

# EAST PARK ENERGY

# **East Park Energy**

EN010141

**Consultation Report Appendices**Part 1

Document Reference: EN010141/DR/5.2

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

# **EAST PARK ENERGY**

Planning Act 2008

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

# Consultation Report Appendices Part 1

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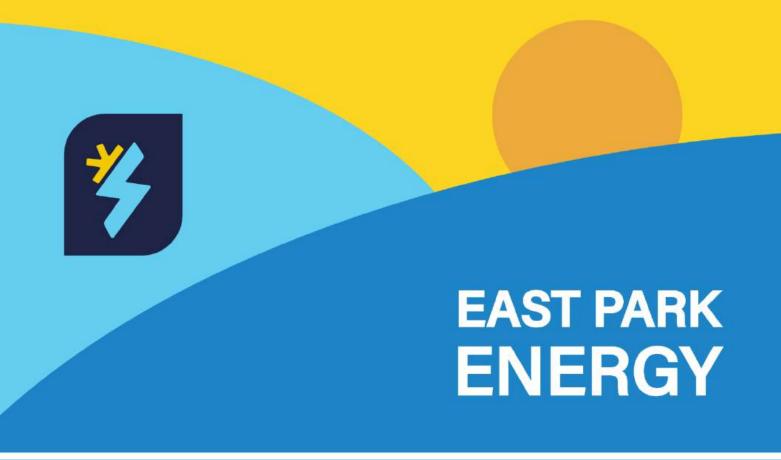
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**East Park Energy** 

EN010141

**Report on Non-Statutory Consultation** 

# **EAST PARK ENERGY**

# **Report on Non-Statutory Consultation**

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01	December 2023	Draft
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# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

# 1.1 Project Overview

- 1.1.1 This document reports on a non-statutory consultation regarding plans for a solar and battery storage project situated to the north-west of St Neots in Bedford and Huntingdonshire. The purpose of this report is to outline the non-statutory consultation process, inform stakeholders of the feedback received and to provide RNA Energy's response to the feedback. It also records matters that flow from the consultation that will inform the approach to the future statutory consultation. This report was completed in March 2024 and information is therefore correct to that date.
- 1.1.2 The proposed scheme aims to establish a solar energy generation system coupled with battery storage. The solar panels will harness sunlight to generate electricity, while the battery storage will facilitate the storing and release of electricity. Specifically, the electricity generated will connect to the National Grid via the existing substation at Eaton Socon. The battery storage will ensure a consistent supply of electricity by storing excess energy during times of low demand and releasing it back into the National Grid during periods of higher demand.

# 1.2 Non-Statutory Consultation Overview

- 1.2.1 The non-statutory consultation undertaken by RNA Energy marked the initial step in engaging with the community and stakeholders regarding the proposed scheme whilst the proposals were at a formative stage. Although delivering a non-statutory consultation is not mandatory, RNA Energy chose this approach to provide local communities with an early opportunity to influence the development before the formal statutory consultation.
- 1.2.2 The primary objective of this early non-statutory consultation was to introduce the project 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 project's



development while in its initial phases. Recognising the significance of local knowledge, RNA Energy sought community input throughout the non-statutory consultation and continues to value this input as the application process progresses.

- 1.2.3 Feedback obtained during the non-statutory consultation has been instrumental in shaping the East Park Energy project to limit its impact on the local community as the scheme reaches its final stages of development.
- 1.2.4 The non-statutory consultation period was open from Tuesday 17th October 2023 to Tuesday 21st November 2023, totalling five weeks. A summary of the engagement activities carried out during and before the consultation period are detailed below:
  - Letters were issued to political stakeholders from Cambridgeshire County Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and Bedford Borough Council where the site is located.
  - Correspondence was distributed to all parish councils hosting the project or within close proximity to it.
  - Letters were issued to Richard Fuller, MP for North East Bedfordshire and Jonathan Djanogly, MP for Huntingdon.
  - Letters were also issued to neighbouring local authorities:
    - o 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
    - South Cambridgeshire District Council
  - Letters were issued to consultees that will be statutory under S42 of the Planning Act 2008 in the next phase of consultation.



- Letters were issued to the owners of land that is hosting the scheme..
- A dedicated consultation website was created, www.eastparkenergy.co.uk to provide further information on the proposals, as well as a facility to submit feedback via an online form.
- A Community Information Line, email address and postal address were available throughout the consultation period for those wanting to correspond with a member of the development team.
- Social media adverts were circulated on Facebook and Instagram at a 10-mile radius of the site, which provided details about the plans, as well as a link to the consultation website.
- A leaflet was distributed to around 1,492 nearby commercial and residential properties to provide an overview of the plans and how feedback could be provided. The leaflet distribution area covered the parish council jurisdictions of:
  - Pertenhall & Swineshead Parish Council
  - Little Staughton Parish Council
  - Hail Weston Parish Council
  - Staploe Parish Council
  - Great Staughton Parish Council
  - Bolnhurst & Keysoe Parish Council
- A press release was issued to local news outlets to inform members of the public of the plans and public consultation.
- A press notice was published in the Hunts Post for one week during the consultation period.
- Three public exhibitions were held at Keysoe Village Hall, Hail Weston Village Hall and Little Staughton Village Hall, with members of the development team in attendance to answer any questions from local residents.
- Meetings with Richard Fuller MP and Parish Councils within the area. A
  briefing was given to elected members of Bedford Borough Council. A
  representative from the development team personally engaged with the
  occupiers of two dwellings to discuss the scheme in detail and address
  any enquiries they had.



1.2.5 This report outlines the methods used to engage with the community, as well as the feedback received from respondents. It also provides the development team's response to any issues raised during the consultation and outlines subsequent changes made to the proposals as a result.



# 2.0 NON-STATUTORY CONSULTATION PROGRAMME

### 2.1 Overview

2.1.1 The non-statutory consultation was launched on Tuesday 17th October and concluded on Tuesday 21st November, spanning a five-week period. This consultation welcomed comments from both the local community and political stakeholders regarding the proposed initiatives. To ensure inclusivity and accessibility for all interested parties and groups within the area, diverse methodologies were implemented, as set out in the following sections.

# 2.2 Letters to political stakeholders

2.2.1 Before the non-statutory consultation launch, on Monday 16th October, a letter was issued to local politicians with an interest in the scheme. Given that the site spans the administrative boundaries of Cambridgeshire County Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, and Bedford Borough Council, this letter served as notification about the proposed scheme and advised of the upcoming public consultation. Additionally, elected members were extended an invitation to meet with the development team for a comprehensive briefing and discussion about the proposals and the forthcoming consultation process. The letter was directed to:

# **Cambridgeshire County Council**

- Councillor Lucy Nethsingha, Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council\*
- Councillor Elisa Mechini, Deputy Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council
- Councillor Lorna Dupre, Chair of the Environment & Green Investment Committee
- Councillor Nick Gay, Vice-Chair of the Environment & Green Investment Committee
- Councillor Henry Batchelor, Chair of the Planning Committee
- Councillor Catherine Rae, Vice-Chair of the Planning Committee
- Councillor Steve Count, Leader of the Conservative Group



- Councillor Tom Sanderson, Leader of the Independent Group
- Councillor Ian Gardener, Division member for Alcombuty & Kimbolton\*
- Councillor Geoffrey Seeff, Division member for St Neots The Eatons
- Councillor Simone Taylor, Division member for St Neots Eynesbury
- Councillor Keith Prentice, Division member for St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton
- Councillor Keith Billington, Division member for Brampton & Buckden

# **Huntingdonshire District Council**

- Councillor Sara Conboy, Leader of Huntingdonshire District Council
- Councillor Tom Sanderson, Deputy Leader of Huntingdonshire District Council
- Councillor Lara Davenport-Ray, Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Environment\*
- Councillor Debbie Mickelburgh, Chair of the Development Management
   Committee
- Councillor Sariqa Mokbul, Vice-Chair of the Development Management Committee
- Councillor Stephen Cawley, Ward member for Great Staughton\*
- Councillor Stephen Ferguson, Ward member for St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton\*
- Councillor Ben Pitt, Ward member for St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton
- Councillor Andrew Slade, Ward member for St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton
- Councillor Dr Marcus Pickering, Ward member for St Neots Eynesbury
- Councillor Ian Taylor, Ward member for St Neots Eynesbury
- Councillor Simone Taylor, Ward member for St Neots Eynesbury
- Councillor Doug Terry, Ward member for St Neots Eynesbury
- Councillor Barry Banks, Ward member for St Neots Eatons
- Councillor Andrew Jennings, Ward member for St Neots Eatons
- Councillor Graham Welton, Ward member for St Neots Eatons



# **Bedford Borough Council**

- Mayor Tom Wootton\*
- Councillor James Weir, Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Environment, Highways & Transport\*
- Councillor Andrea Spice, Executive Member for Town Centres & Planning\*
- Councillor Martin Towler, Ward member for Riseley\*
- Councillor Julie Cox, Ward member for Wyboston
- 2.2.2 All members marked with an asterisk (\*) actively participated in either a preconsultation or post-consultation launch briefings and discussions regarding the proposals. For comprehensive details about these meetings, please consult Section 2.11. Councillor lan Gardener also attended the Hail Weston consultation event.

#### **Members of Parliament**

- 2.2.3 The letter was also issued to the Members of Parliament that have part of the site located within their constituencies. These included:
  - Richard Fuller MP, the Member of Parliament for North East Bedfordshire
  - Jonathan Djanogly MP, the Member of Parliament for Huntingdon

#### **Parish and Town Councils**

- 2.2.4 The neighbouring Parish and Town Councils, encompassing 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 was dispatched to the following Councils:
  - 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
- Kimbolton & Stonely Parish Council
- 2.2.5 A copy of the letter can be found in Appendix 1.

#### 2.3 Letters to consultees

- 2.3.1 Correspondence was also distributed to consultees who will become statutory consultees in the subsequent phase of the consultation process. Similar to the general public outreach, this initiative aimed to ensure their awareness of the proposed plans and afford them adequate time to offer feedback before the onset of the statutory consultation.
- 2.3.2 The full database of the consultees can be found in Appendix 2 and the accompanying correspondence in Appendix 3.

#### 2.4 Consultation website

- 2.4.1 The dedicated consultation website, <u>www.eastparkenergy.co.uk</u>, went live on Tuesday 17th 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. Notably, an online feedback form was available to capture residents' views and comments. The online feedback form received 119 submissions.
- 2.4.2 Throughout the consultation period, spanning from Tuesday 17th October 2023 to Tuesday 21st November 2023, the consultation website received 9,442 views. Images showcasing the website are provided in Appendix 4 for reference.
- 2.4.3 Additionally, the website incorporated exhibition boards within the virtual exhibition space, providing visitors with details of the proposed scheme. The online exhibition boards were the same as those used in the physical exhibition. The exhibition boards can be viewed in Appendix 5.



2.4.4 All the public consultation materials have been archived and are accessible on the consultation website.

# 2.5 Consultation email and postal address

2.5.1 A dedicated email channel, <a href="mailto:eastparkenergy@havingyoursay.co.uk">eastparkenergy@havingyoursay.co.uk</a>, was established specifically for local residents to offer feedback on the proposed plans and to seek clarification by asking questions directly to the development team. Throughout the public consultation period, the email received 16 enquiries and 110 pieces of feedback, and one letter was received. For a more comprehensive insight into the feedback received through these communication channels, please refer to Section 4.

# 2.6 Community Information Line

2.6.1 A Community Information Line was available throughout the consultation to enable people the opportunity to speak with members of the development team. The line was accessible via 0333 358 0502. It was established from the start of the consultation and was staffed from 9.00am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday. An answerphone facility was available outside of office hours. No feedback was received by telephone, but four calls were received during the consultation period. Queries covered the timeline of the development, whether RNA Energy were in receipt of any Government funding, biodiversity, public rights of way, the exact location of the solar panels, discussions with landowners and how the land was acquired.

#### 2.7 Social Media

2.7.1 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 proposed scheme. The Facebook adverts informed residents of the consultation and directed users to the consultation website, <a href="www.eastparkenergy.co.uk">www.eastparkenergy.co.uk</a>. 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 Appendix 6.

### 2.8 Leaflet to residents and businesses

- 2.8.1 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 Friday 13th October 2023, with the intention that they would arrive at the latest on Tuesday 17th 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
  - Bolnhurst & Keysoe Parish Council
- 2.8.2 The leaflet provided an overview of the proposals and information on how people could view the plans in greater detail and provide comments via the following methods:
  - Visiting the website and completing the online feedback form at www.eastparkenergy.co.uk;
  - Calling the Community Information Line on 0333 358 0502;
  - Attending one of the physical exhibition events; and
  - Emailing <u>eastparkenergy@havingyoursay.co.uk.</u>
- 2.8.3 A copy of the leaflet to residents and businesses can be seen in Appendix 7.A map of the distribution area can be seen in Appendix 8.

#### 2.9 Public Exhibitions

2.9.1 To allow local residents the opportunity to view the plans in person and speak with members of the technical team, RNA Energy held three public exhibitions during the consultation period. The events were held at:



# **Keysoe Village Hall**

2.9.2 On Tuesday 24th October a public exhibition was held in Keysoe Village Hall from 2pm – 7pm. In total, 112 residents attended the exhibition to learn more about the plans and speak to members of the technical team. For those wanting to submit feedback, they were offered a physical feedback form to fill in on the day and leave in a secure ballot box. They were also able to take a copy of the form home and send via post. In addition, four members of the public requested an A3 map of the scheme was sent to their addresses so they could view the map in detail before commenting. The maps were issued the next week to the addresses. Images of the exhibition event can be seen in Appendix 9.

# Hail Weston Village Hall

2.9.3 The physical exhibition event at Hail Weston Village Hall took place on Monday 30th October from 2pm – 6pm. The event received 46 attendees and one member of the public requested a map be sent to their address, which was arranged by RNA Energy. Photos of the exhibition event can be seen in Appendix 9.

# **Little Staughton Village Hall**

2.9.4 Finally, an event was held in Little Staughton Village Hall on Monday 6th November from 2pm – 7pm. 125 people attended the event and photos of the exhibition are located in Appendix 9.

### 2.10 Press release

2.10.1 To inform the local community of the public consultation, a press release was issued on Monday 16th 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 17th October 2023. A copy of the press release and the media coverage can be found in Appendix 10.



### 2.11 Press notice

2.11.1 A notice regarding the project was also published in the local news outlet, the Hunts Post, for one week during Wednesday 18th October 2023 to Wednesday 25th 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 Appendix 11.

# 2.12 Stakeholder meetings

2.12.1 During the non-statutory consultation, RNA Energy met with stakeholders to discuss the proposals and to provide further details on the scheme, as well as the consultation process.

# Meeting with elected members from Cambridgeshire County Council and Huntingdonshire District Council

- 2.12.2 RNA Energy engaged in a meeting with elected members and officials from both Cambridgeshire County Council and Huntingdonshire District Council. The meeting was on 13 October 2023 with a follow up on 16 October 2023 for those who could not make the original date. The following elected members were present:
  - Councillor Lucy Nethsingha, Leader (Cambridgeshire County Council)
     (Part)
  - Councillor Ian Gardener, division member for Alconbury & Kimbolton (Cambridgeshire County Council)
  - Councillor Alex Beckett, Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee (Cambridgeshire County Council)
  - Councillor Stephen Ferguson, ward member for St Neots Priory Park & Little Paxton (Huntingdonshire District Council)



- Councillor Martin Towler, Ward member for Riseley (Bedford Borough Council)
- Councillor Martin Hassall, Ward member for Buckden (Huntingdonshire District Council)
- Councillor Stephen Cawley, Ward member for Great Staughton (Huntingdonshire District Council)
- Councillor Lara Davenport-Ray, Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Environment (Huntingdonshire District Council)
- Councillor Tom Sanderson Deputy Leader of Huntingdonshire District Council
- 2.12.3 During the meeting, concerns were voiced regarding the screening of the proposed scheme. Additionally, there were inquiries about active travel initiatives, particularly whether additional routes would be included.
- 2.12.4 RNA Energy made a commitment to keep all involved parties informed by sharing updates on the scheme's progress and the ongoing consultation process.

# **Meeting with Bedford Borough Council**

- 2.12.5 On Wednesday 18th October 2023, a meeting took place involving officers and elected members of Bedford Borough Council. Attendees included:
  - Tom Wooton, Mayor of Bedford
  - Councillor Jim Wier, Deputy Mayor of Bedford and Executive Member for Environment, Highways, and Transport
  - Councillor Andrea Spice, Executive Member for Town Centres and Planning
  - Councillor Martin Towler, Member for Riseley ward
  - Gideon Richards, Officer, Development Management
  - Lana Bibby, Personal Assistant to the Mayor of Bedford
- 2.12.6 An invitation was extended to Councillor Julie Cox, the ward member for Wyboston ward, however, she was unfortunately unable to attend and sent



- her apologies. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the scheme, share the details of the public consultation, and address any queries the members had.
- 2.12.7 Discussions during the meeting included engagement levels with relevant Parish Councils. Specific enquiries were raised regarding the quantity of solar panels proposed and more detailed information about the anticipated community benefits.
- 2.12.8 It was mutually agreed that RNA Energy will maintain communication with the members, providing updates on the consultation feedback and the ongoing progress of the scheme.

# **Meeting with Richard Fuller MP**

2.12.9 Members of RNA Energy met with Richard Fuller MP on Wednesday 8th November 2023. During this meeting, RNA Energy presented an overview of the project and engaged in a brief discussion concerning the grid connection. It was mutually decided that RNA Energy would regularly update Richard Fuller MP on the scheme's advancement and the ongoing consultation process. Furthermore, it was agreed that Richard Fuller MP would forward any correspondence from constituents enquiring about the schemes, including those from the Parish Councils.

# Meeting with parish councils

- 2.12.10 On Tuesday 14th November 2023, RNA Energy held a meeting at Hail Weston Village Hall with representatives from Pertenhall & Swineshead Parish Council, Great Staughton Parish Council, Staploe Parish Council, Kimbolton Parish Council, and Hail Weston Parish Council.
- 2.12.11 The meeting provided an opportunity for parish councillors to engage with the development team regarding the proposed scheme. RNA Energy delivered a presentation outlining the scheme and then facilitated an interactive session where parish councillors had the chance to pose questions and seek clarification.



- 2.12.12 RNA Energy conducted a presentation outlining the necessity for the proposed scheme along with details regarding the overall layout. Following the presentation, a dedicated 45-minute question and answer session took place.
- 2.12.13 The questions raised during this session encompassed several key areas including concerns about the loss of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land, potential risks of fire associated with battery storage, implications for food security, considerations about noise, landscape and visual impact, potential effects on residents' health, and queries about the statutory consultation process.
- 2.12.14 RNA Energy has responded to these queries in Section 4 of the report.

# **Meeting with Residents**

- 2.12.15 On Tuesday 14th November 2023, RNA Energy met with three local residents to discuss the proposal and address any queries about the scheme. During the discussion, the residents expressed concerns about the scale of the scheme and the potential visual impact of the solar panels on their property. In early December 2023 we met with the occupier of another dwelling and discussed ways of making the occupiers of the dwelling feel less surrounded by solar panels.
- 2.12.16 RNA Energy took the opportunity to encourage the residents to actively participate in the consultation process by sharing their feedback. The subsequent response from RNA Energy to these concerns is included in Section 4 of this report.



# 3.0 FEEDBACK RECEIVED

### 3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1 To provide an overview of the different types of consultation feedback, this section has been split into the following parts:
  - An overview of the feedback form responses, both online and physical copies
  - An overview of the email and telephone feedback
  - An overview of pinpoint feedback
- 3.1.2 In total, the consultation received 372 submissions through the feedback channels outlined above. Some respondents used multiple channels, for example a feedback form and pinpoint so the number of different individuals or organisations was less than 300.

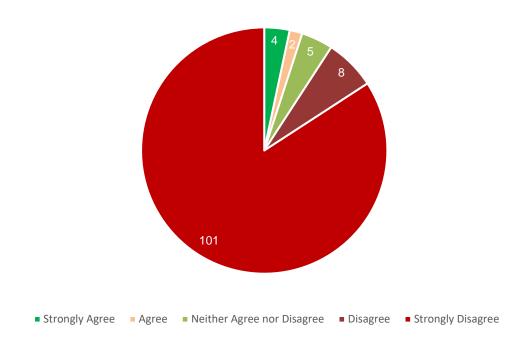
# 3.2 Overview of the feedback form response

3.2.1 The feedback form asked 12 questions, with a tick box answer and comments box for respondents to explain their answers. Overall, the consultation received 124 responses via the feedback form, with 119 online and five hardcopies. The responses to each question are highlighted below:

# Q1 – Do you support the plans for Site A of East Park Energy?

3.2.2 A total of 120 people responded to this question. 109 respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Five responded neutrally, neither agreeing nor disagreeing with the proposals, whilst six answered to say that they supported the plans.



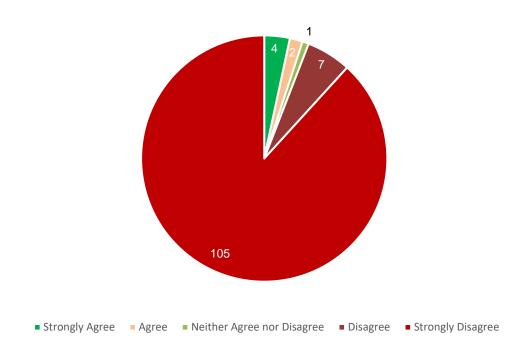


3.2.3 Feedback focused on the size of the development, with many questioning the impact on the landscape, views and footpaths and the agricultural nature of the land with some referencing BMV status. Food production and food security was highlighted in several responses and although varied, concerns related mostly to the potential change to the countryside setting. Specific references were made to the proximity and impact on Pertenhall and the project being visible from the highway. Alternative locations such as roof tops, Grafham Water, car parks, new developments and brownfield land were proposed. Some references were made to an existing solar farm at Manor Farm, and references to impacts on wildlife.

# Q2 – Do you support the plans for Site B of East Park Energy?

3.2.4 We received 119 responses to this question. Of these, 112 were in disagreement or strong disagreement with the plans for Site B, with one person neither agreeing nor disagreeing and with six supporting the plans.



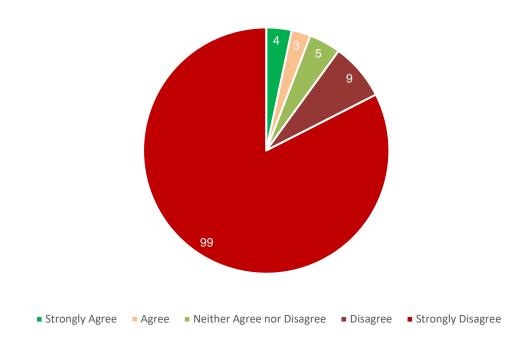


3.2.5 Similar to the responses to question one, feedback for question two focused on the impact of the development, views, and on the agricultural nature of the land, BMV land, food production and food security and the impact on the landscape. Additional comments focused on the perceived industrialisation of the countryside and the impact on wildlife. Specific concerns were raised about the proximity to properties in Little Staughton, impacts on footpaths as well as two properties appearing to be surrounded by solar panels. Some of the land is sloping. At least one person thought that there were better locations closer to St Neots.

# Q3 – Do you support the plans for Site C of East Park Energy?

3.2.6 Of 120 responses to this question, seven answered to say that they supported the plans for Site C. A further five neither agreed nor disagreed with the plans and 108 respondents did not support the plans.



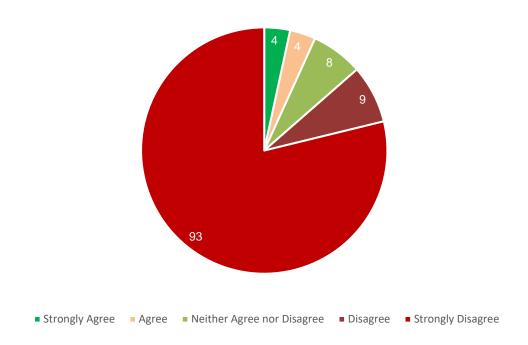


3.2.7 Responses to question three followed a similar pattern to those to questions one and two. Site specific comments included proximity to grade 1 listed church, Conservation Area, and Great Staughton and impacts on footpaths including some designated in the 1990s. Use of north facing slopes is queried.

# Q4 – Do you agree with the plans for Site D of East Park Energy?

3.2.8 A total of 118 people responded to this question. In response, eight said that they supported East Park Energy's plans for Site D, with eight saying that they neither agreed nor disagreed. 102 people disagreed or strongly disagreed with the plans.



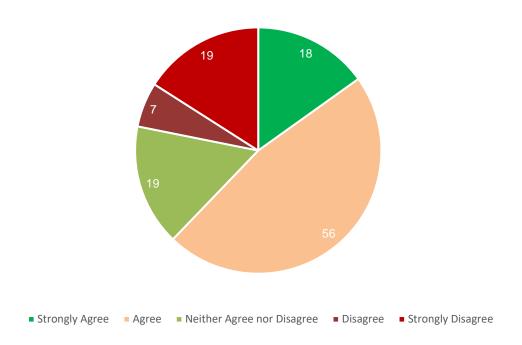


3.2.9 Responses to question four followed a similar pattern to those to questions one and two. Site specific comments included requests to show existing solar farms on future plans and cumulative impacts with those projects, impacts on Pastures Farm, and visibility from the B645.

# Q5 – Do you agree that we need more sustainable energy production to meet net zero targets?

3.2.10 119 people responded to this question with 74 respondents (62%) strongly agreeing or agreeing with the need for more sustainable energy production. While 19 people neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement, seven disagreed and a further 19 strongly disagreed.





## Please explain your answer

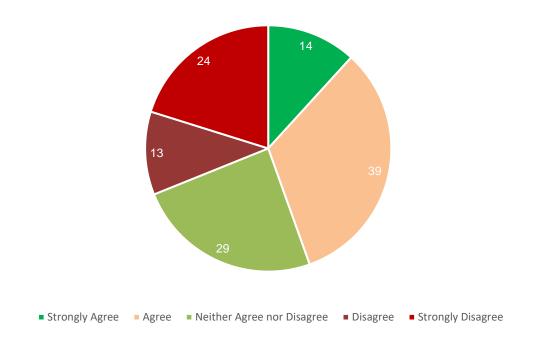
- 3.2.11 The majority of respondents to this question agree with the need for more sustainable energy production to meet net zero targets but stated a preference for solar farms to be placed elsewhere. Respondents raised concerns around the sustainability of the site and noted that in their view solar panels should be placed on rooftops car parks and new developments rather than agricultural land.
- 3.2.12 Other respondents stated a preference for wind farms, nuclear, fusion, tidal and hydro projects while others highlighted that they thought developments for sustainable energy production should be smaller scale and have minimal environmental impact. Some queried the trade offs involved and felt that food security was more important than energy security.

# Q6 – Do you agree with the need to generate cheaper electricity to help with the cost-of-living crisis?

3.2.13 119 people answered this question. Of these, 53 respondents strongly agree or agreed while 29 people neither agreed nor disagreed. 13 people disagreeing and 24 people strongly disagreed. This means that only 31% of



respondents disagreed with the need to generate cheaper electricity to help with the cost-of-living crisis.

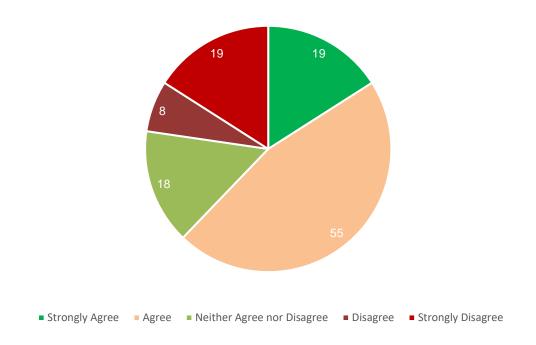


- 3.2.14 Respondents were generally sympathetic to this question. Answers focused on the need to generate cheaper electricity however proposals to facilitate this should not be at the price of the countryside and the character of the area, and also should consider the need to protect agricultural land to prevent food prices increasing. Some references were made to the trade-offs and how terms are defined as well as the need to improve conservation of energy.
- 3.2.15 Others noted that some rural properties are not connected to the national grid and would therefore benefit from a scheme to assist household retrofit solar panels to rooftops in order to bring down individual energy bills.



# Q7 – Do you agree it is important for the UK to generate electricity on home soil to ensure our energy supply is not susceptible to international fuel markets?

3.2.16 Of 119 respondents to this question, 74 people or 62% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that it is important for the UK to generate electricity on home soil. Meanwhile, 18 respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement and a further eight disagreed and 19 strongly disagreed.

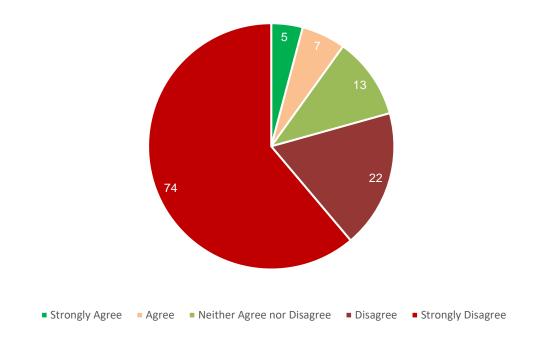


- 3.2.17 As a broad consensus many respondents agreed with need to generate electricity on home soil but raised concerns about the perceived loss of agricultural land and the impact this may have on domestic food production.
- 3.2.18 Many respondents agreed that solar energy should be encouraged, however, they stated a preference for solar panels to be attached to rooftops of houses and industrial developments or placed on brownfield land.
- 3.2.19 Some felt that the question was too simplistic, and references were made to interconnectors and international trade in energy.



# Q8 – Do you agree with the proposals to deliver a solar farm to generate renewable energy to power approximately 108,000 homes?

3.2.20 A total of 121 people responded to this question with 74 people strongly disagreeing, 22 disagreeing, 13 people neither agreed nor disagreed and twelve people agreed or strongly agreed with the proposals.

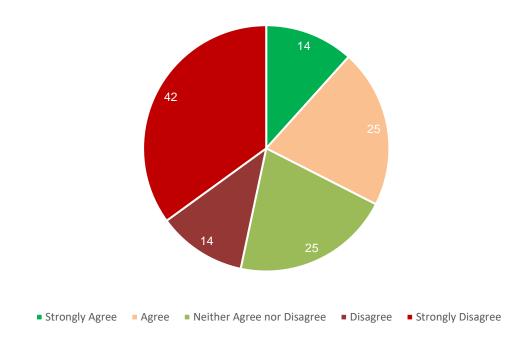


- 3.2.21 Whilst respondents supported the plans for the solar farm in principle residents reflected on the scale of the development raising concerns about the suitability of the development in the countryside also referencing food security and use of BMV and alternative locations such as Grafham Water.
- 3.2.22 Several respondents questioned the benefit to rural communities and the impact on the wider landscape.



