Lime Down
Solar Park

Consultation Report Appendices

Appendix C-5: Non-Statutory Consultation

September 2025

Planning Inspectorate Reference: EN010168

Document Reference: APP/5.2

APFP Regulation 5(2)(q); Planning Act 2008; and Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations

List of Contents

1 Sherston Village Hall event photography – 22 March 2024

[redacted]

2 Hullavington Village Hall event photography – 23 March 2024

3 Grittleton Village Hall event photography – 25 March 2024

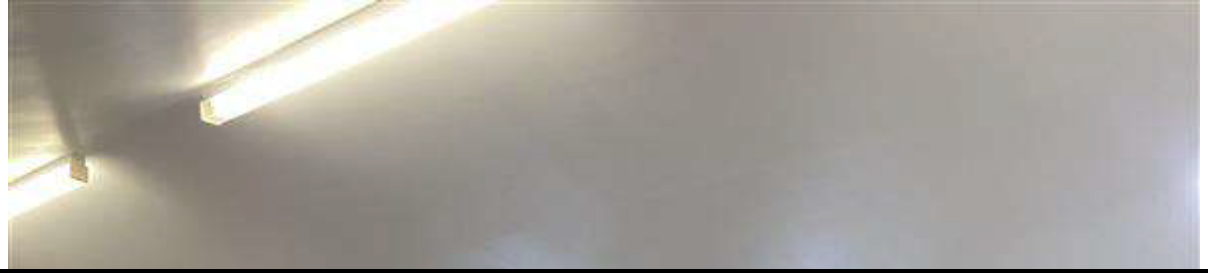
[redacted]

4 Goss Croft Hall event photography – 09 April 2024

5 Corsham Town Council Hall event photography – 10 April 2024

[redacted]

6 Shaw Village Hall event photography – 11 April 2024



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7 Webinar joining instructions

Joining instructions for Lime Down Solar Park Stage One Community Webinars

Overview

You have been invited to attend two virtual community webinars during our Stage One consultation period for Lime Down Solar Park. Each of these sessions will provide you with the opportunity to learn more about our proposals from the project team and ask them your questions.

This document provides you with a step-by-step guide to accessing the webinar sessions.

The community webinars will be held through an accessible online platform. Your audio and video will not be available to be heard or seen by anyone attending the session. Questions are submitted via the Q&A button on the bottom of your screen.

The webinars will be attended by the Lime Down Solar Park project team, and will be conducted in a moderated Q&A format. All questions go through to a member of our team who will manage and collate them all to then be answered by a member of the team after the presentation.

We advise you to join the webinar a few minutes before starting time, if possible, and you are free to leave and re-join as many times as possible while the webinar sessions are ongoing.

Step-by-step guide to joining the webinar

1. To join your preferred webinar session, please click on the corresponding link below, or enter the URL directly into your browser:

2. After following this step, the link will take you to the Zoom meeting in your browser.

a. If Zoom is already downloaded on your computer, select 'Open Zoom Meetings' in the pop-up.
b. If you have not got Zoom downloaded, either:
    i. Select 'download and run Zoom'; or
    ii. Select 'join from your browser' if you cannot download or run the application

3. If you are using your mobile device (smart phone or tablet) you can open in your Chrome or Safari browser. Alternatively, you can download the Zoom app:
    a. From th
    b. From th [redacted]

    Then enter the corresponding Webinar ID:

    - Wednesday 27 March – 17:30pm – 19:00pm
        - Webinar ID: 894 5811 7221
    - Wednesday 17 April – 17:30pm – 19:00pm
        - Webinar ID: 822 6295 6395

4. When you enter the event, you will be prompted to enter your details.
5. After entering these details, you will enter the event room.

