

Botley West Solar Farm

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Revision 1

MASTERPLAN DEVELOPMENT & RATIONALE | JULY 2026



1 | OVERVIEW..... 3

 Introduction 4

 Masterplan Evolution 4

2 | NORTHERN AREA 6

 Design Overview of Northern Area 8

 Masterplan Changes 8

 Northern Area Summary 9

3 | CENTRAL AREA..... 10

 Design Overview of Central Area..... 12

 Reducing Residential Intervisibility 12

 Preserving Rural Outlook and Openness..... 13

 Strengthening Physical and Visual Separation 13

 Protecting the Public Rights of Way Experience 14

 Reinforcing Landscape Structure 14

 Central Area Summary..... 14

4 | SOUTHERN AREA..... 15

 Design Overview of Southern Area 17

 Southern Area Summary 18

5 | ILLUSTRATIVE MASTERPLAN..... 19

 Illustrative Masterplan 20



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Section 1

Overview.

1 | Overview

Introduction

- 1.1
- This document has been prepared by Icen Projects Ltd to explain the changes made to the proposed Botley West Solar Farm Project masterplan following the close of the Examination and to set out the rationale for those changes in response to the questions directed to the Applicant by the Secretary of State.
- 1.2
- The Botley West Solar Farm is located on land within the administrative areas of Cherwell District Council (CDC), Vale of White Horse District Council (VWHDC), West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), which are collectively referred to as the Oxfordshire Host Authorities (OHA).
- 1.3
- The Applicant (Photovolt Development Partners (PVDP), on behalf of SolarFive Ltd) has introduced Requirement 15 to the draft Development Consent Order (DCO).
- 1.4
- In summary, this would secure a minimum separation distance of 100m between existing dwellings and Works No. 1, Works No. 2, Works No. 3, Works No. 5(d), Works No. 6(c), Works No. 6(d) and Works No. 8(g). The Requirement also allows for additional offsets of up to 250m where necessary, with the location and extent of these offsets tailored to the circumstances of individual properties and to refine the extent of the Proposed Development to fit within the existing structure of the landscape.
- 1.5
- For clarity, Requirement 15 also requires the preparation of a Residential Visual Amenity Plan, to be submitted to and approved by the relevant planning authority.
- 1.6
- This document responds specifically to the request made by the Secretary of State in paragraph 24(d) to explain how landscape and visual considerations have informed the siting, scale and design of the Proposed Development, including how the mitigation hierarchy has been applied to avoid, reduce and, where necessary, offset adverse effects.
- 1.7
- This document demonstrates how the continued evolution of the masterplan has applied the mitigation hierarchy to avoid, reduce and, where necessary, offset potential landscape and visual effects, while maintaining the operational and technical requirements of the Proposed Development.
- 1.8
- The accompanying Landscape Parameter Plan acts as the securing mechanism for these proposed works, in addition to Requirement 15.

