



Meridian Solar Farm

EN010169

Volume 5

Consultation

5.1 Appendix B: Non-
Statutory Consultation
Materials

APFP Regulation 5(2)(q)

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

March 2026

Table of Contents

Appendix B-1.1 Early Engagement Newsletter 2024	3
Appendix B-1.2 Stage One Consultation Newsletter 2024	6
Appendix B-1.3 Stage One Consultation Feedback Form 2024	12
Appendix B-1.4 Stage One Consultation Banners 2024	17
Appendix B-1.5 Stage One Consultation Newspaper Advert	25
Appendix B-1.6 Stage One Consultation Launch Letter 2024	26
Appendix B-1.7 Stage One Consultation Press Release 2024	27
Appendix B-1.8 Stage One Primary Consultation Zone 2024	28
Appendix B-1.9 Stage One Consultation Webinar Presentation 2024	29
Appendix B-1.10 Stage One Consultation Summary Newsletter 2024	42

Appendix B-1.1 Early Engagement Newsletter 2024



Meridian
Solar

Accelerating the net zero energy transition is one of the UK's greatest challenges – but also presents exciting opportunities.

To help drive the UK towards a more sustainable future, the government has set targets to develop reliable, affordable, and clean solar energy. That's why we are currently in the early stages of developing a solar project to the northeast of Crowland, known as Meridian Solar.

Meridian Solar has the potential to power 215,000 homes with a clean renewable energy solution, while also protecting the local environment and wildlife.

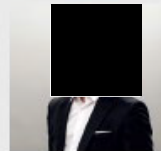
This leaflet contains early information about our proposal and next steps.

"As well as being renewable and low carbon, solar power is one of the cheapest forms of energy for the UK consumer. A fivefold increase in installed solar capacity is anticipated by 2035 according to the Government's Energy Security Strategy (2022) and projects such as Meridian Solar will help the UK accelerate the transition to Net Zero.

We have a long-term vision for Meridian Solar where we will endeavour to provide a substantial biodiversity net gain, support farmers and local agriculture as well as investing in the local community. Forming a strong relationship with the local community is important to

us and we are continually exploring ways we can better support local initiatives.

Thank you for taking time to read this and please contact us directly if you have any questions or suggestions."



Senior Project Engineer, Downing Renewable Developments LLP



Benefits of solar



Renewable Power for up to 215,000 Homes

Meridian Solar would power enough renewable energy to power up to 215,000 homes annually.



Supporting the Future of British Agriculture

Solar farms provide a consistent long-term revenue to farmers whilst providing opportunity to improve the organic quality of agricultural land through providing a 'rest' period to traditional intensive arable farming.



Solar Cuts Costs

Solar power is one of the cheapest sources of energy available. Transitioning to a renewable dominant energy mix can lead to cheaper energy bills for the UK consumer.



Biodiversity Net Gain

We will provide a biodiversity net gain beyond the 10% through mitigation projects such as the creation of new wildlife habitats, planting of hedgerows, grasslands and wildflower meadows.



Community Partnership

Community partnership is one of the most important aspects of our projects as we will develop, construct and operate Meridian Solar for the entirety of its lifecycle. The proposed community benefit will be used to support local projects and key initiatives.

Keep in touch, we're here to listen.

We understand at this early stage you may have questions regarding our plans for Meridian Solar. We will be consulting with local and national stakeholders to progress the project and making further information available very soon.

Contact details:

If you would like to find out more, please visit our website: www.meridiansolar.co.uk

To speak to a member of the project team, or to subscribe to our mailing list:

Email us: enquiries@meridiansolar.co.uk
Or call **08006526120** and ask for the Renewable Developments team

Appendix B-1.2 Stage One Consultation Newsletter 2024



Introducing Meridian Solar

Welcome to our Phase One consultation for Meridian Solar.

Meridian Solar is a proposed solar farm south of Spalding and Holbeach which would supply around 750 Megawatts (MW) of electricity. The proposal also includes associated infrastructure such as co-located battery storage, and an approximate 12km grid connection to National Grid's planned Weston Marsh substation east of Spalding.

This newsletter and the consultation provide us with an opportunity to introduce our initial proposals, the benefits that Meridian Solar would bring, both locally and nationally, and most importantly, to hear what's most important to you as we develop our plans.

Our consultation formally opens on Thursday 30 May 2024. It will be open for 6 weeks, closing at 11:59pm on Thursday 11 July 2024.

We want to hear from you on what you think is important as we develop our plans.

This consultation newsletter provides details on Downing Renewable Developments (DRD), the plans for Meridian Solar, and how to be involved with phase one of our consultation on the Scheme.

More information, including our feedback form and details of upcoming events, can be found on our website www.meridiansolarfarm.co.uk

About us

Meridian Solar is being developed by DRD.

DRD was founded to deliver the renewable energy critical to the transition to a low carbon economy and achieving net zero. More information about DRD can be found on our website www.downing-renewables.co.uk



Powering approximately 215,000 homes, roughly the equivalent of powering all the homes in South Holland, East Lindsey, North Kesteven and Lincoln combined.



Benefitting biodiversity and local ecology.



Providing around 750 megawatts of electricity for export to the national transmission network.

"Downing has a long history of making sustainable investments to help transition the world from fossil fuels to renewable energy. We are excited by the opportunity that Meridian Solar can bring on a national and local scale, and look forward to working with the community and stakeholders to bring this project forward"

Head of NSIP Projects, DRD.



Why a solar farm?

The way we produce our energy is changing. The demand for electricity is continuing to increase and there is a clear need for affordable and reliable energy generation to be developed.

Why here?

Our choice of a suitable solar farm location was driven by the search for opportunities to connect to the national grid, which are limited to certain parts of the UK. This is coupled with careful site analysis to identify the most suitable land available in the area.

National Grid's projects are currently creating opportunities for new renewable energy projects to be developed as part of the UK's renewable energy transition. In our case, the planned Weston Marsh substation east of Spalding was identified as a suitable grid connection opportunity. This was the starting point that led to careful consideration of site options, based on a range of key factors.

Some of these included:

- Land characteristics and environmental qualities/constraints
- The availability of willing and engaging landowners
- Access to established transport links
- Ability to include appropriate areas for landscape buffers, environmental enhancement, and recreation areas

While we have carried out a range of surveys already, further surveys and assessments will be undertaken to understand the Site and surrounding area's environmental characteristics to inform our design.

We have also ensured in selecting the Site, that there is sufficient land within the Scheme to introduce buffers, environmental enhancement zones, and potential areas for recreation.

In the next seven years, National Grid need to build five times the amount of infrastructure they have in the last 30 years. Projects like the Great Grid Upgrade, the largest electricity grid overhaul in generations, are part of efforts to carry our clean, secure energy, from where it's generated to where we need it.

Meridian Solar community benefits

Renewable energy generation offers wide benefits to the UK, but we are also passionate about directly supporting the communities associated with our projects through community benefit schemes. Forming a strong relationship with the community is important to us and we are continually exploring ways we can better support local initiatives

Recent examples from other projects include:

- Providing rooftop solar installations
- Installing Electric Vehicle charging points
- Providing Permissive Paths for walking and recreational use
- Creating science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), apprenticeship and employment opportunities

During this non-statutory consultation, we are seeking feedback on suggested community benefits packages and how these could be managed – such as through the local council or a trust.



Catfield Solar, Hampshire, UK, operated by DRD since 2020

About Meridian Solar

We have a long-term vision for Meridian Solar where we will endeavour to provide wildlife and habitat improvements, support local farmers and agriculture, as well as investing in the local community.

We are developing a site comprising around 1,000 hectares over four land parcels:

- Parcel A, Cloot Drove – orange
- Parcel B, Queen's Bank – purple
- Parcel C, Martins Road – light blue
- Parcel D, Langary Gate Road – dark blue

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



Boomer Park Solar, Dorset, UK, operated by DRD since 2020

We are designing the Scheme in line with the following 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.



