



Meridian Solar Farm

EN010169

Volume 5

Consultation

5.1 Appendix C: Statement
of Community Consultation

APFP Regulation 5(2)(q)

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

March 2026

Table of Contents

Appendix C-1.1 Local Authority Feedback on the Draft Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC)	3
Appendix C-1.2 Statement of Community Consultation 2025	5
Appendix C-1.3 SoCC Compliance	32

Appendix C-1.1 Local Authority Feedback on the Draft Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC)

Lincolnshire County Council feedback on the draft SoCC

[Redacted]

H

I have now received comments back from colleagues within our communication team on the draft SoCC, I have copied their comments below.

I've had a look and have the following comments:

- 6.7 Some confusion over the number of online events – there are references to both one and two online events.
- 6.7 Local information points – there needs to be more options, consider other libraries in the area, for example Holbeach and Spalding. Also, community centres, options include Tonic Health's hubs in Spalding and Holbeach.
- 6.7.1 community consultation events, these seem to be spread across the area and at a range of times to allow maximum participation. However, must ensure that these venues are accessible to all.
- 6.9 "Hard to reach groups": This phrase can cause offence, as groups may be seldom heard rather than hard to reach. Consider using the phrase "seldom heard groups" instead. Other potential contacts are Tonic Health in Spalding and Holbeach. Also, Spalding and District U3s.

I note that the SoCC lists likely components of the proposed development which includes 'connection to the grid via an overhead line, likely lattice towers carrying 400kV lines' - has the overhead line option now been confirmed as your preferred approach? Should LCC have any further comments before the close of consultation these shall be issued.

Please see the below email for our new Infrastructure Office

[Redacted]

Infrastructure Officer

Lincolnshire County Council,

County Offices, Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YL

South Holland District Council feedback on the draft SoCC

[Redacted]

☺ Reply Reply All Forward ⋮

Thu 28/11/2024 14:45

[Follow up](#) - completed on 02 December 2024.

[Redacted]

Thank you for the catchup meeting this afternoon. On behalf of South Holland DC and as discussed, we have read through the draft SOCC and are happy with what has been proposed including the location and number of exhibitions and information points.

Kind regards

[Redacted]

Thank you to all the members of the public and fellow professionals for visiting our stand at the Homebuilding and Renovating Show in Harrogate. We will get back as soon as possible to all the enquiries we received and look forward to seeing you all at next years show!

Appendix C-1.2 Statement of Community Consultation 2025



Statement of Community Consultation

April 2025



Table of Contents

Glossary	3
1. Introduction	4
1.1. Purpose of this document	4
1.2. Why are we publishing this document?	4
2. The Planning Process	5
2.1. Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs)	5
3. Project Overview	6
3.1. The Developer	6
3.2. The Proposed Development	6
3.3. Order Limits	7
3.4. Environmental Impact Assessment	9
4. Consultation and Engagement Approach	10
4.1. Consultation objectives	10
4.2. Consultation approach	10
4.3. Indicative consultation timeline	11
5. Early Engagement and Non-Statutory Consultation	11
5.1. Early Engagement	11
5.2. Collaboration workshops and non-statutory consultation	12
6. Statutory Consultation	14
6.1. The Primary Consultation Zone	14
6.2. Consultation timings	15
6.3. What are we consulting on?	15
6.4. Who are we consulting?	15
6.5. How are we consulting	16
6.6. How the public will be able to participate and respond	18
6.7. Promoting the consultation	18
6.8. Wider engagement	20
6.9. Hard to reach groups	20
6.10. How to respond to the consultation	21
6.11. How we will record feedback and respond to it	21
7. Further Consultation	22

List of Tables

<i>Table 1: Schedule for statutory notices</i>	5
<i>Table 2: Summary of non-statutory consultation events</i>	12
<i>Table 3: Overview of feedback received</i>	13
<i>Table 4: List of statutory consultation documents</i>	16
<i>Table 5: List of local information points</i>	17
<i>Table 6: Overview of promotional activity</i>	18
<i>Table 7: Statutory consultation in person events</i>	19

List of Figures

<i>Figure 1: Non-statutory consultation Scheme boundary</i>	8
<i>Figure 2: Statutory consultation Scheme Boundary</i>	9
<i>Figure 3: Project timeline</i>	11
<i>Figure 4: Map of the Primary Consultation Zone</i>	14

Appendices

<i>Appendix 1: Approach to non-statutory consultation guide</i>	22
<i>Appendix 2: Primary consultation zone for launch</i>	25
<i>Appendix 3: Primary consultation zone for non-statutory consultation</i>	25
<i>Appendix 4: List of community stakeholders</i>	26

Glossary

Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ)

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) is a ministerial department of the Government of the United Kingdom.

Development Consent Order (DCO)

A Development Consent Order (DCO) is a statutory instrument granted by the Secretary of State to authorise the construction and development of a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project.

Downing Renewable Developments (DRD)

The Application is promoted by Meridian Solar Farm Ltd, a subsidiary of UK-based investment manager Downing Renewable Developments (DRD) founded by Downing LLP.

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP)

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) are large scale developments in England and Wales that need to apply for Development Consent Orders under the Planning Act 2008. The application submitted to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.

Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR)

The purpose of the PEIR is to provide early information to allow stakeholders and the local community to develop an informed view of the impacts of the development.

Primary Consultation Zone (PCZ)

The geographical area around a proposed development where stakeholders, including residents, and businesses, are directly engaged in consultation processes. These are typically people most likely to be impacted by the development.

Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC)

A formal document that outlines how a developer plans to consult with the local community about a DCO project. The SoCC is developed in consultation with local planning authorities.

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of this document

This document, known as a Statement of Community Consultation ("SoCC"), sets out how Meridian Solar Farm Limited "the Applicant", plans to consult with the local community on its proposals for the Meridian Solar Farm (hereinafter referred to as the "Scheme").

1.2. Why are we publishing this document?

The Applicant is preparing a Development Consent Order (DCO) application under the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) ("the Act") for the construction, operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning of photovoltaic (PV) solar panels and an approximate 12 to 13 km of overhead line connection into National Grid's planned Weston Marsh substation (due to be located east of Spalding, with the exact location to be confirmed by National Grid). The Scheme will also include associated infrastructure, including co-located battery energy storage systems (BESS) and inter-array connections to link together the land parcels where the solar panels are located ("the Application").

The Scheme is proposed to be located on land to the north of Crowland and east of Spalding, and is located within the administrative boundaries of Lincolnshire County Council and South Holland District Council. The Scheme would have capacity to generate up to 750 megawatts (MW) of electricity and connect to the National Electricity Transmission System (NETS).

The Scheme is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). An NSIP is a major development proposal considered by the UK Government to be of such importance that the permission to build and operate it needs to be confirmed at the national level. For energy NSIPs, this would be by the Secretary of State (SoS) for Energy Security and Net Zero via a DCO.

This document explains how the Applicant will consult with the local community, stakeholders, and interested groups during the stage of statutory consultation. Statutory consultation follows early engagement, and non-statutory consultation that took place between May – July 2024 (please see Chapter 5 for further information). The statutory consultation is an opportunity for stakeholders and members of the local community to consider and influence our proposals before we submit the Application. This SoCC outlines how people can learn more about the Scheme and engage with the process, provides an overview of what is being proposed and what is being consulted on, and the statutory pre-application consultation process.

This SoCC has been prepared in accordance with section 47 of the Act and Regulation 12 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the "EIA Regulations"). We have also referred to applicable Government guidance on pre-application consultation under the Planning Act 2008 and the Planning Inspectorate's Advice note 14 including how to engage with local communities and ensure the consultation process is clear, transparent, and meets statutory obligation.

In accordance with section 47(2) to (5) of the Act, in November 2024, in developing the SoCC we consulted with and have had regard to comments received from the following Section 43(1) local authorities:

- South Holland District Council
- Lincolnshire County Council

In accordance with section 47(6) of the Act, we will be publishing a notice in the Spalding Voice (a weekly paper with a print circulation of 14,500) providing details of where the SoCC can be inspected.

The following neighbouring local planning authorities also received the SoCC for information purposes.

- South Kesteven District Council
- Boston District Council
- King's Lynn and West Norfolk District Council
- Fenland District Council
- Peterborough City Council
- Nottinghamshire County Council
- Leicestershire County Council
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Norfolk County Council

The publication schedule, including the statutory notices published in accordance with section 47 and section 48 of the Act, is set out in **Table 1**.

Newspaper outlet	Notice	1 st publication date	2 nd publication date
Spalding Voice	S47 and S48	Thursday 17 April 2025	Thursday 24 April 2025
The Guardian	S48	Thursday 24 April 2025	N/A
London Gazette	S48	Thursday 24 April 2025	N/A

Table 1: Schedule for statutory notices

2. The Planning Process

Section 14 of the Act defines the types of development that constitute an NSIP and require development consent under Section 31.

2.1. Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs)

As the Scheme is a generating station that will have a capacity exceeding 50MW, and includes an overhead line over 2km, it is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under sections 14(1)(a) and 15(2) of the Act. Overhead lines are also considered an NSIP under sections 14(1)(b) and 16 of the Act, where the thresholds set out in section 16 are met (voltage 132kV or greater and longer than 2km). As the proposed Grid Connection will exceed these thresholds, it is to be treated as an NSIP along with the solar generating station. The consenting regime for NSIPs under the Act therefore requires the Applicant to apply for a DCO, per section 31 of the Act.

The Applicant intends to submit an application for a DCO for the Scheme under Section 37 of the Act. The Application will be submitted to the Secretary of State (via the Planning Inspectorate) who will appoint an Examining Authority to examine the Application and make recommendations to the Secretary of State (SoS) for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) pursuant to the Act. The SoS will subsequently determine whether a DCO should be granted for the Scheme.

