback, the most used of which was a feedback form which was available online, in addition to

physical copies available at the in-person consultation events or by request. Screenshots of the online feedback form and a copy of the physical feedback can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 1-1: Non-statutory consultation report [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

2.4.7 In addition to the feedback form, an interactive pinpoint map was available on the consultation website, allowing respondents to select an exact location that was relevant to their comment enabling detailed local insight to be provided. A screenshot of the pinpoint map can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 1-9: Screenshots of project website during non-statutory consultation [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

2.4.8 Residents could also provide feedback via the dedicated email address, postal address and community information line.

### Non-statutory consultation feedback

2.4.9 In total, the Applicant received 375 submissions through the feedback channels during the non-statutory consultation:

- 126 online feedback forms submitted via the consultation website, and five hardcopies;
- 100 emails received via the project inbox;
- 148 comments left on the interactive pinpoint map; and
- One letter.

2.4.10 Whilst the total number of consultation responses differs from that reported in **Consultation Report Appendix 1-1: Non-statutory consultation report [EN010141/DR/5.2]**, the Applicant can confirm that the Non-statutory consultation report otherwise accurately represents the feedback received to this consultation.

2.4.11 Key themes raised during the consultation, include:

- The need for the Scheme;

- Landscape and visual impact;
- Rural and village character impact;
- Loss of agricultural land;
- Public rights of way;
- Equestrian impacts;
- Noise and air quality;
- Community benefits;
- Biodiversity;
- Cultural heritage;
- Transport;
- Glint and glare;
- Health impacts;
- Cumulative impacts;
- Flooding;
- Ecology;
- Socio-economic impacts;
- Decommissioning;
- Technical issues; and
- Planning policy.

2.4.12 Table 4 sets out the Applicant's response to all the points made on the feedback form or in writing, as at the time of the statutory consultation in 2024.

**Table 4 Response to non-statutory consultation feedback**

Response theme	Applicant's response
<b>Need for the Scheme</b>	
<p>Respondents feel that the development is too large for the area and is on an industrial scale. Concerns that it could be as big as Gatwick airport. Spry report says that the East of England is one of the highest contributors of renewable energy. Existing solar farms are more than sufficient for the area.</p> <p>Challenge on need. One respondent says that their electricity supplier already offers free energy at times.</p> <p>Suggestions were made that solar panels should be on roofs of existing and new buildings including houses, flats, car parks, industrial buildings and warehouses, the dump in St Neots, roofs of logistics depots in Milton Keynes, Grafham Water, or areas unfit for farming.</p> <p>One respondent stated that farms should be merged to make them more efficient – not used for solar panels.</p> <p>Concern on food security - reference to Therese Coffey speech (Guardian 17.11.22) and trade offs between energy security and food security. Also references to food security in context of Russian invasion of Ukraine.</p> <p>Alternatives such as wind farms (mostly offshore), nuclear, fusion, tidal energy and hydro projects were suggested. References were also made to interconnectors and international trade in energy.</p>	<p>The Applicant understands concerns raised by local residents over the presence of an additional solar farm in the area.</p> <p>As the climate continues to change and outside factors to the UK's energy market proliferate, the Applicant is pleased to be leading the way in increasing capacity through renewable sources. This project alone will safely power 108,000 homes and will include a battery storage system to ensure that any excess energy produced will not go to waste.</p> <p>In 2019, the Government committed to the UK achieving net zero by 2050. In order to do so it is forecast that up to 70 GW of solar energy is required nationally by 2035. There is currently only approximately 14.6 GW of solar energy installed in the UK. The East Park Energy development would play a vital role in the achievement of the Government's target. In doing so, it would also more than double the existing solar renewable energy capacity in Bedford Borough and Huntingdonshire District.</p> <p>This need was then reinforced by the recent (January 2024) designation of a new suite of Energy National Policy Statements (NPS) which identified a "Critical National Priority" (CNP) for low carbon infrastructure. Paragraph 4.2.16 of new NPS EN-1 states that "the Secretary of State will take as the starting point for decision-making that such infrastructure is to be treated as if it has met any tests which are set out in the NPS". There is nothing in the NPS that suggests that the concerns expressed outweigh the CNP. The Russian invasion of Ukraine is expressly referenced in respect of ensuring a security of energy supply.</p> <p>The CNP applies to all forms of low carbon infrastructure.</p>
<b>Landscape and Visual Impact</b>	

Response theme	Applicant's response
<p>Concerns were expressed about the potential adverse visual effects of the scheme on the area's landscape and loss of views and vistas. Additionally, feedback included comments on the positioning of the solar panels concerning the topography of the area, specifically that there was little benefit from utilising north facing slopes and/or that was inefficient.</p> <p>Some references were made to a valued local landscape. Concern was expressed over landscape impact on undulating landscapes and the impact on views from high ground to the north - e.g. Hoo Farm and that Site C would destroy an important view in the Kym Valley including views of the church and Manor.</p> <p>Concern was also expressed over maintenance of planting. Screening on existing solar farms in the area was reported as poor.</p> <p>A maintenance plan to ensure that any visual screening and green landscaped areas are properly maintained and managed, including a watertight commitment to replace any failed planting on an ongoing basis was requested.</p>	<p>The visual effects of the proposals will be assessed in a landscape and visual impact assessment that will accompany the application for development consent.</p> <p>Whilst panels will be visible in the immediate vicinity, growth of boundary hedgerow, woodland belt improvements and other factors will mean that the installation will become much less noticeable over time.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that some panels are proposed on north facing slopes and this is taken into account when the predicted output from the scheme is assessed.</p> <p>The application for development consent will be accompanied by an outline Landscape and Environmental Management Plan (LEMP) that will set standards for maintenance. Compliance with the LEMP will be secured through a requirement (similar to a planning condition) on the consent.</p>
<b>Rural and Village Character Impact</b>	
<p>In addition to general concerns about the visual impact, there were more specific apprehensions regarding East Park Energy's potential to adversely affect the area's rural character. These concerns primarily focused on the perceived scale of the scheme and its potential influence on the area's ambience, encompassing visuals, public rights of way, highways, and other elements contributing to the overall rural character. These concerns highlighted a worry about the cumulative impact on the area's distinct rural identity.</p>	<p>The visual effects of the proposals will be assessed in a landscape and visual impact assessment that will accompany the application for development consent.</p> <p>There will be no loss of any public right of way. Our proposals seek to ensure that routes will be maintained on their current alignment following construction of the development, with suitable buffers between rights of way and the solar development areas. The only potential impact on public rights of way would be during the construction phase, where it would be necessary for them to be crossed by cable corridors. Careful management will ensure that this is temporary and adequately mitigated.</p>

Response theme	Applicant's response
<p>Impacts on Great Staughton, Little Staughton and Pertenhall. Move further away from Little Staughton. Too close to housing. Impacts on Keysoe and Swineshead. Too close to Little Staughton.</p> <p>Complaints that two dwellings will be completely surrounded by solar panels.</p>	<p>The Applicant will look again at the relationship between the proposed solar panels and settlements such as Great Staughton and Little Staughton.</p> <p>The Applicant has visited the two dwellings where it was proposed that solar panels be developed on all sides and asked them what changes the Applicant could make to the scheme so that they would avoid a perception of being surrounded. In one case the Applicant has made a change following these discussions. In the other case the occupiers of the dwelling did not request any changes to the layout of the solar development.</p>
<b>Loss of Agricultural Land</b>	
<p>Concern over loss of BMV associated with food security. Reference was made to draft NPS EN3 para 3.10.4. and to a speech by Rushi Sunak (Daily Telegraph 18.8.22) on land quality and fears scheme will cause damage to land quality and after 40 years the land will not be good enough quality for agriculture.</p>	<p>Solar development helps address climate change, which is the single biggest threat to UK food security. This is according to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which says that climate change could reduce the UK's stock of high-grade agricultural land by nearly three-quarters by 2050. Because solar farms generate near zero carbon electricity, they help address climate change. This means they are helping to improve the UK's food security.</p> <p>Solar development also cuts costs, which helps keep UK farmers in business. Solar provides some of the cheapest electricity in history. Without solar, energy prices would be even higher. This is important, because costs are increasing for agricultural businesses, just like everyone else. Solar can also provide a direct and long-term revenue stream for farmers who choose to host a project on their land. By helping to keep UK farming profitable, solar is also helping to secure the UK's domestic food supply.</p> <p>Planning permission for a solar farm is time limited, and installations can be completely dismantled at the end of their operation. Solar development does not permanently take agricultural land, it borrows it, and because agricultural land under a solar farm is in effect left fallow, soil health can recover. The Applicant intends to investigate ways of improving the soil with Rothamsted Research.</p>



Response theme	Applicant's response
	<p>Solar farms themselves occupy a minuscule area, and even with five times as many solar farms deployed around the UK, they would still occupy less land than the amount currently occupied by golf courses.</p> <p>Reference to draft NPS EN-3 is not understood. The designated NPS EN-3 states at paragraph 2.10.29 that "Where the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary, poorer quality land should be preferred to higher quality land avoiding the use of "Best and Most Versatile" agricultural land where possible. 'Best and Most Versatile agricultural land is defined as land in grades 1, 2 and 3a of the Agricultural Land Classification". In this location the use of BMV is necessary.</p>
<b>Public Rights of Way</b>	
<p>Concerns expressed about views from rights of way and highways and loss of amenity for those using rights of way.</p> <p>Specific references made to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Great Staughton village footpaths 23, 34 &amp; 40, together with bridleway 7 in Hail Weston Parish - these were specifically designed in the 1990s.</li> <li>Two long bridleways within the parish of Bolnhurst and Keysoe in Bedfordshire – BW37 and BW40;</li> <li>Byway in Little Staughton Byway 9 - these routes are well-used and link to an extensive equestrian of bridleways in North Bedfordshire; and</li> <li>The access track crosses a right of way (FP 16 in Staploe Parish) and there were several near misses with pedestrians and construction vehicles when the current solar farm was being built.</li> </ul>	<p>There will be no loss of any public right of way. Our proposals seek to ensure that routes will be maintained on their current alignment following construction of the development, with suitable buffers between rights of way and the solar development areas. The only potential impact on public rights of way would be during the construction phase, where it would be necessary for them to be crossed by cable corridors and access tracks. Careful management will ensure that this is temporary and adequately mitigated.</p> <p>The Applicant will carefully consider the impacts on the specified rights of way and bridleways and the requests for new bridleways. However, in the latter case it should be noted that the Applicant only has the contractual ability to use the land for 40 years and will need to ensure it is capable of being used for farming in the future once the scheme is decommissioned.</p>

Response theme	Applicant's response
<p>Request that during construction, the impact on public rights of way be minimised with a minimum corridor of 8m for a footpath and 9m for a bridleway and that bridleways, byways and unsurfaced roads should not be used for site access.</p> <p>Some suggestions for new bridleways, specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A perimeter bridleway around the north of Site D would provide an alternative route with less constrained views than the route within the site;</li> <li>• New bridleway link proposed from B&amp;K BW40 and LS Byway 9; and</li> <li>• A linking bridleway between BW37 at Manor Farm and Pertenhall BWA1 and BW24 would be very beneficial to the network.</li> </ul> <p>These connecting bridleways must be dedicated not permissive for the life of the development.</p> <p>Also, some concern over impact on dog walking on the existing rights of way and some concerns about whether security cameras will capture members of the public on the rights of way,</p> <p>Note – all footpaths referenced are shown on Figure 6.</p>	
<b>Equestrian Impacts</b>	
<p>Impact on equestrian industry associated with impacts on bridleway network and noise impact on horses as a flight animal. Concern about glint and glare including glare impact on horses.</p> <p>Panels should be screened from the rider's (and horse's) view.</p> <p>Impact on equestrian business at Lodge Farm. Areas of panels are shown very close to both paddocks and the stables and ménage. In my view the horses at this property will be seriously adversely affected –</p>	<p>The Applicant will have regard to the British Horse Society Advice Note on Solar Farms 1/2017.</p> <p>For glint and glare this states that “for riders or carriage drivers out hacking, glare is unlikely to present a direct problem because they are moving unless their route is directly towards the arrays at an elevation and time of day where glare is possible.”</p> <p>The Applicant will provide a glint and glare assessment to accompany the</p>

Response theme	Applicant's response
<p>particularly during the construction phase, especially if the track to the north is used for access. In that case a high level of large vehicle traffic movements would be disturbing to the horses and could potentially lead to injuries. The noise of the installation of the panels, particularly from any pile-driving will also be disturbing to the animals and could lead to injury. In my view a separation distance of at least 100m from the property would be appropriate.</p>	<p>application for development consent and ensure that its scope includes the impact on equestrian businesses.</p>
<p><b>Noise and Air Quality</b></p>	
<p>Residents have raised concerns about noise from the battery storage facility, along with questions about the impact on air quality.</p> <p>Concern about operational noise from the solar array and inverters, transformers, battery storage cooling plant, and other plant. Such noise from the existing Little Staughton Airfield site can be heard in the village. Also concern from night time maintenance.</p> <p>Concern about night time effects.</p>	<p>Solar panels are silent in operation, however the inverters and transformers associated with them can emit a low hum during operation.</p> <p>In order to limit noise pollution, the Applicant has initiated baseline noise monitoring of the background noise levels in the surrounding area. Using this data, we are conducting detailed noise modelling to predict the potential noise generated by East Park Energy's operations. This assessment allows the Applicant to determine whether any significant noise impacts might arise and informs our design process accordingly, to avoid impacts to people's property.</p> <p>We are further preparing a preliminary Noise Impact Assessment, which will be part of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR). This report will be shared during the statutory consultation phase for the East Park Energy development.</p> <p>A detailed construction dust and vehicle emissions assessment will be submitted with the DCO application which assesses any likely impacts as a result of the development and will set out mitigation measures required to reduce these impacts to acceptable levels.</p> <p>Typical mitigation measures to control dust may include water spraying over affected areas, lowering the vehicle speed limit along unsurfaced construction routes and regular site inspections.</p>

Response theme	Applicant's response
	There will be no air quality or dust management issues during the operational phase of the development as the scheme would not emit any aerial emission and there will only be limited vehicle movements for maintenance, landscape management and repair.
<b>Community Benefits</b>	
<p>Residents have raised questions over what the community stands to benefit from the Applicant's proposals.</p> <p>Funds could be used to rebuild Staploe Village Hall or the church at Keysoe. Local Subsidies to make energy more affordable.</p> <p>Community funds not delivered on other solar projects in the area. Previous solar farms in the area set up community funds and we know that no money was ever received.</p> <p>Suggestions for the fund include the provision of electric vehicle charging points to encourage more people to buy electric cars. Others suggested funding for solar panels on rooftops and grants to improve the sustainability and efficiency of homes.</p>	<p>The Applicant is also eager to support Net Zero initiatives locally, and through our East Park Legacy Fund we will support the community's transition to Net Zero, likely in the form of grants that will be made available to community groups and facilities, schools and other public services, and local homeowners.</p> <p>We have held initial discussions throughout our non-statutory consultation with the local community in order to understand how the fund can be best utilised to support Net Zero initiatives in the local area, and we will be seeking to gather more input and ideas as we move forward to the statutory consultation.</p>
<b>Biodiversity</b>	
<p>Concerns were raised about the pledge for a biodiversity net gain and the impact of the solar farm itself on biodiversity.</p> <p>Scepticism about biodiversity net gain. Has been promised on other sites before but did not happen. Sheep will not work/be difficult. Solar panels produce a mono-culture and do not provide a habitat for anything so there will be no succession. Solar panels absorb light energy so they compete with plant leaves, reducing photosynthesis and reduces the</p>	<p>The Applicant is conducting thorough surveys aimed at comprehensively assessing the existing biodiversity on our sites. These surveys are integral to our commitment to responsible environmental stewardship. We seek to gain deep insights into the unique ecological makeup of each location, allowing the Applicant to develop strategies that not only preserve but enhance biodiversity. These efforts are essential to ensuring that the Applicant's schemes have a</p>

Response theme	Applicant's response
<p>number of animals that the plants can support. Solar Panels will reduce rather than enhance biodiversity. Concerns over how any BNG would be secured.</p> <p>Requests for more information on BNG.</p>	<p>minimal ecological footprint and contribute positively to the surrounding environment.</p> <p>The Applicant's ambition extends beyond the conventional approach of minimal environmental impact. We aspire to achieve a significant biodiversity net gain that will go well beyond minimum Government requirements. This vision will be realised through the implementation of initiatives such as the introduction of vibrant wildflower meadows, the establishment of biodiverse hedgerows, and the creation of thriving habitats where local wildlife can flourish. In doing so, the Applicant aims not only to meet but to exceed ecological responsibilities, leaving a lasting legacy of environmental enrichment for generations to come.</p> <p>We have already sought input on potential ideas and priorities for achieving a biodiversity net gain from the local community and will continue to ask questions and have conversations throughout the statutory consultation.</p> <p>The Applicant is also working with Rothamsted Research to understand how solar farms can be designed for maximum land use gain across various metrics including CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration, soil health, biodiversity, crop/livestock yield, and solar yield. The Applicant is therefore looking to include new initiatives supported by the research into the proposals for East Park Energy.</p>
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	
<p>Some residents raised concerns about the cultural heritage of the area being impacted.</p> <p>Proximity to heritage assets such as grade I listed churches at Great Staughton and Little Staughton, Staughton Manor, and The Old Rectory Pertenhall, scheduled monuments (one of which is partly within site C), and Conservation Areas. Changes within the setting of these assets may be anticipated and the scheme would potentially result in harm to their significance. The setting of heritage assets is not however just restricted to visual impacts and other factors should also be considered in</p>	<p>Initial assessments will be carried out to identify any known archaeological and cultural heritage features on and around the proposed site.</p> <p>The full assessment of potential for direct impacts will be informed by non-invasive assessment including a geophysical survey. This will identify any below ground features or anomalies and the need for further evaluation and/or mitigation works, such as trial trenching/evaluation and excavation.</p>

Response theme	Applicant's response
<p>particular glare, noise, light, traffic and landscape impact. There may also be undesignated assets of equal significance. The construction of solar panels and associated infrastructure can also affect the significance of the heritage assets through change within their setting. Baseline Cultural Heritage information will need to be identified as part of assessment work. Assessments will need to be carried out to understand the archaeological potential and significance of historic environment (including built environment) as well as the impacts of the proposed scheme on this significance. The temporary as well as permanent effects on the cultural heritage will need to be considered. Heritage buildings – causeway. The impact that the proposed scheme may have on the water environment will also need to be considered. Impact on pathfinder legacy.</p>	<p>The scope of any further work will be discussed and agreed with the archaeological advisors to Bedford Borough Council and Cambridgeshire County Council.</p> <p>The results of the geophysical assessment and associated analysis will be presented within the PEIR, and the results of the full archaeological investigation and any associated mitigation will be presented within the ES that will form part of the DCO application.</p>
<b>Transport</b>	
<p>Concerns have been raised by some respondents that there may be a large amount of activity involved in transporting equipment and personnel to and from the site.</p> <p>Access points – concern over use of public rights of way and lorry movements. Route construction vehicles away from Great Staughton. We have significant concerns regarding how the construction vehicles and equipment would approach the various sites along the very narrow and rural adjacent roads. It would be imperative that any construction traffic be routed away from existing rural villages and roads. Impacts on Local Roads.</p>	<p>Transport of equipment and personnel to and from the site will be set out in a management plan which will ensure minimal impact on nearby residents.</p> <p>Access to the site will only be needed for initial construction and, following this period, only for maintenance, landscape management and repair.</p> <p>The only potential impact on public rights of way would be during the construction phase, where it would be necessary for them to be crossed by cable corridors. Careful management will ensure that this is temporary and adequately mitigated.</p>
<b>Glint and Glare</b>	

Response theme	Applicant's response
Some residents have raised concerns about solar panels creating glints of light and glaring.	<p>All proportionate measures will be taken in order to ensure that glint and glare from panels is avoided where at all possible.</p> <p>Solar panels on the development will further be equipped with anti-reflection coatings in order to limit glare and maximise their light absorption capabilities.</p>
<b>Health Impacts</b>	
<p>Concerns were voiced about potential impact of the development on the mental and physical health of some individuals.</p> <p>Impact on human health from EMF from solar panels and battery storage. Quality of life and mental health/human health.</p>	<p>The Applicant will remain in full compliance with any and all legislation to maintain the safety of the development.</p> <p>Whilst we appreciate that the temporary change of purpose of the agricultural land to host the solar farm may not be what some individuals are familiar with, the Applicant remains contactable and approachable for all residents wishing to raise concerns, ask questions or make suggestions as to how we can make further accommodations. The Applicant stands ready to make reasonable accommodations in order to best suit the local community.</p>
<b>Cumulative Impacts</b>	
<p>Need to consider cumulative impacts with other solar farms that exist (eg Little Staughton airfield and Manor Farm) or are proposed – (eg Bushmead Road) and farms such as Pastures Farm.</p> <p>Concern over cumulative impact with Luton Airport holding stack.</p>	<p>The Applicant will prepare a Cumulative Effects Assessment in accordance with Planning Inspectorate Advice Note 17 to accompany the application for development consent.</p>
<b>Flooding</b>	

Response theme	Applicant's response
<p>Flooding – particularly the brook to the north of Brook End, Keysoe and Pertenhall Brook east to its junction with the River Kym. There is a sewage treatment works just downstream of the area of flooding. Flooding from run off at Little Staughton. Scotch Street/Spring Hill is a very wet area. Also fields running alongside the B660, at Pertenhall Road, which act as a natural flood plain for the Kym brook and regularly flood, alleviating the brook further downstream for houses, and flooding near B645 bridge over river Kym at Great Staughton. Climate change – should be factored in to the assessment of flood risk.</p>	<p>The Applicant will prepare a Flood Risk Assessment to accompany the application for development consent. The Assessment is likely to cover issues of flood risk and surface water run-off.</p>
<b>Ecology</b>	
<p>Concern on impact on wildlife including hare, foxes, rabbits, muntjac/deer, hunting owls, buzzards, red kite, sky larks, bats, reptiles, otters, small eggar moth and badgers. Concern about bats mistaking panels for water.</p> <p>High Wood (an ancient woodland) would be surrounded by solar farms.</p>	<p>The Environmental Statement (ES) accompanying the application for development consent will include a chapter on Ecology and Nature Conservation. This will be supported by surveys and reports on affected priority habitats and consider the impact of the project on ancient woodlands.</p>
<b>Socio-Economic Impacts</b>	
<p>Would attract crime e.g. theft of cabling and lead to security measures.</p> <p>Concern over impact on house prices.</p> <p>Loss of public recreational space.</p>	<p>The Environmental Statement (ES) accompanying the application for development consent will include a chapter on the socio-economic impacts of the project. This is more likely to cover land use and tourism impacts, particularly during construction, than a fear of crime. The Applicant do not believe that the project will result in the loss of any existing public recreational space.</p>
<b>Decommissioning</b>	



Response theme	Applicant's response
More detail needed on decommissioning/how can we be sure that the land will return to farming or that decommissioning will happen at all?	The Applicant will consider preparing an outline decommissioning plan to accompany the application for development consent.
<b>Technical Issues</b>	
Statutory electoral safety clearance must be maintained to National Grid Infrastructure at all times. Impact on underground gas pipelines.  Extent of the PV panels have the potential to create local heat islands due to the 30% reflected heat from the panels (Barron-Gafford et al, Nature, 2016). This is already a hot and dry area in the summer and further raising the temperature may be damaging to residents health and create a wild fire risk in surrounding vegetation/residential areas.	The Applicant will ensure that the application for development consent will include appropriate safety clearance to all statutory undertakers assets within the application site and will comply with relevant safety legislation.
<b>Planning Policy</b>	
Reference should be made to local plans including Bedford Local Plan policies 56 and 57 (renewable energy).	The application for development consent will be accompanied by a Planning Policy Assessment that will reference all relevant policies in the Development Plans of the host local planning authorities.

