

Light Valley Solar

Consultation Report Appendix 10: Post-Phase Two Communication Materials

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APFP Regulation 5(2)(q)



Infrastructure Planning

Planning Act 2008

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

Light Valley Solar

DCO Submission

Consultation Report Appendix 10: Post-Phase Two Communication Materials

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Light Valley Solar

Table of Contents

1	Post-Consultation Newsletter
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1 Post-Consultation Newsletter

Project Update Newsletter

December 2025

This newsletter provides an overview of the comments we received during our Phase Two consultation, how these are being considered ahead of submitting our application early next year, an update regarding what happens once the application has been submitted, and how you can stay involved.



About Light Valley Solar

Light Valley Solar is a proposed solar project located on land between Escrick, Monk Fryston, Hambleton, Chapel Haddlesey and South Milford.

The project consists of seven solar development sites totalling approximately 1,020 hectares (2,500 acres) of land, plus land for underground cabling to connect the sites to the National Grid Monk Fryston substation.

Due to the project's size, it is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure project (NSIP). This means that we will submit our application to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), on behalf of the Secretary of State, who will ultimately decide whether to grant the project a Development Consent Order (DCO).

Light Valley Solar will:

-  Generate up to 500 megawatts (MW) of low-carbon, affordable, and dependable electricity
-  Contribute to energy security, enabling homegrown clean energy.
-  Enhance local wildlife by delivering a minimum 10% biodiversity net-gain
-  Protect existing ecological features such as woodlands, wildlife corridors and ponds
-  Utilise existing local energy infrastructure, continuing a legacy of power generation
-  Deliver a benefits package, based on suggestions from the community

Indicative timeline



Where we are now

Thank you to everyone who took part in our recent Targeted Consultation. Following the consultations and further assessments and design work, we are preparing our final application to submit to the Planning Inspectorate in early 2026.

Application submission

We plan to submit our application in early 2026. PINS then has 28 days to decide whether to accept it to proceed to the examination stage. If accepted, PINS will publish all the application documents on its website. This will be the first opportunity to view our final documents.

For full details regarding the Examination stage, the wider DCO process, and how you will be able to have your say, please visit the PINS website: <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/decision-making-process-guide>.

Our final application will include a Consultation Report summarising responses submitted during all consultation phases and an explanation of how we have taken these into account in our final proposals.

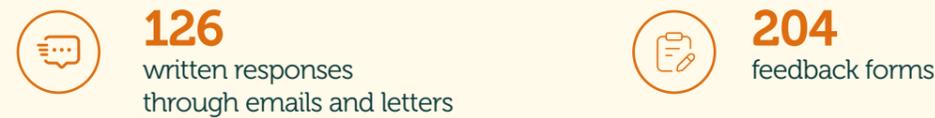
To be part of the Examination process, register for updates on the Planning Inspectorate's Light Valley Solar webpage.