Before submitting an application, the Act requires applicants to carry out consultation with people living in the vicinity of the land, prescribed consultation bodies, relevant statutory undertakers, and those with an interest in the land that is the subject of the application.

Early involvement of communities, local authorities and other stakeholders helps to ensure that we identify valuable information about the potential effects of the Scheme and provides an opportunity for early feedback from stakeholders to shape the Scheme's development.

Consultation ensures that potential mitigation measures can be considered and, where appropriate, built into the Applicant's designs before an application for development consent is submitted.

More information about the DCO process can be found here:

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Advice-note-8.0.pdf>

3. Project Overview

3.1. The Developer

The Application is promoted by Meridian Solar Farm Ltd, a subsidiary of UK-based investment manager DRD founded by Downing LLP. Downing LLP is a certified B-Corporation¹, focused on creating a sustainable future through investing in sectors such as renewable energy. The Applicant brings significant experience in ownership and operation of solar, wind, hydro, battery storage and other infrastructure assets, maintaining a diverse portfolio of renewable energy projects across the UK and Europe since 2010.

3.2. The Proposed Development

The Scheme would comprise the construction, operation (including maintenance) and decommissioning of photovoltaic (PV) solar panels and an approximate 12 to 13 km of overhead line connection into National Grid's planned Weston Marsh substation (due to be located east of Spalding, with the exact location to be confirmed by National Grid). The Scheme will also include associated infrastructure, including co-located battery energy storage systems (BESS) and inter-array connections to link together the land parcels where the solar panels are located.

Settlements within the surrounding area consist of small clusters of development with occasional individual properties scattered throughout. The River Welland is located to the west of the Site and the A16 runs south to north, between parcels A and B (as shown on Figure 1 below). The largest settlements nearest to the Scheme are Crowland to the southwest, Spalding to the northwest and Moulton to the northeast. Smaller settlements within the study area include Holbeach St Johns, Holbeach Drove and Whaplode Drove.

The Scheme would generate around 750MW of electricity for export to the NETS. The Scheme, if consented and developed, would have the capacity to generate energy for approximately 215,000 homes and will make a significant contribution to the country's need for low-carbon energy.

The parameters of the Scheme are not yet finalised, and will be refined as the Scheme progresses, taking into account environmental and technical factors and consultation responses. At this stage, based on an indicative site layout plan the Scheme would comprise the following key components:

- Solar PV modules;
- Solar PV module mounting structures;
- Inverters;
- Transformers;
- High voltage (HV) switchgear and control equipment (housed inside a building);
- Onsite cabling and cabling between solar PV area land parcels;

¹ In September 2022, Downing became a certified B Corporation, demonstrating commitment to the 'triple bottom line' of people, planet and profit. Downing is strongly committed to continue improving their high standards of social and environmental performance, accountability and transparency - while working towards a sustainable future for all.

- Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS);
- Onsite electrical compounds comprising of substations and control buildings;
- A spare parts storage building or enclosure;
- Fencing and security measures;
- Landscaping and biodiversity enhancements; and
- Connection to the national grid via an overhead line, using lattice towers carrying 400 kilovolt (kV) lines.

The design of the Scheme is being guided by a set of design principles:

Sustainability

- Meridian Solar will be designed to support the transition to Net Zero and assist the UK in achieving Net Zero targets by 2050. Our design will be flexible to take advantage of new sustainable and efficient technologies that emerge.

People

- Meaningful engagement will be carried out with communities and stakeholders. We will, where possible, work with local communities to understand how best to protect and enhance their environment and the local area.

Environment

- We will look to manage, protect and, where possible, enhance the landscape and design of the Scheme sensitively with consideration to the local heritage, culture and in support of its ecological value. The Scheme will utilise environmental studies to inform design and suitable mitigation measures and will be supported by a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) that details all the relevant measures.

As part of our commitment to meaningful engagement, the Applicant has sought to keep the local community up to date on the Scheme's development, from its launch in February 2024, to both phases of pre-application consultation. As the statutory consultation is undertaken in line with this SoCC, the Applicant developed an 'Approach to Consultation' (please see Appendix 1) before the non-statutory consultation in 2024 to share with SHDC officers.

3.3. Scheme boundary

The boundary for the Scheme, as shown on Figure 1 below, is within the administrative boundaries of South Holland District Council and Lincolnshire County Council. Figure 1 depicts the Scheme boundary for the non-statutory consultation. This has been updated to reflect the draft Scheme boundary for statutory consultation within this final version of the SoCC, as shown in Figure 2.

We are proposing four development areas comprising approximately 1,100 hectares (2,700 acres):

- Parcel A, Clout Drove
- Parcel B, Queen's Bank
- Parcel C, Martins Road
- Parcel D, Langary Gate Road

The land in the development areas would encompass the development of the solar panels and related infrastructure, including the grid connection, and areas reserved for potential environmental mitigation and enhancement zones, recreational areas and community benefit initiatives.

The Scheme also includes an approximate 12 to 13 km corridor for the grid connection that will connect to the NETS via an overhead line. This would be lattice towers carrying 400 kilovolt (kV) lines.

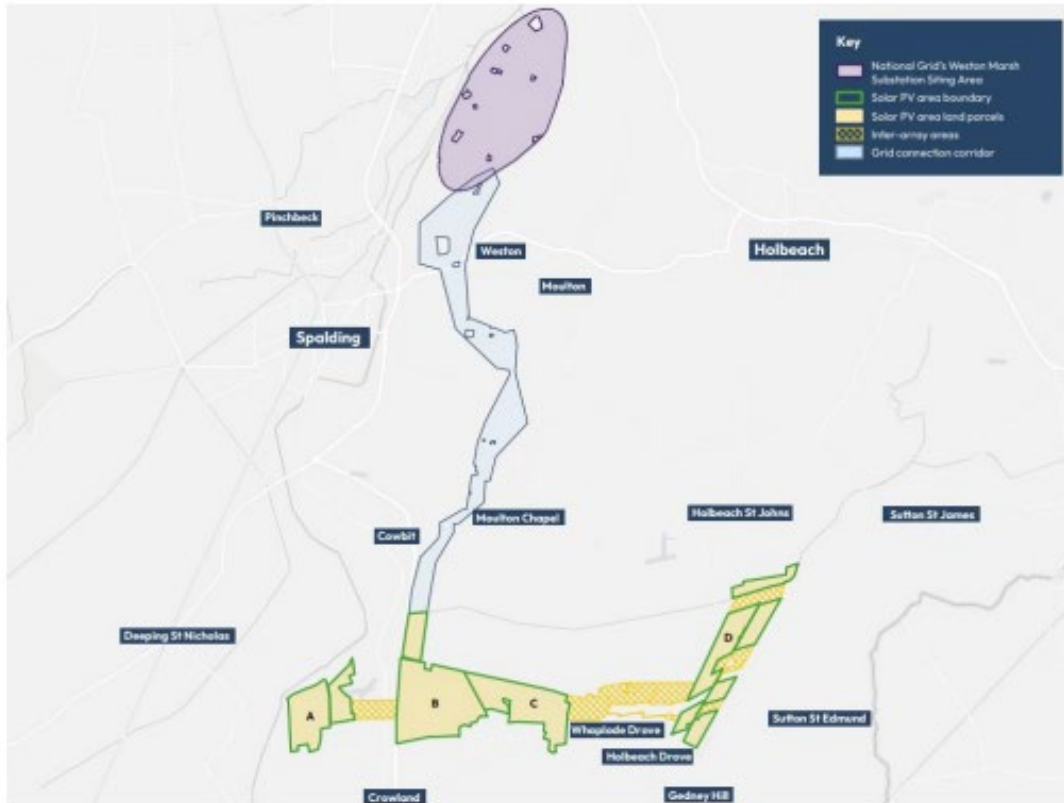


Figure 2: Statutory consultation Scheme boundary

3.4. Environmental Impact Assessment

The Scheme is a 'Schedule 2 development' under paragraph 3 of Schedule 2 of the EIA Regulations 2017, meaning that an EIA is required only if it is considered likely to have significant effects on the environment due to its nature, size or location. As there is potential for the Scheme to have significant effects on the environment, an EIA is required. This means the Applicant must assess the likely significant environmental effects of the Scheme and, where appropriate, implement mitigation measures that will prevent or reduce any significant adverse effects.

An EIA Scoping Opinion was issued by the Planning Inspectorate on 10 July 2024. This identifies the environmental issues and topics relevant to the Scheme, and which should be assessed as part of the EIA. The Scoping Opinion is available to view on the Planning Inspectorate's website at: <https://nspidocuments.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/published-documents/EN010169-000048-Scoping%20Opinion%202017%20EIA%20Regs.pdf>.

A Preliminary Environmental Information Report ('PEIR') – which contains preliminary environmental information on the likely significant effects of the Scheme – has been produced and publicised as part of the statutory consultation in accordance with section 42 of the Act. The PEIR is available to view on the Scheme website and at in person events during the statutory consultation, along with a Non-Technical Summary (NTS) which summarises the contents of the PEIR in a non-technical manner.

The PEIR builds upon the findings from the Scoping Report and the feedback received through early engagement with stakeholders. It provides preliminary environmental information on the potential environmental effects of the Scheme and any proposed mitigation to help the local community and consultation bodies to understand the likely significant effects of the Scheme and inform responses

regarding the proposals. We are inviting feedback and comments on the information presented in the PEIR as part of the statutory consultation. We will have regard to any feedback received before the DCO application and EIA are finalised for submission.