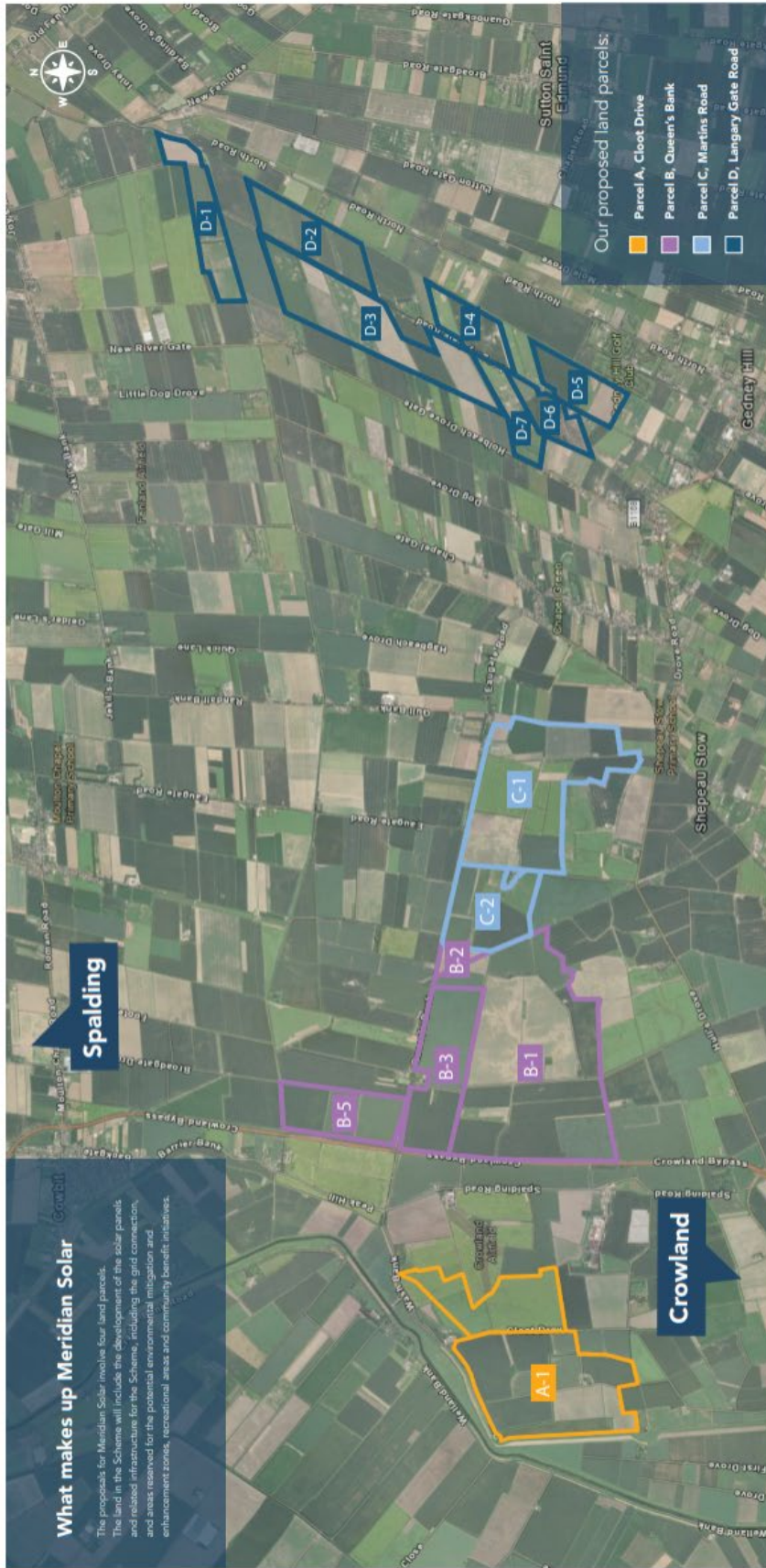
People

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 the Site sensitively with consideration to the local heritage, culture and in support of its ecological value. The Scheme will utilise topic environmental studies to inform design and suitable mitigation measures and will be supported by a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) that details all of the relevant measures.



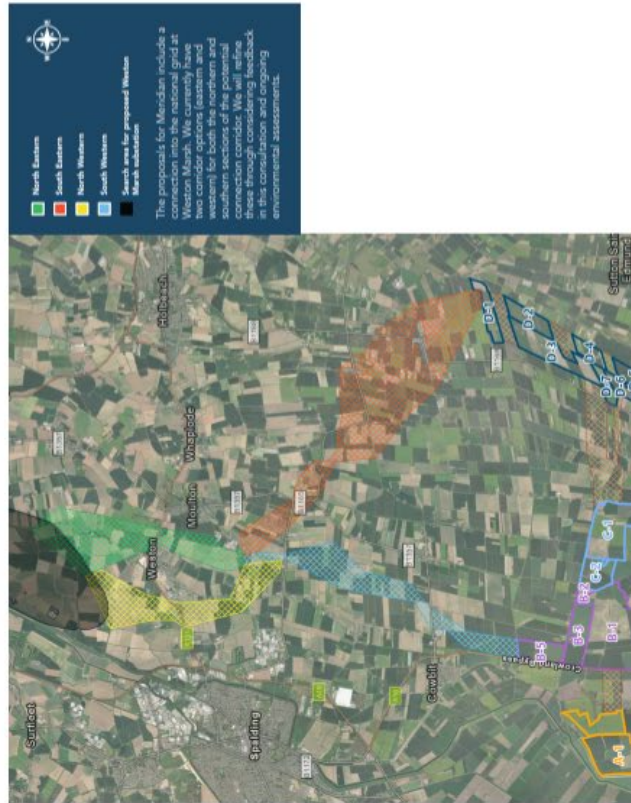


The Connection Corridors

We are exploring different options for connecting the solar farm into the national grid at the proposed Marsh substation. So far, we have identified and mapped constraints in the broad area between our Site and Weston Marsh to identify potential corridor options.

We will continue our appraisal of these options, including consideration of any feedback received through this consultation, to select a preferred corridor and develop subsequent route options. Some of the key environmental considerations that will inform the preferred option will include landscape and visual amenity, ecology and ornithology, water bodies, historic features and archaeology, land use, and tourism and recreation.

Our proposal currently assumes that we will connect to the grid via an overhead line. This would likely be lattice towers carrying 400 kilovolt (KV) lines. We may investigate placing infrastructure underground if required to mitigate impacts.



Protecting and enhancing the environment

The environment is a key consideration informing how we are designing the project.

Some of the key environmental matters that we are investigating include:

- agricultural land and soils
- air quality
- climate change
- heritage and archaeology
- glint and glare
- landscape and visual amenity
- noise and vibration
- socio-economics and health
- traffic and transport
- water bodies and hydrology.

We understand that the protection of agricultural land is an important concern in Lincolnshire. Depending on the final design outcome, Meridian Solar would only cover up to approximately 0.06% of the agricultural land in the East of England.

We are completing an independent agricultural land classification survey to assess the quality of the land within the Site and its surrounds. This will inform our efforts to prioritise development in areas of lower agricultural value (in accordance to DEFRA Survey).

With regard to wildlife habitat in the local area, we are exploring opportunities to protect, retain and manage existing areas and features of environmental significance within the Site. Importantly, we will also seek to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) through the Scheme. BNG is a way of creating and improving natural habitats, and it is a prominent theme in UK infrastructure development. We will look achieve BNG by:

- Creating new wildlife habitats, grasslands and wildflower meadows
- Employing measures such as the installation of bee hotels, log piles and bird and bat boxes

During this non-statutory consultation, we are seeking feedback on the environmental mitigation or biodiversity enhancements that can be implemented to ensure that we make improvements to BNG above and beyond government targets.