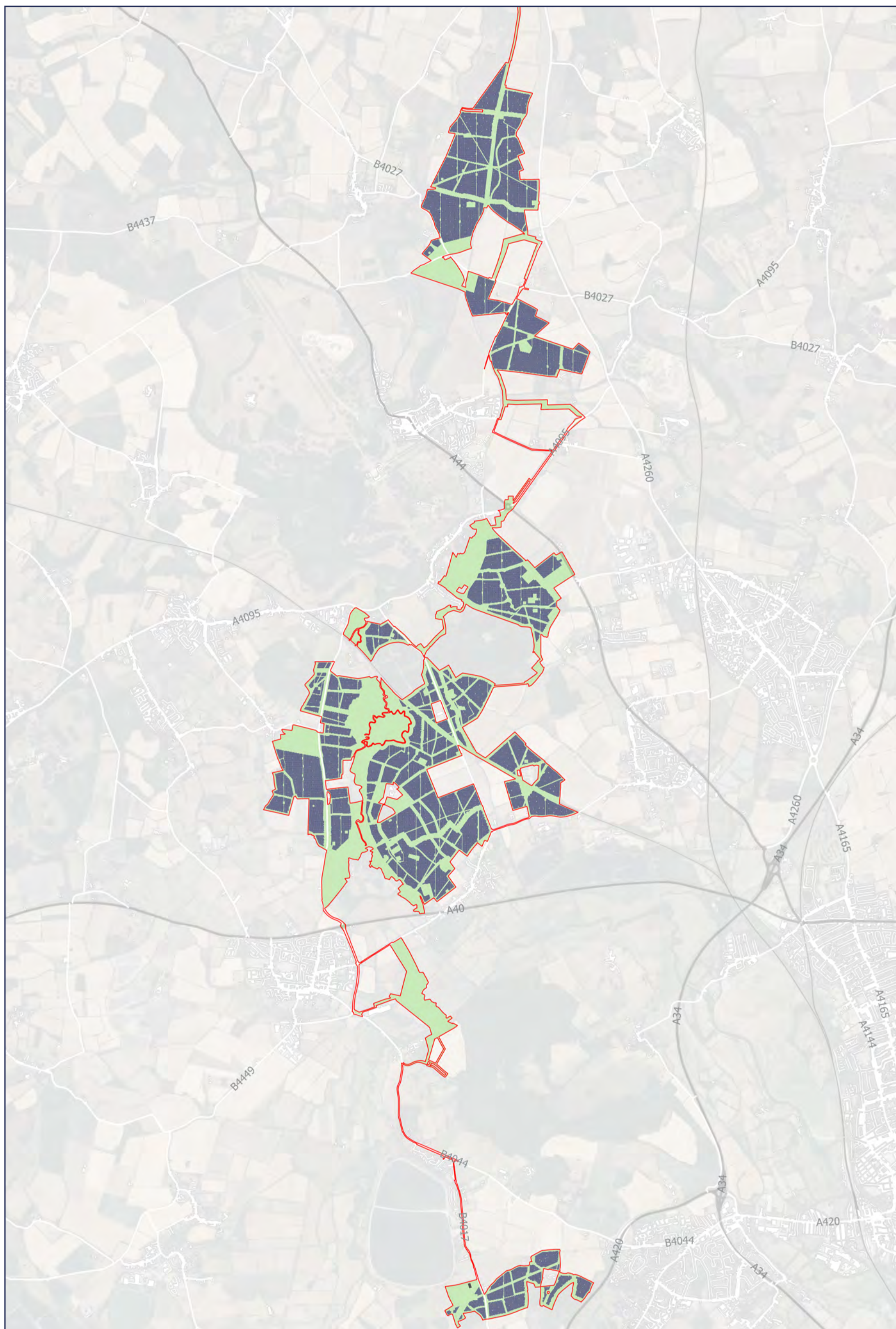
Masterplan Evolution

- 1.9
- The original masterplan was developed having regard to the site-specific characteristics of the Order Limits and the surrounding locality, including landform, field patterns, vegetation structure, settlement form and visual relationships.
- 1.10
- Following the close of the Examination, a number of further changes have been made to the masterplan, as summarised in the table opposite. These changes have been informed by further landscape and visual assessment, additional site survey work and ongoing consultation with the OHA.
- 1.11
- Collectively, these changes have resulted in a substantial reduction in the extent of the operational development area compared with the original DCO submission, as visualised in figure 1 on the following page (please click on the buttons at the top of the page to switch between the original and proposed masterplans.
- 1.12
- In total, the solar panel installation area has been reduced by **130.23ha**, representing a reduction in generating capacity of approximately **219.8 MWp**.
- 1.13
- In addition to reducing the potential for adverse landscape and visual effects, the revised masterplan provides opportunities for enhanced landscape mitigation, habitat creation and the strengthening of existing vegetation between residential properties and proposed above-ground infrastructure.
- 1.14
- These wider landscape and ecological enhancements are not described further within this document but are instead presented on the accompanying Masterplan (EN010147APP6.4 ES - Figures 2.1a - 2.4c - Illustrative Masterplan - Rev 5.pdf).

Masterplan Changes Table - Post Examination

Design Change	Removed Installation Area (ha)	Removed Capacity (MWp)
100m Buffer to all properties (except where existing agreements are in place)	31.82 ha	53.7 MWp
New Bat Corridor	34.91 ha	58.9 MWp
Oxford Airport Removals	1.64ha	2.8 MWp
100m to 250m Changes	61.86ha	104.4 MWp
Total	130.23ha	219.8 MWp

Figure 1 - Reduction in Overall Development Area Animation

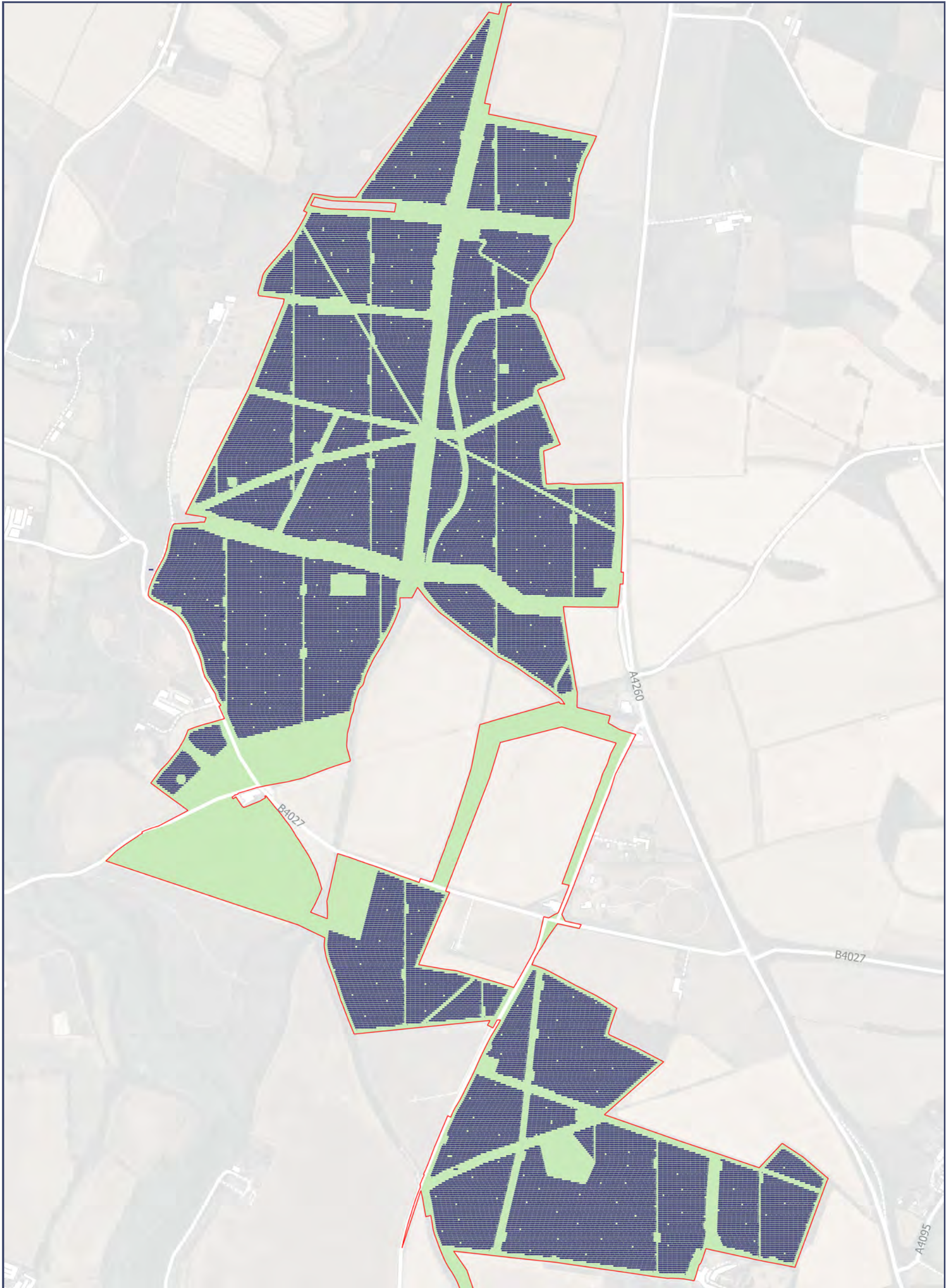


Section 2

Northern Area.