The Applicant will report on the outcomes of this process in an Environmental Statement (ES), which will be submitted as part of the Application. The ES will set out the assessment and conclusions of the EIA process. It will build on the content of the PEIR and incorporate the responses from the statutory consultation, stakeholder engagement and the results of surveys undertaken. It will also describe any changes to the Scheme and any mitigation measures that need to be implemented.

4. Consultation and Engagement Approach

In line with the requirements set out in the Act, along with the guidance in the Planning Inspectorate's Planning Act 2008: Pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects, the Applicant will be carrying out meaningful, statutory pre-application consultation and engagement with the local community in the vicinity of the Scheme as well as with statutory consultees, landowners, businesses, parish councils, elected representatives, and wider stakeholders where appropriate.

As aligned with our design principles, we will where possible, work with local communities to understand how best to protect and enhance their environment and the local area. The Applicant acknowledges that consultation is an important factor in the development of the Scheme and values the local knowledge provided in consultation responses. Throughout the pre-application process, the Applicant will seek to address feedback as part of design development, where appropriate.

4.1. Consultation objectives

The programme of consultation and engagement has four core objectives:

- to share and explain the updated proposals with a wide range of stakeholders and the public, whilst still at an early stage of the process;
- to gain insight through listening to the views of local communities and other stakeholders about the updated project proposals, whilst still at an early stage;
- to identify potential impacts of the project and take stakeholder and community input into account in developing potential mitigation strategies; and
- to provide a robust evidence base for the DCO application, enabling us to demonstrate how community and stakeholder feedback has influenced our considerations where possible.

4.2. Consultation approach

The Applicant wants to ensure that the Scheme is listening to and learning from the people who live in the area as well as wider stakeholders.

The Applicant is committed to engaging and consulting with communities and stakeholders at an early stage of the Scheme development process, giving people the opportunity to provide feedback and insight at a formative stage, ahead of more detailed design work being carried out. This commitment includes providing accessible information on the project to help inform engagement and gain feedback from stakeholders.

In order to maximise the opportunity for a wide range of stakeholders to participate in our programme of consultation and engagement, and to increase the opportunity for local views to influence our considerations, the Applicant has committed to undertake a multi-phase programme.

4.3. Indicative consultation timeline



Figure 3: Project timeline

5. Early Engagement and Non-Statutory Consultation

5.1. Early Engagement

In February 2024, the Applicant officially started undertook a programme of initial engagement to help raise awareness of the Scheme. During this stage of engagement, an informal 'Approach to Consultation' (please see Appendix 1) document was provided to officers at South Holland District Council prior to the non-statutory consultation. This document offered a brief description of the objectives of the programme and the phases of activity, along with more detailed information about the initial non-statutory phase of consultation. Feedback received on this document not only informed the approach we took to early engagement but has also been used to aid in the preparation of this SoCC to ensure consistency of approach.

This first phase of engagement aimed to:

- introduce the Scheme to the local community and stakeholders;

- engage early with the community and statutory consultees to incorporate technical advice and local knowledge into the Scheme’s development;
- brief local elected representatives and secure their support for the engagement approach;
- understand initial views and allow stakeholders to shape the Scheme through the design process; and
- provide an early indication of the Applicant’s approach to consultation and the aspects of the Scheme for which feedback was sought.

The early engagement phase of the Scheme included:

- A consultation newsletter - delivered to 4,018 addresses in the launch Primary Consultation Zone (please see Appendix 2) informing local residents of the Scheme and how they could get involved in the upcoming summer consultation.
- Launch of a Scheme website - including messaging and information about the Scheme and upcoming engagement activities. The website also contains contact details for people to get in touch with the project team, which can be found here: www.meridiansolarfarm.co.uk.
- Delivery of in-person project briefings to:
 - Sir John Hayes MP
 - Crowland Parish Council
 - Gedney Parish Council
 - Sutton St Edmund Parish Council
 - SHDC members and officers
 - LCC Leader, Deputy Leader, Ward Member, Spokes of Environment and Green Investment Committee, and officers

5.2. Collaboration workshops and non-statutory consultation

A public non-statutory consultation took place from 30 May 2024 to 11 July 2024 to provide members of the local community and key stakeholders an opportunity to learn more about the proposals and give their initial feedback at a formative stage.

During this consultation period, we received feedback and insights from various stakeholders including community members, the local authority and technical stakeholders. The feedback, suggestions and insights shared have helped inform the next stage of the consultation process - the statutory consultation. This consultation period included three in person events, where project specialists from the planning, environmental, communications, and engineering teams were available to answer detailed questions as they arose. A summary of events can be seen in Table 2 and an overview of the consultation feedback received can be found in Table 3.

Date	Time	Location	Attendance
Friday 14 June	14:00 - 20:00	Crowland Pavilion, Peterborough PE8 9QR	85
Saturday 15 June	10:00 - 16:00	Moulton Village Hall, Broad Ln, Moulton, Spalding PE12 6PN	81
Monday 24 June	14:00 - 20:00	Sutton St Edmund Village Hall, 273 Broadgate, Sutton St Edmund, Spalding PE12 0LR	48
Monday 1 July	18:00 - 19:00	Webinar - held online on Livestorm	19

Table 2: Summary of non-statutory consultation events

Feedback Type	Breakdown	Amount Received
Feedback Form	Digital	339
	Hard Copy (Freepost; events; scanned and submitted via email)	27
Communications Lines	Project inbox (Emails)	55
	Letters (Freepost address; events)	5
	Freephone information line	1
Total		427

Table 3: Overview of feedback received

The Applicant also held a collaboration workshop on 5 June 2024 which took place prior to the six-week non-statutory consultation period. The workshop session provided an opportunity for the Applicant to introduce the red line boundary areas and further details about the proposals, clarify the consultation approach and create focused engagement. The purpose and aims of the co-design workshop were to:

- bring parish councils and key stakeholders together in a workshop format;
- share knowledge and understanding of the local area, including existing constraints that the Applicant should be aware of;
- understand stakeholders' preferences to be considered in the ongoing design process;
- increase awareness of the sites in question and location of constraints in the area, including what stakeholders like and dislike about the area and their priorities for future development;
- help stakeholders understand the site selection along with refinement process and rationale; and
- identify preferred design features and help shape the scheme's design ahead of statutory consultation.

A full summary of the non-statutory consultation can be found in the Meridian Solar non-statutory consultation report (October 2024) which can be found on the Scheme website (www.meridiansolarfarm.co.uk/documents).

To help facilitate and guide the engagement with the local community, the Primary Consultation Zone (PCZ) comprising homes and businesses surrounding the proposed Scheme boundary was extended for non-statutory consultation. This was to account for the updated Scheme boundary, which included options for the connection corridors between the land parcels and National Grid's siting area for its Weston Marsh substation. A consultation newsletter was delivered to 6,810 addresses to explain how local residents could take part in the non-statutory consultation. The PCZ in place for the non-statutory consultation was agreed with South Holland District Council and can be found in Appendix 3.

6. Statutory Consultation (24 April 2025 to 8 June 2025)

6.1. The Primary Consultation Zone

For this statutory consultation, the connection corridor boundary north of the A151 has extended slightly further west. As a result, the PCZ has also been extended west up to the A16. The updated PCZ can be seen in Figure 4, with the updated Scheme boundary presented in purple and PCZ in red.

In advance of any mailings to the PCZ, elected members of Parish, District, County and Constituency offices were notified via email. This is to ensure stakeholders are kept up to date on the projects development, and know in advance materials entering the public domain.

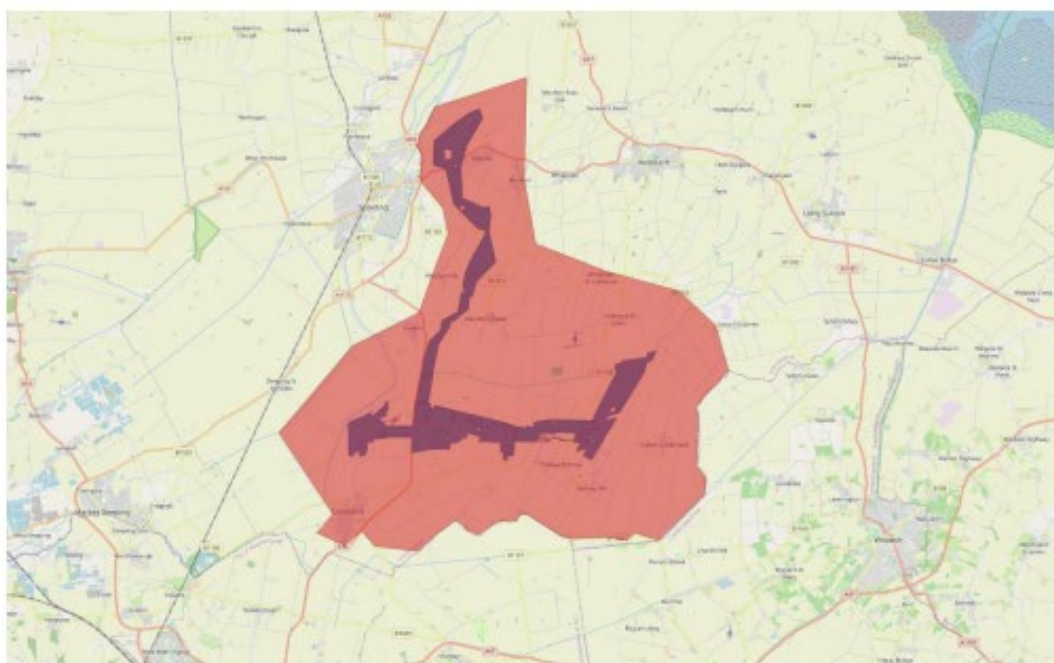


Figure 4: Map of the Primary Consultation Zone

The PCZ:

- extends up to 2km from the proposed Scheme boundary;
- incorporates the core settlements of Crowland, Cowbit, Weston, Moulton, Moulton Chapel, Whalpole St Catherine, Whaplode Drove, Holbeach Drove, Gedney Hill, and Sutton St Edmund; and
- follows existing landmarks and roads, thereby avoiding intersecting residential streets, or established communities.

