

The Drovers Solar Farm

Consultation Report Appendix A – Non-statutory Engagement Supporting Material – Part 4

Prepared by: Copper Consultancy

Date: November 2025

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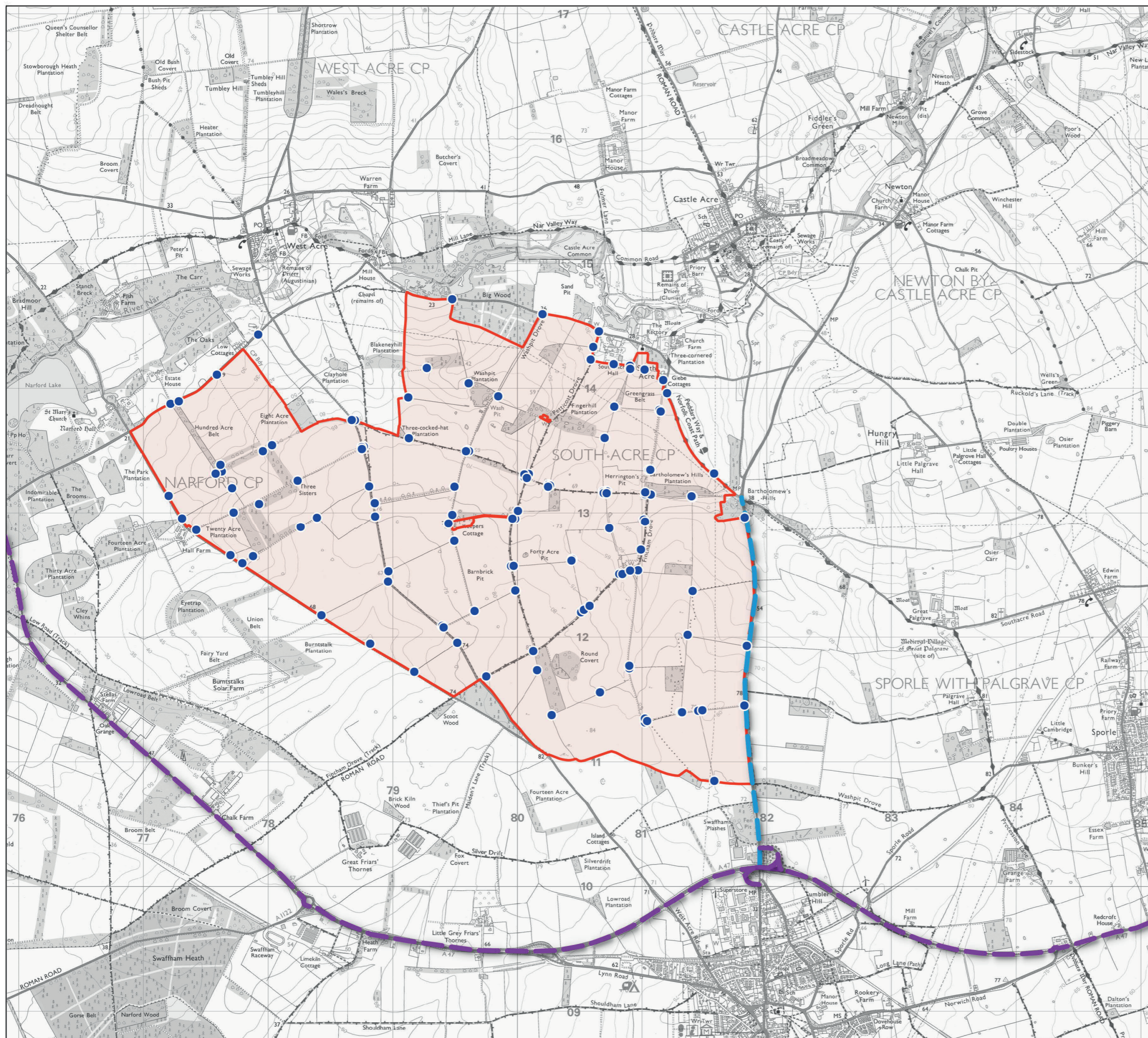
Document reference: APP/5.2 (Original)

APFP Regulation Reg 5(2)(q)

Planning Act 2008

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

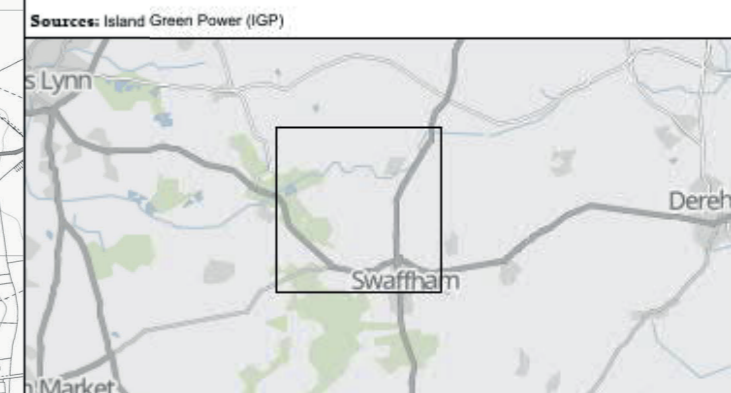




DRAWING TITLE:
Existing Field Access Points

DOCUMENT:
Co-Design Workshop

- LEGEND:
- Site Boundary
 - Existing Field Access Point
 - Strategic Route - A47
 - Key Route - A1065



DWG. NO. TR002

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|-----------|----------|----------|----|
| DATE | Sep 2024 | DRAWN | GJ |
| SCALE @A3 | NTS | CHECKED | CR |
| STATUS | Final | APPROVED | CR |

No dimensions are to be scaled from this drawing.
All dimensions are to be checked on site.
Area measurements for indicative purposes only.
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5 Early-engagement workshop presentation



The Drovers Solar Farm

Co:design workshop

October 2024



Welcome and meet the project team

- Island Green Power - Harman Sond, Development Manager
- DWD Planning - Sarah Price and Emma-Jane Hayward
- LDA Design - Robert Pile and Charlie Mitchell
- Copper Consultancy - Nilufa Jahan, Kate Bullock, Sophie Moss
- Technical Consultants:
 - Aspect Arbor Ecology - Ecology
 - GHC Archaeology & Heritage - Cultural heritage
 - Velocity - Transport
 - Raincloud Consulting - Flood risk and surface water drainage
 - LDA – landscape and visual, amenity and recreation
 - Volterra - Socio-economics and health

Agenda

| | Item | Presenter | Time |
|----|--|-----------------------------|---------|
| 1. | Welcome, meet the team and about today | Copper | 10 mins |
| 2. | About IGP and the need for solar | IGP | 5 mins |
| 3. | Session #1: Presentation – An Introduction to The Drovers Solar Farm | LDA / Technical consultants | 40 mins |
| 4. | Q&A | Copper to chair | 20 mins |
| 5. | Refreshments break | | 10 mins |
| 6. | Session #2: Interactive sessions – discuss key topic areas | All | 60 mins |
| 7. | Time to come together as a group and to report back | Copper | 15 mins |
| 8. | Next steps, closing remarks and opportunity for final comments | Copper / IGP | 10 mins |
| 9. | Workshop close | | |

About today

- These workshops form an important role in the formative stages of the project and non-statutory consultation.
- Your engagement will help inform our plans and project design as this develops in more detail.
- We want to hear your local knowledge to help us to better understand the local context, any key opportunities and considerations, and what else is important to you for the scheme.
- We will present an 'environmental considerations plan' and explain what the components of the site will be and describe the buffers and considerations that will go into the siting of equipment. This will feed into a more informed layout plan ready for further consultation next year.
- We want this session to be as open and collaborative as possible. There will be opportunities for you to ask questions of the team.

Gathering feedback

You can provide feedback today by:

- Providing comments on post-it notes, which can be pinned on printed maps.
- Placing pins on the printed maps to identify notable locations in the area.
- Using our feedback sheets.

We will also be noting down actions and key discussion points throughout the day.