Our Phase Two Consultation

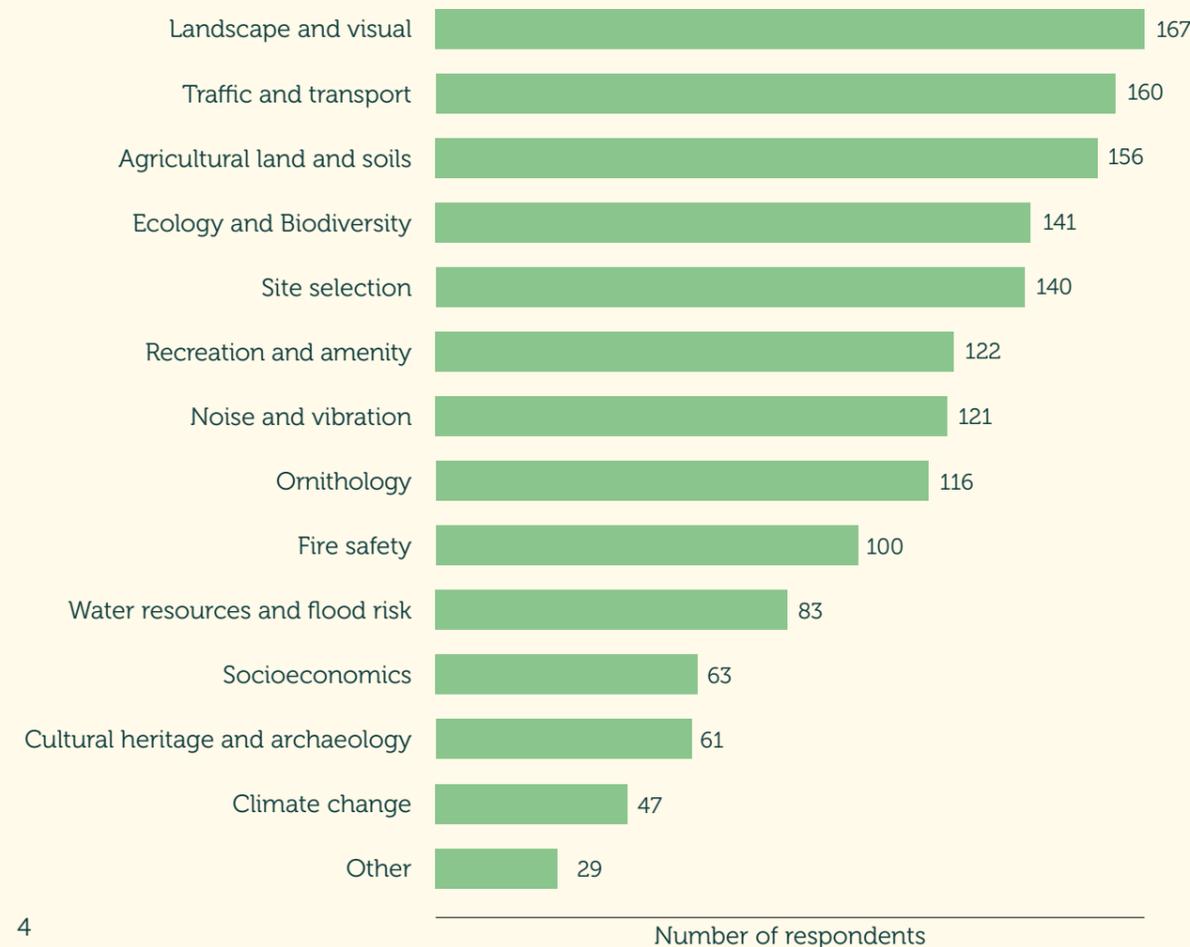
Our statutory second phase of consultation ran from 26th June to 7th August 2025, welcoming feedback on more detailed proposals for the project.

Community feedback plays a crucial role in this process, and we are grateful for the comments we've received. Your comments have helped shape our understanding of what to prioritise as we finalise our proposals for Light Valley Solar.

During our Phase Two consultation, we received 330 pieces of feedback:



The aspects most important to you



In our consultation, we asked which aspects of the proposals mattered to you most. We provided the option to 'tick' from a list of key environmental themes which themes were most important to you.

The top three were:

- **Landscape and visual impacts** and how we can screen Light Valley Solar effectively;
- **Traffic and transport**, including concerns over certain access routes, road safety and the quality of existing road infrastructure; and
- **Agricultural land and soils**, including concerns regarding food security, loss of agricultural land, and how we can mitigate any impacts on land quality.

Targeted Consultation

Following our second phase of consultation we held a targeted phase of consultation which ran from 16th October to 20th November 2025. During this consultation we welcomed feedback on a series of 40 localised changes, and this feedback is now being evaluated and considered.

Two key themes you raised in feedback were concerns over vegetation management and the introduction of passing places. Below we provide some clarification on these two issues:

Vegetation management

This means the potential trimming or removal of vegetation, such as overhanging branches or overgrown hedgerows, to facilitate the localised changes. **This does not imply that long lengths of hedgerows or multiple trees will be removed.** No vegetation management would be undertaken until further surveys have been completed to establish whether trees and hedgerows are overgrown at the time of construction. Where it has been determined that trees or hedgerows do need to be cut back, further surveys and visual inspections would be undertaken to ensure we are not disturbing existing habitats. For any vegetation that is removed, replacement planting as close to the location and species of the vegetation as possible will be undertaken. Overall, the project will ensure that local wildlife habitats are left in a measurably better state than before.