We have identified 6,828 addresses in total within the PCZ that will be directly notified. The PCZ was developed to be proportionate to the size and potential impact of the Scheme.

All homes and businesses within the PCZ were sent a copy of the newsletter via Royal Mail delivery service at the start of the statutory consultation period.

We recognise that people who live and work beyond the PCZ may have an interest in our proposals and may wish to participate in the statutory consultation. We are committed to making sure individuals, communities, and organisations can participate in the consultation and will raise awareness using several

methods such as advertising and press releases in the local media, and engagement with Parish and Town Councils. See Section 6.7 - Promoting the consultation - for further details.

6.2. Consultation timings

Our statutory consultation will run for six weeks from Thursday 24 April to Sunday 8 June 2025. This is a six-week period, in excess of the statutory minimum period of 28 days required by the Act. All responses to the consultation must be received by 11:59pm on Sunday 8 June 2025.

Held in accordance with Section 42 of the Act, this consultation provides an opportunity for the Applicant to present proposals for the Scheme for a formal response. More details on what we will be consulting on and how we propose to consult are included below.

6.3. What are we consulting on?

The Applicant will be seeking feedback on all aspects of the Scheme. This will involve inviting comments on topics including, but not limited to:

- The overall Scheme
 - Our updated plans for the land parcel sites, including the indicative location of equipment and infrastructure within each
 - Our connection corridor between the land parcels and connection at National Grid's proposed Weston Marsh substation
 - Our indicative alignment for the overhead line within the grid connection corridor
 - Measures we are proposing to reduce the impacts associated with the construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of the Scheme
 - Suggestions on how Meridian Solar can benefit the local community
- Any other feedback on our work so far or local issues and sensitivities of which we should be aware.

The primary aim of this statutory consultation is to ensure that that the community, landowners, stakeholders, and technical consultees have a formal opportunity to understand and feed into our proposals before we submit our DCO application.

6.4. Who are we consulting?

Anyone who is interested in the proposals is welcome to take part. The Applicant welcomes all views and will have regard to them before the DCO application is submitted.

Under Section 47 of the Act, the Applicant has a duty to consult people living in the vicinity of the land that is the subject of the Application. In consultation with host local authorities, we have developed the PCZ, as shown in Figure 4.

In addition to the PCZ, the Applicant will consult the following groups:

- Local Authorities;
- Residents and businesses;
- Landowners with interest in the Scheme;
- Parish Councils;
- Community groups;
- Environmental groups in the vicinity of the Scheme;
- Schools and colleges within the vicinity of the Scheme;
- Seldom heard groups;
- Statutory consultees;

- Non-statutory consultees; and
- Members of Parliament and Local Government.

A list of community groups can be found in Appendix 4.

6.5. How are we consulting

During statutory consultation, we are using a range of methods to ensure that the consultation is inclusive and accessible for a broad range of stakeholder audiences. In addition to making information available online, we will upload two online information presentations to the Scheme website during the consultation period. The first presentation will provide an overview of our proposals and where to find out more information. The second presentation will be uploaded after the in person events and will provide a summary of the main questions we were asked and responses to them.

In line with our hybrid approach, non-digital methods are being used alongside the digital medium to provide alternative means for consultees to engage with the Scheme. In person consultation events are also planned to be held within the vicinity of the site during statutory consultation.

The following documents are available as part of the consultation:

Document	Detail
Consultation Newsletter	<p>A Consultation Newsletter providing a high-level overview of the Scheme, of the consultation events and how people can get involved. The newsletter indicates where the relevant project information can be found and publicises the consultation events, including locations, dates, and times.</p> <p>This has been sent to all homes and businesses within the PCZ and is available on the consultation website, at our consultation events, information points, and on request by post.</p>
Consultation Information Booklet	<p>The Consultation Information Booklet includes the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • summary of the proposals we are consulting on; • details of how people can take part in the consultation; • information on the potential benefits and impacts of the Scheme; • how we propose to mitigate any potential impacts; and • and the timeline for the proposals. <p>Hard copies of the Consultation Information Booklet are available at our consultation events, information points, and on request by post.</p>
Feedback Form	<p>A Feedback Form has been prepared to allow people to provide feedback on the proposals. The questionnaire can be completed online or downloaded if required and sent into the consultation via Freepost.</p> <p>Paper copies of the Feedback Form will be available at our consultation events, information points, and on request by post.</p>
Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) and non-	<p>The PEIR contains a description of the Scheme, a preliminary assessment of the likely significant environmental effects, and the initial strategies to mitigate these effects. The PEIR is based on information available and the assessments will be developed once further detail is</p>

technical summary (NTS)	<p>available and reported within the Environmental Statement submitted with the DCO application.</p> <p>An NTS of the PEIR are available for download from the project website.</p> <p>Paper copies of the PEIR and NTS are available at our consultation events and in one local information point, Crowland Library, for reference.</p>
Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC)	This SoCC document is available online as part of the consultation and is available in paper format at our consultation events and in one local information point, Crowland Library, for reference.

Table 4: List of statutory consultation documents

At the start of the consultation period, copies of consultation information booklets, feedback forms and newsletters were deposited in local information points located in the vicinity of the Scheme. Our SoCC, NTS and full PEIR are available in printed format for inspection at the information point: Crowland Library. All of the locations and opening times are as follows:

Venue	Opening hours	Materials available
Crowland Library, Hall Street, Crowland PE6 0EW	<p>Tuesday and Thursday: 9.30am to 12.30pm and 2pm to 5pm</p> <p>Saturday: 10am to 1pm</p>	<p>To takeaway Consultation Information Booklet Consultation Feedback Form Consultation Newsletter</p> <p>For reference only PEIR NTS SoCC</p>
Spalding Library, Victoria Street, Spalding PE11 1EA	<p>Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday: 9am to 5pm</p> <p>Thursday: 9am to 6pm</p> <p>Saturday: 9am to 1pm</p>	<p>To takeaway Consultation Information Booklet Consultation Feedback Form Consultation Newsletter</p>
Holbeach Library, Co-Op Store, 5 Fleet Street, Holbeach, Spalding PE12 7AX	<p>Monday to Friday: 9am to 5pm</p> <p>Saturday: 9am to 12 noon</p>	<p>To takeaway Consultation Information Booklet Consultation Feedback Form Consultation Newsletter</p>
Tonic Health Centre Spalding, 6 Broadgate House, Westlode Street, Spalding PE11 2AF	<p>Monday and Thursday: 10am to 7pm</p> <p>Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday: 10am to 3pm</p>	<p>To takeaway Consultation Information Booklet Consultation Feedback Form Consultation Newsletter</p>
Tonic Health Centre Holbeach, Holbeach Hub, Boston Road South, Holbeach PE12 7LR	<p>Monday and Thursday: 10am to 7pm</p> <p>Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday: 10am to 3pm</p>	<p>To takeaway Consultation Information Booklet Consultation Feedback Form Consultation Newsletter</p>

Table 5: List of local information points

Venue opening times are correct at the time of publication. We recommend contacting the venue to check the opening times before visiting, especially over bank holidays.

The consultation materials are available in hard copy for individuals at no extra charge (except the PEIR and NTS, hard copies of which can be requested for a charge of £0.35 per page to cover printing and posting costs). If you require this information in an alternative format, such as Braille, large print or alternative languages, please contact us using the details in this SoCC.

6.6. How the public will be able to participate and respond

The public will be able to participate in, and respond to, the consultation through:

- three community drop-in events hosted in an exhibition format at locations across the consultation zone;
- two online information presentations, to learn about the Scheme and consultation materials;
- a dedicated consultation website;
- an interactive Scheme map, which is a digital map hosted on the website for users to engage with elements of the Scheme by zooming, dragging and clicking to reveal more information;
- information points at community venues to host copies of consultation materials and signposting to feedback mechanisms; and
- a project contact centre, including a dedicated email address, phone number and Freepost.

6.7. Promoting the consultation

The Applicant is using a variety of methods to make people aware of the Scheme and advertise the consultation.

Method	Detail
Consultation newsletter	All residents, local businesses, and communities within the PCZ have been notified of the start of statutory consultation through a consultation newsletter. The newsletter was also be issued by email to wider consultees, including community groups and seldom heard groups (see Appendix 4).
Press release	A local media press release would provide wider notification to local stakeholders of the consultation events, reaching stakeholders outside the consultation mailing zone. The press release would be briefed into local and regional media outlets.
Emails	Emails were be sent to stakeholders informing them of the statutory consultation, upcoming events, how to request further information, and how to feedback. This will allow stakeholders to engage with the consultation and to share the consultation information among their networks, such as with local constituents or group members.
Scheme website	The Scheme website was updated on the launch of the statutory consultation. This update includes details of consultation events, consultation materials, and information on how to feed back on the Scheme proposals. This will allow stakeholders to engage fully with the consultation, either in person or online.
Statutory notices and adverts	Statutory notices to publicise the consultation and the SoCC will be published in local and national news publications.