# Q9 – Do you agree with the proposals to include battery storage to take pressure off electricity distribution and increase energy resilience?

3.2.23 Question nine received 120 responses. Of these, 39 either strongly agreed or agreed with the proposals to include battery storage, with 25 neither agreeing nor disagreeing. 14 people disagreed and 42 strongly disagreed.

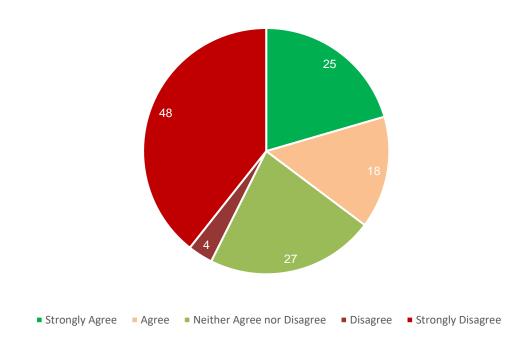


- 3.2.24 Several respondents questioned the safety of battery storage systems, raising concerns about the possibility of thermal runaway, fires, fire prevention measures such as on-site water storage and damage to the site's natural surroundings. Reference was made to a report on a fire in Liverpool in 2020.
- 3.2.25 Those supporting battery storage systems said that it was not logical to have solar without storage too, although there were suggestions that the battery storage not be on agricultural land or only be on land owned by National Grid.



# Q10 – Do you agree with the principal to increase biodiversity throughout the site?

3.2.26 122 people responded to this question with 43 agreeing or strongly agreeing with the principal of increasing biodiversity. 27 neither agreed nor disagreed while, four respondents disagreed and a further 48 strongly disagreed.



### Please explain your answer

3.2.27 It is apparent that there is a lot of care for the environment in the responses, with many agreeing that biodiversity was important and further agreeing that proposing to increase the biodiversity of the site was a good thing. There were split views on the existing level of biodiversity with many of the view that there was a great deal of biodiversity on the land, and does not need further enhancement although others noted that farm land is not biodiverse. Some raised concerns about the impact on local wildlife due to the change of use of the proposed site and a decrease in biodiversity, whilst others mentioned that they considered the site to already benefit from a range of wildlife. Several people raised concerns about how any undertakings to improve biodiversity would be secured. Reference was made to the need to not hinder the



movement of wildlife. There were requests for more information associated with this topic.

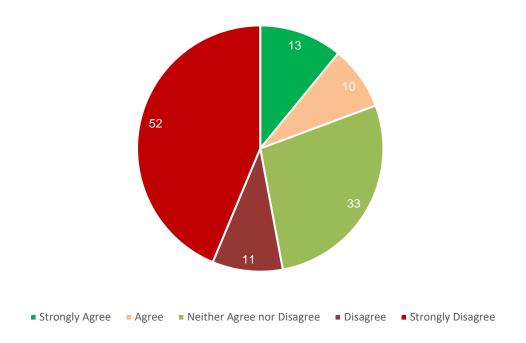
Q10A – What initiatives would you like to see at East Park Energy to boost biodiversity (wildflower meadows, woodlands, hedges etc)?

- 3.2.28 While a number of respondents indicated a preference for the land to remain in agricultural use other noted that the inclusion of wildlife corridors, retention of hedgerows and the introduction of native plant species to increase biodiversity. There was some scepticism that the clay soils in the area could support an increase in biodiversity. There were also suggestions that similar improvements had not been delivered on other solar farms.
- 3.2.29 A local environment group suggested the delivery of a 1.25 acre conservation park with a range of habitats and farms, an employed ranger and access to wildlife through gaps in fencing. Others suggested the creation of ponds.

Q11 – Do you agree with the creation of an East Park Legacy Fund to help support the local community's transition to net zero?

3.2.30 119 responses were received to this question with 23 people strongly agreeing or agreeing with the creation of an East Park Legacy Fund while 33 people neither agreed nor disagreed, 11 disagreed and 52 strongly disagreed.





#### Please explain your answers

3.2.31 Responses to this question focused on opposition to the project more generally rather than reflecting on the Legacy Fund. Those who supported the development of the fund largely did not answer as to why they agreed, with one person stating that this is the minimum that RNA Energy could do given the scope and size of the project. There were some suggestions on paying compensation to residents and one suggestion that the church at Keysoe be restored.

# Q11A – What types of initiatives would you like to see the East Park Legacy Fund support?

3.2.32 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. A total of 79 responses were received on this question.



## Q12 - Please share any further comments?

3.2.33 The response to question 12 reiterated the feedback themes raised throughout the previous questions with residents noting concerns about the impact on the countryside and surrounding landscape. Others highlight that they wish for the land to be kept in use as agricultural land, with particular reference to the perceived shortage of food in the UK alongside concerns that this development could limit local food production. Further comments included the size of the development and the impact on the local community in terms of landscape, views and traffic during the set up and removal of the scheme, concerns of chemicals used to clean solar panels and a request for reduced electricity prices for locals.

## 3.3 Overview of the email responses

3.3.1 In total, 100 emails were received. A large number of people were concerned about the impact on the agricultural capacity of the land and the effect on the natural landscape, with many also suggesting that solar panels should be put on the rooftops of industrial buildings and houses rather than on agricultural land. There were concerns about the size of the development, and many residents raised questions based on need given that other developments are being procured nearby. Objections and strong objections were typically accompanied by wishes for the proposals either not to go ahead or to go ahead elsewhere. A small number of people were confused by the Scoping process beginning during the consultation.

## 3.4 Suggestions made during the consultation

- 3.4.1 The following suggestions made were made on how the consultation could be improved:
  - Show all existing and proposed solar farms on plans.
  - Hold consultation events in Pertenhall/Swineshead and Great Staughton.
  - Consider closing consultation events later than 7pm.
  - Concern over mapping quality.



- Please state size of project (preferably in acres).
- Please provide a map showing footpaths/Rights of Way.
- Not clear if all the project land between Pertenhall and Swineshead will be covered by panels,
- Members of Cambridgeshire Local Access Forum would be happy to meet with developers and would like to be consulted at statutory consultation.
- 3.4.2 This feedback is appreciated, and RNA Energy will look to address these concerns at the Statutory Consultation
- 3.4.3 The following suggestions were made for project changes:
  - 25 acres should be set aside as a publicly accessible conservation park including a range of habitats and several ponds. This may be between Scotts Lane, West End and Green End at Little Staughton linking the entrance via the playing fields stretching down to join with Scotts Lane.
  - An employed warden/ranger supports the biodiversity net gain and particularly cares for newly planted trees, hedges and wildflower meadows.
  - A clear plan to achieve biodiversity net gain that is contractually binding Biodiversity improvements are implemented in parallel with the panel installation. Installation removed on completion.
  - Assess impacts on Landscape Character Areas.
  - Safeguard key landscape vistas.
  - The distance either side of public footpaths to the fence should be 15m.
  - EAGLeS request that if the solar farm comes to fruition we would also wish
    to be considered for funds from your East Park Legacy Fund to look after
    the Conservation Park and biodiversity aspects, working alongside the
    Parish Council.
  - Some of the larger green infrastructure areas provide some excellent opportunities to provide open access areas to the general public,



## 3.5 Responses from organisations

- 3.5.1 The following organisations responded to the consultation.
  - Anglian Water.
  - Health and Safety Executive.
  - Pertenhall and Swineshead Parish Council
  - Hertfordshire County Council.
  - Little Staughton Parish Council
  - Cambridgeshire Local Access Forum
  - Historic England.
  - British Horse Society
  - National Grid
  - Staploe Parish Council
  - Hail Weston Parish Council
  - Great Staughton Parish Council
  - Bolnhurst & Keysoe Parish Council

## 3.6 Reported Issues with Consultation

- 3.6.1 The following issues were reported with the consultation.
  - Problems with mapping tool on consultation website.
  - Problems with virtual exhibition on consultation website on certain devices.
  - Problem accessing consultation website on 16 October 2023.
  - Leaflet not received by a dwelling in Pertenhall.
- 3.6.2 Most of the reported problems with the mapping tool related to the verification process that meant that there was a delay between a user entering the comment and it appearing on the website. It was working as intended, but it is understood that this was frustrating and the technique will not be repeated at statutory consultation.



- 3.6.3 RNA Energy are aware with issues with the way in which the website displayed on certain mobile devices. A change was made during the consultation to address this and in the long run a switch has been made to a different service provider in advance of the Statutory Consultation.
- 3.6.4 The consultation website went live on 17 October 2023 at the start of the consultation. Some of the consultation letters arrived early and this is why it was not possible to view the website before the launch of the consultation. It was not intended that the public should view the website before the launch of the consultation. No one was disadvantaged by this.
- 3.6.5 RNA Energy are sorry that one letter was reported as not being received.

## 3.7 Overview of pinpoint feedback

- 3.7.1 Included on the consultation website was an interactive pinpoint map, with 148 comments being left on the map. This feature allowed respondents to select an exact location that was relevant to their comment allowing detailed local insight to be provided. Some people left more than one comment.
- 3.7.2 Much of the pinpoint feedback was not location specific and repeated points made in other forms of feedback, Figures 1-5 show the location that the Pins were dropped on. The responses that were location specific are addressed in section 4.



## 4.0 RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK

#### 4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 RNA Energy appreciates everyone who took the time to provide feedback on the scheme. This non-statutory consultation phase has been crucial in understanding local priorities and shaping our plans to align with the community. We have carefully reviewed all the feedback and below, we address the key themes that were raised based on our knowledge in February 2024.
- 4.1.2 We have split the response to feedback into three parts. Firstly, direct questions that were asked at non-statutory consultation are addressed, secondly consultation feedback, and finally location specific.

#### 4.2 Direct Questions

4.2.1 Table 1 sets of the direct questions that were asked and the applicant's response. Where reference is made to chapters in the Environmental Statement (ES) these will assess the likely significant effects of the scheme and propose any mitigation to reduce the effects if appropriate.

Table 1: Response to Feedback

Questions Raised	RNA's Response to Feedback
Is it possible to camouflage solar panels with earth toned paint shades?	Painting solar panels may impact their ability to absorb light efficiently, which could potentially reduce the amount of electricity they generate. The panels will be equipped with anti-reflection coatings to limit glare and maximise their light absorption capabilities.
What does "Green Infrastructure" mean?	The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) provides a definition of "Green Infrastructure" in its glossary as "a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate local and wider communities and prosperity". As this is technical language, we will not use this phrase on consultation plans at statutory consultation.



Questions Raised	RNA's Response to Feedback
What activities will the staff employed on the development undertake?	Staff on site will undertake a range of maintenance tasks, including managing the landscaped areas and maintaining the structures on site.
Will native hedging be installed?	The application for development consent will be accompanied by a Landscape and Environmental Management Plan (LEMP) that will set standards for the landscaping. It is likely that this will specify native hedging.
Will planting be managed and maintained? – references were made to A14 planting failure and similar experiences on other solar developments.	The application for development consent will include a draft development consent order (DCO). This is likely to include a requirement to maintain the landscaping for a set number of years and replace it if it should die. RNA Energy cannot comment on the experience of other projects promoted by others.
Will RNA Energy maintain a long-term interest in the project?	RNA Energy cannot state that they will maintain a long-term interest in the project.
What is the timescale for the legacy fund?	This is not fixed yet but may be the first 15 years of the project.
More detail needed on Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Please provide a comprehensive analysis to verify your statement that there will be BNG.	For solar farms on previous arable land, giving the land a break from intensive cultivation for extended periods – with minimal or no inputs of pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers – can reap big rewards in terms of boosting biodiversity, soil health and regeneration. BNG is not a device specific to this application. The BNG approach will be as set out in the emerging government framework. This will not apply to applications such as this until 2025, but we will apply the latest approach. For more details see <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides">https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides</a> . We will provide more information at Statutory Consultation.
What are proposals for wildlife corridor facilitation?	Anywhere outside of the fencelines would likely ultimately function as a wildlife corridor.
What access to mammals and amphibians will be available through fences? Eg deer badgers and foxes.	As set out in the scoping report the perimeter fencing is expected to be designed in such a way to allow small animals to pass through fenced areas. We will include mammal passes to each fenced area.
What are your plans for watering newly planted trees and wildflower meadows? Where will that water be sourced?	The application for development consent will be accompanied by a Landscape and Environmental Management Plan (LEMP) that will set standards for



Questions Raised	RNA's Response to Feedback
	landscaping including watering proposals. We have not yet determined the source of the water.
What plants and flowers will be planted in what proportion under and between solar panels within the enclosures (species list please)?	The application for development consent will be accompanied by a Landscape and Environmental Management Plan (LEMP) that will set standards for landscaping including indicative planting mixes.
How many trees and what is the species mix and proportions you plan to plant?	The application for development consent will be accompanied by a Landscape and Environmental Management Plan (LEMP) that will set standards for landscaping including indicative planting mixes.
Visual screening and the proposed species of any planting – are these to be native, and how will you ensure the ongoing maintenance of these to ensure that they continue to grow once planted.	The application for development consent will be accompanied by a Landscape and Environmental Management Plan (LEMP) that will set standards for landscaping including indicative planting mixes. It is likely this will specify the use of native species. It is likely that there will be a requirement to maintain the landscaping for a set number of years and replace it if it should die.
How you will screen the development in regard to adjacent property, and how this will be maintained throughout the period?	The application for development consent will be accompanied by a Landscape and Environmental Management Plan (LEMP) that will set standards for maintenance.
Which areas other than public footpaths and the expected conservation park will be accessible to the public?	It is not envisaged that any areas beyond the public footpaths will be accessible to the public.
Could you confirm you will not be using pesticides, herbicides or fungicides?	RNA Energy cannot commit to not using pesticides, herbicides or fungicides at this time although there are also no active plans to use them. Any use is likely to be less than that used in farming,
Have any surveys been carried out to see what biodiversity currently exists?	Yes, surveys have been carried out and will be reported in the application for development consent.
What is your assessment of the proposed development on the local rural economy (as distinct from the income generated for the landowners poised to benefit from the scheme)?	The application for development consent will be accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES) which will report on the Socio-Economic Impact of the project.



Questions Raised	RNA's Response to Feedback
Please guarantee that no woodland will be lost (especially on Site C).	There is no intention to fell any trees. This includes New Wood on Site C.
Please confirm that cable linking sites to sub-station will be underground.	It is proposed that the cable linking the solar sites to the Eaton Socon substation will be underground.
Please confirm that no rights of way will be stopped up.	It is not currently proposed to permanently stop up any rights of way.
Please provide better maps.	We will provide better plans at the Statutory Consultation.
Do you have a guaranteed connection date to the National Grid at the Eaton Socon Substation. When was this?	Yes, we have a contracted connection date. This is in 2028. It was obtained in 2021.
What was the basis for selecting the proposed area of land for installation of solar panels and associated infrastructure apart from capacity at the Eaton Socon Substation. Were other areas considered? Were brownfield and other appropriate sites considered? Why have they not been selected?	We have prepared a site selection report that sets out the basis for selecting the site.
What is the justification for removing thousands of acres of land from agricultural use and associated loss of production?	The need for new sustainable electricity generation is recognised in government policy to be a critical national priority.
What is your assessment of the grades of agricultural land across all locations? How many samples were obtained and what locations were tested?	As set out in Appendix 17-1 of the Scoping Report a detailed assessment of the agricultural land quality. This reports 24% of the site as it was at that time is grade 2, 50% grade 3a, 24% grade 3b and 2% non-agricultural. In total, 180 soil profiles have been examined across the site using an Edelman (Dutch) auger at a reconnaissance density of one observation per four hectares. Eleven observation pits have also been excavated to examine subsoil structures.
Have you assessed the health and safety risks of siting solar panels and all associated infrastructure so close to	Solar PV and battery energy storage are mature technologies which have been deployed extensively in the UK and globally in both urban and rural areas. Their safety has been demonstrated by the huge



Questions Raised	RNA's Response to Feedback
residential property? If so, what were your findings?	number of operational projects. These technologies facilitate the decommissioning of thermal power stations which improves air quality and human health in the short term and safeguards environmental stability in the long term. The health and safety of the community will be central to the design of East Park. A Battery Safety Management Plan will be prepared and adhered to.
What is your assessment of the visual impact of the scheme overall? Have you visited any sites in the surrounding area, for example, higher ground looking down into the valley?	The Environmental Statement (ES) that will accompany the application for development consent will include a full Landscape and Visual Impact assessment. The Methodology can be found in Appendix 7-1 of the Scoping Report.
What is your assessment of the visual and physical impact of the proposed development on the heritage assets of the villages and landforms?	The Environmental Statement (ES) that will accompany the application for development consent will include a chapter on cultural heritage. The baseline is set out in the Scoping Report.
How would surface water drainage be handled? Are you aware that, even though in your literature you say panels and infrastructures would be placed on land that is deemed to be in Zone 1, most of the surrounding area is a Zone 3 area (HIGH RISK of flooding).	The application for development consent will include a Flood Risk Assessment. RNA Energy are aware of the location of the flood zones near the application site.
What is total cost of project?	At this time the cost of the project is confidential.
How many solar panels would be used to construct this installation?	At the current time It is estimated that there would be between 700,000 and 800,000 solar panels in the scheme.
What would be the dimensions of each panel?	Each Panel would be approximately 2.4m x 1.3m.
How high would panels be mounted from the ground?	As set out in the scoping report the maximum height of the panels along the top (northern) edge of the array is not expected to be taller than 3m in height.
What type of security fencing would be used? How many kilometres of fencing would be	As set out in the scoping report a perimeter security fence would be installed to enclose the operational areas of the Scheme. The fence is likely to be either a wire-mesh or deer fence and measure between 2m



Questions Raised	RNA's Response to Feedback
used? More details on fencing system.	and 3m in height. More details will be provided with the application for development consent.
How many security cameras would be used in the scheme?	RNA Energy do not have a fixed figure at this stage, but it could be around 500.
Where would the solar panels be manufactured? If the answer is 'China', as a major global polluter, what is the estimated additional carbon load created by this project, including shipping?	The solar panels would be sourced post consent. It is not possible to say at this stage where they will come from. The application for development consent will include an assessment of the carbon footprint of the project.
How many tenant farmers would lose part or all of their holdings?	There are two short term (3 year) lets that would be affected.
If the planning application is successful when would construction be likely to start?	The start of construction will not be before 2026.
How many HGV vehicles would be required during the construction phase?	As set out in the Scoping Report, it was estimated that 2580 one way HGV movements would be generated during the construction phase.
How many HGV would be delivering to the site on a daily basis?	This number is not yet available but would be included in the Environmental Statement (ES) that would accompany the application for development consent.
How would you access Little Staughton and Pertenhall? What would be the proposed route of all traffic to the site?	Construction Traffic in the Little Staughton and Pertenhall areas would be through the site.
Please provide full details of impacts on rights of way during and after construction?	It is not proposed to stop up any rights of way. There may be a need for temporary closures, and these will be set out in the draft DCO that will accompany our application for development consent. A buffer will be established between the rights of way and the site fencelines.
Please could you provide details on how you have assessed surface water run off?	Chapter 9 of the Scoping Report sets out our approach to surface water. It is intended that a Surface Water Management Plan be submitted with the ES.



Questions Raised	RNA's Response to Feedback
How much extra north facing land has been included to gain the electrical production in comparison to a south facing flat topography.	Land was identified based on environment, landscape, proximity to grid connection and availability. If this land was found to have a north facing slope, the energy yield was estimated to ensure it was viable to take forward.
Will land surrounding the development be adversely affected and therefore be downgraded as a result of this?	Initial indications are that the increased biodiversity on the application site could increase the biodiversity on the surrounding land.
Where will the battery store be developed?	At this stage it is proposed to develop the battery storage area to the south of New Wood in site C.
Please show existing gas pipelines on the plans.	The plans at statutory consultation and in the application for development consent will take account of the location of the existing gas pipelines.
How will you consult with environmental groups to ensure that wildlife is not impacted and how this will be undertaken?	We will consult all the statutory consultees such as Natural England and will be happy to consult other local or national bodies that are suggested to us.
Please consult the RSPB. Concern over impact on Cuckoo and Red Kite.	Although not a statutory consultee we will ensure that the RSPB are consulted at the Statutory Consultation.
Please provide details of how all animal habitats and their food supply chains will not be adversely affected.	The Environmental Statement (ES) accompanying the application for development consent will include an assessment of the impact on a range of species.
Please provide details of where site accesses will be located. Both permanent and temporary.	The access strategy at non-statutory consultation was shown on the masterplan that was the subject of the consultation. Two potential access points off the B645 were shown. More details will be available at Statutory Consultation.
Please provide details of light pollution.	No permanent lighting is proposed. Any lighting will be motion sensitive.
What mitigation plans will be in place regarding impacts on livestock surrounded by this development.	RNA Energy are not aware of any livestock adjacent to the site.



Questions Raised	RNA's Response to Feedback
How will construction traffic be managed, and sympathetic to all road users eg cars, bikes, horse riders, walkers	The application for development consent will be accompanied by a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) that will address these issues.
How will you ensure that the roads are suitable and will withstand heavy traffic, what plans will you put in place to ensure roads are not left in a worse condition.	We will undertake consultation with the relevant Highway authorities and the application will be accompanied by a Construction Traffic management Plan (CTMP).
How will you ensure that any economical benefit would remain within the UK, given that similar projects may be sold abroad.	It is not possible to say if the project will be sold or not.
How was the land selected?	We have prepared a site selection report that sets out the basis for selecting the site.
Please consider equalities impacts of scheme given vast majority of equestrians are female.	The application for development consent will be accompanied by a Equalities Impact Assessment.
Please work with British Horse Society.	Although not a statutory consultee we will ensure that the British Horse Society are consulted at the Statutory Consultation
Please specify if the battery will be Lithium ion.	Yes, it is likely that the BESS will be lithium-ion.
Who will maintain the landscaping?	The application for development consent will be accompanied by a Landscape and Environmental Management Plan (LEMP) that will set out how the details of maintenance of the landscaping.
Are solar panels recyclable?	Yes, 99% of a solar panel is recyclable, and there are well established industrial processes to do this. A solar panel is made of a frame (typically aluminium), glass, crystalline silicon solar cells, and copper wiring, all of which can be extracted, separated, and recycled or reused. The remaining one percent is an encapsulant material which bonds the layers of a panel together.
We would appreciate your confirmation that no rights of way	We are not able to be definitive on this point at this time.



Questions Raised	RNA's Response to Feedback
(whether within the site or outside it) will be used as access routes to or within the development.	
Provide details on how protected bird species have been recorded and how your plan will ensure that their habitats are not affected.	As set out in the Scoping Report, a preliminary ecological appraisal has been undertaken that included Wintering Bird Surveys and Breeding Bird Surveys. The Environmental Statement (ES) that will accompany the application for development consent will include details of how the impacts on these habitats will be managed.
Publication in full of all raw data prior to any planning application to enable independent assessment, analysis and verification of data.	The Environmental Statement (ES) that accompanies the application for development consent will have survey data attached in the appendices.
Is it intended that BW37 from Manor Farm will be used for access to the more westerly parts of the development?	BW37 forms part of the access route to the more westerly part of the development. More details will follow at statutory consultation.

## 4.3 Consultation Feedback

4.3.1 Table 2 below sets out the applicant's response to all the points made on the feedback form or in writing.

Table 2: Response to Feedback

Response Theme	Response of RNA Energy
Need for the Scheme	
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 that 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. Challenge on need. One	RNA Energy understands concerns raised by local residents over the presence of an additional solar farm in the area.  As our climate continues to change and outside factors to the UK's energy market proliferate, we are 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.  In 2019, the Government committed to the UK
respondent says that their	achieving net zero by 2050. In order to do so it is



electricity supplier already offers free energy at times.

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.

One respondent stated that farms should be merged to make them more efficient – not used for solar panels.

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.

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.

#### **Response of RNA Energy**

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.

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.

The CNP applies to all forms of low carbon infrastructure.

#### **Landscape and Visual Impact**

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.

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 The visual effects of the proposals will be assessed in a landscape and visual impact assessment that will accompany the application for development consent.

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.

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.

The application for development consent will be accompanied by a 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.



Response Theme	Response of RNA Energy
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.	
Concern was also expressed over maintenance of planting. Screening on existing solar farms in the area was reported as poor.	
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.	

#### **Rural and Village Character Impact**

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 ambiance, 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.

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.

Complaints Two dwellings will be completely surrounded by solar panels.

The visual effects of the proposals will be assessed in a landscape and visual impact assessment that will accompany the application for development consent.

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.

We will look again at the relationship between the proposed solar panels and settlements such as Great Staughton and Little Staughton.

We have visited the two dwellings where it was proposed that solar panels be developed on all sides and asked them what changes we could make to the scheme so that they would avoid a perception of being surrounded. In one case we have 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.

#### **Loss of Agricultural Land**



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.

#### **Response of RNA Energy**

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.

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.

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. RNA Energy intend to investigate ways of improving the soil with Rothamsted Research.

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.

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.

#### **Public Rights of Way**

Concerns expressed about views from rights of way and highways and loss of amenity for those using rights of way.

Specific references made to:

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



- Great Staughton village footpaths 23, 34 & 40 together with bridleway 7 in Hail Weston Parish -these were specifically designed in the 1990s.
- Two long bridleways within the parish of Bolnhurst and Keysoe in Bedfordshire – BW37 and BW40 - and
- Byway in Little Staughton Byway 9. These routes are well-used and link to an extensive equestrian of bridleways in North Bedfordshire.
- 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.

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.

- Some suggestions for new bridleways, specifically: a perimeter bridleway around the north of Site D would provide an alternative route with less constrained views than the route within the site.
- new bridleway link proposed from B&K BW40 and LS Byway 9
- A linking bridleway between BW37 at Manor Farm and Pertenhall BWA1 and BW24 would be very beneficial to the network.

These connecting bridleways must be dedicated not

#### Response of RNA Energy

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.

We 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 we only have 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.



Response Theme	Response of RNA Energy
permissive for the life of the development.  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,  Note – all footpaths referenced are shown on Figure 6.	
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.  Panels should be screened from the rider's (and horse's) view.  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 – 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 piledriving 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.	We will have regard to the British Horse Society Advice Note on Solar Farms 1/2017.  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."  We will provide a glint and glare assessment to accompany the application for development consent and ensure that its scope includes the impact on equestrian businesses.
Noise and Air Quality	
Residents have raised concerns about noise from the battery storage facility, along with	Solar panels are silent in operation, however the inverters and transformers associated with them can emit a low hum during operation.



questions about the impact on air quality.

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.

Concern about night time effects.

#### **Response of RNA Energy**

In order to limit noise pollution, RNA Energy have 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 us to determine whether any significant noise impacts might arise and informs our design process accordingly, to avoid impacts to people's property.

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.

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.

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.

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.

#### **Community Benefits**

Residents have raised questions over what the community stands to benefit from RNA Energy's proposals.

Funds could be used to rebuild Staploe Village Hall or the church at Keysoe. Local Subsidies to make energy more affordable.

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.

Suggestions for the fund include the provision of electric vehicle charging points to encourage RNA Energy 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.

We have held initial discussions throughout our nonstatutory 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.



Response Theme	Response of RNA Energy
more people to buy electric cars. Others suggested funding for solar panels on rooftops and grants to improve the sustainability and efficiency of homes.	

#### **Biodiversity**

Concerns were raised about the pledge for a biodiversity net gain and the impact of the solar farm itself on biodiversity.

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 number of animals that the plants can support. Solar Panels will reduce rather than enhance biodiversity. Concerns over how any BNG would be secured.

Requests for more information on BNG.

RNA Energy 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 us to develop strategies that not only preserve but enhance biodiversity. These efforts are essential to ensuring that our schemes have a minimal ecological footprint and contribute positively to the surrounding environment.

Our ambition at RNA Energy 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, we aim not only to meet but to exceed our ecological responsibilities, leaving a lasting legacy of environmental enrichment for generations to come.

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.

RNA Energy 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. RNA Energy is therefore looking to include new initiatives supported by the research into the proposals for East Park Energy.

#### **Cultural Heritage**



Some residents raised concerns about the cultural heritage of the area being impacted.

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 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.

#### **Response of RNA Energy**

Initial assessments will be carried out to identify any known archaeological and cultural heritage features on and around the proposed site.

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.

The scope of any further work will be discussed and agreed with the archaeological advisors to Bedford Borough Council and Cambridgeshire County Council.

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.

#### **Transport**

Concerns have been raised by some respondents that there may be a large amount of activity involved in transporting 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.



#### **Response Theme** Response of RNA Energy equipment and personnel to and Access to the site will only be needed for initial from the site. construction and, following this period, only for maintenance, landscape management and repair. Access points – concern over use of public rights of way and The only potential impact on public rights of way would be during the construction phase, where it lorry movements. Route construction vehicles away from would be necessary for them to be crossed by cable Great Staughton. We have corridors. Careful management will ensure that this is significant concerns regarding temporary and adequately mitigated. 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 Glint and Glare Some residents have raised All proportionate measures will be taken in order to concerns about solar panels ensure that glint and glare from panels is avoided creating glints of light and where at all possible. glaring. Solar panels on the development will further be equipped with anti-reflection coatings in order to limit glare and maximise their light absorption capabilities. **Health Impacts** Concerns were voiced about RNA Energy will remain in full compliance with any potential impact of the and all legislation to maintain the safety of the development on the mental and development. physical health of some Whilst we appreciate that the temporary change of individuals. purpose of the agricultural land to host the solar farm Impact on human health from may not be what some individuals are familiar with, EMF from solar panels and RNA remains contactable and approachable for all battery storage. Quality of life residents wishing to raise concerns, ask questions or and mental health/human health. make suggestions as to how we can make further accommodations. RNA Energy stands ready to make reasonable accommodations in order to best suit the local community. **Cumulative Impacts** Need to consider cumulative RNA Energy will prepare a Cumulative Effects Assessment in accordance with Planning Inspectorate impacts with other solar farms that exist (eq Little Staughton Advice Note 17 to accompany the application for airfield and Manor Farm) or are development consent. proposed - (eg Bushmead



Response Theme	Response of RNA Energy
Road) and farms such as Pastures Farm.	
Concern over cumulative impact with Luton Airport holding stack.	
Flooding	

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.

RNA Energy 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.

#### **Ecology**

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.

High Wood (an ancient woodland) would be surrounded by solar farms.

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.

#### **Socio-Economic Impacts**

Would attract crime e.g. theft of cabling and lead to security measures.

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



Response Theme	Response of RNA Energy
Concern over impact on house prices.  Loss of public recreational space.	of crime. RNA Energy do not believe that the project will result in the loss of any existing public recreational space.
Decomissioning	
More detail needed on decommissioning/how can we be sure that the land will return to farming or that decommissioning will happen at all?	RNA Energy will consider preparing an outline decommissioning plan to accompany the application for development consent.
Technical Issues	
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.	RNA Energy 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.
Planning Policy	
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.