The consultation and consent process

Meridian Solar is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project. We will therefore apply for a Development Consent Order under the Planning Act 2008, with the application submitted to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero. An Inspector(s), appointed by the Secretary of State, through the Planning Inspectorate (the Examining Authority), will examine the application, including a process that will include a number of public hearings, and make a recommendation to the Secretary of State, who will then decide whether the Scheme should be approved.

While the decision sits with the Secretary of State, the views of community members, local authorities and other interest groups will be carefully considered during examination of the DCO, and you will have regular opportunities to formally provide your views including during non-statutory, statutory consultation and the formal examination process

Our approach to consultation:

Phase one – Non-statutory Consultation, 30 May to 11 July 2024 (this round)

Phase two – Statutory Consultation, late 2024/early 2025

Consultation is an important factor in the development of our proposals. We value the local knowledge provided in your responses and where appropriate will seek to address it as part of our plans. As part of our Phase Two statutory consultation, we will also publish a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) outlining how people can get involved.

⁽¹⁾ You can find out more by visiting the DEFRA website here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/agricultural-facts-england-regional-profiles/agricultural-facts-east-of-england-region>.



Have your say on Meridian Solar

How to have your say

We want to hear your views. You can provide feedback by:

- Completing our feedback form online at www.meridiansolarfarm.co.uk
- Completing a hard copy of the feedback form and returning it to FREEPOST DOWNING MERIDIAN
- Submitting your comments or completed form by email to enquiries@meridiansolar.co.uk

Our consultation documents, and an online version of this newsletter, are available on our website www.meridiansolarfarm.co.uk

If you wish to receive paper copies of these documents or need them in another format, please get in touch by freephone on **0800 652 6120**, or by email at enquiries@meridiansolar.co.uk

Please submit your response by **23:59pm on 11 July 2024**.

Meet the team

As part of our Phase One consultation, we are holding a series of public information events. At these events, you will be able to meet the team and ask questions about our proposals.

Date	Time	Location
Friday 14 June	14:00 – 20:00	Crowland Pavilion, Peterborough PE8 9QR
Saturday 15 June	10:00 – 16:00	Moulton Village Hall, Broad Ln, Moulton, Spalding PE12 6PN
Monday 24 June	14:00 – 20:00	Sutton St Edmund Village Hall, 273 Broadgate, Sutton St Edmund, Spalding PE12 0LR
Monday 1 July	18:00 – 19:00	Register on our website



Appendix B-1.3 Stage One Consultation Feedback Form 2024



Consultation Feedback Form

30 May 2024 to 11 July 2024

Downing Renewable Developments (DRD) is consulting on Meridian Solar – a proposed solar farm with associated infrastructure including co-located battery storage and a grid connection to National Grid's planned Weston Marsh substation east of Spalding. Meridian Solar would supply around 750 Megawatts (MW) of electricity, enough to power around 215,000 homes. This is roughly the equivalent of powering all the homes in South Holland, East Lindsey, North Kesteven and Lincoln combined.

This is phase one of our consultation for Meridian Solar, and your comments will assist us in developing our proposals in more detail and refining our project design ahead of statutory consultation. This non-statutory consultation is open between 30 May 2024 to 11 July 2024.

As part of the consultation, we are also seeking your views on how DRD can best support local initiatives and provide benefits to the community through the development of Meridian Solar.

To help inform your response, we have published a consultation newsletter, available on the Meridian Solar website. We have also planned a number of in person consultation events where project specialists will be on hand to answer questions and seek to address any concerns people may have regarding the Scheme.

How to respond to our consultation

You can provide feedback by:

- Completing our feedback form online at <https://www.meridiansolarfarm.co.uk/>
- Completing this feedback form, and returning it to FREEPOST DOWNING MERIDIAN
- Submitting your comments or completed questionnaire by email to enquiries@meridiansolar.co.uk

A copy of our feedback form is included on the following page. Our other consultation documents, including an online version of this feedback form, are available on our website <https://www.meridiansolarfarm.co.uk/>.

If you wish to receive paper copies of these documents or need them in another format, please get in touch by freephone on 0800 652 6120 or by email at enquiries@meridiansolar.co.uk.

Please submit your response by 23:59pm on 11 July 2024.



2

Views on solar

1. What are your views on solar farms as part of the renewable infrastructure needed to meet the UK Government's commitment to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050?

- Supportive
- Supportive, but I have some concerns
- Unsupportive, but I would like to find out more
- Completely against
- Unsure

Please explain why.

2. What are your views of the development of solar farms located in the South Holland area, Lincolnshire, England?

- Supportive
- Supportive, but I have some concerns
- Unsupportive, but I support solar farms the development of solar farms generally
- Completely against
- Unsure

Please explain why.

3

Site layout

3. Which areas of the Scheme do your comments relate to? Please refer to the map provided on page 4 -5 in the newsletter.

- Parcel A, Cloot Drove – yellow
- Parcel B, Queen's Bank – light blue
- Parcel C, Martins Road – purple
- Parcel D, Langary Gate Road – dark blue
- All of the above

4. We are in the early stages of developing our proposals. We are seeking your feedback to further develop and refine our plans. Do you have any comments on the potential layout for the land parcel(s) you have selected? This could be in regard to matters such as panel location, environmental considerations, or use of land.

4

Connection corridor

The electricity generated by Meridian Solar would be required to be transferred to the national grid. The planned grid connection for Meridian Solar is National Grid's proposed Weston Marsh Substation near Spalding. Our proposal currently assumes that we will connect to the grid via an overhead line. This would likely be lattice towers carrying 400 kilovolt (kV) lines. We may investigate placing infrastructure underground if required to mitigate impacts.

5. Which connection corridor do your comments relate to? Please refer to the map provided on page 6 in the newsletter.

North eastern
 South eastern
 North western
 South western
 All

5

The local environment and landscape

We are currently preparing our Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), which will provide an initial appraisal of the Scheme's potential impacts and opportunities for the environment.

7. What environmental issues relating to the proposals are most important to you? Please tick your top three.

<input type="checkbox"/> agricultural land and soils	<input type="checkbox"/> noise and vibration
<input type="checkbox"/> air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> socio-economics and health
<input type="checkbox"/> climate change	<input type="checkbox"/> traffic and transport
<input type="checkbox"/> heritage and archaeology	<input type="checkbox"/> water bodies and hydrology
<input type="checkbox"/> glint and glare	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please detail)
<input type="checkbox"/> landscape and visual amenity	

8. Please provide any further comments on why these topics are most important to you.

Community Benefits

DRD is committed to making a positive contribution in South Holland and beyond. Our consultation is important in helping us to understand what local schemes or projects could be supported to benefit the communities located closest to the Scheme.

Recent examples from other projects include providing rooftop solar installations, installing electric vehicle charging points, providing permissive paths, and creating science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) and employment opportunities.

9. Do you have any suggestions on what community benefits would be appropriate and/or are currently lacking in the local area?

Our consultation

Thank you for taking the time to share your views on Meridian Solar.

10. In what capacity are you responding to this consultation?

- Resident of the local area
- Elected representative (Parish Council, Community Council, Local Authority or MP)
- Local business owner
- Local interest group

11. Please rate the information we have published in terms of how clearly it was presented and how easy it was to understand.

- Very good
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very poor
- Unsure

12. Do you have any further comments about our consultation process or anything we can improve about our consultation?

About you

You do not have to supply personal details in your response to our consultation. However, this will help us to understand who has accessed our consultation and enable us to keep you updated on Meridian Solar.