## Summary of Changes to Scheme Following non-statutory Consultation

- 2.4.13 Following the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant reviewed all the responses received.
- 2.4.14 Responses received to the open questions and bespoke responses were reviewed and summarised in terms of key themes and issues.
- 2.4.15 As part of the analysis of free text responses, the Applicant identified 'Change Requests' (specific requests to change elements of the proposed reinforcement design). These issues were sorted and considered as part of the design development process.
- 2.4.16 All issues raised from the feedback at non-statutory consultation were considered and responded to as part of the Non-statutory consultation report. The Non-statutory consultation report was intended to be uploaded to the website at the start of the statutory consultation; however, it was omitted due to human error. No requests for the report were received during the statutory consultation, and it was subsequently uploaded to the website on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024.
- 2.4.17 A copy of the Non-statutory consultation report can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 1-1: Non-statutory consultation report [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.
- 2.4.18 Following the non-statutory consultation and technical surveys, the following key changes were made to the Scheme:
- The identification of a new BESS and Substation location within East Park Site D, referred to as Option 2;
  - Solar development removed from the north and east of East Park Site C in response to consultation feedback and following the discovery of the remains of a Roman town in this area;

- Solar development removed from areas west of Little Staughton in response to consultation feedback;
- Solar development removed from land north of The Kangaroo (a residential property on Staughton Road) in response to consultation feedback;
- Solar development added to the west of East Park Site C to compensate for the loss of developable area in Site C;
- Realignment of solar development fence lines to provide suitable buffers to existing public rights of way, and to remove development from areas identified as being within fluvial Flood Zones 2 and 3;
- Solar development fence lines consolidated across the Scheme to rationalise boundaries and reduce the amount of fencing;
- Change in site access, with the removal of two proposed site access points along the B645 near Hail Weston, and addition of a new site access north of East Park Site D, and a further new site access utilising an existing private access to the north-west of Site C;
- Changes to the alignment of the 400 kV grid connection in response to feedback from the affected landowners; and
- Change in position and alignment of the cable corridors between Site B and Site C, and between Site C and Site D.

2.4.19 More information demonstrating how the design of the Scheme has changed over time can be found in the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/5.6]**.

## 2.5 Engagement following non-statutory consultation

2.5.1 Following the non-statutory consultation, on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024 the Applicant sent a newsletter to all the addresses within the host Parish Council areas with a project update. The newsletter included an overview of the non-statutory consultation, upcoming surveys, the Applicant's acquisition by Brockwell Storage and Solar, and the next steps in the consultation process. The distribution area is detailed in Figure 2, and a copy of the newsletter can

be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 1-13: July 2024 newsletter [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

2.5.2 To maintain communication with local stakeholders, two meetings were held with the Member of Parliament for North Bedfordshire. The first was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2024 and the second on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2024.

2.5.3 Engagement continued with the Host Authorities during this time, in addition to a series of meetings with technical stakeholders. Details of these meeting can be found in Table 5.

***Table 5 Meetings with technical stakeholders following close of non-statutory consultation***

Stakeholder	Date
Host Authorities	8th December 2023
Host Authorities	12th January 2024
Host Authorities	9th February 2024
Host Authorities	16th February 2024
Host Authorities	19th February 2024
Host Authorities	8th March 2024
Highways Authorities	11th March 2024
Heritage Officers	12th March 2024
Environmental Health Officers	12th March 2024
County Archaeologists	13th March 2024
Ecology Officers	15th March 2024
Host Authorities	12th April 2024
Host Authorities	10th May 2024
Host Authorities	14th June 2024
Host Authorities	12th July 2024
Host Authorities	9th August 2024
Host Authorities	13th September 2024

## 3.0 CONSULTATION UNDER ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) REGULATIONS

### 3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1 Chapter 3 outlines how the Applicant has delivered engagement in accordance with the EIA Regulations.
- 3.1.2 Regulation 14 of the EIA Regulations states that an application for an order granting development consent for EIA development must be accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES).
- 3.1.3 The Scheme falls under paragraph 3(a) of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations and would constitute an EIA development if it were likely to have significant environmental effects by virtue of its nature, size or location. It is considered by the Applicant that the Scheme has the potential to meet these criteria and so the Applicant elected to prepare an Environmental Statement (ES) in support of its DCO application.
- 3.1.4 This Chapter provides a general overview of the pre-application engagement carried out by the Applicant relating to the EIA process. Full details of consultation and engagement activities of relevance to the EIA are provided in **ES Vol 1: Main Report [EN010141/DR/6.1]**.

### 3.2 EIA Scoping

- 3.2.1 Regulation 8(1) of the EIA Regulations requires the Applicant to undertake one of the following steps before carrying out statutory consultation under Section 42 of the PA 2008:

“(a) ask the Secretary of State to adopt a screening opinion in respect of the development to which the application relates; or

(b) notify the Secretary of State in writing that the person proposes to provide an environmental statement in respect of that development.”.

- 3.2.2 The Applicant submitted an Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report to the Planning Inspectorate on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2023, supporting their request for a Scoping Opinion under Regulation 10 of the EIA Regulations. Under Regulation 8(1)(b) of the EIA Regulations, a cover letter was also submitted as a notification to accompany the Scoping Report, which highlighted that the Applicant proposes to provide an Environmental Statement with an application for an order granting development consent.
- 3.2.3 An EIA Scoping Opinion was issued by the Planning Inspectorate on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2023.
- 3.2.4 In accordance with Regulation 11(1)(b) of the EIA Regulations, the Planning Inspectorate provided the Applicant with a list of consultation bodies notified under Regulation 11(1)(a), who were subsequently included in future consultation activities by the Applicant. A copy of the Regulation 11 list provided by the Planning Inspectorate is shown in **Consultation Report Appendix 2-1: Copy of Regulation 11 list [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.
- 3.2.5 The Regulation 11(1)(b) list was subsequently used to inform the list of prescribed consultees to be consulted under Section 42(1)(a) of the PA 2008 during statutory consultation. Further detail is provided in Chapter 5 of the Report.
- 3.2.6 Comments about the content of the ES have been taken into account when preparing these reports, with further detail to be found in the relevant chapters of the ES.

### **3.3 Development of Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR)**

- 3.3.1 The adoption of the Scoping Opinion informed the next stage in the EIA process, namely the preparation of a PEIR.
- 3.3.2 The PEIR outlined the assessments of the potential impacts of the Scheme carried out to date. It was included as one of the consultation documents

created for statutory consultation. The PEIR allowed the local community and those with an interest in the Scheme to understand the likely environmental effects of the Scheme and in turn, informed their response to the statutory consultation.

- 3.3.3 In accordance with Section 42 of the PA 2008, the Applicant carried out a statutory consultation between 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and 29<sup>th</sup> October 2024.
- 3.3.4 In accordance with the requirements of Regulation 13 of the EIA Regulations, on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024 a copy of the notice published under Section 48 of the PA 2008 for the statutory consultation was sent to EIA consultation bodies, including those bodies listed by the Planning Inspectorate in the Scoping Opinion under Regulation 11 of the EIA Regulations. A copy of the letter sent to consultees is included in **Consultation Report Appendix 4-2: Letter sent to consultees under section 42 [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.
- 3.3.5 A copy of the notice published under Section 48 of the PA 2008 sent to the relevant consultation bodies is available in **Consultation Report Appendix 3-4: Section 48 notice [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

## 3.4 Demonstrating regard to advice

- 3.4.1 Consultation and engagement during the EIA process is critical to the development of a comprehensive and proportionate ES. The views of statutory and non-statutory consultees are important to ensure that from the outset, the EIA focuses on specific issues where significant environmental effects are likely, and where further investigation is required.
- 3.4.2 Issues raised at statutory consultation by Section 42(1)(a) and Section 42(1)(b) consultees, which includes EIA consultation bodies, and the Applicant's response are outlined in **Consultation Report Appendix 5-1: Regard had to Section 42(1)(a) and (1)(b) responses [EN010141/DR/5.2]**. Some section 42(1)(d) and section 47 consultees raised issues relating to the environment in their responses, these are identified under environmental

themes within **Consultation Report Appendix 5-2: Regard had to Section 42(1)(d) and 47 responses [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

- 3.4.3 In line with the Pre-application Guidance, the Applicant has undertaken proactive and ongoing engagement with EIA consultation bodies and a variety of representative local groups to further gather views to help develop the design of the Scheme.
- 3.4.4 The Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) was based on the **ES Vol 2 Appendix 4-2: EIA Scoping Opinion [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. **ES Vol 2 Appendix 4-3: Scoping Opinion Response Matrix [EN010141/DR/6.2]** demonstrates how due consideration has been given to the Scoping Opinion.
- 3.4.5 Table 6 demonstrates how the ES complies with the requirements for engagement and consultation in accordance with the EIA Regulations.

**Table 6 Summary of compliance with EIA Regulations**

Regulation within the EIA Regulations 2017	Requirement or provision of regulation	How the Applicant has complied
Regulation 8	Notify the SoS that an ES will be submitted with the Application	Under Regulation 8 of the EIA Regulations, a cover letter was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate as a notification, to accompany the Scoping Report (see next paragraph), which highlighted that the Applicant proposes to provide an Environmental Statement with an application for an order granting development consent. The Applicant submitted an Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report ( <b>ES Volume 2 Appendix 4-1: East Park Energy EIA Scoping Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]</b> ), to the Planning Inspectorate on 30 <sup>th</sup> October 2023, supporting their request for a Scoping Opinion
Regulation 10	Applicant may request a Scoping Opinion from the SoS on the information that should be included within the ES	



		under Regulation 10 of the EIA Regulations.
Regulation 11	Planning Inspectorate to notify the consultation bodies that the Applicant intends to provide an ES for the Scheme	The list of consultation bodies attached to the Planning Inspectorates' Scoping Opinion referenced above was used to inform the prescribed consultees consulted under section 42(1)(a) during the statutory consultation. A copy of the Reg 11 list can be found in <b>Consultation Report Appendix 2-1: Copy of Regulation 11 list [EN010141/DR/5.2]</b> .
Regulation 13	The Applicant must publish the notice and send a copy of the section 48 notice to Regulation 11 consultation bodies	On 23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2024 a copy of the section 48 Notice for the 2024 statutory consultation was emailed or posted by 24 tracked to all prescribed consultees required by section 42(a) of the PA 2008, including Regulation 11 bodies. A copy of the cover letter can be found in <b>Consultation Report Appendix 4-2: Letter sent to consultees under section 42 [EN010141/DR/5.2]</b> and a copy of the notice can be found in <b>Consultation Report Appendix 3-4: Section 48 notice [EN010141/DR/5.2]</b> .
Regulation 14	An application for an order granting development consent for EIA must be accompanied by an Environmental Statement	An ES has been prepared and submitted as part of the DCO Application.

## 4.0 STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION (SOCC)

### 4.1 Overview

4.1.1 **Chapter 4** includes details of how the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) was prepared, consulted on and published, pursuant to Section 47 of the PA 2008, prior to commencing statutory consultation for the Scheme. The SoCC can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 3-3: Final SoCC [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

4.1.2 Section 47 of the PA 2008 states:

“(1) The applicant must prepare a statement setting out how the applicant proposes to consult, about the proposed application, people living in the vicinity of the land.

(2) Before preparing the statement, the applicant must consult each local authority that is within section 43(1) about what is to be in the statement.

(3) The deadline for the receipt by the applicant of a local authority's response to consultation under subsection (2) is the end of the period of 28 days that begins with the day after the day on which the local authority receives the consultation documents.

(4) In subsection (3) “the consultation documents” means the documents supplied to the local authority by the applicant for the purpose of consulting the local authority under subsection (2).

(5) In preparing the statement, the applicant must have regard to any response to consultation under subsection (2) that is received by the applicant before the deadline imposed by subsection (3).

(6) Once the applicant has prepared the statement, the applicant must — (za) make the statement available for inspection by the public in a way that is reasonably convenient for people living in the vicinity of the land; (a) publish in a newspaper circulating in the vicinity of the land a notice stating where and

when the statement can be inspected, and (b) publish the statement in such manner as may be prescribed.

(7) The applicant must carry out consultation in accordance with the proposals set out in the statement.”

## 4.2 Development of the early draft SoCC

4.2.1 Following the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant began the preparation of the draft SoCC. The draft SoCC provided information about how the Applicant would consult and engage with the local communities likely to be affected by the Scheme.

4.2.2 Section 47(2) of the Act requires the Applicant to consult each local authority within Section 43(1) (the host authorities for the areas of land needed for the Scheme) about the SoCC.

4.2.3 The Host Authorities were consulted on the content of the draft SoCC, following which the SoCC was amended and finalised prior to the start of the statutory consultation.

## 4.3 Consultation on the early draft SoCC

4.3.1 An early draft of the proposed SoCC was issued to the Host Authorities on 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024 with a request that responses were received by 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

4.3.2 Copies of the emails to the host authorities regarding the early draft SoCC can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 3-1: Email sharing early draft of SoCC with Host Authorities [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

4.3.3 Responses were received from all three Host Authorities.

## **4.4 Regard Had to local authority responses to the early draft SoCC**

- 4.4.1 Table 7 outlines the comments received from the host local authorities on the early draft SoCC and the changes made to the SoCC.

**Table 7 Regard had to comments on early draft of the proposed SoCC**

Local authority	SoCC ref.	Comment	Applicant's response
Cambridgeshire County Council	3.0	Suggested stylistic change to description of located of the application site.	Section 3.0 updated in line with comments.
Huntingdonshire District Council	3.0	Noted and agree with recommendations of CCC.	As above.
Bedford Borough Council	3.1	Need to state land take. Circa 1,000ha.	Section 3.1 updated to refer to approximate size of the Scheme in hectares.
Bedford Borough Council	3.2	Add section on emerging concerns from community regarding scheme?	This information was included in the Consultation brochure published as part of the statutory consultation, but the Applicant does not consider that this information is required in the SoCC. No change made.
Huntingdonshire District Council	3.2	Is reference to doubling the renewable energy capacity qualified data?	The data is sourced from a government dataset ( <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/regional-renewable-statistics">https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/regional-renewable-statistics</a> ). Reference to source of data added as footnote.
Bedford Borough Council	3.2	Need to understand what the East Park Legacy Fund means; management and ownership structure and duration.	At the time of preparing the early draft of the proposed SoCC, this information was unconfirmed and therefore not available for inclusion. No change made, but information on this topic was included in the consultation materials published as part of the statutory consultation.
Bedford Borough Council	3.2	Need to evidence statement that consumer costs are soaring.	Language in section 3.2 modified and reference to House of Commons Library research briefing ( <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/regional-renewable-statistics">https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/regional-renewable-statistics</a> ) added.
Huntingdonshire District Council	5.1	Appreciate “for example” list of matters that feedback will be sought on – but to me this appears loaded based on the listed questions which are quite detailed.	The questions outlined in Section 5.1 were not all the questions that the Applicant proposed to ask for feedback on. However, it is important to recognise that the need for the Scheme is established and that there are topics the Examining Authority will have expected the Applicant to have asked for specific feedback on. No change made to the SoCC.
Cambridgeshire County Council	5.1	How will you be addressing decommissioning?	The questions outlined in section 5.1 were indicative and not exhaustive. However, the Applicant amended the list to make reference to

Local authority	SoCC ref.	Comment	Applicant's response
			decommissioning, and it sought views on decommissioning as part of the statutory consultation.
Bedford Borough Council	5.1	Need to recognise upfront cumulative effect.	The Applicant does not believe the suggested change is relevant to the scope of the Statement of Community Consultation. No change made, but the Applicant did present information on cumulative impacts as part of the statutory consultation.
Cambridgeshire County Council	5.1	Is it worth mentioning BNG, community fund? More relatable to residents?	The questions outlined in section 5.1 were indicative and not exhaustive. Furthermore, the Applicant has already consulted on the legacy fund as part of the non-statutory consultation. No change made, but information on biodiversity net gain and the proposed legacy fund did form part of the Applicant's statutory consultation.
Bedford Borough Council	5.1	What is its legacy? How is this delivered and funded over 40 year period?	The Scheme would have long-term benefits beyond the proposed legacy fund, including supporting energy security and the UK's net zero targets. No change required.
Cambridgeshire County Council	5.1	Just to be clear. Will there be a single non-technical summary for the complete PEIR, or non-technical summaries for each section of the PEIR?	A single non-technical summary of the PEIR was made available as part of the statutory consultation. No change required.
Huntingdonshire District Council	5.1	Understood based on previous sessions that the consultation would be 2 stage on the PEIR. The wording here does not suggest this or when the information will be consulted on.	The PEIR was consulted on as part of the statutory consultation, not as a standalone consultation. No change required.
Cambridgeshire County Council	5.2	Suggest adding to list of those who would be consulted Local Authority Councillors representing wards within and bordering the consultation zone.	Section 5.2 updated to make clear that local authority councillors will be consulted.
Bedford Borough Council	5.2	Add Ramblers to list of local interest groups.	Section 5.2 updated to include the Ramblers Association in the list of local interest groups.

Local authority	SoCC ref.	Comment	Applicant's response
Cambridgeshire County Council	5.2.1	Add ward to north of Hail Weston to consult due to landscape impact	Southlow & Midloe, and Little Paxton parish councils added to the list of consultees contained within paragraph 5.2.1.
Huntingdonshire District Council	5.2.1	Add Southoe & Midlow, and Little Paxton Parish Council's to reflect the ZTV within the Scoping Report.	As above.
Cambridgeshire County Council	6.0	Will large print be available to those that request? Possible Audio? All documentation must be available in formats that can be read by people who care for example colour blind and available in braille?	Section 6.0 updated to make reference to information being available in alternative formats (such as accessible PDF, large print, easy read, audio recording or braille) upon request.
Huntingdonshire District Council	6.0	Print and font size? Hard 'library' copy with Parish Clerk?	The print and font size of consultation documents, such as the PEIR, was as per the Planning Inspectorate's advice note on the preparation and submission of application documents. Whilst the Applicant did not consider that providing paper copies of consultation materials to the parish clerk was appropriate in a digital-first world, these were available to view at consultation events and paper copies of most documents were available free-of-charge on request. No change required.
Cambridgeshire County Council	6.0	I have seen an online interactive map used before where you can 'pin' a comment. Is anything like this proposed?	This tool was used at the non-statutory consultation but was not considered a success due to negative feedback on the tool from consultation respondents. As such, the Applicant did not make use of it at the statutory consultation. No change made.
Huntingdonshire District Council	6.0	Exhibitions should have options for times of the week/day. How will the events be promoted?	The Applicant held a weekend daytime consultation event as part of the statutory consultation, alongside three weekday daytime/evening (finishing at 7pm) consultation events. Section 6.0 updated to include further details of how the consultation will be promoted.
Bedford Borough Council	6.0	How often will the events be?	Section 8.3 updated to set out the Applicant's intention to hold up-to four events. Following the formal consultation on the draft SoCC, a further update included details of when and where these events were taking place.

Local authority	SoCC ref.	Comment	Applicant's response
Cambridgeshire County Council	6.0	How long in advance will you advertise the event and through what media?	Section 6.0 sets out the Applicant's plan to use newspapers, direct mail, a website and social media to advertise the statutory consultation, with this activity taking place shortly prior to the start of the consultation.
Huntingdonshire District Council	6.0	What would be in the press notice? Period of time for comments?	The press notice included a description of the Scheme, location of exhibitions and deadline for comments. Section 6.0 updated to make reference to this.
Cambridgeshire County Council	6.0	A variety of times to reach most people.	The Applicant held a weekend daytime consultation event as part of the statutory consultation, alongside three weekday daytime/evening (finishing at 7pm) consultation events. Section 6.0 updated to include further details of how the consultation will be promoted.
Cambridgeshire County Council	6.0	Any there are any parish newsletters?	Where they exist, the Applicant believes that the frequency of such newsletters was not timely for the consultation. No change made.
Cambridgeshire County Council	6.0	Need to define the notice period being given.	The first newspaper notice appeared alongside the start of statutory consultation. No change made.
Cambridgeshire County Council	6.0	Are there any local Facebook pages to link with?	Facebook adverts were targeted at all users within a defined area. No change made.
Huntingdonshire District Council	6.0	On seldom heard groups, Cambridgeshire County Council have provided a list of Gypsy and Traveller Groups and we will provide a list of community groups in the area.	Once provided, the Applicant consulted the groups identified by the Council. No change made.
Bedford Borough Council	8.1	How will the local insights be recorded?	Local insights will be captured in the Consultation Report, but the Applicant does not consider that this information is required in the SoCC. No change required.
Bedford Borough Council	8.1	Add dates and venues of non-statutory consultation.	This information will be included in the Consultation Report, but the Applicant does not consider that this information is required in the SoCC. No change made.



Local authority	SoCC ref.	Comment	Applicant's response
Cambridgeshire County Council	9.1	It is noted that feedback will be in writing unless there are exceptional circumstances. How will this be communicated to the public? Some hard to reach groups may find writing a barrier unless they are aware of alternative routes via the phone.	The Consultation brochure published as part of the statutory consultation set out that feedback would be accepted by telephone in exceptional circumstance. Section 9.1 updated to make this clear.
Bedford Borough Council	9.3	Statement that any future targeted consultation would be undertaken in accordance with the principles and methods set out in this SoCC needs to be a more committed statement.	Section 9.3 updated in line with comments.
Bedford Borough Council	10.0	Put in months for consultation – not just “summer”.	The final version of the SoCC included the dates of the statutory consultation, which were subject to change at the time of the consultation on the early draft of the proposed SoCC. No change made at the time of the consultation on the early draft of the proposed SoCC.
Bedford Borough Council	10.0	Set out more what the opportunities are for public representations at the examination.	Cross reference to guidance on Planning Inspectorate's website added.
Huntingdonshire District Council	Contact us	Data protection. How will data be handled and stored.	'Contact us' section updated to include statement on how data will be processed and handled.

## 4.5 Consultation on the draft SoCC

- 4.5.1 The Host Authorities were formally consulted on the draft SoCC on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2024, with any comments requested to be submitted by 29<sup>th</sup> May 2024.
- 4.5.2 Copies of the emails to the host authorities regarding the draft SoCC can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 3-2: Email sharing draft of SoCC with host authorities [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.
- 4.5.3 Responses were received from all three Host Authorities.

## 4.6 Regard Had to local authority responses to the draft SoCC

- 4.6.1 Table 8 outlines the comments received from the host local authorities on the draft SoCC and the changes made to the SoCC. A copy of the SoCC published alongside the statutory consultation is included in **Consultation Report Appendix 3-3: Final SoCC [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

**Table 8 Regard had to comments on draft SoCC**

Local authority	SoCC ref.	Comment	Applicant's response
Cambridgeshire County Council	2.1.2	May be worth stating geographically where, regional, national, Europe.	The existing text in section 2.0 sets out that, whilst the Applicant's portfolio of projects has been centred in Scotland, moving forwards it is seeking to strengthen its footprint across the UK. As such, no change to SoCC made.
Cambridgeshire County Council	2.1.2	Clarification: EN-3 Footnote 43 'For planning purposes, the proposed development will be assessed on the impacts of the <b>total number of panels installed on the site</b> (i.e., the impacts of the overplanted site)'; and, the related total potential capacity generated. Can this be provided?	Footnote 43 is no longer part of the current version EN-3 (November 2023). The comparable footnote would appear to be footnote 92, which does not base the assessment on the total number of panels installed on the site but on the impacts of the full extent of the Scheme, including any overplanting. This is the approach taken in the Environmental Impact Assessment, and does not form part of the summary description of the proposals provided in the SoCC. As such, no change made.
Cambridgeshire County Council	3.2.1	Can it be clarified if this is referring to AC current or DC current?	Footnote added to 3.2.1 clarifying that the anticipated output is measured in AC.
Cambridgeshire County Council	3.2.1	Clarification: MW storage capacity of the BESS, can this be stated to ensure it is not over-scaled to requirement, which in turn reverts to harm.	The project description is based on that included in the PEIR and other documents. For consistency with these documents, no change made to the SoCC.
Cambridgeshire County Council	3.2.1	Can this be quantified?	The project description is based on that included in the PEIR and other documents. For consistency with these documents, no change made to the SoCC.
Cambridgeshire County Council	3.2.1	Is this or can this be expressed as how much the Scheme will deliver annually as a baseline minimum (GW)?	3.2.1 expanded to explain that the proposed solar array ' <i>...would generate approximately 430 GWh of electricity per annum...</i> '.
Cambridgeshire County Council	3.2.1	East Park Legacy Fund: need clarification what this is, etc. Currently there is no further information on what many will see as a potentially important benefit.	Further detail on the Legacy Fund was included in the materials published as part of the statutory consultation. The Applicant did not consider that any further information is needed within the SoCC, as the focus of this document was

Local authority	SoCC ref.	Comment	Applicant's response
			on <i>how</i> the Applicant will consult rather than on <i>what</i> the Applicant is consulting on. As such, no change made to the SoCC.
Cambridgeshire County Council	3.3.1	This statement cannot be evidenced in terms of energy price to consumer. Should be removed.	The Applicant notes the comment and has removed the statement from the SoCC.
Cambridgeshire County Council	3.3.1	Not sure this (' <i>connection to the National Grid is available to BSSL in the relatively near term</i> ') is a benefit.	The Applicant notes the comment and has removed the statement from the SoCC.
Cambridgeshire County Council	5.1.1	International, national, regional or local. This is to ensure consideration of manufacturing and logistics. i.e. import of PVs and other equipment.	The Applicant believes the comment is a matter for the EIA process, rather than the SoCC process. As such, no change made.
Cambridgeshire County Council	5.1.1	Add 'operational' for completeness. Whilst envisaged less than construction and decommissioning, replacement still needs to be considered. Potential to amount to significant if panels need to be replace within the 40 year permission. Also to consider the replacement of large infrastructure such as batteries or transformers.	5.1.1 amended to read ' <i>...How BSSL can ensure the Scheme manages any disruption for local residents during construction, operation, and decommissioning works...</i> '
Cambridgeshire County Council	5.1.1	Clarify completion - end of construction or end of the 40 year permission	5.1.1 amended to remove ' <i>upon completion</i> ' from text.
Cambridgeshire County Council	5.2.1	Add 'organisations'.	5.2.1 amended to read ' <i>...Our communication channels (detailed later in this SoCC) can be used by interested parties, organisation or individuals to get in touch...</i> '
Cambridgeshire County Council	5.2.3	Local authorities and...	5.2.3 amended to read ' <i>...Seldom heard groups' within the consultation zone, who have been drawn to our attention by Local Authorities and Parish Councils...</i> '
Huntingdonshire District Council	5.3.1	Petenhall - I believe there is an 'r' but defer to BBC (BBC confirm Pertenhall)	5.3.1 amended to correct spelling error.
Cambridgeshire County Council	5.3.3	Suggest adding to the map to show boundaries	Figure 1 of the SOCC revised to better show parish council boundaries.