Passing places

Safety concerns regarding the local road network were raised during all phases of consultation, and we fully recognise the importance of this issue. The inclusion of passing places is to ensure the safety of all road users, not just construction traffic. Passing places are especially useful on narrower routes and can also help maintain the flow of traffic.

How we're listening

Summarised below are the key themes from the comments received and how our team has considered them in the development of Light Valley Solar.

As part of our DCO Application, we will be submitting an Environmental Statement (ES). The ES supersedes the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), which was prepared to inform our Statutory Consultation and is still available to view on our website. As the ES is a more developed version of the PEIR, it will contain more environmental information, assessment data and proposed mitigation measures. This includes aspects such as traffic and access routes, ecology and biodiversity, recreational amenity and noise.

Your comments	How we're listening
Traffic and transport	
You had concerns about local road capacity and traffic disruption, especially on the A63, Old Lane, Common Lane and Fryston Common Lane.	<p>We have explored alternatives and we can confirm that we will not be proceeding with using Fryston Common Lane to access Site 2 from Monk Fryston for construction traffic. Additionally, we no longer intend to use Old Lane for construction traffic.</p> <p>A Transport Assessment has been prepared to assess the road network capacity. This reviews the current highway network usage and determines if any mitigation is required. The assessment takes into account any committed developments (e.g. housing developments in the area that have received planning permission but haven't been built yet) as part of the cumulative assessment scenario.</p> <p>An outline Construction Traffic Management Plan is being prepared which identifies the routes that should be used by construction traffic. This takes into account the existing highway capacity of each route.</p> <p>Both of these documents will be available as part of the final DCO Application.</p>
Landscape and visual	
You had concerns about landscape and visual impacts. You also asked for photomontages showing how the project could look if built.	The design of Light Valley Solar identifies many opportunities for landscape restoration and enhancement, by introducing planting which repairs or reinforces existing vegetation patterns and contributes to biodiversity net gain.

Your comments	How we're listening
Landscape and visual	
	<p>An extensive planting scheme is being proposed across the project area. This includes planting new hedges, trees and shrubs, and will be set out in an outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan, which will be included with the final application.</p> <p>Baseline photography has been obtained and will be included within the DCO Application to help demonstrate the nature of baseline views including the extent of existing screening. The ES will also include a number of photomontages to help understand how the project could look.</p>
Agricultural land and soils	
You had concerns about the use of agricultural land, potential impact on the UK's food security and the effect on soil quality.	<p>We acknowledge concerns about the use of agricultural land. Infrastructure will be located on lower-quality land wherever this does not conflict with environmental objectives or project benefits.</p> <p>Detailed Agricultural Land Classification surveys have informed the design, showing at PEIR-stage that 451 ha (out of 1,022 ha) of the panel areas is Best and Most Versatile land, around 1% of BMV land in Selby District and 0.07% in the Yorkshire and Humber Region, meaning Light Valley Solar does not represent a significant regional use of high-grade farmland. Nationally, government estimates indicate that even all existing and proposed solar farms combined occupy less than 1% of UK agricultural land, and the 2024 UK Food Security Report identifies climate change, not solar development, as the greatest threat to UK agriculture and food security.</p> <p>Studies from Keele University (2022) and Lancaster University (2024) indicate that solar farms let previously intensively farmed soils rest and recover, leading to better water retention and increased soil biodiversity when the land returns to agricultural use.</p> <p>We are committed to avoiding fragmentation of remaining agricultural land and to carefully manage soils throughout all project phases. An Outline Soil Resources Management Plan will guide the protections at all stages of the development.</p>