We may publish a summary of the feedback received through this consultation, but no information about an individual would be revealed. The answers you provide to this question are defined as 'special category data'. If you agree to provide Equality and Diversity information, you can withdraw your permission at any time.

Name Postcode

Organisation if applicable Email

What is your gender?

- Male Non-binary
 Female Prefer not to say

What is your age?

- Under 16 35-44 65+
 16-24 45-54 Prefer not to say
 25-34 55-64

Data privacy notice

DRD is committed to protecting your personal information. Whenever you provide such information, we are legally obliged to use it in line with all applicable laws concerning the protection of personal data, including the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

How will DRD use the information you submit?

- We will use your responses collected via this consultation for a number of purposes, including:
- in the analysis of the feedback to the non-statutory consultation;
 - to produce a Consultation Report, based on our analysis of responses (individuals will not be identified in the Report);
 - to write to you with updates about the results of the consultation and other developments; and
 - to keep up-to-date records of our communications with individuals and organisations.

Any personal information you include in this form will be handled and used by (or made available to) the following recipients to record, analyse and report on the feedback we receive:

- DRD and its consultants working on Meridian Solar, for the purposes of work relating to Meridian Solar only;
- the Planning Inspectorate (which will consider our application for development consent– any details published as part of this process will be anonymised);
- the Secretary of State for Energy and Net Zero (who will make the decision on our application); and
- our legal advisers.

What rights do I have over my personal data?

Under the terms of the UK GDPR, you have certain rights over how your personal data is retained and used by Downing Renewable Developments. For more information, see our full data privacy statement <https://www.downing.co.uk/legals/privacy-and-cookie-policy>.

Appendix B-1.4 Stage One Consultation Banners 2024



Introducing Meridian Solar

Welcome and thank you for attending our Phase One consultation for Meridian Solar. We've identified an area near Spalding and Holbeach as a potential site for a new solar farm, Meridian Solar.

We're consulting for 6 weeks on our proposed solar farm between **Thursday 30th May** and **Thursday 11th July 2024**.

We encourage you to read the information on display today alongside our **consultation newsletter**.

Our team is here today to answer any questions you have about the proposed solar farm.

We would like to hear what's most important to you as we develop our plans.

Please share your views with us by completing a **feedback questionnaire**.

Our proposed solar farm would...



Power approximately 215,000 homes, roughly the equivalent of powering all the homes in South Holland, East Lindsey, North Kesteven and Lincoln combined.




Benefit biodiversity and local ecology.



Provide around 750 megawatts of electricity for export to the national transmission network.

Get in touch

Email: enquiries@meridiansolar.co.uk
Freephone: 0800 652 6120
Post: FREEPOST DOWNING MERIDIAN





Who is Downing, and why are we consulting?

"Downing has a long history of making sustainable investments to help transition the world from fossil fuels to renewable energy. We are excited by the opportunity that Meridian Solar can bring on a national and local scale, and look forward to working with the community and stakeholders to bring this project forward" [Redacted] **Head of NSIP Projects, DRD.**

Meridian Solar is being developed by DRD. DRD was founded to deliver the renewable energy critical to the transition to a low carbon economy and achieving net zero.

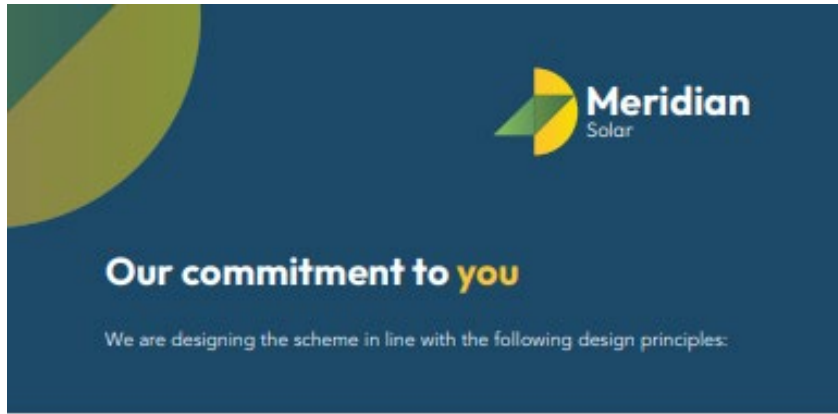
Consultation is an important factor in the development of our proposals. We value the local knowledge provided in your responses and where appropriate will seek to address it as part of our plans.

-  The proposal includes a solar farm and associated infrastructure such as co-located battery storage, and an approximate 12km Grid Connection to National Grid's planned Weston Marsh substation east of Spalding
-  Meridian Solar is considered a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, requiring a Development Consent Order.

More information about DRD and materials can be accessed via our [website](#).

Project Programme





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 the Site sensitively with consideration to the local heritage, culture and in support of its ecological value. The Scheme will utilise topic environmental studies to inform design and suitable mitigation measures and will be supported by a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) that details

Forming a strong relationship with the community is important to us and we are continually exploring ways we can better support local initiatives. Recent examples from other projects include:

- Providing rooftop solar installations
- Installing Electric Vehicle charging points
- Providing Permissive Paths for walking and recreational use
- Creating science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), apprenticeship and employment opportunities



What makes up Meridian Solar?

We are exploring a site comprising around 1000 hectares over 4 land parcels.

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



Why here?

National Grid's projects are currently creating opportunities for new renewable energy projects to be developed as part of the UK's renewable energy transition. In our case, the planned Weston Marsh substation east of Spalding was identified as a suitable grid connection opportunity. This was the starting point that led to careful consideration of site options, based on a range of key factors.

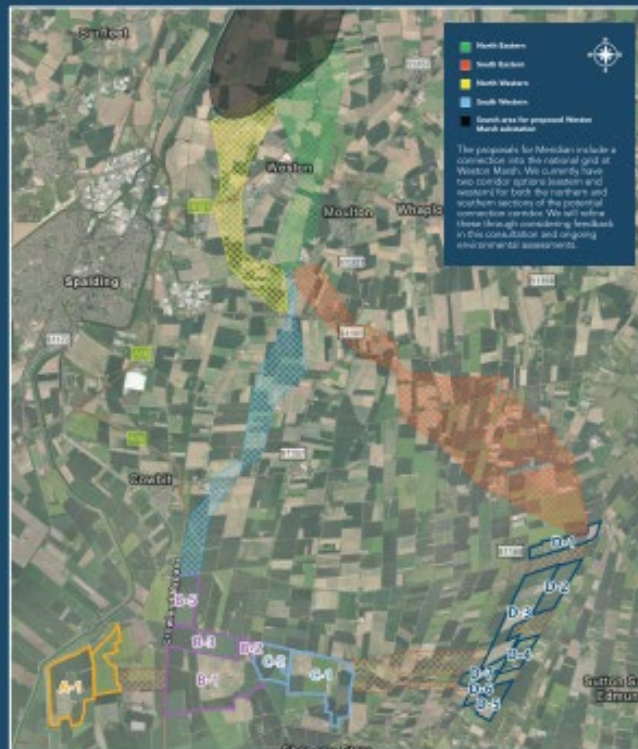




The Connection Corridors

We are exploring different options for connecting the solar farm into the National Grid at Weston Marsh substation.

So far, we have identified and mapped constraints in the broad area between our Site and Weston Marsh to identify potential corridor options.



We will continue our appraisal of these options, including consideration of any feedback received through this consultation,

Our proposal currently assumes that we will connect to the grid via an overhead line. This would likely be lattice towers carrying 400 kilovolt (kV) lines. We may investigate placing infrastructure underground if required to mitigate impacts.





Protecting and enhancing the environment

The environment is a key consideration informing how we design the project.