2 | Northern Area

Figure 2 - Northern Area Masterplan Changes Animation



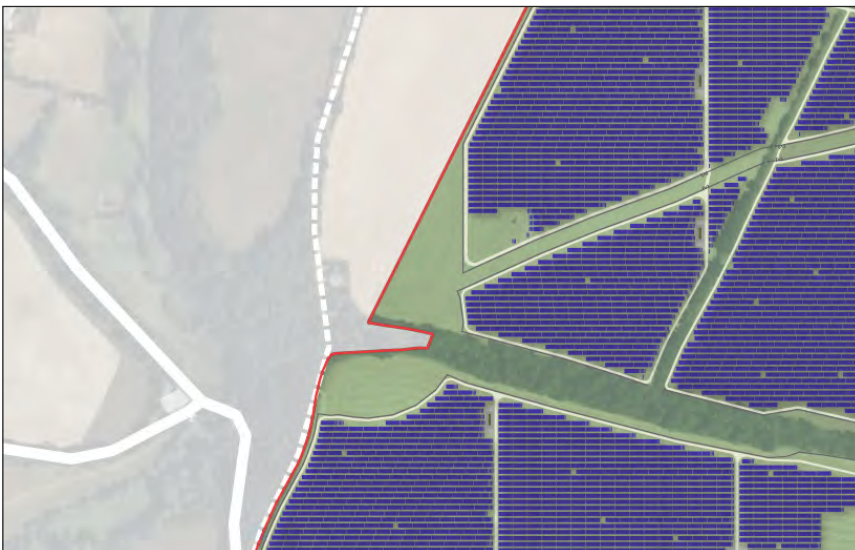
Design Overview of Northern Area

- 2.1 The northern area of the Proposed Development has undergone a series of targeted design refinements following the close of the Examination, in response to further landscape and visual assessment, additional site survey work and ongoing discussions with the OHA.
- 2.2 The amendments to the masterplan within the northern part of the site focus primarily on the relationship between the Proposed Development and nearby residential properties.
- 2.3 Rather than applying a uniform approach across the site, the revised masterplan responds to the specific characteristics, orientation and visual relationship of each receptor. This has resulted in the selective removal of solar panel arrays where they formed part of the immediate setting or principal outlook from residential properties.
- 2.4 Collectively these changes demonstrate the continued application of the mitigation hierarchy by:
 - avoiding effects through the complete removal of development from the most sensitive locations; reducing potential effects by increasing separation distances between residential properties and solar infrastructure;
 - reinforcing opportunities for landscape enhancement and ecological mitigation within the retained open land; and
 - maintaining the operational integrity of the Proposed Development whilst responding proportionately to local landscape and visual constraints.
- 2.5 These changes form part of the wider evolution of the masterplan and have contributed towards the overall reduction of approximately 130ha of solar panels across the Proposed Development.

Masterplan Changes

- 2.6 The following individual changes have been made to the northern area of the masterplan.

Removal of Panels East of Dornford Cottage



Design Rationale

- 2.7 Solar panels have been removed immediately to the east of Dornford Cottage to retain the property's immediate open setting.
- 2.8 The original masterplan located development into the foreground of views from the dwelling. Although potentially mitigated through new planting, further design considerations concluded that the most appropriate response was to remove the development from this location.
- 2.9 This amendment increases the extent of undeveloped land immediately adjacent to the property, preserving the perception of openness that currently characterises the setting of Dornford Cottage. The retained land also provides additional opportunities for landscape enhancement and ecological management, reinforcing the rural transition between the dwelling and the wider solar development.

Application of the Mitigation Hierarchy

- 2.10 The principal mitigation measure is avoidance. Rather than relying upon additional screening or mitigation planting, the proposed panels have been removed from this part of the receptor's setting. This represents the highest level of the mitigation hierarchy and provides a long-term design response which is proportionate to the sensitivity of the location.

Preservation of Southern Outlook from the Hordley Properties



Design Rationale

- 2.11 Panels have been removed south of Hordley Cottages, Hordley Farm, Hordley Barns and Hordley House to preserve the predominantly open rural outlook currently experienced from these properties.
- 2.12 The revised masterplan retains a substantial area of undeveloped land between the residential properties and the solar development, reducing the perception of enclosure and maintaining the visual connection with the surrounding countryside.
- 2.13 This change also strengthens the landscape structure around this part of the site and provides opportunities for additional habitat creation.

Application of the Mitigation Hierarchy

- 2.14 This change represents avoidance through the complete removal of development from a visually sensitive location. It reduces potential landscape and visual effects rather than relying solely on landscape screening.

Preservation of Westward Views from Weaveley Farm



Design Rationale

- 2.15 Panels have been removed west of Weaveley Farm to maintain westward outward views across the surrounding landscape.
- 2.16 This amendment increases the openness immediately adjacent to the property and better reflects the existing landscape pattern.
- 2.17 The retained land also enables future landscape enhancement to reinforce the transition between the residential boundary and the operational development.

Application of the Mitigation Hierarchy

- 2.18 The revised layout applies avoidance by removing development from the most visually sensitive area whilst retaining sufficient operational land elsewhere to maintain the functionality of the Proposed Development.

Shipton Slade Farm Changes



Design Rationale

- 2.19 Solar panels have been removed north of Shipton Slade Farm and neighbouring properties to retain an immediate area of open land between residential receptors and the operational development.
- 2.20 The amendment preserves the existing sense of openness experienced from the properties and avoids introducing solar infrastructure into their immediate northern setting. It also creates additional opportunities for ecological enhancement and landscape management within the retained undeveloped land.

Application of the Mitigation Hierarchy

- 2.21 The amendment demonstrates the application of avoidance through the removal of development from the immediate residential setting. This design response reduces potential visual effects before consideration of secondary mitigation measures such as planting or management.