# 4.4 Location Specific Feedback

4.4.1 There were 148 pins dropped on the mapping by 130 individuals. Figures 1-5 show the locations where these pins were dropped.



4.4.2 Many of the Pinpoint submissions did not contain location specific information and made very similar points to those already summarised above. Table 3 below sets out the location specified, the representation and the response of RNA Energy.

**Table 3: Response to Pinpoint Feedback** 

Ref.	Representation	Response of RNA Energy
2	Will access be granted to the south side of the river where many walk their dogs to complete a circuit?	There are already public rights of way to the south of the River Kym with access to Great Staughton and these would be kept open.
4	This is a large area of farmland intersected by several rights of way, which should be preserved for the amenity of the local residents.  Access route should be decided on and upgraded for the additional construction traffic	The rights of way in this area would be kept open.
5	From an economic point of view and to minimise disruption would it not be far cheaper to site the Solar Panels nearer to the point of connection to the Grid at Eaton Socon?	There are competing proposals in these areas, including for residential development.
6	The proposal near little Staughton is so close to the village. The noise from the construction and operation of the scheme will destroy this peaceful village and will deter people from wanting to live here.  Concern that once the time is up the land will then be brownfield and open to house building, redevelop	RNA Energy to review proximity of development to Green End and Little Staughton. Noise will be assessed in the Environmental Statement (ES) accompanying the application for development consent.
7	What is happening to the footpath network which runs through the proposed development?	The intention is that all public rights of way will be retained, including those to the west of Lodge Farm,
12	What is going to happen to the footpaths and bridleways running through these area's	The intention is that all public rights of way will be retained, including those to the west of Lodge Farm,
24	Strongly object to a solar farm in Little Staughton. The farmland at the bottom of our garden rises steeply so there is	RNA Energy to review proximity of development to Green End and Little Staughton



Ref.	Representation	Response of RNA Energy
	no way that solar panels placed there can be screened.	
25	The proposed site is at the bottom of our garden and the land is on a fairly steep slope, there is no way you can screen these solar panels.	RNA Energy to review proximity of development to Green End and Little Staughton
30	Understand that the plan is to build a road across the Roman Field on Moor Road to gain access to the plant on the opposite side of Moor Road.  The proposed access road will cause significant ground disturbance on a field that is prone to flooding so I am extremely worried about the flood risk aspect. Roman Field has a number of natural underground springs and a road through the middle of it has the potential to increase the flood risk significantly. These concerns will need to be addressed properly by independent flood risk professionals and a full risk assessment carried out.  Bearing in mind the road will need to accommodate HGVs this is presumably going to incur rather a lot of disruption and noise for some time, along with a lack of privacy. Also concern over impact on tranquillity of garden and hours of use, period of operation and permanence. Furthermore, the access road also appears to cross the public footpath to St Neots. Will the footpath be kept open and safe at all times?  Currently approximately one mile away is a 40MW solar plant which is in the process of been given approval to become a 150MW plant. Concern about cumulative impacts.  There is also no clarity regarding where any battery storage will be. This is also true of any inverters which we have experienced noise from at the Little Staughton Airfield Solar Plant.	RNA Energy to review location of construction access near Moor Road.  A Flood Risk Assessment to be prepared to accompany application for development consent.  Cumulative Impacts to be assessed.  Noise to be assessed.
42	Let's not forget there is already a solar farm here.	The application for development consent will be accompanied by a Cumulative Impacts Assessment.



Ref.	Representation	Response of RNA Energy
50	I didn't object to the Little Staughton Airfield site that our garden backs onto, but this is too big. I would look favourably up on a revised plan for several smaller sites that are not adjacent to each other.	The application for development consent will be accompanied by a Cumulative Impacts Assessment.
71	We have spent a lot of time and money on putting up a building to process Thatching long straw it has taken us many years to find this location the process is very labour intensive and dusty but very important to the survival of thatched houses in the area this would have a detrimental impact our business as very little long straw is grown and processed in the Home county's	It is intended that the Thatching business will continue as it is at present.
83	The project is far too large in scale, and is too close to Great Staughton. The current beautiful views south from The Causeway toward Staughton Moor and Little Staughton will be completely ruined, as the slope is uphill, and it is very doubtful there would be any way of screening the panels which would be clearly visible in all directions.  The scheme is also in direct contravention of Policy GSNP 7 of the Great Staughton Neighbourhood Development Plan. The report defines protected views and vistas and that are offered protection under Policy GSNP 7 "Settlement Patterns and Identity."	RNA Energy to consider proximity of proposal to Great Staughton.  Application for Development Consent to include assessment of views identified in Great Staughton Neighbourhood Development Plan.
86	In the event, of a solar installation of any size manifesting itself, this location would be appropriate for a conservation park, stretching from Green End, Scot street to West End.	RNA Energy to review proximity of development to Green End and Little Staughton. Difficulties are envisaged with returning a conservation park to farming at the end of a 40 year period.
87	Should some form of the solar farm manifest itself, the area between Green End, Scott Street and West End would be a good choice for a conservation area	RNA Energy to review proximity of development to Green End and Little Staughton. Difficulties are envisaged with returning a conservation park to farming at the end of a 40 year period.
115	This area floods regularly. Your virtual exhibition states that you are only using land that is wholly located within flood	Review inclusion of land at higher risk of flooding that flood zone 1.



Ref.	Representation	Response of RNA Energy
	risk 1, which is low risk of flooding. Therefore this land is not suitable due to the regular nature of flooding.	
122	The land by the river (some of it former parkland) at Great Staughton is very tight to the church and two Great Staughton conservation areas; panels here would have a negative effect on the views to and from the Church, Bird's meadow and The Causeway.	RNA Energy will review proximity of panels to Great Staughton.
123	This land by the river (some of it former parkland) at Great Staughton is very tight to the church and two Great Staughton conservation areas; panels here would have a negative effect on the views to and from the Church, Bird's meadow and The Causeway.	RNA Energy will review proximity of panels to Great Staughton.
124	This will be the access point for all the traffic to sites A,B and C, and potentially for a battery installing in the open farmland just south of new wood	RNA Energy will review its access strategy.
130	1. The extent and proximity of the panels around the Little Staughton.  2. More specifically, the hill is called 'Spring Hill for a reason. The land around the byway known as Scotch Street is very wet and during the winter this access and the land around it, including the properties on Green End are extremely wet. Panels on the north facing hill behind the western end of Green End will not only not be optimally placed but are likely to decrease the absorption of rainwater on that land and therefore increase the risk of flooding on Green End and around those properties. The risk of this, given the size of the rest of the project is unnecessary.  3. Impact on the views across the farmed land and the churches on the horizon - Old Manor Farm on the hill above the access road, a beautiful Blue Bell wood to the West of the village, all of this will be damaged by the view of solar panels and that heritage lost.	RNA Energy will review proximity of panels to Little Staughton, including in respect of the land to the south of Green End. Also photomontages to be prepared to accompany the application for development consent of key views and vistas. A requirement can be anticipated on any consent that will secure the maintenance of new planting,



Ref.	Representation	Response of RNA Energy
	4. There is evidence that proposals on other sites to provide screening and land management, does not happen. Any developer must be held to account for their promises.	
	5. Finally, concern about the damage that might be done underground and unseen to the national gas supply that runs under many parts of this proposal.	
140	Effect on the setting of the Grade 1 Listed church and impact on views to and from the church	The Environmental Statement (ES) accompanying the application for development consent will include a chapter on Cultural Heritage and this will assess setting impacts off the project on designated heritage assets such as grade 1 listed churches.
141	Effect on the setting of the Scheduled Monument and impact on views across the valley	The Environmental Statement (ES) accompanying the application for development consent will include a chapter on Cultural Heritage and this will assess setting impacts off the project on designated heritage assets such as scheduled monuments.
142	There will be considerable detrimental impact on all the public rights of way across the area - including amenity, views and the fences will remove the feel of being in the countryside. I am assuming all the rights of way will be maintained on their existing routes (from what I can see on the plans) and none will be diverted	It is proposed that rights of way will not be diverted.



### 5.0 NEXT STEPS

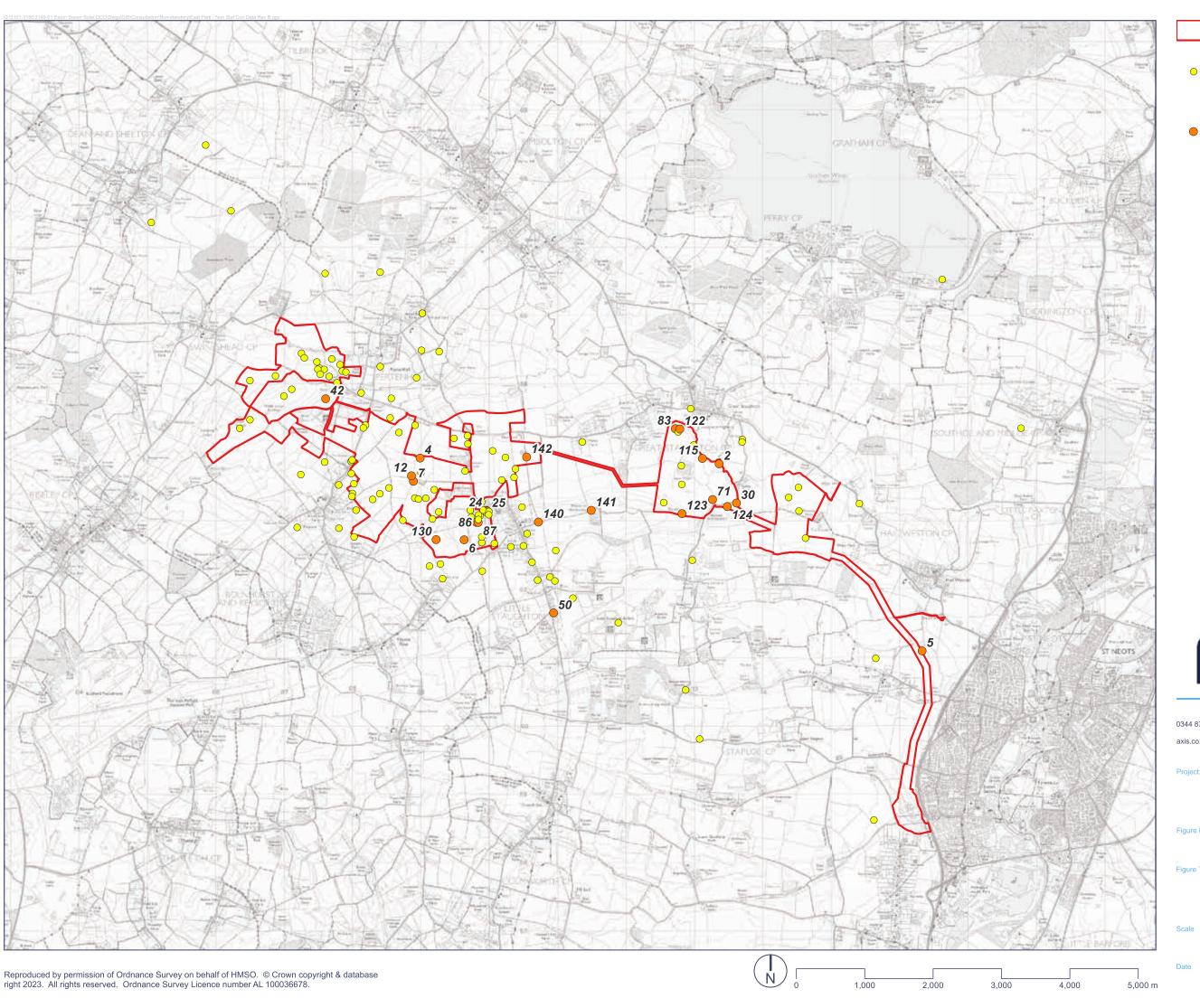
- 5.1.1 RNA Energy extends its gratitude to all who participated in the non-statutory consultation by sharing their valuable feedback. The input has been carefully considered, and we have compiled a comprehensive report addressing the themes raised during this consultation phase.
- 5.1.2 In responding to the submissions made at non-statutory consultation we have made a number of commitments. We will:
  - i) Not refer to "Green Infrastructure" on the consultation plans. Use "landscaped areas" instead.
  - ii) Make it clearer at future stages that Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a national policy that applies to all developments.
  - iii) Provide better plans at statutory consultation.
  - iv) Clearly show gas pipelines on plans.
  - v) Consult RSPB at Statutory Consultation.
  - vi) Consult British Horse Society at Statutory Consultation.
  - vii) Show all existing and proposed solar farms (that we are aware of) on consultation plans
  - viii)Investigate holding consultation events in Pertenhall/Swineshead and Great Staughton.
  - ix) Consider closing a consultation event after 7pm.
  - x) Consider removing land from the scheme at Green End and Little Staughton and consider making it a conservation park.
  - xi) Consider employing a warden/ranger to manage BNG etc.
  - xii) Include a plan at Statutory Consultation showing footpaths and rights of way.
  - xiii) Assess impacts on Landscape Character Areas
  - xiv) Assess key landscape vistas
  - xv) Establish a minimum buffer of 10m from footpaths to fences.
  - xvi) Consult Cambridgeshire Local Access Forum.
  - xvii) Not use the pinpoint mapping system
  - xviii) Improve usability of project website on mobile devices.



- xix) Consider relationship with Great Staughton.
- xx) Include in the material published at statutory consultation a map showing footpaths and rights of way.
- xxi) Make the location that the project is considering locating solar panels clearer.
- xxii) Specify the distance between public footpaths and the fences.
- xxiii) Provide an update on the legacy fund.
- 5.1.3 Moving forward, our next step involves finalising the Statement of Community Consultation, leading up to the statutory consultation scheduled for summer 2024. During this interim period, our telephone and email channels will remain open and available should anyone have inquiries or require further information ahead of the statutory consultation.
- 5.1.4 Once again, thank you for your invaluable contributions during this phase of engagement.



# **FIGURES**



EIA Scoping Order Limits

- Non-Statutory Consultation Pinpoint Data from Consultation Website
- Non-Statutory Consultation Pinpoint Data from Consultation Website (Location Specific Comment)



0344 8700 007



**East Park Energy** 

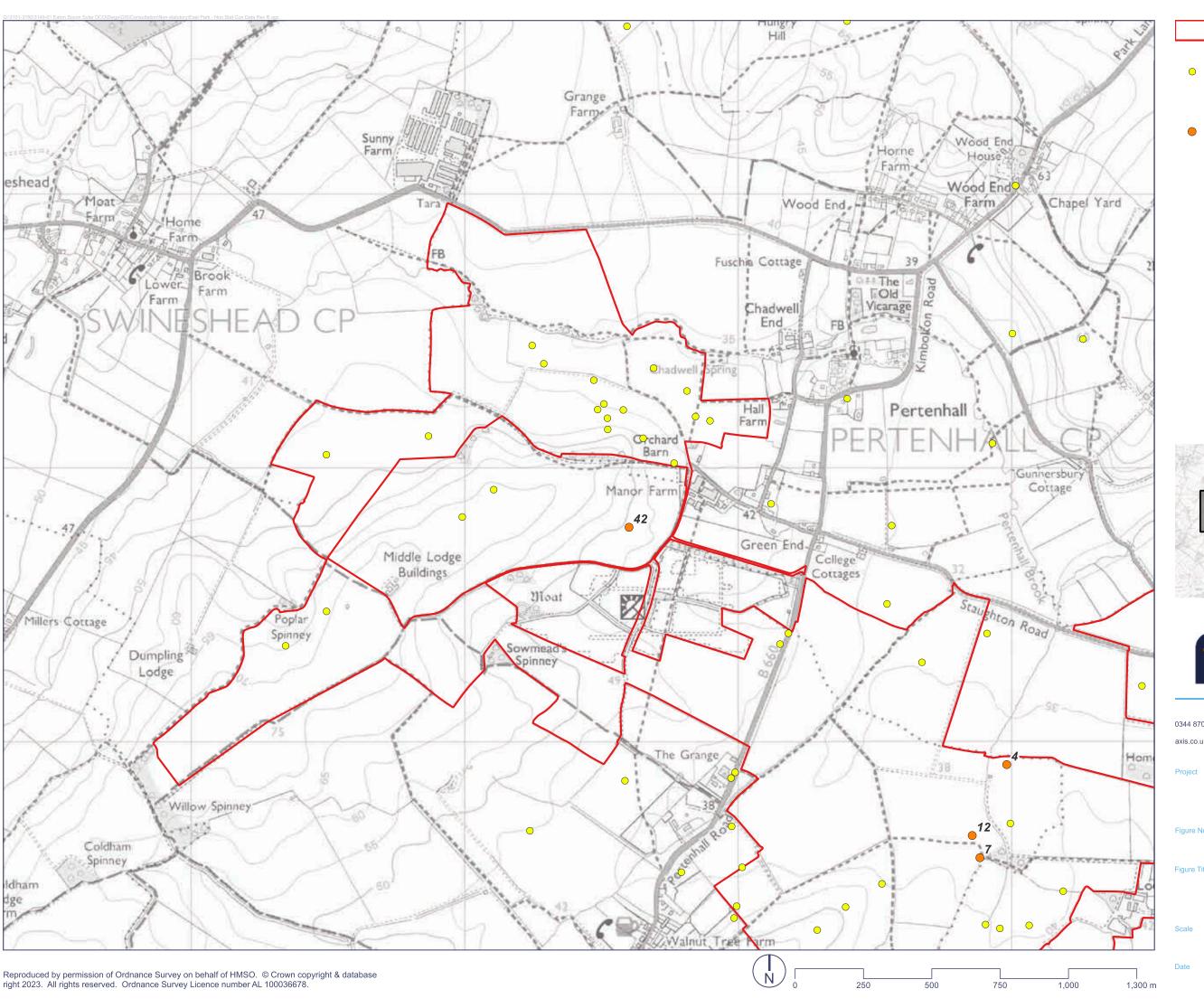
Figure Number

Figure 1

Non-Statutory Consultation Pinpoint Data (Sheet 1 of 5)

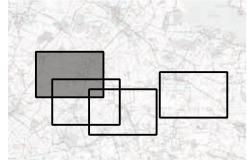
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January 2024



**EIA Scoping Order Limits** 

- Non-Statutory Consultation Pinpoint Data from Consultation Website
- Non-Statutory Consultation Pinpoint Data from Consultation Website (Location Specific Comment)





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**East Park Energy** 

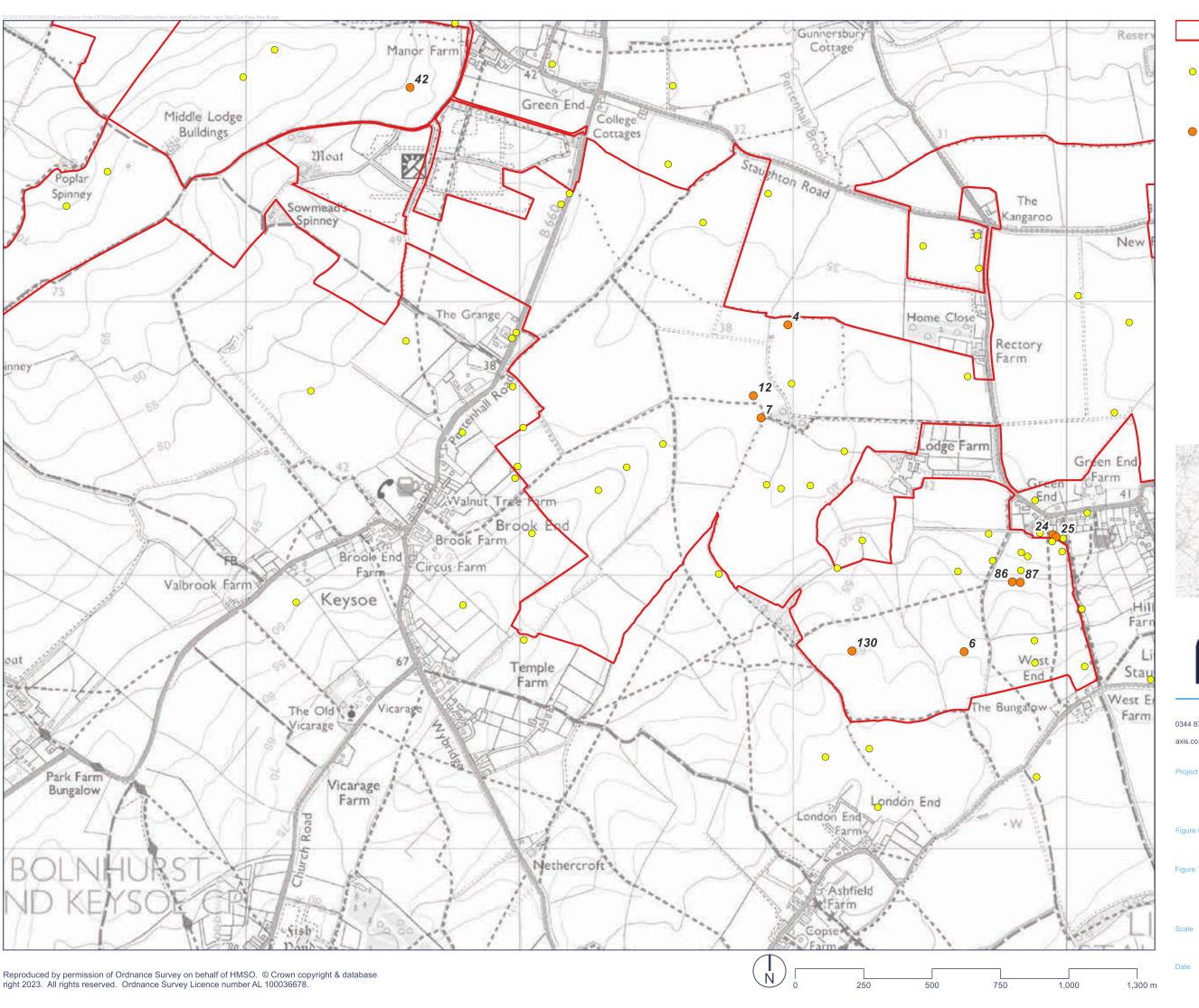
Figure Number

Figure 2

**Non-Statutory Consultation Pinpoint Data** (Sheet 2 of 5)

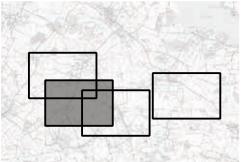
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January 2024



**EIA Scoping Order Limits** 

- Non-Statutory Consultation Pinpoint Data from Consultation Website
- Non-Statutory Consultation Pinpoint Data from Consultation Website (Location Specific Comment)





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**East Park Energy** 

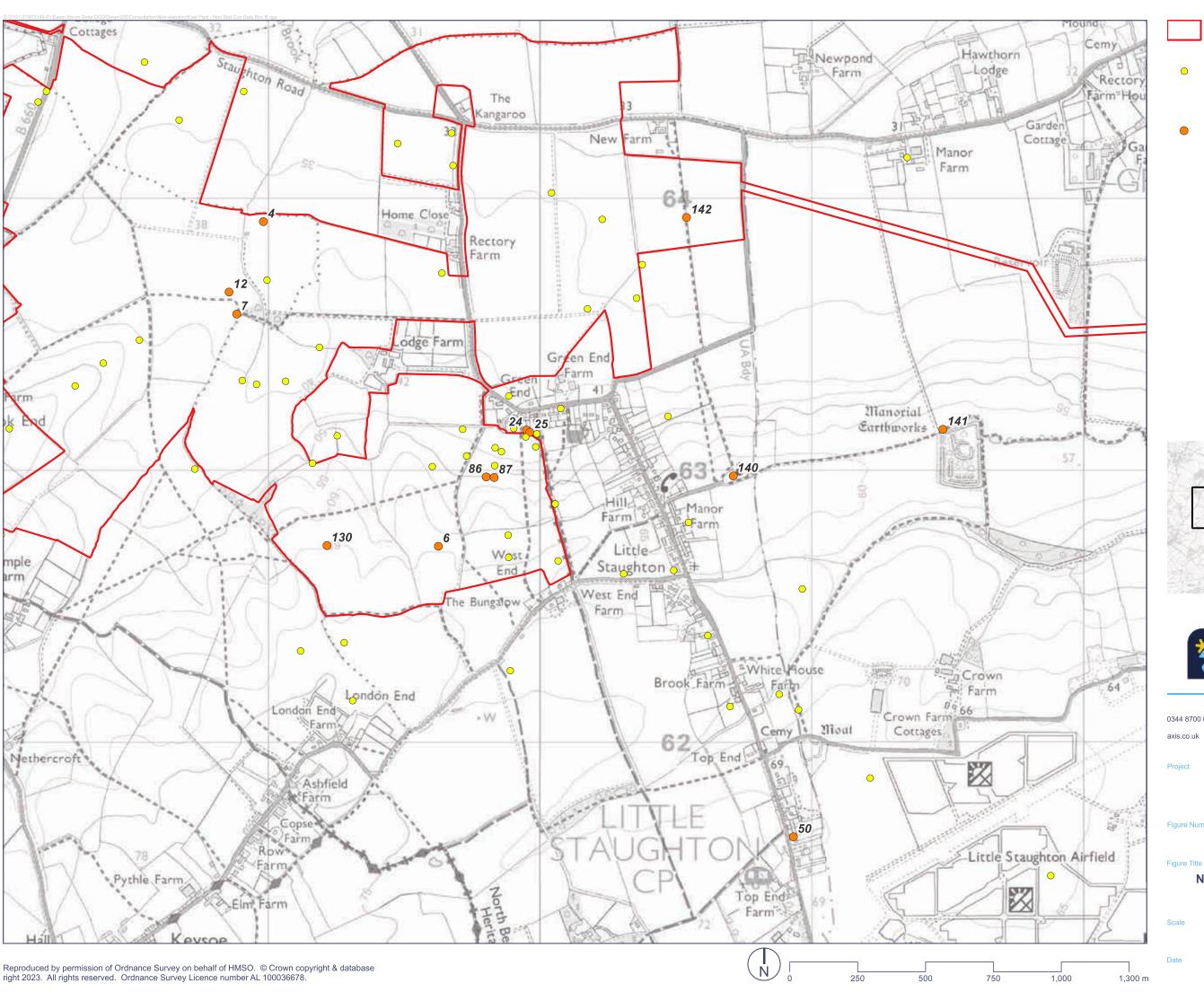
Figure Number

Figure 3

**Non-Statutory Consultation Pinpoint Data** (Sheet 3 of 5)

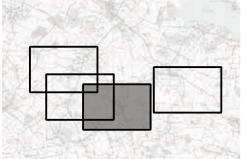
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January 2024



**EIA Scoping Order Limits** 

- Non-Statutory Consultation Pinpoint Data from Consultation Website
- Non-Statutory Consultation Pinpoint Data from Consultation Website (Location Specific Comment)





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**East Park Energy** 

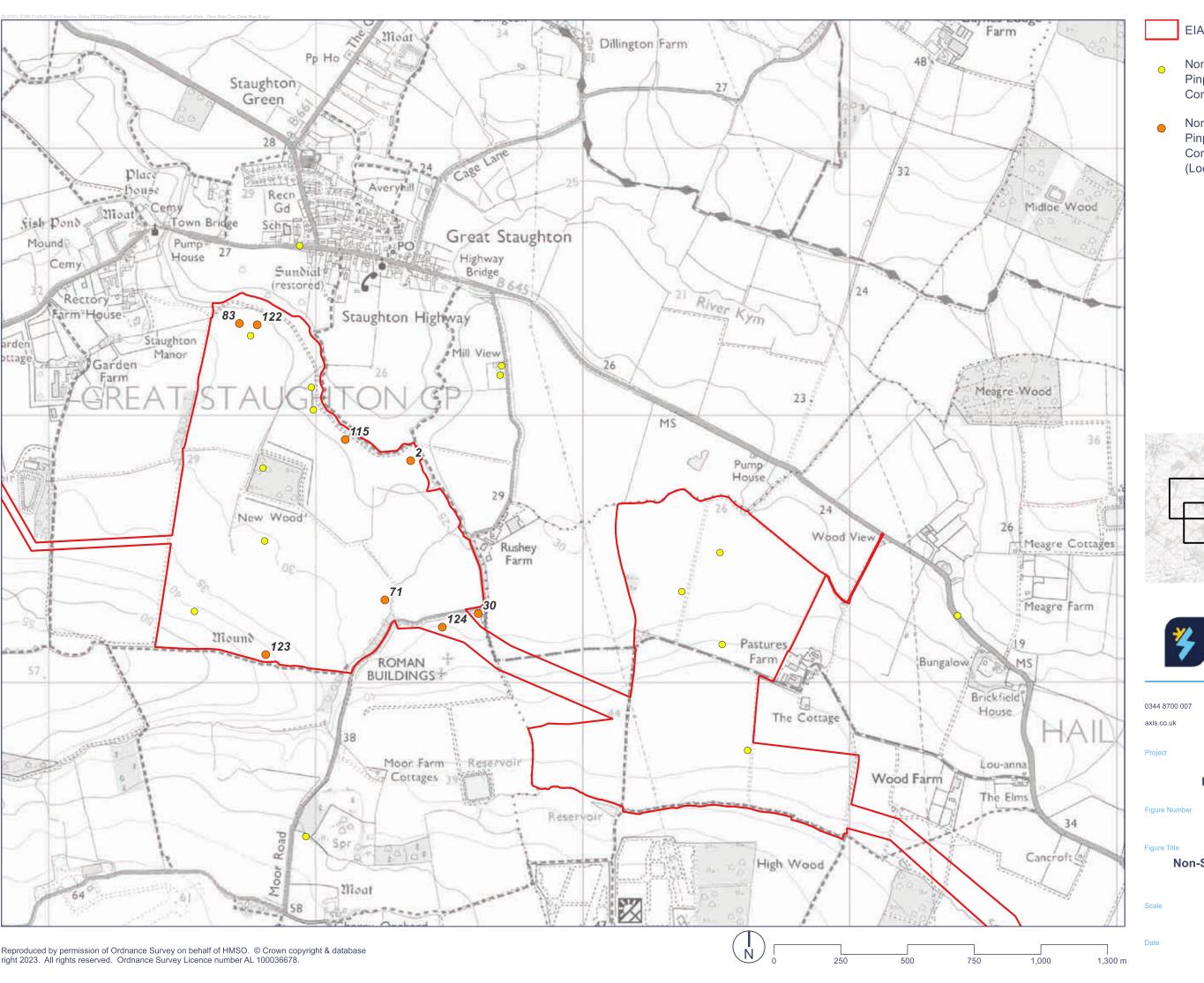
Figure Number

Figure 4

**Non-Statutory Consultation Pinpoint Data** (Sheet 4 of 5)

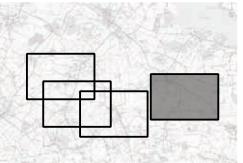
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January 2024