Some of the **key environmental matters** that we are investigating include:

-  Agricultural land and soils
-  Air quality
-  Climate change
-  Heritage and archaeology
-  Glint and glare
-  Landscape and visual amenity
-  Noise and vibration
-  Socio-economics and health
-  Traffic and transport
-  Water bodies and hydrology

We understand that the protection of agricultural land is an important concern in Lincolnshire. Depending on the final design outcome, Meridian Solar would only cover approximately up to 0.06% of the agricultural land in the East of England (according to a DEFRA Survey).

Wildlife habitat - We are exploring opportunities to protect, retain and manage existing areas and features of environmental significance within the site.

During our non-statutory consultation, we are seeking feedback on what environmental mitigation or biodiversity enhancements can be implemented to ensure that we make improvements to BNG above and beyond the government stipulated targets for BNG.

We are completing an independent agricultural land classification survey to assess the quality of the land within the Site and its surrounds. This will inform our efforts to prioritise development in areas of lower agricultural value.



What is the **consultation** and **consent** process?

Meridian Solar is an NSIP. We will therefore apply for a DCO under the Planning Act 2008, with the application submitted to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero. An Inspector(s), appointed by the Secretary of State, through PIN5 (the Examining Authority), will examine the application, including the use of a number of public hearings, and make a recommendation to the Secretary of State, who will then decide whether the Scheme should be approved.

While the decision sits with the Secretary of State, the views of community members, local authorities and other interest groups will be carefully considered during examination of the DCO, and you will have regular opportunities to formally provide these views including during non-statutory, statutory consultation and formal examination process.

Phase one – Non-statutory Consultation, 30 May to 11 July 2024 (this round)

Phase two – Statutory Consultation, late 2024/early 2025

Consultation is an important factor in the development of our proposals. We value the local knowledge provided in your responses and where appropriate will seek to address it as part of our plans. As part of our Phase Two statutory consultation, we will also publish a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) outlining how people can get involved.





Have your say on Meridian Solar

We want to hear your views. You can provide feedback by:

- Completing our feedback form online at www.meridiansolarfarm.co.uk
- Submitting your comments or completed form by email to enquiries@meridiansolar.co.uk

Our consultation documents, and an online version of this newsletter, are available on our website www.meridiansolarfarm.co.uk


If you wish to receive paper copies of these documents or need them in another format:

Get in touch

Email: enquiries@meridiansolar.co.uk
Freephone: 0800 652 6120
Post: FREEPOST DOWNING MERIDIAN



Appendix B-1.5 Stage One Consultation Newspaper Advert



Downing Renewable Developments (DRD) starts consultation on Meridian Solar
30 May 2024

The first phase of consultation has opened on a proposed solar farm south of Spalding and Holbeach which would supply up to 750 Megawatts (MW) of electricity. Meridian Solar is a proposed new solar farm, co-located with battery storage and has the capacity to generate energy for around 215,000 homes. Meridian Solar is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), and would make a significant contribution towards achieving net zero and providing greater energy security for the UK. The panels and battery storage areas are proposed to be located around the Crowland, Fleet and Sutton St Edmund Parish Council areas, with a transmission connection to National Grid's planned Weston Marsh substation east of Spalding also required.

The proposal is being developed by DRD; a certified B-corporation with significant experience of investing in, developing, delivering, and operating renewable projects since 2010.

As an NSIP, Meridian Solar will have to apply for a Development Consent Order (DCO) under the Planning Act 2008.

"We are excited to open our first consultation on Meridian to the public, inviting everyone to learn more about this proposal for a nationally significant solar farm and tell us their thoughts on the early proposals. Consultation is an integral part of the development of all DRD's projects, and with the project in the very early stages of design, local knowledge, and local feedback is critical in helping us shape a project that addresses a significant national need, but with local impacts and concerns being identified, addressed, and wherever possible, mitigated." – [REDACTED], Head of NSIP Projects for DRD.

The public consultation will run for six weeks from 30 May 2024 to 11 July 2024. This is an opportunity for the public to share their views before further statutory consultation in late 2024 or early 2025. **Public exhibitions, where members of the project team will be on hand to answer questions, are being held on:**

Date: Friday 14 June	Location: Crowland Pavilion, Peterborough PE8 9QR	Time: 14:00 – 20:00
Date: Saturday 15 June	Location: Moulton Village Hall, Broad Ln, Moulton, Spalding PE12 6PN	Time: 10:00 – 16:00
Date: Monday 24 June	Location: Sutton St Edmund Village Hall, 273 Broadgate, Sutton St Edmund, Spalding PE12 0LR	Time: 14:00 – 20:00
Date: Monday 1 July	Online: Register on our website - www.meridiansolarfarm.co.uk	Time: 18:00 – 19:00



For more information, you can visit www.meridiansolarfarm.co.uk or contact the team at enquiries@meridiansolar.co.uk. You can provide feedback on the proposals by completing a feedback form on our website.

Appendix B-1.6 Stage One Consultation Launch Letter 2024



Meridian Solar Project
Downing Renewable Developments
23 Newton Place, Glasgow G3 7PY
E: enquiries@meridiansolar.co.uk
T: 0800 6526120
www.meridiansolarfarm.co.uk

Dear Sir/Madam,

Meridian Solar Phase One consultation: 30 May 2024 to 11 July 2024

We are writing to you to inform you of the launch of the phase one consultation for Meridian Solar.

Meridian Solar is a proposed solar farm south of Spalding and Holbeach which would supply around 750 Megawatts (MW) of electricity. The proposal also includes associated infrastructure such as co-located battery storage, and an approximate 12km Grid Connection to National Grid's planned Weston Marsh substation east of Spalding.

Our consultation formally opens on Thursday 30 May 2024. It will be open for 6 weeks, closing at 11:59pm on Thursday 11 July 2024.

Consultation is an important factor in the development of our proposals. We value the local knowledge provided in your responses and where appropriate will seek to address it as part of our plans.

As part of this consultation, we are holding a series of public information events. At these events, you will be able to meet the team and ask questions about our proposals.

- Exhibition, Friday 14 June, Crowland Pavilion, Peterborough PE8 9QR, 14:00 – 20:00
- Exhibition, Saturday 15 June, Moulton Village Hall, Broad Ln, Moulton, Spalding PE12 6PN, 10:00 – 16:00
- Exhibition, Monday 24 June, Sutton St Edmund Village Hall, 273 Broadgate, Sutton St Edmund, Spalding PE12 0LR, 14:00 – 20:00
- Webinar, Monday 1 July, online, 18:00 – 19:00

We are at an early stage in the design and development of Meridian Solar. We want to hear from you on what you think is important as we develop our plans.

You can provide feedback on our early stage proposals by:

- Completing our feedback form online at <https://www.meridiansolarfarm.co.uk/>
- Submitting your comments or completed form by email to enquiries@meridiansolar.co.uk

Our consultation documents, and an online version of our newsletter, are available on our website <https://www.meridiansolarfarm.co.uk/>.

The attached consultation newsletter provides details on DRD, the plans for Meridian Solar, and how to be involved with phase one of our consultation on the Scheme.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with the Meridian Solar Community Relations team by email enquiries@Meridiansolar.co.uk, phone 0800 6526120, or freepost FREEPOST DOWNING MERIDIAN.

Kind regards,



Head of NSIP Projects
Downing Renewable Developments LLP

Appendix B-1.7 Stage One Consultation Press Release 2024

30 May 2024

Downing Renewable Developments (DRD) starts consultation on Meridian Solar

The first phase of consultation has opened on a proposed solar farm south of Spalding and Holbeach which would supply up to 750 Megawatts (MW) of electricity. Meridian Solar is a proposed new solar farm, co-located with battery storage and has the capacity to generate energy for around 215,000 homes. Given the scale of electricity that is to be produced, the scheme is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), and would make a significant contribution towards achieving net zero and providing greater energy security for the UK. The panels and battery storage areas are proposed to be located in the Crowland, Fleet and Sutton St Edmund Parish Council areas, with a transmission connection to National Grid’s planned Weston Marsh substation east of Spalding also required.