Northern Area Summary

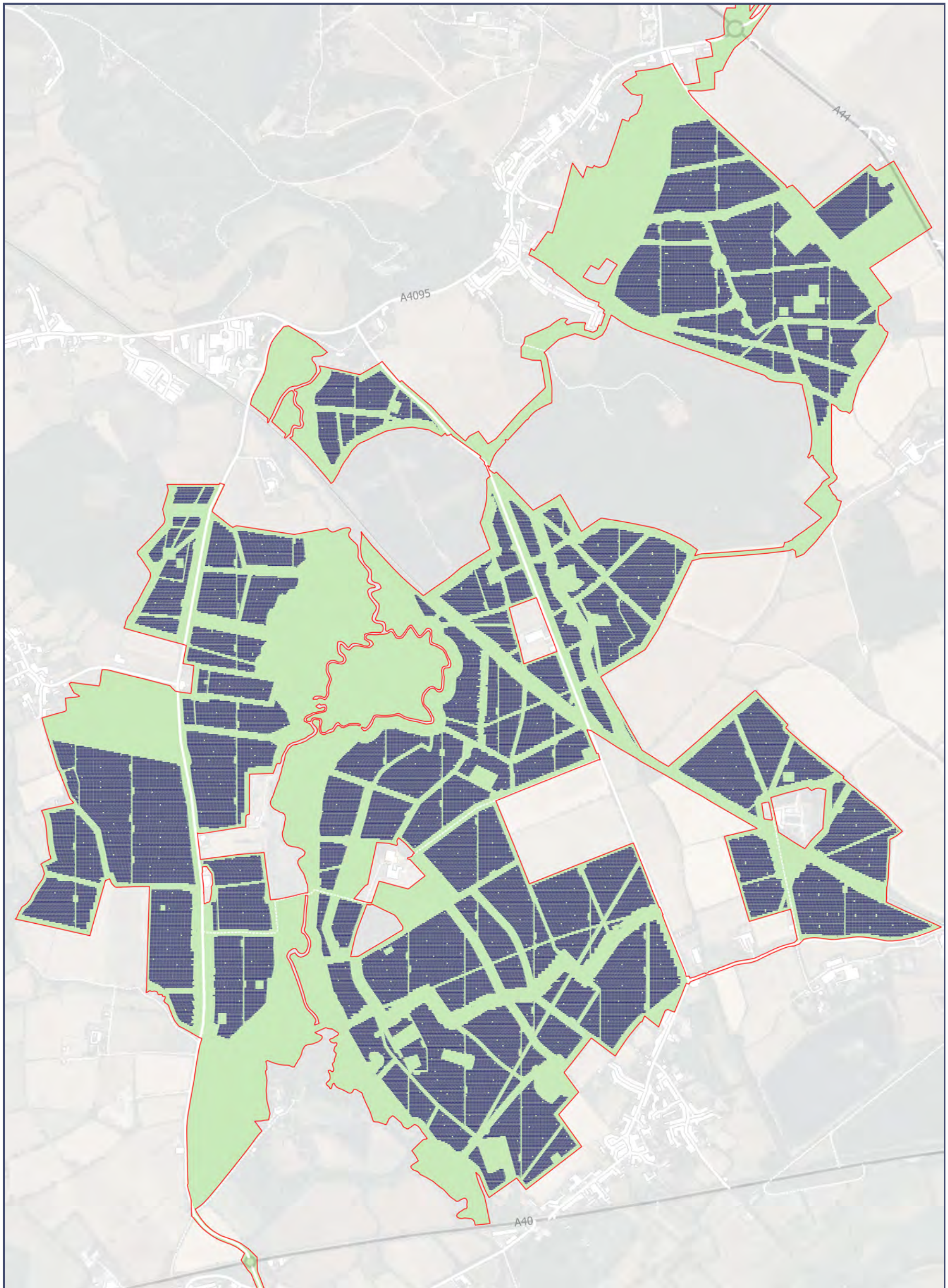
- 2.22 The cumulative effect of these changes is to create a more refined and responsive masterplan that better reflects the character of the receiving landscape and the relationship between the Proposed Development and nearby residential properties.
- 2.23 Rather than applying a blanket setback across the northern area, the revised masterplan responds to the particular circumstances of each receptor, demonstrating the continued application of the mitigation hierarchy through design-led avoidance in the most sensitive locations.
- 2.24 The resulting layout maintains the operational requirements of the Proposed Development whilst providing greater separation, preserving key aspects of residential setting and outlook, and creating additional opportunities for landscape enhancement and biodiversity gain.

Section 3

Central Area.

3 | Central Area

Figure 3 - Central Area Masterplan Changes Animation



Design Overview of Central Area

- 3.1
- The central area of the Proposed Development has undergone substantial refinement following the close of the Examination. Building upon the original landscape-led design approach, the revised masterplan responds to additional landscape and visual assessment, further field survey work and continued discussions with the OHA.
- 3.2
- Unlike the northern area, where revisions principally focus on individual residential properties, the amendments across the central area respond to a broader range of landscape, visual and user experience considerations. These include protecting the setting of settlements and farmsteads, maintaining the openness of the countryside experienced from Public Rights of Way (PRoW), reducing intervisibility between the solar development and surrounding receptors, and reinforcing the landscape framework that separates individual parcels of development.
- 3.3
- Collectively, these amendments demonstrate the continued application of the mitigation hierarchy through an iterative design process. Rather than relying solely upon landscape planting to mitigate effects, the revised masterplan removes panels from the most sensitive locations, increases physical separation between receptors and infrastructure, and creates additional opportunities for landscape enhancement, biodiversity gain and ecological connectivity.
- 3.4
- These changes have been balanced against the operational requirements of the solar development to ensure that the revised layout continues to function efficiently whilst responding proportionately to identified landscape and visual constraints.
- 3.5
- The amendments made across the central area are not isolated design changes but form part of a wider refinement of the masterplan, and have been described through five strategic design objectives, which comprise:
 - reducing intervisibility with residential receptors,
 - preserving important views and the rural setting,
 - increasing physical and visual separation from sensitive receptors,
 - maintaining the quality of the Public Rights of Way network, and
 - strengthening the wider landscape framework.
- 3.6
- Together, they illustrate how the mitigation hierarchy has been applied through iterative design refinement, prioritising avoidance wherever practicable before seeking to reduce and mitigate any remaining effects.

Reducing Residential Intervisibility

- 3.7
- The most significant design changes relate to improving the relationship between the solar development and surrounding residential properties.



- 3.8
- Panels have been selectively removed around:
 - Wolsey Court
 - Campsfield Farmhouse
 - Rose Cottage
 - Heath Lane
 - College Farm
 - Pelican House
 - Owls Leat
 - Willow Cottage
 - Jericho Farm
 - New Barn Cottage
- 3.9
- These interventions increase the physical offset between residential receptors and infrastructure whilst reducing the amount of solar development occupying principal views.
- 3.10
- Rather than applying a blanket exclusion distance across the site, the revised masterplan responds to the orientation, setting and visual relationship of each individual receptor. This approach reflects good design by ensuring that each intervention is proportionate to the sensitivity of the location.

Application of the Mitigation Hierarchy

- 3.11
- The primary mitigation measure is avoidance. Development has been removed entirely from those locations where it formed part of the immediate residential setting or principal outlook.
- 3.12
- Where development remains visible, reduction has been achieved through increased separation distances and the retention of existing landscape features, thereby reducing potential visual effects before considering secondary mitigation measures.