A report on the outcomes from today will be published on our website: <https://drovessolarfarm.co.uk/>

If you have any further comments after the workshop, please contact our dedicated Community Relations team:

Email: info@drovessolarfarm.co.uk

Freephone: 08000129154

About Island Green Power (IGP)

- IGP specialises in the development of solar and battery projects, overseeing the entire development process.
- Their mission is to help the UK increase our solar energy generation making more renewable energy possible and drastically reduce our carbon emissions.
- 1GW of renewable energy assets. Successful development of 34 solar projects worldwide, with 17 of these in the UK and Republic of Ireland.
- Cottam solar project awarded development consent by the Secretary of State for the Department of Energy Security.
- Operates in UK, Ireland, Europe, Australia. Head office in London but offices near Norwich.
- Further information about Island Green Power and their projects can be found on their website: www.islandgp.com



Shuttleworth - Lancashire

Solar in the UK



- The UK has a legally- binding climate change target to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 to ensure that the energy supply remains secure, reliable, and affordable.
- The government aims to achieve 70 GW of solar power by 2035. According to the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, approximately 17GW of solar has been installed in the UK.
 - Government plans would require no more than 0.3% of the country's land to provide about 12% of the UK's energy needs.
- Breckland Council declared a climate emergency in September 2019.
 - Development of solar will help achieve climate change targets as set out in 'Breckland 2035 : Our roadmap to net zero'.

Application for Development Consent Order (DCO)



- Solar farms with a generating capacity in excess of 50MW, are considered to be a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008, and require a Development Consent Order (DCO).
- The Drovers Solar Farm DCO application would be examined by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS).
- They would make a recommendation on the project application to the Secretary of State for the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ).
- The Secretary of State will then make the final decision on the DCO application.
- As part of the DCO application, Norfolk County Council and Breckland Council, as well as other neighbouring local authorities such as King's Lynn and West Norfolk and parish councils, will be consulted through the EIA Scoping Report, Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) and the consultation process, which will help shape our proposals.

Timeline



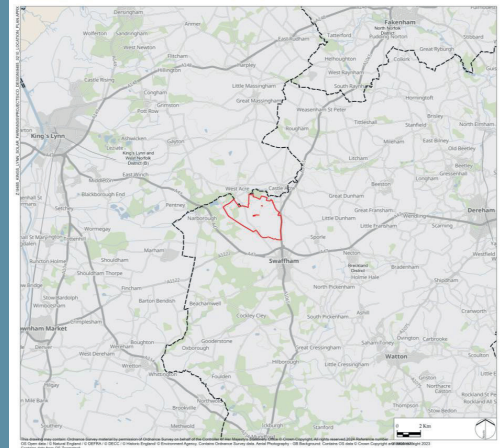
Session #1

An introduction to The Drovers Solar Farm

Location Plan



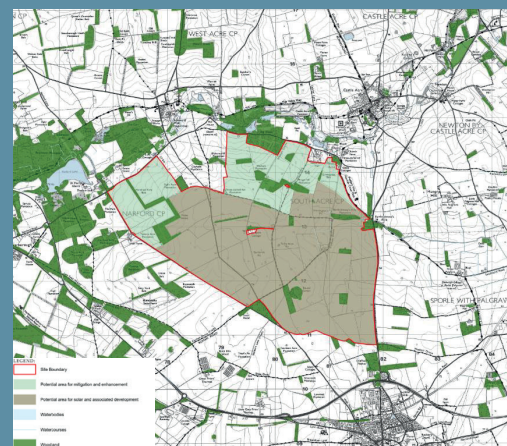
- The proposed solar farm is located on land north of Swaffham and south of Castle Acre.



Project overview



- Co-located solar PV, BESS and associated development
- Grid connection 500 MW (AC)
- Onsite grid connection via existing 400kV overhead lines
- New Project substation
- New National Grid substation
- Green Infrastructure



Project outcomes



1. Contribute to decarbonisation & energy security.

5. Contribute to nature recovery.

2. Build in flexibility & resilience to enable adaptation to climate change and technological advancement.

6. Respond sensitively to the landscape and settlement context.

3. Support local communities and businesses.

7. Respect cultural heritage.

4. Protect recreational routes and provide new ways for people to enjoy the countryside.

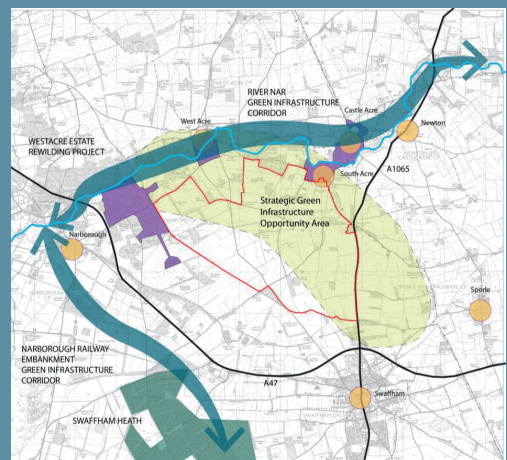
8. Responsibly manage Breckland's natural resources.

Opportunities being considered



Examples of opportunities being considered at this stage:

- Landscape enhancements
- Ecology
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)
- Public access
- Job creation
- Community benefit fund





THE DROVES
SOLAR FARM

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THE DROVES
SOLAR FARM

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Input welcome



- Panel locations
- Landscape mitigation/enhancement such as screening/vegetation
- Enhancement measures incorporated into the design for the benefit of the community, e.g. green spaces, educational initiatives
- Provision of additional/missing PRoW links within the red line boundary
- Access routes
- Community benefits
- Local knowledge e.g local birds species, habitat preferences

Topic #1 - ecology and biodiversity

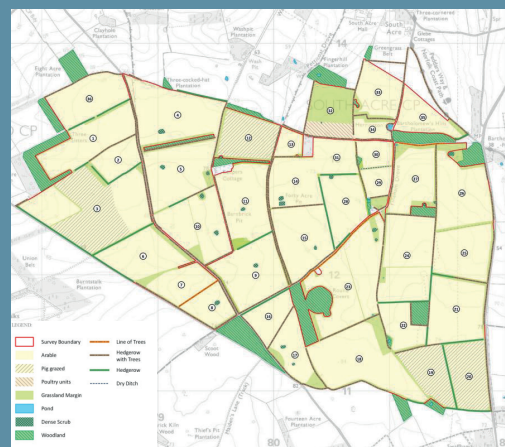


Habitats

- Initial survey and appraisal of on-site habitats and ecological features has been undertaken.

Interim findings and Evaluation

- Site dominated by mixed arable (farm) land.
- Key features include Veteran/Ancient trees, trees with bat roosting potential, blocks of woodland, ponds, hedgerow corridors and tree-lines.
- We expect to achieve a substantial increase in biodiversity.



Topic #1 - ecology and biodiversity

Breeding Bird surveys

- Undertaken to capture species breeding within site.
- Total of 75 species recorded, including 42 listed for conservation concern.
- 14 species of priority listing confirmed breeding within the site, largely associated within hedgerows and field margins.
- Majority of species will benefit from the creation and enhancement of foraging and nesting habitats and creation of open spaces and buffer areas.
- Separate mitigation to be progressed for Skylark, which has been recorded throughout the site.

Wintering Bird surveys

- Surveys to be conducted between during winter 2024/25.

Great Crested Newt eDNA surveys

- Initial surveys identified a number of ponds on-site and within the adjacent areas
- eDNA surveys undertaken within the optimal period, with all relevant ponds returning a negative result.
- Great Crested Newt therefore not considered a constraint to development, though other amphibians will benefit from the proposals through enhanced extent of suitable terrestrial habitat post-development.

Topic #1 - ecology and biodiversity

Bats (Activity Surveys)

- In progress across the 2024 season to assess levels of bat foraging / commuting activity across site.
- Undertaken in the form of remote Static Detector deployments & Night-time Bat Walkover Surveys in line with standard guidance.
- Typical bat assemblage indicated from the analysis to date. Barbastelle activity noted, likely including flightlines.
- Given the scheme is unlikely to significantly disrupt commuting routes (treelines / hedgerows / woodland and woodland edge), it is anticipated that impacts will be readily mitigated, including through the buffering to field boundary habitats and sensitive lighting design strategy.
- Enhancements in the form of tree mounted bat boxes, strengthening of vegetated corridors and new planting will be incorporated.

Topic #1 - ecology and biodiversity

Badger

- Badger survey work has been undertaken, in order to determine levels of use.
- Limited use of the site by Badger, including a small number of setts recorded.
- Appropriate buffers will ensure all setts can remain unaffected and opportunities for foraging will be enhanced in the long term.