Local authority	SoCC ref.	Comment	Applicant's response
Cambridgeshire County Council	5.3.3	Can [the following] be added. Brampton and Buckden county division - SW boundary is close to site D. This would incorporate Diddington, Southoe & Midlow Riseley - NW boundary is close to site A.	Figure 1 of the SoCC revised to include Diddington, and Southloe & Midleoe Parish Councils.
Cambridgeshire County Council	Figure 1	Can this include the 10km effect area.	The Applicant believes that the consultation zone it has identified is proportionate to the scale of the Scheme, as it includes all of the parish councils that would host it. As such, no change made to the SoCC.
Cambridgeshire County Council	Table 1	Detail of exhibition events is missing from column. Knowing where is important as the site covers a number of villages.	Table 2 of the SoCC amended to include detail of public consultation events.
Cambridgeshire County Council	Table 1	<i>Press releases</i> - Consideration needs to be given to the notice period for events and readvertising closer to the time.	Comment noted, no change to the SoCC required.
Cambridgeshire County Council	Table 1	<i>Community Information Line</i> - Can it be stated this information will be printed on all material? (particularly important for those not wishing to or cannot use the web site).	Table 1 amended to read ' <i>...A community information line will be available for anyone who has questions about the proposals via 0808 258 5991 Monday – Friday 9am to 5:30pm. Detail of the community information line will be included on consultation material provided to the public...</i> '.
Cambridgeshire County Council	Table 1	<i>Press notice - local newspaper</i> - Where there is the opportunity look to use local parish newsletters	Where they exist, the Applicant believes that the frequency of such newsletters was not timely for the consultation. No change made to the SoCC.
Cambridgeshire County Council	Table 1	<i>"Social media adverts with details of the proposed application and the consultation will be distributed at a 10-mile radius to the site"</i> - Not sure this follows. Better placed above related to postings.	The Applicant believes that the wording of the text is accurate/clear. As such, no change made to the SoCC.
Huntingdonshire District Council	6.1.2	Will it take 10 days to consider if the request can be accommodated, or the details then provided? Support the approach for these requests, but not sure on timescales and this could be a delay for people to be able to participate	6.1.2 amended to read ' <i>If any consultees need information available on the Scheme website in a different format, such as accessible PDF, large print, easy read, audio recording or braille, they can call the community information line to</i>

Local authority	SoCC ref.	Comment	Applicant's response
			<i>request this. The request will be considered, and a response provided, <b>within</b> <del>in</del> 10 working days.'</i>
Cambridgeshire County Council	8.3.1	<i>Weekday events end time (7PM) - To maximise attendance a broader timeframe for those returning home from work would be advantageous.</i>	In response to feedback from the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant held two additional in-person consultation events compared to the non-statutory consultation, including one that featured bookable 1:1 appointments for more in-depth conversations about the proposals. The Applicant believes these measures were sufficient in broadening access to in-person consultation events. As such, no change to the end time of consultation events was required.
Cambridgeshire County Council	10.0	Reflect revised programme.	10.1.2 updated to read ' <i>September – October 2024: Statutory consultation...</i> '
Cambridgeshire County Council	N/A	Can I check if you have identified as part of the hard to reach community the private traveller site on Kimbolton Road, which is between Hail Weston and Great Staughton? Do you have any specific plans for this community when at Statutory Consultation to share, or us LAs can assist with?	The Applicant can confirm that the traveller site was captured in the distribution area for the consultation zone mailing.

- 4.6.2 Following the amendments highlighted in Table 10, the final SoCC was published on the website as part of the launch of the statutory consultation on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024.
- 4.6.3 The SoCC was also available at all the in-person consultation events, with consultees being given the opportunity to request paper copies of the SoCC. No requests were made for this.

## 4.7 Publicity under Section 47 of the Planning Act 2008

- 4.7.1 The Applicant published a Section 47 notice, which included information relevant to, and was publicised in accordance with, the requirements of Section 47(6) in addition to a Section 48 notice which was publicised in accordance with, the requirements of Section 48 of the PA 2008.
- 4.7.2 In compliance with the publicity requirements of Section 47(6) of the PA 2008, the SoCC was made available for viewing for the duration of the statutory consultation, as detailed below.
  - 4.7.2.1 An advert publicising the locations where the SoCC could be viewed were placed in local newspaper, The Hunts Post, on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024.
- 4.7.3 A copy of the notice, as placed in the newspaper listed above, can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 3-6: Section 47 and 48 notices - The Hunts Post [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.
- 4.7.4 An electronic version of the SoCC was published on the project website on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024. A screenshot of the SoCC being available to download can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 3-9: Website screenshot showing SoCC can be downloaded [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.
- 4.7.5 Paper copy versions of the SoCC were available at all the consultation events during the statutory consultation.

- 4.7.6 Chapter 5 of the Report details the statutory consultation. Table 16 outlines how the consultation was undertaken in compliance with the published SoCC, as per the requirements of Section 47(7) of the PA 2008.
- 4.7.7 An early version of Table 16 was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate as part of the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone Report on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2025.



## 5.0 STATUTORY CONSULTATION

### 5.1 Overview

5.1.1 Chapter 5 provides a summary of the activities undertaken by the Applicant to ensure compliance with the requirements of the PA 2008, EIA Regulations and the commitments made within the published SoCC. Evidence of this compliance is supplied in the Appendices, where relevant and appropriate, and is referred to throughout the Chapter.

### 5.2 Summary of activity

5.2.1 The PA2008 requires the Applicant to:

- Notify the Planning Inspectorate of the proposed application on or before beginning statutory consultation (Section 46);
- Prepare a statement in consultation with the relevant local authority or authorities, which describes how the Applicant proposes to consult the local community (Section 47(1) and (2));
- Carry out consultation in accordance with the SoCC (Section 47(7));
- Make the SoCC available for inspection by the public in a way that is reasonably convenient for people living in the vicinity of the land where the development is proposed, publishing the statement and a newspaper notice stating where and when the statement can be inspected (Section 47(6));
- Identify and consult statutory consultees, local authorities and all persons with an interest in land (Sections 42, 43 and 44);
- Set a deadline for consultation responses not less than 28 days from the day after receipt of the consultation documents (Section 45);

- Publicise the proposed application in accordance with the APFP Regulations (section 48); and
- Have regard to relevant responses to publicity and consultation (Section 49).

5.2.2 The Applicant therefore held a five-week statutory consultation between 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and 29<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

5.2.3 The Applicant sought feedback on all aspects of the Scheme; including:

- Views on the UK's transition to net zero;
- The role of solar and battery storage projects;
- Changes made since the non-statutory consultation;
- Level of support for each of the four proposed development sites and associated infrastructure;
- Preferences regarding the location of the BESS and substation;
- Concerns about environmental impacts;
- Suggestions for delivering biodiversity net gain;
- Comments on the proposed East Park Legacy Fund;
- Preferred funding models of the East Park Legacy Fund and ideas for local projects that could benefit;
- Evaluation of the consultation process and materials; and
- Demographic information to support equality and diversity monitoring.

5.2.4 The Applicant welcomed all views and has had regard to all comments and feedback when developing the design, as detailed in Chapter 6.

5.2.5 The Applicant consulted with prescribed bodies and local authorities under Section 42(1)(a) and (b) of the PA 2008, along with PILs under Section 42(1)(d). Under Section 47 of the PA 2008, the Applicant also has a duty to consult the local community. The SoCC detailed the approach to consultation, as outlined in Chapter 4.

5.2.6 Table 9 summarises the activities which took place as part of the statutory consultation.

**Table 9 Summary of statutory consultation activities**

Activity	Date
Section 47 notice placed in a local newspaper in line with statutory requirements	18 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
Section 48 notice placed in a local newspaper in line with statutory requirements	18 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
Section 46 notice issued to the Planning Inspectorate	23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2024
Press release announcing the consultation issued to local media	23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2024
Consultation newsletter posted to 1,606 properties in the consultation zone, including the following parishes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bolnhurst &amp; Keysoe Parish Council;</li> <li>• Great Staughton Parish Council;</li> <li>• Hail Weston Parish Council;</li> <li>• Little Staughton Parish Council;</li> <li>• Pertenhall &amp; Swineshead Parish Council; and</li> <li>• Staploe Parish Council.</li> </ul>	24 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
Letters and emails sent to affected landowners and prescribed consultees	Letters – 20 <sup>th</sup> , 23 <sup>rd</sup> , 26 <sup>th</sup> September 2024 and 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2024 Emails - 24 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
Social media posts advertising the consultation launched	24 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
Consultation website updated with consultation details and all consultation documents	24 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
Section 48 notice placed in national newspaper and the London Gazette in line with statutory requirements	24 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
Section 48 notice placed in a local newspaper in line with statutory requirements	25 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
Launch of the statutory consultation	24 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
Publication of the SoCC, the PEIR, consultation brochure, feedback form and supporting materials on the project website	24 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
In-person public consultation event (Keysoe Village Hall, Elm Tree Grove, Keysoe, MK44 2JE)	1 <sup>st</sup> October 2024
In-person public consultation event (Little Staughton Village Hall, Colmworth Rd, Little Staughton, MK44 2BX)	2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2024
In-person public consultation event (Hail Weston Village Hall, 109 High St, Hail Weston, PE19 5JS)	11 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
In-person public consultation event (Great Staughton Village Hall, Green Lane, Great Staughton, PE19 5DG)	12 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
One-to-one meetings (Pertenhall Village Hall, Swineshead Road, Pertenhall, MK44 2AT)	22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2024

## 5.3 Consulting with Prescribed Consultees under Section 42

5.3.1 Section 42(1) of the PA 2008 specifies those parties who require consultation about the proposed application. This includes:

- Section 42(1)(a) – such persons as may be prescribed (covered in Section 5.4);
- Section 42(1)(aa) – the Marine Management Organisation;
- Section 42(1)(b) – each local authority that is within section 43 (covered in Section 5.5);
- Section 42(1)(c) – the Greater London Authority if the land is in Greater London (covered in Section 5.6); and
- Section 42(1)(d) – each person who is within one or more of the categories set out in section 44 (covered in Section 5.6).

5.3.2 Section 42(1)(aa) only applies in any case where the Scheme would affect, or would be likely to affect, any of the areas specified in Section 42(2). Further details of this is covered in Section 5.4.

5.3.3 The following sections outline how consultees have been identified. A full list of consultees identified in accordance with Section 42 can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 4-1: List of consultees under section 42 (a-b) [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

## 5.4 Consulting with Prescribed Consultees Under Section 42(1)(a) and Section 41(1)(aa)

5.4.1 Section 42(1)(a) of the PA 2008 requires applicants to consult with all applicable ‘prescribed’ bodies. Persons prescribed under Section 42(1)(a) are listed in column 1 of the Schedule to the APFP Regulations, (as substituted by the Infrastructure Planning (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2024 which came into force on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2024).

- 5.4.2 The Applicant consulted all those identified in the APFP Regulations. The updated table of prescribed consultees defines ‘relevant’ as “the body which has responsibility for the location where the proposals may or will be sited or has responsibility for an area which neighbours that location.”
- 5.4.3 On 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024, a consultation notification letter was sent by Special Delivery and via email on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024 to the Section 42(1)(a) consultees, along with a copy of the Section 48 notice, and the newsletter. The consultation notification letter can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 4-2: Letter sent to consultees under section 42 [EN010141/DR/5.2]** and the newsletter can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 4-3: Statutory consultation newsletter [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.
- 5.4.4 Section 42(1)(aa) requires consultation with the Marine Management Organisation (MMO). As the Scheme is inland, the MMO was not consulted.
- 5.4.5 A full list of the bodies consulted under Section 42(1)(a) and the dates they were notified can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 4-1: List of consultees under section 42 (a-b) [EN010141/DR/5.2]**

## 5.5 Consulting with Prescribed Consultees Under Sections 42(1)(b) and 43

- 5.5.1 Section 42(1)(b) requires that each local authority within Section 43 must be consulted. Section 43 states that:
- A local authority is within this section if the land is in the authority’s area;
  - A local authority (“A”) is within this section if: (a) the land is in the area of another local authority (“B”), (aa) B is a unitary council or a lower-tier district council, and (b) any part of the boundary of A’s area is also a part of the boundary of B’s area; and
  - If the land is in the area of an upper-tier county council (“C”), a local authority (“D”) is within this section if: (a) D is not a lower-tier district

council, and (b) any part of the boundary of D's area is also part of the boundary of C's area.

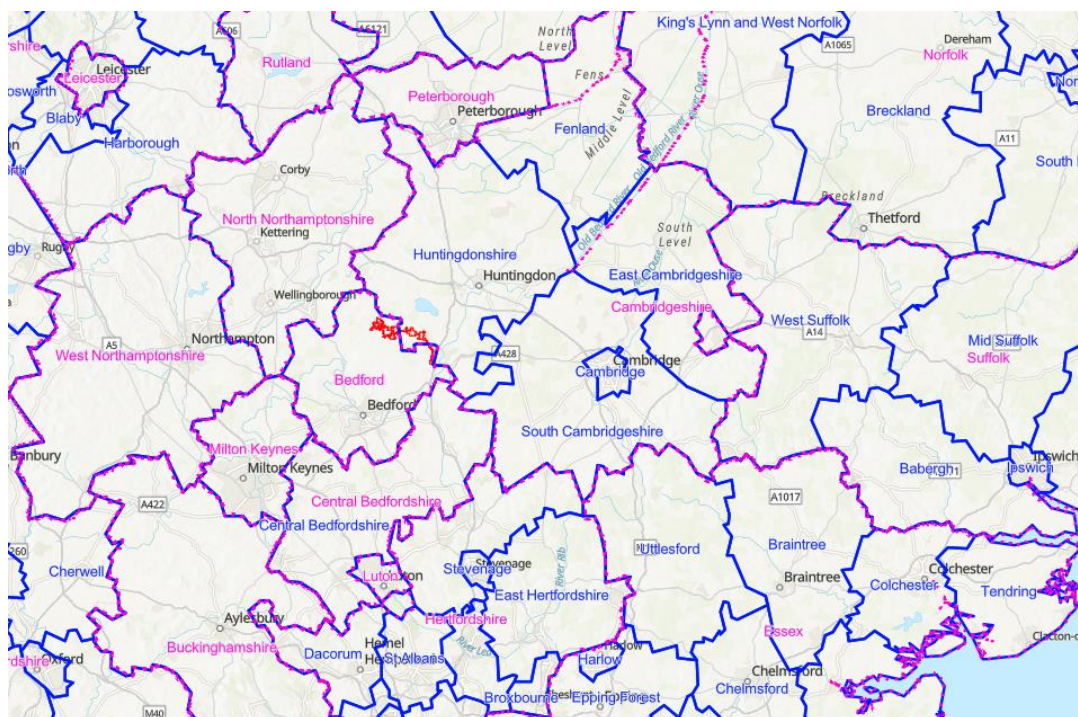
5.5.2 Huntingdonshire District Council, Bedfordshire Borough Council and Cambridgeshire County Council are the host authorities for the Scheme.

5.5.3 A full list of Section 42(1)(b) local authorities is included in Table 10, whilst Figure 3 shows the Section 42(1)(b) local authorities on a map.

**Table 10 Section 42(1)(b) local authorities**

Local authority section	Local authority
"A" S43 Consultees (lower-tier local authority, national park, London borough, etc. that shares a boundary with a "B" (host) authority)	North Northamptonshire Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, Central Bedfordshire Council, Peterborough City Council, Milton Keynes Council and Fenland District Council
"B" S43 Consultees (a lower-tier district council or a Unitary Council who is a host authority for the development and any associated development)	Huntingdonshire District Council and Bedford Borough Council
"C" S43 Consultees (an upper-tier county council who is a host authority)	Cambridgeshire County Council
"D" s43 Consultees (a local authority ("D") is within this section if: (a) D is not a lower-tier district council, and (b) any part of the boundary of D's area is also part of the boundary of C's area)	Lincolnshire County Council, Essex County Council, Suffolk County Council, Hertfordshire County Council and Norfolk County Council

Figure 3 Map of local authorities relative to Scheme order limits



5.5.4 A consultation notification letter was sent by Special Delivery on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024 and via email on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024 to the Section 42(1)(b) consultees, along with a copy of the Section 48 notice and the newsletter. The consultation notification letter can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 4-2: Letter sent to consultees under section 42 [EN010141/DR/5.2]**, and the newsletter can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 4-3: Statutory consultation newsletter [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

5.5.5 In cases where a prescribed/non-prescribed consultee pack was returned to sender, it was either reissued to an alternative address or verified to ensure the email version had reached the intended recipient. This process was also carried out for email bounce backs, and completed by 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024, to ensure that all prescribed and non-prescribed consultees had been informed through at least one contact channel.



## **5.6 Consulting with Prescribed Consultees Under Section 42(1)(c)**

- 5.6.1 Section 42(1)(c) requires consultation with the Greater London Authority (GLA) if the land is in Greater London. The Scheme is not within Greater London and therefore the GLA was not consulted.

## **5.7 Consulting persons with interests in land Under Sections 42(1)(d) and 44**

- 5.7.1 Section 42(1)(d) and Section 44 of the PA 2008 sets out how an applicant must consult with persons with interest in land (PILs) in respect of the Scheme, i.e. those who own, occupy, have an interest in, or who may be able to make certain claims for compensation in respect of land affected by a Scheme.

- 5.7.2 Under Section 44, PILs are split into three categories:

- Category 1: Where the applicant, after making diligent inquiry, knows that the person is an owner, lessee, tenant (whatever the tenancy period) or occupier of the land;
- Category 2: Where the applicant, after making diligent inquiry, knows that the person is interested in the land, or has power to sell and convey the land, or to release the land; and
- Category 3: Where the applicant thinks that, if the order sought by the proposed application were to be made and fully implemented, the person would or might be entitled to make a relevant claim:
  - As a result of the implementing of the order;
  - As a result of the order having been implemented; or
  - As a result of use of the land once the order has been implemented.

- 5.7.3 Category 3 persons are those with potential claims under the above legislation should the Scheme be carried out. They mainly relate to those whose land may be injuriously affected (i.e. its value would be diminished) as



a result of interference with a right or interest as a result of the Scheme, although the land in question is not acquired outright.

- 5.7.4 The Applicant carried out diligent inquiry using the following methods to identify and consult with those with an interest in the land affected by the Scheme.
- 5.7.5 Desktop referencing was undertaken through extraction of Land Registry data, requests for land interest information from landowners and other desktop activities to identify open spaces and rights of way.
- 5.7.6 Land interest questionnaires (LIQs) were posted from February to September 2024 to all parties identified through desktop searches (such as HM Land Registry, Companies House checks and site enquires) to confirm their interest and request further information. LIQs were also sent to any subsequently identified new interests. The LIQs included a request for information of the recipient's own interests, associated third party interests and the spatial extent of the property. Included with the questionnaires were individual plans showing the extent of land ownership boundaries.
- 5.7.7 Site referencing was undertaken through site visits to understand the occupation details for properties (ownership, leases, tenants or occupiers) in addition to confirming details which had been gathered through desktop methods.
- 5.7.8 Where land ownership information could not be ascertained through desktop or site referencing methods, the land referencing team erected notices on-site requesting information. The notice showed the land boundary in question and provided details of how to contact the land referencing team with any relevant information. These notices were checked weekly for six weeks.
- 5.7.9 Through diligent inquiry, the Applicant considers that there are no persons who may be entitled to make a relevant claim as a Category 3 interest under section 10 of the Compulsory Purchase Act 1965, Part 1 of the Land Compensation Act 1973 or section 152(3) of the PA 2008 in relation to the

following matters: noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, light emissions, discharge of solid or liquid substances. Of these matters, the factors that the Applicant considered could be relevant to proposals such as the Scheme were noise and vibration. **ES Vo 2 Appendix 4-1: East Park Energy EIA Scoping Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]** sets out the scope of the noise and vibration assessments made. These assessments concluded there is a low likelihood of significant adverse noise and vibration impacts resulting from the operational phase of the Scheme. These matters are considered in detail in **ES Vol 1 Chapter 10: Noise and Vibration [EN010141/DR/6.1]**.

- 5.7.10 A total of 98 PILs under Categories 1 and 2 were identified and sent a letter on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2024 notifying them of the start of consultation and the deadline for responses. The letter was issued alongside a copy of the Section 48 notice and the newsletter. A copy of the letter can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 4-4: Letter sent to consultees under section 42(1)(d)**,
- 5.7.11 Site notices were also put up around the site on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024 and were checked weekly throughout the consultation period to help identify any additional land interests. The notices were taken down on 31 October 2024.
- 5.7.12 A copy of the site notice can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 4-5: Site notice [EN010141/DR/5.2]**, whilst **Consultation Report Appendix 4-6: Plan showing location of site notices [EN010141/DR/5.2]** sets out where the notices were displayed throughout the statutory consultation period.
- 5.7.13 More information on the process for identifying land interests can be found in the **Statement of Reasons [EN010141/DR/4.1]** and the list of land interests is included in the **Book of Reference [EN010141/DR/4.3]**.

## 5.8 Notifying the Secretary of State Under Section 46

- 5.8.1 Section 46 of the PA 2008 requires an applicant to notify the SoS of the proposed application for development consent. This must be done on, or

before, the commencement of the statutory consultation under Section 42, and the SoS must be supplied with the same information as is proposed to be used for the Section 42 consultation.