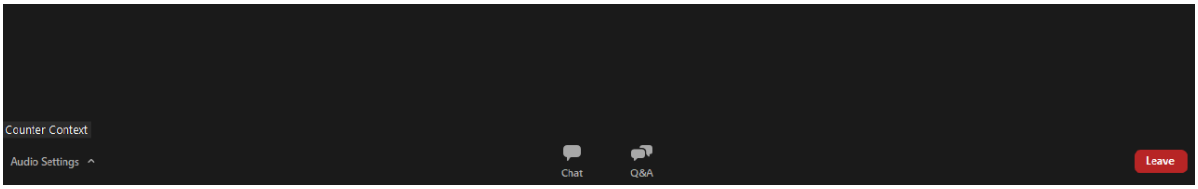
Participating in the event

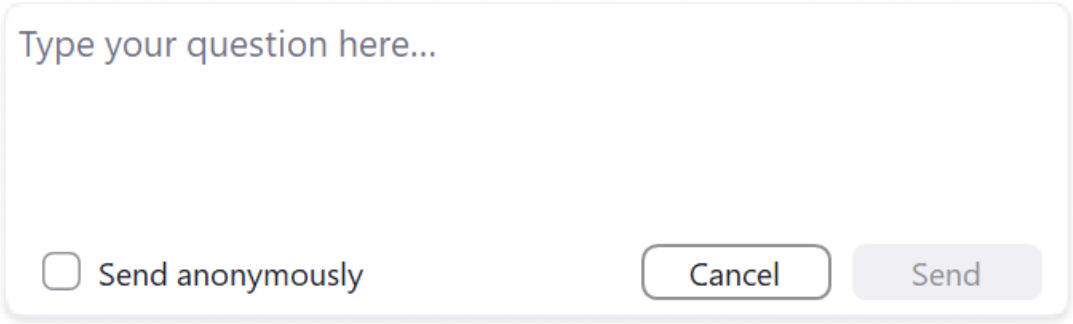
During the event, your audio and video will not be visible to anybody in the webinar session.

If you have joined via a computer, smartphone, or tablet, please press the Q&A button at the bottom of your screen to submit your question. A member of the Lime Down Solar Park project team will then answer your question once the presentation has finished.

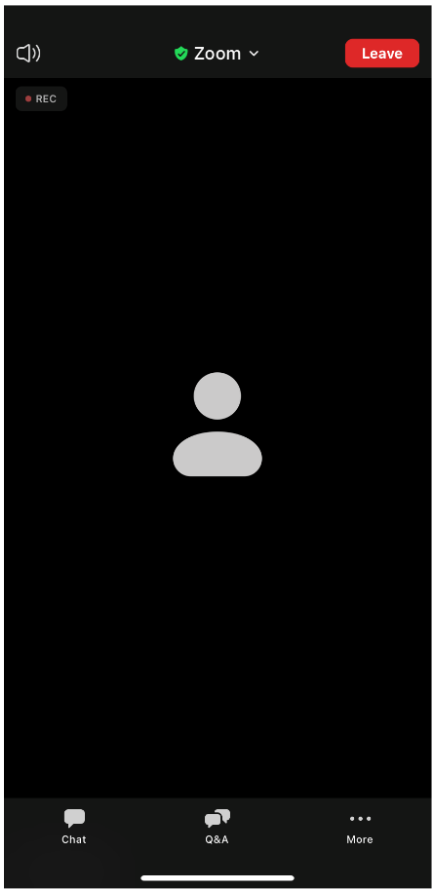
While the presentations are going on, please feel free to ask any questions by using the Q&A button at the bottom of your screen.