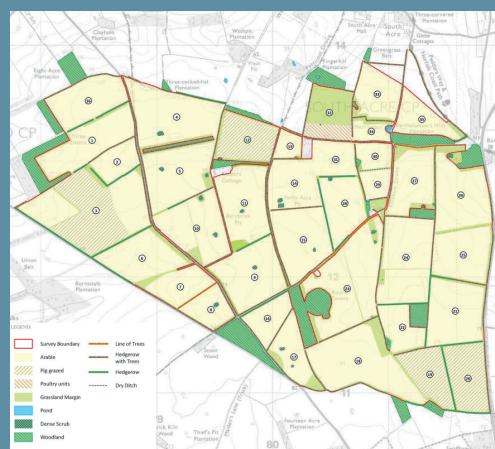
Reptiles

- Field margins and associated areas provides potential for common species of reptiles. Reptile surveys to be conducted during the appropriate season. Should reptiles be present within the site, these can be readily accommodated, and enhancements provided. Minor measures to safeguard individuals during construction may be required.

Topic #1 - ecology and biodiversity

Ecological Approach

- Retention of the most ecologically valuable features (Woodland, Hedgerows, Treelines, Semi-mature – Veteran / Ancient Trees, and ponds), with appropriate buffers.
- New planting to strengthen existing corridors.
- Focus on increasing connectivity through and across the site, linking with off-site key habitats.
- Inclusion of faunal enhancements (bird and bat boxes)



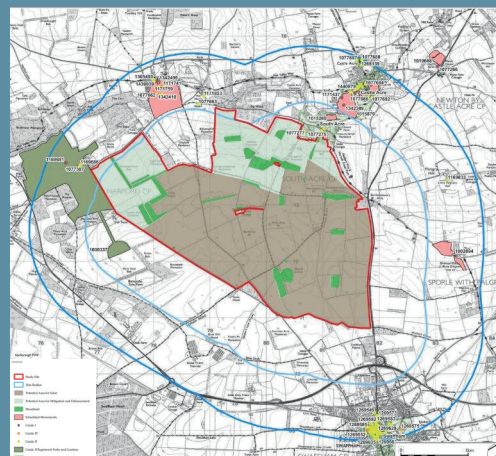
Topic #2 – cultural heritage

Key considerations

- The setting of heritage assets encompassing; how they are experienced, important views of/from the assets, historic relationships between assets and the site.
- Identification and assessment of below ground archaeological remains within the application site.

Work undertaken and in progress

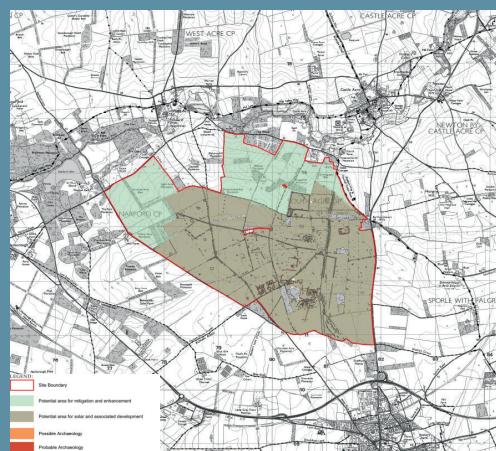
- Desk Based Assessment;
- Setting Assessment;
- Geophysical Survey;
- Aerial Photographic Assessment;
- Engagement with Norfolk Historic Environment Service over scope of any further assessments required.



Topic #2 – cultural heritage

Key results to date

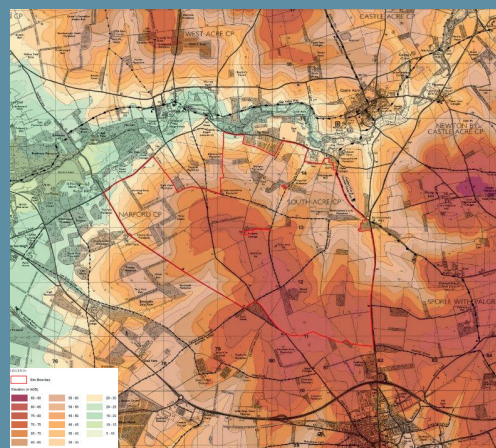
- Designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the site are well screened in views both to and from the site.
- Where there is visibility of the site from designated heritage assets it tends to be discrete sections.
- Localised areas of probable prehistoric and Roman archaeology have been identified through geophysical survey. These are largely found in a broad band through the south-central part of the site.



Topic #3 – landscape and visual

Key considerations:

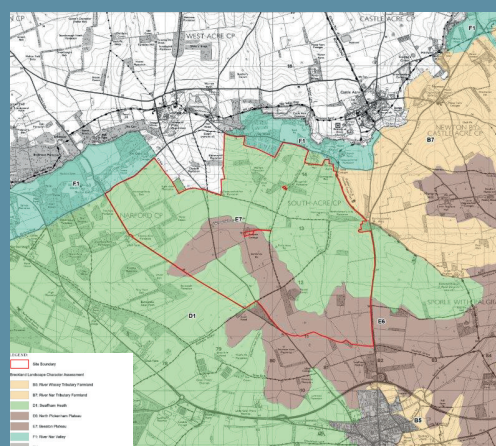
- **Existing characteristics of the local landscape** both within the site and wider landscape context of Swaffham and Nar Valley.
- **Existing key landscape features within the site**, which include woodland blocks, field hedgerows and mature trees, marl pits and ponds within fields, and the wider 'plateau' landscape topography north of Swaffham, as shown on the topography plan.
- **Key visual considerations** include views from nearby settlements and residential properties, public rights of way (such as Peddars Way and Nar Valley Way), users of local roads as well as publicly accessible areas within nearby settlements such as Castle Acre Priory, Castle Acre Castle, and parks and open spaces.



Topic #3 – landscape and visual

Work undertaken to understand existing context

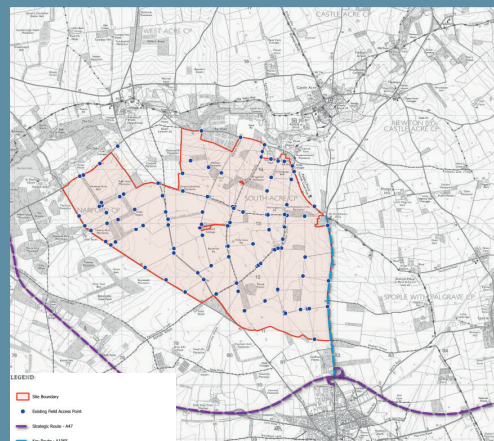
- Desk based research and studies, fieldwork both within the site and wider landscape, visiting nearby settlements.



Topic #4 – transport and access

Key considerations

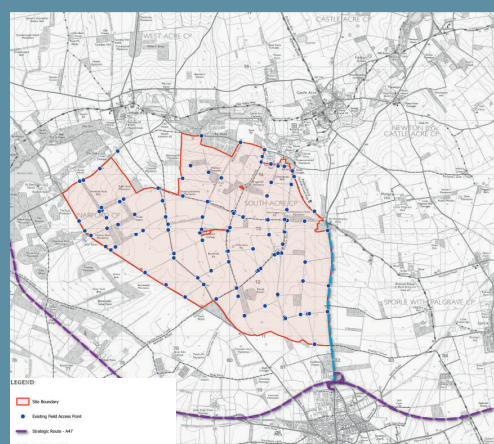
- Transport impacts of the proposal are primarily associated with construction / decommissioning – once operational the traffic flows are minimal.
- Site has excellent vehicular access from the A1065 to the east, which provides direct access to the A47 and strategic road network (SRN) in the south – avoiding disruption to local residents and going through any local villages.
- The routing of construction traffic will be secured through the DCO.



Topic #4 – transport and access

Key considerations

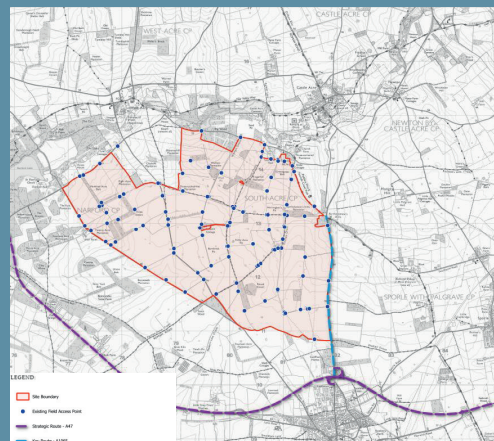
- **The access strategy will seek to utilise existing access points** where possible and consolidate deliveries, so vehicles arrive to the main construction compound (close to A1065).
- **Internal routes will use existing tracks** through fields (where possible) to minimise impacts to The Drovers and the number of times vehicles interact with local people.
- **All access points and highway works will be reviewed** to ensure they comply with current design requirements, namely the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB).