Wolsey Court / Campsfield Farmhouse / Rose Cottage

- 3.13
- Panels have been removed from the north eastern parcel to reduce intervisibility between the solar development and properties at Wolsey Court, Campsfield Farmhouse and Rose Cottage.
- 3.14
- The revised layout creates a substantially larger area of undeveloped land adjacent to these receptors, maintaining a stronger perception of openness and reducing the prominence of solar infrastructure in outward views.

Heath Lane

- 3.15
- The western edge of the parcel has been pulled back to further reduce the prominence of the solar panels when experienced from Heath Lane.
- 3.16
- Rather than relying on screening vegetation alone, the masterplan has been amended to remove development from the most visually exposed location.

College Farm / Pelican House

- 3.17
- The revised layout increases separation between the solar development and College Farm and Pelican House through the removal of adjacent panel arrays.
- 3.18
- The retained open land reinforces the existing transition between the residential properties and surrounding agricultural landscape.

Owls Leat / Willow Cottage / New Barn Cottage

- 3.19
- Several targeted removals have been made to preserve the physical and visual separation between the proposed development and these properties.
- 3.20
- The revised layout reduces enclosure, maintains the rural character of the surrounding landscape and reinforces the perception that the properties remain set within open countryside.

Jericho Farm

- 3.21
- Solar panels have been removed to maintain physical and visual separation between Jericho Farm and the operational development.
- 3.22
- The amendment reduces the perceived scale of development experienced from the property whilst allowing additional landscape enhancement within the retained land.

Preserving Rural Outlook and Openness

3.23 The second key design objective applied to the masterplan is to retain important outward views from both residential receptors and publicly accessible locations.



3.24 This has resulted in the removal of solar panels around:

- Burleigh House
- Folly Bridge
- Burleigh Farm
- Goose Eye Farm
- Barrow Court
- Williams Court
- Yarnton Road
- Elms Road

3.25 Collectively these changes preserve the appreciation of the wider landscape and avoid creating an overly enclosed character.

Burleigh House / Folly Bridge

- 3.26 Panels have been removed to retain the southward appreciation from Burleigh House and Folly Bridge.
- 3.27 The amendment maintains the open foreground which contributes to the rural setting of these receptors.

Burleigh Farm

3.28 Development has been pulled back to preserve eastward views from Burleigh Farm. The retained open land strengthens the transition between the farmstead and surrounding countryside.

Goose Eye Farm

3.29 Panel removal maintains northern and eastern outlooks from Goose Eye Farm and reinforces the openness of the surrounding landscape.

Barrow Court / Williams Court / Yarnton Road / Elms Road

3.30 Additional undeveloped land has been retained north of Barrow Court, Yarnton Road, Elms Road, Williams Court and Eynsham Road to preserve the open rural setting of these residential areas.

Strengthening Physical and Visual Separation

3.31 A key objective of the revised masterplan has been to strengthen the physical and visual separation between the solar development and surrounding settlements, farmsteads and rural properties.



3.32 The amendments seek to maintain the perception of openness around sensitive receptors, reinforce the distinction between built form and the surrounding countryside, and avoid creating the impression that solar infrastructure extends into the immediate setting of existing properties.

Application of the Mitigation Hierarchy

- 3.33 The principal mitigation measures comprise avoidance and reduction.
- 3.34 Avoidance has been achieved through the removal of solar panel arrays from locations where they would otherwise occupy the immediate setting of residential properties or diminish the existing perception of openness.
- 3.35 Reduction has been achieved by increasing the physical distance between operational infrastructure and sensitive receptors, allowing retained vegetation, topography and additional landscape enhancements to perform a more effective role in filtering views and integrating the Proposed Development into the surrounding landscape.

College Farm and Pelican House

- 3.36 Panels have been removed to increase the physical and visual separation between College Farm, Pelican House and the Proposed Development.
- 3.37 The revised layout creates a broader area of undeveloped land around the properties, preserving their immediate rural setting and reducing the perception that operational infrastructure extends into their foreground. The retained land also provides opportunities for landscape enhancement that further reinforces the transition between the built environment and surrounding agricultural landscape.

Owls Leat, Willow Cottage and New Barn Cottage

- 3.38 Targeted panel removal has increased the separation between the Proposed Development and the isolated rural properties at Owls Leat, Willow Cottage and New Barn Cottage.
- 3.39 The revised layout maintains a greater sense of openness around these properties and preserves the distinction between the residential curtilages and the wider operational development. The amendments also reduce the potential for perceptions of enclosure whilst allowing additional landscape mitigation to be incorporated within the retained open land.

Jericho Farm

- 3.40 The masterplan has been amended to retain a greater degree of physical and visual separation between Jericho Farm and the Proposed Development.
- 3.41 Removing panels adjacent to the farmstead reduces the prominence of solar infrastructure within the immediate setting of the property and maintains a more legible transition between the existing agricultural holding and the surrounding landscape.

Williams Court, Barrow Court, Yarnton Road and Elms Road

- 3.42 Additional undeveloped land has been retained north of Williams Court, Barrow Court, Yarnton Road and Elms Road to preserve the open setting of these residential areas and reinforce the separation between the existing settlement edge and the Proposed Development.
- 3.43 The amendments reduce the perceived proximity of solar infrastructure and help maintain the existing transition from the built environment into the surrounding countryside, consistent with the landscape-led principles that underpin the masterplan.

Protecting the Public Rights of Way Experience

- 3.44 One of the more significant changes to the masterplan is the increased amount of open land retained around the existing Public Rights of Way (PROW) network.



Bladon Heath PROW

- 3.45 Panels have been removed to retain an open southward appreciation across Bladon Heath from the existing Public Right of Way.
- 3.46 Rather than enclosing the route with solar panels and supporting infrastructure, the revised masterplan retains a broader landscape corridor, which better reflects the existing experience of moving through open countryside.

Application of the Mitigation Hierarchy

- 3.47 This change represents avoidance through the removal of development from one of the most sensitive publicly accessible viewpoints within the central area.

Reinforcing Landscape Structure

- 3.48 An important outcome of the revised layout is the creation of substantially wider green corridors between development parcels across the central area.



- 3.49 These spaces perform several functions simultaneously:
 - increase residential separation;
 - improve ecological connectivity;
 - reinforce existing field patterns;
 - reduce perceived development mass;
 - improve visual permeability through the site.

- 3.50 These areas now form an integral component of the landscape framework underpinning the revised masterplan.