The proposal is being developed by DRD; a certified B-corporation with significant experience of investing in, developing, delivering, and operating renewable projects since 2010.

As an NSIP, Meridian Solar will have to apply for a Development Consent Order (DCO) under the Planning Act 2008.

David Vernon– Head of NSIP Projects for DRD:

“We are excited to open our first consultation on Meridian to the public, inviting everyone to learn more about this proposal for a nationally significant solar farm and tell us their thoughts on the early proposals. Consultation is an integral part of the development of all DRD’s projects, and with the project in the very early stages of design, local knowledge, and local feedback is critical in helping us shape a project that addresses a significant national need, but with local impacts and concerns being identified, addressed, and wherever possible, mitigated.”

The public consultation will run for six weeks from 30 May 2024 to 11 July 2024. This is an opportunity for the public to share their views before further statutory consultation in late 2024 or early 2025.

Public exhibitions, where members of the project team will be on hand to answer questions, are being held on:

- Friday 14 June 14:00 – 20:00 Crowland Pavilion, Peterborough PE8 9QR
- Saturday 15 June 10:00 – 16:00 Moulton Village Hall, Broad Ln, Moulton, Spalding PE12 6PN
- Monday 24 June Time 14:00 – 20:00 Sutton St Edmund Village Hall, 273 Broadgate, Sutton St Edmund, Spalding PE12 0LR
- Monday 1 July 18:00 – 19:00 Online – register on the project website

For more information, you can visit www.meridiansolarfarm.co.uk or contact the team at enquiries@MeridianSolar.co.uk.

You can provide feedback on the proposals by completing a feedback form on our website; <https://www.meridiansolarfarm.co.uk/>.

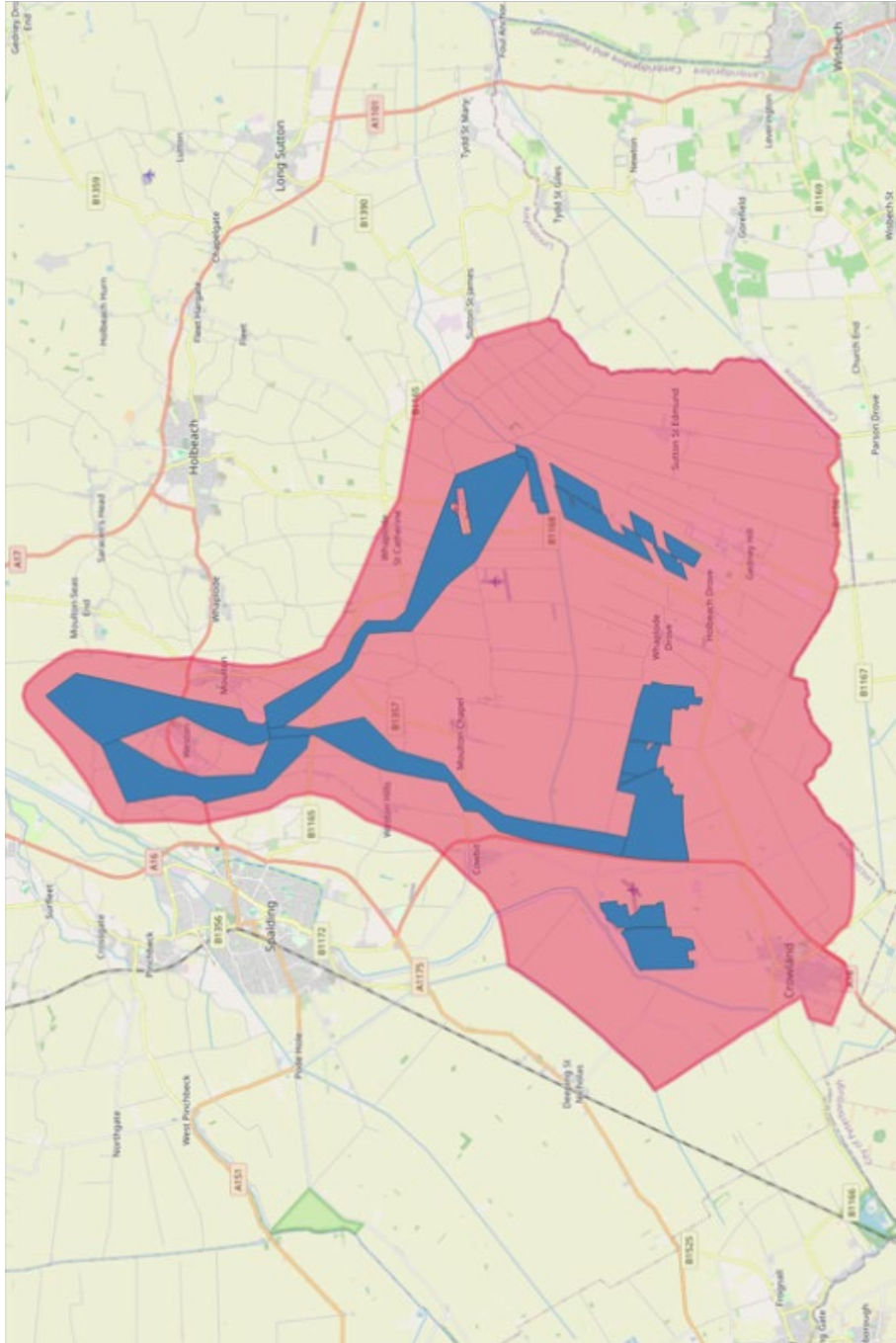
ENDS

Note to editors:

Community Relations	M: [REDACTED]	enquiries@meridiansolar.co.uk
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Appendix B-1.8 Stage One Primary Consultation Zone 2024

1.1.1. The Stage One Primary Consultation Zone (PCZ) comprised the homes and businesses surrounding the proposed Scheme boundary. The Scheme boundary presented at non-statutory consultation is in blue, and the PCZ is in red.



Appendix B-1.9 Stage One Consultation Webinar Presentation 2024



Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Housekeeping
3. About Downing
4. Project programme
5. About Meridian Solar
6. Q&A
7. Next steps



INTRODUCTION

Who are Downing LLP?

Downing LLP are a London-based investment manager making investments that matter. Founded in 1986, Downing is now a certified B-Corporation focused on creating a sustainable future through investing in sectors such as renewable energy, infrastructure, property and healthcare.

Downing Renewable Developments LLP (DRD) was founded by Downing to deliver an exclusive pipeline of new solar, battery storage and onshore wind assets for Downing managed funds to invest in.

Meridian Solar Farm Ltd. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Downing LLP and will be the applicant in the Development Consent Order (DCO) application.



Inwood Solar, operated by DRD since 2020





An introduction to Meridian Solar Farm



PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Meridian Solar Farm is a new solar energy farm co-located with battery storage to be located in Lincolnshire

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Project Overview

A solar photovoltaic (PV) electricity generating facility with a potential capacity of up to 750MW with a co-located battery storage facility.

The proposed development is to be located to the south of Spalding within South Holland District Council and Lincolnshire County Council.

The project will potentially have a total site area of 900 hectares, some of which will be explored for PVs and battery.

As the point of connection to the National Grid is awaiting confirmation, a cable route may be required.