Topic #4 – transport and access

Work undertaken to understand existing context:

- Desk based research and studies, supported by site visits;
- Automatic Traffic Count (ATC) surveys will be undertaken to establish baseline traffic conditions;
- Engagement will be undertaken with local highway authority and stakeholders.



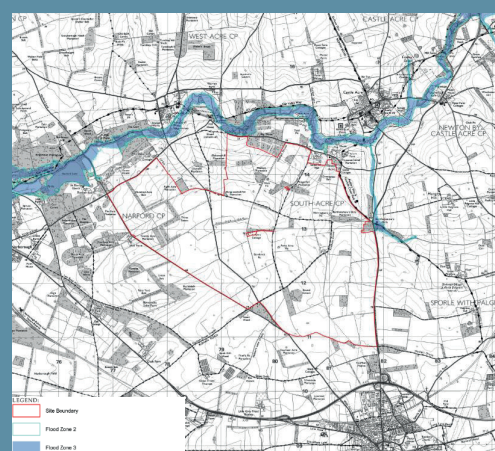
Topic #5 – water environment

Key considerations

- Protection of groundwater underlying the site.
- Management of surface water during construction and operation to ensure no increase in run-off.
- Protection of Private Water Supplies.

Work undertaken to understand existing context:

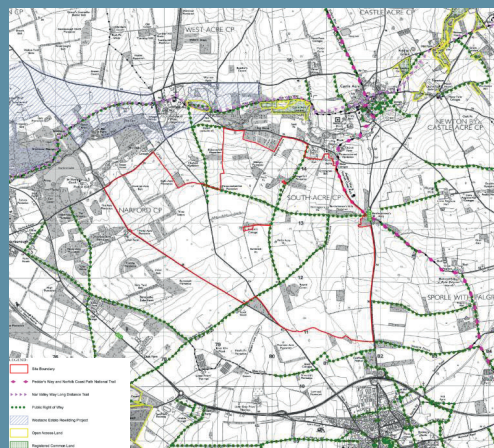
- Desk based research and studies.



Topic #6 – amenity and recreation

Key considerations:

- This topic considers the impacts from changes to views, noise, dust and other emissions, and traffic.
- Receptors would include users of nearby promoted recreational routes, public rights of way (comprising public footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic), cycle routes, outside recreational facilities, access land and public open space.



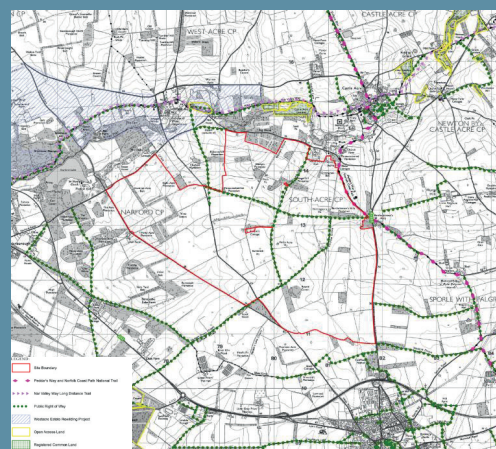
Topic #6 – amenity and recreation

Work Key Considerations:

- Examples of locations that will be considered include public recreational areas and local parks within nearby settlements, visitor attractions such as Castle Acre Priory and Castle Acre Castle, PRoWs through the site, including Castle Acre circular walk, and long distance promoted routes such as The Peddars Way and Nar Valley Way.

Work undertaken to understand existing context:

- Desk based research, fieldwork both within the site and wider landscape, visiting nearby settlements.



Topic #7 – socio economic and land use

Socio-economics – assessing the social and economic impact that the project will have on local people, places, businesses, and the economy. **Key considerations:**

- **Construction jobs and period** – Assessment of construction jobs required, focusing on the proportion expected to be local. Consideration of the peak job periods and the overall duration of the construction phase.
- **Temporary worker accommodation** – The availability of local accommodation to facilitate the construction workers required, particularly during peak periods of construction activity.
- **Operational jobs** – Assessment of the operational jobs of the project, and how this could be enhanced through opportunities for local education and training.
- **Changes in land use** – Evaluation of the current agricultural use of the land, focusing on the potential impacts on food production and the financial implications for local farmers.
- **Tourism** – Analysis of the impact on tourism assets and public rights of way (PRoW).
- **Local businesses** – Evaluation of the impact on local businesses potentially affected by the project and the extent of socio-economic effects.

Topic #8 – community benefit

We are committed to ensuring that local communities can benefit from the project. Through our ongoing engagement we want to understand what local initiatives or projects could be supported to benefit local communities. These could include:

- On-site benefits, which focus on improvements directly related to the project location, such as habitat creation.
- Off-site benefits, which involve broader community support, including funding local charities or educational programmes.
- Community benefits can be immediate, offering short-term advantages, or longer-lasting, with investments spread over a period of time to ensure continued impact and support.

Approach to community benefits

- A local needs assessment will be undertaken to identify vulnerable groups and specific needs, combining a local policy review with desk-based analysis for a comprehensive understanding of the local area.
- Engagement with local groups will be undertaken to further enhance understanding of the local community. This engagement will supplement initial findings and help to develop a list of potential initiatives that could benefit the community. It is crucial to identify the right stakeholders and groups to engage with in the community to ensure the project truly benefits the community.

Q&A

Refreshments break

Session #2

Interactive session

Topic #1 – ecology and biodiversity

- What habitats and species do you consider to be a priority within the local area?
- Are there any local species populations that you feel should be given additional consideration?
- Are there any biodiversity and wildlife enhancements that you would like to see included within the scheme?

Topic #2 – cultural heritage

- We are currently gathering data regarding known heritage assets within the proximity of the project.
- Are there any local heritage features we should be aware of?
- Are there any particularly important views to/from any heritage assets that we should be aware of?

Topic #3 – landscape and visual impact

- Are there any key landscape features that we should be aware of?
- Are there any key viewpoints that we should be aware of?
- What type of enhancement and mitigation measures would you like to see?
- Where would you like to see enhancement and mitigation measures?

Topic #4 – transport and access

- Which routes should development traffic avoid?
- Which public rights of way are well-used locally?
- Would there be benefits to introducing a permissive path through the site?

Topic #5 – water environment

- Are there any popular water courses locally?
- Is there a history of flooding/poor drainage that we should be aware of?

Topic #6 – amenity and recreation

- Are there any popular viewpoints we should be aware of?
- Are there any recreational areas or footpaths you think we should be aware of?

Topic #7 – socio economic and land use

- Do you have any comments on socio-economics and land use, such as impacts on employment, local businesses or land use?

Topic #8 – community benefit



- Do you have any thoughts on our approach to community benefits and how local people can benefit from the scheme?
- Are there any local groups or projects that could positively benefit from the scheme?

What happens next



- Thank you for attending today's workshop.
- Your feedback will help inform the layout and refine the proposals for The Drovers Solar Farm.
- We will publish a report on the outcomes from today on the project website.
- In the meantime, if you have any further comments or questions, please get in touch:
 - Email info@drovessolarfarm.co.uk
 - Freephone: 08000129154



Island Green Power
<https://islandgp.com/>

Example Panels



6 Initial public newsletter

The Droves Solar Farm



Newsletter



Island Green Power (IGP) is exploring the potential of a solar farm with battery energy storage on the land between Swaffham, Narford and South Acre.

Our project, The Drove Solar Farm, could generate up to 500 megawatts (MWac) of renewable energy – enough to power approximately 115,000 households annually – and become a substantial source of electricity for the country. The battery energy storage component would store surplus energy and supply it to the national grid.

The planning process

The Drove Solar Farm is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) as the proposed energy capacity exceeds 50MW. To gain permission to build and operate it, IGP must submit a Development Consent Order (DCO) application. This will be reviewed by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), an independent body that examines NSIPs. PINS will then make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ), who will make the final decision on the application.

Project benefits

If consented, The Drove Solar Farm would:



Be a NSIP with the potential to generate up to 500 megawatts (MWac), enough to power approximately 115,000 homes annually.



Contribute to decarbonisation and energy security.



Support local communities and businesses.



Protect recreational routes and provide new ways for people to enjoy the countryside.



Contribute to nature recovery and respond sensitively to the landscape, including Breckland's natural resources.



Respect cultural heritage.

Working with the community

We are committed to working closely with the local community throughout the consultation process. We are in the early stages of the project and your continued input and local insights will be valuable in helping us to refine the project further. So far, we have held several briefing meetings with local stakeholders, and two early engagement workshops where stakeholders, community groups and technical specialists were invited to provide feedback on our initial proposals.