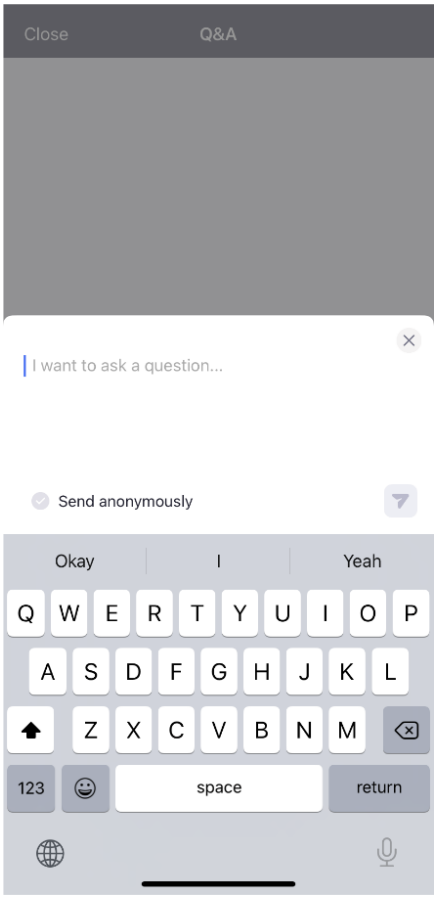
Via computer





Via smartphone or tablet





After the event

If you have any follow-up questions, please feel free to send these to our project information lines afterwards.

Troubleshooting common issues

Should you have any issues accessing or viewing the webinar, please visit the Zoom webinar attendee [redacted] or email info@limedownsolar.co.uk

8 Webinar response to outstanding questions – 27 March 2024

Lime Down Solar Park

Stage One Consultation- Online Community Webinar

Wednesday 27 March 2024, 17:30pm – 19:00pm

Purpose of this document

This document is intended to answer unanswered questions regarding the Lime Down Solar Park proposals and/or Stage One consultation submitted to the project team during the Q&A portion of the webinar session held on 27 March 2024.

To avoid duplication and maximise the usefulness of this document, questions have been grouped together where possible.

1. How does solar compare to other means of generating energy?

A: Our goal is not to advocate for the exclusion of any particular technology from the future energy mix in Great Britain. Instead, we recognise the importance of diversifying our energy sources.

By supporting the development of alternative renewable technologies alongside solar Photovoltaic (PV) generation, for example offshore wind, we aim to ensure a robust and reliable supply of electricity to meet demand across a wide range of future scenarios, I.e. considering the possibility that long-lead time, currently unconsented or unfunded technologies are either delayed in delivery or cannot ultimately be delivered.

The National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1) published in January 2024 articulates the prudence of planning infrastructure development on a conservative basis to ensure we reach our goals for a diversified future energy mix. This supports the Government's identification "*for sustained growth in the capacity of onshore wind and solar in the next decade*" and further that a Net-Zero consistent [energy] system in 2050 "*is likely to be composed predominantly of wind and solar*" (Paragraph 3.3.20 of EN-1).

With regard to Solar PV Generation, paragraph 2.10.9 of the January 2024 National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3) details that the Government "*has committed to sustained growth in solar capacity to ensure that we are on a pathway that allows us to meet net zero emissions by 2050. As such, solar is a key part of the government's strategy for low-cost decarbonisation of the energy sector".* Indeed, paragraph 2.10.11 states the government need for deployment of "*large scale ground-mount solar deployment across the UK, looking for development mainly on brownfield, industrial and low and medium grade agricultural land".*

2. How was the land identified as suitable for a solar development?

A: Lime Down Solar Park made a grid connection application to National Grid for connection at Melksham Substation and an offer was made for 500MW. The grid connection we received for the Melksham Substation POC was not site-specific, and we have proceeded to look at sites that could accommodate a solar project to support the grid capacity available at Melksham Substation up to approximately 20 kilometres from the Substation.

We have not yet finalised the layout of Lime Down Solar Park at this early stage in the development process, as this will evolve based on the findings from environmental and technical surveys we are carrying out and feedback we receive through consultation and engagement.

We have identified the five solar park development sites as suitable for a number of reasons alongside the grid connection offer we have received. These include the following:

- They comprise large arable fields of regular shape

- Gently undulating topography makes the sites technically suitable for solar development and maximising the efficiency of panels
- Existing hedgerows, tree belts and woodland around and across the sites mean they are well screened
- Most of the sites are located in Flood Zone 1 which is defined as having low risk of flooding
- There are only a small number of residential properties in proximity of the sites and effective landscaping and screening could be employed to offset or reduce any visual impacts
- The land is predominantly classified as Grade 3b or below (moderate quality agricultural land)
- There are existing accesses for construction vehicles

When we submit our Development Consent Order (DCO) application to the Planning Inspectorate, we will outline the environmental research that guided our decision-making process regarding land suitability for solar development. This comprehensive assessment will set out the factors that justify or exclude specific parcels of land from our proposals.