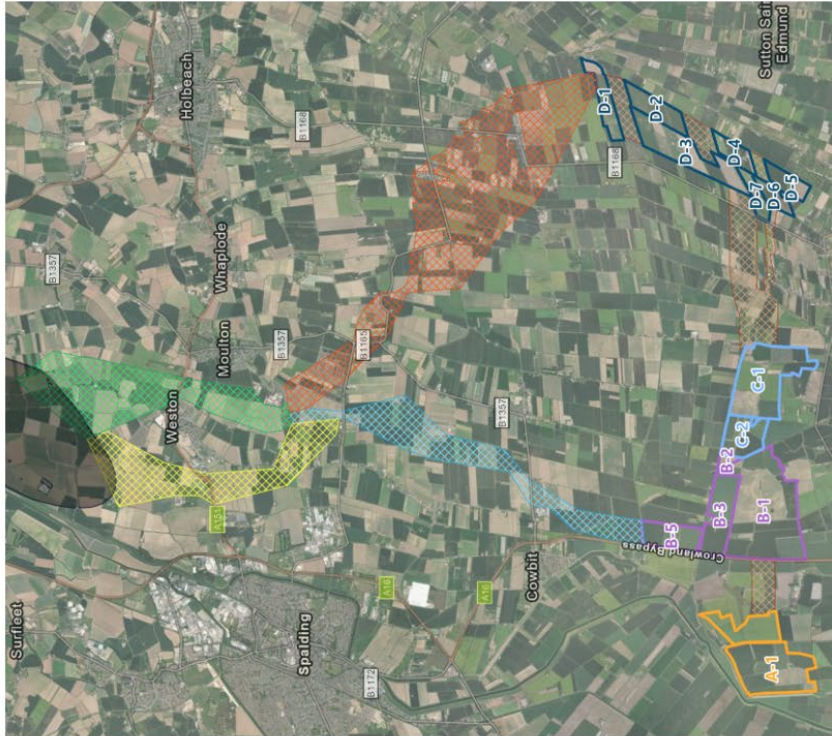




6

Classification L2 - Business Data

The Connection Corridors



North Eastern

South Eastern

North Western

South Western

Search area for proposed Weston Marsh substation

The proposals for Meridian include a connection into the national grid at Weston Marsh. We currently have two corridor options (eastern and western) for both the northern and southern sections of the potential connection corridor. We will refine these through considering feedback in this consultation and ongoing environmental assessments.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Why this Site?

The Meridian location will be carefully selected. In addition to the desktop assessments completed to date, a campaign of surveys and assessments will be carried out on the main site and surrounding area to establish the environmental constraints and opportunities and inform suitable mitigations.



The site selection process and methodology for Meridian Solar Farm will be examined by the Planning Inspectorate.

Key criteria for Meridian Solar Farm's location:

- 1 Grid connection opportunity
- 2 Environmental characteristics of the site
- 3 Willing and engaging landowners
- 4 Established transport links and access
- 5 Opportunities to protect and enhance local amenity and biodiversity
- 6 The site is not designated as green belt.

Design principals



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 the Site sensitively with consideration to the local heritage, culture and in support of its ecological value. The Scheme will utilise topic environmental studies to inform design and suitable mitigation measures and will be supported by a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) that details all of the relevant measures.



Classification L2 - Business Data

Sutton Bridge Farm, operated by DRD since 2020



SITE BENEFITS

Biodiversity Net Gain

Meridian Solar Farm provides an excellent opportunity for Biodiversity Net Gain to the local area.

We want to know what you want to see to help us maximise the increase in biodiversity than before the site is installed. This could include exploring:

- The creation of new wildlife habitats, grasslands and wildflower meadows.
- Where practical, improve and manage existing wildlife, hedgerows and grasslands.
- Employ measures such as the installation of Bee Hotels, log piles, bird and bat boxes.



Community Benefit Schemes

We are passionate about supporting the communities associated with our projects through community benefit schemes.

Recent examples from other projects include:

- Working with local groups and local Parish Councils to provide funding for local initiatives.
- Providing rooftop solar schemes to local households and businesses.
- Installing Electric Vehicle charging points.
- Providing Permissive Paths for walking and recreational use around the site.
- Creating STEM, Apprenticeship and Temporary Employment Opportunities for local people associated with the construction and operation of Meridian.

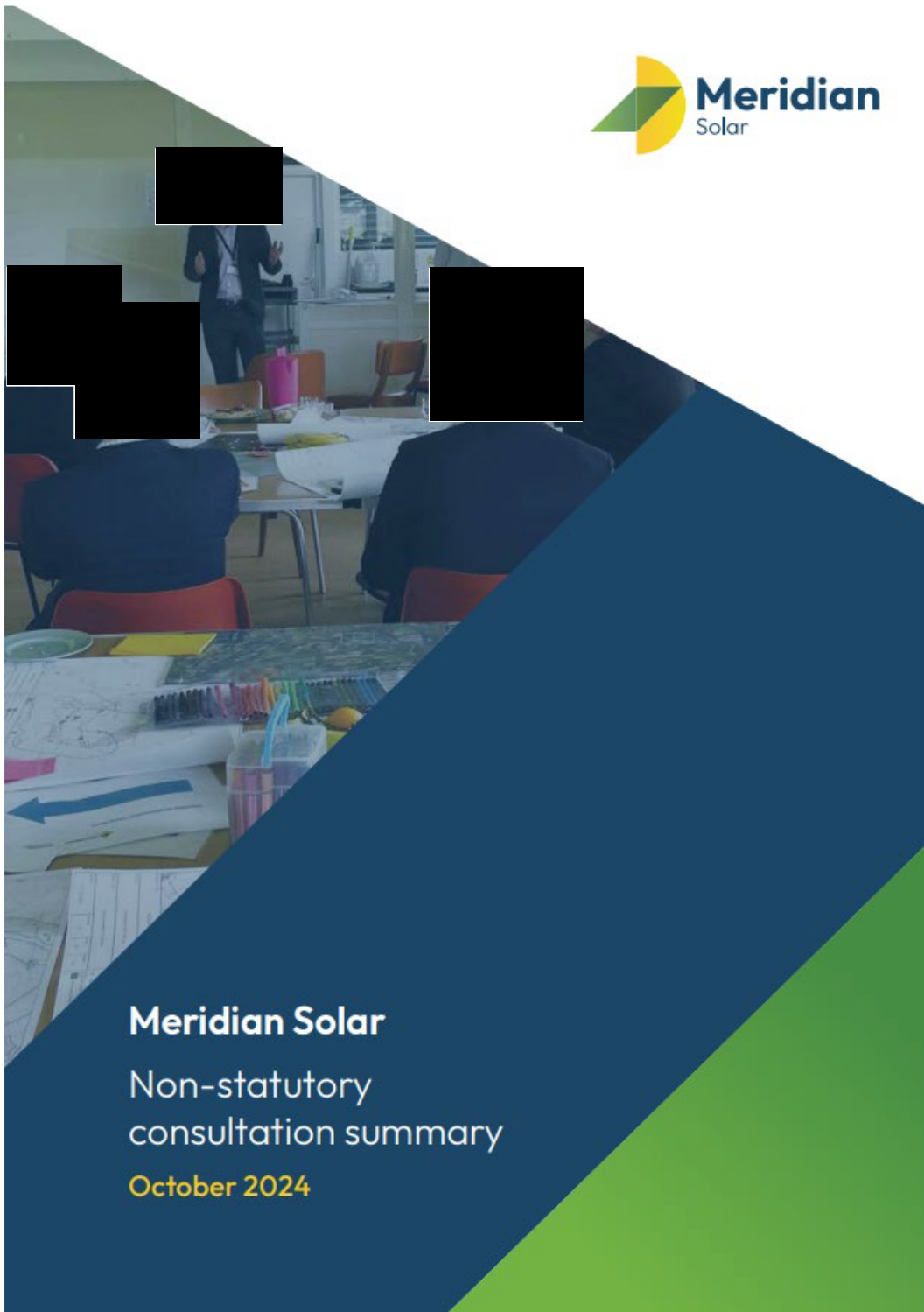




Classification L2 - Business

Q&A

Appendix B-1.10 Stage One Consultation Summary Newsletter 2024



Introduction

Welcome to our non-statutory consultation summary for Meridian Solar. Through this newsletter, we provide an overview of what engagement has happened so far, summarise the feedback collected, and explain what will happen with the responses we received.