We would like to thank everyone who took part in our early stage engagement.

Next steps

We will publish a report of the outcomes from the co-design workshops in the coming months. The report will include a summary of the information shared and key themes from the feedback we received. We will explain how this feedback will be incorporated into

the design proposals for The Drovers Solar Farm. We intend to hold our statutory consultation in spring/summer 2025, which will provide an opportunity for members of the public to attend face-to-face consultation events and meet the project team. As part of the consultation, we will present detailed proposals for communities and stakeholders to comment on. Input from the consultation will help shape the final project design before we submit our application.

Other projects in the area

Throughout the consultation process we will ensure everyone who wants to engage with the project and provide their feedback has the opportunity to do so.

We are aware of other projects in the area, including several proposed solar developments. Where appropriate, we will address any potential concerns collectively.

Our proposals

At this early stage, the following areas have been identified to form part of our proposals for The Drovers Solar Farm:

Potential areas for solar and associated development

Areas where solar PV panels and associated infrastructure would be located comprises approximately 770 hectares.

The Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) would be located on the same land, to store surplus renewable energy and release it to the grid when it is needed. The exact location of this energy storage is under consideration.

Potential areas for mitigation and enhancement

An area of approximately 330 hectares will be dedicated to mitigation and enhancement. This includes tree planting and the creation of new habitats. The remaining 30 hectares would be areas of woodland and waterbodies.

We aim to make improvements near the site based on the feedback from our consultation, to ensure that communities can continue to access and enjoy the local environment and its amenities. Access to existing public rights of way will remain and be maintained.

Timeline



More information regarding the DCO process can be accessed on the **Planning Inspectorate website** <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/the-process/>.

About Island Green Power

Island Green Power (IGP) is a leading developer of renewable energy projects, with a focus on utility-scale solar farms and battery storage systems. Our mission is to help the UK increase our solar energy generation, making more renewable energy possible and drastically reducing our carbon emissions. The UK has committed to decarbonising the electricity system by 2035 and has set out how the deployment of renewable technologies such as solar will be accelerated in the Government's Manifesto.

How to contact us

We want to hear from you. We will do our best to answer any questions you may have about the proposals at this stage, or to provide you with any further assistance you need.

To stay up to date on the progress of our plans, please contact us via email or freephone.

✉ Email: **info@drovessolarfarm.co.uk**

📞 Call: **08000 129 154**

You can also visit our website:

www.drovessolarfarm.co.uk to find out more.

7 Workshop Summary Report

The Drovers Solar Farm

Workshop Summary Report
December 2024



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Introduction to The Droves Solar Farm

Island Green Power (IGP) is bringing forward proposed plans for a solar farm with battery storage located on land north of Swaffham and south of Castle Acre, West Norfolk.

Areas to accommodate solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and associated infrastructure would comprise approximately 770 hectares. A further 330 hectares of land is being considered for mitigation and enhancement measures.

The Droves Solar Farm (the Project), if consented, could generate up to 500 megawatts (MWac) of renewable energy, enough to power approximately 115,000 homes annually. The battery storage component of the Project would store surplus energy and supply it to the national grid when needed.

As the proposed generation capacity exceeds 50 MW, the Project is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), which means an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to construct, operate and decommission the Project must be made under the Planning Act 2008. The applicant for The Droves Solar Farm will be The Droves Solar Farm Limited, a subsidiary of IGP.

About Island Green Power

IGP is a leading developer of utility-scale solar projects and battery storage systems. We operate in the UK, Spain, Italy, Australia and New Zealand. Our mission is to help countries accelerate the transition from fossil fuels to solar power by making more renewable energy possible, drastically reducing carbon emissions and contributing to global net zero targets.

IGP oversees the entire development process, including securing grid connections, sourcing land and obtaining planning consents.

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of our early engagement workshops, including the information presented and discussed. It also outlines the key themes from the comments received and explains how this feedback will be incorporated into our project design process.

Approach to consultation

We will submit the DCO application to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), who are responsible for the examination of the application. PINS will then make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero on whether to approve the DCO. The Secretary of State makes the final decision on the DCO application.

To date, we have conducted introductory meetings with key stakeholders who have expert knowledge of the local area. This engagement has helped us understand potential concerns and opportunities at the Site and its surrounding context. Our early efforts have also included a series of workshops and communication with the landowner and nearby properties.

This engagement is essential for the preparation and refinement of our detailed proposals, which we will present during statutory consultation, which is currently scheduled for spring/summer 2025. Following this, we will prepare to submit our DCO application, which we expect to be in winter 2025.



Early consultation workshops

Introduction

As part of our early engagement for The Drovers Solar Farm, we held two **in-person workshops** with local councils and community groups:

- Tuesday 17 September 2024, from 14:00 until 17:00 at The Dragonfly Hotel, King’s Lynn
- Tuesday 1 October 2024, from 17:00 until 20:00 at The George Hotel, Swaffham

In addition to the in-person workshops, we held a series of **virtual technical workshops**:

- Water and Flood workshop: Tuesday 24 September 2024, from 10:00 until 12:00 using Microsoft Teams
- Planning, Community Benefit and Socio-economic workshop: Tuesday 24 September, from 14:00 until 16:00 using Microsoft Teams
- Traffic and Transportation workshop: Thursday 26 September, from 10:00 until 11:30 using Microsoft Teams

Each session included an introductory presentation, followed by a question-and-answer session, and an interactive ‘masterplanning’ session, where attendees could provide local insight, and work with the project team to provide feedback. This format provided an opportunity for attendees to actively participate in the early-stage design process.

Several members of the project team, including IGP staff and technical specialists, attended the workshops; they explained the Project and the work carried out to date, and used their technical knowledge to address any questions. This included experts in relation to biodiversity and ecology, heritage, transport, flood risk and surface water drainage, landscape and visual, amenity and recreation, and socio-economics and health.

Workshop attendees

Workshop attendees included:

- planning and technical officers from Norfolk County Council.
- ward councillors from Breckland Council and Kings Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council.
- representatives of the local community, including parish councils, and local interest and community groups.
- wider environmental and technical stakeholders.

The Project team in attendance consisted of:

- Island Green Power
- DWD – planning consultants
- LDA Design – Environmental Impact Assessment, masterplanning, landscape and visual, residential visual amenity and amenity and recreation consultants
- Aspect Ecology – ecology and biodiversity consultants
- GHC Archaeology and Heritage – cultural heritage consultants
- Velocity – transport and access consultants
- Raincloud Consulting – flood risk and water environment consultants
- Volterra – socio-economics consultants
- Copper Consultancy – communications and engagement consultants

Information presented

The table below provides a summary of the information presented at the workshops.
The full presentation can be found on the Project website here: <https://drovessolarfarm.co.uk/#documents>

| Introduction | |
|--|---|
| About Island Green Power (IGP) | We introduced IGP, a leading developer of renewable energy projects with a focus on utility-scale solar farms and battery storage systems, to attendees. |
| Solar in the UK | Following this, we shared an overview of the needs case for the Project, along with UK net zero targets. |
| Application for Development Consent Order (DCO) | We then introduced the DCO application process required for NSIPs. A project timeline with key milestones was also presented. |
| Overview of The Drovers Solar Farm | For the final introductory section, we shared more details of the Project, its location and proposed infrastructure, and our initial work carried out to date. This included an initial identification of key environmental considerations that will inform the design. |
| Technical updates | |
| Ecology and biodiversity | We provided an overview of the ecological and biodiversity surveys conducted to date, including Breeding Bird, Wintering Bird, Great Crested Newt and active Bat surveys. |
| Cultural heritage | We provided an overview of the surveys conducted by the team, offering insights into local heritage and archaeological features that contribute to the cultural character and experience of the area. |
| Landscape and visual | We shared an overview of the landscape and visual assessments undertaken to date, identifying key considerations that will inform the project design. |
| Transport and access | We provided an overview of ongoing traffic and access assessments, including a review of field access points and route options for construction vehicles. |
| Water environment | We summarised the initial water environment and flood zone assessments. |
| Amenity and recreation | We presented research on the impacts of changes to views, noise, dust, other emissions and traffic on nearby recreational areas. |
| Socio-economic and land use | We gave an overview of key socio-economic considerations, including job opportunities and worker accommodation. |





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| Community benefit | <p>For the final topic area, we shared our commitment to working with local community organisations, to understand how to best support local community initiatives and projects.</p> <p>Examples included on-site benefits, like habitat creation, and off-site benefits, such as funding for educational programs.</p> |
| Interactive Session | <p>During the second half of the workshop, we held a question-and-answer session, to allow attendees to put forward any initial questions to the team.</p> <p>We then invited attendees to assess the Site maps that were presented during the presentation. We provided Post-it notes™, pens and feedback forms to encourage attendees to provide their insights and comments that the project team should consider in the design of The Drovers Solar Farm.</p> <p>We invited comments on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ecology and biodiversity• culture and heritage• landscape and visual impact• transport and access• water environment• socio-economics and land use• community benefit• any other issues important to local people. |

Key feedback themes received

Attendees were encouraged to submit their feedback in the following ways:

- on map via Post-it notes
- by completing feedback forms
- by providing written comments on the print materials.