**EIA Scoping Order Limits** 

- Non-Statutory Consultation Pinpoint Data from Consultation Website
- Non-Statutory Consultation Pinpoint Data from Consultation Website (Location Specific Comment)







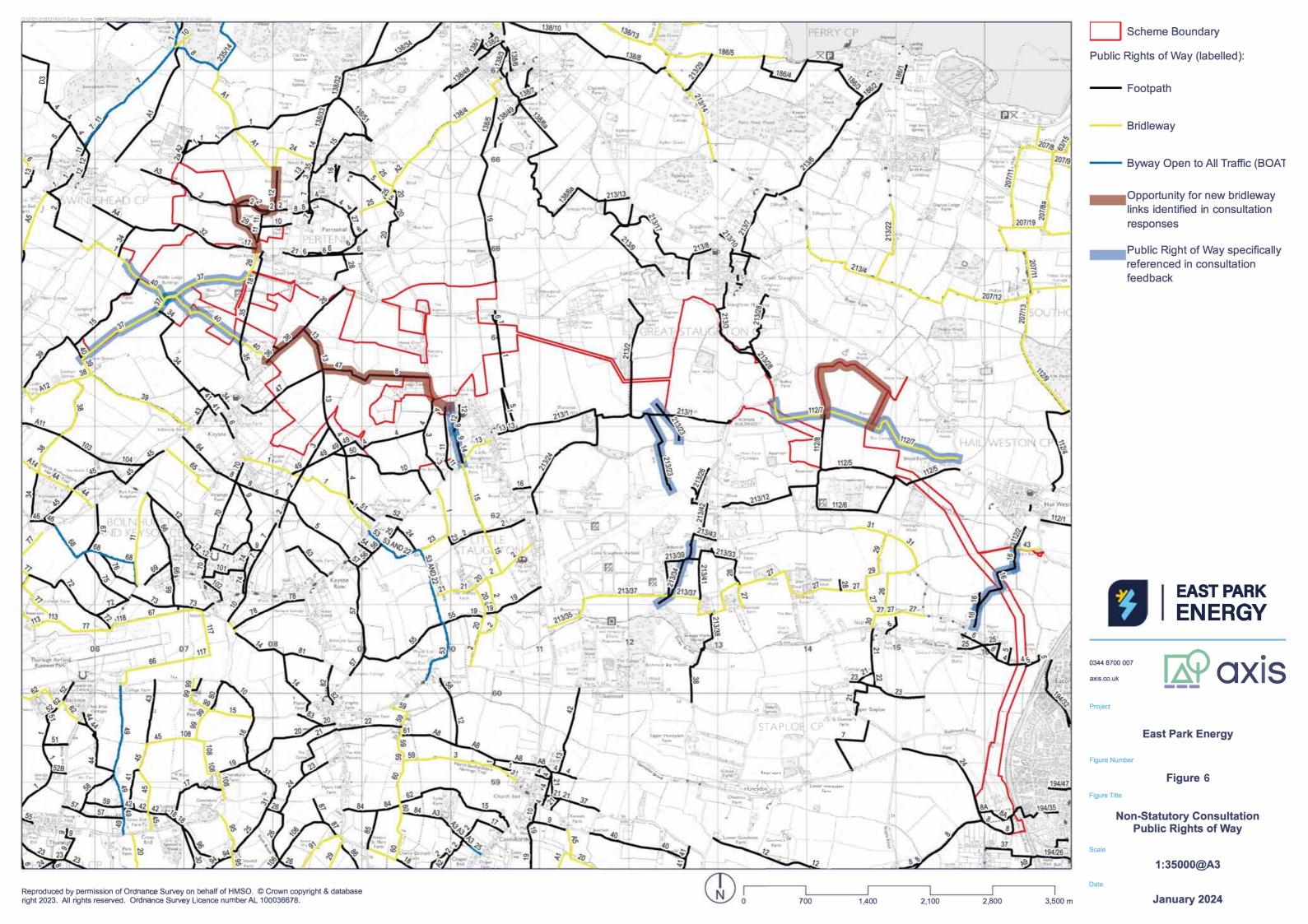
**East Park Energy** 

Figure 5

**Non-Statutory Consultation Pinpoint Data** (Sheet 5 of 5)

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January 2024





# **APPENDIX 1**

**Letter to Political Stakeholders** 



(%) 0333 358 0502

East Park Energy Project, C/O Lexington Third Floor, Queens House, Queen Street Manchester, M2 5HT

[Title] [Name] [Surname] [Position] [Address 1] [Address 2] [Postcode]

16th October 2023

Dear [Title] [Name],

#### East Park Energy: Delivering a New Solar Farm & Battery Storage Scheme

I am writing to you to introduce RNA Energy and share further details on our plans to deliver East Park Energy, a solar farm and battery storage scheme, situated in Bedford and Huntingdonshire.

The scheme aims to export up to 400MW of renewable energy generation to the National Grid, ensuring a sustainable energy source for approximately 108,000 households — more than the total number in Bedford. As the scheme will exceed 50MW of energy generation, it is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and RNA Energy will be required to submit a Development Consent Order (DCO) application to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.

RNA Energy Ltd will be undertaking an initial consultation on the proposals from Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October to Tuesday 21st November 2023, with the aim of undertaking a statutory consultation in 2024 and submitting an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) in winter 2024/25. We will be hosting three public exhibitions during this period, and we would be delighted if you could attend.

As you may know, solar energy is one of the cheapest forms of electricity generation. Therefore, delivering more solar energy schemes will help bring down energy prices. East Park Energy will significantly expand the UK's domestic energy generation capability, contributing towards our energy security needs and helping to deliver stable energy prices that are independent of international fossil fuel markets.

The UK Government is committed to the delivery of Net Zero. 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 and, as such, a step-change is required in the delivery of solar energy across the UK to achieve the 70 GW target.

RNA Energy is fully committed to supporting Net Zero initiatives locally, and through our East Park Legacy Fund we will support the community transition to Net Zero, likely in the form of grants that will be made available to community groups and facilities, public services, and local homeowners. The delivery of the East Park Legacy Fund is something we will discuss with the local communities to understand how it can best support Net Zero initiatives at a local level, but at this stage we would like to discuss the current options to understand your thoughts and priorities.



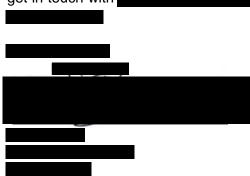
(6) 0333 358 0502

East Park Energy Project, C/O Lexington Third Floor, Queens House, Queen Street Manchester, M2 5HT

East Park Energy will make a significant contribution to fight Climate Change, increase our energy security, deliver significant biodiversity net gain by providing diverse habitats. The scheme will be designed sensitively, taking account of the characteristics of the local landscape and providing appropriate mitigation. To find out more about our plans and the physical exhibition events, please visit our dedicated website at https://eastparkenergy.co.uk/ which will launch on Tuesday 17th October.

We are committed to delivering a scheme which is shaped by the local community. Ahead of submitting a DCO application, RNA is planning to launch two rounds of public consultation on our plans for East Park Energy. This initial public consultation will last for five weeks from Tuesday 17th October to Tuesday 21st November 2023 where local residents will have the opportunity to learn more about our plans and share their feedback.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our initial proposals in more detail, get your feedback, and understand how you feel the East Park Legacy Fund could benefit the local community. One of our consultants will contact your office shortly to see if we could arrange a meeting with you, in the meantime, should you have any enquiries, please do not hesitate to get in touch with





# **APPENDIX 2**

**Database of Consultees** 

Description	Name	Title
Host local authority	Cambridgeshire County Council	Councillor
Host local authority Host local authority Local local puthority	Cambridgeshire County Council Huntingdonshire District Council Huntingdonshire District Council	Councillor
Host local authority Host local authority	Huntingdonshire District Council Bedford Borough Council	Mayor
Host local authority Neighbouring local authority	Bedford Borough Council Central Bedfordshire Council	Councillor
Neighbouring local authority Neighbouring local authority	Central Bedfordshire Council Milton Keynes City Council	Councillor
Neighbouring local authority Neighbouring local authority	Milton Keynes City Council North Northamptonshire Council	Councillor
Neighbouring local authority Neighbouring local authority	North Northamptonshire Council City of Peterborough Council	Councillor
Neighbouring local authority Neighbouring local authority	City of Peterborough Council Fenland District Council	Councillor
Neighbouring local authority Neighbouring local authority	Fenland District Council East Cambridgeshire District Council	Councillor
Neighbouring local authority Neighbouring local authority		Councillor
Neighbouring local authority Neighbouring local authority	Norfolk County Council Suffolk County Council	Councillor
Neighbouring local authority Neighbouring local authority	Suffolk County Council Essex County Council	Councillor
Neighbouring local authority Neighbouring local authority	Essex County Council Hertfordshire County Council	Councillor
Neighbouring local authority	Hertfordshire County Council	
Neighbouring local authority	South Cambridgeshire District Council	Councillor
Neighbouring local authority Relevant parish Council	South Cambridgeshire District Council Pertenhall & Swineshead Parish Council	
Relevant parish Council Relevant parish Council	Staploe Parish Council Hail Weston Parish Council	Parish Councillor Parish Councillor
Relevant parish Council Relevant parish Council	Great Staughton Parish Council Little Staughton Parish Council	Parish Councillor Parish Councillor
Relevant parish Council	Bolnhurst & Keysoe Parish Council	Parish Councillor
Neighbouring paish council Neighbouring paish council	Risley Parish Council Kimbolton Parish Council	Parish Councillor Parish Councillor
The Health & Safety Executive National Health Service Commissioning Board	The Health and Safety Executive NHS England	
The relevant ambulance	East of England Ambulance Con-	
The relevant ambulance service The NHS Commissioning Board The NHS Commissioning Board	East of England Ambulance Service Bedfordshire, Luton & Milton Keynes Integrated Care Board	
The NHS Commissioning Board The UK Health Security Agency	Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care System The UK Health Security Agency Natural Facility of The Care System System Systems (Security Agency Systems	Professor Dame
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The relevant police authority The relevant police authority The Environment Agency	Bedtordshire Police Cambridgeshire Constabulary The Environment Agency	
Homes England The Civil Aviation Authority	Ine Environment Agency Homes England The Civil Aviation Authority	
The Highways Agency Secretary of State for Transport	I ne Civil Aviation Authority National Highways The Rt Hon Mark Harper MP	The Rt Hon
Secretary of State for Transport Secretary of State for Defense Office of Rail Regulation	The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP	The Rt Hon
Onice of Rail Regulation	Office of Rail & Road	
Canals & Rivers Trust The relevant localresilience forum	Canals & Rivers Trust Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Resilience Forum	
Canals & Rivers Trust The relevant localessilience forum The Gas & Electricity Markets Authority Relevant statutory undertakers		
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# **APPENDIX 3**

**Correspondence with Consultees** 



(6) 0333 358 0502

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East Park Energy Project, C/O Lexington Third Floor, Queens House, Queen Street Manchester, M2 5HT

[Title] [Name] [Surname] [Position] [Address 1] [Address 2] [Postcode]

16th October 2023

Dear [Title] [Name],

East Park Energy: Delivering a New Solar Farm & Battery Storage Scheme

I am writing to inform you that RNA Energy Ltd is bringing forward proposals to deliver East Park Energy, a solar farm and battery storage scheme to the north-west of St Neots that will be capable of generating up to 400MW of renewable energy.

This letter notifies you that RNA Energy Ltd will be undertaking a non-statutory consultation on the scheme from Tuesday 17th October to Tuesday 21st November 2023, with the aim of undertaking a statutory consultation in 2024 and submitting an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) in winter 2024/25.

As part of the DCO application process, you have been identified as a person of interest and RNA Energy Ltd wanted to share the initial plans during the non-statutory consultation and invite you to provide feedback.

The consultation website can be accessed at – www.eastparkenergy.co.uk – on Tuesday 17th October and provides further information on the scheme, as well as a virtual exhibition.

Any response to the consultation can be sent to the following email address eastparkenergy@havingyoursay.co.uk or should you have any enquiries, please do not hesitate to get in touch by calling 0333 358 0502 (Monday to Friday, 9am – 5:30pm).

As part of the consultation, RNA Energy Ltd will be hosting three physical exhibition events to give local residents an opportunity to view the plans in more detail and ask questions of the development team. The physical exhibitions will be held:

- Tuesday 24th October Keysoe Village Hall: 2pm 7pm
- Monday 30th October Hail Weston Village Hall: 2pm 6pm
- Monday 6th November Little Staughton Village Hall: 2pm 7pm

#### The Scheme

East Park Energy is a new solar farm and energy storage scheme that will generate electricity for export to the National Grid, with the connection at Eaton Socon Substation. The plans include a battery storage site which will allow for more efficient use of the solar panels and means electricity can be stored at times of low demand and released back to the grid when it is most needed. It also helps to provide grid stability services to the National Grid when the solar farm is not operating, such as at night.



(6) 0333 358 0502

East Park Energy Project, C/O Lexington Third Floor, Queens House, Queen Street Manchester, M2 5HT

The scheme aims to export up 400MW of power to the National Grid, ensuring a sustainable energy source for approximately 108,000 households — more than the total number in Bedford. As the scheme will exceed 50MW of energy generation, it is considered to be a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and RNA Energy will be required to submit an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.

In addition, RNA Energy is fully committed to supporting Net Zero initiatives locally, and through our East Park Legacy Fund we will support the community transition to Net Zero, likely in the form of grants that will be made available to community groups and facilities, public services, and local homeowners. The delivery of the East Park Legacy Fund is something we will discuss with the local communities to understand how it can best support Net Zero initiatives at a local level, but at this stage we would like to discuss the current options to understand your thoughts and priorities.

If you have any questions on the proposed scheme or the non-statutory consultation process, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

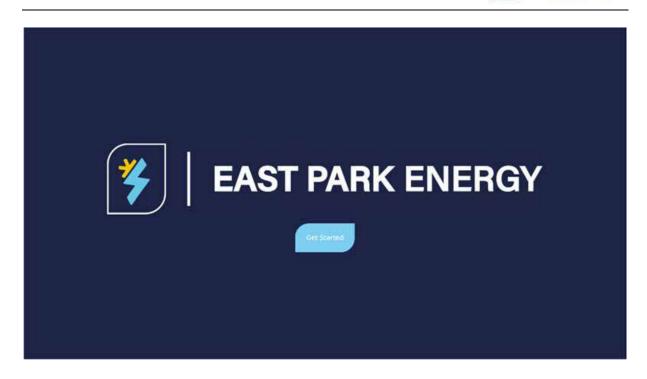




# **APPENDIX 4**

**Consultation Website Images** 







The Scheme

The Benefits

Community Fund

FAOs

Consultation Process

About Us

Contact Us

# Welcome

Thank you for taking the time to visit our website about our plans for East Park Energy, a proposed solar farm and energy storage scheme.

This website will be the home for all information about the scheme and where you will be able to find the latest information on our proposed application as the plans are progressed.







Site Centext Plan (Click to enlarge)

# The Scheme

East Park Energy is a new solar farm and energy storage scheme that is proposed to the north-west of St Neots, straddling the administrative boundary of Bedford and Huntingdonahiro.

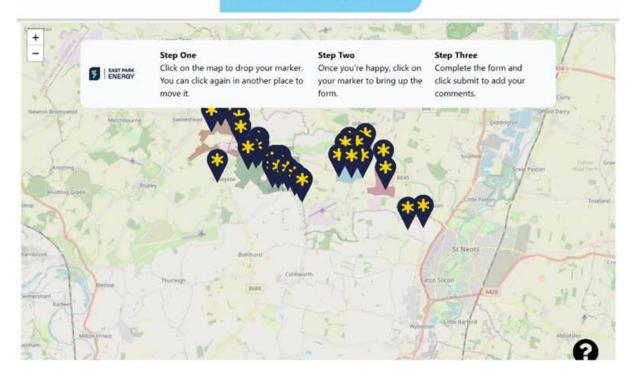
The scheme will connect to the National Grid at the existing substation at Eaton Socon. The solar panels would generate electricity for export to the National Grid, whilst the inclusion of battery storage allows for more efficient use of the solar panels and means electricity can be stored at times of low demand and released back when it is most needed. It also helps to provide grid stability services to National Grid when the solar farm is not operating, such as at night. Our plans will also encompass a suite of environmental mitigation and blodiversity enhancement measures to provide a huge boost to local wildlife, with an biodiversity net gain for the local area, going well beyond minimum Government requirements.

The scheme aims to export up to 400MW of power to the National Grid, ensuring a sustainable energy source for approximately 108,000 households — surpassing the total number in Bedford. As the scheme will exceed 50MW of energy generation, it makes it a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and RNA Energy will be required to submit an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.

East Park Energy is not connected with any solar farms that already exist or are proposed within the area.

# Masterplan

Click here for a PDF version of our masterplan











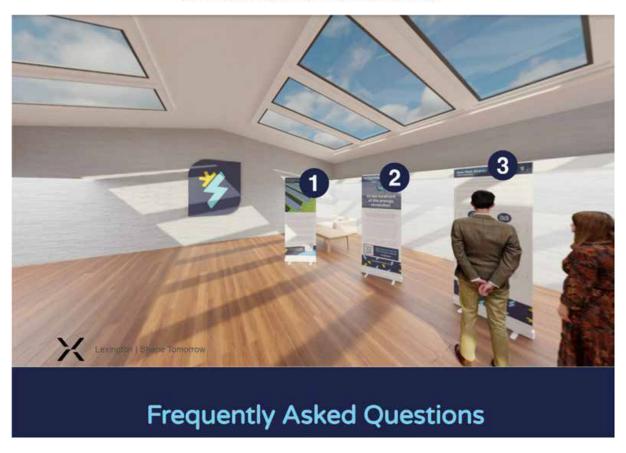




RNA Energy is fully committed to supporting Net Zero initiatives locally, and through our East Park Legacy Fund we will support the community transition to Net Zero, likely in the form of grants that will be made available to community groups and facilities, public services, and local homeowners. The delivery of the East Park Legacy Fund is something we will discuss with the local communities to understand how it can best support Net Zero initiatives at a local level, but at this stage we would like to discuss the current options to understand your thoughts and priorities.

# Virtual Exhibition

Welcome to our virtual exhibition! Here you can have a look through our information banners to find out more about our plans. Click on the numbers to open the boards and find out more.





#### Why is the energy park needed?

## Why is the energy park needed?

The UK Government is proposing a very significant change in the way the UK meets its energy needs. In 2019, the Government committed the country to the achievement of 'net zero' carbon emissions by 2050 in order to help mitigate the worst effects of climate change.

Following this commitment, the Government published its 'Net Zero Strategy' in October 2021 which sets out how this can be achieved. A critical element of the strategy is a move away from traditional energy generation (such as fossil fuel power stations) to cheap, clean, and renewable sources of electricity in the UK. This includes increased amounts of solar energy and energy storage.

Aside from its contribution to our net-zero target, solar and energy storage technologies can play a vital role in achieving energy security. The UK Government is committed to the delivery of Net Zero. 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 and, as such, a step-change is required in the delivery of solar energy across the UK to achieve the 70 GW target.

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, providing enough renewable energy to supply approximately 108,000 homes — surpassing the total number in Bedford.

#### What is an NSID?

### What is an NSIP?

Due to the capacity of the solar and energy storage park exceeding 50MW, the scheme is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP).

The development consenting regime for NSIPs comes under the Planning Act 2008 and the application process is known as the Development Consent Order (DCO) process. DCO applications in the case of energy related development are made directly to the Secretary of State for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ). DCO applications are not determined by the local authority, although local authorities are involved throughout and maintain an important role during the DCO application process. The local authority is the responsible planning authority, following the grant of a DCO.



#### What is the NSIP process?

## What is the NSIP process?

#### Non-statutory consultation

RNA Energy is undertaking a non-statutory consultation. This is the beginning of the consultation process where the initial plans are shared with the public and stakeholders so early feedback can be received. Following the non-statutory/initial consultation, RNA Energy will analyse the feedback and make changes to the plans where necessary.

#### Statutory consultation

During the pre-application phase, RNA Energy will continue to develop the proposals in consultation with stakeholders and undertake environmental surveys and assessment to reduce the potential impacts of the scheme. A formal, statutory pre-application consultation will then be undertaken in 2024, with the aim of submitting the DCO application in winter 2024/25.

#### Acceptance

Once the DCO application is submitted and subject to change from the statutory consultation, the Planning Inspectorate, on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), will decide whether the application meets the standards required to be accepted for examination.

#### Pre-examination

When the application is accepted for examination, in winter 2024/25, members of the public can register with the Planning Inspectorate to become an Interested Party. An Examining Authority (made up of independent inspectors from the Planning Inspectorate) is also appointed at the pre-examination stage, and all Interested Parties will be invited to attend a Preliminary Meeting, run and chaired by the Examining Authority. The preliminary environmental information will also be published during this period.

#### Examination

The Examining Authority will then carry out an examination and take into account the application and analyse the feedback receive on the plans. Examinations are a public process and primarily a written aspect, where members of the community can get involved. They can last for up to six months, but at the start of this stage the Examining Authority will set deadlines for the submission of written information. Hearings will also take place during the examination period to discuss specific aspects of the application.

#### Recommendation and Decision

Following the examination period, the Examining Authority will prepare a report on the application to the Secretary of State for DESNZ, which includes a recommendation. The Secretary of State for DESNZ will then make a decision on whether to grant or refuse the development consent.

#### Post Decision

After the decision has been made by the Secretary of State for DESNZ, there is a six-week period in which the decision can be challenged in the High Court, known as a judicial review.



#### Why has this site been chosen?

### Why has this site been chosen?

A comprehensive site selection process was undertaken to identify the most suitable land for East Park Energy. This process considered all land within 15km of the grid connection point at Eaton Socon Substation in terms of agricultural land classification, environmental constraints (including flood risk, landscape, ecology and heritage considerations), planning constraints (including local allocations, existing planning applications and existing NSIPs), land availability, site size, topography and other technical constraints (including location of urban areas, main rivers and major highway infrastructure).

#### What are the benefits?

#### What are the benefits?

#### 1) Helping achieve Net Zero

The UK Government is committed to the delivery of Net Zero. 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 and, as such, a step-change is required in the delivery of solar energy across the UK to achieve the 70 GW target. The East Park Energy development would play a vital role in the achievement of the Government's target.

#### 2) A low-cost renewable energy source

Solar energy is one of the cheapest forms of electricity generation. Therefore, delivering more solar energy schemes will help bring down energy prices at a time when consumer costs are soaring. East Park Energy will significantly expand the UK's domestic energy generation capability, contributing towards our energy security needs and helping to deliver stable energy prices that are independent of international fossil fuel markets.



#### 3) Increasing biodiversity and environmental net gain

The land identified for the site is currently used for arable crops. As such, it is currently a suboptimal location for habitats and local wildlife. East Park Energy will not only make a significant contribution to fighting the global climate emergency, but our aspiration is also to deliver a significant biodiversity net gain for the local area, going well beyond minimum Government requirements, by enhancing the local environment and providing diverse new habitats that will create new, resilient ecological networks.

#### 4) Sustainable employment and economic growth

The construction of the site by East Park Energy will contribute to the local economy through the creation of job opportunities. This influx of construction jobs not only benefits the immediate community but also provides a vital economic boost.

East Park Energy is committed to maintaining a dedicated workforce comprising a minimum of 10 to 16 full-time employees. In alignment with our dedication to community engagement and sustainable growth, RNA Energy will actively collaborate with local educational institutions and government initiatives to facilitate apprenticeships and provide training opportunities for residents in the immediate vicinity. This approach ensures that our operations not only contribute to regional employment but also foster skill development and career prospects within the local community.

During the operational phase the impact on the local road network would be minimal. A scheme of this scale would typically have a small operational workforce of a minimum of 10-16 full time employees on rotation in a shift pattern. As such, only a small number of post-construction vehicle movements would be generated, and this would mainly consist of maintenance vehicles occasionally visiting the site.

East Park Energy's commitment to delivering a dependable, cost-effective energy supply to the UK holds the potential to reduce energy expenses for households and businesses nationwide, thereby contributing to broader economic stability and growth.

#### 5) Community benefits from the East Park Legacy Fund

RNA Energy 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.

RNA will hold discussions with the local communities to understand how the fund can be best utilised to support Net Zero initiatives in the local area.



What will the environmental impact of the scheme be?

## What will the environmental impact of the scheme be?

RNA Energy will carry out a detailed Environment Impact Assessment (EIA), which will assess the environmental impact of the East Park Energy development. The scope of the EIA will be agreed with the Planning Inspectorate in advance and the reporting will be provided in an Environmental Statement (ES) which will be submitted with the Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

A draft version of the ES (the Preliminary Environmental Information Report – PEIR), will be made available for review as part of the statutory consultation in 2024, prior to submission of the DCO application.

How will the scheme increase biodiversity & ecology in the area?

# How will the scheme increase biodiversity & ecology in the area?

RNA Energy is dedicated to 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 us to develop strategies that not only preserve but enhance biodiversity. These efforts are essential to ensuring that our schemes have a minimal ecological footprint and contribute positively to the surrounding environment.

Our ambition at RNA Energy 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, we aim not only to meet but to exceed our ecological responsibilities, leaving a lasting legacy of environmental enrichment for generations to come.

RNA Energy is also working with Rothamsted Research to understand how solar farms can be designed for maximum land use gain across various metrics including CO2 sequestration, soil health, biodiversity, crop/livestock yield, and solar yield. RNA Energy is therefore looking to include new initiatives supported by the research into the proposals for East Park Energy.



#### Will there be any noise pollution?

## Will there be any noise pollution?

RNA Energy places a high priority on limiting noise impacts on the local community and other noise-sensitive areas when designing our solar farms and battery storage schemes. In our commitment to responsible project development, we are acutely aware that solar panels themselves operate silently; however, the inverters and transformers associated with them can emit a low hum during their operation. To address this, we are taking proactive steps.

Firstly, we have initiated baseline noise monitoring in the surrounding area to establish a comprehensive understanding of the background noise levels. Using this data, we are conducting detailed noise modelling to predict the potential noise generated by East Park Energy's operations. This assessment allows us to determine whether any significant noise impacts might arise and informs our design process accordingly, to avoid impacts to people's property.

We are 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.

#### Will the scheme impact the air quality in the area?

## Will the scheme impact the air quality in the area?

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.

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.

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.



How will the plans mitigate flooding?

## How will the plans mitigate flooding?

All built development, including solar panels, transformers and the battery storage facility, is proposed to be located on land wholly within Flood Zone 1 which is defined by the Environment Agency as having the lowest risk of flooding.

A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Strategy will be prepared and included within the DCO application, which will assess any potential impacts which could occur as a result of the development and propose mitigation to reduce any potential impacts. The Drainage Strategy would include SuDS features suitable for the control of surface water run-off at the site.

Are solar panels sustainable?

## Are solar panels sustainable?

After between 1 - 4 years of operating the solar panels will have 'paid off' the carbon used in their production. In terms of recycling, it is now possible to recycle around 99% of the component parts of each solar panel and there are a growing number of facilities specialising in solar panel recycling.

Have you assessed the scheme's impact of archaeology and local heritage?

# Have you assessed the scheme's impact of archaeology and local heritage?

Initial assessments will be carried out to identify any known archaeological and cultural heritage features on and around the proposed site.

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.

The scope of any further work will be discussed and agreed with the archaeological advisors to Bedford Borough Council and Cambridgeshire County Council.

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.



#### – Will the scheme impact food production?

## Will the scheme impact food production?

The independent National Food Strategy Review shows that solar farms do not in any way present a risk to the UK's food security. Solar farms in the UK currently account for just 0.08% of total land use and this is expected to rise to just 0.5% by 2050 – less than the amount currently used for golf courses.

However, RNA has carefully selected the land which will be used for East Park Energy to ensure it is of the lowest agricultural grade where possible, to ensure any potential impact on local food production is minimal. RNA Energy is working in partnership with Rothamsted Research, and the scheme will explore ways that solar projects can maximise local biodiversity improvements, carbon sequestration, soil health, and agricultural yields.

Additionally, any areas of the site that are currently used for agricultural purposes would only be temporarily transitioned to solar farm development. This would be reversible after the 40 year project life. Moreover, solar panels would only prevent the farming of arable crops, they would not prevent alternative agricultural use, including sheep grazing.

Solar energy generation will further allow farmers to diversify their income and allow British farmers to continue farming.

#### Will the scheme impact my view?

## Will the scheme impact my view?

Solar farms are of a low height, such that they are often not as widely visible as typical residential or employment land uses, or other forms of renewable energy such as wind turbines.

The scheme will affect views at a local level from around the site boundary, and from some nearby properties, footpaths and roads. In the long-term, the impact on some of these views will reduce as our proposed hedgerow and woodland belt improvements establish and reach a height where they 'screen' the proposed development.

Photo-realistic visualisations of the scheme will be prepared to help give an understanding of the likely appearance of the solar farm from key viewpoints in the local area. These visualisations will be prepared in advance of the statutory consultation events in 2024.



How will the scheme be accessed and will there be more traffic?

# How will the scheme be accessed and will there be more traffic?

The greatest potential for highways impacts to occur in connection with a solar development is during the construction phase.

RNA Energy has given consideration to the potential highways effects of the East Park Energy scheme and has devised a proposed access strategy that aims to limit the impact of construction traffic on the local highway network. It is proposed that construction vehicles would access the site from the A1 via the B645. Vehicles would then take the first left onto a private road which provides access to an adjacent existing solar farm, before heading north into East Park Energy site through privately owned land.

This strategy would effectively eliminate the need for vehicles to run through neighbouring villages, including Hail Weston, Staunton Highway, Great Staughton, Little Staughton, Keysoe, Swineshead and Riseley.

During the operational phase, impacts on the road would be minimal. A scheme of this scale would typically have a small operational workforce of a minimum of 10-16 full time employees. As such, only a small number of post-construction vehicle movements would be generated, and this would mainly consist of maintenance vehicles occasionally visiting the site.

Will the scheme impact the Public Rights of Way that run through the site?

# Will the scheme impact the Public Rights of Way that run through the site?

The current scheme are not expected to result in the loss of any public right of way, and the current proposals seek to ensure that such routes would be maintained on their current alignment following construction of the East Park Energy development, with suitable buffers between footpaths and the solar development areas.

The only potential effects on the access to existing rights of way would be during the construction phase where it is necessary for them to be crossed by cable corridors. However, such effects would be temporary and could be adequately mitigated through careful management of the construction process.



Why are you holding consultation events in only three villages near the site?

# Why are you holding consultation events in only three villages near the site?

As this is an initial non-statutory consultation, we are holding three exhibition events within the consultation area. These three venues were selected because they:

- 1. Are located in villages which may be impacted by the proposals.
- 2. Have all the necessary facilities required to host an exhibition event.
- Are spread evenly across the consultation area, ensuring people who may be impacted by the scheme can access an event.