- 5.8.2 On 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024, the Applicant notified the Planning Inspectorate under Section 46 of the PA 2008 of the statutory consultation by email, formatted as a letter. A copy of the email can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 4-7: Section 46 notification letter [EN010141/DR/5.2]**. The letter and email included copies of an example letter issued under Section 42 of the PA 2008, along with copies of the Section 47 and 48 notices. It also signposted to the project website, [eastparkenergy.co.uk](http://eastparkenergy.co.uk), where copies of all documents published as part of the statutory consultation could be access.
- 5.8.3 The Planning Inspectorate provided formal acknowledgement of the notification made under Section 46 on 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

## 5.9 Consulting the local community under Section 47

- 5.9.1 As outlined in Chapter 4, the Applicant produced a SoCC setting out how it would consult the local community. The SoCC was made available for inspection on the Applicant's website, with details of how the SoCC could be inspected published in a local newspaper.
- 5.9.2 The SoCC identified commitments made by the Applicant in relation to carrying out the community consultation. Section 5.17 of the Report outlines how the consultation was conducted in accordance with commitments made in the SoCC.
- 5.9.3 Residents, businesses and organisations located in the vicinity of the Scheme were sent via post a consultation newsletter, which notified them of the consultation and invited them to provide their feedback. The consultation newsletter was sent by 1<sup>st</sup> Class post on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024 to addresses within the identified consultation zone (which was agreed with the local authorities as part of the SoCC consultation). This ensured that all of the

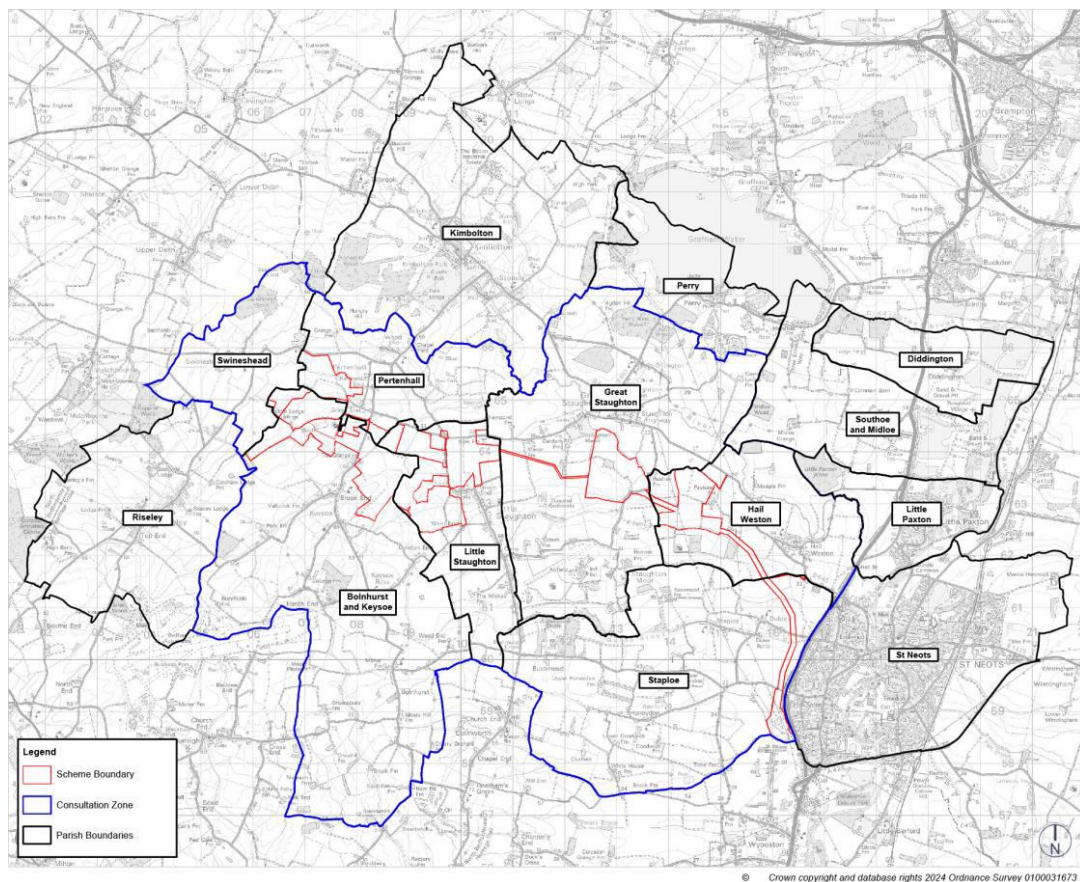
immediate local community around the site were consulted in accordance with Section 47 of the PA 2008.

5.9.4 A consultation zone was established following discussions with the local authorities. The zone was designed to capture the communities and elected representatives closest to the Scheme. It extends to the parish council boundaries of:

- Bolnhurst & Keysoe Parish Council;
- Great Staughton Parish Council;
- Hail Weston Parish Council;
- Little Staughton Parish Council;
- Pertenhall & Swineshead Parish Council; and
- Staploe Parish Council.

5.9.5 A map of the consultation zone is provided in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4 Map of consultation zone



5.9.6 Within the SoCC, the Applicant committed to consulting the following groups;

- Parish councils representing parishes within the immediate vicinity of the Scheme;
- Local Authority Councillors representing wards within and bordering the consultation zone;
- Members of Parliament (MPs) representing constituencies within and bordering the consultation zone;
- Seldom heard groups within the consultation zone, who have been drawn to the Applicant's attention by Local Authorities and Parish Councils. These groups, represent people who are unlikely to respond to traditional consultation techniques and may need additional support to access materials; and
- Local interest groups, such as residents' associations, community groups and groups with particular specialisms, such as local heritage or wildlife.

5.9.7 A consultation notification letter was sent via 1<sup>st</sup> Class post on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024 and via emails on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024 to all of the stakeholders listed in **Consultation Report Appendix 4-1: List of consultees under section 42 (a-b) [EN010141/DR/5.2]** and **Consultation Report Appendix 4-8: List of non-prescribed consultees [EN010141/DR/5.2]** in order to consult them on either a prescribed or non-prescribed basis during the statutory consultation. The letter and email sent to these bodies can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 4-2: Letter sent to consultees under section 42 [EN010141/DR/5.2]** and **Consultation Report Appendix 4-9: Letter sent to non-prescribed consultees [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

## 5.10 Duty to publicise under Section 48

5.10.1 Section 48 of the PA 2008 requires the Applicant to publicise its proposed application for development consent in the Prescribed Manner. This is defined in Regulation 4 of the APFP Regulations. The Applicant issued a Section 47 and a Section 48 notice. A copy of the notices can be found in **Consultation**

**Report Appendix 3-8: Section 47 notice [EN010141/DR/5.2] and Consultation Report Appendix 3-4: Section 48 notice [EN010141/DR/5.2].**

5.10.2 As per the requirements of Regulation 4 of the APFP Regulations, a notice pursuant to Section 48 of the PA 2008 was published:

- (a) For at least two successive weeks in one or more local newspapers circulating in the vicinity in which the proposed development would be situated;
- (b) Once in a national newspaper;
- (c) Once in the London Gazette and, if land in Scotland is affected, the Edinburgh Gazette; and
- (d) Where the proposed application relates to offshore development—
  - (i) once in Lloyd's List; and
  - (ii) once in an appropriate fishing trade journal.

5.10.3 The Scheme does not relate to offshore development; therefore Regulation 4(2)(d) does not apply.

5.10.4 The Scheme does not affect land in Scotland and therefore was not published in the Edinburgh Gazette.

**Table 11 Detail of newspapers the Section 47 and 48 notices were published in**

Newspaper	Date(s)	
Section 47		
Local Newspaper		
The Hunts Post	18 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	
Section 48		
National Newspaper		
The Guardian	24 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	
The London Gazette	24 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	
Local Newspaper		
The Hunts Post	18 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	25 <sup>th</sup> September 2024

- 5.10.5 Copies of the Section 47 notice and the Section 48 notice were made available on the consultation website, [eastparkenergy.co.uk](http://eastparkenergy.co.uk), from the start of statutory consultation on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

Additionally, in accordance with Regulation 13 of the EIA Regulations, copies of the Section 48 notices were issued to the consultees identified under Regulation 3 of the EIA Regulations. This list of consultees under Section 42(a) and (b) that received this can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 4-1: List of 42(a-b) consultees** and **Consultation Report Appendix 4-8: List of non-prescribed consultees [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

## 5.11 Consultation Documents

- 5.11.1 A suite of documents was developed to support the statutory consultation. These documents aimed to provide comprehensive information to all those with an interest in the Scheme. The following documents can be found in the Appendices:

- **Consultation Report Appendix 4-3: Statutory consultation newsletter [EN010141/DR/5.2];**
- **Consultation Report Appendix 4-10: Statutory consultation brochure [EN010141/DR/5.2];**
- **Consultation Report Appendix 4-11: Statutory consultation feedback form [EN010141/DR/5.2]**
- **Consultation Report Appendix 4-12: Statutory consultation freepost envelope [EN010141/DR/5.2]**
- **Consultation Report Appendix 4-13: Non-technical summary of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report [EN010141/DR/5.2]**
- **Consultation Report Appendix 4-14: Statutory consultation exhibition boards [EN010141/DR/5.2]; and**
- **Consultation Report Appendix 1-1: Non-statutory consultation report [EN010141/DR/5.2].**



- 5.11.2 All the consultation documents, with the exception of the PEIR, were available to view in paper copy at the in-person consultation events. All documents were made available to view and download on the consultation website from the start of consultation. The Applicant has kept the documents on the consultation website.
- 5.11.3 The Applicant received four separate requests for paper copies of select consultation documents and received no requests for any of the consultation documents to be made available in alternative formats.
- 5.11.4 The Non-statutory consultation report was intended to be uploaded to the website at the start of the statutory consultation; however, it was omitted due to human error. No requests for the report were received during the statutory consultation, and it was subsequently uploaded to the website on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024.
- 5.11.5 A summary of these documents and their content is provided below.

### Consultation brochure

- 5.11.6 The consultation brochure was a 35-page booklet designed to serve as the primary consultation document. It provided comprehensive information about the Scheme, including:
- The rationale for its need;
  - Updates made since the non-statutory consultation;
  - Detailed descriptions of the four proposed sites (A–D) and associated infrastructure;
  - The Environmental Impact Assessment process, covering topics such as landscape and visual impact, heritage, ecology, flood risk, traffic, noise, agricultural land, and glint and glare; and
  - A description of the construction, operation, and decommissioning phases, as well as proposed community benefits and the project timeline.



5.11.7 The document was made available at consultation events, online, and could be requested as a free paper copy via the Applicant's community contact channels, including email and phone.

5.11.8 During the statutory consultation, an error was identified in the red line boundary shown on the map on pages 9, 11, 13, 22 and 23 of the Consultation brochure, which incorrectly included a property within the boundary of Site B. Once the Applicant was made aware of this, the brochure was updated online and the correction was signposted on the website.

### Consultation newsletter

5.11.9 The newsletter was a four-page newsletter providing a brief overview of the Scheme and the statutory consultation process.

5.11.10 The newsletter included:

- A summary of the need for the Scheme;
- An overview of the proposals;
- The Illustrative masterplan and reference to more detailed maps available online;
- Information on the statutory consultation process and how to participate;
- A schedule of upcoming in-person consultation events and one-to-one meetings;
- Contact details and instructions for submitting feedback via post, email, or online form; and,
- Details on how to request materials in alternative formats and register for updates.

5.11.11 The newsletter aimed to inform local stakeholders and encourage community involvement in the consultation process.

5.11.12 During the statutory consultation, an error was identified in the red line boundary shown on the map in the newsletter, which incorrectly included a property within the boundary of Site B. Once the Applicant was made aware

of this, the newsletter was updated online and the correction was signposted on the website.

### **Feedback form and Freepost envelope**

5.11.13 A feedback form was developed in order to capture community and stakeholder feedback on the Scheme. The form was available online and at consultation events, and featured 19 questions alongside signposting to the relevant pages within the consultation brochure where necessary. The questions were a mixture of quantitative (closed) and qualitative (open).

5.11.14 The online feedback form was available to complete on the consultation website, alongside a downloadable version that could be printed. Paper copies of the feedback form and Freepost envelopes were also available at the consultation events, and available to request for free via the Applicant's community contact channels, including email and phone.

### **PEIR and Non-Technical Summary (NTS)**

5.11.15 The PEIR was developed to provide preliminary environmental information regarding the Scheme. This comprehensive document included an analysis of potential benefits, effects, and impacts of the development. Additionally, the PEIR outlined proposed mitigation measures to address any identified adverse effects.

5.11.16 The PEIR was available to view on the consultation website. A paper copy could be requested for a charge of £0.35 per page to cover printing and postage costs. No requests for a paper copy of the document were received.

5.11.17 A non-technical summary (NTS) of the PEIR was developed to provide an accessible version of the detailed information contained within the PEIR. The NTS aimed to present the key environmental aspects of the Scheme in a clear and concise manner, making it easier for the general public to understand the scope of the Scheme, potential impacts, and benefits.

5.11.18 The NTS was available to view in paper copy at the in-person consultation events during the statutory consultation. It was also available digitally via the consultation website. Paper copies were available to request for free via the Applicant's community contact channels, including email and phone. Two requests were made for a paper copy of the NTS.

## Consultation banners

5.11.19 In total, three consultation banners were created to display information about the proposals and provide an overview of the key components of the Scheme at the in-person events.

5.11.20 The consultation banners were designed to assist in the understanding of the Scheme at the in-person consultation events and supported discussions with the Applicant during public information events and other meetings.

## 5.12 Maps and plans

5.12.1 Technical maps and plans were provided on the consultation website as part of the PEIR, and at the in-person consultation events. Key maps were also included within the consultation brochure. These included Illustrative Masterplan maps, maps to indicate changes from the non-statutory consultation, individual site maps and heritage/archaeology maps.

## 5.13 Feedback channels

5.13.1 There were several channels available for feedback to be provided on the Scheme. These channels included:

- **Post:** Participants could return a feedback form, or provide an open text response, by writing to FREEPOST EAST PARK ENERGY;
- **Online:** An online feedback form was available on the consultation website, [eastparkenergy.co.uk](http://eastparkenergy.co.uk), allowing participants to submit their comments electronically;

- **In-person:** Participants could complete a paper copy of the feedback form provided at one of the in-person consultation events, or bring one they had completed at home and hand it to a member of staff at the event or insert it into the dedicated feedback box provided at the events; and
- **Email:** Interested parties could provide feedback by sending an email to [info@eastparkenergy.co.uk](mailto:info@eastparkenergy.co.uk).

5.13.2 The Applicant encouraged all respondents to feedback via the above channels. The Applicant would also accept formal feedback responses over the phone, which would be considered in exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis where someone may not otherwise be able to respond to the consultation as stated within the SoCC. No feedback was received over the phone during the statutory consultation.

## 5.14 Consultation events

### In-person consultation events

- 5.14.1 The Applicant hosted four in-person public consultation events, in addition to a day of one-to-one meetings during the consultation period.
- 5.14.2 The public consultation events were arranged as drop-in sessions that local residents were invited to attend and speak with members of the project team, whilst the one-to-one meetings required pre-booking and allowed residents with specific queries to speak with members of the project team on a one-to-one basis.
- 5.14.3 Members of the project team were in attendance at all the events and available to speak with residents and stakeholders. The consultation events were held at suitable, publicly accessible venues near to the Scheme.

**Table 12 Details of in-person consultation events**

Date	Time	Location	Number of attendees
Tuesday 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2024	2pm-7pm	Keysoe Village Hall, Elm Tree Grove,	59

		Keysoe, MK44 2JE	
Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2024	2pm-7pm	Little Staughton, Village Hall, Colmworth Rd, Little Staughton, MK44 2BX	42
Friday 11 <sup>th</sup> October 2024	2pm-7pm	Hail Weston Village Hall, 109 High St, Hail Weston, PE19 5JS	113
Saturday 12 <sup>th</sup> October 2024	11am-3pm	Great Staughton Village Hall, Green Lane, Great Staughton, PE19 5DG	91
Tuesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2024	10am-2pm	Pertenhall Village Hall, Swineshead Road, Pertenhall, MK44 2AT	12 bookings

5.14.4 Across the five events, there were a total of 317 attendees. Photos of the events can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 4-15: Photos of statutory consultation events [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

## 5.15 Advertising and publicity of the consultation

5.15.1 On 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024, the four-page consultation newsletter was distributed to all 1,606 properties and businesses within the consultation zone. The newsletter was also included in the consultation packs sent to statutory consultees, and to wider consultees via email, including relevant elected representatives, community organisations and seldom heard groups. The full list of consultees can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 4-1: List of consultees under section 42 (a-b) [EN010141/DR/5.2]** and **Consultation Report Appendix 4-8: List of non-prescribed consultees [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

5.15.2 In accordance with the SoCC, a press release announcing the start of the statutory consultation was issued on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024 to the Hunts Post, Cambridgeshire Live, Bedford Today, in addition to BBC Look East, BBC Radio Cambridgeshire, BBC Three Counties Radio, ITV News Anglia and Heart East Anglia. A copy of the press release can be found in **Consultation**

**Report Appendix 4-18: Statutory consultation launch press release [EN010141/DR/5.2].**

- 5.15.3 Statutory notices to publicise the SoCC and consultation, in accordance with Section 47 and Section 48 of the PA 2008, were published in The Guardian and The London Gazette on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024 (Section 48) and in the local circulating paper, the Hunts Post on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024 (Section 47 and Section 48) and 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024 (Section 48). A copy of the notices can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 3-8: Section 47 notice [EN010141/DR/5.2]** and **Consultation Report Appendix 3-4: Section 48 notice [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.
- 5.15.4 Social media adverts publicising the consultation were placed on Facebook and Instagram from 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024, and on TikTok from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024. The adverts had a cumulative reach of over 29,000. A copy of the social media adverts can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 4-16: Social media advertisements used during statutory consultation [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

## **5.16 Engagement with seldom heard groups**

- 5.16.1 The Applicant is committed to ensuring that the consultation was accessible and inclusive for all stakeholders, including ‘under-represented’ or ‘seldom heard’ groups and individuals who may be less likely to participate in or respond to traditional consultation methods.
- 5.16.2 ‘Seldom heard groups’ within the consultation zone, were drawn to the Applicant’s attention by Local Authorities and Parish Councils. These groups, which are listed in **Consultation Report Appendix 4-8: List of non-prescribed consultees [EN010141/DR/5.2]** represent people who are unlikely to respond to traditional consultation techniques and may need additional support to access materials.

- 5.16.3 The Applicant took deliberate and varied steps to engage with seldom heard groups throughout the consultation process, demonstrating a commitment to inclusivity.
- 5.16.4 For seldom heard groups, the approach included directly mailing the consultation newsletter to all addresses within the consultation zone and providing details of how to access and request paper copies of the consultation documents. Options were provided to engage with the Applicant and the consultation through conventional communications channels, including by Freepost and the information phonenumber. Important information was provided in both digital and non-digital formats and alternative formats such as large print (upon request) were offered. The option for feedback to be provided via a Freepost address was provided. Consultation events were held at four accessible locations within the consultation zone, with members of the team available to assist with completing feedback responses.
- 5.16.5 Ahead of consultation events, the Applicant ensured that all event spaces had disabled access and facilities, and the layout of the consultation room provided space for those with wheelchairs to be mobile.
- 5.16.6 For young people, online engagement methods were utilised, including social media advertising, to encourage younger people to learn about the Scheme and engage with the consultation.
- 5.16.7 The Applicant identified seldom heard groups in the local community and notified them of the start of consultation and the deadline for responses. A list of the seldom heard groups can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 4-8: List of non-prescribed consultees [EN010141/DR/5.2]**. A letter was issued on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024, ahead of the consultation launch, and an email was issued on the day the consultation launched on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024. Both the letter and email included a copy of the consultation brochure, consultation newsletter, feedback form and Freepost envelope. A copy of the letter can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 4-9: Letter sent to non-prescribed consultees [EN010141/DR/5.2]**

## 5.17 Stakeholder meetings

- 5.17.1 Host parish councils, MPs and relevant local councillors were contacted ahead of the statutory consultation launch to offer a briefing on the Scheme.

Meetings were conducted from 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024, throughout the statutory consultation period until 25<sup>th</sup> October 2024. A full list of meetings held can be found in Table 13.

**Table 13 Meetings held before and during the statutory consultation**

Stakeholder	Date
Elected representatives and officers from Huntingdonshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and Bedford Borough Council.	18 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
Elected representatives and officers from Huntingdonshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and Bedford Borough Council.	19 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
Elected representatives and officers from Huntingdonshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and Bedford Borough Council.	23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2024
Representatives from Great Staughton Parish Council.	30 <sup>th</sup> September 2024
MP for Huntingdon	14 <sup>th</sup> October 2024
Representatives from British Horse Society, Bedford Local Access Forum, Cambridgeshire Local Access Forum and Trails Trust.	25 <sup>th</sup> October 2024

## 5.18 Adherence with the SoCC

- 5.18.1 Table 14 outlines how the consultation was undertaken in accordance with the commitments outlined in the SoCC.



**Table 14 SoCC commitments and evidence of compliance**

SoCC ref.	Commitment made	Evidence of compliance
5.1.1	<p>BSSL will be seeking feedback on all aspects of the proposed application for the Scheme. This will involve asking community members to give their feedback about the proposals. For example, BSSL will be seeking feedback on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Preliminary Environmental Information Report, which will identify the receptors and the likely significant effects of the Scheme.</li> <li>• How BSSL can ensure the Scheme manages any disruption for local residents during construction, operation, and decommissioning works.</li> <li>• What benefits the Scheme could bring on both a local and national level, such as contributing towards Net Zero and providing security of energy supply.</li> <li>• How BSSL can best realise the long-term benefits of the Scheme.</li> </ul>	<p>The feedback form published as part of the statutory consultation seeks views specifically on the PEIR and potential disruption during construction, operation and decommissioning works (Q5), and on the benefits the Scheme could bring (Q6, 7, 8 and 9).</p> <p>Additionally, Q10 allows feedback form respondents to give feedback on any areas they feel not covered by a specific question on the feedback form. Respondents who gave their feedback by email or post were able to structure their response in whatever way they chose.</p>
5.1.2	<p>The full extent of the Scheme will be consulted on as part of the process. Draft outline construction methodologies for the proposed application will also be consulted on.</p>	<p>Information on the full extent of the Scheme, including draft outline construction methodologies, were published as part of the statutory consultation materials. As outlined above, respondents were able to give feedback on these topics via any of the advertised feedback channels.</p>
5.2.1	<p>Our communication channels (detailed later in this SoCC) can be used by interested parties, organisation or individuals to get in touch with the development team to find out more information and comment on our proposals.</p>	<p>Contact channels (email, telephone and freepost address) were made available prior to, during and following the statutory consultation, with several comments and requests received through these channels.</p>
5.2.3	<p>We will also consult the following groups and individuals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parish councils representing parishes within the immediate vicinity of the Scheme.</li> <li>• Local Authority Councillors representing wards within and bordering the consultation zone.</li> </ul>	<p>Letters (23<sup>rd</sup> September 2024) and/or emails (24<sup>th</sup> September 2024) were issued to all of the stakeholders listed in 5.2.3 in order to consult them on either a prescribed or non-prescribed basis during the statutory consultation.</p>

SoCC ref.	Commitment made	Evidence of compliance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members of Parliament (MPs) representing constituencies within and bordering the consultation zone.</li> <li>'Seldom heard groups' within the consultation zone, who have been drawn to our attention by Local Authorities and Parish Councils. These groups, which are listed in Appendix A, represent people who are unlikely to respond to traditional consultation techniques and may need additional support to access materials.</li> <li>Local interest groups, such as residents' associations, community groups and groups with particular specialisms, such as local heritage or wildlife.</li> </ul>	
5.3.2	Properties within the consultation zone will receive a leaflet informing them of the statutory consultation and how to provide feedback through the post.	A newsletter that includes the content stipulated in 5.3.2 was issued by post to all residential and business addresses in the consultation zone on 23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2024.
5.3.3	<p>In addition, we will also consult the following neighbouring Parish and Town Councils on behalf of their residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kimbolton and Stonely Parish Council</li> <li>Perry Parish Council</li> <li>Riseley Parish Council</li> <li>St Neots Town Council</li> <li>Southoe and Midloe Parish Council</li> <li>Little Paxton Parish Council</li> <li>Buckden Parish Council</li> </ul>	Letters (23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2024) and/or emails (24 <sup>th</sup> September 2024) were issued to all of the parish councils listed in 5.3.3 in order to consult them on either a prescribed or non-prescribed basis during the statutory consultation.
Table 1	(How we will publicise the statutory consultation) Distributing consultation leaflets with details of the consultation website, communication channels and exhibition events to all addresses within the consultation zone.	A newsletter that included the content stipulated in Table 1 was issued by post to all residential and business addresses in the consultation zone on 23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2024.

SoCC ref.	Commitment made	Evidence of compliance
Table 1	(How we will publicise the statutory consultation) The consultation website will be updated for people to find out more information and provide their feedback on the proposed application.	The contents of the consultation website matches the description outlined in Table 1.
Table 1	(How we will publicise the statutory consultation) Press releases will be issued to local news outlets, such as Cambridgeshire Live, Hunts Post and Bedford Today.	A press release publicising the statutory consultation was issued to the outlets listed in Table 1 (along with BBC Look East, BBC Radio Cambridgeshire, BBC Three Counties Radio, ITV News Anglia and Heart East Anglia) was issued on 23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2024.
Table 1	(How we will publicise the statutory consultation) A press notice including a description of the scheme and deadline for comments will be displayed in the London Gazette and a local newspaper.	Statutory notices were placed in the Hunts Post on 18 <sup>th</sup> September (Section 47 and Section 48) and 25 <sup>th</sup> September 2024 (Section 48), and in the London Gazette and Guardian (Section 48) on 24 <sup>th</sup> September 2024. The notices match the description outlined in Table 1.
Table 1	(How we will publicise the statutory consultation) Direct mail letters to Councillors, MPs, seldom heard groups within the consultation zone and other outreach method as appropriate, such as target social media collateral and sharing information at key community locations.	Letters (23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2024) and/or emails (24 <sup>th</sup> September 2024) were issued to all of the stakeholders listed in Table 1 in order to consult them on either a prescribed or non-prescribed basis during the statutory consultation.
Table 1	(How we will publicise the statutory consultation) Community and seldom heard groups identified by District and Parish Councils are listed in Appendix A to this SoCC and will be consulted.	Letters (23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2024) and/or emails (24 <sup>th</sup> September 2024) were issued to all of the stakeholders listed in Appendix A in order to consult them on either a prescribed or non-prescribed basis during the statutory consultation.
Table 1	(How we will publicise the statutory consultation) Social media adverts with details of the proposed application and the consultation will be distributed at a 10-mile radius to the site. The social media adverts will be displayed on Facebook, Instagram and TikTok.	Social media adverts publicising the consultation were placed on Facebook and Instagram from 25 <sup>th</sup> September 2024, and on TikTok from 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2024.