	<p>We are running adverts in the local media during the consultation period. The adverts are designed in a clear, accessible format, clearly communicating what the consultation is about, when it is running and how to take part.</p> <p>We have also contacted local parish councils and invited them to share the advert through their own social channels.</p>
Information points	Hard copies of the consultation materials are available to takeaway or view for reference in local information points, in line with in Table 5.
Site notices	Notices are being placed in publicly accessible locations within the Scheme boundary to notify of the consultation.
In person consultation events and online information presentations	We are holding three in person for anyone with an interest in the Scheme to attend, learn about our proposals and provide their initial feedback. In person events are being held at venues within the PCZ and publicised alongside online events in the Scheme launch newsletter, site notices, adverts and press releases. We will also upload two online information presentations to the Scheme website during the consultation period. The first presentation will provide an overview of our proposals and where to find out more information. The second presentation will be uploaded after the in person events and will provide a summary of the main questions we were asked and responses to them.
Stakeholder briefings & previews	Briefings with key political stakeholders have been offered to provide an opportunity for early feedback and input. Briefings would be conducted either in person or remotely online. The briefings were offered to key affected stakeholders including Lincolnshire County Council, South Holland District Council, the host Member(s) of the UK Parliament, host ward councillors, portfolio holders and host parish councils.

Table 6: Overview of Promotional Activity

6.7.1. Community consultation events

We are holding three in person public consultation events in the local area, providing consultees with an opportunity to meet the team, learn more about the proposals and ask any questions they may have. Key information about the Scheme will be provided on large consultation boards and members of the project team will be on hand to discuss the Scheme and answer questions.

We will also upload two online information presentations to the Scheme website during the consultation period. The first presentation will provide an overview of our proposals and where to find out more information. The second presentation will be uploaded after the in person events and will provide a summary of the main questions we were asked and responses to them.

To ensure a balanced split of locations, events are planned to be held at the following venues:

Venue	Date	Time
Sutton St Edmund Village Hall, 273 Broadgate, Spalding PE12 OLR	Saturday 10 May 2025	10:30 - 16:30
Crowland Snowden Pavilion, Thorney Road, Peterborough PE8 9QR	Wednesday 21 May 2025	14:00 - 20:00
Weston Village Hall, Small Drove, Spalding PE12 6HU	Thursday 22 May 2025	14:00 - 20:00

Table 7: Statutory consultation in person events

Details are correct at the time of publication and are unlikely to change. Any updates will be reflected on the Scheme website, which we recommend to check for the most current details before attending.

Events will be open for six hours, with one event held on a Saturday, and week-day event times running until 8pm to allow people to attend outside of normal working hours.

6.7.2. Scheme contact channels

In addition to the methods described above, people will be able to find out about the consultation, ask questions and request documents through the Scheme Freephone number and email address which have remained the same from the non-statutory consultation. People will also be able to submit feedback to the project email address and Freepost address.

Contact channels for the project are as follows:

- Calling 0800 652 6120 (9:00am to 5:30pm, Monday to Friday);
- Emailing enquiries@meridiansolar.co.uk; and
- Writing to the project team at Freepost DOWNING MERIDIAN (no stamp required).

6.8. Wider engagement

Ongoing engagement has been undertaken ahead of the launch of the consultation with relevant stakeholders including local authorities and MPs, technical stakeholders such as Natural England, Historic England and the Environment Agency, along with local interest groups, residents, and landowners who get in touch.

All relevant local and parish councils, elected members for the county, and MPs were contacted at the launch of the consultation and will be kept informed about the proposals. They were also encouraged to share information about the consultation with members of their constituencies or local communities.

6.9. Seldom heard groups

It is important to ensure that consultation is inclusive and enables participation from a wide range of audiences, including those who are seldom heard in public. Seldom heard groups are defined as being inaccessible to most traditional and conventional methods of consultation. To ensure that seldom heard groups are encouraged to get involved in the consultation, the materials are prepared to be accessible and clear.

Examples of seldom heard groups include:

- young people;
- working people with limited time;
- people with visual impairments;
- people with hearing impairments;
- people with limited mobility; and
- geographically isolated individuals or communities.

We are seeking to engage with seldom heard groups by:

- holding events at a variety of times, including evenings and a weekend, to enable participation from people with different time commitments;
- making provision for people who do not have access to the internet or are isolated by sending a community newsletter to every address in the PCZ and making key materials such as the consultation information booklet and feedback form available at information points;

- choosing accessible venues for public information point and in person events, where possible, side rooms at venues will be utilised to allow communication in a quiet environment;
- providing materials in alternative formats such as Braille on request;
- contacting local community and voluntary organisations including parish councils and schools with Scheme information and encouraging them to promote the consultation through their own existing communication channels; and
- providing a variety of communication channels including a Freephone number, email address and Freepost address for those seeking information.

We will liaise with local organisations representing seldom heard groups to ensure accessibility to the consultation and that materials can be made available in the appropriate formats.

6.10. How to respond to the consultation

Feedback to the consultation should be submitted in writing or online to the by 11:59pm on Sunday 8 June 2025.

Consultation responses can be submitted in the following ways:

- online – by completing the online feedback form, which can be accessed via the project website: www.meridiansolarfarm.co.uk;
- at an in person consultation event – attendees at consultation events can complete a paper copy of a feedback form can be provided to be filled in and handed to a member of the project team or posted back to us via Freepost;
- at an information point – hard copies of the feedback form are available at the information points; and
- via a request at the community contact centre – requests for paper copies of the feedback form can be made via the community contact centre channels listed below.
 - Calling 0800 652 6120 (9:00am to 5:30pm, Monday to Friday)
 - Emailing enquiries@meridiansolar.co.uk
 - Writing to the project team at Freepost DOWNING MERIDIAN (no stamp required)
- Submitting comments via email – Anyone can share their views by submitting their comments via email to or in writing to the Freepost address during the consultation dates.

6.11. How we will record feedback and respond to it

The Applicant will have regard to all feedback received during the consultation period. All feedback will be processed into a secure database, read and then analysed. Thematically similar comments will be identified and grouped together into 'issues'. All comments per issue will then be summarised and considered by the Applicant. The team will consider this as part of the ongoing design process and assess how potential impacts of the Scheme could be managed and mitigated, while taking onboard suggestions where appropriate.

A Consultation Report will be produced as part of our application for development consent, which will be submitted as part of the Application. This document will set out how the Applicant has had regard to the feedback from the consultation, including where it has shaped and influenced the proposals. Responses submitted during the statutory consultation will be summarised and themes will be responded to within the Consultation Report and included within the document. All personal details will be redacted. We will take reasonable care to comply with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation and the Planning Inspectorate's Privacy Policy.

7. Further Consultation

If, following the statutory consultation, we consider it is necessary to undertake further localised, targeted or supplementary consultation, this would be undertaken, so far as relevant and proportionate, in accordance with the principles and methods set out in this SoCC.

Appendices

1. Approach to non-statutory consultation guide

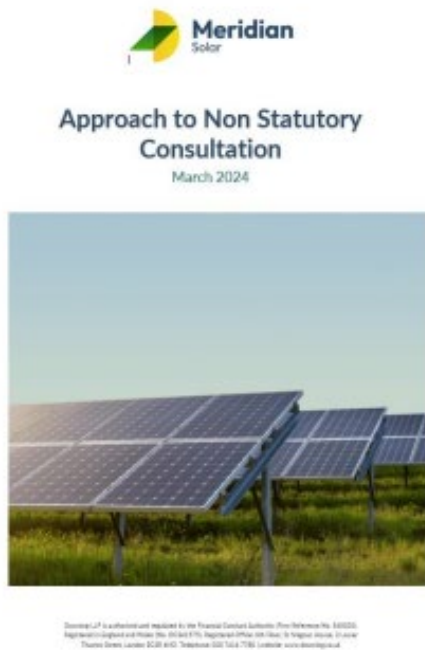


Table of Contents

Table of Contents	3
1. Meridian Solar Farm – Approach to Non-Statutory Consultation	2
1.1 Introduction	3
1.2 The Development Consent Order (DCO) Process	4
1.3 Consultation Date	4
1.4 Project Timeline – Key Dates	5
1.5 Our Approach to Consultation	5
2. Non-Statutory Consultation	6
2.1 Consultation workshop	7
2.2 Invites	7
2.3 Public Engagement	8
3. How we Use Feedback	8

1. Meridian Solar Farm – Approach to non-statutory Consultation

The purpose of this document is to outline how Downing Heremule Developments LLP intend to engage with local communities and key stakeholders throughout the first phase of the pre-application process for Meridian Solar Farm (the Project). This document is intended to provide an outline of the Applicant's approach to non-statutory consultation. The Applicant welcomes feedback from the Local Planning Authority (LPA) on the proposed approach to inform its approach to the non-statutory consultation prior to the development of the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC), which will set out its approach to statutory consultation, in accordance with Section 47 of the Planning Act 2008 (the Act). This document has been prepared in addition to the statutory requirement for the Applicant to produce the SoCC.

1.1 Introduction

The Applicant is preparing a Development Consent Order (DCO) application under the Act for a new solar farm, battery energy storage scheme, grid connection route, and associated infrastructure located within the administrative boundaries of South Holland District Council (SHDC) and close to the boundaries of Fenland District Council (FDC) and Peterborough City Council (PCC).

In line with the requirements of the Act, secondary legislation made under the Act, guidance on the pre-application process (D33) prepared by Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (in its then role) and the Planning Inspectorate's Advice Notes on Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP), we will carry out pre-application consultation and engagement with the local community in the vicinity of the proposed Project as well as landowners, businesses, local planning authorities, Parish Councils, elected representatives and other stakeholders.

The proposed Project is situated to the northeast of **Cambridge**, to the south of Spalding and is comprised of several separate land parcels as shown in the consultation zone below.

The Project would also include a grid connection of up to approximately 12km, being to a 400kV substation at Weston Marsh, potentially via overhead lines. As these lines are developed further, we will ensure that those affected by the proposed route for the grid connection will be included as part of the engagement as part of the Project.