However, we appreciate that some people may not be able to attend these events given the location and timings, as such we have a virtual exhibition room which can be accessed via our website alongside an online feedback form for local residents to share their views on the scheme. The materials in the virtual exhibition are the same as the ones we display during our physical exhibition events. We also have a community information line available for people wishing to speak to a member of the team.

We are striving to ensure the local community remain informed and included as we develop the plans for East Park Energy further. As part of this non-statutory consultation, we welcome feedback on how we are consulting so that we can make changes ahead of the statutory consultation which will likely take place in 2024.

## Consultation Process

RNA Energy is delighted to launch this initial consultation on the plans for East Park Energy. This is an opportunity for us to share our plans and hear your feedback on our initial plans.

The initial consultation will run for five weeks, from Tuesday 17th October to Tuesday 21th November 2023.

Please ensure your feedback is completed by Tuesday 21st November 2023 to be included as part of this consultation.

Your views are important to us and we want to create an energy park that the whole community can benefit from so please take the opportunity to have your say. Get in touch and tell us what you think by:

- Speaking with a member of the team by calling: 0333 358 0502 (Monday Friday 9.00am 5.00pm).
- Emailing us with your comments, questions or feedback at: eastparkenergy@havingyoursay.co.uk

Attending our public exhibitions on:

- Tuesday 24th October at Keysoe Village Hail from 2pm-7pm Monday 30th October at Hail Weston Village Hall from 2pm-6pm Monday 6th November at Little Staughton Village Hall from 2pm-7pm
- Filling in the below feedback form.



Please read the information in our virtual exhibition before answering the following questions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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Should you require any documents in large print, audio or braille then please contact us at the details provided. Please click here to read our Privacy Policy.

Previous





# Get In Touch

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you would like to find out more information about East Park Energy. You can contact us and find out more by using the details below.

- Call us on the community information line on 0333 358 0502 (Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.30pm)
- Émail us at: eastparkenergy@havingyoursay.co.uk
- Write to us at: RNA Energy, East Park Energy; c/o Lexington, Third Floor Queens House, Queen Street, Manchester, M2 5HT

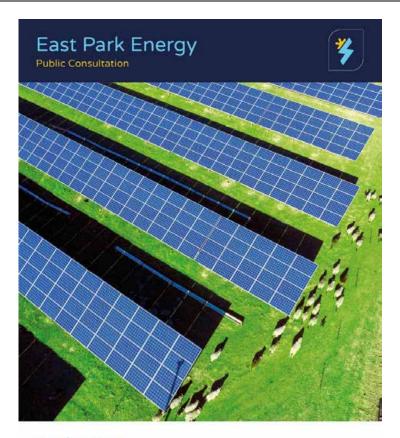






# **APPENDIX 5**

**Exhibition Boards** 



# Welcome

Thank you for taking the time to visit our virtual exhibition. We are excited about our plans for East Park Energy (EPE), a new solar farm and battery storage scheme to the north-west of St Neots. Please navigate through the exhibition boards to learn more about our plans and how to provide feedback during this initial consultation.

The scheme aims to export up to 400MW of renewable energy generation to the National Grid, ensuring a sustainable energy source for approximately 108,000 households — more than the total number in Bedford. As the scheme will exceed 50MW of energy generation, it is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). Therefore, RNA Energy will be required to submit an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.

RNA Energy is undertaking an initial consultation on the proposals from Tuesday 17th October to Tuesday 21st November 2023, with the aim of undertaking a statutory consultation in 2024 and submitting an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) in winter 2024/25.

You can submit your comments by completing our feedback form or using one of the methods listed on the contact us section on the last board of this exhibition room. Please ensure your comments are submitted by Tuesday 21st November to ensure that these can be taken into consideration as part of the initial consultation.







# About RNA Energy

RNA Energy is dedicated to advancing the development and construction of a diverse portfolio of renewable energy schemes, aimed at providing the UK with affordable, clean, and reliable energy solutions.

The RNA Energy team is renowned for its extensive expertise and unwavering commitment to building the clean energy infrastructure required for a net zero emissions future.

The team has developed an extensive portfolio of subsidy free solar schemes across the UK. Our site selection process is thorough, taking into account a variety of factors, including the potential environmental impacts, technical feasibility, and ecological enhancements possible at each location. We prioritise the integration of battery energy storage systems whenever possible to ensure the seamless delivery of energy to the grid during periods of peak demand. This strategic approach prevents the inundation of the grid with solar energy during low-demand periods and maximises the use of clean energy.

With our well-established track record as project developers, we specialise in fostering collaborative relationships with landowners and local stakeholders. This approach enables us to design and deliver schemes that are mutually beneficial for all parties involved.









### Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project

#### What is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project?

Due to the capacity of the solar and energy storage scheme exceeding 50MW, the scheme is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP).

The development consenting regime for NSIPs comes under the Planning Act 2008 and the application process is known as the Development Consent Order (DCO) process.

DCO applications in the case of energy related development are made directly to the Secretary of State for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ). DCO applications are not determined by the local authority, although local authorities are involved throughout and maintain an important role during the DCO application process. The local authority is the responsible planning authority, following the grant of a DCO.

## What is the NSIP process?

For a more detailed version of the NSIP process, please visit our website.





**Public Consultation** 



# The Site

The Site encompasses the areas required for solar development, battery storage, all associated infrastructure, landscaping and ecological mitigation (or 'green infrastructure'), access tracks, cabling, and the grid connection to the Eaton Socon Substation. The site can be broadly broken down into four component areas, but the boundaries of each may be refined as the plans progress:

#### East Park Site A

Covering the land west of the B660 between Pertenhall and Swineshead at the western end of the site. East Park Site A comprises fields located to the north, west and east side of a small hill that lies between Pertenhall and Riseley.

#### Fact Park Site R

Covering the land between Pertenhall, Keysoe, and Little Staughton. East Park Site B comprises fields located north of an elevated ridgeline which runs between Keysoe and Little Staughton.

#### East Park Site C

Covering the land south of Great Staughton. East Park Site C comprises fields located south of the River Kym, with access possible from Moor Road to its south-eastern boundary.

### East Park Site D

Covering land around Pastures Farm between Great Staughton and Hail Weston. East Park Site D comprises fields with access via existing farm tracks to the B645.



# Why has this site been chosen?

A comprehensive site selection process was undertaken to identify the most suitable land for the East Park Energy scheme. This process considered all land within 15km of the grid connection point at Eaton Socon Substation in terms of agricultural land classification, environmental constraints (including flood risk, landscape, ecology and heritage considerations), planning constraints (including the Local Plan, existing planning applications and existing NSIPs), land availability, site size, topography and other technical constraints (including the location of urban areas, main rivers and major highway infrastructure).





**Public Consultation** 



# Benefits

East Park Energy will deliver significant benefits both nationally and locally, by helping the UK address its climate change obligations, boosting the local economy and increasing biodiversity.



### Helping to achieve Net Zero

The UK Government has stated 70 GW of solar is needed by 2035 to deliver Net Zero. East Park Energy is crucial to meeting this ambitious Government target.



# Increasing biodiversity and environmental net gain

East Park Energy will deliver a significant biodiversity net gain for the local area, going well beyond minimum Government requirements, by enhancing the local environment and providing diverse new habitats.



# Community benefits from the East Park Legacy Fund

The East Park Legacy Fund 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.



# A low-cost renewable energy source

Solar energy is one of the cheapest forms of electricity generation. East Park Energy will significantly expand the UK's domestic energy generation capability, contributing towards our energy security needs and helping to deliver stable energy prices.



# Employment & Education Opportunities

East Park Energy aims to stimulate the local economy through job creation and educational opportunities, including apprenticeships.





**Public Consultation** 



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**Public Consultation** 



# Environment



# Impact on Air Quality

A detailed construction dust and vehicle emissions assessment will be submitted with the DCO application. This will assess any likely impacts as a result of the development and will set out mitigation measures required to reduce these impacts to acceptable levels

There will be no air quality or dust management issues during the operational phase of the development as the scheme would not generate any aerial emission and there will only be limited vehicle movements for maintenance, landscape management and repair.



### Flood Risk and Drainage

The site is located on land wholly within Flood Zone 1 which is defined by the Environment Agency as having the lowest risk of flooding. However, a comprehensive Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Strategy will be prepared and included within the DCO application. This will assess any potential impacts which could occur as a result of the development and propose mitigation to reduce any potential impacts. The Drainage Strategy would include SuDS features suitable for the control of surface water run-off at the site.



### Archaeology / Heritage

Initial assessments will be carried out to identify any known archaeological and cultural heritage features on and around the proposed site.

Any direct potential impacts will be informed by non-invasive assessments 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 and excavation.

The results of the geophysical assessment and associated analysis will be presented within the PEIR, while 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.





**Public Consultation** 



# Environment



#### Agricultural Land

RNA has carefully selected the land which will be used for East Park Energy to ensure it is of the lowest agricultural grade where available. This will ensure the potential impact on local food production is as low as possible. Despite this, RNA Energy's partnership with Rothamsted Research will seek to understand how the scheme can be most beneficial to local crop and livestock yields. This includes using sheep to graze parts of the site and encouraging specific pollinators and pest control species by growing the right mix of wildflowers in the right place. RNA Energy will look to include new initiatives supported by this research into the proposals for East Park Energy.

Additionally, any areas of the site that are currently used for agricultural purposes would only be temporarily transitioned to solar farm development. This would be reversible after the 40 year project life.



### Access and Traffic

The primary concern for highway impacts in solar development arises during the construction phase. RNA Energy has carefully considered this aspect in planning the East Park Energy scheme. A proposed access strategy involves utilising the A1 and B645, before guiding construction vehicles to the site without traversing through nearby villages such as Hail Weston, Staughton Highway, Great Staughton, and others. This approach aims to minimise disruptions and traffic congestion in the area during the construction period.

Once operational, the workforce will comprise 10-16 full-time employees at the site. Therefore, the impact on the local road network would be minimal.



### Public Rights of Way

The current proposals are not expected to result in the loss of any public right of way. These routes are expected remain on their current alignment, and suitable buffers will be created between footpaths and the solar development areas once construction is complete.

The only potential effects on the access to existing rights of way would be during the construction phase where it is necessary for them to be crossed by cable corridors. However, such effects would be temporary and could be adequately mitigated through careful management of the construction process.





**Public Consultation** 



# Myth Busting



### Mow reliable is solar energy in the UK?

Solar energy is extremely reliable. The sun provides an abundant and consistent power supply, unlike fossil fuels which are finite and subject to price volatility and geopolitical tensions. Solar panels do not need direct sunlight to operate, and they produce energy all year round which means solar schemes operate well in the UK.

The co-location of a battery storage facility with the proposed solar panels will increase the efficiency of East Park Energy, as the batteries would store any excess energy when production is high and demand is low, and release energy at times when production is low and demand is high. This increases the efficiency of the scheme, minimises losses and ensures a more consistent supply of energy.



#### Q Does land used for solar farms reduce food security?

No. The independent National Food Strategy Review shows that solar farms do not in any way present a risk to the UK's food security. Solar farms provide valuable income for UK farmers and can support them to continue food production on other parts of their land.



### Can you recycle solar panels?

You absolutely can! In fact, up to 99% of materials in a solar panel are made from recyclable materials. Most solar panels are built to last for decades, meaning they do not need to be replaced regularly.



#### Does manufacturing solar panels produce more carbon than they save in their lifetime?

Not at all. Research shows a solar panel's carbon payback is 1 - 4 years and that they generate a hundred times more energy than it takes to make them over a 40year warranty period.



#### S Is solar expensive?

Solar is one of the cheapest ways to produce energy, meaning our energy bills can drastically reduce by choosing solar.



#### O Do solar farms take up a lot of space?

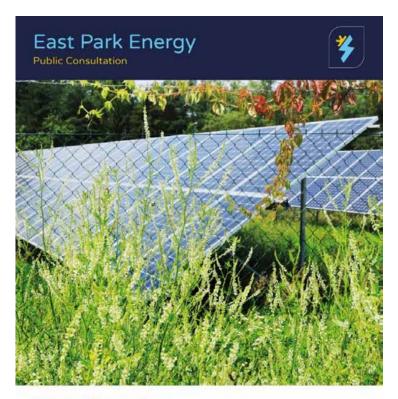
No, they take up very little space. Even under 2050 Net Zero targets, solar farms would occupy less than 0.5% of the UK's land, which is less land than is currently used for golf courses.



# Is solar popular?

Absolutely! According to government surveys, solar is considered the most popular energy source. In 2021, data showed that 90% of the public supported it, with 81% saying they would not oppose a solar farm being built in their area.





# Have Your Say

This initial public consultation provides the local community with the opportunity to provide feedback on our plans ahead of the submission of a DCO application. Your views are very important to us and RNA Energy will analyse all the feedback received and make changes to the plans where necessary.

You can submit your comments by using the online feedback form which is available on our website, or by using one of the methods listed on the contact us section below.

This consultation will run until Tuesday 21st November 2023. Please ensure all feedback is received by us before this date.

# Contact Us

Should you want any further information or have any questions, you can contact the team using the details below:



You can write to us at: East Park Energy, c/o Lexington, Third Floor Queens House, Queen Street, Manchester, M2 5HT



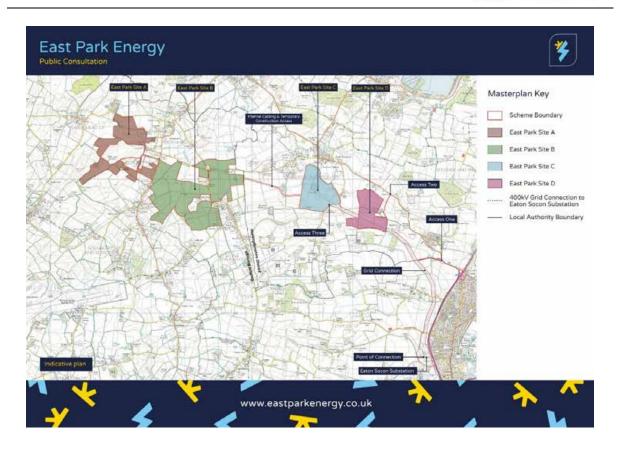
You can call our Community Information Line on 0333 358 0502 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5:30pm)

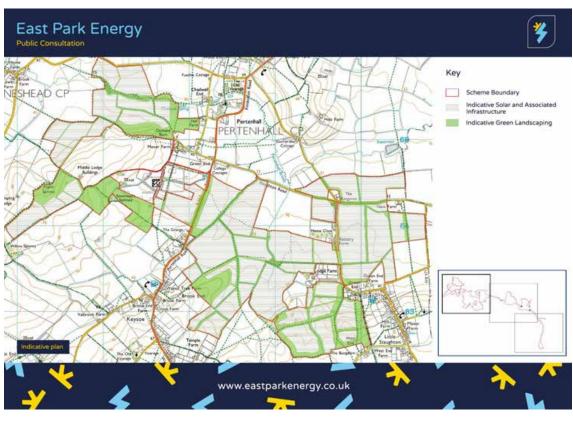


You can email us at eastparkenergy@havingyoursay.co.uk

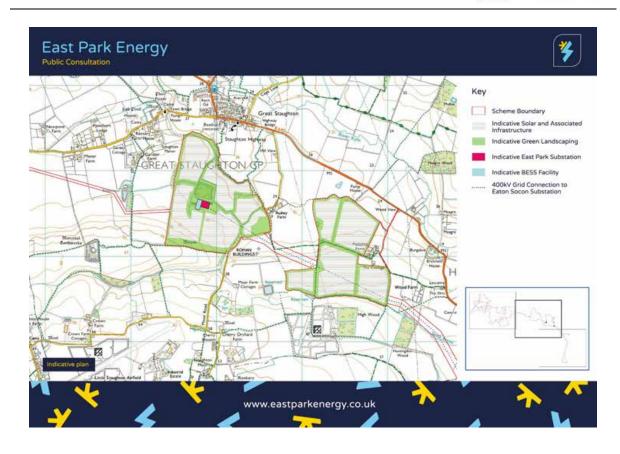


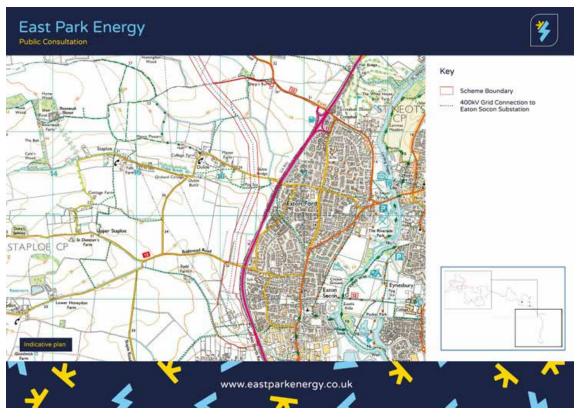














# **APPENDIX 6**

**Social Media Advertisements** 





Our plans for East Park Energy will contribute to the local economy, providing employment opportunities during construction and operation of the scheme. Click below to find out more.





The plans for East Park Energy will deliver lasting benefits to the wider community through the East Park Legacy Fund. This fund will likely provide grants that will be made available to community groups and facilities, public services and local homeowners. To find our more and share your views, click below!







RNA Energy is committee to support your community's transition to net zero. Our plans for a new solar farm and battery storage scheme includes the East Park Legacy Fund which will provide grants to support local net zero initiatives. Click here to learn more and share your views!





Energy security is vital in delivering economic growth as soaring energy prices create uncertainty for businesses. East Park Energy will provide a safe and secure supply to help stabilise energy prices. Click below to find out more!







Solar energy is one of the cheapest ways to generate power. East Park Energy will significantly increase the UK's solar energy output, providing cheaper and cleaner energy to thousands of homes. Want to learn more and share your views? Click here!









East Park Energy will deliver a substantial biodiversity net gain for the local area by ising the space between solar panels to introduce diverse habitats. To find out more and share your views, click the link below!







RNA Energy is excited to unveil our solar and battery storage scheme, which will power approx. 108,000 homes - more than the total number in Bedford! Click below to learn more and share your thoughts. Let's shape a greener world together!











Our plans for East Park Energy will significantly expand the UK's domestic energy generation capability by providing clean, renewable energy to thousands of homes, helping to decrease the UK's dependency on imported fossil fuels. To find out more and share your views, click here!







# **APPENDIX 7**

**Leaflets to Residents and Businesses** 

Your views are important to us and we want to create an energy park that the whole community can benefit from. Our public consultation runs for five weeks from Tuesday 17th October to Tuesday 21st November 2023 so please take the opportunity to have your say.

# Get in touch and tell us what you think by:



Visiting our consultation website and virtual exhibition at:

www.eastparkenergy.co.uk



Speaking with a member of the team by calling:

0333 358 0502 (Monday - Friday 9:00am - 5:00pm)



Emailing us with your comments, questions or feedback at:

eastparkenergy@havingyoursay.co.uk



Attending our public exhibitions:

Tuesday 24th October, Keysoe Village Hall, 2pm - 7pm

Monday 30th October, Hail Weston Village Hall, 2pm - 6pm

Monday 6th November, Little Staughton Village Hall, 2pm - 7pm

All feedback received will be logged and reviewed to help shape the final plans for each phase of the development before any applications are submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in winter 2024/25. All comments should be received no later than Tuesday 21st November 2023 to ensure that they can be taken into consideration.





Scan QR code to visit our website

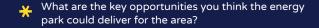
RNA Energy is bringing forward exciting plans for East Park Energy, a solar and battery storage scheme, to the north-west of St Neots.

The scheme is aiming to export up to 400MW of renewable energy to power approximately 108,000 households - more than the total number in Bedford. The scheme qualifies as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) due to its exceeding 50MW of energy generation, necessitating RNA Energy to apply for a Development Consent Order (DCO) from the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.

RNA Energy will be undertaking an initial consultation on the scheme from Tuesday 17th October to Tuesday 21st November 2023. We want to hear your views to help shape our scheme.

# Share your views:







We want to hear from you and develop plans which have been shaped by the feedback received from the local community. The public consultation on our plans will run for five weeks from Tuesday 17th October to Tuesday 21st November 2023.



EAST PARK ENERGY RNA ENERGY

# The Scheme:

East Park Energy will be designed sensitively, taking account of the characteristics of the local landscape of Bedford and Huntingdonshire whilst making a significant contribution to tackling the energy crisis and fighting the global climate emergency.

# The plans for East Park Energy will:



Boost the local economy through increased employment opportunities arising from both the construction and operation of the scheme.



Deliver a significant biodiversity net gain for the local area, going well beyond minimum Government requirements.



Deliver the East Park Legacy Fund which will help support the community transition to Net Zero.



More than double the existing solar energy generation in Bedford Borough and Huntingdonshire District.



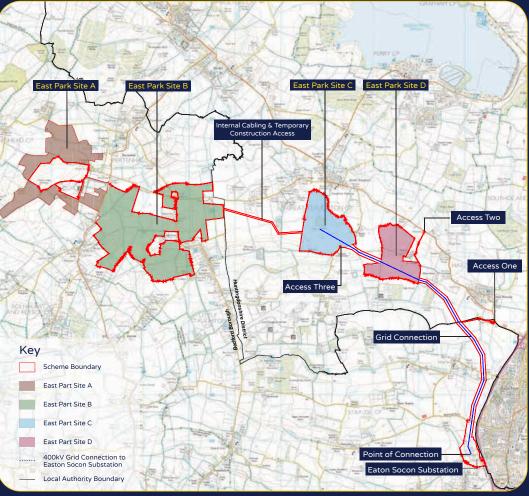
Boost the UK's renewable energy supply and contribute towards the transition to Net Zero.



Provide a stable, secure, and low-cost energy supply which will bring numerous benefits for the wider UK economy.



Export up to 400MW of low carbon electricity to the National Grid, at Eaton Socon Substation, providing enough renewable energy to supply approx. 108,000 homes — surpassing the total number in Bedford.



To view the masterplan at a larger scale, please visit our website: eastparkenergy.co.uk



Scan QR code to visit our website

# We want to know what you think:

We want to hear your views on our plans for East Park Energy to ensure that it delivers on what Bedford and Huntingdonshire wants. All feedback will be reviewed in detail and will help shape the scheme. This is the start of an in-depth consultation exercise where the local community will have multiple opportunities to comment and provide your views.

Visit our website for further information on the plans:

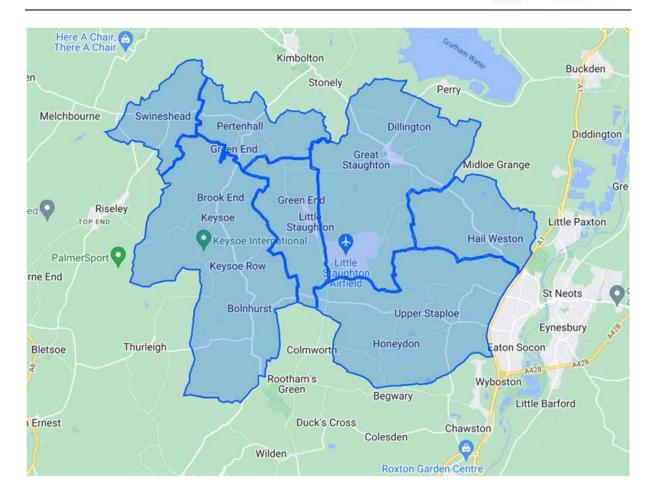
www.eastparkenergy.co.uk



# **APPENDIX 8**

**Leaflet Distribution Area Map** 





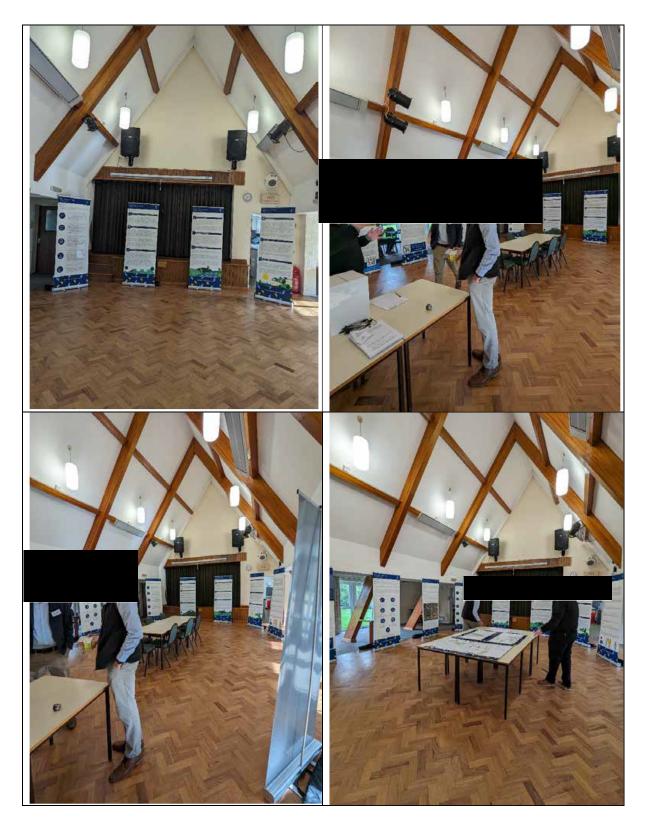


# **APPENDIX 9**

Images of the Keysoe, Hale Weston and Little Staughton Village Hall

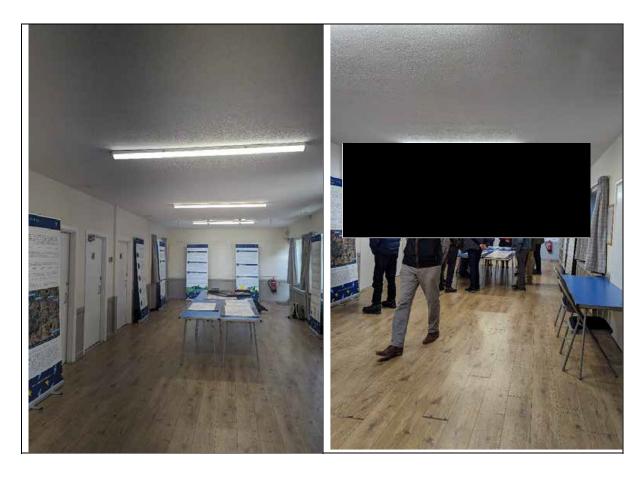


# **Keysoe Village Hall**





# **Hail Weston Village Hall**



# **Little Staughton Village Hall**





# **APPENDIX 10**

Press release and media coverage ahead of public consultation



# **Press Release**

### EMB Tuesday 17th October

# East Park Energy: RNA Energy Unveils Plans for a New Solar Farm & Battery Storage Scheme to Tackle Climate Change Head on

RNA Energy, an expert in solar power and battery energy storage, is bringing forward plans for East Park Energy; a new solar farm and battery storage scheme on land north-west of St Neots, straddling the administrative boundary of Bedford and Huntingdonshire. An initial consultation on the scheme will run for five weeks from, Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October to Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023.

The scheme aims to export 400MW of renewable energy generation to the National Grid, ensuring a sustainable energy source for approximately 108,000 households— more than the total number in Bedford. Notably, the scheme is expected to more than double the current renewable energy output of Huntingdonshire District and Bedford Borough.

The plans also include a battery energy storage facility that will be used to store excess power that is generated by the solar array to make power available to the grid during times of peak demand. By ensuring a steady and reliable energy supply, East Park Energy will contribute to the stability of the National Grid's operations.

As the scheme will exceed 50MW of energy generation, this makes it a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and RNA Energy will be required to submit an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.

In the first instance, RNA Energy will be undertaking an initial consultation on the scheme to understand public opinion and to shape the final plans before delivering a statutory consultation in 2024.

Beyond its energy benefits, East Park Energy will include substantial hedgerow, tree planting, and wild grassland areas around the perimeter of each field. This will provide a boost to local pollinator, bird and small mammal (mice, voles, hedgehog, bat) species populations due to the increased habitat connectivity and additional food sources. RNA Energy has an ambition to deliver a significant biodiversity net gain for the local area, going well beyond minimum Government requirements.

As part of the plans, RNA Energy has also committed to a Community Benefit Fund (the East Park Legacy Fund) which will support the community transition to Net Zero, likely in the form of grants that will be made available to community groups and facilities, public services, and local homeowners.

A spokesperson for RNA Energy said:

"We are delighted to share our initial plans for East Park Energy. The scheme will provide clean renewable energy and will assist with the UK's transition to net zero.

"During a time when people are struggling to pay their energy bills, it is essential that we find cheap, green alternatives to the fossil fuel markets which are responsible for surging energy prices.



"We are committed to engaging with the local community to better develop the scheme. We are proud of our plans, and we look forward to hearing what those in the area think of our ideas."

Members of the public can find out more about East Park Energy and share their views by visiting the website <a href="https://eastparkenergy.co.uk/">https://eastparkenergy.co.uk/</a>. Furthermore, local residents can get in touch via email to <a href="mailto:eastparkenergy@havingyoursay.co.uk">eastparkenergy@havingyoursay.co.uk</a> or by calling the Community Information Line via 0333 358 0502 (Monday to Friday – 9am to 5:30pm).

### **ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors**

### **About RNA Energy**

RNA Energy is dedicated to advancing the development and construction of a diverse portfolio of solar and storage schemes, aimed at providing the UK with affordable, clean, and reliable energy solutions.

The RNA Energy team is renowned for its extensive expertise and unwavering commitment to constructing the clean energy infrastructure required for a net-zero emissions future.

RNA Energy is actively involved in the cultivation of a subsidy-free solar scheme portfolio across the UK. Our site selection process is thorough, taking into account a variety of factors, including the potential environmental benefits and technical feasibility of each location. We prioritise the integration of battery energy storage systems whenever possible to ensure the seamless delivery of energy to the grid during periods of peak demand. This strategic approach prevents the inundation of the grid with solar energy during low-demand periods and minimises the limitation of clean energy.

With our well-established track record as project developers, we specialise in fostering collaborative relationships with landowners and local stakeholders. This collaborative approach enables us to design and deliver schemes that are mutually beneficial for all parties involved.





# **Press Coverage**

# Plans unveiled for new solar farm and battery storage scheme on edge of Bedford

And you can have your say via public consultation starting today

### By Olga Norford

Published 17th Oct 2023, 12:08 GMT Updated 17th Oct 2023, 12:18 GMT







Have your say on plans for a new solar farm and battery storage scheme on land on the edge of **Bedford**.

An initial consultation on the East Park Energy scheme will run for five weeks from today, (October 17) to Tuesday, November 21.

The scheme is expected to more than double the current renewable energy output of Bedford borough and Huntingdonshire district by exporting 400MW of renewable energy generation to the <u>National Grid</u>.