The table below provides a summary of the key themes that were raised during the workshops, and how we are working to address comments. All feedback, together with our ongoing engagement, design work, and assessments, will help inform our proposals. We will present the refined plans during our statutory consultation, currently scheduled to take place in spring/ summer 2025.



| Key themes from the feedback | How we are working to address and incorporate the feedback |
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| Design | |
| Participants raised concerns about the size of the Project and the amount of land proposed for solar PV panels, Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) and associated infrastructure. | <p>The UK has set ambitious climate change targets to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The Drovers Solar Farm would contribute towards achieving this and help to ensure that our energy supply remains secure, reliable and affordable.</p> <p>The exact location of the panels has not yet been decided, and there are areas under consideration for mitigation. We are keen to hear feedback and will continue to consider suggestions as the project develops.</p> <p>The Site would also be designed to minimise impact through retaining and enhancing its ecological features where possible.</p> |

Maps and plans

A range of maps and plans were available at each workshop and subsequently published on the Project website. **The materials include:**

- Site Plan
 - Location Plan
 - Habitats and Ecological Features Plan
 - Designated Heritage Assets Plan
 - Geophysical Interpretation Results Plan
 - Topography Plan
 - Landscape Character Plan
 - Existing Field Access Points Plan
- Flood Zones Plan
 - Recreational Access Plan
 - Socio-economics Plan
 - Groundwater Source Protection Zones Plan
 - Drinking Water Protected Area Plan.

All maps and plans can be found on our website at:
<https://drovessolarfarm.co.uk/#documents>



Ecology and biodiversity

Participants recognised the opportunities for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) but highlighted the need for enhancements to be proposed on-Site and in the surrounding area.

Participants raised concerns about the potential impact of infrastructure, including security fencing, panels, and BESS, on local ecology and biodiversity. Specific references were made to the potential for an increased risk of road collisions with displaced deer and badgers. Participants emphasised the need to provide ‘alternative’ routes to safeguard and enhance ecology and biodiversity levels.

Mitigation solutions to reduce the potential impact on local wildlife included the inclusion of hedgerows, trees and brambles to create new wildlife corridors, in and around the the Site.

Participants noted the presence of several bird species on the the Site, including buzzards, kites and skylarks.

Participants highlighted a possible toad migratory route to the north of the Site, in the Castle Acre area.

A suggestion for bees to be included in areas designated for BNG was submitted.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust was named as an important stakeholder to engage in the design of mitigation and enhancement strategies. Some participants suggested that a partnership with the Trust could allow for the development of a volunteer network to aid maintenance of ecological features.

Participants encouraged the team to continue to work with Breckland Council to support the implementation of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Our initial ecological assessments of the Site indicate that we can expect to achieve an increase in biodiversity of at least 10%.

Survey work is currently being undertaken to identify areas within the Site that will be used for environmental and biodiversity safeguarding and enhancement. This would include new planting to strengthen existing wildlife corridors and encourage new species.

There are potential further opportunities for habitat creation though the installation of bat and bird nesting boxes, hibernacula, woodpiles, and beehives within the margins of the Site.

We have conducted initial bird surveys to map habitat, and breeding and migration patterns. We will survey wintering birds over winter 2025.

Our ecology team are continuing to carry out further habitat and species surveys, which will allow us to better identify any potential biodiversity impacts of the Project. These surveys include, birds, bats, reptiles, amphibians and badgers.

We are continuing to engage with key technical specialists, councillors and community stakeholders to support the early design process. Their insight and feedback will help to refine our proposals.

We are also engaging with Norfolk Wildlife Trust and Breckland Council to gather feedback and explore options for biodiversity and ecological enhancements.

Cultural heritage

The local area was described by participants as a valuable natural and historical resource. Participants welcomed the potential opportunity to encourage tourist engagement with local heritage sites.

Participants highlighted the importance of preserving the experience of local landmarks, including the Church of St James, Castle Acre.

Participants noted that Roman roads run through the Site and should be protected throughout the construction, operation and decommissioning phases of the Project.

As part of our cultural heritage assessments, we are undertaking surveys from important heritage sites, including Castle Acre Priory and Castle Acre Castle.

Our initial findings, along with further surveys, will provide the information we need to identify appropriate mitigation strategies if required.



Landscape and visual impact

Participants were collectively concerned about the impact on the landscape, and its rural character, including the Project’s visual impact.

Suggestions on how to mitigate and enhance the local landscape included:

- screening of security and BESS infrastructure
- new planting with diverse species
- strategic use of existing woodland.

Participants emphasised the need to protect views towards local settlements, including Castle Acre.

Attendees were concerned about the project’s potential impact overnight, particularly regarding light pollution in a designated ‘Dark Sky’ area.

Participants suggested that any security infrastructure should be painted matt black to mitigate any visual impacts.

Participants also requested that the team share details of any lighting management schemes for both the construction and operation of the Project with stakeholders.

Our design process is landscape-led and we seek to take advantage of natural screening, topography and landform, existing hedgerows, and woodland. Existing screening would be reinforced with new planting, using native species. As solar panels are low profile compared with other forms of infrastructure, they can be more easily screened.

Early desk-based research and field work has identified key existing visual features and characteristics.

Key considerations for visual impact include:

- views from Castle Acre and other nearby settlements
- views and experience of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and bridleways, including routes from South Acre to Swaffham and across the Nar Valley
- views from open spaces.

By taking these factors into consideration as we refine our proposals, we can seek to minimise the visual impact of the Site.

CCTV with night vision would reduce lighting needs, and low-level emergency lighting at substations and BESS would activate only as required. All lighting would be designed to minimise light pollution and local impact.

Glint and glare

The potential impact of glint and glare from the solar PV panels on geese migration was raised as a point of concern. Participants suggested we contact the Nar Valley Ornithological Society to to discuss bird species present in the area.

Concern about the potential impact of glint and glare from the solar PV panels was also shared by participants. It was noted that RAF Marnham (located south-west of the Site), operates a flight path across the Site.

We are conducting a comprehensive assessment of glint and glare to understand the potential impact locally. We are also assessing the potential impact on aerodromes.

We identified the Nar Valley Ornithological Society as an important stakeholder and will seek their insight and feedback on local bird species and migratory patterns.



Water environment

Participants noted the presence of chalk streams running through the Site. Concern was raised about the potential impact of run-off into the streams, which feed into the River Nar.

Participants highlighted a ford near South Acre which has flooded and caused the road to be closed.

Attendees emphasised the need to assess ground and surface water levels as part of ongoing surveys and Site refinement. The inclusion of flood mitigation measures, including swales and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs), was recommended.

Participants suggested that ponds be included to mitigate run-off throughout the construction and operational phase of the Project.

Our initial water assessments have revealed that the Site is predominantly located within Flood Zone 1. Areas within Flood Zone 1 are deemed to have less than a 1 in 1000 (0.1%) annual probability of flooding in any given year. Flood Zone 1 is the lowest-risk flood zone.

A full flood risk assessment and a drainage statement will be prepared as part of the DCO application. A combined water quality, flood risk and drainage assessment will consider the impacts of the Project through the construction, operation and decommissioning phases.



Transport, traffic and access

Participants provided insight into the quality of roads near the Site. It was noted that roads through Sporle with Palgrave and Castle Acre would likely be inadequate for construction vehicles.

The management of construction traffic was a priority for participants. It was recommended that construction vehicles follow agreed routes and times of operation.

Participants provided feedback regarding the impact of seasonal traffic flows on local roads. It was noted that the A1065 often experiences busy periods during summer, owing to tourism, and harvest seasons, owing to local agricultural activities.

Agricultural traffic, particularly in the period between October and February, was also raised as a point of concern. Transport surveys to account for seasonal change were requested.