Meridian Solar Farm would:

- be a utility scale solar farm and co-located battery storage project that it is anticipated could contribute up to 750 megawatts (MW) to the UK's energy security and Net Zero targets.
- increase biodiversity and enhance existing ecology, to achieve a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and maintain opportunities for nature recovery, and
- include provision of additional associated infrastructure such as cabling and vehicle access, necessary to facilitate the proposed development.

1.2 The Development Consent Order (DCO) Process

As the proposed generation capacity of the solar farm exceeds 50 MW, the Project is an NSIP and the consenting regime comes under the Act, requiring the Applicant to apply for a DCO.

The Meridian Solar Farm DCO application would be examined by an independent Examining Authority appointed by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero (Secretary of State) who would make a recommendation on whether the application should be granted or not to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State makes the final decision on a DCO application.

expecting statutory consultation to take place in Winter 2024, and this will be accompanied by a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR). The DCO application will be submitted in 2025.

The Applicant will provide regular project updates to local authorities ahead of the commencement of each of these consultation milestones, including further details (i.e. dates and timings).

Engagement from the non-statutory consultation will help to shape proposals ahead of statutory consultation alongside the environmental and design work undertaken by the Applicant.

1.3 Our Approach to Consultation

The Applicant is committed to engaging and consulting with communities and stakeholders from an early stage of the Project, giving stakeholders the opportunity to input into the Project's development from a formative stage.

Through this engagement, the Applicant will gain a greater understanding of the issues that are important to key stakeholders and local communities, using this knowledge to help develop the Project. We will report on how we have had regard to their views and where appropriate, show how these have influenced the development of the Project, following the non-statutory and statutory consultation. Equally, where it has not been possible to adopt specific feedback or views, we will explain the reasons why this is the case.

1.3 Consultation Zone

We will map a Primary Consultation Zone (PCZ) for our engagement activities at all stages of the pre-application consultation.

A PCZ will be identified for the non-statutory consultation which will include all properties that lie within at least 2km of the proposed project (and part of boundary) and at least 500m of the non-statutory cable route search corridor. Where appropriate, the PCZ will be extended to include whole streets and postcodes rather than discrete households or neighbourhoods (where appropriate). All relevant stakeholders within this area will be consulted and each residential and business address will be contacted directly via a letter through post. Due to the relatively sparse nature of land parcels for this project, additional regard may be given by the Applicant to reflect this when extending the PCZ further beyond the proposed project boundary, to ensure all potentially affected addresses are covered.

Below please find an initial map of the PCZ that was used for the public launch of the project. This will be expanded to include the cable route search corridor when available.



The PCZ will be reviewed and amended for statutory consultation which will be set out in the SoCC will be developed in consultation with SHDC, FDC and PCC.

We are committed to ensuring that people in a wider consultation area are notified by advertising in local media (The Spalding and South Holland Voice, Spalding Today, Lincolnshire Live and Lincolnshire Free Press), and using social media, and will work with local authorities, including parish and district councils to advertise and promote the consultation.

1.4 Project Timeline – Key Dates

The project was publicly launched on 15 February 2024. The Applicant will submit a request for a Scoping Opinion from the Secretary of State in Summer 2024, which will be accompanied by a Scoping Report. The non-statutory consultation will also take place in late Spring 2024. The Applicant is

2. Non-Statutory Consultation

The non-statutory consultation for Meridian Solar Farm will take place in late spring 2024.

During this phase, we first will hold collaboration workshops with key stakeholders to understand what technical, design and environmental considerations are important to them. This knowledge will be used to develop and shape the Project. These collaboration workshops will allow for a more meaningful and effective initial period of engagement with these stakeholders on the Project.

This approach is being proposed in addition to consultation with the wider public on the Project.

2.1 Collaborative workshops

Collaborative workshops will have the following aims:

- bring community representatives and key stakeholders together in a workshop format.
- share knowledge and understanding of the local area, including any existing constraints that the Applicant should be aware of.
- establish preferences of stakeholders for the proposed development which, where appropriate, will be considered within the design process.
- increase awareness of the site(s) in question as well as the nature and location of relevant considerations, including what stakeholders like and dislike about the area and priorities for future development.
- increase stakeholder understanding as to what considerations determine the site selection and refinement process (including environmental, land ownership and grid connection), and
- identify preferred design features and help inform the evolution of the project ahead of statutory consultation.

2.2 Invites

We are proposing a series of collaborative workshops that seek to involve stakeholders across the local community alongside political and technical consultees.

The proposed stakeholder list will therefore include:

Stakeholder	Type of stakeholder
South Holland District Council: Leader, Deputy Leader, Lead Cabinet Member for the Environment, Lead Member of Planning and Members of the Planning Committee	Political
Local Ward Member	Political
Local and neighbouring WPs	Political
Parish Councils – Cambridge , West, Suttern St Edmund, Dalway, Gathay Hill, Cambridge , Cambridge , Holbeck, Long Suttern, Suttern, Westwick, Cambridge , Suttern, Suttern St James, The Cambridge , Cambridge Library and Weston Parish Councils	Political
Lincolnshire County Council	Political
Community interest groups (such as Healthy Fenland Project, Volunteer Garden Partners)	Community
Local environmental interest groups (such as Fenland and West Norfolk Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace)	Technical

Local, regional and national technical stakeholders (such as South Holland Business Association, Natural England)	Technical
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------

2.3 Public Engagement

Early public engagement activities will include:

- non-statutory public consultation
- in-person events and online webinars
- dedicated community relations contact centre; and
- publicity methods specific to the PCZ and WCA (please see section 1.3 above)

All stakeholders will be able to engage with us throughout the non-statutory consultation process using the dedicated phone line, project email address and FREEDPOST address.

Throughout the non-statutory consultation process, we will post updates on our project website: <http://www.meridiansolarfarm.com>. The latest information about Meridian Solar Farm and upcoming engagement activities as well as contact details will all be readily available on the website.

3. How we Use Feedback

Feedback will be reviewed and considered to understand key themes from stakeholders and the local community. The Applicant will clearly demonstrate how feedback gathered throughout the non-statutory consultation process has helped shape the plans for the Project.

Feedback will be received via:

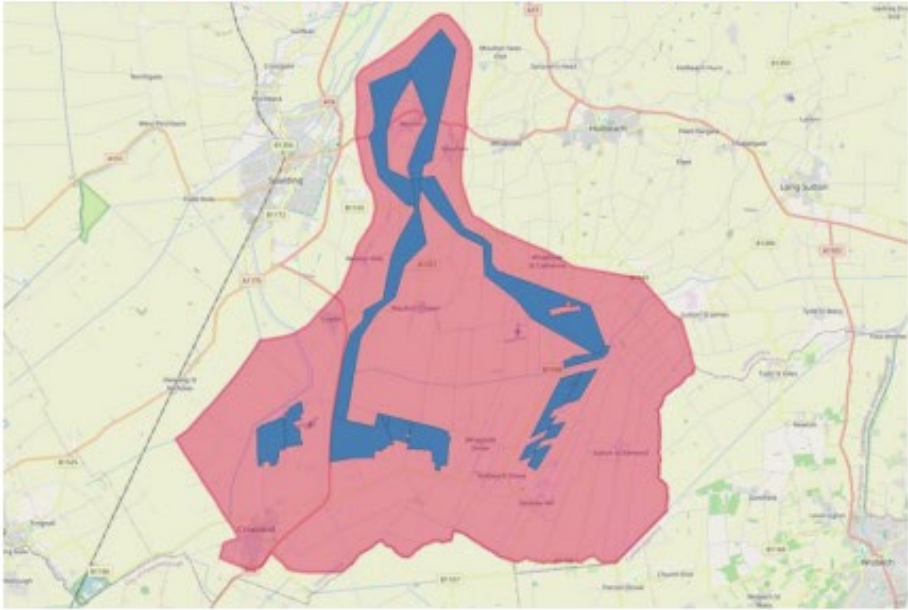
- hard copy feedback forms returned at events or via FREEDPOST;
- online feedback; and
- email feedback.

We will report on how non-statutory consultation has impacted the development of the Project before the statutory consultation. When preparing our application, a Consultation Report will be produced and submitted. The Consultation Report will set out how feedback gathered during consultation has shaped and influenced the final proposals. All responses submitted during the pre-application consultation will be responded to within the Consultation Report, any responses that are published within the Consultation Report will have all personal details redacted.