A solar farm (ARCHIVE IMAGE)

It's claimed this will ensure a sustainable energy source for approximately 108,000 households – more than the total number in Bedford.

Plans also include a battery energy storage facility to store excess power available to the National Grid during times of peak demand and offer environmental benefits.

A spokesperson for RNA Energy, which is behind the scheme, said: "We are delighted to share our initial plans for East Park Energy. The scheme will provide clean renewable energy and will assist with the UK's transition to net zero.

"During a time when people are struggling to pay their energy bills, it is essential that we find cheap, green alternatives to the fossil fuel markets which are responsible for surging energy prices.



"We are committed to engaging with the local community to better develop the scheme. We are proud of our plans, and we look forward to hearing what those in the area think of our ideas."

A spokesperson added: "East Park Energy plans will also include substantial hedgerow, tree planting, and wild grassland areas around the perimeter of each field. This will provide a boost to local pollinator, bird and small mammal (mice, voles, hedgehog, bat) species populations due to the increased habitat connectivity and additional food sources.

"The company is also committed to a Community Benefit Fund (the East Park Legacy Fund) which will support the community transition to net zero."

You can find out more and share your views by visiting the <u>website</u> 🗹 emailing eastparkenergy@havingyoursay.co.uk 🖸 or by calling the Community Information Line via 0333 358 0502.

RNA Energy, based in Regent Street, London, is developing and building a portfolio of energy storage and solar facilities to power the UK with cheap, clean, and reliable energy.



# **APPENDIX 11**

Press notice inviting public contact





Hams pink Building firm raises breast cancer awareness

# Life in jail for double mure



Man 'executed' father and son

The man who shot dead his daughter's ex-partner and her ex-partner's father has been sentenced to life in prison.
Stephen Alderton, left, has been told he will serve a minimum of 25 years for the murders of Josh Dunnore, 32, and his father Gary, 57, earlier this year.

LOUISE HEPBURN

The 67-year-old killed both men in their homes in Cambridgeshire over a family court case irrobving his grandson. Judge Mark Bishop described the murders as an "execution" when sentencing Alderton at

Cambridge Crown Court on Menday. He said: "You took the decision to take the law into you own hands and end the lives of two innocent men." Alderton had previously admitted to the March 29 marders.

Full story, pages 2-5

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WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 25, 2023 THE HUNTS POST 41

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artin Clive Goodhead trading as Peterborough anoport Services of Adios, Hartford Marins, Banka ob. Wyton, Canba, PE28 2AA is applying for a ence to use Allways Garage Services, Longholme add, Upwood, Hursingdon, Camba, PE38 200 as toperating centre for 1 goods winkle and 1 stalls eners or occupiers of land (including buildings) Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) mare the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hilfirest House, 366 Harnhills Lane, Leeds L59 699, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representations was at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A guide to making representations is on the applicant of the making representations is not a specific to making representations in available from the Traffic Commissioner's Office.

### CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
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### OTHER

RNA Energy | East Park Energy, North-West of St Neots. East Park Energy Public Consultation

The scheme sines to export 400MW of power in the National Grid, emuring a sustainable energy sources of the second Grid, emuring a sustainable energy sources of the second Grid, emuring a sustainable in Bedford, As its scheme will exceed 50MW of energy generation it makes it a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NIBI) and RNA Energy will be required to submit an application for a Development Consert Order (DCO) to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.

#### Find out more

We will be consulting on the scheme betwee luesday 17th October to Tuesday 21tal Novemb 1022. Members of the public can find out no thout the scheme and how to take part in it onsultation by:

Tuesday 24th October Keyson VIII

If you have any questions about RNA's publi consultation, or East Park Energy, please get it

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# OTHER

NOTICE is given that Cambridgeshire County Council has made an Order pursuant to the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, as amended by the Road Traffic Temporary Restriction Act 1993, the effect of which:

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Anticipated dates for works	Road(s)	Diversion
21 November and 28 November 2023		Cage Lane - 8645 - 8661 and vice vers
6 November and 28 November 2023	Taylors Lane. Buckden	No diversion route









THE HUNTS POST WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 25, 2023

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#### CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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#### PLANNING

# TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE) ORDER 2015 LISTED BUILDINGS AND BUILDINGS IN CONSERVATION AREAS REGULATIONS 2015 PLANNING PERMISSION AFFECTING THE SETTING OF A LISTED BUILDING 23/01980/PP Land Adjacent Timp Hall Church Steed, Old Hurst Proposed readenful development 32/01980/LOV Vallage Farm Church Road, Gustham Replacement steps with reve handral PLANNING DEMANDER.

PLANNING PERMISSION AFFECTING THE SETTING OF A CONSERVATION AREA

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# LISTED BUILDING CONSENT 23/01908/LBC 5 The Maltings Alco

23/01908/LBC 5 The Malings Alcorbury Huntingdon Single storey rear extension, 23/01963/LBC Old Roctory The Green Hilton Conversion of parity cooms into habitable space to be

braned serior render and coated with time wash white paint.

DETERMINATION AS TO WHETHER PRIOR APPROVAL WILL BE REQUIRED
23/01900/TELDET QO Must At Sylvan Ltd Broadway Yasley.

The proposed upgrade of an enasting base station consisting of the replacement of the existent
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Any person withing to make representations should write to Development Services, Pathfinder House, St Maryl, Street, Huntingdon, PIZ99 3TN within 16 days of the publication of this Notice. Copies of the submitted place can be inspected by apportment of Council State. The application to the bedding documents and plains, is also available to view from Huntingdonshire District Council's Web district Council's will be also available to view from Huntingdonshire District Council's Web will be also available to the first of the submit any comments you care to make direct from this site to this office.

The provision of the Local Generating (Access in Information) Act, 1004 poquim that any Internation and the council development of the Council Comment (Access in Information) Act, 1004 poquim that any Internation are existed may be made public and if an application results or an appeal, copies of representations on the contractions.



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APPENDIX 1-2 CONSULTATION REPORT APPENDIX 1-2: LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS CONTACTED DURING NON-STATUTORY CONSULTATION [EN010141/DR/5.2]

Description	Name	Title
Host local authority Host local authority	Cambridgeshire County Council Cambridgeshire County Council	Councillor
Host local authority Host local authority	Huntingdonshire District Council Huntingdonshire District Council	Councillor
Host local authority Host local authority	Bedford Borough Council Bedford Borough Council	Mayor
nost local authority Neighbouring local authority Neighbouring local authority	Central Bedfordshire Council Central Bedfordshire Council	Councillor
Neighbouring local authority	Milton Keynes City Council	Councillor
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Neighbouring local authority Neighbouring local authority	East Cambridgeshire District Council East Cambridgeshire District Council	Councillor
Neighbouring local authority Neighbouring local authority	Norfolk County Council Norfolk County Council	Councillor
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Neighbouring local authority	South Cambridgeshire District Council	Councillor
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National Health Service Commissioning Board	NHS England	
The relevant ambulance service	East of England Ambulance Service	
The NHS Commissioning Board The NHS Commissioning Board	Bedfordshire, Luton & Milton Keynes Integrated Care Board Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Integrated Care System	
The UK Health Security Agency	The UK Health Security Agency	Professor Dame
Natural England The Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England	Natural England Historic England	
The relevant fire & rescue authority The relevant fire & rescue authority	Bedfordshire Fire & Rescue Service  Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service	
The relevant crime commissioner The relevant crime commissioner	Office of the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner  Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough	
The relevant police authority The relevant police authority	Bedfordshire Police Cambridgeshire Constabulary	
The Environment Agency	The Environment Agency	
Homes England The Civil Aviation Authority	Homes England The Civil Aviation Authority	
The Highways Agency Secretary of State for Transport	National Highways The Rt Hon Mark Harper MP	The Rt Hon
Secretary of State for Defense Office of Rail Regulation	The Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP Office of Rail & Road	The Rt Hon
Canals & Rivers Trust The relevant localresilience forum	Canals & Rivers Trust Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Resilience Forum	
The Gas & Electricity Markets Authority	Office of Gas and Electricity Markets	
Relevant statutory undertakers	Royal Mail	
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# APPENDIX 1-3 CONSULTATION REPORT APPENDIX 1-3: LETTER NOTIFYING STAKEHOLDERS OF NON-STATUTORY CONSULTATION [EN010141/DR/5.2]



(%) 0333 358 0502

East Park Energy Project, C/O Lexington Third Floor, Queens House, Queen Street Manchester, M2 5HT

[Title] [Name] [Surname] [Position] [Address 1] [Address 2] [Postcode]

16th October 2023

Dear [Title] [Name],

### East Park Energy: Delivering a New Solar Farm & Battery Storage Scheme

I am writing to you to introduce RNA Energy and share further details on our plans to deliver East Park Energy, a solar farm and battery storage scheme, situated in Bedford and Huntingdonshire.

The scheme aims to export up to 400MW of renewable energy generation to the National Grid, ensuring a sustainable energy source for approximately 108,000 households — more than the total number in Bedford. As the scheme will exceed 50MW of energy generation, it is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and RNA Energy will be required to submit a Development Consent Order (DCO) application to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.

RNA Energy Ltd will be undertaking an initial consultation on the proposals from Tuesday 17th October to Tuesday 21st November 2023, with the aim of undertaking a statutory consultation in 2024 and submitting an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) in winter 2024/25. We will be hosting three public exhibitions during this period, and we would be delighted if you could attend.

As you may know, solar energy is one of the cheapest forms of electricity generation. Therefore, delivering more solar energy schemes will help bring down energy prices. East Park Energy will significantly expand the UK's domestic energy generation capability, contributing towards our energy security needs and helping to deliver stable energy prices that are independent of international fossil fuel markets.

The UK Government is committed to the delivery of Net Zero. 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 and, as such, a step-change is required in the delivery of solar energy across the UK to achieve the 70 GW target.

RNA Energy is fully committed to supporting Net Zero initiatives locally, and through our East Park Legacy Fund we will support the community transition to Net Zero, likely in the form of grants that will be made available to community groups and facilities, public services, and local homeowners. The delivery of the East Park Legacy Fund is something we will discuss with the local communities to understand how it can best support Net Zero initiatives at a local level, but at this stage we would like to discuss the current options to understand your thoughts and priorities.



(6) 0333 358 0502

East Park Energy Project, C/O Lexington Third Floor, Queens House, Queen Street Manchester, M2 5HT

East Park Energy will make a significant contribution to fight Climate Change, increase our energy security, deliver significant biodiversity net gain by providing diverse habitats. The scheme will be designed sensitively, taking account of the characteristics of the local landscape and providing appropriate mitigation. To find out more about our plans and the physical exhibition events, please visit our dedicated website at https://eastparkenergy.co.uk/ which will launch on Tuesday 17th October.

We are committed to delivering a scheme which is shaped by the local community. Ahead of submitting a DCO application, RNA is planning to launch two rounds of public consultation on our plans for East Park Energy. This initial public consultation will last for five weeks from Tuesday 17th October to Tuesday 21st November 2023 where local residents will have the opportunity to learn more about our plans and share their feedback.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our initial proposals in more detail, get your feedback, and understand how you feel the East Park Legacy Fund could benefit the local community. One of our consultants will contact your office shortly to see if we could arrange a meeting with you, in the meantime, should you have any enquiries, please do not hesitate to get in touch with

Yours sincerely,

**Managing Director** RNA Energy

APPENDIX 1-4 CONSULTATION REPORT APPENDIX 1-4: LETTER NOTIFYING SECTION 42 CONSULTEES OF NON-STATUTORY CONSULTATION [EN010141/DR/5.2]



(6) 0333 358 0502

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East Park Energy Project, C/O Lexington Third Floor, Queens House, Queen Street Manchester, M2 5HT

[Title] [Name] [Surname] [Position] [Address 1] [Address 2] [Postcode]

16th October 2023

Dear [Title] [Name],

East Park Energy: Delivering a New Solar Farm & Battery Storage Scheme

I am writing to inform you that RNA Energy Ltd is bringing forward proposals to deliver East Park Energy, a solar farm and battery storage scheme to the north-west of St Neots that will be capable of generating up to 400MW of renewable energy.

This letter notifies you that RNA Energy Ltd will be undertaking a non-statutory consultation on the scheme from Tuesday 17th October to Tuesday 21st November 2023, with the aim of undertaking a statutory consultation in 2024 and submitting an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) in winter 2024/25.

As part of the DCO application process, you have been identified as a person of interest and RNA Energy Ltd wanted to share the initial plans during the non-statutory consultation and invite you to provide feedback.

The consultation website can be accessed at – www.eastparkenergy.co.uk – on Tuesday 17th October and provides further information on the scheme, as well as a virtual exhibition.

Any response to the consultation can be sent to the following email address eastparkenergy@havingyoursay.co.uk or should you have any enquiries, please do not hesitate to get in touch by calling 0333 358 0502 (Monday to Friday, 9am – 5:30pm).

As part of the consultation, RNA Energy Ltd will be hosting three physical exhibition events to give local residents an opportunity to view the plans in more detail and ask questions of the development team. The physical exhibitions will be held:

- Tuesday 24th October Keysoe Village Hall: 2pm 7pm
- Monday 30th October Hail Weston Village Hall: 2pm 6pm
- Monday 6th November Little Staughton Village Hall: 2pm 7pm

#### The Scheme

East Park Energy is a new solar farm and energy storage scheme that will generate electricity for export to the National Grid, with the connection at Eaton Socon Substation. The plans include a battery storage site which will allow for more efficient use of the solar panels and means electricity can be stored at times of low demand and released back to the grid when it is most needed. It also helps to provide grid stability services to the National Grid when the solar farm is not operating, such as at night.



(6) 0333 358 0502



East Park Energy Project, C/O Lexington Third Floor, Queens House, Queen Street Manchester, M2 5HT

The scheme aims to export up 400MW of power to the National Grid, ensuring a sustainable energy source for approximately 108,000 households — more than the total number in Bedford. As the scheme will exceed 50MW of energy generation, it is considered to be a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and RNA Energy will be required to submit an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.

In addition, RNA Energy is fully committed to supporting Net Zero initiatives locally, and through our East Park Legacy Fund we will support the community transition to Net Zero, likely in the form of grants that will be made available to community groups and facilities, public services, and local homeowners. The delivery of the East Park Legacy Fund is something we will discuss with the local communities to understand how it can best support Net Zero initiatives at a local level, but at this stage we would like to discuss the current options to understand your thoughts and priorities.

If you have any questions on the proposed scheme or the non-statutory consultation process, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,



# APPENDIX 1-5 CONSULTATION REPORT APPENDIX 1-5: NON-STATUTORY CONSULTATION NEWSLETTER [EN010141/DR/5.2]

Your views are important to us and we want to create an energy park that the whole community can benefit from. Our public consultation runs for five weeks from Tuesday 17th October to Tuesday 21st November 2023 so please take the opportunity to have your say.

## Get in touch and tell us what you think by:



Visiting our consultation website and virtual exhibition at:

www.eastparkenergy.co.uk



Speaking with a member of the team by calling:

0333 358 0502 (Monday – Friday 9:00am – 5:00pm)



Emailing us with your comments, questions or feedback at:

eastparkenergy@havingyoursay.co.uk



Attending our public exhibitions:

Tuesday 24th October, Keysoe Village Hall, 2pm - 7pm Monday 30th October, Hail Weston Village Hall, 2pm - 6pm

Monday 6th November, Little Staughton Village Hall, 2pm - 7pm

All feedback received will be logged and reviewed to help shape the final plans for each phase

of the development before any applications are submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in winter 2024/25. All comments should be received no later than Tuesday 21st November 2023 to ensure that they can be taken into consideration.





Scan QR code to visit our website

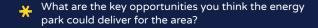
RNA Energy is bringing forward exciting plans for East Park Energy, a solar and battery storage scheme, to the north-west of St Neots.

The scheme is aiming to export up to 400MW of renewable energy to power approximately 108,000 households - more than the total number in Bedford. The scheme qualifies as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) due to its exceeding 50MW of energy generation, necessitating RNA Energy to apply for a Development Consent Order (DCO) from the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.

RNA Energy will be undertaking an initial consultation on the scheme from Tuesday 17th October to Tuesday 21st November 2023. We want to hear your views to help shape our scheme.

### Share your views:







We want to hear from you and develop plans which have been shaped by the feedback received from the local community. The public consultation on our plans will run for five weeks from Tuesday 17th October to Tuesday 21st November 2023.



EAST PARK ENERGY RNA ENERGY

# The Scheme:

East Park Energy will be designed sensitively, taking account of the characteristics of the local landscape of Bedford and Huntingdonshire whilst making a significant contribution to tackling the energy crisis and fighting the global climate emergency.

# The plans for East Park Energy will:



Boost the local economy through increased employment opportunities arising from both the construction and operation of the scheme.



Deliver a significant biodiversity net gain for the local area, going well beyond minimum Government requirements.



Deliver the East Park Legacy Fund which will help support the community transition to Net Zero.



More than double the existing solar energy generation in Bedford Borough and Huntingdonshire District.



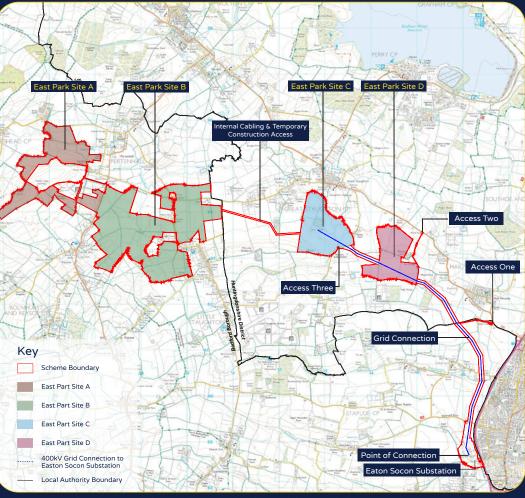
Boost the UK's renewable energy supply and contribute towards the transition to Net Zero.



Provide a stable, secure, and low-cost energy supply which will bring numerous benefits for the wider UK economy.



Export up to 400MW of low carbon electricity to the National Grid, at Eaton Socon Substation, providing enough renewable energy to supply approx. 108,000 homes — surpassing the total number in Bedford.



To view the masterplan at a larger scale, please visit our website: eastparkenergy.co.uk



Scan QR code to visit our website

# We want to know what you think:

We want to hear your views on our plans for East Park Energy to ensure that it delivers on what Bedford and Huntingdonshire wants. All feedback will be reviewed in detail and will help shape the scheme. This is the start of an in-depth consultation exercise where the local community will have multiple opportunities to comment and provide your views.

Visit our website for further information on the plans:

www.eastparkenergy.co.uk

APPENDIX 1-6 CONSULTATION REPORT APPENDIX 1-6: NON-STATUTORY CONSULTATION PRESS RELEASE [EN010141/DR/5.2]

#### EMB Tuesday 17th October

# East Park Energy: RNA Energy Unveils Plans for a New Solar Farm & Battery Storage Scheme to Tackle Climate Change Head on

RNA Energy, an expert in solar power and battery energy storage, is bringing forward plans for East Park Energy; a new solar farm and battery storage scheme on land north-west of St Neots, straddling the administrative boundary of Bedford and Huntingdonshire. An initial consultation on the scheme will run for five weeks from, Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October to Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023.

The scheme aims to export 400MW of renewable energy generation to the National Grid, ensuring a sustainable energy source for approximately 108,000 households—more than the total number in Bedford. Notably, the scheme is expected to more than double the current renewable energy output of Huntingdonshire District and Bedford Borough.

The plans also include a battery energy storage facility that will be used to store excess power that is generated by the solar array to make power available to the grid during times of peak demand. By ensuring a steady and reliable energy supply, East Park Energy will contribute to the stability of the National Grid's operations.

As the scheme will exceed 50MW of energy generation, this makes it a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and RNA Energy will be required to submit an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.

In the first instance, RNA Energy will be undertaking an initial consultation on the scheme to understand public opinion and to shape the final plans before delivering a statutory consultation in 2024.

Beyond its energy benefits, East Park Energy will include substantial hedgerow, tree planting, and wild grassland areas around the perimeter of each field. This will provide a boost to local pollinator, bird and small mammal (mice, voles, hedgehog, bat) species populations due to the increased habitat connectivity and additional food sources. RNA Energy has an ambition to deliver a significant biodiversity net gain for the local area, going well beyond minimum Government requirements.

As part of the plans, RNA Energy has also committed to a Community Benefit Fund (the East Park Legacy Fund) which will support the community transition to Net Zero, likely in the form of grants that will be made available to community groups and facilities, public services, and local homeowners.

A spokesperson for RNA Energy said:

"We are delighted to share our initial plans for East Park Energy. The scheme will provide clean renewable energy and will assist with the UK's transition to net zero.

"During a time when people are struggling to pay their energy bills, it is essential that we find cheap, green alternatives to the fossil fuel markets which are responsible for surging energy prices.

"We are committed to engaging with the local community to better develop the scheme. We are proud of our plans, and we look forward to hearing what those in the area think of our ideas."

Members of the public can find out more about East Park Energy and share their views by visiting the website <a href="https://eastparkenergy.co.uk/">https://eastparkenergy.co.uk/</a>. Furthermore, local residents can get in touch via email to <a href="mailto-eastparkenergy@havingyoursay.co.uk">eastparkenergy@havingyoursay.co.uk</a> or by calling the Community Information Line via 0333 358 0502 (Monday to Friday – 9am to 5:30pm).

#### **ENDS**

#### **Notes to Editors**

#### About RNA Energy

RNA Energy is dedicated to advancing the development and construction of a diverse portfolio of solar and storage schemes, aimed at providing the UK with affordable, clean, and reliable energy solutions.

The RNA Energy team is renowned for its extensive expertise and unwavering commitment to constructing the clean energy infrastructure required for a net-zero emissions future.

RNA Energy is actively involved in the cultivation of a subsidy-free solar scheme portfolio across the UK. Our site selection process is thorough, taking into account a variety of factors, including the potential environmental benefits and technical feasibility of each location. We prioritise the integration of battery energy storage systems whenever possible to ensure the seamless delivery of energy to the grid during periods of peak demand. This strategic approach prevents the inundation of the grid with solar energy during low-demand periods and minimises the limitation of clean energy.

With our well-established track record as project developers, we specialise in fostering collaborative relationships with landowners and local stakeholders. This collaborative approach enables us to design and deliver schemes that are mutually beneficial for all parties involved.

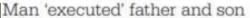


# APPENDIX 1-7 CONSULTATION REPORT APPENDIX 1-7: NON-STATUTORY CONSULTATION PRESS NOTICE [EN010141/DR/5.2]





# Life in jail for double murder



to man who shat doed his aughtor's on partner and her quartner's father has been eteroed to life in prison. Stephen Akkerton, left, has so told he will serve a mirroum of 20 years for the sarders of Josh Dumnors, 32 of his following Comp. 17 will all his follow Comp. 17 will navlers of Josh Dunmors, 32, ad his father Gary, 57, surfer

The 67-year-old killed both men in their hoten in Cambridgeshian over a family must care insolving his grandon Judge Mark Biolop described the mustlers as an 'conscition' when westercing Aklerton at

two innocent men."

Alderton had previously admitted to the March 25 marden.

Full story, pages 2-5



**Parking** profits revealed









or email: ec.publicnotices@localiq.co.uk

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# GOODS Vehicle Licensing

#### Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

#### CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCALIO

#### OTHER

#### Over 300,000 Trustpilot reviews – that's more than double any other travel insurance provider

...just saying

Staysure

0800 069 6167 staysure.co.uk

#### CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

THE HUNTS POST

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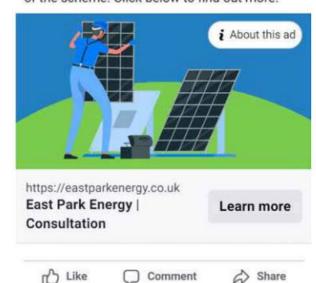




# APPENDIX 1-8 CONSULTATION REPORT APPENDIX 1-8: NON-STATUTORY CONSULTATION SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTS [EN010141/DR/5.2]



Our plans for East Park Energy will contribute to the local economy, providing employment opportunities during construction and operation of the scheme. Click below to find out more.



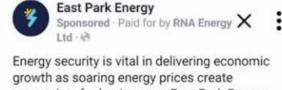


The plans for East Park Energy will deliver lasting benefits to the wider community through the East Park Legacy Fund. This fund will likely provide grants that will be made available to community groups and facilities, public services and local homeowners. To find our more and share your views, click below!





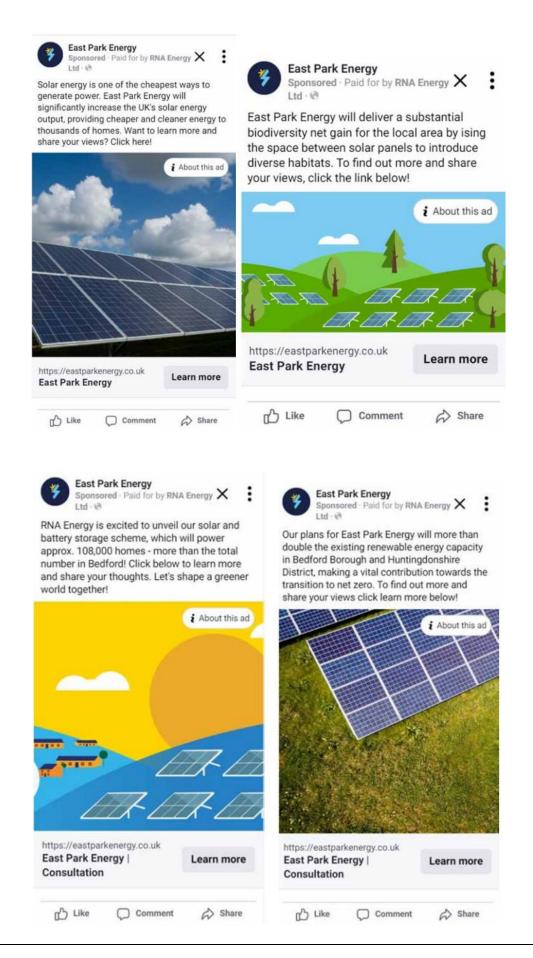
RNA Energy is committee to support your community's transition to net zero. Our plans for a new solar farm and battery storage scheme includes the East Park Legacy Fund which will provide grants to support local net zero initiatives. Click here to learn more and share your views!

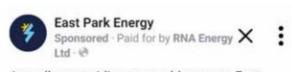


Energy security is vital in delivering economic growth as soaring energy prices create uncertainty for businesses. East Park Energy will provide a safe and secure supply to help stabilise energy prices. Click below to find out more!

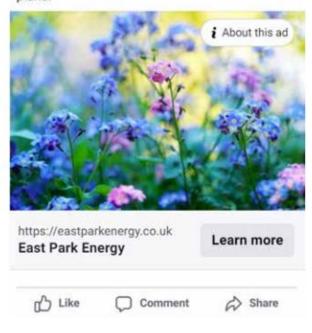








As well as providing renewable energy, East Park Energy will significantly boost biodiversity in the local area. We will deliver substantial hedgerows, tree planting and wildflower areas to provide a diverse range of habitats for wildlife. Click below to have your say on our plans!





Our plans for East Park Energy will significantly expand the UK's domestic energy generation capability by providing clean, renewable energy to thousands of homes, helping to decrease the UK's dependency on imported fossil fuels. To find out more and share your views, click here!



APPENDIX 1-9 CONSULTATION REPORT APPENDIX 1-9: SCREENSHOTS OF PROJECT WEBSITE DURING NON-STATUTORY CONSULTATION [EN010141/DR/5.2]





The Scheme

The Benefits

Community Fund

FAOs

Consultation Process

About Us

Contact Us

# Welcome

Thank you for taking the time to visit our website about our plans for East Park Energy, a proposed solar farm and energy storage scheme.

This website will be the home for all information about the scheme and where you will be able to find the latest information on our proposed application as the plans are progressed.







Site Centext Plan (Click to enlarge)

# The Scheme

East Park Energy is a new solar farm and energy storage scheme that is proposed to the north-west of St Neots, straddling the administrative boundary of Bedford and Huntingdonahire.

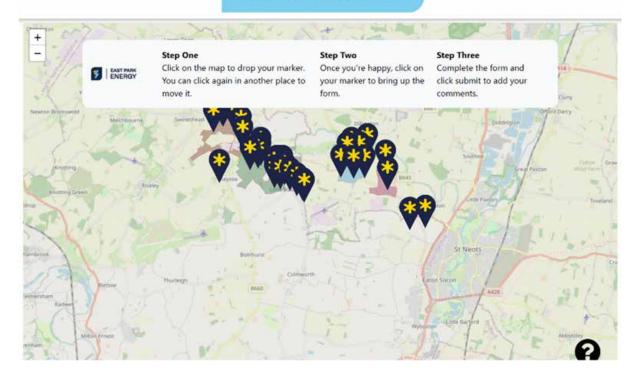
The scheme will connect to the National Grid at the existing substation at Eaton Socon. The solar panels would generate electricity for export to the National Grid, whilst the inclusion of battery storage allows for more efficient use of the solar panels and means electricity can be stored at times of low demand and released back when it is most needed. It also helps to provide grid stability services to National Grid when the solar farm is not operating, such as at night. Our plans will also encompass a suite of environmental mitigation and blodiversity enhancement measures to provide a huge boost to local wildlife, with an biodiversity net gain for the local area, going well beyond minimum Government requirements.

Consultation Report
The scheme aims to exposeptember 2025 wer to the National Grid, ensuring a sustainable en Version 01 or approximately 108,000 households — surpassing the total number in Bedford. As the scheme will exceed 50MW of energy generation, it makes it a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and RNA Energy will be required to submit an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.

East Park Energy is not connected with any solar farms that already exist or are proposed within the area.

# Masterplan

Click here for a PDF version of our masterplan









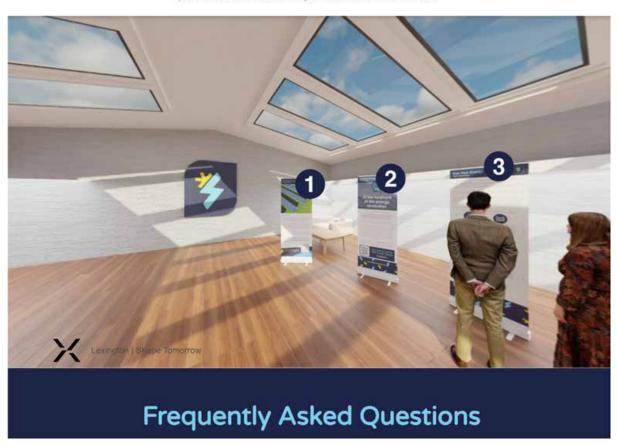




RNA Energy is fully committed to supporting Net Zero initiatives locally, and through our East Park Legacy Fund we will support the community transition to Net Zero, likely in the form of grants that will be made available to community groups and facilities, public services, and local homeowners. The delivery of the East Park Legacy Fund is something we will discuss with the local communities to understand how it can best support Net Zero initiatives at a local level, but at this stage we would like to discuss the current options to understand your thoughts and priorities.