3. Who will be operating Lime Down Solar Park if it is agreed?

A: The Lime Down Solar Park will continue to be operated by the statutory undertaker as specified in the Development Consent Order (DCO). If ownership of the company changes hands, all obligations related to site management and operation will still apply and must be adhered to. In essence, the responsibilities and compliance requirements remain the same regardless of ownership.

4. If built, would the project have any significant impact on local residents electricity bills?

A: The national grid is not set up in a way that allows renewable energy generated in one place to specifically benefit the area it was generated in. However, by generating 500 megawatts of clean electricity, Lime Down Solar Park will increase the amount of solar energy generation in the UK's energy mix, which helps to drive down the price of electricity as solar is currently the most affordable form of electricity in the UK (National Grid, 2024). Further, unlike other renewables that require significant investment and have lengthy build times, solar power has much lower construction costs and is the quickest method to get energy into the system, all while being a highly predictable source of power. In the long term, having more solar generation like Lime Down Solar Park will help increase the amount of affordable electricity and contribute to reducing household energy bills.

Our proposals also include plans for on-site storage facilities, known as a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), which could also help contribute to a long-term reduction of household energy bills. This is because such energy storage systems provide an important balancing service for the national grid whereby electricity generated by the solar panels can be stored at times when demand for electricity is low, then exported on when demand peaks. It can also be used to import and store electricity from the national grid until it is needed, and balance out fluctuations in power generation which improves the interaction between supply (generation) and demand (consumption). BESS helps regulate the national supply of renewable energy, allowing energy to be used more flexibly while improving the reliability, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of our home-grown supply.

As part of our proposals we are also committing to a tailored package of community benefits, and want to engage with local communities to understand how we can best contribute. Community benefits contributions associated with Lime Down Solar Park could, for example, go towards local fuel poverty charities to help directly reduce bills for those near the site who need help most.

We welcome hearing from you at any time with ideas and suggestions for locals schemes or projects we could support or deliver, and are directly inviting suggestions on this during the first stage of consultation we hold (14 March – 26 April 2024).

5. How deep and how wide would trenching be to accommodate underground cabling?

A: The electrical design for the cable routes is currently being undertaken so is not yet final and depths and widths will depend on the number of cables required and factors such as geology and hydrology. The trench for the cable route to Melksham substation will be at a depth of approximately 1.5 metres (m) and a width of 7m. The trench for the cabling between the solar arrays will be at a depth of approximately 1.5m and a width of between 2-3m.

6. What are the expected HGV routes? How many movements per day are expected?

A: We are currently considering roads that comprise the construction vehicle routes from Junctions 17 and 18 of the M4.

We will assess the potential impact on traffic, and we will produce an outline construction traffic management plan to outline how we will minimise impact on local traffic during construction and operation. This plan will provide a framework for the management of construction vehicle movements to and from the Site (including the Primary Cable Route once finalised), to ensure that the effects of the temporary construction phase on the local highway network are minimised.

The plan will also set out our proposed framework for construction access arrangements, construction vehicle routing, construction vehicle trip generation, and the management/mitigation measures. We will be able to share more details of this plan in our Preliminary Environmental

Information Report (PEIR), which will be made available prior to our second stage of consultation to help inform your consultation response.

7. How long is the construction period expected to last?

A: The overall construction is estimated to take approximately 2 years. The construction will be phased so not all parcels of land will be constructed at the same time. Further detail of the way the construction will be phased will be provided when the application for the Development Consent Order is submitted. This plan will provide a framework for the management of construction vehicle movements to and from the Site (including the Primary Cable Route once finalised), to ensure that the effects of the temporary construction phase on the local highway network are minimised.

We will be able to share more details of this plan in our Preliminary Environmental Information Report, which will be made available prior to our second stage of consultation to help inform your consultation response.