2. Primary Consultation Zone - for project launch



3. Primary Consultation Zone - for non-statutory consultation



4. Community stakeholders

Environment group for Fenland - Friends of the Earth
Local Energy Advice Partnership
Sustainability/ conservation group for the whole of the Fens
Getting It Sorted
Lincolnshire Bird Club
Volunteer Centre Fenland
Healthy Fenland Project
Whitemill Environment fund
Lincolnshire community and voluntary service
South Holland District council environmental services
Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust
Friends of Queen Elizabeth Park
Most People Campaign
South Holland Business Association
Lincoln ECO society
Age UK Cambridge and Peterborough
Age UK Lincoln and South Lincolnshire
Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust
Gosberton Community Action Team
Spalding & District Wildfowlers Association Limited
National Trust - Peckover House and Garden
Lincolnshire chamber of commerce
Greater Lincolnshire LEP
Invest in North Lincolnshire
Business Lincolnshire
Social Enterprise East Midlands
Tonic Health Spalding
Tonic Health Holbeach
Spalding and District u3a

Appendix C-1.3 SoCC Compliance

Section of SoCC	SoCC Commitment	Compliance
SoCC		
1.2	Consult with and have had regard to comments received from South Holland District Council and Lincolnshire County Council authorities on the SoCC.	A 28-day consultation was held with local authorities on the SoCC between 31 October and 29 November 2024. All comments received were considered and addressed within the final version of the SoCC that was published at the launch of the stage two consultation.
1.2	Publish a notice in the Spalding Voice to provide details of where the SoCC can be inspected.	The SoCC publication schedule was published, in accordance with section 47 and 48 of the Act in the following publications: Section 47 and 48 notice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spalding Voice (Thursday 17 April 2025 and Thursday 24 April 2025) Section 48 notice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Guardian (Thursday 24 April 2025) London Gazette (Thursday 24 April 2025)
1.2	Neighbouring local planning authorities will receive the SoCC for information purposes only.	The SoCC was shared with the following neighbouring local planning authorities for information purposes:

Section of SoCC	SoCC Commitment	Compliance
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Kesteven District Council • Boston Borough Council • King’s Lynn and West Norfolk District Council • Fenland District Council • Peterborough City Council • Nottinghamshire County Council • Leicestershire County Council • Cambridgeshire County Council • Norfolk County Council.
Consultation		
6.1	In advance of any mailings to the PCZ, elected members of Parish, District, County and Constituency offices were notified via email.	An email was issued to elected members of Parish, District, County and Constituency offices on 24 April 2025 to confirm that the consultation period had opened and included a link to all consultation materials.
6.1	The 6,828 addresses that were identified in the PCZ will be directly notified about the consultation.	<p>Under Section 47 of the Act, the Applicant has a duty to consult people living in the vicinity of the land that is required for the Application.</p> <p>All properties within PCZ were sent a copy of the newsletter via Royal Mail delivery service at</p>

Section of SoCC	SoCC Commitment	Compliance
		<p>the start of the stage two consultation period.</p> <p>The Applicant notes that the PCZ increased from 6,810 addresses during the stage one consultation. This change reflects an extension to the connection corridor boundary north of the A151, which was extended slightly further west.</p>
6.2	<p>The stage two consultation will run for six weeks from 24 April to 8 June 2025.</p>	<p>The stage two consultation took place from 24 April until 8 June 2025. This is in excess of the statutory minimum period of 28-days required by the Act.</p>
6.3	<p>The Applicant will seek feedback on all aspects of the Scheme</p>	<p>A comprehensive 12-page feedback form was developed to encourage comments on all key aspects of the Scheme. This included, but was not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General comments on the overall Scheme • The updated plans for the land parcel sites, including the indicative location of equipment and infrastructure within each • The connection corridor between the land parcels and connection at National Grid’s proposed Weston Marsh substation

Section of SoCC	SoCC Commitment	Compliance
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The indicative alignment for the overhead line within the grid connection corridor • The measures proposed to reduce the impacts associated with the construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of the Scheme • Suggestions on how Meridian Solar can benefit the local community; and • Any other feedback or local issues and sensitivities of which the Applicant should be aware. <p>In addition to the Feedback Form, consultees could provide their feedback via any of the permitted feedback channels, including contacting the project team via the dedicated email address, phone number or Freepost.</p>
6.4	<p>Will consult the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Authorities; • Residents and businesses; 	<p>All the community groups outlined in Appendix 4 of the SoCC were consulted. All statutory consultee groups were contained within the Section 42 consultation list and consulted.</p>

Section of SoCC	SoCC Commitment	Compliance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landowners with interest in the Scheme; • Parish Councils; • Community groups; • Environmental groups in the vicinity of the Scheme; • Schools and colleges within the vicinity of the Scheme; • Seldom heard groups; • Statutory consultees; • Non-statutory consultees; and • Members of Parliament and Local Government 	
Consultation materials		
6.5	<p>The Applicant will use a range of methods to ensure that the consultation is inclusive and accessible for a broad range of stakeholder audiences.</p> <p>Non-digital methods are being used alongside the digital medium to provide alternative means for consultees to engage with the Scheme.</p>	<p>Emails were sent to the following stakeholders on the day of the consultation launch to provide them of details about the consultation and a link to the consultation materials which were hosted on the Scheme website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 47 stakeholders, including local community groups and the Scheme mailing list • Section 42 stakeholders where email addresses were obtained.

Section of SoCC	SoCC Commitment	Compliance
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 44 stakeholders where email addresses were obtained. <p>In addition to the website, hard copies of materials were also available upon request. Hard copies were also available to view at the in-person events and at five local information points.</p>
6.5	<p>Upload two online information presentations to the Scheme website during the consultation period. The first presentation will provide an overview of our proposals and where to find out more information. The second presentation will be uploaded after the in-person events and will provide a summary of the main questions we were asked and responses to them.</p>	<p>Two presentations were uploaded during the consultation period. The first provided an overview of the proposals and where to find out more information.</p> <p>The second included project team members responding to some of the common questions asked during the consultation period in video format. This was produced in an engaging format and aimed to further support people to understand the proposals ahead of submitting their consultation feedback.</p>
6.5	<p>A Consultation Newsletter will be sent to all homes and businesses within the PCZ and is available on the consultation website, at our consultation events, information points, and on request by post.</p>	<p>The Consultation Newsletter was sent via Royal Mail to all properties located within the PCZ. It was also attached to the emails that were issued to stakeholders on the day of the consultation launch.</p> <p>The newsletter was uploaded to the consultation website on the</p>

Section of SoCC	SoCC Commitment	Compliance
		<p>day of the consultation launch and hard copies were available at all in-person events and at each of the five information points. The Applicant carried out regular checks to ensure stock levels at the information points were high throughout the stage two consultation period.</p> <p>The newsletter was also available in hard copy to those that requested it. Hard copies were posted via Royal Mail.</p>
6.5	<p>A Consultation Newsletter will be sent to all homes and businesses within the PCZ and is available on the consultation website, at our consultation events, information points, and on request by post.</p>	<p>The Consultation Newsletter was sent via Royal Mail to all homes and businesses located within the PCZ. It was also attached to the emails that were issued to stakeholders on the day of the consultation launch.</p> <p>The newsletter was uploaded to the Scheme website on the day of the consultation launch and hard copies were available at all in-person events and at each of the five information points. Throughout the consultation period, weekly stock checks of the materials in information points were carried out and replenished where necessary.</p> <p>The newsletter was also available in hard copy to those who requested it. Hard copies were posted via Royal Mail.</p>

Section of SoCC	SoCC Commitment	Compliance
6.5	Hard copies of the Consultation Information Booklet are available at our consultation events, information points, and on request by post.	<p>Hard copies of the Consultation Information Booklet were available at all in-person events and at each of the five information points. Throughout the consultation period, weekly stock checks of the materials in information points were carried out and replenished where necessary.</p> <p>The Consultation Information Booklet was also available in hard copy to those who requested it. Hard copies were posted via Royal Mail.</p>
6.5	The Feedback Form can be completed online or downloaded if required and sent into the consultation via Freepost. Paper copies of the Feedback Form will be available at our consultation events, information points, and on request by post.	<p>Digital and hard copy versions of the Feedback Form were created for the consultation. The Scheme website included a link to the online Feedback Form, which could be completed and submitted directly. The website also included a link to a non-digital version of the Feedback Form that could be downloaded, printed, completed and then submitted via Freepost.</p> <p>Hard copies of the Feedback Form were available at all in-person events and at each of the five information points. The Applicant carried weekly checks to ensure stock levels at the information points were high throughout the consultation</p>

Section of SoCC	SoCC Commitment	Compliance
		<p>period. On 9 May 2025, the Applicant checked stock levels and replenished consultation materials at Crowland Library, Spalding Library, and Tonic Health Centre. A further restock was undertaken at Spalding Library on 23 May 2025.</p> <p>The Feedback Form was also available in hard copy to those that requested it. Hard copies were posted via Royal Mail.</p>
6.5	<p>The NTS of the PEIR is available for download from the project website.</p> <p>Paper copies of the PEIR and NTS are available at our consultation events and in one local information point, Crowland Library, for reference.</p>	<p>The PEIR and the NTS of the PEIR were both uploaded to the Scheme website, and available to download, on the day of the consultation launch.</p> <p>Hard copies of both were available to read at all in-person events, and were hosted at Crowland Library for the duration of the consultation period for anyone to view.</p>
6.5	<p>The SoCC document will be available online as part of the consultation and is available in paper format at our consultation events and in one local information point.</p>	<p>The SoCC was uploaded to the Scheme website, and available to download, on the day of the consultation launch.</p> <p>Hard copies of the SoCC were available to read at all in-person events, and was hosted at Crowland Library for the duration of the consultation period for anyone to view.</p>
6.5	<p>At the start of the consultation period, hard copies of</p>	<p>Hard copies of the consultation materials were deposited at</p>

Section of SoCC	SoCC Commitment	Compliance
	<p>consultation materials were deposited in local information points located in the vicinity of the Scheme.</p>	<p>local information points on the day of the consultation and remained there until the close of the consultation period. The location of the information points were as follows:</p> <p>Crowland Library, Hall Street, Crowland PE6 0EW</p> <p>Materials to take away:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage two consultation information booklet • Feedback form; and • Consultation newsletter. <p>Materials for reference only:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PEIR • NTS; and • SoCC. <p>Spalding Library, Victoria Street, Spalding PE11 1EA</p> <p>Materials to take away:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage two consultation information booklet • Feedback form; and • Consultation newsletter. <p>Holbeach Library, Co-Op Store, 5 Fleet Street, Holbeach, Spalding PE12 7AX</p> <p>Materials to takeaway</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage two consultation information booklet