SoCC ref.	Commitment made	Evidence of compliance
Table 1	(How we will publicise the statutory consultation) Statutory Notices will be placed in accordance with the provisions of the Planning Act 2008.	Statutory notices were placed in the Hunts Post on 18 <sup>th</sup> September (Section 47 and Section 48) and 25 <sup>th</sup> September 2024 (Section 48), in The Guardian on 24 <sup>th</sup> September 2024 (Section 48) and in the London Gazette (Section 48) on 24 <sup>th</sup> September 2024. The notices match the description outlined in Table 1.
Table 1	A website – <a href="http://www.eastparkenergy.co.uk">www.eastparkenergy.co.uk</a> – with details of the proposals for the community to review and provide comments on. The website will include a feedback form, which will also be available in paper copy.	The contents of the consultation website matched the description outlined in Table 1.
Table 1	A community information line will be available for anyone who has questions about the proposals via 0808 258 5991 Monday – Friday 9am to 5:30pm. Detail of the community information line will be included on consultation material provided to the public.	The contact telephone number detailed in Table 1 was available prior to, during and following the statutory consultation, with several comments and requests received through these channels. Details of the contact telephone number were included in the newsletter, consultation brochure and feedback form.
Table 1	A consultation email address will also be available for people to ask questions and send their comments to: <a href="mailto:info@eastparkenergy.co.uk">info@eastparkenergy.co.uk</a> .	The email address detailed in Table 1 was available prior to, during and following the statutory consultation, with several comments and requests received through these channels. Details of the contact email were included in the newsletter, consultation brochure and feedback form.
Table 1	Social media adverts will publicise the consultation and include a link to find out more and provide feedback via the consultation website.	Social media adverts publicising the consultation were placed on Facebook and Instagram from 25 <sup>th</sup> September 2024, and on TikTok from 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2024.
6.1.2	If any consultees need information available on the Scheme website in a different format, such as accessible PDF, large print, easy read, audio recording or braille, they can call the community information line to request this. The request will be considered, and a response provided, within 10 working days.	The Applicant had procedures in place to facilitate requests for copies of consultation materials in alternative formats, although no such requests were received.

SoCC ref.	Commitment made	Evidence of compliance
7.1.2	At the consultation, BSSL will present a Preliminary Environmental Information Report ('PEIR'). The PEIR will report on the EIA work undertaken up-to the time of the start of statutory consultation and will enable all consultees to get a clear understanding of the likely environmental effects of the Scheme.	The PEIR was published as part of the statutory consultation.
7.1.2	BSSL will be actively seeking consultee's comments on the PEIR, and there will be the opportunity for both the design of the Scheme and the ongoing EIA work to consider any comments received through the consultation.	The feedback form published as part of the statutory consultation sought views specifically on the PEIR (Q5). Additionally, Q10 allowed feedback form respondents to give feedback on any areas they feel not covered by a specific question on the feedback form. Respondents who gave their feedback by email or post were able to structure their response in whatever way they chose.
7.1.3	BSSL is engaging with key stakeholders and statutory environmental bodies following receipt of the Scoping Opinion, and a summary of this consultation and actions taken will be set out in the PEIR.	Chapter 1 of the PEIR set out how the Applicant has engaged with key stakeholders and statutory environmental bodies following receipt of the scoping opinion.
8.3.1	The statutory consultation will run for five weeks from Tuesday 24 September to Tuesday 29 October 2024.	The statutory consultation took place between the dates set out in 8.3.1.
8.3.2	Four public consultation events are proposed to take place during the consultation period. The dates, times and locations of these events are outlined in Table 2 [of the SoCC].	Four consultation events took place and were in line with 8.3.2 and Table 2 of the SoCC. Further information on these events is included in 2.3.4 of this Statement.
8.3.3	Additionally, BSSL is proposing to hold a day of one-to-one meetings with the project team during the consultation period. Appointments will be available on a first come first served basis and will enable members of the local community to have more detailed conversations with the project team. Table 3 includes details of these proposed meetings.	A day of one-to-one meetings took place and was in line with 8.3.3 and Table 3 of the SoCC.
9.1.1	Respondents will be able to share their feedback on Scheme by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submitting an online feedback form.</li> <li>Filling in a physical feedback form.</li> </ul>	Respondents were able to submit feedback to the consultation via the feedback channels listed in 9.1.1.

SoCC ref.	Commitment made	Evidence of compliance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sending a written letter.</li> <li>Sending an email.</li> </ul>	
9.1.3	Responses given orally, such as via telephone, will be considered in exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis where someone may not otherwise be able to respond to the consultation.	Whilst the Applicant had made arrangements to accept feedback via telephone in exceptional circumstances, no such scenario occurred and therefore no responses were submitted in this manner.
9.2.1	Following the close of the statutory consultation, all feedback will be reviewed and analysed to understand key themes and concerns.	The Applicant can confirm that it is in the process of reviewing and analysing all feedback received to the statutory consultation. As part of its application for development consent, it will submit a Consultation Report with further detail of how the Applicant has had regard to this feedback.
Appendix A	<p>In preparing the SoCC, BSSL asked local authorities to recommend seldom heard groups to engage with at the statutory consultation.</p> <p>Huntingdonshire District Council made a number of recommendations that are contained in Table 2 below. They also recommended that we seek the views of the Parish Councils. The responses from the Parish Councils are contained in Table 3.</p> <p>BSSL will consult with all these groups at Statutory Consultation.</p>	Letters (23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2024) and/or emails (24 <sup>th</sup> September 2024) were issued to all of the stakeholders listed in Tables 4 and 5 (incorrectly referred to in the text of Appendix A as Tables 2 and 3) in order to consult them on either a prescribed or non-prescribed basis during the statutory consultation.

## 6.0 SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO STATUTORY CONSULTATION

### 6.1 Overview

6.1.1 Chapter 6 provides a summary of the responses the Applicant received to its statutory consultation, in line with its duties under Section 49 of the PA 2008 to take account of responses to the consultation and publicity. It is structured as follows:

- **Analysing responses to statutory consultation:** statistical overview of types of responses received, details of the methodology and how responses were handled and feedback analysed;
- **Responses received from the statutory consultees:** outlining the section 42(1)(a) and (b) consultees who responded to the consultation;
- **Responses to closed questions:** presents and discusses the responses to the closed questions on the feedback form;
- **Issues raised in open questions and Applicant's response:** outlines the matters raised by consultees in response to the consultation and publicity, alongside the Applicant's response to matters raised to help demonstrate the regard had to every relevant response; and
- **Summary of changes made following feedback received from statutory consultation:** outlining the changes made to the Scheme further to feedback received.

### 6.2 Analysis of responses

#### Number and format of responses

6.2.1 A total of 916 responses were received in response to the statutory consultation held between 24<sup>th</sup> September and 29<sup>th</sup> October 2024. This figure includes responses received after the deadline where an extension was agreed with the Applicant.

6.2.2 Respondents were able to provide feedback through multiple channels:

- **Consultation feedback form:** Available for online submission, or to complete paper copies either in-person at events, or to return via post;
- **Written Responses:** Accepted in the form of letters and emails.

6.2.3 Of the total number of responses, 28 were submitted from respondents consulted under Section 42(1)(a) of the PA 2008, 6 under Section 42(1)(b), 54 under Section 42(1)(d), and 828 under Section 47.

6.2.4 A full list of the section 42(1)(a) and 42(1)(b) consultees who were consulted and those who responded can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 4-1: List of consultees under section 42 (a-b) [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

6.2.5 In addition to respondents who self-identified, the Applicant has tried to identify respondents' interest in the Scheme, such as a statutory party or land interest, using information provided by the respondent. For example, S42(1)(d) respondents were identified using address or contact details provided by the respondent in the feedback form or email feedback responses. S42(1)(d) consultees were also asked to self-identify as such in the first question in the feedback form.

6.2.6 Table 15 shows a breakdown of the number of responses by each consultee category, along with the channels through which these responses were submitted. As respondents had the option of submitting feedback anonymously, it was not always possible to see where multiple responses were submitted by one individual.

**Table 15 Breakdown of responses by consultee type and channel**

	S42(1)(a)	S42(1)(b)	S42(1)(d)	S47	Total
<b>Email</b>	27	6	21	359	<b>413</b>
<b>Letter</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Paper Survey</b>	0	0	0	29	<b>29</b>
<b>Online Survey</b>	1	0	33	440	<b>474</b>
<b>Email Survey</b>	0	0	0	0	0



<b>Total</b>	28	6	54	828	<b>916</b>
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6.2.7 The feedback form asked for comments on the need for the Scheme, site configuration, the BESS options, changes made to the scheme since the non-statutory consultation, environmental enhancements, community benefits and the consultation. There was also an opportunity to provide contact details to establish their personal interest in the scheme. A copy of the feedback form can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 4-11: Statutory consultation feedback form [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

6.2.8 Respondents that chose to provide feedback via the feedback form were not required to answer all questions, allowing respondents to provide feedback only on the topics that interested them. Respondents that chose to provide feedback via email were unrestricted in the format of their response and could give feedback on any topics they considered appropriate.

### 6.3 Management of late responses

6.3.1 The Applicant accepted all responses received prior to the advertised deadline of 11:59pm on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

6.3.2 Deadline extensions and late submissions were agreed for the following consultees on a discretionary basis:

- Network Rail – 30<sup>th</sup> October 2024;
- The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Northamptonshire – 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024;
- Natural England – 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024;
- The British Horse Society Bedfordshire – 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024;
- The British Horse Society Cambridgeshire – 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024; and
- Environment Agency – 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

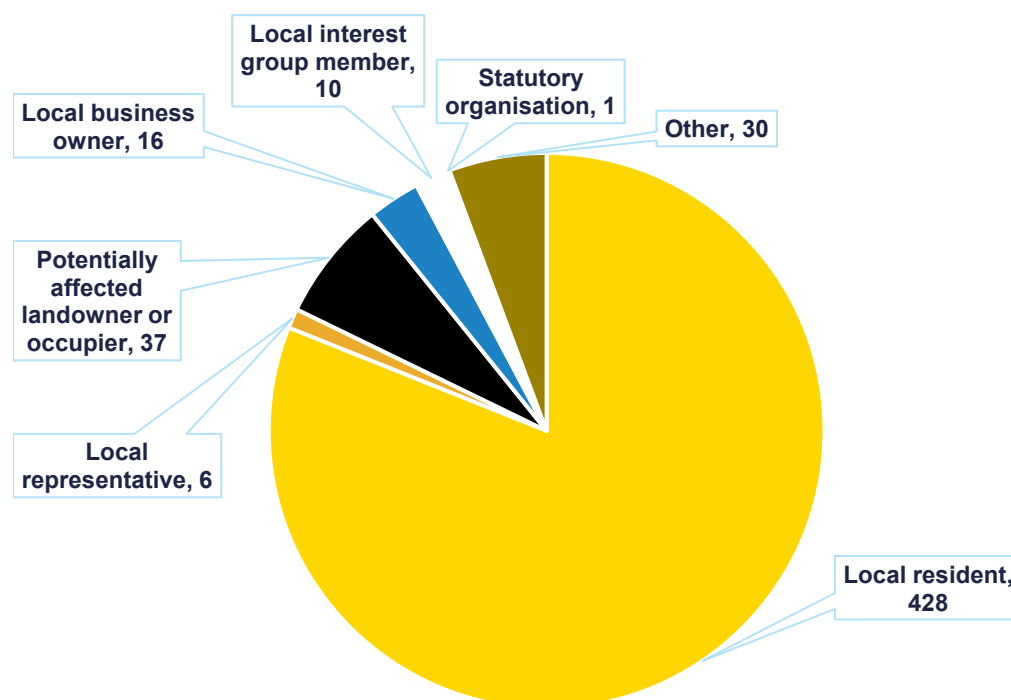
## Consultation analysis method

- 6.3.3 Following the close of the consultation, the Applicant reviewed all the responses received.
- 6.3.4 The response to closed (quantitative) questions are detailed in Section 6.5, while comments received in response to the open (qualitative) questions or through free text responses by email or letter are detailed in Section 6.6.
- 6.3.5 The percentages on the graphs have been rounded up or down to provide the percentage to a whole number. As such, the totals may not always equal 100%.
- 6.3.6 To analyse the responses received to the open questions and free text responses, a coding framework was used to capture and summarise these responses and identify themes and issues. This approach is in accordance with Planning Inspectorate Guidance 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the Consultation Report'.
- 6.3.7 A written response could receive multiple codes to highlight different issues covered. New classifications were added on an ad-hoc basis as feedback was received, allowing for further breakdown of themes.
- 6.3.8 To ensure quality of analysis, checks were made on the identification of issues by a senior member of the team.
- 6.3.9 The analysis of free text responses included the identification of 'Change Requests' (specific requests to change elements of the proposed design). These issues were triaged and considered as part of the design development process.

## 6.4 Responses to closed questions

- 6.4.1 This section presents and discusses the feedback gathered through closed questions on the feedback form. As such, it does not take into account any identifying information provided in email feedback.

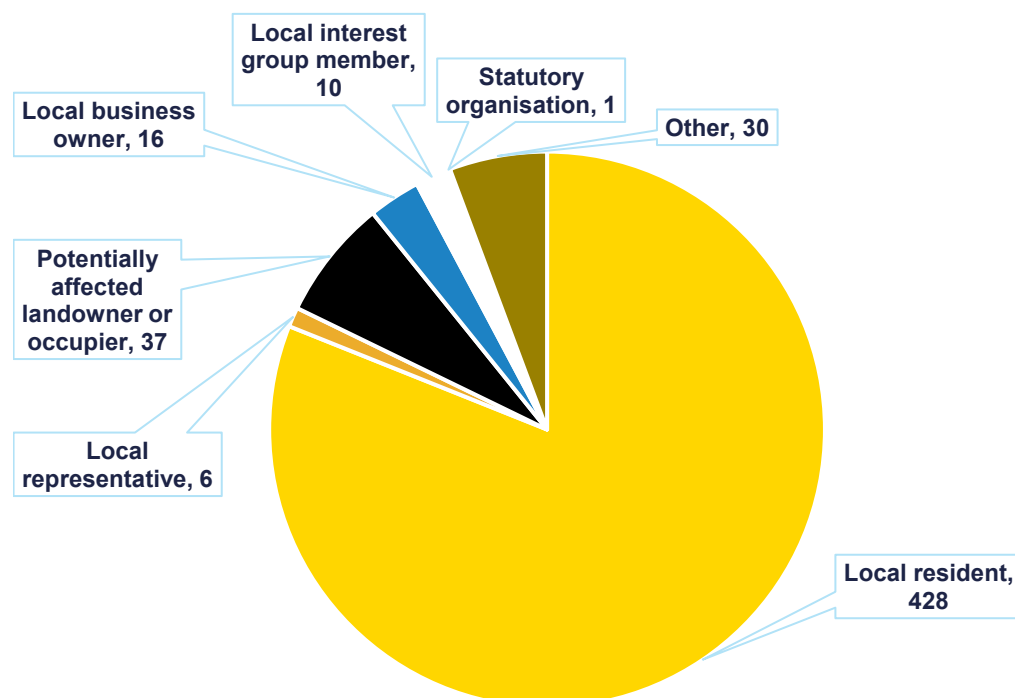
#### 6.4.2 Figure 5 How would you describe your interest in East Park Energy?



#### 6.4.3

shows how the respondents that completed the feedback form would describe their interest in the Scheme. This question was a multiple-choice question, and some respondents selected more than one option to identify their interest in the proposals.

Figure 5 How would you describe your interest in East Park Energy?



6.4.4 In total, 428 of the 528 responses to this question were from local residents. 10 responses were from local interest group members, and 16 responses were from local business owners.

6.4.5 This question also had a free text box where respondents could add further detail or comments if required. Some respondents added general comments about the scheme to this section. A summary of the themes raised in this section is included in the analysis of open responses in Section 6.6.

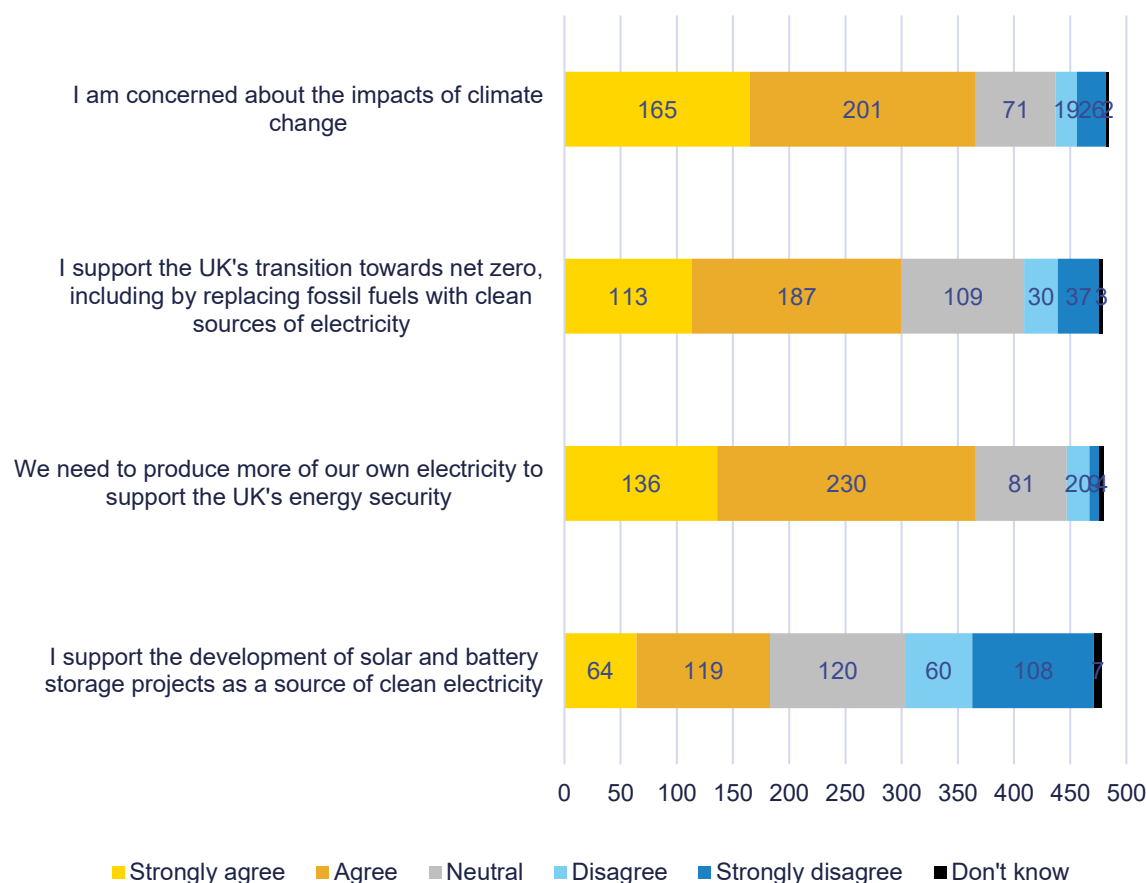
6.4.6 Some respondents who answered 'Other' to this question also provided additional information regarding their interest in East Park Energy. These responses included:

- Environmental group member;
- Regular visitor to the local area; and
- A relative of a local resident.

## Question 1

6.4.7 Question 1 sought to gauge respondents' perceptions of climate change, energy security, net zero, fossil fuels, renewable energy and energy storage. The responses to this question are shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6 Question 1: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?



6.4.8 In total, 478 respondents gave an answer to at least one part of this question. 1.5%

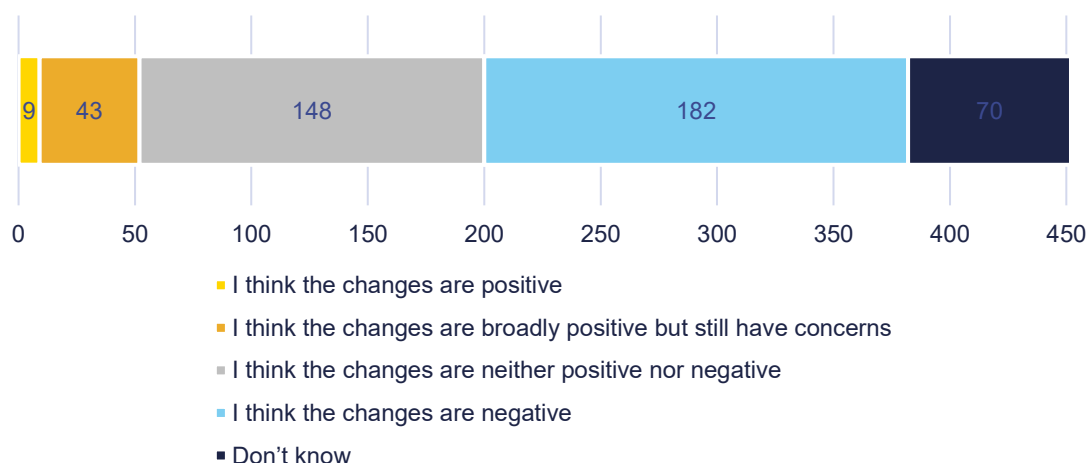
6.4.9 The issues of climate change and energy security were most important to respondents, with 75.6% noting they 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that climate change is important, and 76.2% noting they 'strongly agree' or 'agree' that energy security is important.

6.4.10 The least important issue, based on the percentage of respondents who ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ with each statement, was the development of solar and battery storage. Only 38.3% of respondents agreed that solar and battery storage projects should be developed as a source of clean energy, the lowest percentage of agreement among the issues surveyed.

## Question 2

6.4.11 Question 2 asked respondents whether they thought the proposals for the scheme were an improvement on those presented previously at the 2023 non-statutory consultation. The results are shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7 Question 2: Do you think that our detailed proposals are an improvement on what we presented previously?



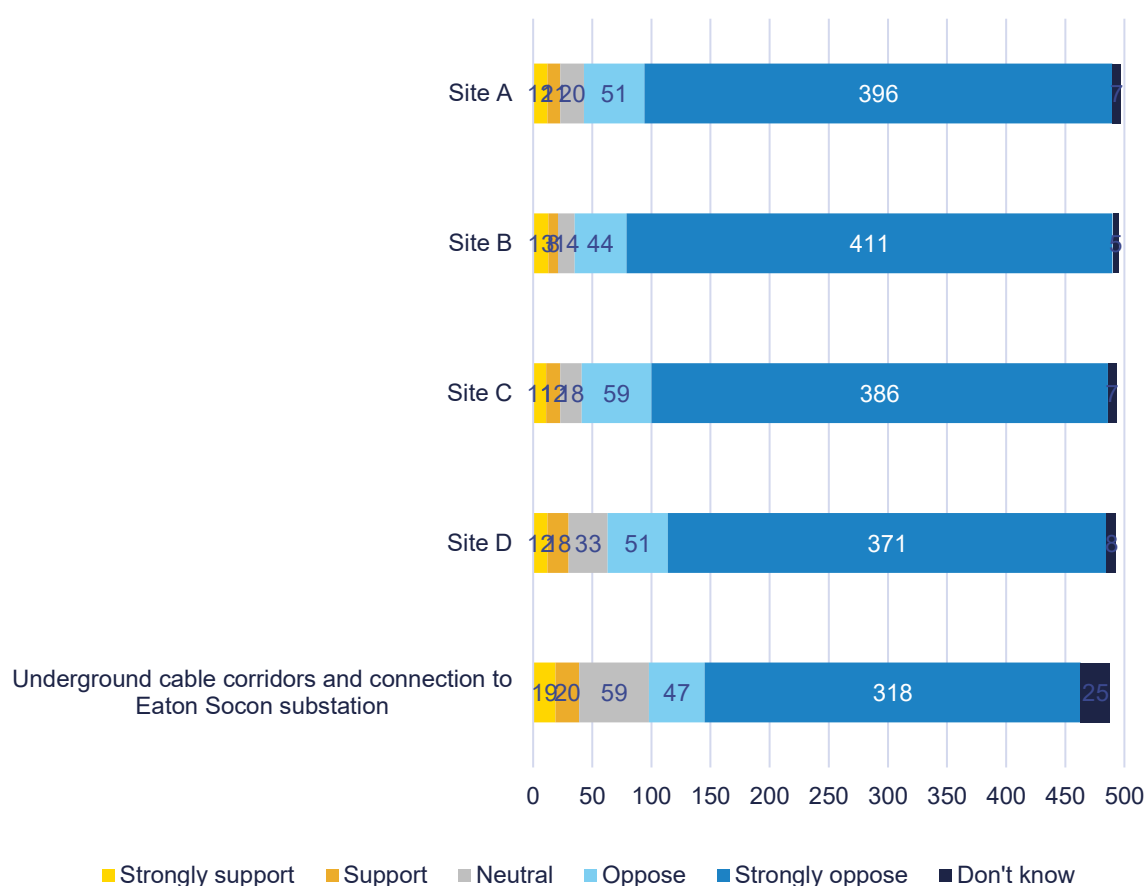
6.4.12 In total, 452 respondents provided a response to this question. Of those, 2% outlined that they thought the changes were positive. A further 10% of respondents thought the changes were broadly positive, but with some

concerns. 40% outlined that they thought the changes were negative. An additional 33% said they thought the changes were neither positive nor negative, and 15% said they did not know whether the changes were positive or negative.