8. Will the landowners in receipt of leasing revenue be required to contribute to any community fund?

A: No. Any community fund or benefits associated with the project are at the sole discretion of the developer. Island Green Power (IGP), the developer for Lime Down Solar Park, seeks to offer a community benefits package with the renewable energy schemes that it promotes and are responsible for fully funding this package.

IGP believes that those closest to the project should benefit from it, and believe these communities are best placed to recommend what this community benefit should be. During this ongoing early stage of community consultation (Stage One, closing on 26 April), we are therefore inviting local residents and key stakeholders to make suggestions for local schemes and projects we could support, including both on-site and off-site initiatives.

We are committed to working together to identify and define community benefits and look forward to receiving feedback on this topic. To read examples of the kinds of benefits currently under consideration, please visit our project-dedicated webpage [redacted]

9. Would it be possible to deliver a project that generates less than 500 megawatts?

A: Lime Down Solar Park made a grid connection application to National Grid for connection at Melksham Substation and an offer was made for 500MW and the intention would be to fulfil the grid connection agreement if possible. The grid connection offer we received for the Melksham Substation Point of Connection was not site-specific, and we have proceeded to look at sites that

could accommodate a solar project to support the grid capacity available at Melksham Substation up to approximately 20 kilometres from the Substation.

10. How do we propose to manage pollution or hazards related to the BESS?

A: The Battery Energy Storage System (or BESS) facility proposed as part of our plans for Lime Down Solar Park will be designed to be safe, efficient and in compliance with all regulatory standards. Battery Energy Storage Systems are manufactured to meet strict safety regulations and are widely used due to their reliability and safety profile. Further, BESS technology includes various safety systems to mitigate risks, such as fire control, smoke detectors, and temperature control systems. The design of the BESS facility will be undertaken in consultation with key stakeholders including Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Environment Agency.

Because Lime Down Solar Park is classified as an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development, we are required to assess the potential significant environmental impacts of our plans in line with the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. The purpose of the EIA process is to make sure that wherever we do identify any significant effects, we then put in place appropriate measures to avoid or reduce negative impacts, while also seeking to enhance positive effects where applicable.

The Lime Down Solar Park project includes plans for the installation of BESS and we are therefore currently in the process of assessing and identifying any potential effects this may have on the environment (both positive and negative) as part of the EIA process. These assessments will examine whether there is pollution or fire hazard risk (along with other potential risks) and, if any such risks are identified, then determine appropriate mitigation for us to include as part of the design for the project. The details of this environmental work will be included in the Development Consent Order (DCO) application we submit to the Planning Inspectorate.

11. What are the factors that would lead to an unsuccessful Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) solar project application?

A: The development consenting regime for an NSIP comes under the Planning Act 2008. This means that we need to submit an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to build, operate and decommission Lime Down Solar Park and this is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), rather than the local planning authority. In the case of energy related NSIPs, PINS acts on behalf of the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.

The DCO application will include evidence of how we have met the requirements set out by the Planning Act 2008, and our DCO application could be deemed unsuccessful if PINS determines we have not satisfactorily met these requirements.

Alternatively, the Planning Inspectorate could accept the DCO which means it will then carry out an examination of our application and then make a recommendation to the Secretary of State on whether or not to grant consent. The Secretary of State will then make the final decision on whether to grant consent for Lime Down Solar Park and makes this decision at their own discretion, meaning the factors they considered are not made available to either the public or project developer. The DCO for this NSIP project could therefore be unsuccessful as a result of the Secretary of State's final decision on the application.

12: How can we be confident in the environmental findings presented by the developer?

A: As the developer of a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), it is Island Green Power's responsibility to ensure that the Development Consent Order (DCO) application for Lime Down Solar Park meets the requirements of the Planning Act 2008. These requirements include provisions for us to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of our proposals, meaning we are required to carry out extensive environmental research to identify any significant impacts (positive and negative) the plans could have on the environment. The technical consultants appointed on the developer's behalf are experts who are required to produce their findings on the basis of their own professional and technical standards.