# Virtual Exhibition

Welcome to our virtual exhibition! Here you can have a look through our information banners to find out more about our plans. Click on the numbers to open the boards and find out more.



# Why is the energy park needed?

The UK Government is proposing a very significant change in the way the UK meets its energy needs. In 2019, the Government committed the country to the achievement of 'net zero' carbon emissions by 2050 in order to help mitigate the worst effects of climate change.

Following this commitment, the Government published its 'Net Zero Strategy' in October 2021 which sets out how this can be achieved. A critical element of the strategy is a move away from traditional energy generation (such as fossil fuel power stations) to cheap, clean, and renewable sources of electricity in the UK. This includes increased amounts of solar energy and energy storage.

Aside from its contribution to our net-zero target, solar and energy storage technologies can play a vital role in achieving energy security. The UK Government is committed to the delivery of Net Zero. 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 and, as such, a step-change is required in the delivery of solar energy across the UK to achieve the 70 GW target.

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, providing enough renewable energy to supply approximately 108,000 homes — surpassing the total number in Bedford.

What is an NSID?

## What is an NSIP?

Due to the capacity of the solar and energy storage park exceeding 50MW, the scheme is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP).

The development consenting regime for NSIPs comes under the Planning Act 2008 and the application process is known as the Development Consent Order (DCO) process. DCO applications in the case of energy related development are made directly to the Secretary of State for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ). DCO applications are not determined by the local authority, although local authorities are involved throughout and maintain an important role during the DCO application process. The local authority is the responsible planning authority, following the grant of a DCO.

## What is the NSIP process?

#### Non-statutory consultation

RNA Energy is undertaking a non-statutory consultation. This is the beginning of the consultation process where the initial plans are shared with the public and stakeholders so early feedback can be received. Following the non-statutory/initial consultation, RNA Energy will analyse the feedback and make changes to the plans where necessary.

#### Statutory consultation

During the pre-application phase, RNA Energy will continue to develop the proposals in consultation with stakeholders and undertake environmental surveys and assessment to reduce the potential impacts of the scheme. A formal, statutory pre-application consultation will then be undertaken in 2024, with the aim of submitting the DCO application in winter 2024/25.

#### Acceptance

Once the DCO application is submitted and subject to change from the statutory consultation, the Planning Inspectorate, on behalf of the Secretary of State for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), will decide whether the application meets the standards required to be accepted for examination.

#### Pre-examination

When the application is accepted for examination, in winter 2024/25, members of the public can register with the Planning Inspectorate to become an Interested Party. An Examining Authority (made up of independent inspectors from the Planning Inspectorate) is also appointed at the pre-examination stage, and all Interested Parties will be invited to attend a Preliminary Meeting, run and chaired by the Examining Authority. The preliminary environmental information will also be published during this period.

#### Examination

The Examining Authority will then carry out an examination and take into account the application and analyse the feedback receive on the plans. Examinations are a public process and primarily a written aspect, where members of the community can get involved. They can last for up to six months, but at the start of this stage the Examining Authority will set deadlines for the submission of written information. Hearings will also take place during the examination period to discuss specific aspects of the application.

#### Recommendation and Decision

Following the examination period, the Examining Authority will prepare a report on the application to the Secretary of State for DESNZ, which includes a recommendation. The Secretary of State for DESNZ will then make a decision on whether to grant or refuse the development consent.

#### Post Decision

After the decision has been made by the Secretary of State for DESNZ, there is a six-week period in which the decision can be challenged in the High Court, known as a judicial review.

#### Why has this site been chosen?

## Why has this site been chosen?

A comprehensive site selection process was undertaken to identify the most suitable land for East Park Energy. This process considered all land within 15km of the grid connection point at Eaton Socon Substation in terms of agricultural land classification, environmental constraints (including flood risk, landscape, ecology and heritage considerations), planning constraints (including local allocations, existing planning applications and existing NSIPs), land availability, site size, topography and other technical constraints (including location of urban areas, main rivers and major highway infrastructure).

#### What are the benefits?

### What are the benefits?

#### 1) Helping achieve Net Zero

The UK Government is committed to the delivery of Net Zero. 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 and, as such, a step-change is required in the delivery of solar energy across the UK to achieve the 70 GW target. The East Park Energy development would play a vital role in the achievement of the Government's target.

#### 2) A low-cost renewable energy source

Solar energy is one of the cheapest forms of electricity generation. Therefore, delivering more solar energy schemes will help bring down energy prices at a time when consumer costs are soaring. East Park Energy will significantly expand the UK's domestic energy generation capability, contributing towards our energy security needs and helping to deliver stable energy prices that are independent of international fossil fuel markets.

#### 3) Increasing biodiversity and environmental net gain

The land identified for the site is currently used for arable crops. As such, it is currently a suboptimal location for habitats and local wildlife. East Park Energy will not only make a significant contribution to fighting the global climate emergency, but our aspiration is also to deliver a significant biodiversity net gain for the local area, going well beyond minimum Government requirements, by enhancing the local environment and providing diverse new habitats that will create new, resilient ecological networks.

#### 4) Sustainable employment and economic growth

The construction of the site by East Park Energy will contribute to the local economy through the creation of job opportunities. This influx of construction jobs not only benefits the immediate community but also provides a vital economic boost.

East Park Energy is committed to maintaining a dedicated workforce comprising a minimum of 10 to 16 full-time employees. In alignment with our dedication to community engagement and sustainable growth, RNA Energy will actively collaborate with local educational institutions and government initiatives to facilitate apprenticeships and provide training opportunities for residents in the immediate vicinity. This approach ensures that our operations not only contribute to regional employment but also foster skill development and career prospects within the local community.

During the operational phase the impact on the local road network would be minimal. A scheme of this scale would typically have a small operational workforce of a minimum of 10-16 full time employees on rotation in a shift pattern. As such, only a small number of post-construction vehicle movements would be generated, and this would mainly consist of maintenance vehicles occasionally visiting the site.

East Park Energy's commitment to delivering a dependable, cost-effective energy supply to the UK holds the potential to reduce energy expenses for households and businesses nationwide, thereby contributing to broader economic stability and growth.

#### 5) Community benefits from the East Park Legacy Fund

RNA Energy 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.

RNA will hold discussions with the local communities to understand how the fund can be best utilised to support Net Zero initiatives in the local area.

What will the environmental impact of the scheme be?

# What will the environmental impact of the scheme be?

RNA Energy will carry out a detailed Environment Impact Assessment (EIA), which will assess the environmental impact of the East Park Energy development. The scope of the EIA will be agreed with the Planning Inspectorate in advance and the reporting will be provided in an Environmental Statement (ES) which will be submitted with the Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

A draft version of the ES (the Preliminary Environmental Information Report – PEIR), will be made available for review as part of the statutory consultation in 2024, prior to submission of the DCO application.

How will the scheme increase biodiversity & ecology in the area?

# How will the scheme increase biodiversity & ecology in the area?

RNA Energy is dedicated to 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 us to develop strategies that not only preserve but enhance biodiversity. These efforts are essential to ensuring that our schemes have a minimal ecological footprint and contribute positively to the surrounding environment.

Our ambition at RNA Energy 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, we aim not only to meet but to exceed our ecological responsibilities, leaving a lasting legacy of environmental enrichment for generations to come.

RNA Energy is also working with Rothamsted Research to understand how solar farms can be designed for maximum land use gain across various metrics including CO2 sequestration, soil health, biodiversity, crop/livestock yield, and solar yield. RNA Energy is therefore looking to include new initiatives supported by the research into the proposals for East Park Energy.

# Will there be any noise pollution?

RNA Energy places a high priority on limiting noise impacts on the local community and other noise-sensitive areas when designing our solar farms and battery storage schemes. In our commitment to responsible project development, we are acutely aware that solar panels themselves operate silently; however, the inverters and transformers associated with them can emit a low hum during their operation. To address this, we are taking proactive steps.

Firstly, we have initiated baseline noise monitoring in the surrounding area to establish a comprehensive understanding of the background noise levels. Using this data, we are conducting detailed noise modelling to predict the potential noise generated by East Park Energy's operations. This assessment allows us to determine whether any significant noise impacts might arise and informs our design process accordingly, to avoid impacts to people's property.

We are 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.

- Will the scheme impact the air quality in the area?

# Will the scheme impact the air quality in the area?

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.

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.

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.

How will the plans mitigate flooding?

# How will the plans mitigate flooding?

All built development, including solar panels, transformers and the battery storage facility, is proposed to be located on land wholly within Flood Zone 1 which is defined by the Environment Agency as having the lowest risk of flooding.

A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Strategy will be prepared and included within the DCO application, which will assess any potential impacts which could occur as a result of the development and propose mitigation to reduce any potential impacts. The Drainage Strategy would include SuDS features suitable for the control of surface water run-off at the site.

- Are solar panels sustainable?

## Are solar panels sustainable?

After between 1 - 4 years of operating the solar panels will have 'paid off' the carbon used in their production. In terms of recycling, it is now possible to recycle around 99% of the component parts of each solar panel and there are a growing number of facilities specialising in solar panel recycling.

Have you assessed the scheme's impact of archaeology and local heritage?

# Have you assessed the scheme's impact of archaeology and local heritage?

Initial assessments will be carried out to identify any known archaeological and cultural heritage features on and around the proposed site.

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.

The scope of any further work will be discussed and agreed with the archaeological advisors to Bedford Borough Council and Cambridgeshire County Council.

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.

# Will the scheme impact food production?

The independent National Food Strategy Review shows that solar farms do not in any way present a risk to the UK's food security. Solar farms in the UK currently account for just 0.08% of total land use and this is expected to rise to just 0.5% by 2050 – less than the amount currently used for golf courses.

However, RNA has carefully selected the land which will be used for East Park Energy to ensure it is of the lowest agricultural grade where possible, to ensure any potential impact on local food production is minimal. RNA Energy is working in partnership with Rothamsted Research, and the scheme will explore ways that solar projects can maximise local biodiversity improvements, carbon sequestration, soil health, and agricultural yields.

Additionally, any areas of the site that are currently used for agricultural purposes would only be temporarily transitioned to solar farm development. This would be reversible after the 40 year project life. Moreover, solar panels would only prevent the farming of arable crops, they would not prevent alternative agricultural use, including sheep grazing.

Solar energy generation will further allow farmers to diversify their income and allow British farmers to continue farming.

Will the scheme impact my view?

# Will the scheme impact my view?

Solar farms are of a low height, such that they are often not as widely visible as typical residential or employment land uses, or other forms of renewable energy such as wind turbines.

The scheme will affect views at a local level from around the site boundary, and from some nearby properties, footpaths and roads. In the long-term, the impact on some of these views will reduce as our proposed hedgerow and woodland belt improvements establish and reach a height where they 'screen' the proposed development.

Photo-realistic visualisations of the scheme will be prepared to help give an understanding of the likely appearance of the solar farm from key viewpoints in the local area. These visualisations will be prepared in advance of the statutory consultation events in 2024.

How will the scheme be accessed and will there be more traffic?

# How will the scheme be accessed and will there be more traffic?

The greatest potential for highways impacts to occur in connection with a solar development is during the construction phase.

RNA Energy has given consideration to the potential highways effects of the East Park Energy scheme and has devised a proposed access strategy that aims to limit the impact of construction traffic on the local highway network. It is proposed that construction vehicles would access the site from the A1 via the B645. Vehicles would then take the first left onto a private road which provides access to an adjacent existing solar farm, before heading north into East Park Energy site through privately owned land.

This strategy would effectively eliminate the need for vehicles to run through neighbouring villages, including Hail Weston, Staunton Highway, Great Staughton, Little Staughton, Keysoe, Swineshead and Riseley.

During the operational phase, impacts on the road would be minimal. A scheme of this scale would typically have a small operational workforce of a minimum of 10-16 full time employees. As such, only a small number of post-construction vehicle movements would be generated, and this would mainly consist of maintenance vehicles occasionally visiting the site.

Will the scheme impact the Public Rights of Way that run through the site?

# Will the scheme impact the Public Rights of Way that run through the site?

The current scheme are not expected to result in the loss of any public right of way, and the current proposals seek to ensure that such routes would be maintained on their current alignment following construction of the East Park Energy development, with suitable buffers between footpaths and the solar development areas.

The only potential effects on the access to existing rights of way would be during the construction phase where it is necessary for them to be crossed by cable corridors. However, such effects would be temporary and could be adequately mitigated through careful management of the construction process.

# Why are you holding consultation events in only three villages near the site?

As this is an initial non-statutory consultation, we are holding three exhibition events within the consultation area. These three venues were selected because they:

- 1. Are located in villages which may be impacted by the proposals.
- 2. Have all the necessary facilities required to host an exhibition event.
- Are spread evenly across the consultation area, ensuring people who may be impacted by the scheme can access an event.

However, we appreciate that some people may not be able to attend these events given the location and timings, as such we have a virtual exhibition room which can be accessed via our website alongside an online feedback form for local residents to share their views on the scheme. The materials in the virtual exhibition are the same as the ones we display during our physical exhibition events. We also have a community information line available for people wishing to speak to a member of the team.

We are striving to ensure the local community remain informed and included as we develop the plans for East Park Energy further. As part of this non-statutory consultation, we welcome feedback on how we are consulting so that we can make changes ahead of the statutory consultation which will likely take place in 2024.

# Consultation Process

RNA Energy is delighted to launch this initial consultation on the plans for East Park Energy. This is an opportunity for us to share our plans and hear your feedback on our initial plans.

The initial consultation will run for five weeks, from Tuesday 17th October to Tuesday 21th November 2023.

Please ensure your feedback is completed by Tuesday 21st November 2023 to be included as part of this consultation.

Your views are important to us and we want to create an energy park that the whole community can benefit from so please take the opportunity to have your say. Get in touch and tell us what you think by:

- Speaking with a member of the team by calling: 0333 358 0502 (Monday Friday 9.00am 5.00pm).
- Emailing us with your comments, questions or feedback at: eastparkenergy@havingyoursay.co.uk

Attending our public exhibitions on:

- Tuesday 24th October at Keysoe Village Hall from 2pm-7pm Monday 30th October at Hall Weston Village Hall from 2pm-6pm Monday 6th November at Little Staughton Village Hall from 2pm-7pm
- Filling in the below feedback form.

Please read the information in our virtual exhibition before answering the following questions.

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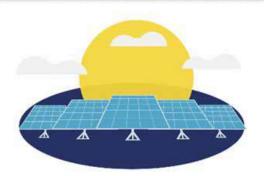
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#### Get In Touch

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you would like to find out more information about East Park Energy. You can contact us and find out more by using the details below.

- Call us on the community information line on 0333 358 0502 (Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 5.30pm)
- Email us at: eastparkenergy@havingyoursay.co.uk
- Write to us at: RNA Energy, East Park Energy; c/o Lexington, Third Floor Queens House, Queen Street, Manchester, M2 5HT

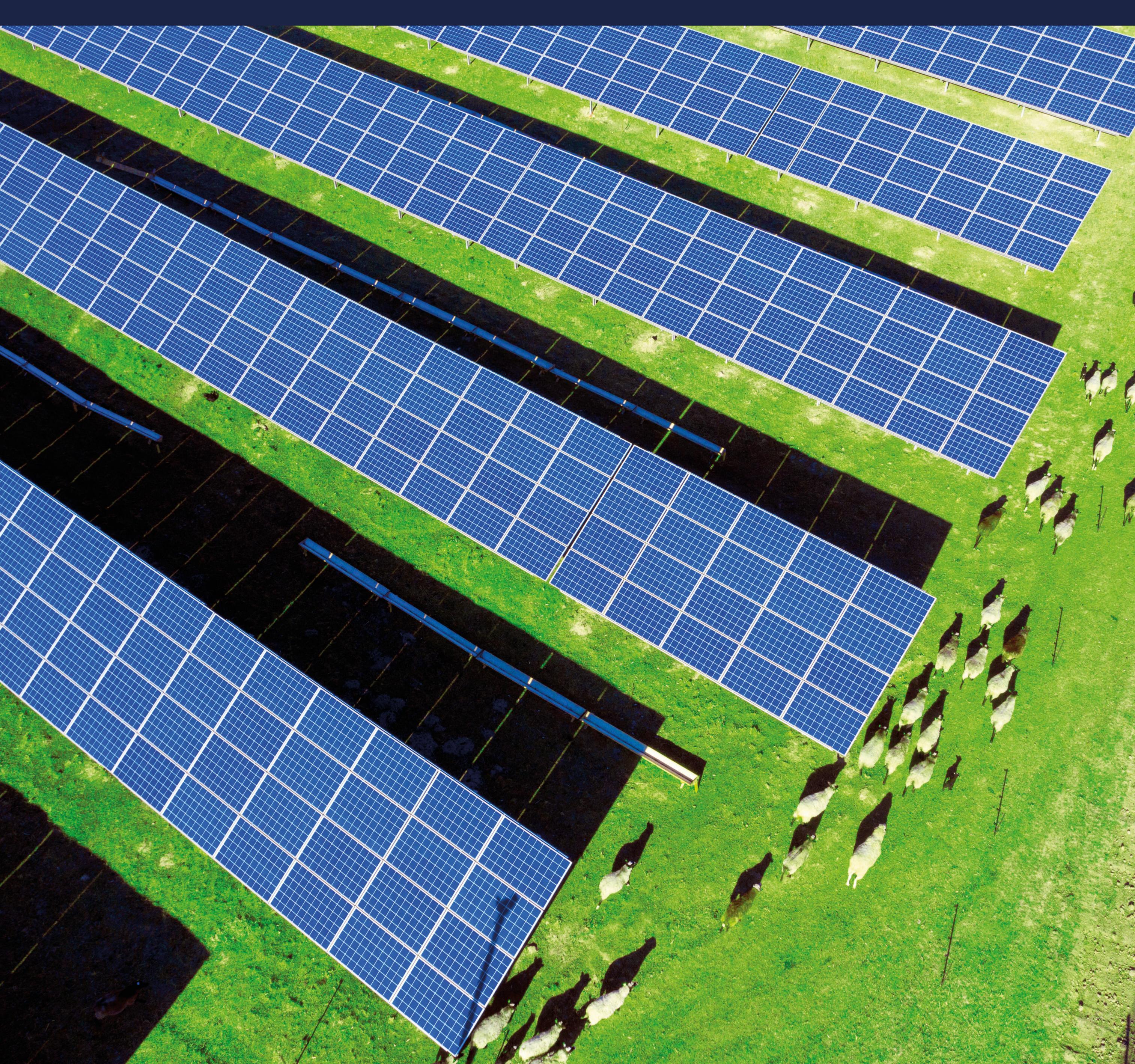




#### APPENDIX 1-10 CONSULTATION REPORT APPENDIX 1-10: NON-STATUTORY CONSULTATION EXHIBITION BANNERS [EN010141/DR/5.2]

Public Consultation





# Welcome

Thank you for taking the time to visit our exhibition. We are excited about our plans for East Park Energy (EPE), a new solar farm and battery storage scheme to the north-west of St Neots. Please navigate through the exhibition boards to learn more about our plans and how to provide feedback during this initial consultation.

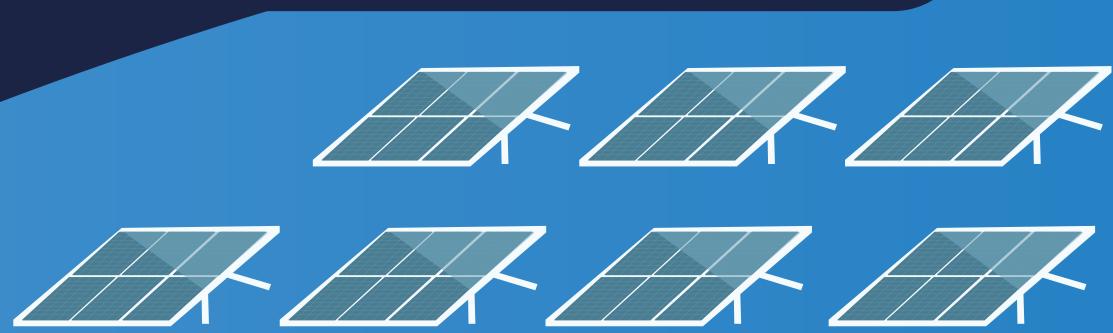
The scheme aims to export up to 400MW of renewable energy generation to the National Grid, ensuring a sustainable energy source for approximately 108,000 households — more than the total number in Bedford. As the scheme will exceed 50MW of energy generation, it is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). Therefore, RNA Energy will be required to submit an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.

RNA Energy is undertaking an initial consultation on the proposals from Tuesday 17th October to Tuesday 21st November 2023, with the aim of undertaking a statutory consultation in 2024 and submitting an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) in winter 2024/25.

You can submit your comments by completing our feedback form or using one of the methods listed on the contact us section on the last board of this exhibition room. Please ensure your comments are submitted by Tuesday 21st November to ensure that these can be taken into consideration as part of the initial consultation.

Visit our consultation website: www.eastparkenergy.co.uk





Public Consultation





# About RNA Energy

RNA Energy is dedicated to advancing the development and construction of a diverse portfolio of renewable energy schemes, aimed at providing the UK with affordable, clean, and reliable energy solutions.

The RNA Energy team is renowned for its extensive expertise and unwavering commitment to building the clean energy infrastructure required for a net zero emissions future.

The team has developed an extensive portfolio of subsidy free solar schemes across the UK. Our site selection process is thorough, taking into account a variety of factors, including the potential environmental impacts, technical feasibility, and ecological enhancements possible at each location. We prioritise the integration of battery energy storage systems whenever possible to ensure the seamless delivery of energy to the grid during periods of peak demand. This strategic approach prevents the inundation of the grid with solar energy during low-demand periods and maximises the use of clean energy.

With our well-established track record as project developers, we specialise in fostering collaborative relationships with landowners and local stakeholders. This approach enables us to design and deliver schemes that are mutually beneficial for all parties involved.



Scan here to visit the RNA Energy website

RNA ENERGY



Public Consultation



# Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project

#### What is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project?

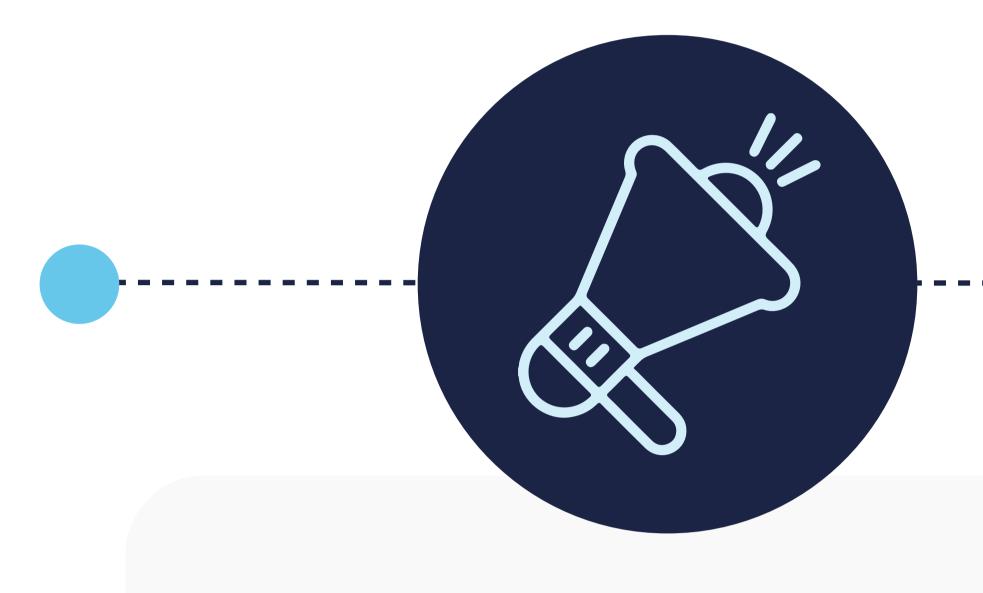
Due to the capacity of the solar and energy storage scheme exceeding 50MW, the scheme is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP).

The development consenting regime for NSIPs comes under the Planning Act 2008 and the application process is known as the Development Consent Order (DCO) process.

DCO applications in the case of energy related development are made directly to the Secretary of State for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ). DCO applications are not determined by the local authority, although local authorities are involved throughout and maintain an important role during the DCO application process. The local authority is the responsible planning authority, following the grant of a DCO.

# What is the NSIP process?

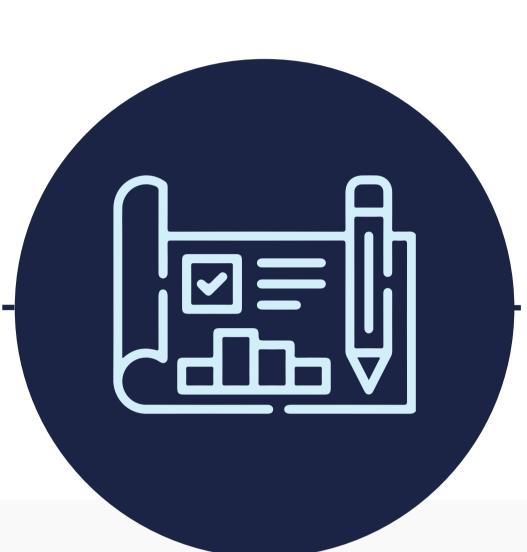
For a more detailed version of the NSIP process, please visit our website.



#### Non-statutory consultation

Est: Oct-Nov 2023

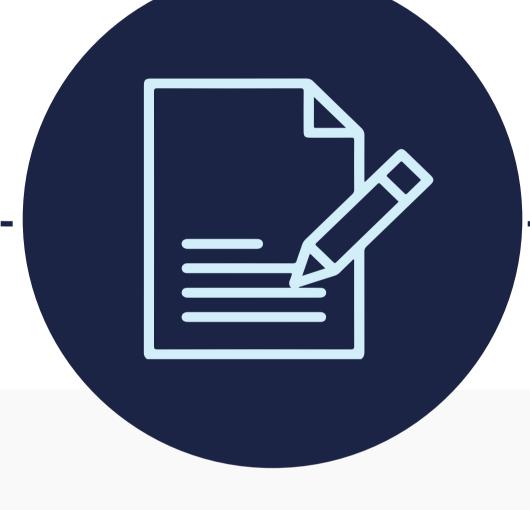
Initial plans are shared with the public and stakeholders so early feedback can be received.



#### Statutory consultation

Est: 2024

Plans will be updated following step one and RNA Energy will launch a statutory consultation.



#### Pre-examination

Est: 2025

Once accepted, the public can register as an Interested Party. Members of the Planning Inspectorate are then appointed.



#### Acceptance

Est: Winter 2024/25

RNA will submit an application for a Development Consent Order to the Secretary of State.



#### Examination

Est: 2025

The Planning Inspectorate will examine the application and feedback received.



#### Recommendation

Est: Late 2025/Early 2026

The Planning Inspectorate will submit a recommendation to the Secretary of State on whether to grant approval.



#### Post Decision

Est: 2026

After the decision has been made by the Secretary of State, there is a six-week period in which the decision can be challenged in the High Court, known as a judicial review.



Public Consultation



## The Site

The Site encompasses the areas required for solar development, battery storage, all associated infrastructure, landscaping and ecological mitigation (or 'green infrastructure'), access tracks, cabling, and the grid connection to the Eaton Socon Substation. The site can be broadly broken down into four component areas, but the boundaries of each may be refined as the plans progress:

#### East Park Site A

Covering the land west of the B660 between Pertenhall and Swineshead at the western end of the site. East Park Site A comprises fields located to the north, west and east side of a small hill that lies between Pertenhall and Riseley.

#### East Park Site B

Covering the land between Pertenhall, Keysoe, and Little Staughton. East Park Site B comprises fields located north of an elevated ridgeline which runs between Keysoe and Little Staughton.

#### East Park Site C

Covering the land south of Great Staughton. East Park Site C comprises fields located south of the River Kym, with access possible from Moor Road to its south-eastern boundary.

#### East Park Site D

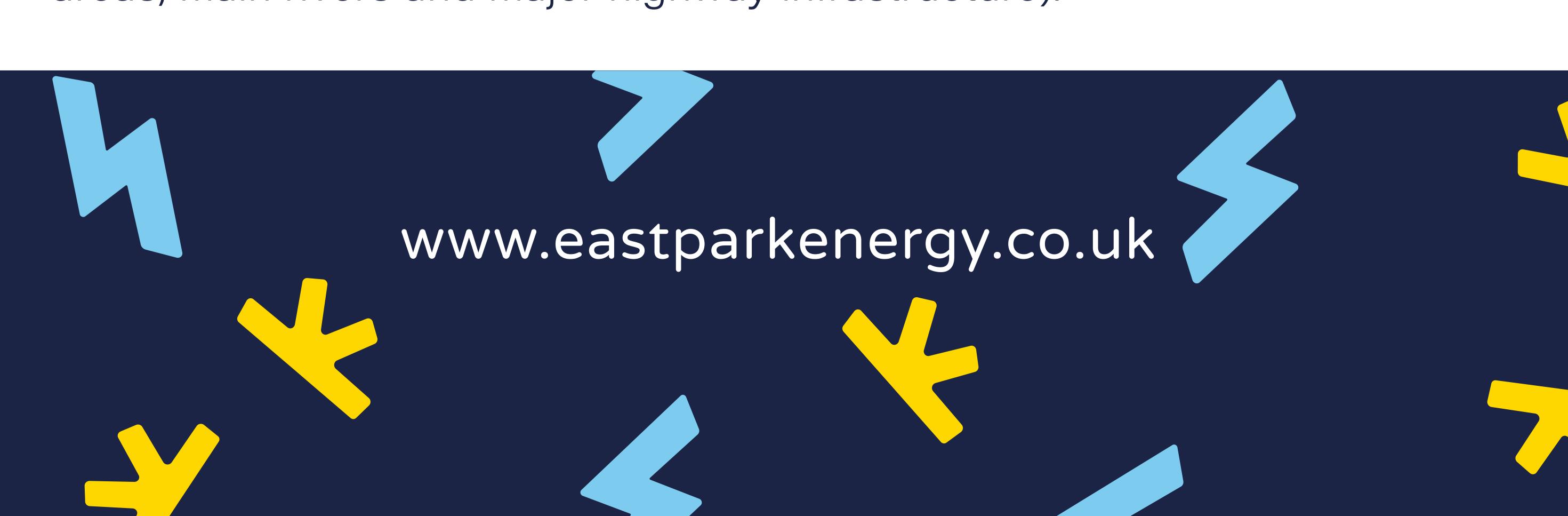
Covering land around Pastures Farm between Great Staughton and Hail Weston. East Park Site D comprises fields with access via existing farm tracks to the B645.