### Question 3

6.4.13 Question 3 asked respondents how supportive they were of the four proposed sites for the scheme, and the underground cable route and connection to Eaton Socon substation. The results are shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8 Question 3: To what extent do you support our proposals across each site?



6.4.14 In total, 488 respondents gave an answer to at least one part of this question.

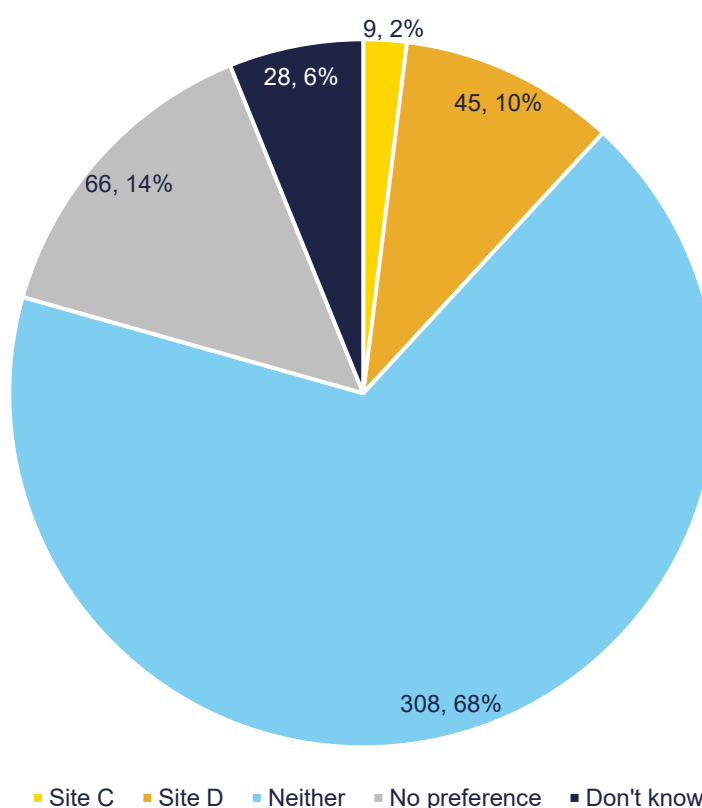
6.4.15 Site B appeared to be the least supported of the four sites included within the Scheme, with 91.9% saying they 'oppose' or 'strongly oppose' the proposals

at this location. Based on the percentage of respondents who ‘oppose’ or ‘strongly oppose’ each location, the proposed underground cable corridor and connection to Eaton Socon substation appeared to be the least opposed element of the Scheme.

## Question 4

6.4.16 Question 4 asked respondents for their opinion on which proposed location of the Battery Energy Storage System and substation they preferred. The results are shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9 Question 4: Which of the locations for the Battery Energy Storage System and substation infrastructure do you prefer?



6.4.17 In total, 456 respondents provided a response to this question.

6.4.18 Of those, 68% outlined that they did not support either option for the Battery Energy Storage System and substation location, and a further 14% stated that they did not have a preference.

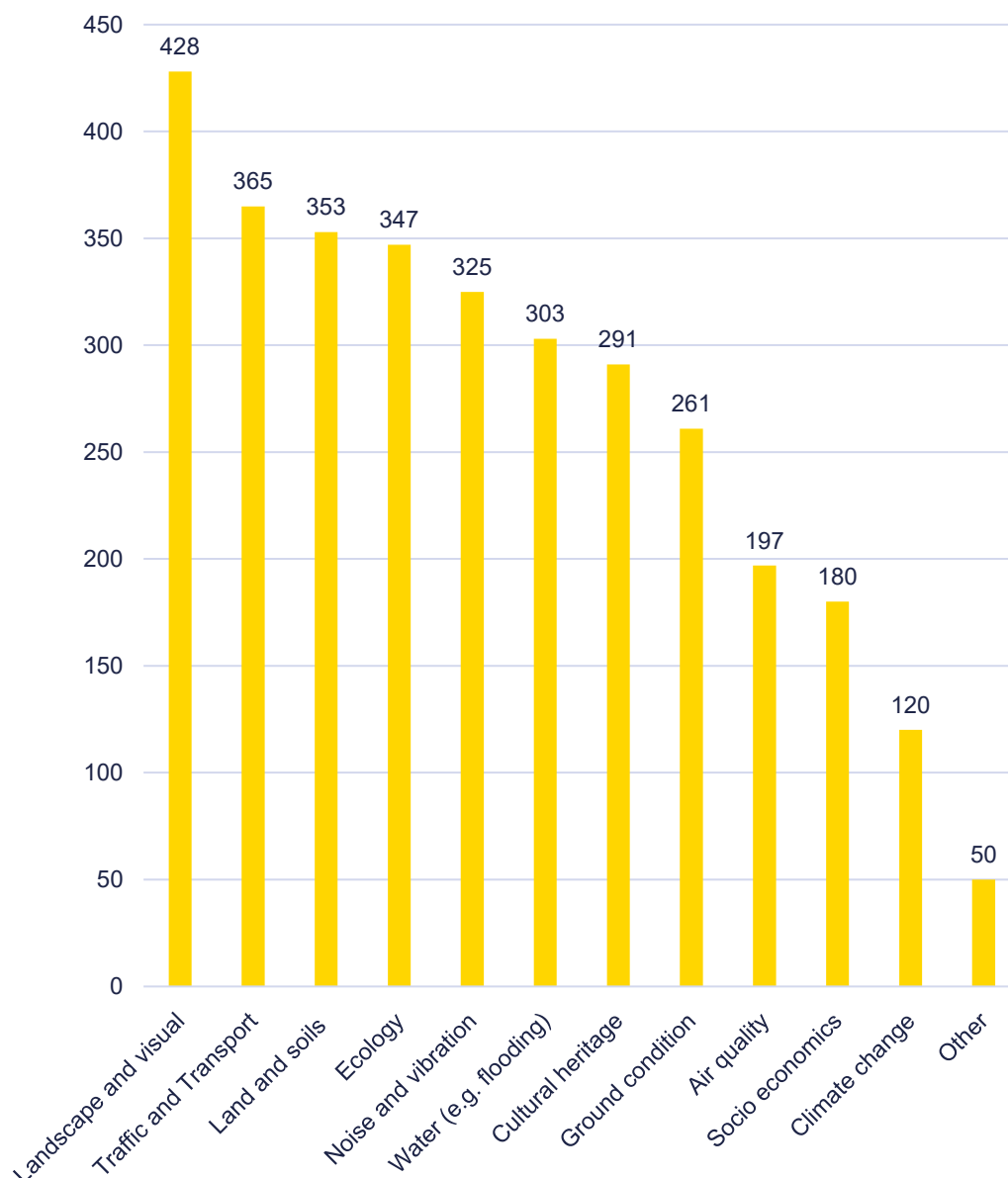


- 6.4.19 Of the people who selected a preferred option, 83% selected Site D and 17% selected Site C.

### Question 5

- 6.4.20 Question 5 was a multiple-choice question which asked respondents to identify any specific concerns they had about the construction, operation, or decommissioning of the Scheme, or the contents of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report. The results are shown in Figure 10.

*Figure 10 Question 5: Do you have any concerns about the construction, operation or decommissioning of the project, or the contents of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report more generally?*



6.4.21 In total, 457 respondents provided a response to this question.

6.4.22 The most common concern amongst respondents was 'landscape and visual', with 93% selecting this. This was followed by 'traffic and transport', which was selected by 80% of respondents. The least important concerns appear to be 'socio economics', which was selected by 39% of respondents, and 'climate change', which was selected by 26% of respondents.

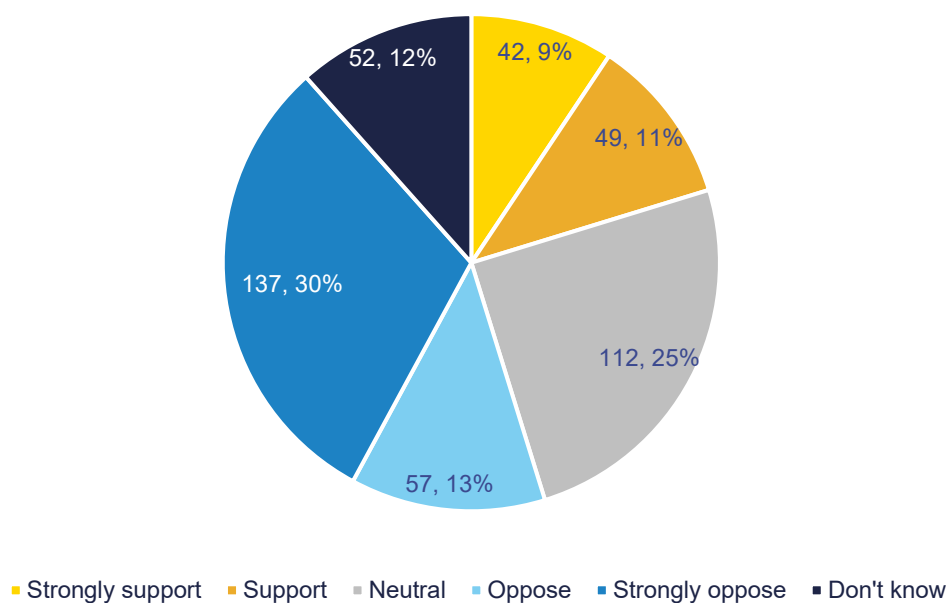
6.4.23 Some respondents that selected 'other' in response to Question 5 raised additional concerns, including:

- Access to countryside for recreation;
- Footpaths and bridleways;
- Agriculture and food security;
- Impact on mental and physical health; and
- Scale of the scheme.

## Question 6

6.4.24 Question 6 asked respondents how supportive they were of the plans to deliver environmental enhancements. The results are shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11 Question 6: Do you support our plans to deliver environmental enhancements, such as biodiversity net gain?



6.4.25 In total, 449 respondents provided a response to this question.

6.4.26 Of those, 45% outlined that they were either neutral or supportive of the plans to deliver environmental enhancements. A further 43% outlined that they 'strongly oppose' or 'oppose' the plans, and 12% were unsure if they supported or opposed the plans.

## Question 8

6.4.27 Question 8 asked respondents for their opinion on how the proposed East Park Legacy Fund should be delivered.

6.4.28 Respondents were provided with three options:

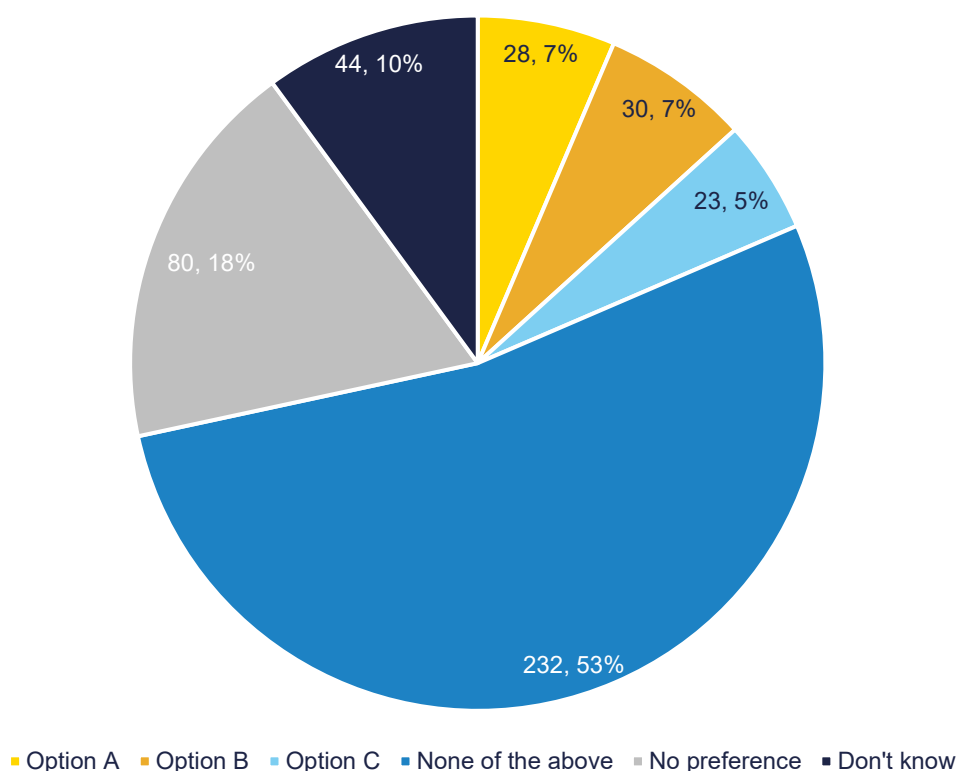
*Option A: A lump sum of £2 million would be made available at the start of the operational phase. No annual fund would be provided.*

*Option B: A lump sum of £1 million would be made available at the start of the operational phase, along with an additional annual fund of £75,000 per year throughout the operational phase.*

*Option C: An annual fund of £150,000 per year would be made available throughout the operational phase. No lump sum would be provided.*

6.4.29 The results are shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12 Question 8: Do you have a preference for how the East Park Legacy Fund is delivered?



6.4.30 In total, 437 respondents provided a response to this question.

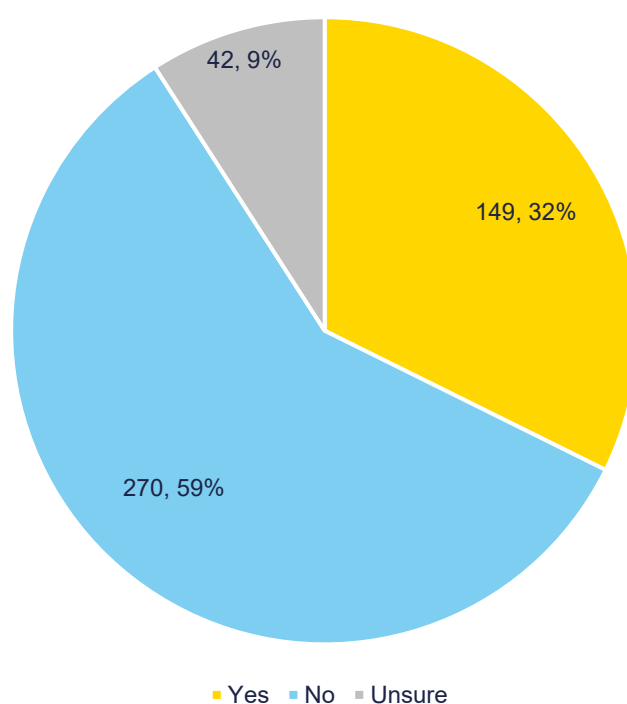
6.4.31 Of those, 53% outlined that they did not support any of the proposals for the delivery of the East Park Legacy Fund. A further 28% said they either did not know or had no preference for the Legacy Fund.

6.4.32 Of the 81 respondents who selected a preferred option, Option B was the most popular, with 37% of respondents selecting this option. This was closely followed by 35% of respondents who preferred Option A. Option C was least popular, with 28% of respondents who selected a preferring option choosing it.

## Question 11

6.4.33 Question 11 asked respondents if they took part in the 2023 non-statutory consultation. The results are shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13 Question 11: Did you take part in our previous consultation?



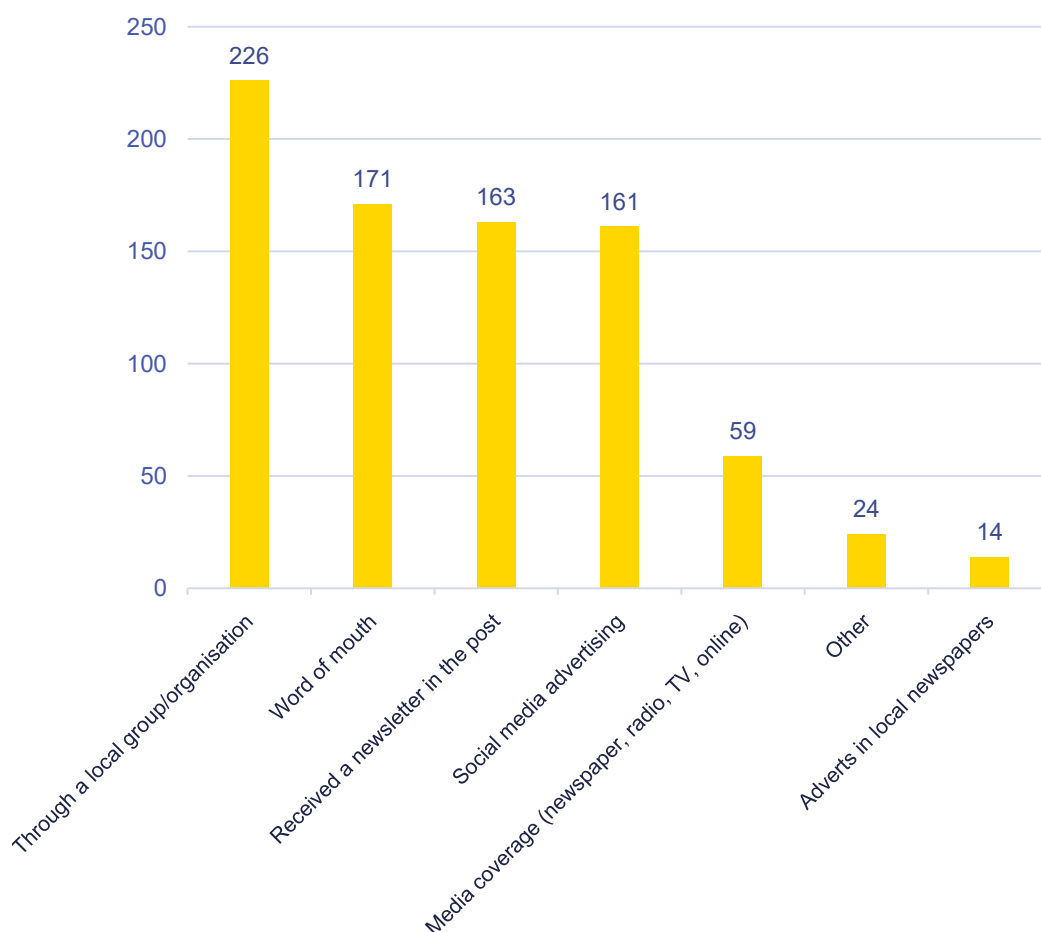
6.4.34 In total, 461 respondents provided a response to this question.

6.4.35 Of those, 59% did not participate in the previous consultation, and 32% did. A further 9% were unsure if they participated.

## Question 12

6.4.36 Question 12 was a multiple-choice question that asked respondents how they found out about the statutory consultation. The results are shown in Figure 14.

Figure 14 Question 12: How did you find out about the consultation?



6.4.37 In total, 455 respondents provided a response to this question.

6.4.38 The most common way that respondents found out about the consultation was via a local group or organisation, with 27% selecting this option. A further 21% found out via 'word of mouth', closely followed by 20% via a newsletter

in the post, and 19% via 'social media advertising'. Only 1.7% of respondents found out via adverts in local newspapers.

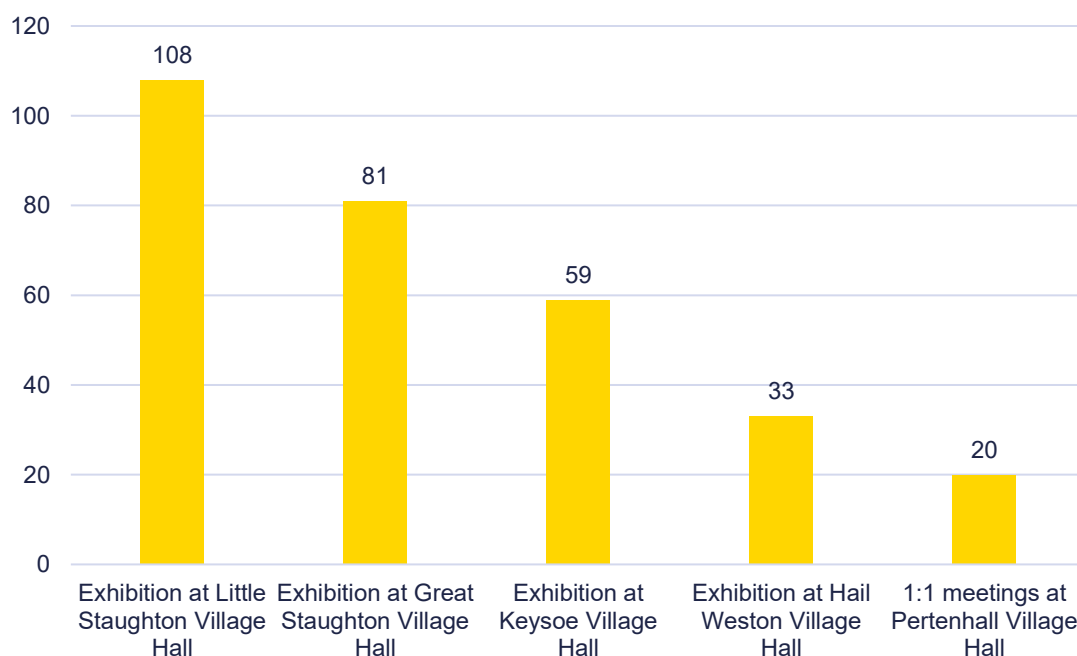
6.4.39 Some respondents that selected 'other' in response to Question 12 identified other ways through which they had learnt about the consultation, including:

- Local notice boards;
- Local MP;
- Road signage from a local organisation;
- Email;
- Parish Council meeting; and
- Letter.

## Question 13

6.4.40 Question 13 asked respondents whether they attended any public consultation events. The results are shown in Figure 15.

Figure 15 Question 13: Did you attend any public consultation events? If so, what events?



6.4.41 In total, 301 respondents provided a response to this question.

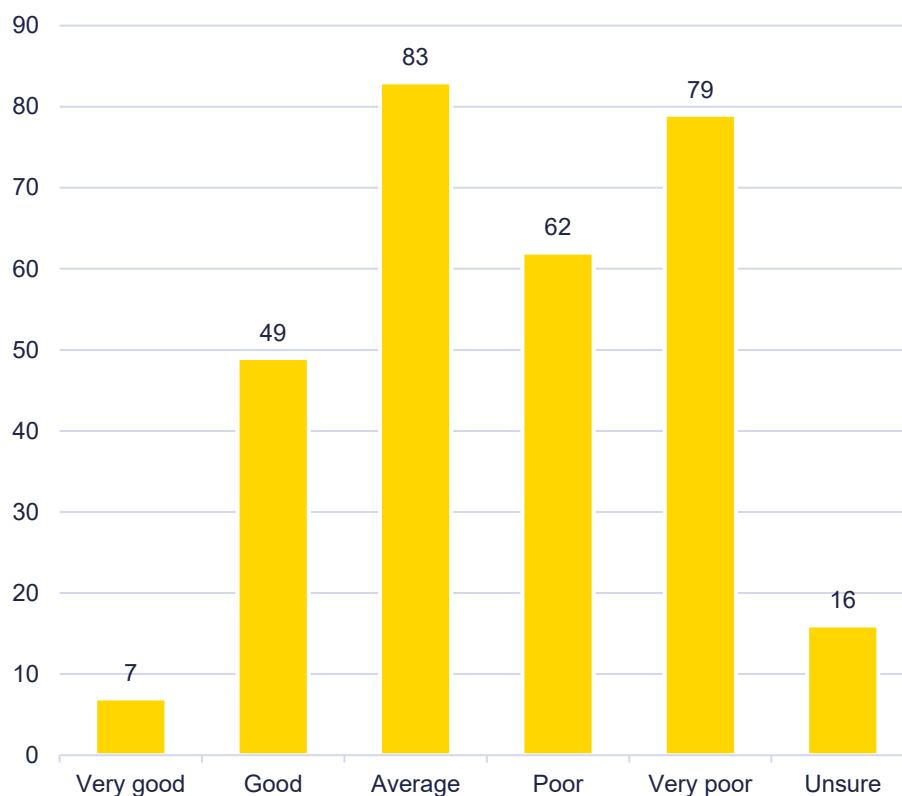
- 6.4.42 The most attended event amongst respondents was that held at Little Staughton Village Hall, with 108 respondents identifying that they had attended this event. The least attended public event amongst respondents was at Hail Weston Village Hall, with only 33 respondents noting their attendance at this event. A further 20 respondents attended the 1:1 meetings at Pertenhall Village Hall, which were on an appointment-only basis.
- 6.4.43 Table 12 sets out the number of attendees that the Applicant recorded at each public consultation event. It is worth recognising that not all attendees at the in-person event will have completed a feedback form. Furthermore, the Applicant noted that some respondents identified that they had attended one of the consultation events listed in the response options prior to the event taking place.