Further, as Lime Down Solar Park is free of government subsidies, Island Green Power is responsible for funding the research associated to its projects.

Feedback we receive from the community and statutory stakeholders (more details on this below) are fed into the development design process up until the point of DCO submission, and the final results of the EIA will be set out in detail in the DCO application for the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) to consider when they decide whether or not to accept the application for examination.

During the six-month examination period, PINS will then organise a series of activities to further probe the details of the application, including the EIA. This typically involves activities such as onsite inspections, hybrid hearings (in person with online options available) and the digital submission of additional written materials from a variety of stakeholders (both statutory and non-statutory).

As defined by Government[i], statutory consultees are organisations or individuals that are legally required to be consulted on NSIPs, as listed in Schedule 1 of the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009. The Schedule also sets out the circumstances in which statutory consultees are to be consulted; for example, whereas the Environment Agency must be consulted on all NSIPs, the Office of Rail Regulation is consulted only on NSIPs which are likely to affect the rail transport industry.

We are therefore required to consult on our proposals with a number of statutory stakeholders as part of the DCO and EIA process to help ensure that any potential impacts are appropriately identified. This means bodies including the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Natural England, the Commission for Sustainable Development, the relevant fire and rescue authority, police

authority and highways authority will all be consulted on our proposals and we will use the feedback they provide to help inform and shape the design for Lime Down Solar Park, as is done for consultation feedback we receive from members of the local community.

[i] Planning Act 2008: Development Consent Order Fact Sheet. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a751191ed915d60d3b90de7/Fact_Sheet_Planning_Act_2008_DCO_Final.docx#:~:text=Statutory%20consultees%20are%20deemed%20to,take%20part%20in%20the%20Examination.

9 Webinar response to outstanding questions – 17 April 2024

Lime Down Solar Park

Stage One Consultation- Online Community Webinar

Wednesday 17 April 2024, 17:30pm – 19:00pm

Purpose of this document

This document is intended to answer unanswered questions regarding the Lime Down Solar Park proposals and/or Stage One consultation submitted to the project team during the Q&A portion of the webinar session held on 17 April 2024.

To avoid duplication and maximise the usefulness of this document, questions have been grouped together where possible.

1. Will the proposals include direct compensation to local tourism businesses and residents?

A: Our current (Stage One) proposals for Lime Down Solar Park do not include measures to provide any form of direct compensation to local businesses or residents. However, we are seeking for feedback on a community benefits package and remain open to suggestions.

Island Green Power offers a community benefits package with the renewable energy schemes that it promotes. This is because we believe those living and working closest to the proposed development should benefit from it and that local communities are the best placed to recommend what they believe these benefits should be.

Therefore, as part of this initial stage of consultation we are inviting ideas for local schemes and projects we could support – including both on-site and off-site initiatives.

Off-site initiatives could come in the form of a community benefit fund or grant, should this be of interest to local communities.

Other off-site measures we are considering include the provision of subsidised solar PV for domestic installation, improvements to existing community amenities (such as sports facilities, children's playgrounds, and village halls), or provision of electric charging points.

We are committed to working with you to identify and define community benefits, and encourage feedback from anyone who has ideas on this topic. To find out how to provide feedback please follow this link: https://www.limedownsolar.co.uk/how-to-provide-feedback

2. What previous studies have been done on how house prices may be affected by projects like Lime Down Solar Park? Will residents be compensated if housing values fall?

A: To date, there has not been any academic or Government research into the (long- or short-term) effects of solar farms on house prices in the UK.

However, our first principle is to ensure that we design a project with as little an impact as possible on nearby residential properties, including appropriate screening as well as buffer zones/offsets between proposed equipment and residential properties.

To determine what is most suitable for both public amenities and private properties in the local area we are undertaking a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA).

The LVIA is an assessment we are required to undertake to ensure we have identified any potential visual impacts associated with the development we're proposing and put in place appropriate measures to reduce them.