The A1065 and A47 are the major roads in proximity to the Site. Participants raised concerns about pedestrian safety and limited access across the roads. Suggestions for bridges to improve connectivity to the Site were put forward.

Participants also raised concerns about the impact of construction traffic on pedestrian and equestrian routes. Where passing along or crossing restricted byways is unavoidable, the provision of safe alternatives should be made available.

Suggestions to support the mitigation of potential impacts of construction traffic on other road uses included:

- buffers around byways
- temporary parking bays.

Participants asked that a Central Management Plan and Code of Construction be published and adhered to.

The A1065 and A47 will be the primary routes for any traffic associated with the construction or decommissioning of the Site, which will mitigate potential impacts on local road users and residents.

Given the strong transport links, Heavy Good Vehicles (HGVs) are not expected to pass through small settlements, such as Castle Acre, Sporle with Palgrave, and South Acre.

We are continuing to undertake surveys and assessments of local routes to assess traffic flows and inform the preferred route for construction and access points to the Site.

We will implement a comprehensive Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) and Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to ensure construction activities are appropriately controlled.

Once the Project becomes operational, we anticipate vehicle movements to be minimal to and from site, and primarily limited to those conducting maintenance and replacement activities.





| Noise | |
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| <p>Participants expressed concern about the possibility of noise, including ‘humming’, being emitted from solar PV panels and BESS infrastructure.</p> <p>Participants noted existing noise in the area from local business and recreational activities, including shooting.</p> <p>Participants put forward suggestions for noise mitigation, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• high-density insulation around noise-emitting infrastructures• environmental screening including use of existing woodlands. <p>Participants also suggested that inverters are sited away from byways to reduce the impact of noise on recreational users of the space.</p> <p>Noise surveys were requested by attendees.</p> | <p>Solar PV arrays generally emit only minimal noise; however, we will be conducting noise monitoring and surveys at the Site to assess and confirm any potential impacts on surrounding areas.</p> <p>Similarly, other equipment on the Site, such as the BESS, emits very low levels of noise.</p> <p>The feedback received on noise mitigation will be considered as part of ongoing design refinements.</p> |
| Health, safety and wellbeing | |
| <p>Participants expressed safety concerns about BESS infrastructure, particularly with regards to fire risk.</p> <p>Participants provided feedback about theft in the area. Additional security measures to dissuade thieves were advised.</p> <p>The importance of protecting public physical and mental health, particularly during the construction phase, was emphasised by participants.</p> <p>Participants raised concerns about supply chains and have emphasised the importance of ethical and sustainable sources.</p> | <p>The BESS will adhere to applicable safety standards and regulations. An outline battery safety management plan will be submitted with the DCO application, which among other measures will outline how the risk of fire will be reduced and identify how safety requirements have been met.</p> <p>Protecting and enhancing public health is also a priority. We want to support local communities and provide new ways for people to enjoy the local area. To ensure the Site remains safe and secure, CCTV will be installed along the perimeter and monitored remotely.</p> <p>We will also be conducting a Local Needs Assessment to identify specific local needs, and we will be working with the local community to deliver impactful and tailored benefits where possible.</p> <p>We are yet to confirm the contracts for suppliers of the equipment for the Project and an appropriate assessment will be conducted as the proposal progresses into the next stages.</p> <p>To ensure supply chains are as ethical and sustainable as possible, IGP has pledged to support the independent auditing of all UK solar supply chains and is a signatory to Solar Energy UK’s Supply Chain Statement.</p> <p>This is an industry-led, traceability protocol that aligns with internationally recognised standards.</p> |

| Public rights of way / recreational spaces | |
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| <p>Participants raised concerns about the potential impact of the Project on PRoW and restricted byways.</p> <p>Participants particularly expressed concern about whether access to existing routes would be impacted during or after construction. Mitigation suggestions included adding environmental buffers and establishing a minimum distance between fencing.</p> <p>There is a high recreational value attached to existing walking, cycling and riding routes in the local area. Participants put forward suggestions for new and enhanced routes to improve connectivity across the Site, and with other proposed projects in the area.</p> <p>Ideas included maintaining and enhancing existing local PRoWs, creating a central destination within the Site for walkers, and providing additional routes for equestrians.</p> <p>Participants put forward further suggestions for new walking, cycling and equestrian connections between the Site and the West Acre Rewilding Project. It was noted that good signage and mapping would be required to promote routes.</p> <p>Additional suggestions to improve connectivity included adding PRoW linkages towards the River Nar corridor, and along the Nar Valley Way.</p> <p>Participants also emphasised the recreational and educational value of accessible wildlife zones or corridors.</p> <p>Suggestions for new community benches to support the accessibility and enjoyment of routes, were also put forward.</p> | <p>We recognise the value of PRoW, and restricted byways, and are committed to enhancing routes where possible. This will help ensure that communities can continue to access and enjoy the local environment and its amenities.</p> <p>In response to feedback provided during the early engagement workshops, we will gather information on PRoWs from sources such as information points, leaflets, and maps provided by local organisations, such as the Breckland Walkers Group.</p> <p>We will also seek to engage with the West Acre Rewilding Project to explore ways to enhance connectivity, and improve signage, maps and leaflets for local residents and visitors.</p> |





Socio-economic and land use considerations

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| <p>Participants enquired about the land grading of the Site. Concerns were expressed over the changing use of arable land, and the potential regional and national impact on food security.</p> <p>Participants provided feedback on the local and regional farming heritage of Norfolk. It was suggested that the possibility for sheep farming under solar array areas did not reflect local farming expertise.</p> <p>Participants stated that they lacked confidence that any socio-economic benefits would be felt locally. However, suggestions for local upskilling and specialist training to support the Project’s construction and operation were noted.</p> <p>Participants highlighted the value of creating employment and educational opportunities, such as apprenticeships, to bring young people into the area and support green jobs growth.</p> | <p>While we recognise concerns around food security, the Independent National Food Strategy Review (2021) indicates that solar farms do not pose a risk to the UK’s food supply.</p> <p>Following feedback about local farming practices and heritage, we are considering alternative options for animal grazing.</p> <p>We will also ensure, wherever possible, local contractors and suppliers have the opportunity to work on the Project. Most of the training, employment and contractor opportunities would be available during the construction phase of the Project if the DCO is granted.</p> <p>We will assess local employment and educational opportunities as part of our Local Needs Assessment to establish how we can offer targeted support for local communities.</p> |
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Operation and maintenance

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| <p>Participants raised concerns about the impact of a 60-year operational term on land and wildlife quality.</p> <p>Questions were raised about panel cleaning, and the potential for run-off to disrupt wildlife and water sources.</p> <p>Participants also expressed concern about whether the commitments made in the DCO application would be honoured for the Project’s lifespan.</p> <p>The decommissioning process was also queried and participants asked whether land could, in fact, be returned to its original condition.</p> | <p>The Project is considered a ‘temporary’ development, meaning it would be decommissioned after 60 years and the land will be returned to ‘the landowner’, as per the requirements of the DCO.</p> <p>An outline Operational Environmental Management Plan will be submitted with the DCO application. It will specify that an operations and maintenance specialist will be appointed to manage and maintain the Site throughout its lifetime. They will be legally required to honour the commitments agreed in the DCO application.</p> |
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Cumulative impact

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| <p>Participants raised concerns about the cumulative impact of multiple developments proposed in the local area</p> <p>Participants suggested that a map should be made available to show all proposed sites and the extent to which they overlap.</p> <p>Participants also suggested coordinating efforts across proposals to address any combined socio-economic and environmental impacts and to increase the local benefits of community funding.</p> | <p>We are aware of other projects in the county, including several proposed solar developments and NSIPs.</p> <p>We have open lines of communication with other developers and will continue to address concerns collectively where appropriate.</p> <p>We are also considering ways to work together to maximise any potential positive impact from mitigation efforts or community benefit initiatives.</p> <p>As part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, we will be required to undertake a cumulative assessment. This will be submitted as part of the DCO application.</p> |
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Community benefits

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| <p>Participants provided valuable insights into local community projects and places that would benefit from community benefit funds. A partnership with the Norfolk Community Foundation, to ensure benefits are felt locally, was suggested.</p> <p>Suggestions for community benefits included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• creating a community garden and/or orchard• new and/or enhanced public community infrastructure• new leisure facilities• new playgrounds• domestic solar infrastructure• electric vehicle (EV) chargers• food bank and/or bus• STEM sessions. <p>Additional suggestions included enhancing community safety measures through the addition of zebra crossings in local villages.</p> <p>There was also a request to explore working in tandem with other developers to maximise local impact.</p> | <p>We are keen to use this opportunity to support local communities and work in partnership to deliver initiatives which will have a positive impact.</p> <p>We are also continuing to meet with other developers who have proposed projects in the area, and are exploring how we might work together to deliver community benefits in partnership.</p> <p>We will continue to consult with local stakeholders, such as Norfolk County Council, Breckland District Council, relevant parish councils, and Norfolk Community Foundation, to help inform any initiatives we seek to take forward.</p> <p>We will also keep our communication channels open for feedback and suggestions throughout the consultation process.</p> |
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Communications and engagement