Meridian Solar is a proposed solar farm south of Spalding and Holbeach which would generate around 750 Megawatts (MW) of electricity. The proposal also includes associated infrastructure such as co-located battery storage, and an approximate 12km Grid Connection to National Grid's planned Weston Marsh substation east of Spalding.

Between 30th May and 11th July 2024, we held our first public consultation on Meridian Solar. This was to introduce the project, explain the benefits and need for the proposed solar farm and, most importantly, gather early feedback from the local community.

Ahead of the first consultation, we also held a design workshop with people identified as having an interest in the project from a community, political or environmental perspective. This helped to inform the project design, which we are continuing to develop.

Meridian Solar is a company set up and owned by Downing Renewable Developments. The development will be guided by 3 design principles:



Sustainability
Support the UK's transition to Net Zero by 2050 and provide flexibility to take advantage of new sustainable and more efficient technologies as they emerge.



People
Engage meaningfully with communities and stakeholders, seeking feedback on the proposals, community benefit packages and how best to protect and enhance their environment and the local area.



Environment
Protect, enhance and sensitively consider the landscape, local heritage, culture and ecological value, with supportive use of environmental studies and the full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to evolve the design.

Project timeline



- Q1 2024** Project launch
- Q2 – Q3 2024** Design workshops and non-statutory consultation
- Q3 – Q4 2024** Review of all feedback and constraints and the updating of design proposals
- Q1 2025** Publication of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report and the Statement of Community Consultation to support a Statutory Consultation
- Q2 2025** Design refinements and continued environmental and technical surveys
- Q3 2025** DCO submission

The consultation process

Meridian Solar is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project.

We will therefore apply for a Development Consent Order under the Planning Act 2008, with the application submitted to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero for consideration.

While the decision sits with the Secretary of State, the view of community members, local authorities, statutory undertakers, other stakeholders and interest groups will be carefully considered. Our non-statutory consultation was the first stage of engagement, which will continue into statutory consultation in 2025.

“ We would like to thank everyone who participated in the non-statutory consultation for our proposed solar farm. Your engagement at the design workshop, public exhibitions, webinar, and through the community relations line has been invaluable in helping us better understand the views, concerns, and ideas from the local community. Our team is currently working through feedback, and where feasible, we will try to incorporate it into the design at statutory consultation. ”
David Vernon – Head of NSIP projects



Non-statutory consultation

Project evolution driven by your feedback

Feedback received during the non-statutory consultation will be carefully considered and is being used to help refine the project design.

We were pleased to meet over 200 people over three public exhibitions and one online webinar in the summer. These events allowed us to present the boundary for the project, explain our proposals, and collect feedback to refine the project design. This includes understanding potential environmental gains and your ideas for community benefits.

In addition to the public exhibitions, we also held a design workshop in early June. This created a platform for active participation in the design process.

In the design workshop, attendees were asked to identify key issues, constraints and features that are most important to them and the people who live in local communities. Feedback gathered from the design workshops alongside the 427 responses received as part of non-statutory consultation will inform ongoing design refinement.

Key topics received in feedback include:



Opportunities for community benefit was also a key area of feedback and we are committed to making a positive contribution in South Holland and beyond. Both consultation phases will be important in helping us to understand what local schemes or projects could be supported to benefit the communities located closest to the Scheme. Early suggestions from the non-statutory consultation included:



We are continuing to consider how these suggestions and other opportunities for community benefit could be supported as part of the ongoing development of Meridian Solar and look forward to hearing more from the community through statutory consultation.



What happens with your feedback?

The feedback received during the non-statutory consultation is being carefully reviewed and will play a key role in shaping the next stage of Meridian Solar.

In the coming months, we will continue to analyse all feedback to identify recurring themes, key concerns, and valuable ideas that could enhance the project's benefits and reduce the potential impacts. Where feasible, we will incorporate this input into the refined project design, which will be presented during our statutory consultation. We are currently exploring the following in response to feedback:



Land Use and Agriculture

Many respondents raised concerns about the potential impact on agricultural land. We are committed to reducing the potential disruption to local farming practices and are exploring options to retain some agricultural use. Meridian Solar will also include areas not required for generating infrastructure.



Traffic, Access and Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

We received feedback on the current PRoW in the site, and are currently exploring opportunities to enhance the footpath network. There were also comments made about the impact of construction traffic on local roads. Our approach to reducing potential impacts will be explained in more detail in the Preliminary Environmental Information Report, which will be available at our statutory consultation.



Landscape and Visual Impact

There were points raised about how the solar farm may affect local views. We are working with landscape specialists to assess visual impact and are considering natural screening methods where necessary.



Biodiversity

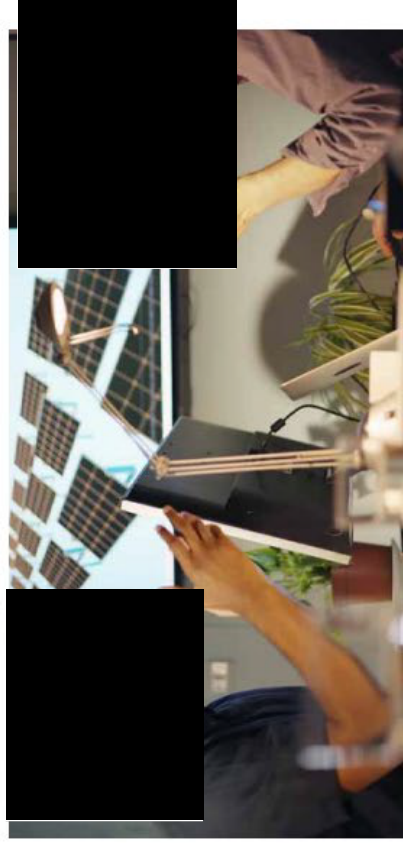
Many respondents expressed a strong desire for the project to support local biodiversity. We are looking at ways to enhance habitats around the solar farm, including creating new habitats and installing wildlife corridors to encourage greater ecological diversity.



Site Selection

One of the reasons the site for Meridian Solar was chosen was the grid capacity available at Weston Marsh, and willingness from landowners. It also balances technical requirements with potential disruption to landscape, biodiversity, and nearby communities. We are committed to refining the project's design and incorporating community feedback to minimise impacts and deliver local benefits.

We will also be discussing next steps for the community benefit fund with Local Authorities.



What happens next?

We are planning to hold our statutory consultation in early 2025.

Before this consultation takes place, we will prepare a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) which will be shared with and reviewed by South Holland District Council and Lincolnshire County Council. The SoCC will set out how we will undertake our statutory consultation, including how consultation will be made accessible, how it will be advertised and how local communities and stakeholders with an interest in the project can provide feedback.

As part of the statutory consultation, we will consult a wide variety of people who may be interested in Meridian Solar. We will also publish our Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) to inform consultees on how the project will interact with the environment and providing a preliminary assessment of any likely significant effects.

We are aware of other proposals in the area connecting into Weston Marsh. We have been and will continue to engage with National Grid to see how we can work together constructively.

Following the statutory consultation, we will have regard to the responses received in further refining our proposals. We will set out a summary of the responses provided in a Consultation Report, which will detail how we have had regard to the feedback received.

During this period, we will complete our Development Consent Order application and prepare the necessary application documents. We will then submit the application to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero via the Planning Inspectorate.



Brookside Solar, operated by DRD since 2020.

Contact us

Freephone: 0800 652 6120
Email: enquiries@meridiansolar.co.uk
Website: www.meridiansolarfarm.co.uk