Red line boundary map - The site boundary will likely be refined as the scheme progresses

# Why has this site been chosen?

A comprehensive site selection process was undertaken to identify the most suitable land for the East Park Energy scheme. This process considered all land within 15km of the grid connection point at Eaton Socon Substation in terms of agricultural land classification, environmental constraints (including flood risk, landscape, ecology and heritage considerations), planning constraints (including the Local Plan, existing planning applications and existing NSIPs), land availability, site size, topography and other technical constraints (including the location of urban areas, main rivers and major highway infrastructure).



Public Consultation



# Benefits

East Park Energy will deliver significant benefits both nationally and locally, by helping the UK address its climate change obligations, boosting the local economy and increasing biodiversity.



# Helping to achieve Net Zero

The UK Government has stated 70 GW of solar is needed by 2035 to deliver Net Zero. East Park Energy is crucial to meeting this ambitious Government target.



# Increasing biodiversity and environmental net gain

East Park Energy will deliver a significant biodiversity net gain for the local area, going well beyond minimum Government requirements, by enhancing the local environment and providing diverse new habitats.



# Community benefits from the East Park Legacy Fund

The East Park Legacy Fund 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.



# A low-cost renewable energy source

Solar energy is one of the cheapest forms of electricity generation. East Park Energy will significantly expand the UK's domestic energy generation capability, contributing towards our energy security needs and helping to deliver stable energy prices.



# Employment & Education Opportunities

East Park Energy aims to stimulate the local economy through job creation and educational opportunities, including apprenticeships.



Public Consultation



# Environment



## Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

RNA Energy will carry out a detailed Environment Impact Assessment (EIA), which will assess the environmental impact of East Park Energy scheme. The scope of the EIA will be agreed with the Planning Inspectorate and the report will be provided in an Environmental Statement (ES) which will be submitted with the Development Consent Order (DCO) application.



#### Noise Pollution

RNA Energy places a high priority on limiting noise impacts on the local community and other noise-sensitive areas when designing our solar farms and battery storage schemes. In our commitment to responsible project development, we are acutely aware that solar panels themselves operate silently; however, the inverters and transformers associated with them can emit a low hum during their operation.

Using this data, we are conducting detailed noise modelling to predict the potential noise generated by East Park Energy's operations to ensure we avoid impacts to people's property.

We are 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.



#### Biodiversity & Ecology

Surveys have been undertaken to assess the existing biodiversity on the scheme. Through the creation of diverse new habitats, such as vibrant wildflowers meadows and native hedgerow planting, we aspire to achieve a significant biodiversity net gain that will go well beyond Government requirements.

RNA Energy is also working with Rothamsted Research to understand how solar farms can be designed for significant land use gain across various metrics including CO2 sequestration, soil health, biodiversity, crop/livestock yield, and solar yield. RNA Energy is therefore looking to include new initiatives supported by the research into the proposals for East Park Energy.



Public Consultation



# Environment



### Impact on Air Quality

A detailed construction dust and vehicle emissions assessment will be submitted with the DCO application. This will assess any likely impacts as a result of the development and will set out mitigation measures required to reduce these impacts to acceptable levels

There will be no air quality or dust management issues during the operational phase of the development as the scheme would not generate any aerial emission and there will only be limited vehicle movements for maintenance, landscape management and repair.



### Flood Risk and Drainage

The site is located on land wholly within Flood Zone 1 which is defined by the Environment Agency as having the lowest risk of flooding. However, a comprehensive Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) and Drainage Strategy will be prepared and included within the DCO application. This will assess any potential impacts which could occur as a result of the development and propose mitigation to reduce any potential impacts. The Drainage Strategy would include SuDS features suitable for the control of surface water run-off at the site.



#### Archaeology / Heritage

Initial assessments will be carried out to identify any known archaeological and cultural heritage features on and around the proposed site.

Any direct potential impacts will be informed by non-invasive assessments 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 and excavation.

The results of the geophysical assessment and associated analysis will be presented within the PEIR, while 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.



Public Consultation



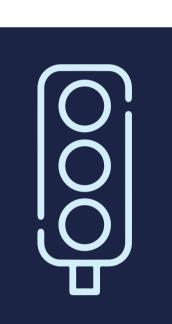
# Environment



#### Agricultural Land

RNA has carefully selected the land which will be used for East Park Energy to ensure it is of the lowest agricultural grade where available. This will ensure the potential impact on local food production is as low as possible. Despite this, RNA Energy's partnership with Rothamsted Research will seek to understand how the scheme can be most beneficial to local crop and livestock yields. This includes using sheep to graze parts of the site and encouraging specific pollinators and pest control species by growing the right mix of wildflowers in the right place. RNA Energy will look to include new initiatives supported by this research into the proposals for East Park Energy.

Additionally, any areas of the site that are currently used for agricultural purposes would only be temporarily transitioned to solar farm development. This would be reversible after the 40 year project life.



#### Access and Traffic

The primary concern for highway impacts in solar development arises during the construction phase. RNA Energy has carefully considered this aspect in planning the East Park Energy scheme. A proposed access strategy involves utilising the A1 and B645, before guiding construction vehicles to the site without traversing through nearby villages such as Hail Weston, Staunton Highway, Great Staughton, and others. This approach aims to minimise disruptions and traffic congestion in the area during the construction period.

Once operational, the workforce will comprise 10-16 full-time employees at the site. Therefore, the impact on the local road network would be minimal.



## Public Rights of Way

The current proposals are not expected to result in the loss of any public right of way. These routes are expected remain on their current alignment, and suitable buffers will be created between footpaths and the solar development areas once construction is complete.

The only potential effects on the access to existing rights of way would be during the construction phase where it is necessary for them to be crossed by cable corridors. However, such effects would be temporary and could be adequately mitigated through careful management of the construction process.



Public Consultation



# Myth Busting



### How reliable is solar energy in the UK?

Solar energy is extremely reliable. The sun provides an abundant and consistent power supply, unlike fossil fuels which are finite and subject to price volatility and geopolitical tensions. Solar panels do not need direct sunlight to operate, and they produce energy all year round which means solar schemes operate well in the UK.

The co-location of a battery storage facility with the proposed solar panels will increase the efficiency of East Park Energy, as the batteries would store any excess energy when production is high and demand is low, and release energy at times when production is low and demand is high. This increases the efficiency of the scheme, minimises losses and ensures a more consistent supply of energy.



## Does land used for solar farms reduce food security?

No. The independent National Food Strategy Review shows that solar farms do not in any way present a risk to the UK's food security. Solar farms provide valuable income for UK farmers and can support them to continue food production on other parts of their land.



### Can you recycle solar panels?

You absolutely can! In fact, up to 99% of materials in a solar panel are made from recyclable materials. Most solar panels are built to last for decades, meaning they do not need to be replaced regularly.



# Does manufacturing solar panels produce more carbon than they save in their lifetime?

Not at all. Research shows a solar panel's carbon payback is 1 - 4 years and that they generate a hundred times more energy than it takes to make them over a 40year warranty period.



#### Is solar expensive?

Solar is one of the cheapest ways to produce energy, meaning our energy bills can drastically reduce by choosing solar.



#### Do solar farms take up a lot of space?

No, they take up very little space. Even under 2050 Net Zero targets, solar farms would occupy less than 0.5% of the UK's land, which is less land than is currently used for golf courses.



#### Is solar popular?

Absolutely! According to government surveys, solar is considered the most popular energy source. In 2021, data showed that 90% of the public supported it, with 81% saying they would not oppose a solar farm being built in their area.



www.eastparkenergy.co.uk

Public Consultation





# Have Your Say

This initial public consultation provides the local community with the opportunity to provide feedback on our plans ahead of the submission of a DCO application. Your views are very important to us and RNA Energy will analyse all the feedback received and make changes to the plans where necessary.

You can submit your comments by completing one of our feedback forms which the team will make available during this exhibition event. Alternatively, you can submit your feedback using the online feedback form which is available on our website at www.eastparkenergy.co.uk, or by using one of the methods listed on the contact us section below.

This consultation will run until Tuesday 21st November 2023. Please ensure all feedback is received by us before this date.

# Contact Us

Should you want any further information or have any questions, you can contact the team using the details below:



You can write to us at: East Park Energy, c/o Lexington, Third Floor Queens House, Queen Street, Manchester, M2 5HT



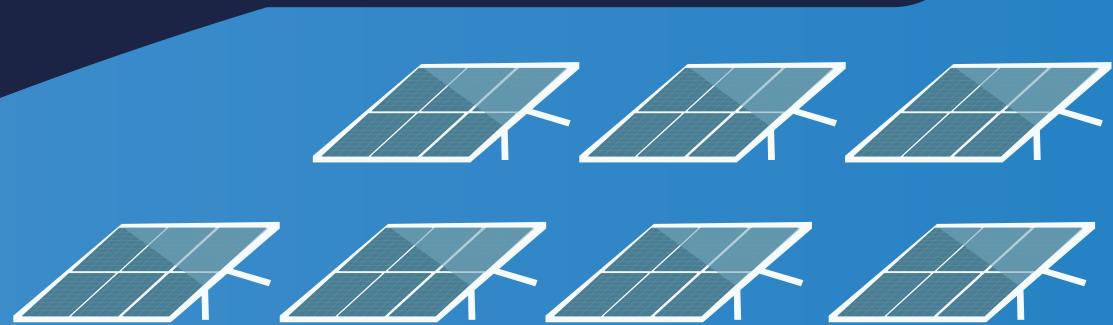
You can call our Community Information Line on 0333 358 0502 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5:30pm)



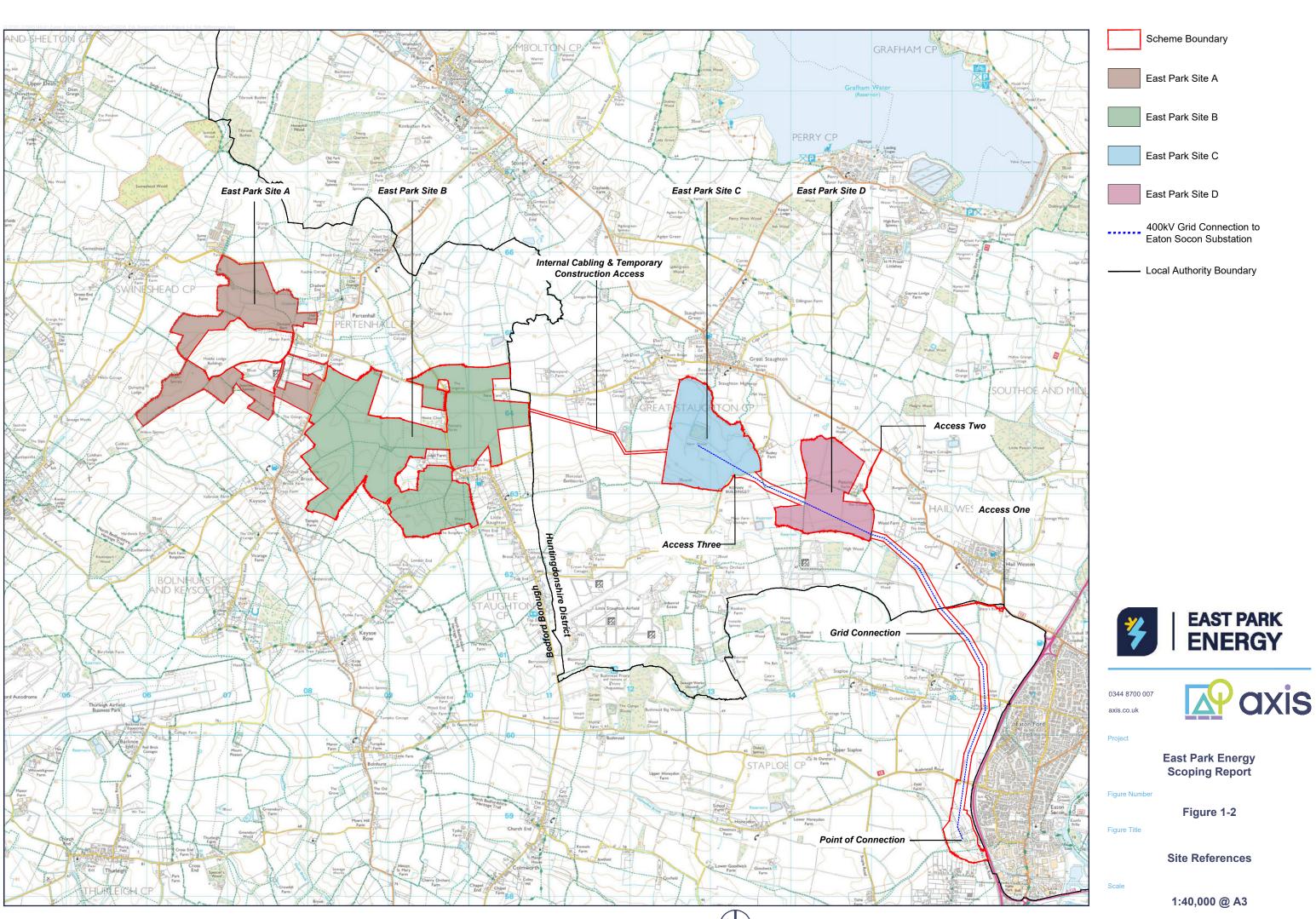
You can email us at eastparkenergy@havingyoursay.co.uk







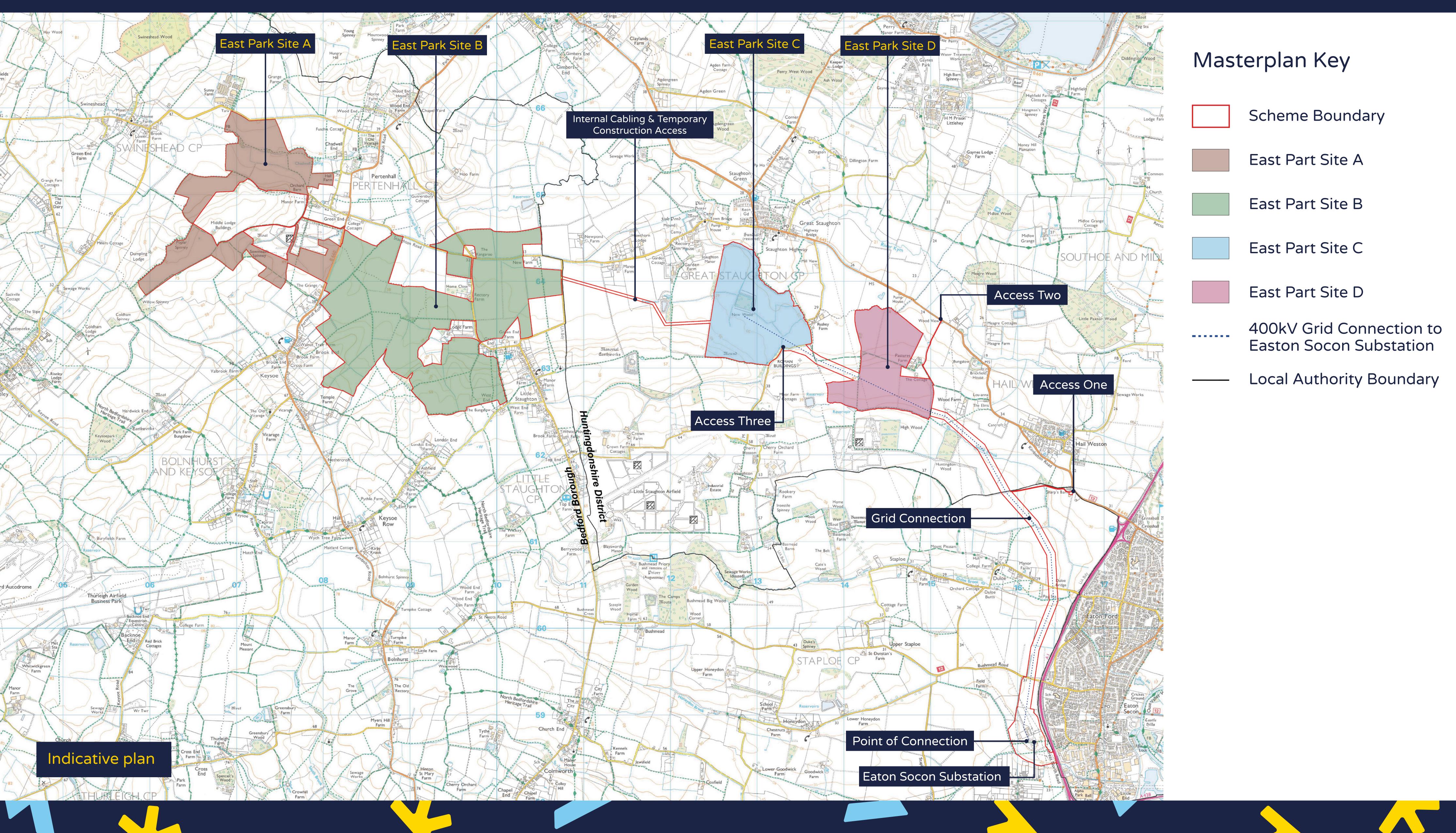
#### APPENDIX 1-11 CONSULTATION REPORT APPENDIX 1-11: NON-STATUTORY CONSULTATION DRAFT MASTERPLAN [EN010141/DR/5.2]



#### APPENDIX 1-12 CONSULTATION REPORT APPENDIX 1-12: NON-STATUTORY CONSULTATION PLANS AND DRAWINGS [EN010141/DR/5.2]

Public Consultation





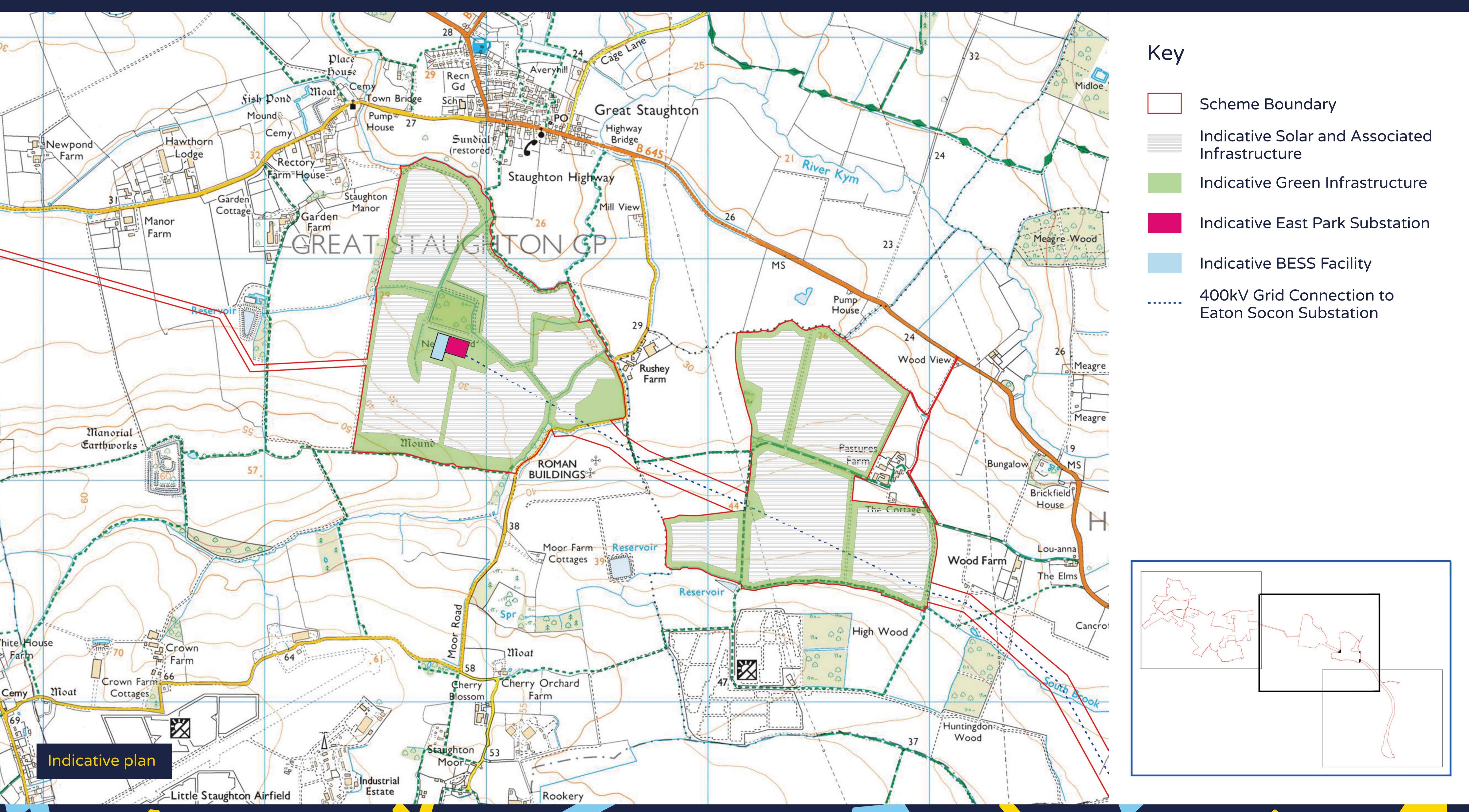
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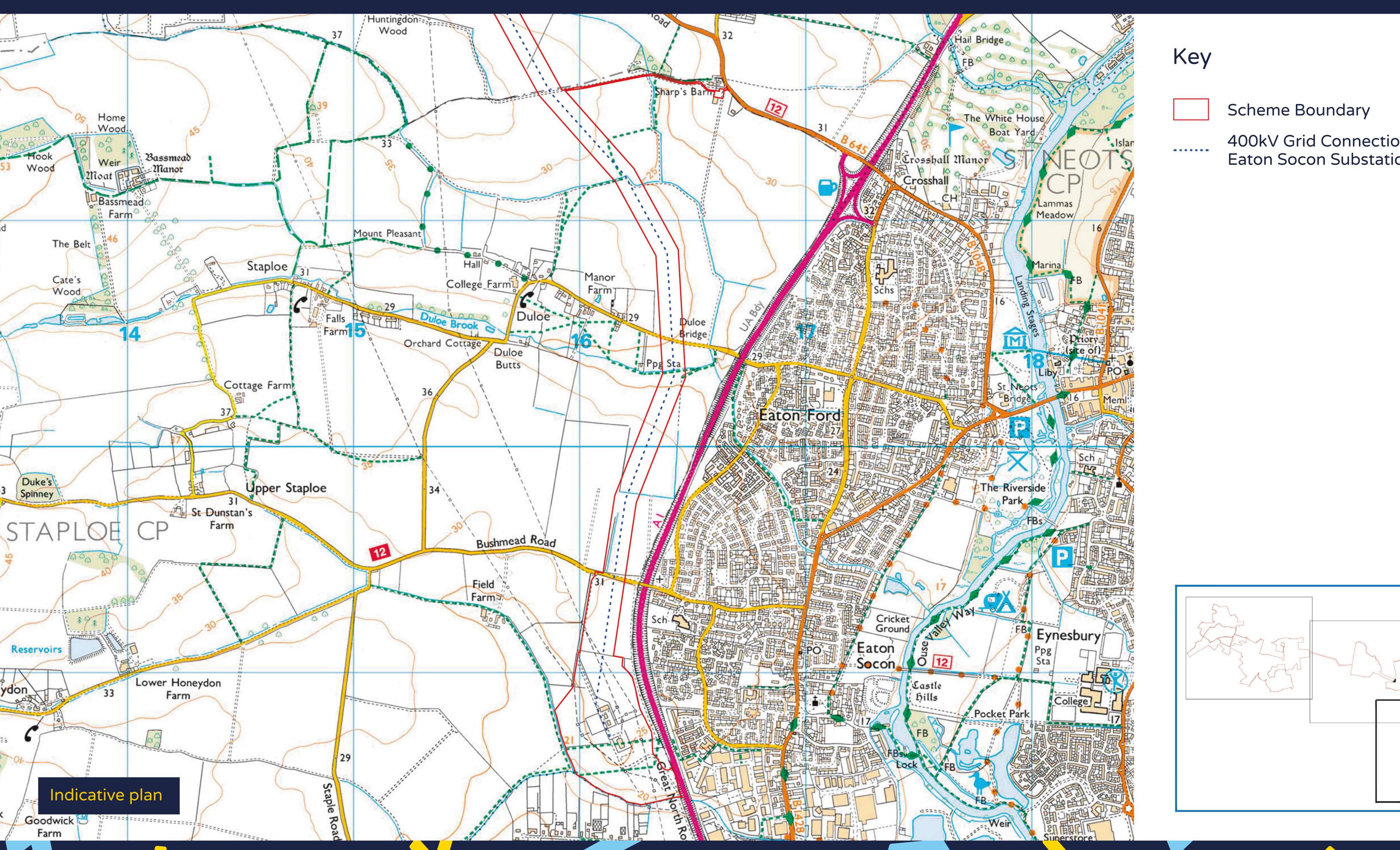
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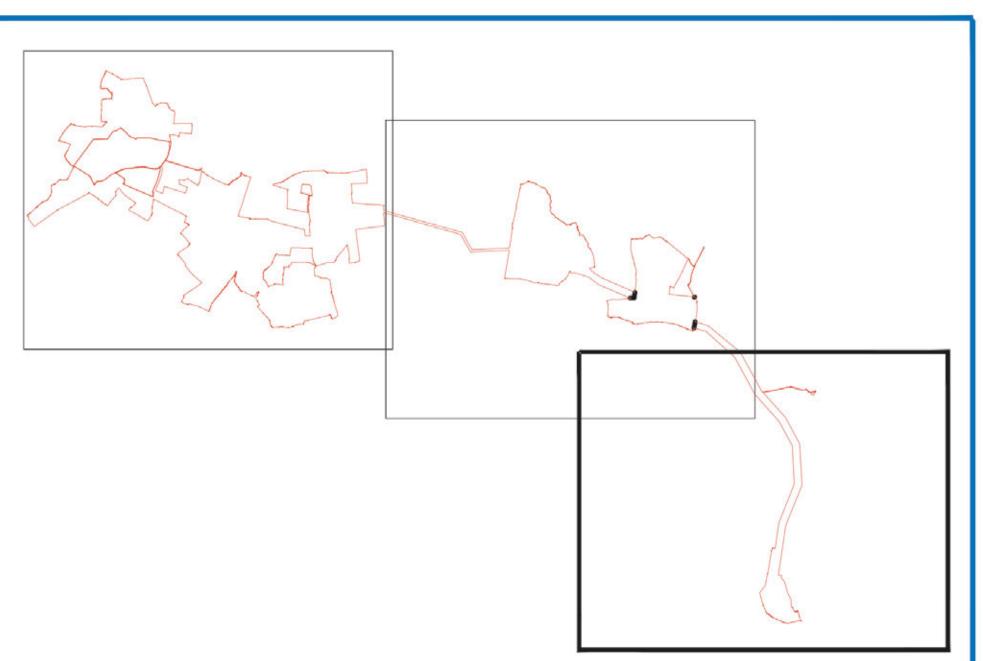


Public Consultation





400kV Grid Connection to Eaton Socon Substation



#### APPENDIX 1-13 CONSULTATION REPORT APPENDIX 1-13: JULY 2024 NEWSLETTER [EN010141/DR/5.2]



Brockwell Storage and Solar is developing plans for a new solar farm and energy storage project to the northwest of St Neots, known as East Park Energy.

Our proposals would be capable of generating up to 400 megawatts of clean energy, which is enough electricity to power approximately 108,000 homes – more than the total number in Bedford.

In this update you can read about some of the work that's been taking place since our initial public consultation last year, including:

- An overview of the key statistics and themes arising from our first round of consultation
- An update on Brockwell Energy's acquisition of RNA Energy
- Information on upcoming survey works
- Information on next steps and upcoming further consultation

#### THE STORY SO FAR

Last year we hosted an initial round of public consultation, where we invited local residents and stakeholders to share their views on our early proposals for East Park Energy.

As part of this consultation, we wrote to elected members, plus all business and residential addresses in the parishes that the project would be located within. We also met with Richard Fuller MP, along with parish, district and county councils, held three public exhibitions, launched a project website with details of our early proposals, and advertised on social media.

370+

pieces of feedback received 280+

local residents attended our public exhibitions 1,400+

leaflets sent to nearby residential and commercial properties

We're grateful to all those who provided their comments. Some of the recurring themes seen in feedback included questions about the need for and location of the project, along with concerns about the potential impacts of the proposals on the environment, including the loss of agricultural land and impact on food security.

All of this feedback, along with the results of ongoing technical assessments, is being carefully considered as we develop our proposals further. As part of our upcoming statutory consultation, we will publish a detailed non-statutory consultation report that sets out the feedback submitted to our previous consultation, along with our response to it. You can read more about this later in this update.



#### UPCOMING SURVEYS UPDATE

To inform the development of our proposals, we need to undertake a range of surveys across the land required for East Park Energy. You may have already seen members of our team out conducting surveys on land across the project area.

In the coming weeks we are due to commence archaeological investigations. The purpose of these surveys is to identify the presence of any archaeological sites of significance. Survey work is due to commence in August and run through until winter 2024/25.

As these surveys progress, we will continue to keep the local community and key stakeholders updated. More information on upcoming surveys will be shared on our website as and when works take place.

#### NEXT STEPS AND FURTHER CONSULTATION

Since the close of our non-statutory consultation in 2023, our team has been busy reviewing consultation feedback and the results of survey work. We are now planning to hold a statutory consultation on our plans for East Park Energy from September 2024. This is the legal consultation that we must hold before we can submit our application for development consent, which we intend to do in early 2025.

As part of this consultation, we will present our detailed plans for the project and publicise the results of our preliminary environmental assessments. We will write to you again at the start of this consultation to set out the different ways you can find out more about our detailed plans and how you can submit your feedback.

#### BROCKWELL ENERGY ACQUIRES RNA ENERGY LTD

Proposals for East Park Energy are now being developed by Brockwell Storage and Solar, formerly known as RNA Energy. In March 2024, Brockwell Energy reached an agreement to acquire 100% of RNA Energy, inheriting its solar and battery storage pipeline with a commitment to further investment.

Since incorporation in 2017, Brockwell Energy has delivered renewable energy projects in the UK requiring approximately £800m of capital. These projects include 400 MW of onshore wind, including the flagship 220.5 MW North Kyle wind farm and Energy from Waste projects in Grangemouth and Fife. The Brockwell team are delivering projects through the development phase and subsequently into construction and operation, with teams based in Edinburgh and London.

You can find out more about Brockwell at **brockwellstoragesolar.com** or **brockwellenergy.co.uk**.

#### FIND OUT MORE

To find out more about the project and register for email updates, visit our website at **eastparkenergy.co.uk**. You can also contact us via:

@ info@eastparkenergy.co.uk

**Q** 0808 258 5991

Freepost EAST PARK ENERGY