Your comments	How we're listening
Ecology and biodiversity	
You had concerns regarding the potential impact of Light Valley Solar on ecology, including local deer, badger, and rabbit populations, as well as wildlife corridors and fencing.	<p>We can confirm that the final design will include habitat creation and enhancement. Ecological assessments included in the ES will show how survey results have shaped our mitigation measures, including maintaining deer commuting routes by designing fencing around these routes, providing buffers around existing vegetation, and planting new hedgerows and trees.</p> <p>Research demonstrates that solar farms deliver habitat enhancements and higher levels of biodiversity gain than other developments by creating pesticide-free zones that support pollinators, birds, and small mammals¹. Solar farms support a healthier natural ecosystem by creating additional shelter for birds and small mammals and supporting plant life to flourish around the solar panels with minimal disturbance.</p>
Ornithology	
You had concerns about the effect on local birds.	We recognise the need to protect bird species. Buffer zones and other undeveloped areas of the Proposed Development will be enhanced, including a substantial dedicated non-breeding bird mitigation area in the southern part of Site 1 . Full details regarding bird mitigation and enhancement measures will be set out in the upcoming ES and Outline Environmental Masterplan.
Hydrology	
You had concerns about existing flood defences, as well as water run-off and impact to waterways such as the River Ouse.	We have done detailed studies to understand current flood risk and how to avoid increasing it. This includes measures such as permeable surfaces on new access tracks and sustainable drainage systems. Our application will also include an outline drainage strategy which includes how water run-off will be managed.

¹Solar Habitat: Ecological trends on solar farms in the UK, Solar Energy UK (https://solarenergyuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Solar-Energy-UK_-Habitat-Report-2023.pdf)

Your comments	How we're listening
Noise and vibration	
You had concerns about noise, especially during construction.	<p>As part of our application, an Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan will set out the noise mitigation measures we will use during construction.</p> <p>During operation, noise will be further reduced by placing the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) compound centrally within the site. The BESS compound has and will be designed carefully to reduce noise for residents.</p>
Site selection	
<p>You had concerns about the site selection process and suggested alternative sites or a preference for rooftop solar.</p> <p>You had concerns that we would add additional sites to Light Valley Solar.</p>	<p>Our assessment process found no reasonable alternative sites within the wider area that could accommodate a project of this scale.</p> <p>Local brownfield sites are typically too small, fragmented, or poorly connected to meet the project's requirements. We fully support rooftop solar but meeting the nation's 2030 targets will require both rooftop and ground-mounted solar, as rooftops alone cannot deliver the scale or pace needed.</p> <p>We will not add further sites to our proposals, including along the cable route.</p>
Cultural heritage and archaeology	
You had concerns about the potential impact on archaeological and historical sites.	<p>Our extensive surveys included geophysical work and trial trenching. We are preparing a Detailed Archaeological Mitigation Strategy for any further archaeology found during construction. We are also using the results of traffic and noise and vibration surveys to assess whether there will be significant impacts on any historical sites, and how to mitigate these if needed.</p> <p>North Yorkshire Council's Conservation Officer previously indicated a view that Light Valley Solar would result in less than substantial harm to built heritage assets within our assessment.</p>

Your comments	How we're listening
Cumulative	
You had concerns about cumulative impacts, or wanted us to consider other nearby developments in our assessments.	We will work with other nearby infrastructure projects, including energy and housing developments. In our application, for each relevant topic, we will include a cumulative impact assessment that considers existing developments and all publicly-known proposals. This will cover traffic, landscape, ecology, and other key environmental topics. The list of developments included is regularly updated.
Recreation and Public Rights of Way (PROWs)	
We received comments highlighting the potential impact on both existing routes and potential new ones.	We expect all existing PROWs to remain open during construction, with management measures in place to ensure safety. Three permanent PROW diversions are planned at Site 1, mainly in response to feedback received. These diversions have been designed to maintain connectivity and accessibility for local users, as well as provide a more protected area for the new non-breeding bird mitigation area at the southern area of Site 1. In addition, spread over several sites, we will create approximately 8 km (5 miles) of new permissive paths, improving local walking and cycling routes.

Community benefits

We are grateful for all suggestions for community initiatives we could support. We are considering this feedback as we finalise our community benefit offering.

At this time, we are awaiting the upcoming government guidance on community benefits, following their consultation earlier this year, as we want to make sure our offering is aligned to what the government sets out.

We are also keen to explore how the community benefit offering could be managed. We'd like to engage with local organisations about this over the coming months.



Contact Us



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Freepost: Freepost LIGHT VALLEY SOLAR*

*Free of charge, no need for a stamp.



Freephone Information Line: 0808 281 4784

Available Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm.

Voice-mails can be left outside of these hours.

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