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| <p>Participants who attended our workshops emphasised the importance of continued engagement with the county, district and parish councils.</p> <p>Questions were raised about additional opportunities for stakeholders and members of the public to learn about and comment on the proposals.</p> | <p>Our programme of public consultation gives local representatives, community organisations and technical specialists the opportunity to support the early design process and share local knowledge.</p> <p>We are seeking continued engagement with Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), including Breckland Council, organisations, such as Norfolk Community Foundation, and technical stakeholders, including Norfolk Wildlife Trust and Historic England.</p> <p>As a community-led developer, we also use feedback from our public consultations to develop then refine our final proposals. Every project we have developed to date has been improved by feedback we have received during public consultation.</p> |
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Frequently asked questions

During the workshops, attendees raised a series of specific questions related to the Project. We have summarised our answers to these below, with further information available on our website: www.drovessolarfarm.co.uk/

Design

How much of the Site will be occupied by solar, BESS and security infrastructure?

We are still at the early stages of the design, meaning that survey work is still being undertaken to identify the exact areas within the Site that will be used for environmental mitigation and enhancement, solar PV panels and associated development.

We are considering the suitability of up to 770 hectares to accommodate solar PV panels and associated infrastructure. Further to this, we are considering the potential for up to approximately 330 hectares for mitigation and enhancement measures.

Is battery storage safe?

We understand public concern towards the safety of Battery Energy Storage. Our BESS adhere to applicable safety standards and regulations. We will also submit an outline battery safety management plan as part of our DCO application, which amongst other measures will outline how the risk of fire will be reduced and identify how safety requirements have been met.

Operation and maintenance

How long will the construction phase be?

We expect the timeframe for construction to be up to 24 months.

An engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contractor will construct The Drovers Solar Farm, and an operations and maintenance specialist will manage and maintain it until it is decommissioned .

What is the lifespan of the Project?

The Project is considered a ‘temporary’ development, meaning it would be decommissioned after 60 years, after which the land will be returned to its the landowner as per the DCO.

Ecology and biodiversity

How will green infrastructure be used for mitigation and enhancement?

Solar farms have been proven to be able to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of at least 10%. Our proposals for The Drovers Solar Farm will be no different.

The Project will be designed to retain and enhance the Site’s ecological features and minimise any impact.

Mitigation and enhancement areas are proposed in the areas of the Site that are excluded from solar panel development and other infrastructure. This may include:

- new planting and ecological buffers
- additional habitat and wildlife corridors
- new bat and bird nesting boxes, hibernacula, woodpiles and beehives.

Landscape and visual

How will you protect our views?

Our design process is landscape-led and we seek to take advantage of natural screening, topography and landform, existing hedgerows and woodland. As solar panels are low profile compared to other forms of infrastructure, they can be more easily screened.

Any existing screening would also be reinforced with new planting, including the filling-in of gaps in hedgerows with native species.

The landscape and visual impacts will be assessed from a number of key viewpoints agreed with landscape officers at Breckland Council and Borough Council of King’s Lynn & West Norfolk.

Transport and access

How will the cumulative impacts of construction traffic be managed?

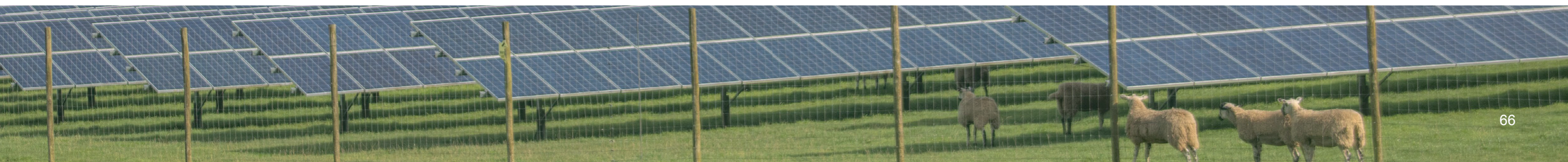
The A1065 and A47 will be the primary routes for any traffic associated with the construction or decommissioning of the Site, which will mitigate potential impacts on local road users and residents.

Construction traffic is not expected to pass through settlements, such as Castle Acre, Sporle with Palgrave, or South Acre.

We are continuing to undertake surveys and assessments of local routes to assess traffic flows and inform the preferred route for construction and access points to the Site.

We will agree proposed construction vehicle routes with Norfolk County Council, and construction traffic will be monitored and assessed for impact on surrounding areas.

As part of our DCO application, we will submit an outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) and an outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).





Frequently asked questions

Water environment

How will run-off from the Site be managed?

National planning policy requires all planning applications above certain thresholds to include a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA), which details mitigation in the form of a drainage strategy.

Both an FRA and surface water drainage strategy will be provided as part of the DCO application. The commitments outlined in these documents will ensure that the project does not - and cannot - increase run-off in the area.

Amenity and recreation

What will be the impact on local footpaths and bridleways?

Access to existing public rights of way will be maintained. We will also aim to make improvements within the Site based on the feedback from our consultation. This will help ensure that communities can continue to access and enjoy the local environment and its amenities.

Socio-economic and land use

What is the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) for the Site?

To determine the grading of the land on the Site, we are undertaking soil surveys and an Agricultural Land Classification survey.

The Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) will outline these findings and be made available at our statutory consultation in the spring/summer 2025.

Will there be employment opportunities associated with the Project?

IGP is committed to working closely with the community, to ensure those near the solar farm also see tangible benefits locally.

We will ensure, wherever possible, local contractors and suppliers have the opportunity to work on the Project. Most of the employment and contractor opportunities will likely be available during the construction phase.

There will be multiple opportunities to register interest.

You can email our dedicated project Community Relations Team at info@drovessolarfarm.co.uk or call the project team on the Community Relations Freephone: 0800 0129 154.

Community benefit

Will there be community benefits associated with the project?

We will be consulting with local stakeholders and community groups, to help inform our approach to delivering community benefit initiatives.

Ongoing engagement will also be supported by a Local Needs Assessment to ensure any proposed community benefit initiatives are tailored to the needs of the community.

We will keep our communication channels open for feedback and suggestions, to allow attendees and members of the public to continue sharing ideas.

Communication and engagement

When will the public have the opportunity to engage with the plans?

We are aiming to hold our statutory consultation in spring/summer 2025. This will last six weeks, and will comprise a combination of in-person and online events.

During this period, we will present our refined project design and rationale to the community. Feedback from these sessions will help us further refine our design proposals.

Cumulative impact

Are you aware of other solar developments in the local area?

We are aware of other projects in the county, including several proposed solar developments and NSIPs. In response, we are continuing to meet with other developers and are exploring how we might work together to ensure concerns are addressed collectively where appropriate.

As part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, we are also required to undertake a cumulative assessment that will be submitted with the DCO application. The EIA will look at the combined impact of different projects happening in the same area and help identify any cumulative effects that might not be noticed when considering projects individually.

Next steps – consultation and engagement

Thank you to everyone who gave their time to provide feedback at our workshops. This information is invaluable and will be factored into the masterplanning process for The Drovers Solar Farm, including how we refine the early design proposals.

During our statutory consultation, currently scheduled to take place in spring/summer 2025, a more detailed design will be presented, along with our Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) and Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR).

The SoCC will describe how we plan to engage with the local communities as part of the statutory consultation. We will consult with Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) on our approach to statutory consultation before publishing this statement and launching the statutory consultation.

Engagement will continue with key stakeholders, including local parishes, community groups, charities and landowners. We will also be engaging with statutory consultees, LPAs, environmental groups and others to refine our proposals.





Contact us

If you have any questions, comments, or would like to request to join our mailing list, please contact our Community Relations Team using the details below.



Email us at: info@drovessolarfarm.co.uk



Community Relations Freephone: 0800 0129 154

(Our phone lines are monitored 9:00 – 17:30 Monday to Friday, with an answerphone facility available outside of these hours)



Visit our website: www.drovessolarfarm.co.uk



THE DROVES
SOLAR FARM