Central Area Summary

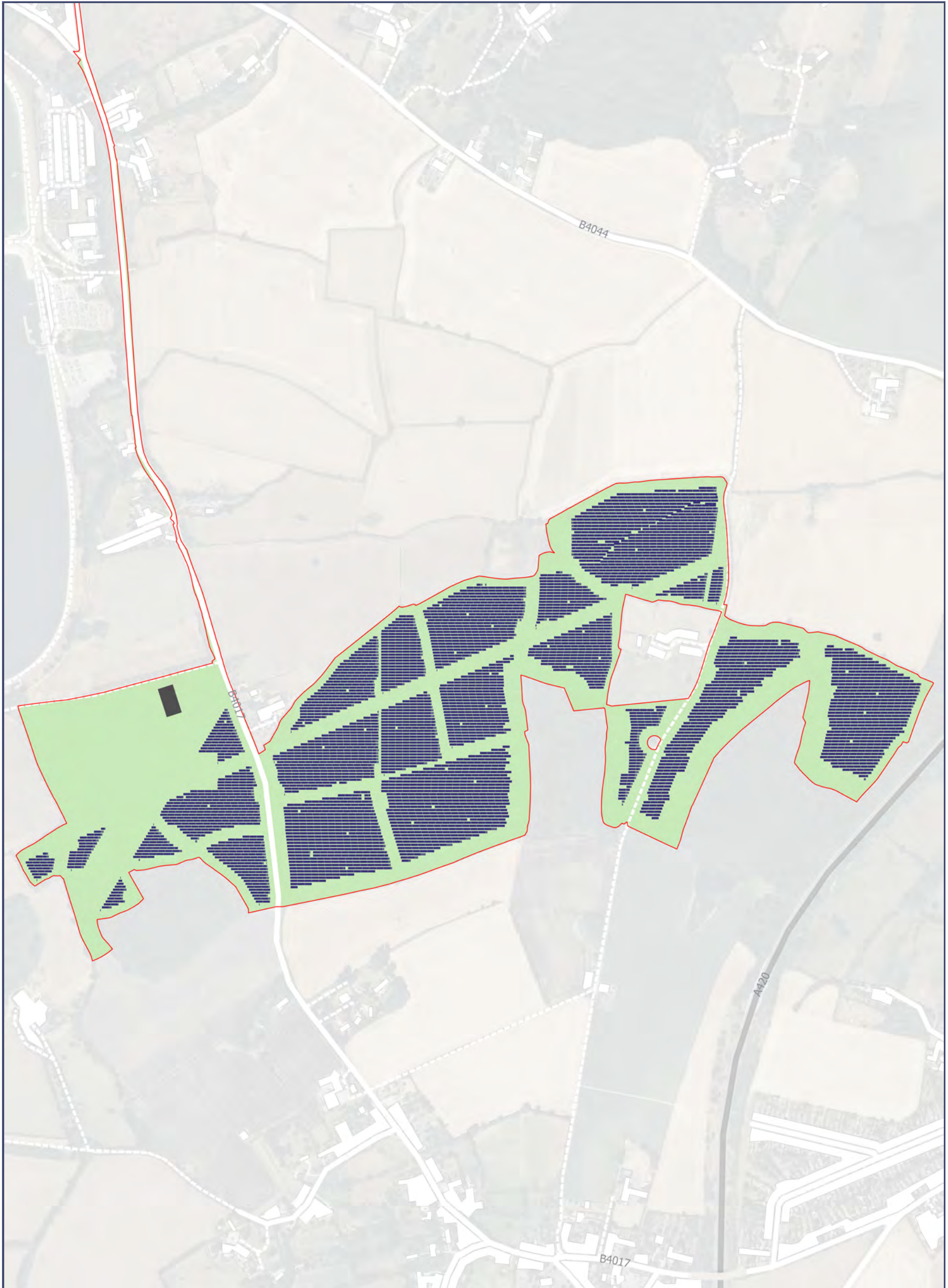
- 3.51 The cumulative effect of the amendments made across the central area is the creation of a more refined, landscape-led masterplan that responds more effectively to the character of the existing landscape and its relationship with surrounding settlements, farmsteads, Public Rights of Way and individual residential properties. Rather than representing a series of isolated changes, the amendments form part of a coordinated evolution of the masterplan that has systematically applied the mitigation hierarchy through iterative design refinement.
- 3.52 Across the central area, the predominant design response has been one of avoidance, with solar development removed from the most sensitive locations to preserve residential amenity, maintain important outward views, protect the experience of the Public Rights of Way network and reinforce the open rural setting of existing settlements and farmsteads. Where operational infrastructure has been retained, the layout has been refined to reduce potential landscape and visual effects by increasing physical separation, retaining strategically located areas of open land and strengthening the existing landscape framework.
- 3.53 Collectively, these amendments demonstrate how landscape and visual considerations have continued to inform the evolution of the solar development beyond the original DCO submission.
- 3.54 The resulting masterplan provides a more balanced integration of renewable energy infrastructure within the surrounding countryside, creating additional opportunities for landscape enhancement, habitat creation and ecological connectivity whilst maintaining the operational and technical requirements of the Proposed Development.

Section 4

Southern Area.

4 | Southern Area

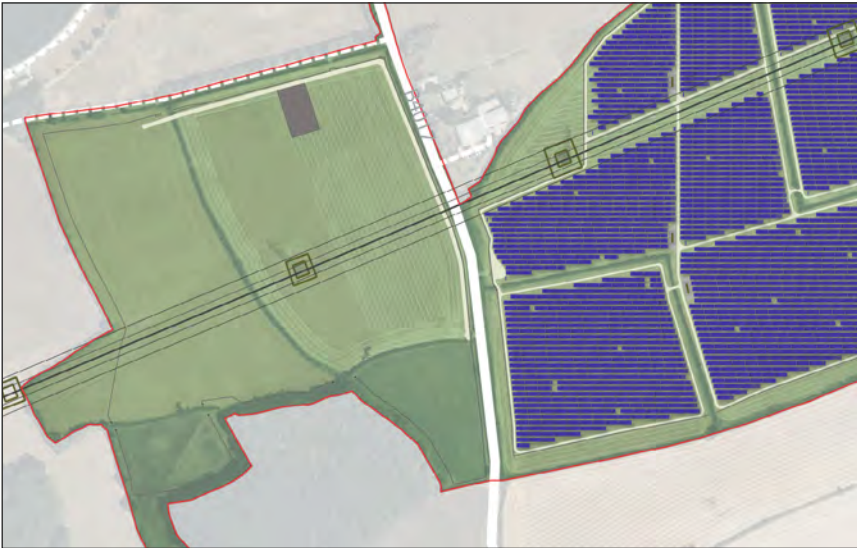
Figure 4 - Southern Area Masterplan Changes Animation