## Question 14

- 6.4.44 Question 14 sought to gauge how informative respondents found the consultation events and materials. The results are shown in Figure 16.

*Figure 16 Question 14: How informative did you find our events/consultation materials?*





6.4.45 In total, 296 respondents provided a response to this question.

6.4.46 Of those, 47% stated the consultation materials were 'good', 'very good', or 'average', compared to 48% of respondents who found the events or consultation materials 'poor' or 'very poor'.

## 6.5 Responses to open questions

6.5.1 As outlined in Section 6.3, open questions were grouped and themed by the Applicant, based on common issues raised.

6.5.2 Table 16 provides a summary of the key themes raised in response to each question presented in the statutory consultation feedback questionnaire.

6.5.3 More detailed analysis of issues raised in the statutory consultation and the Applicant's responses to issues can be found in **Consultation Report Appendices 5-1, 5-2 and 5-3 [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

**Table 16 Key issues raised in response to each question**

Question	Theme
How would you describe your interest in East Park Energy. Please add further detail if required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General opposition to the Scheme;</li> <li>• Statement that the Scheme impacts food security;</li> <li>• Statement that solar panels should be placed on roofs;</li> <li>• Concern regarding loss of agricultural land;</li> <li>• Concern about the impact on countryside;</li> <li>• Statement that the Scheme is too big / Concern regarding the scale of the Scheme.</li> </ul>
<b>Question 2:</b> Do you think that our detailed proposals are an improvement on what we presented previously? If you have any further comments to make in response to this question, please include them below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General opposition to Scheme;</li> <li>• Statement that the Scheme impacts food security;</li> <li>• Opposition to changes / Statement that changes made to Scheme are negative;</li> <li>• General opposition to location;</li> <li>• Concern regarding loss of agricultural land;</li> <li>• Statement that the proposed development is too big / Concern regarding the scale of the Scheme;</li> <li>• Statement that solar panels should be placed on roofs.</li> </ul>
<b>Question 3:</b> To what extent do you support our proposals across each site? If you have further comments to make in response to this question, please include them below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern regarding loss of agricultural land;</li> <li>• Statement that the Scheme is too big / Concern regarding the scale of the Scheme;</li> <li>• Suggestion that solar panels should be placed on roofs;</li> <li>• General opposition to location;</li> <li>• Statement that the Scheme impacts food security;</li> <li>• Suggestion that solar panels should be placed on industrial buildings.</li> </ul>
<b>Question 4:</b> Which of the locations for the Battery Energy Storage System and substation infrastructure do you prefer? If you have further comments to make in response to this question, please include them below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern regarding safety risk associated with BESS;</li> <li>• Suggestion that BESS should not be located near houses;</li> <li>• General opposition to BESS;</li> <li>• Concern regarding the loss of agricultural land;</li> <li>• General opposition to Scheme.</li> </ul>
<b>Question 5:</b> Do you have any concerns about the construction, operation or decommissioning of the project, or the contents of the Preliminary environmental information report more generally? If you have further comments to make in response to this question, please include them below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concern regarding loss of agricultural land;</li> <li>• Concern regarding impact on wildlife/habitats;</li> <li>• Concern about the impact on countryside;</li> <li>• Concern regarding extra traffic during construction;</li> <li>• Statement that construction traffic will lead to increased noise pollution;</li> <li>• Concern regarding disruption associated with the construction phase.</li> </ul>

Question	Theme
<p><b>Question 6:</b> Do you support our plans to deliver environmental enhancements, such as biodiversity net gain? If you have further comments to make in response to this question, please include them below.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General opposition to Scheme;</li> <li>• General negative comments on the consultation;</li> <li>• Scepticism in the process / Statement that the outcome is already decided;</li> <li>• Concern regarding impact on wildlife/habitats;</li> <li>• Statement that the proposed environmental and biodiversity mitigation is insufficient;</li> <li>• Statement that the Scheme represents a net loss for nature;</li> <li>• Concern about the impact on countryside.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Question 7:</b> Do you have any specific ideas for how we could deliver environmental enhancements?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General opposition to the Scheme;</li> <li>• General opposition about location;</li> <li>• Suggestion that solar panels should be placed on industrial buildings;</li> <li>• Suggestion that solar panels should be placed on roofs;</li> <li>• Concern regarding the loss of agricultural land;</li> <li>• Suggestions for how to deliver environmental enhancements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ensure all hedgerows are planted at the earliest opportunity;</li> <li>○ Large rewilded buffers along footpaths, ditches, and hedgerows;</li> <li>○ Create additional areas for wildlife;</li> <li>○ Natural ponds;</li> <li>○ More footpaths;</li> <li>○ Use mature planting to minimise the time taken for screening to be effective;</li> <li>○ Tree planting;</li> <li>○ Allow on-site animal grazing;</li> <li>○ Remove corridor security fencing;</li> <li>○ Wildflower meadows.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Question 8:</b> Do you have a preference for how the East Park Legacy Fund is delivered? If you have further comments to make in response to this question, please include them below.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General opposition to the proposed fund;</li> <li>• Statement that the proposed fund is insufficient;</li> <li>• Suggested change to the proposed fund;</li> <li>• Concern regarding the impact of the Scheme on house prices;</li> <li>• General opposition to the Scheme.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Question 9:</b> Do you have any specific ideas for projects/groups that could benefit from funding via the East Park Legacy Fund?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General opposition to the Scheme;</li> <li>• Statement that the proposed fund is insufficient;</li> <li>• General opposition to the proposed fund;</li> <li>• Suggestions of groups/organisations which would benefit from funding;</li> <li>• Suggestion of compensation for residents.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Question 10:</b> Do you have any other comments about our proposals that you have not given previously?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General opposition to the Scheme;</li> <li>• General opposition to location;</li> <li>• Concern regarding the loss of agricultural land;</li> <li>• Statement that the Scheme is too big / Concern regarding the scale of the Scheme;</li> <li>• Suggestion that solar panels should be placed on roofs;</li> </ul>

Question	Theme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statement that the Applicant only cares about profits;</li> <li>• Statement that the Scheme impacts food security;</li> <li>• Concern regarding the impact on countryside.</li> </ul>
<b>Question 12:</b> How did you find out about the consultation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General negative comments on the consultation;</li> <li>• General opposition to the Scheme.</li> </ul>
<b>Question 14:</b> How informative did you find our events/consultation materials?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General negative comments on consultation;</li> <li>• Statement that maps were not detailed enough;</li> <li>• Concern that views will be ignored;</li> <li>• Comment that the consultation materials were misleading / biased;</li> <li>• Scepticism in the process / Statement that outcome has already been decided.</li> </ul>
<b>Question 15:</b> Do you have any comments about our consultation materials or suggestions for how we could improve?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General opposition to the Scheme;</li> <li>• General negative comments on the consultation;</li> <li>• Comment that the consultation materials were misleading / biased;</li> <li>• Statement that maps were not detailed enough.</li> </ul>

## 6.6 Regard to responses (in accordance with s49 of Planning Act 2008)

6.6.1 In accordance with Section 49(2) of the PA 2008, this section of the Report demonstrates how the Applicant has had regard to matters raised in the responses received as part of the statutory consultation.

6.6.2 In the **Consultation Report Appendices [EN010141/DR/5.2]**, the Applicant has provided:

- A record of the responses received from section 42(1)(a) and (1)(b) consultees and the Applicant's response to these matters, in accordance with section 49 of the PA 2008 (**Consultation Report Appendix 5-1: Regard had to Section 42(1)(a) and (1)(b) responses [EN010141/DR/5.2]**)
- A record of the responses received by section 42(1)(d) PILs and the Applicant's response to these matters, in accordance with section 49 of the PA 2008 (**Consultation Report Appendix 5-2: Regard Had to Section 42(1)(d) and 47 responses [EN010141/DR/5.2]**);

- A record of the responses received from non-prescribed consultees and the Applicant's response to these matters, in accordance with section 49 of the PA 2008 (**Consultation Report Appendix 5-3: Regard had to non-prescribed consultee responses [EN010141/DR/5.2]**);
- A summary of the matters raised by section 47 general public respondents and the Applicant's response to these matters, in accordance with section 49 of the PA 2008 (**Consultation Report Appendix 5-2: Regard Had to Section 42(1)(d) and 47 responses [EN010141/DR/5.2]**).

6.6.3 A series of design changes were made to the Scheme following the statutory consultation. These took into account feedback received during the statutory consultation, including ongoing engagement with stakeholders, landowners and the local community, as well as results from emerging environmental survey data and technical assessments.

6.6.4 Where a matter raised in the consultation responses resulted in or related to a design change, this is identified in the Regard Had appendices outlined above. Where matters raised in the consultation response did not result in, or relate to, a design change, the Applicant has also provided a justification for this decision.

6.6.5 Section 6.8 identifies the key design changes that were made following the statutory consultation, along with the reasoning behind these changes and whether were a direct result of consultation feedback. It also identifies the design suggestions or requests that the Applicant received from the consultation feedback, but which did not result in a change to the design and provides a justification for not implementing these changes.

## 6.7 Summary of the changes to the scheme as a result of consultation

- 6.7.1 As part of the analysis of the feedback received to the statutory consultation, the Applicant reviewed and considered the suggested design changes.
- 6.7.2 Design changes suggested in response to the statutory consultation were carefully considered and assessed by specialists involved in the design of the Scheme. A review of commonly requested changes and whether they resulted in a change to the design of the scheme and the reasons why, are summarised below.
- 6.7.3 A full response to feedback received can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 5-1: Regard had to Section 42(1)(a) and (1)(b) responses [EN010141/DR/5.2]**, **Consultation Report Appendix 5-2: Regard had to Section 42(1)(d) and 47 responses [EN010141/DR/5.2]** and **Consultation Report Appendix 5-3: Regard had to non-prescribed consultee responses [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.
- 6.7.4 Design changes to the Scheme have also been influenced outside of statutory consultation through ongoing engagement with stakeholders and landowners, emerging environmental survey data and technical assessment work. An account of the development of the Scheme and all design changes made is provided in the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/7.4]**.

### Design changes made and why

- 6.7.5 The principal changes to the design of the Scheme sought to reduce the landscape and visual impacts of the Scheme on local communities, reduce impacts during construction, and reduce impacts on the local environment.
- 6.7.6 A summary of the principal design changes made following the statutory consultation are provided below.

### ***Reduction in size of panel area***

- 6.7.7 In response to the statutory consultation, concerns were raised with regard to the overall scale of the Scheme.
- 6.7.8 In response to the feedback received, the Applicant undertook further assessment and design development to identify where it may be possible to provide additional offsets and/or reductions in the footprint of the Scheme without compromising the ability to produce the required capacity output.
- 6.7.9 One area of focus was Site B, where concerns had been raised in regard to the visual impacts upon nearby properties. In response to this feedback, the Applicant made the decision to remove several parcels of solar development in the area around Little Staughton. In this area, the Applicant also reintroduced a small parcel of solar development at a location north of The Kangaroo, along with new woodland planting and screening.
- 6.7.10 The Applicant also made the decision to increase the distance between the Scheme and the existing environment at Site C by removing small parcels of solar development near Garden Farm and Staughton Manor. The Applicant also removed an area of solar development close to where archaeology surveys previously identified the site of a probable Roman Small Town. The Applicant instead proposes woodland planting at this location, providing a buffer between the Scheme and the archaeology findings.
- 6.7.11 The Applicant has also undertaken further consolidation and realignment of proposed fence lines, particularly where solar development has been removed from the proposals, and where the Applicant proposes to increase buffer zones between the proposals and the existing environment. An account of the development of the Scheme and this design change is provided in the **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/7.4]**.

### ***Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and internal substation***

- 6.7.12 At the statutory consultation, the Applicant presented two options for where a BESS and internal substation could be located – Site C (Option 1) and Site D (Option 2).
- 6.7.13 Of the two options, Option 2 was the preferred option in consultation feedback. The BESS and internal substation will therefore be located in Site D, whilst at Site C the Applicant proposes solar development in place of BESS Option 1. An account of the development of the Scheme and this design change is provided in **Design Approach Document [EN010141/DR/7.4]**.

### ***Site access***

- 6.7.14 At the statutory consultation, concerns were raised regarding the proposed access routes. In response to consultation feedback, the Applicant has made changes to two proposed site access points.
- 6.7.15 North west of Little Staughton, the Applicant moved the alignment of the site access further north to increase the distance from nearby residential properties and reduce the impact on nearby public rights of way.
- 6.7.16 Along Great Staughton Road, the Applicant still proposes to make use of an existing access point to enter Site C, however the proposes building a new access track instead of use an existing private track. This design change is accounted for in **ES Vol 3: Figures [EN010141/DR/6.3]**.

### ***East Park Legacy Fund***

- 6.7.17 At the statutory consultation, the Applicant sought views on three models for delivery a Legacy Fund that would provide financial contributions to local projects and initiatives. These options included suggested financial funding of £2 million (Option A – lump sum), £4 million (Option B – lump sum and annual fund) and £6 million (Option C – annual fund). Whilst the Applicant has not confirmed which distribution model the Legacy Fund will use, it is confirming its intention to increase the amount of funding to £400 per megawatt of



installed solar capacity per year. Across the lifetime of the project, this would give the Legacy Fund a total value of £6.4 million.

### ***Cable route***

- 6.7.18 In response to consultation feedback, the Applicant is also widening the order limits around the underground cable corridor between Sites B and C to allow sufficient space to work around field drains. This design change is provided in **ES Vol 3: Figures [EN010141/DR/6.3]**.

### **Design changes not made and why**

- 6.7.19 During the consultation there were responses received that the Applicant considers; however, they were ultimately not implemented.
- 6.7.20 A summary of some frequently suggested design changes that were considered but not implemented is provided below.

### ***Location and alternatives***

- 6.7.21 Several responses to the statutory consultation queried why the Scheme was planned in the location presented.
- 6.7.22 Some respondents also suggested alternative locations for where the Scheme could be located including on brownfield land, along the A421 or A1, or at other locations in the immediate vicinity of the Site.
- 6.7.23 The Applicant's approach to Site identification is set out in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1: Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. This report sets out the four stages that informed the Applicant's approach to site identification:
- **Stage 1:** Identification of the Area of Search;
  - **Stage 2:** Review of Brownfield and Previously Developed Land
  - **Stage 3:** The Exclusion of Land Covered by Planning, Environmental and Other Spatial Constraints; and

- **Stage 4:** Factors influencing site selection.

6.7.24 The initial Area of Search included all land within 15km of the proposed connection point at Eaton Socon substation. Three Search Zones were subsequently identified:

- **Zone A:** Located either side of the A14 at the northernmost extent of the original Area of Search, to the north of Grafham Water;
- **Zone B:** Located across then north-west of the original Area of Search, to the south-west of Grafham Water; and
- **Zone C:** Located to the east of the A1 between St Neots, Sandy and Potton in the south of the original Area of Search.

6.7.25 **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1: Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]** concludes that, whilst there were no Search Zones that were not constrained in some way, that Zone B should be taken forward. This was due to Zone B being found as 'likely to have the most straightforward grid connection, which should in turn avoid and reduce environmental impacts, affect less landowners, and ensure that the Scheme remains commercially viable.'

6.7.26 The Applicant's approach to land identification is then set out in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-2 Land Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]**. This Report sets out the land offered by landowners for potential use as part of the Scheme. Given that this land totalled almost double that theoretically required for the Scheme, it also sets out the criteria the Applicant used to select which land parcels to take forward as part of the Scheme.

6.7.27 In line with National Policy Statement EN-3, the Applicant has considered the potential for the Scheme to be located on previous developed land, brownfield land, contaminated land and industrial land prior to looking at agricultural land. However, the Applicant's assessment determined that there was not sufficient brownfield or previously developed land suitable for supporting the Scheme

on its own. This is set out in **ES Vol 2 Appendix 3-1: Site Identification Report [EN010141/DR/6.2]**.

### ***Use of agricultural land***

- 6.7.28 Some respondents raised concerns about the agricultural land proposed for use as part of the Scheme, suggesting that lower quality agricultural land should be used instead, along with rooftop solar.
- 6.7.29 When developing the proposals, the Applicant sought to avoid the use of high-quality agricultural land, including that which is classified as ‘best and most versatile’ where possible. However, there are various constraints, including the general high quality of farmland in the area, the need to remain within 15km of the agreed connection point at Eaton Socon substation, and the topography/nature of some land within the search area, which mean that the proposals do still involve building solar infrastructure on some high-quality farmland.
- 6.7.30 Whilst it is outside of the scope of the Scheme, the Applicant is supportive of rooftop-mounted solar, such as on warehouses and other existing buildings. However, rooftop-mounted solar installations account for only a small amount of the UK’s total solar generation capacity at present. To meet the Government’s ambitions to boost the amount of solar power capacity, there is an established need to bring forward new ground-mounted solar developments at the same time as better utilising rooftops. Proceeding with new rooftop-mounted solar only would not be enough to meet the Government’s targets.

### ***Food security***

- 6.7.31 Some respondents suggested that the Scheme could impact the UK’s food security due to taking farmland out of active use, arguing that it should not proceed because of this.

- 6.7.32 The development of solar infrastructure will help to address climate change, which has been identified as the single biggest threat to the UK's food security. The UK Food Security Index - published by the Government earlier in 2024 - concludes that the UK's food security is 'broadly stable', but that there is a longer-term risk from climate change. This is reinforced by the Government's Food Security Report 2021, which stated that climate change and other environmental pressures like soil degradation, water quality and biodiversity, are the biggest medium to long term risks to the UK's domestic food production. This report also found that climate change could reduce the proportion of best and most versatile agricultural land by 70% between now and 2050, making it a much bigger risk to the UK's food security than projects like the Scheme, which will help the UK meet its net zero targets and therefore avoid the worst impacts of climate change.
- 6.7.33 To meet the UK's net zero targets, it is estimated that around 90 GW of solar will be required by 2050 – this is above and beyond the Government's current solar targets. Using Solar Energy UK's estimate of six acres of land required per megawatt of solar power generated, meeting this target in full would require the use of 218,530 hectares of land, which is less than 1% of the UK's total land area. However, this figure does not take into account how the Government estimates that future solar developments will require less land per megawatt (MW) generated (the Scheme would require around three acres of land per MW). If, for example, all future developments required four acres per MW, then this would reduce the total amount of UK land required to around 0.6%.
- 6.7.34 As of 2022, around 63.1% of land in England is in agricultural use. This amounts to 8,225,085 hectares of land. Not all solar development will take place in England, nor will it all take place on agricultural land. However, if this were to happen then this would affect less than 3% of agricultural land in England.

### **BESS safety**

- 6.7.35 Some respondents raised concerns about the safety of the proposed BESS facility, and suggested that the location of this infrastructure be altered or the BESS removed from the Scheme.
- 6.7.36 The BESS would include cooling systems which are designed to regulate temperatures to within safe conditions to minimise the risk of fire. The units would also contain fire detection and suppression systems.
- 6.7.37 In developing the proposals, the Applicant has followed guidance published by the National Fire Chiefs Council regarding the design and layout of BESS infrastructure, which includes a recommendation that an on-site water supply is provided in the event of a fire.
- 6.7.38 The Applicant held initial discussions with Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service, as a result of which the Applicant is proposing two water storage tanks with a minimum capacity of 228,000 litres of water each as part of the BESS infrastructure.
- 6.7.39 The Fire and Rescue Service are amongst a range of consultees the Applicant sought feedback from during the consultation.
- 6.7.40 The Applicant has also consulted the Health and Safety Executive on the Scheme. The construction, operation and decommissioning of the Scheme are not considered to have a risk of major accidents or disasters that could affect existing or future receptors, which are not considered through existing design mitigation and regulatory regimes.
- 6.7.41 An outline Battery Safety Management Plan [EN010141/DR/7.10] has been produced as part of the application for development consent. This plan outlines the procedures proposed to be followed regarding battery safety and the final version of this plan will be approved by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the local fire service.

## 7.0 APPROACH TO ENGAGEMENT BETWEEN STATUTORY CONSULTATION AND APPLICATION SUBMISSION

### 7.1 Overview

- 7.1.1 Chapter 7 outlines the engagement undertaken following the statutory consultation. The feedback received at the statutory consultation, combined with further assessments and engagement with other stakeholders, allowed the Applicant to further refine its proposals.
- 7.1.2 This Chapter also includes detail of the AoCM statement, including how the Applicant has had regard to the advice that the Planning Inspectorate and affected statutory bodies has issued during the pre-application stage as per the Pre-application Guidance.

### 7.2 Adequacy of Consultation Milestone

- 7.2.1 As outlined previously in this Report, the Applicant produced an AoCM Statement in accordance with the Pre-application Guidance and Prospectus.
- 7.2.2 A written submission was prepared by the Applicant and submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2025 to enable the Planning Inspectorate to give early consideration of the adequacy of consultation undertaken on the Scheme.
- 7.2.3 The AoCM Statement provided an overview of the engagement and consultation activity to date and how it has met with the requirements of the PA 2008. A copy of the AoCM statement can be found in **Consultation Report Appendix 6-1: Adequacy of Consultation Milestone Statement [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

## 7.3 Section 51 advice

- 7.3.1 Paragraph 026 of the Pre-application Guidance states that the Report should “set out specifically what the applicant has done to comply with the statutory requirements of the Planning Act, including advice issued under section 51 of the Planning Act, relevant secondary legislation and this guidance”.
- 7.3.2 The Applicant has engaged the Planning Inspectorate through the pre-application process, including attending a number of meetings. The Planning Inspectorate took notes of these meetings, which were published on its website.
- 7.3.3 The Applicant has had regard to all Section 51 advice received, as outlined in Table 17.

**Table 17 Regard to Section 51 Advice**

Date of meeting/date of advice given	Planning Inspectorate advice	Regard to advice
<b>Email on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2024</b>		
<p>Feedback on the Programme Document</p>	<p>The applicant supplied the Inspectorate with its initial Programme Document in line with the Expression of Interest process, after the publication of the 2024 Pre-application Prospectus. Having reviewed the document, the Inspectorate considers that it satisfactorily covers the expected content as set out in the government's pre-application guidance at paragraph 10, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the date the applicant intends to submit their application</li> <li>• a comprehensive timetable of the applicant's preapplication process, the main events with dates and milestones demonstrating how the pre-application process will be completed (using the maximum target of 2 years as a benchmark)</li> <li>• the applicant's view on the main issues for resolution and activities they will undertake to address those</li> <li>• the applicant's proposals for engaging with statutory consultees and local authorities during the preapplication period and any intended financial support agreements, such as Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs)</li> <li>• the applicant's identification of risks to achievement of the pre-application stage and the process by which these risks are tracked and managed</li> <li>• cross references to the SoCC required by section 47of the Planning Act.</li> </ul> <p>The Programme Document provides enough detail about the proposed development, timetable and activities for the preapplication process, as well as the applicant's approach to engagement with statutory consultees and other parties. In the next iteration of the document, it would be helpful if the applicant includes the timescale for the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone.</p>	<p>The Applicant ensured that the following iteration of the Programme Document included the timescale for the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone.</p>



Date of meeting/date of advice given	Planning Inspectorate advice	Regard to advice
<b>Meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2025</b>		
Consultation report	<p>The applicant updated on their statutory consultation with substantial feedback received. They informed that the Planning Performance Agreements (PPA) have taken a long time to sign by the host authorities (as the councils needed to secure delegations on responding to cross-boundary matters) and they were pursuing a joint agreement with the councils. The authorities were looking to provide joint responses on certain issues (such as landscape and visual impact), whilst 4 retaining individual responses on others (such as highway matters).</p> <p>The Inspectorate advised that when comments are provided by these councils, that their individual or joint submissions should be clearly articulated in the Consultation Report and how they have been taken into consideration.</p>	The Applicant has considered the advice and actioned this in the Consultation report.
Project Programme	<p>The applicant informed the Inspectorate that they are planning to submit the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone in Q2 2025 with final feedback from local authorities expected soon to allow for this stage.</p> <p>The applicant also informed that they would update the Inspectorate in the Spring regarding when in Q3 2025 the submission of the DCO application will be expected. The applicant informed the Inspectorate that the timing of trial trenching would be critical to the submission date, in respect of updating the Environmental Statement and Works Plans.</p>	The Applicant provided an update on submission timescales and the AoCM at a subsequent meeting on 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2025.
Programme Document	<p>The Inspectorate queried why the Programme Document was not on the applicant's website and if it has been updated since it was last submitted. The Inspectorate reminded the applicant of the feedback provided in October on its first iteration. The Inspectorate also advised the applicant to include all consents that were being sought into the programme document due to the planned application submission in Q3 2025.</p> <p>The applicant stated that certain checks had to be taken before the programme document could be finalised but that a version would be published on its website once the dates for trial trenching are confirmed.</p>	The Programme Document was uploaded to the project website on 28 April 2025.