Section of SoCC	SoCC Commitment	Compliance
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback form; and • Consultation newsletter. <p>Tonic Health Centre Spalding, 6 Broadgate House, Westlode Street, Spalding PE11 2AF</p> <p>Materials to takeaway:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage two consultation information booklet • Feedback form; and • Consultation newsletter. <p>Tonic Health Centre Holbeach, Holbeach Hub, Boston Road South, Holbeach PE12 7LR</p> <p>Materials to takeaway:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage two consultation information booklet • Feedback form; and • Consultation newsletter.
6.5	<p>The consultation materials are available in hard copy for individuals at no extra charge (except the PEIR and NTS, hard copies of which can be requested for a charge of £0.35 per page to cover printing and posting costs). If you require this information in an alternative format, such as Braille, large print or alternative languages, please contact us using the details in this SoCC.</p>	<p>There were no requests for printed copies of materials that required a printing or postage charge, or request for information to be provided in an alternative format.</p>

Section of SoCC	SoCC Commitment	Compliance
6.6	The public will be able to participate in, and respond to, the consultation through various methods.	<p>The public could take part in the stage two consultation in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By attending one of the three in-person events hosted in an exhibition format at locations across the PCZ • By watching the two online information presentations, to learn about the Scheme and consultation materials • By visiting the Scheme website and accessing the materials • By using the interactive Scheme map, which was hosted on the website for users to engage with elements of the Scheme by zooming, dragging and clicking to reveal more information • By visiting one of the five information points at community venues to host copies of consultation materials and signposting to feedback channels • Providing feedback via any of the feedback channels provided

Section of SoCC	SoCC Commitment	Compliance
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contacting the project team, including via a dedicated email address, phone number or Freepost.
Promoting the consultation		
6.7	A local media press release will provide wider notification to local stakeholders of the consultation events, reaching stakeholders outside the consultation mailing zone. The press release would be briefed into local and regional media outlets.	<p>A press release was issued to the following publications ahead of the stage two consultation launch, for publication on the day the consultation commenced:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Spalding and South Holland Voice • LincsOnline • Lincolnshire Live • Lincolnshire Echo • Peterborough Telegraph. <p>The publications covered the PCZ and beyond to secure a wider coverage. It included information about the consultation including details of the in-person events and how people could view the materials and provide their feedback.</p>
6.7	Emails will be sent to stakeholders informing them of the statutory consultation launch, upcoming events, how to request further information, and how to feed back.	Emails were sent to the following stakeholders on the day of the consultation launch to provide notification that the stage two consultation had formally launched, provide details about the events, how to provide feedback and how to

Section of SoCC	SoCC Commitment	Compliance
		<p>get in touch with the project team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Planning Inspectorate • Section 47 stakeholders, including local community groups and those on the Scheme mailing list • Section 42 statutory consultees that we obtained email addresses for. This included local Parish and District councillors; and • Section 44 land interests where an email address could be identified.
6.7	<p>Statutory notices to publicise the consultation and the SoCC will be published in local and national news publications.</p>	<p>Statutory notices were published in the following publications, in accordance with Section 47 and 48 of the PA2008, to confirm details of the stage two consultation and the SoCC:</p> <p>Section 47 and 48 notice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spalding Voice (17 April 2025 and Thursday 24 April 2025) <p>Section 48 notice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Guardian (24 April 2025)

Section of SoCC	SoCC Commitment	Compliance
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> London Gazette (24 April 2025)
6.7	<p>The Applicant will run adverts in the local media during the consultation period. The adverts are designed in a clear, accessible format, clearly communicating what the consultation is about, when it is running and how to take part.</p>	<p>A newspaper advert was published in the Spalding and South Holland Voice and the Peterborough Telegraph publications on the day of the stage two consultation launch.</p> <p>The adverts provided an overview of the consultation including the location of the in-person events, details of how to provide feedback and a QR code linking to the Scheme website.</p>
6.7	<p>Briefings with key political stakeholders have been offered to provide an opportunity for early feedback and input.</p>	<p>Prior to the launch of stage two consultation, stakeholder briefings were offered to the Member of Parliament for South Holland and The Deepings, Lincolnshire County Council officers and members, South Holland District Council officers and members, mayoral candidates (as the local Mayoral elections took place near the start of the consultation launch), and Parish Councillors of the following Parish Councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crowland Fleet Cowbit Weston The Moultons

Section of SoCC	SoCC Commitment	Compliance
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holbeach • Whaplode • Sutton St Edmund; and • Gedney Hill. <p>The briefings were offered to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to discuss the Scheme with the project team and provide their input.</p>
6.7	<p>Three in-person events are being held at venues within the PCZ and publicised alongside online events in the Scheme launch newsletter, site notices, adverts and press releases.</p> <p>Events will be open for six hours, with one event held on a Saturday, and weekday event times running until 8pm to allow people to attend outside of normal working hours.</p>	<p>In person events took place at the following venues, located with reference to the PCZ and in areas near the land parcels and along the grid connection corridor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutton St Edmund Village Hall, Saturday 10 May 2025, 10:30-16:30 • Crowland Snowden Pavillion, Wednesday 21 May 2025, 14:00-20:00 • Weston Village Hall, Thursday 22 May 2025, 14:00-20:00
6.7.1	<p>The Applicant will upload two online information presentations to the Scheme website during the consultation period.</p>	<p>Two presentations were uploaded during the consultation period. The first provided an overview of the proposals and where to find out more information.</p> <p>The second included project team members responding to some of the common questions</p>

Section of SoCC	SoCC Commitment	Compliance
		asked during the consultation period in video format. This was produced in an engaging format and aimed to further support people to understand the proposals ahead of submitting their consultation feedback.
Contact channels		
6.7.2	People will be able to find out about the consultation, ask questions and request documents through the Scheme Freephone number and email address which have remained the same from the non-statutory consultation.	<p>A dedicated contact centre was created at the stage one consultation which remained open throughout the stage two consultation and beyond. People were able to contact the project team through the following channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calling the Freephone line 0800 652 6120 (9:00am to 5:30pm, Monday to Friday) • Emailing enquiries@meridiansolar.co.uk; and • Writing to the Scheme: FREEPOST DOWNING MERIDIAN (no stamp required).
Wider engagement		
6.8	Ongoing engagement has been undertaken ahead of the launch of the consultation with relevant stakeholders including local authorities and MPs, technical stakeholders such as Natural England, Historic	All relevant local and parish councils, elected members for the county, and the MP South Holland and The Deepings were contacted at the launch of the stage two consultation and were

Section of SoCC	SoCC Commitment	Compliance
	<p>England and the Environment Agency, along with local interest groups, residents, and landowners who get in touch.</p>	<p>kept informed about the Scheme.</p> <p>As part of this engagement, the Applicant encouraged stakeholders to contact the project team to arrange briefing meetings to discuss the Scheme. The Applicant subsequently met with the following stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MP South Holland and The Deepings • SHDC (Officers) • LCC (Officers) • SHDC (Members) • LCC (Members) • Crowland Parish Council • Whaplode Parish Council; and, • Cowbit Parish Council. <p>Stakeholders were also encouraged to share information about the consultation with members of their constituencies or local communities.</p> <p>Technical stakeholders were kept informed ahead of the stage two consultation as part of regular ongoing engagement.</p>
6.9	<p>To ensure that seldom heard groups are encouraged to get involved in the consultation, the</p>	<p>The Applicant carried out the following activities to ensure engagement with seldom heard</p>

Section of SoCC	SoCC Commitment	Compliance
	<p>materials are prepared to be accessible and clear.</p>	<p>groups was as accessible as possible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held events at a variety of times, including evenings and a weekend, to enable participation from people with different time commitments • Made provision for people who do not have access to the internet or are isolated by sending a community newsletter to every address within the PCZ and making key materials such as the consultation information booklet and feedback form available at information points • Chose accessible venues for local information points and in person events, where possible, side rooms at venues were also available allow communication in a quiet environment • Providing materials in alternative formats such as Braille or alternative languages, on request • Contacted local community and voluntary

Section of SoCC	SoCC Commitment	Compliance
		<p>organisations including parish councils and schools with Scheme information and encouraging them to promote the consultation through their own existing communication channels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided a variety of communication channels including a Freephone number, email address and Freepost address for those seeking information. <p>In addition to properties within the PCZ, seldom heard groups that were contacted are listed in Appendix 4 of the SoCC.</p>
Feedback		
6.10	Feedback to the consultation should be submitted in writing or online to the by 11:59pm on Sunday 8 June 2025	<p>Consultation feedback could be submitted to the Scheme using the following methods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing a feedback form online at www.meridiansolarfarm.co.uk • Completing a feedback form, and returning it free of charge to FREEPOST DOWNING MERIDIAN (no stamp required)

Section of SoCC	SoCC Commitment	Compliance
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitting completed feedback form by email to enquiries@meridiansolar.co.uk • Providing free form comments by email or post.
6.11	The Applicant will have regard to all feedback received during the consultation period.	<p>Following the close of the consultation at 11:59pm on Sunday 8 June 2025, the Applicant reviewed all comments and suggestions received during the stage two consultation period.</p> <p>The Applicant granted discretionary extensions to stakeholders on a case-by-case basis. All feedback received after the closing date of the stage two consultation will be considered alongside feedback submitted before the deadline. The Applicant took time to consider and have regard to all feedback when making further refinements to the proposed design and developing the planned mitigation measures.</p>
6.11	A Consultation Report will be produced as part of our application for development consent, which will be submitted as part of the Application.	The Applicant will set out a summary of the feedback responses in a Consultation Report, which will detail how the Applicant has had regard to all feedback and how the

Section of SoCC	SoCC Commitment	Compliance
		feedback has influenced the proposals. This report will form part of the application for development consent.