Design Overview of Southern Area

- 4.1
- The southern area of the masterplan has undergone a series of targeted design refinements following the close of the Examination in response to further landscape and visual assessment, additional site survey work and ongoing consultation with the Oxfordshire Host Authorities (OHA).
- 4.2
- The amendments focus principally on strengthening the relationship between the solar development and the surrounding rural landscape through increased physical and visual separation from nearby residential receptors and the retention of a greater sense of openness along the western edge of the site. In addition, the relocation of the proposed substation has enabled a more sensitive arrangement of infrastructure that better responds to the surrounding landscape and views from nearby receptors.
- 4.3
- Collectively, these changes demonstrate the continued application of the mitigation hierarchy by:
- avoiding potential landscape and visual effects through the removal of operational development from the most sensitive locations,
- reducing potential effects by increasing separation between residential receptors and operational infrastructure,
- preserving the open rural setting adjacent to the B4017 and Green Belt Way,
- reinforcing opportunities for landscape enhancement and ecological connectivity within the retained open land, and
- maintaining the operational and technical requirements of the solar farm whilst responding proportionately to identified landscape and visual constraints.
- 4.4
- The following section explains the design changes that have informed the evolution of the masterplan for the southern area and demonstrates how the mitigation hierarchy has been applied to achieve a more responsive and landscape-led design.

Relocation of the Proposed Substation and Western Panel Removal



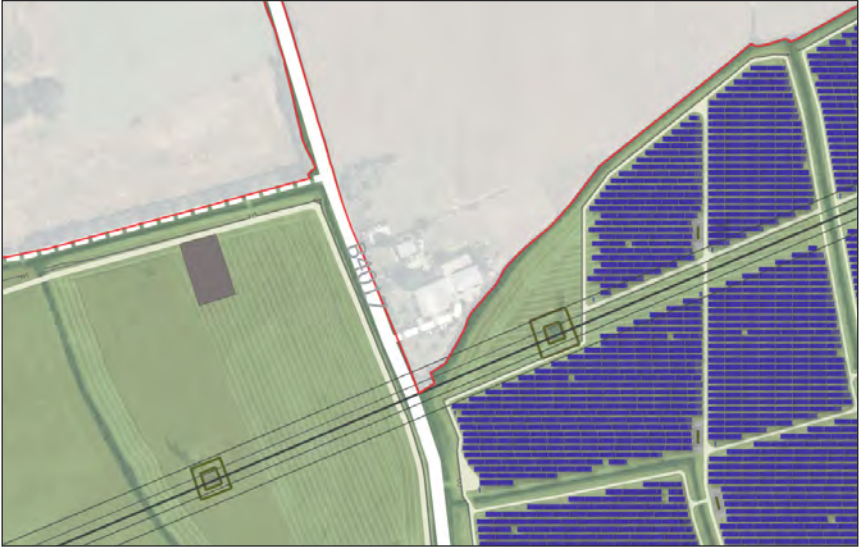
Design Rationale

- 4.5
- The most significant amendment within the southern area has been the removal of solar panels from the western part of the development parcel together with the potential relocation of the proposed substation further to the west.
- 4.6
- This refinement has been undertaken to retain the sense of openness along the western side of the B4017, increase visual separation from Jumpers Farm and reduce the potential for views of the operational infrastructure from Upper Whitley Farm.
- 4.7
- The revised arrangement the large area of undeveloped land between the highway, nearby residential receptors and the solar development. This not only preserves the perception of openness that characterises this part of the landscape but also provides greater flexibility for landscape enhancement and habitat creation.
- 4.8
- Potentially relocating the substation as part of this redesign ensures that associated infrastructure sits within a more appropriate landscape context whilst continuing to satisfy the operational requirements of the solar farm.

Application of the Mitigation Hierarchy

- 4.9
- This revision to the masterplan demonstrates both avoidance and reduction.
- 4.10
- Avoidance has been achieved through the complete removal of panels from the most visually sensitive part of the parcel.
- 4.11
- Reduction has been achieved through the relocation of the substation and the increased separation between the operational infrastructure and nearby receptors, thereby reducing the prominence of the solar farm within the surrounding landscape.

Strengthening Separation from Jumpers Farm



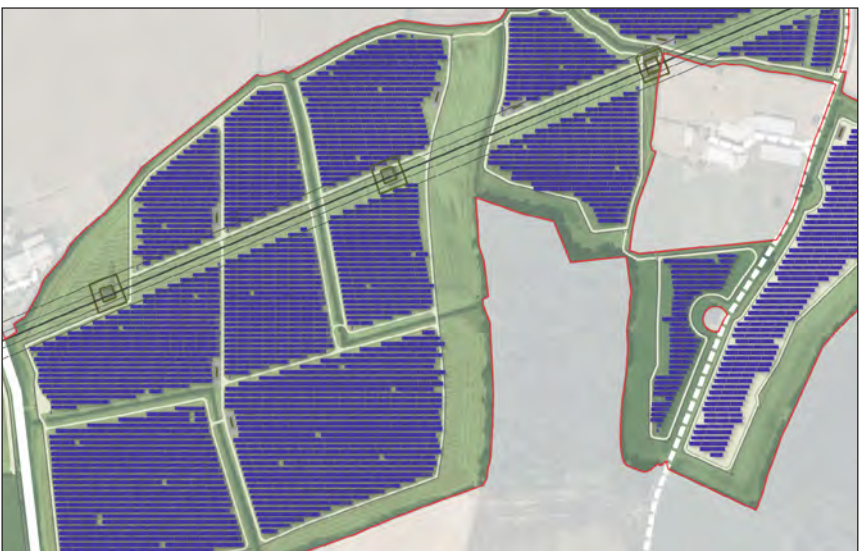
Design Rationale

- 4.12
- Panels have been removed from immediately adjacent to Jumpers Farm to strengthen the physical and visual separation between the property and the solar development.
- 4.13
- The revised layout preserves the property's immediate rural setting by increasing the extent of undeveloped land surrounding the farmstead and reducing the influence of development infrastructure within its outlook. The retained land also creates opportunities for landscape enhancement that further reinforces the transition between the existing built environment and the surrounding agricultural landscape.