Date of meeting/date of advice given	Planning Inspectorate advice	Regard to advice
Land/ Landowner Engagement	<p>The applicant informed the Inspectorate that negotiations with landowners along the grid connection corridors was still underway and it is hoped there will be limited need for Compulsory Acquisition (CA).</p> <p>The Inspectorate queried whether feedback from users of the nearby airfields had been received and how this was being captured in the applicant's glint and glare assessment. The applicant said that the glint and glare assessment had been completed, taking into account any effects on the airfields.</p>	No action needed.
Grid Connection	The applicant is now looking to apply for one option for the on-site substation / BESS, with an emerging preference for Option 2. No decision has yet been made.	No action needed.
Archaeological Sites	<p>The applicant provided an update on the recently discovered Roman site of national importance, which has now been designated, and how they were assessing the area. The applicant stated that the extent of changes to the scheme following this discovery should be minimal and that they had agreed the extent of trial trenching with the relevant council. The applicant also said that they would be presenting information about the archaeological discovery to local schools and historical societies. The Inspectorate advised the applicant that any outcomes to its trial trenching leading to further design changes should be captured in their Design Approach Document (DAD) or equivalent, to explain the design evolution of the scheme. The applicant noted this and said it has been drafting a DAD since the Inception Meeting.</p> <p>The Inspectorate queried the progress of assessments of other heritage assets across the four sites. The applicant responded that mitigation such as buffers and screening were being considered. some outcomes to surveys had been delayed during the preparation of its Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), and that likely mitigation changes would be needed and set out in the DCO application.</p>	No action needed.
Statement of Need (post-meeting advice)	The applicant queried whether a standalone 'Statement of Need' would be required with the DCO application, for this project and other Solar projects at pre-application, and whether this was now a standard' practice set by the Inspectorate. The applicant referred to the Inspectorate's recent s51 advice to the applicant for the Botley West Solar Farm project, following the 'acceptance' stage. Specifically, the s51 advice for Botley West requested a Statement of Need document which addresses the "UK future electricity requirements and what role would solar farms play, if any, in	No action needed.

Date of meeting/date of advice given	Planning Inspectorate advice	Regard to advice
	<p>helping to meet any increases in demand"; additional "detail on the reasons for the scale of the proposed solar farm"; and information "on the efficiency and how economically attractive solar generation in the UK is, compared to other forms of renewable generation". For the East Park Energy project, the Applicant is intending to include a statement of need in its Planning Statement and not as a standalone document. The Applicant referred to the government's Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy in respect of the important role wind and solar is expected to play in meeting the UK's policy of achieving net zero emissions by 2050 paragraph 3.3.20 onwards) and the sustained growth in the capacity of onshore wind and solar needed in the next decade, under the Energy White Paper.</p> <p>The Inspectorate advises that it is unlikely that a standalone 'Statement of Need' will be requested for this or other Solar projects if the relevant information is easily discoverable and complete within other application documents. The s51 advice for Botley West stated that a standalone Statement of Need document was not a statutory requirement but was being requested for the reasons given. Such a document would thus avoid having to cross-reference different information on 'need' in the 'Statement of Reasons' and the 'Planning Support Statement'. Additionally, several parties had questioned the scale and specific location of the proposed Botley West solar farm and the heritage and environmental constraints therein, as outlined in the applicant's Consultation Report. A standalone Statement of Reasons, outlining the 'need' in one place, would also assist other parties to understand the applicant's position on the issue and may help answer other related matters. Lastly, including a Policy Compliance Document can greatly assist with signposting stakeholders to relevant sections of an application, to demonstrate perceived accordance with all important and relevant policies.</p>	
<b>Meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2025</b>		
Programme update	The applicant informed the Inspectorate that they are still working towards their September submission date with the 3 host authorities also aware.	No action needed.
Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AoCM)	The Inspectorate advised the applicant that they will be reviewing any comments from the local authorities about the adequacy of the consultation at the AoCM stage and whether there is a need for further targeted consultation to ensure the application is fit for purpose upon submission. The	The Applicant shared a copy of the draft AoCM statement on 21 <sup>st</sup> August 2025. No comments were received from the Host

Date of meeting/date of advice given	Planning Inspectorate advice	Regard to advice
	applicant said that local authorities are currently being consulted and would append any comments to their AOCM statement.	Authorities prior to the submission of the AoCM to the Planning Inspectorate.
Historic environment and archaeology	The Inspectorate queried from previous meetings if discussions with Historic England and county archaeologists were ongoing and if there were any particular concerns with the proposed methodology. The applicant stated that it had undertaken extensive surveying work of the site, including 900 trenches dug. The applicant's approach has been agreed with Bedfordshire and Cambridge Councils, with no significant concerns raised by Historic England. The applicant is seeking to submit a Outline Archaeological Plan and a Outline Heritage Enhancement Strategy with their DCO application. Given the extent of potential archaeological remains on site, further studies may need to be undertaken following consent (if granted).	No action needed.
Planning Performance Agreements (PPA)	The Inspectorate advised the applicant on the material produced by Suffolk County Council's NSIP Centre of Excellence on PPAs to support local authorities understanding, and the revised advice for councils by the Inspectorate about the DCO process and the need to seek delegated authority early to ensure submissions can be submitted in time during examinations. The applicant said that PPAs have been signed by the three main authorities, to assist with their resources during examination and the employment of certain specialists, such as landscape experts.	No action needed.
Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)	<p>The Inspectorate advised the applicant and potential issues arising from Interested Parties regarding BESSs. Other solar schemes going through examination have seen representations and submissions about the BESSs visual impact and proximity to residential receptors. The Inspectorate further advised on the emerging requests for Statements of Common Ground's in examinations with fire services.</p> <p>The applicant highlighted that they were aware of these issues and have factored this with the Plume study forming part of the Outline Battery Safety Management Plan and have employed a fire safety specialist to assist in the drafting of its Outline Battery Safety Management Plan. The applicant will shortly communicate the selected BESS location.</p>	The Applicant communicated the decision around the location of the BESS in a newsletter update in September 2025, prior to submission of the DCO application.
Protected Provisions	The Inspectorate advised that resolving protected provisions with statutory undertakers can take up significant time in examination and to progress the resolution of draft provisions as early as possible.	The Applicant is including protective provisions within the Draft DCO and is engaging with statutory undertakers.

Date of meeting/date of advice given	Planning Inspectorate advice	Regard to advice
	The applicant stated that it is working on a protected provisions schedule in the draft Development Consent Order and that statutory undertakers have been involved in preapplication discussions to seek agreement on these.	
Agro-Solar Research area	<p>The applicant informed the Inspectorate that as part of the proposed works, it was seeking to include in Works 10 a research area for the local Agricultural College to undertake soil sampling studies (to assess any benefits or effects from solar on agriculture). The applicant stated that this could provide a substantive research base for the benefit of the solar industry more widely.</p> <p>The Inspectorate advised that relevant environmental assessments will need to account for any change in parameters between the agro-solar research area and main solar PV sites.</p>	The relevant environmental assessments accounts for the works proposed.
	<p>The Inspectorate advised on potential Glint and Glare mitigation with nearby airfields. The Helios Renewable Energy Project was highlighted where a small airfield which was used by gliders encountered issues with Glint and Glare during examination.</p> <p>The applicant informed that this had been considered, and the closest small airfield nearby was already adjacent to an existing solar farm.</p>	No action needed.
Compulsory Acquisition	In answer to questions from the Inspectorate, the applicant said that discussions with landowners under voluntary agreement was progressing well, with over 80% of land agreements in place and most of the remaining land agreements to conclude prior to submission. Some further negotiations were ongoing with certain sections of the cable route corridor. It is likely that some CA powers would be sought in the DCO, in line with other NSIPs.	Since this meeting the Applicant has brought all of the solar land under voluntary agreement and has progressed negotiations on much of the cable corridor.
Pre-submission	The Inspectorate advised about the advice page detailing the updated application index which should be completed by applicants. The Inspectorate also stated that applications were now being submitted via the Inspectorate's SharePoint site. Details of which would be provided to the applicant before submission. The Inspectorate further highlighted the trend towards more efficient and proportionate examinations, pointing to Oaklands and Peartree Hill as examples.	No action needed.
<b>Email of 15<sup>th</sup> September 2025</b>		

Date of meeting/date of advice given	Planning Inspectorate advice	Regard to advice
Adequacy of Consultation Milestone Statement	<p>The applicant's Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AOCM) statement has been prepared and submitted having had regard to the government's statutory pre-application stage guidance as well as the Inspectorate's non-statutory 2024 Pre-application Prospectus. Having reviewed the applicant's AOCM statement, the Inspectorate considers that it sets out the applicant's consultation activities undertaken to date, and confirms the approaches set out in the applicant's Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) and Programme Document.</p> <p>At the time the AOCM was produced, not all responses received in the applicant's statutory consultation had been analysed, though a summary of potential changes to the scheme already identified from engagement is included at paragraph 4.2.3.</p> <p>The AOCM aligns with the applicant's Programme Document and SoCC in consulting the three host local authorities (LAs) of Bedford Borough Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council throughout the preapplication process. However, no reference is made to the other twelve LAs identified by the Planning Inspectorate and communicated to the applicant in the post-scoping consultation body list. Therefore, it is unclear if or what engagement has taken place with all LAs as defined by section 43 of the Planning Act 2008. In its Consultation Report, the applicant is advised to clearly set out how all statutory parties have been consulted (along with explaining overall how it has met its consultation duties under sections 42, 47 and 48 of the Planning Act 2008 and how the proposed application has been amended to take account of any relevant responses).</p> <p>Outside of the AOCM, the applicant confirmed the document had been shared with Bedford Borough Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council, but that all three LAs had declined to comment, instead preferring to reserve comments until the Adequacy of Consultation stage during acceptance. The absence of views or supporting material from the LAs has limited the ability of the Inspectorate to cross-check the AOCM statement.</p> <p>The applicant provided its AOCM statement to the Planning Inspectorate on 4 September 2025, three weeks before the intended submission of its application for acceptance on 29 September</p>	<p>The Applicant has fully accounted for how it engaged with both host and neighbouring local authorities as part of this Consultation report, further details of this can be found in Section 5.5.</p> <p>The Applicant notes the guidance around the timing of the submission of the AoCM for future projects.</p>

Date of meeting/date of advice given	Planning Inspectorate advice	Regard to advice
	<p>2025. For any future applications, the applicant is respectfully reminded that the AOCM statement should be submitted to the Inspectorate three months before the intended date for submitting the application. While the AOCM is an informal process, the government's guidance explains that it is nonetheless an "important opportunity to check that the pre-application programme is on track, and if it is seriously adrift the Planning Inspectorate will advise the applicant about the steps necessary to enable the application to be submitted having fulfilled the statutory requirements". The Inspectorate's comments on the applicant's AOCM statement are made without prejudice to any decision on whether to accept the application for examination.</p>	

## 7.4 Pre-application Guidance

- 7.4.1 Throughout this Report the Applicant has shown how it has met the requirements of the PA 2008 and associated legislation and regulations. In April 2024, updated Pre-application Guidance was released by the Planning Inspectorate.
- 7.4.2 **Consultation Report Appendix 7-1: Regard to Pre-application guidance [EN010141/DR/5.2]** details how the Applicant has had regard to the advice in the Pre-application Guidance.

## 7.5 Engagement with elected representatives

- 7.5.1 Following the end of the statutory consultation, the Applicant maintained communication with the Member of Parliament for Huntingdon with a site visit subsequently taking place on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2025.
- 7.5.2 The Applicant also maintained communication with Great Staughton Parish Council and, in March 2025, held a meeting to discuss archaeological findings and their significance.
- 7.5.3 Following submission of the application, the Applicant will notify local elected representatives that the application has been submitted and is awaiting acceptance by the Planning Inspectorate. This correspondence will also outline next steps for the application and the Applicant's commitments to ensuring the community is engaged throughout the process. A developed 'You Said, We Did' document will also be issued.

## 7.6 Engagement with Host Authorities

- 7.6.1 Table 18 sets out the date and purpose of meetings the Applicant has had with Host Authorities since the close of the statutory consultation.



**Table 18 Engagement with Host Authorities following statutory consultation**

Host Authorities	Date/method of engagement	Purpose
Officers at Bedford Borough Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council.	8 <sup>th</sup> November 2024 Meeting	Project update meeting including statutory consultation on outcomes and planning performance agreement.
Officers at Bedford Borough Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council.	24 <sup>th</sup> April 2025 Meeting	Project update including plans for submission, plan for landscape and visual impact review, adequacy of consultation and planning performance agreement.
Officers at Bedford Borough Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council.	23 <sup>rd</sup> July 2025 Meeting	Project update meeting including design changes and community benefit.

## 7.7 Engagement with technical stakeholders

- 7.7.1 Informal engagement with technical stakeholders has also continued following statutory consultation, mainly via email. Where appropriate, following submission of the application, the Applicant will provide a response to prescribed consultees consulted under Section 42, outlining the regard had to their consultation response.
- 7.7.2 Table 19 outlines the dates and purposes of key engagement with technical environmental stakeholders following statutory consultation.

**Table 19 Engagement with technical and environmental stakeholders following statutory consultation**

Technical stakeholder	Date/method of engagement	Purpose
Bedford Borough / Cambridgeshire County – Archaeology	March-September 2025 Site Work / Email	Ongoing site meetings and email exchanges with BBC and CCC Archaeologists in relation to the archaeological trial trenching that was being undertaken on site.
Historic England	28 <sup>th</sup> March 2025 MS Teams	To provide an update on the project and the progress with archaeological trial trenching.
Natural England	7 <sup>th</sup> May 2025 Email	To discuss and agree approach to agricultural land classification survey method.
Environment Agency	23 <sup>th</sup> May 2025 Email	To agree the extent of fluvial flood zone and query a potential error in the EA's data for Site B.
National Highways	28 <sup>th</sup> May 2025 MS Teams	To discuss feedback from statutory consultation.
Bedford Borough / Cambridgeshire County – Highways	19 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	To discuss feedback from statutory consultation.
Cambridgeshire County Council / Bedford Borough Council - Ecology	24 <sup>th</sup> June 2025 MS Teams	To discuss feedback from statutory consultation and agree requirements for any pluvial modelling near the BESS, as well as climate change allowances for drainage design.
Cambridgeshire County Council / Huntingdonshire District Council - Water	22 <sup>nd</sup> July 2025	To discuss feedback from statutory consultation and agree approach to surface water

Technical stakeholder	Date/method of engagement	Purpose
Historic England	7 <sup>th</sup> August 2025 Email	To share the outline Archaeological Mitigation Strategy for review and comment.
Historic England	22 <sup>nd</sup> August 2025 MS Teams	To provide a general project update, and to review the interim findings from the archaeological trial trenching.
Historic England	5 <sup>th</sup> September 2025 MS Teams	To discuss and agree the approach to incorporating scheduled monument consent within the draft development consent order.
Environment Agency	10 <sup>th</sup> September 2025 MS Teams	To provide a project update and have an initial discussion on protective provisions.

7.7.3 Alongside technical environment bodies, the Applicant has engaged with a number of utilities and statutory parties regarding their responses to statutory consultation as outlined in Table 20.

**Table 20 Engagement with utilities and statutory parties**

Technical stakeholder	Date/method of engagement	Purpose
National Grid Electricity Transmission	8 <sup>th</sup> October 2024 Meeting	Update on statutory consultation outcomes and interface with Eaton Socon Substation.
National Grid Electricity Transmission	12 <sup>th</sup> November 2024 Meeting	Update on statutory consultation outcomes and interface with Eaton Socon Substation.
National Grid Electricity Transmission	10 <sup>th</sup> December 2024 Meeting	Update on statutory consultation outcomes and interface with Eaton Socon Substation.

National Grid Electricity Transmission	14 <sup>th</sup> January 2025 Meeting	Update on statutory consultation outcomes and interface with Eaton Socon Substation.
National Grid Electricity Transmission	11 <sup>th</sup> February 2025 Meeting	Update on statutory consultation outcomes and interface with Eaton Socon Substation.
National Grid Electricity Transmission	11 <sup>th</sup> March 2025 Meeting	Update on statutory consultation outcomes and interface with Eaton Socon Substation.
National Grid Electricity Transmission	8 <sup>th</sup> April 2025 Meeting	Update on statutory consultation outcomes and interface with Eaton Socon Substation.
National Gas Transmission PLC	Emails with solicitors acting for National Gas Transmission PLC (April 2025 and ongoing)	The Applicant's legal advisors are engaged with solicitors acting for National Gas Transmission PLC in respect of bespoke protective provisions.
National Grid Electricity Transmission	13 <sup>th</sup> May 2025 Meeting	Update on statutory consultation outcomes and interface with Eaton Socon Substation.
National Grid Electricity Transmission	10 <sup>th</sup> June 2025 Meeting	Update on statutory consultation outcomes and interface with Eaton Socon Substation.
National Grid Electricity Transmission	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2025 Meeting	Update on statutory consultation outcomes and interface with Eaton Socon Substation.
National Grid Electricity Transmission	9 <sup>th</sup> September 2025 Meeting	Update on statutory consultation outcomes and

		interface with Eaton Socon Substation.
National Grid Electricity Transmission	Emails with solicitors acting for National Grid Electricity Transmission (September 2025 and ongoing)	The Applicant's legal advisors are engaged with solicitors acting for National Grid Electricity Transmission in respect of bespoke protective provisions.
National Grid Electricity Transmission	14 <sup>th</sup> October 2025 Meeting	Agreed strategy for order limits, powers sought and plan for agreeing protective provisions.

7.7.4 Additionally, the Applicant has reached out to the following utilities and technical stakeholders where assets belonging to those stakeholders had been identified within the order limits:

- Anglian Water Services Limited;
- Eastern Power Networks plc;
- Environment Agency;
- EUNetworks Fiber UK Limited;
- Gigaclear Limited;
- National Gas Transmission plc;
- National Grid Electricity Transmission plc;
- UK Power Networks (Operations) Limited; and
- Vodafone Limited.

7.7.5 The emails circulated to these stakeholders copied in the Applicant's legal advisors and explained that the Applicant was looking to engage with the stakeholders regarding protective provisions to ensure that their interests would be protected. The Applicant has engaged with requests for information

that have followed this email and based on the responses received the Applicant's legal advisors have been engaged in discussions around protective provisions.

7.7.6 In summary, the Applicant's legal advisors are currently engaged in discussions around protective provisions with the following stakeholders and/or their legal advisors:

- Anglian Water Services Limited;
- Cadent Gas;
- Environment Agency;
- National Gas Transmission plc;
- National Grid Electricity Transmission plc;
- Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (engagement was prompted by Network Rail with the parties currently discussing whether the Scheme would have any impact on Network Rail's assets); and
- UK Power Networks (Operations) Limited.

7.7.7 Please refer to the **Land Rights Tracker [EN01041-DR-4.4]** for further detail on the engagement undertaken to date with these stakeholders.

7.7.8 The **Potential Main Issues for the Examination [EN010141/DR/7.26]** outlines any outstanding potential main issues with parties, including statutory bodies.

## 7.8 Engagement with communities

7.8.1 Following the conclusion of the statutory consultation, the Applicant sent a newsletter on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025 via 2<sup>nd</sup> Class post to 1,606 residential and business addresses within the host Parish Council areas. The newsletter thanked residents for their participation in the consultation, provided an update on the programme and ongoing surveys, and highlighted the Applicant's recent community engagement work. A copy of the newsletter is provided in **Consultation Report Appendix 7-2: April 2025 newsletter [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.

- 7.8.2 After reviewing all the feedback received, the Applicant made changes to the proposals. To communicate these updates to the local community, a newsletter was distributed on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2025 to 1,606 residential and business addresses within the host Parish Council areas. The newsletter included a summary of the key changes, an indicative project timeline, and an updated map. A copy of the newsletter is provided in **Consultation Report Appendix 7-3: September 2025 newsletter [EN010141/DR/5.2]**.
- 7.8.3 Paragraph 026 of the Pre-application Guidance states that “It is good practice that those who have contributed to the consultation are informed of the results. The consultation report may not be the most appropriate format in which to respond to the points raised by various consultee groups and bodies. Applicants should therefore consider producing a summary note in plain English for the local community setting out headline findings and how they have been addressed, together with a link to the full consultation report for those interested.”
- 7.8.4 The Applicant has committed to developing a ‘You Said, We Did’ consultation document that outlines how community feedback has directly resulted in changes to the Scheme. This will include a link to the full consultation report. On acceptance of the application, the Applicant intends to release this onto the consultation website. The Applicant will contact key stakeholders such as MPs and local councillors, to inform them of the document and where to access it.

## 7.9 Engagement with landowners

- 7.9.1 The Applicant has continued to engage with landowners following the statutory consultation through the referencing process (HM Land Refreshes, Confirmation Schedules, calls, emails or site visits to confirm any outstanding landownership queries). The Applicant remains in regular conversation with all landowners on the scheme, and continues negotiations, as outlined in the **Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker [EN010141/DR/4.4]**.

7.9.2 Following the statutory consultation, the Applicant identified the need to realign an access point on Great Staughton Road. Associated with this site access realignment, the Applicant identified a reduction to the size of the Order Limits for the Scheme. As this change would only impact a single landowner, whom the Applicant had engaged with on several occasions during the pre-application stage, the Applicant engaged directly with this stakeholder on the change.

7.9.3 Following the statutory consultation, the Applicant has carried out a land referencing refresh to ensure those with relevant land interests have been identified. These further diligent inquiries identified a total of six parties who had not been directly consulted as part of the statutory consultation.

Of these, the Applicant determined that:

- One of these parties was a commercial entity, the members of which the Applicant had engaged with individually as part of the statutory consultation; and
- One of these parties was a continuation of an entity that the Applicant had previously identified as part of the statutory consultation. The Applicant has also carried out further targeted engagement with this entity over a change it made to its proposals following the statutory consultation, as set out in 7.9.2.

7.9.4 The remaining four parties were identified shortly prior to DCO submission as a result of a land registry change. The Applicant wrote to these parties upon their identification to notify them of the Scheme but has been unable to take formal account of any feedback from these parties prior to DCO submission. It will therefore ensure the parties are advised of how they can take part in the DCO process, as recommended in the Pre-application guidance.



- 7.9.5 A land registry refresh will be undertaken on project acceptance and prior to Section 56 notices going out and again before the close of examination, to identify any new interests.
- 7.9.6 The **Book of Reference [EN010141/DR/4.3]** identifies all persons with an interest in land impacted by the Scheme.

## 8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1.1 This Report has been submitted in accordance with Section 37(3)(c) of the PA 2008, which requires that any application for an order granting development consent must be accompanied by a Consultation Report.
- 8.1.2 In compliance with Section 37(7) of the PA 2008, this Report provides details of:
- How the Applicant has carried out consultation in compliance with statutory requirements (namely Section 42, section 47 and Section 48 of the PA 2008), in relation to statutory consultation;
  - A summary of the relevant responses received by the Applicant in response to the statutory consultation, any further targeted consultation and publicity of the proposed Application; and
  - How the Applicant had regard to the relevant responses, in accordance with section 49 of the PA 2008.
- 8.1.3 Additionally, this Report details how the Applicant carried out early and continuous meaningful engagement with stakeholders, and how the feedback received throughout the pre-application process has been taken into account when developing the design of the Scheme.
- 8.1.4 This Report has also set out how the Applicant has carried out pre-application consultation and engagement in accordance with the EIA Regulations, the APFP regulations and the Planning Inspectorate's guidance on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the Consultation Report.
- 8.1.5 The Applicant has demonstrated that a proactive and inclusive approach to consultation has been undertaken during the pre-application stage of the Scheme. The approach taken enabled stakeholders the opportunity to influence and inform the design of the Scheme, as evidenced throughout this Report and supporting Appendices.

- 8.1.6 The evidence supports the assertion that the Scheme, which is subject to this application for development consent, has been designed in a way which has taken into account feedback from prescribed consultees, those with land interests, local interest groups and members of the local communities, such that changes have been made to the design as a direct result of their feedback.
- 8.1.7 It is therefore concluded that, in line with the Applicant's self-completed **S55 Checklist [EN010141/DR/1.4]**, it has complied with all statutory requirements of the PA 2008 in relation to carrying out consultation prior to submitting the DCO Application.