Where required respective of their proximity to the project, we are also committed to going beyond the requirements and plan to undertake a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment on private views and amenity. Where practicable, we will propose bespoke measures to visually reduce the potential impacts of the development for each of the properties that may be affected.

3. Are there any risks associated to the underground cabling being proposed?

A: The Development Consent Order (DCO) process is a set process determined by the Planning Inspectorate and requires that a developer must assess any potential risks or impacts from the development proposals, including the cable infrastructure required to connect the project to the National Grid. The Environmental Impact Assessment will include an assessment of risks associated with the cable route. The following National Grid sources provide further information about underground high voltage cables:

[redacted]

4. What percentage of light reaches the ground to permit growth below the panels?

A: A well-managed solar farm can be a nature reserve – helping boost and protect wildlife and extend biodiversity. As the panels are set on posts with minimal disturbance to the ground, much of the land is available to support plant and animal species. While it is too early to confirm the specific solar panels that would be installed for Lime Down Solar Park, we anticipate that the panels will be a mixture of tracker panels and fixed and the exact distance between rows of panels is yet to be confirmed. The amount of light will depend on these factors and vary depending upon the time of day and the time of year.

From November 2025, there will be a legal requirement for developers of NSIP projects to show their projects will boost biodiversity by a minimum 10 per cent. This means our plans need to ensure that local wildlife habitats are in a measurably better state than before. Lime Down Solar Park could boost local biodiversity through means such as establishing wildflower areas that provide habitats for pollinators and birds, promoting wetland habitats to reduce flood risk and support aquatic and avian life, and restoring hedgerows and native species.

To design Lime Down Solar Park in a way that boots and enhances local wildlife by delivering a net gain in biodiversity, specific examples of benefits we are looking at delivering are listed below:

- Sowing land between and under the arrays as grassland and meadow management with a mix of some areas being grazed.

- Filling gaps in existing hedgerows with additional native species to increase diversity
- Managing hedgerows to enable wildlife to benefit from them year-round.
- Maintaining appropriate vegetated buffers with native planting.
- Installing bird nest and bat boxes on trees to provide opportunities for a range of local species
- The creation of new woodland blocks and belts
- New tree planting where appropriate.

5. What are the factors under consideration in the site selection process?

A: We have selected the solar development sites after considering Government policy on new renewable energy projects. This includes examining whether they are within a viable distance of an available grid connection, have suitable levels of irradiation (sunlight) and other considerations such as environmental constraints, the distance of the sites from dwellings, agricultural quality of the land, and accessibility.

We have also engaged with landowners who have confirmed their willingness to enter into lease agreements. This explains why the proposals are not spread into much smaller areas/ across a wider expanse of space, but are instead mostly located across fields that are adjacent to one another.

Further to this, the solar park development sites were identified as suitable for a number of additional reasons:

- They comprise arable fields of regular shape.
- Gently undulating topography makes the sites technically suitable for solar development and maximising the efficiency of panels.
- Existing hedgerows, tree belts and woodland around and across the sites mean they are well screened.
- Most of the sites are located in Flood Zone 1 which is defined as having low risk of flooding.
- There are only a small number of residential properties in proximity of the sites and effective landscaping and screening could be employed to offset or reduce any visual impacts.
- There are existing accesses for construction vehicles.

Along with feedback we receive from local communities and statutory stakeholders, these are the factors under consideration as part of the site selection process. We seek to reduce potential impacts on local communities as far as is possible and remain committed to this as we continue to refine our proposals for Lime Down Solar Park.

A Site Selection report will be included in our application for development consent and this document will explain how the areas of land proposed for Lime Down Solar farm were identified and selected.

Economic viability is a key factor in the development of projects but is considered alongside a number of other factors including civil and electrical engineering, suitable and available land and environmental constraints. The site remains economically viable if the battery is located on either Land at Melksham Substation or Lime Down D.

The site selection process for Lime Down Solar Park resulted in the land being in one area, rather than multiple, smaller sites spread out across individual sites located along the cable route corridor. It is important to us to reduce the impact on local communities as far as is possible so the number of sites has been minimised.