Application of the Mitigation Hierarchy

- 4.14
- The principal mitigation measure is avoidance. Rather than relying solely on landscape planting to screen development, the revised masterplan removes solar infrastructure from the most sensitive part of the property's setting. This provides a more robust and permanent design solution while maintaining the functionality of the wider development parcel.

Increasing Separation from Green Belt Way



Design Rationale

- 4.15
- Solar panels have been removed to increase the separation between the solar development and Green Belt Way, thereby preserving the open character experienced along this route and maintaining a greater sense of openness within the surrounding landscape.
- 4.16
- The amendment widens the undeveloped corridor adjacent to the route, reducing the perceived scale of development and ensuring that operational infrastructure does not dominate the immediate landscape setting.

- 4.17 The retained land also contributes to the wider landscape framework by providing opportunities for habitat creation and strengthening ecological connectivity.

Application of the Mitigation Hierarchy

- 4.18 This intervention combines avoidance and reduction.
- 4.19 Development has been removed from the most sensitive location adjacent to Green Belt Way, whilst the increased offset allows retained vegetation and future landscape enhancements to provide more effective integration of the solar farm within the wider countryside.

Southern Area Summary

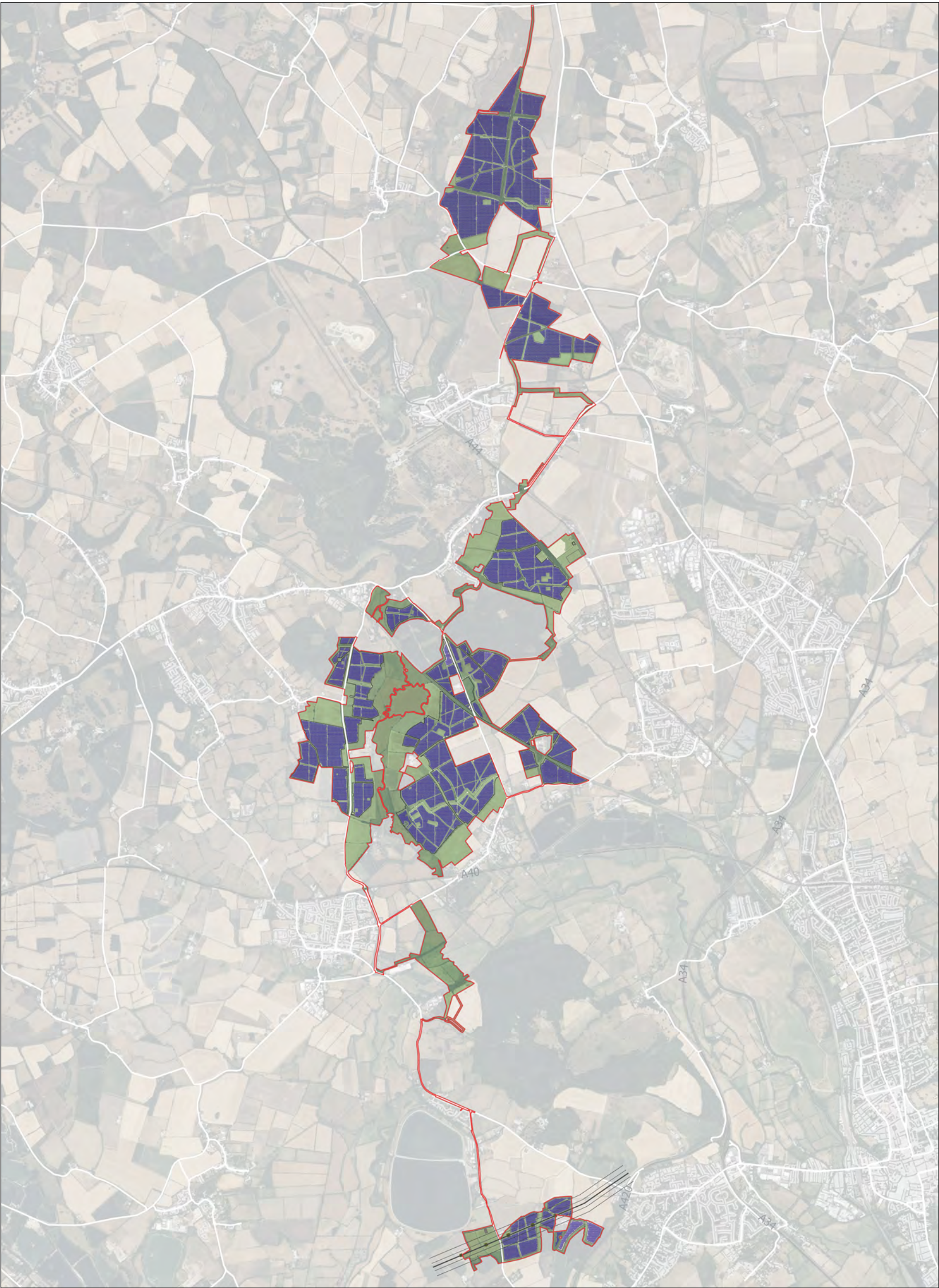
- 4.20 The cumulative effect of the revisions made across the southern area is the creation of a more refined and responsive masterplan that better reflects the relationship between the proposed solar development, the surrounding rural landscape and nearby residential receptors. Rather than representing isolated design changes, the changes form part of a coordinated refinement of the masterplan that applies the mitigation hierarchy through iterative design development.
- 4.21 The predominant design response has been one of avoidance, with operational development removed from the most sensitive locations to preserve the open rural setting adjacent to the B4017 and Green Belt Way, strengthen the separation between the Proposed Development and Jumpers Farm, and reduce the prominence of associated infrastructure through the relocation of the proposed substation. Where development has been retained, the layout has been refined to reduce potential landscape and visual effects through increased separation and the retention of strategically located areas of open land.
- 4.22 Collectively, these changes demonstrate how landscape and visual considerations have continued to inform the evolution of the proposed development beyond the original DCO submission, creating additional opportunities for landscape enhancement, biodiversity gain and ecological connectivity whilst maintaining the operational and technical requirements of the solar farm.

Section 5

Illustrative Masterplan.

5 | Illustrative Masterplan

Figure 5 - Illustrative Masterplan



Delivery | Design | Engagement | Heritage | Impact Management | Planning
Sustainable Development | Townscape | Transport

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