



WHITESTONE
solar farm

WHITESTONE SOLAR FARM

Volume 5: Reports and Statements

5.1 Consultation Report

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CONSULTATION REPORT

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Appendices (See Volume 5.1, Appendices)

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B	Appendix B SoCC development
C	Appendix C Statutory Consultation notification
D	Appendix D Statutory Consultation materials
E	Appendix E Statutory Consultation feedback
F	Appendix F Adequacy of Consultation Milestone Report
G	Appendix G Targeted Consultation
H	Appendix H Engagement after Statutory Consultation
I	Appendix I Compliance with guidance and advice

Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
AoCM	Adequacy of Consultation Milestone
BESS	Battery Energy Storage System
CDC	City of Doncaster Council
CMRA	Coal Mining Risk Assessment
DCC	Derbyshire County Council
DCO	Development Consent Order
DESNZ	Department of Energy Security and Net Zero
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ES	Environmental Statement
HDD	Horizontal Directional Drilling
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
MP	Member of Parliament
Neddc	Northeast Derbyshire District Council
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
oBSMP	outline Battery Safety Management Plan
oCEMP	outline Construction Environmental Management Plan
oCTMP	outline Construction Traffic Management Plan
oDEMP	outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan
oLEMP	outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan
oPRoWMP	outline Public Right of Way Management Plan
PC	parish council
PPA	Planning performance agreement
PRoW	public right of way
PWS	Private Water Supply
RMBC	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
SoCC	Statement of Community Consultation
SOS	Secretary of State

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.1 This Consultation Report has been prepared on behalf of Whitestone Net Zero Ltd ('the Applicant') to describe the pre-application consultation in relation to the Development Consent Order (DCO) Application for the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of Whitestone Solar Farm (hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development') in accordance with section 37(3)(c) of the Planning Act 2008 (PA 2008).
- 1.1.2 The approach taken to pre-application consultation and engagement was designed to ensure compliance with the legislative requirements set out in sections 42, 47, 48, 49 and 50 of the PA 2008, while also exceeding these minimum requirements to ensure best practice.
- 1.1.3 Pre-application consultation and engagement were key features of the evolution of the Proposed Development, enabling continuous improvements to the Applicant's proposals and related assessments that form the basis of this application for development consent.
- 1.1.4 This Report describes the pre-application consultation and engagement undertaken by the Applicant, summarises the responses received, and explains how the Applicant has had regard to them to develop its proposals.
- 1.1.5 The Report sets out how pre-application consultation, including a period of non-statutory consultation and a period of statutory consultation was undertaken in the development of the Proposed Development.
- 1.1.6 **Chapter 2** sets out the purpose of the document, summarises the context for the consultation and provides an overview of the different stages of consultation which the Applicant carried out.
- 1.1.7 **Chapter 3** summarises non-statutory consultation carried out by the Applicant in relation to the Proposed Development. This includes early engagement (section 3.2), a period of non-statutory consultation from 18 November 2024 to 31 January 2025 (sections 3.3-3.6) and a summary of the feedback received, how the Applicant has had regard to it, and how the design has changed in response (section 3.7-3.8). It should be read alongside **Appendix A**. This chapter also includes the ongoing engagement carried out between the non-statutory and statutory consultation (section 3.9) and a summary of regard had to advice received from the Planning Inspectorate under s51 of PA 2008 (section 3.10).
- 1.1.8 **Chapter 4** confirms that the Proposed Development is EIA development as defined by the EIA Regulations 2017 [REF-1] and that the Applicant sought a scoping opinion from the Secretary of State as a result.
- 1.1.9 **Chapter 5** sets out the process through which the Applicant developed its Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC). This includes how the Applicant developed the SoCC including through early engagement with the local authorities under s43(1) of the PA 2008 (section 5.3 and 5.4) and details of the publication of the SoCC (section 5.5). It should be read alongside **Appendix B**.
- 1.1.10 **Chapter 6** reports on consultation carried out by the Applicant in fulfilment of statutory requirements over the period from 16 September to 28 October 2025. This includes an overview of the statutory consultation (section 6.1),

consultation under s42 of PA 2008 (section 6.2), the notification of PINS (on behalf of the Secretary of State) under s46 of PA 2008 (section 6.3), consultation with the local community in accordance with the SoCC as prescribed by s47(7) of PA 2008 (section 6.4), and publicity under s48 of PA 2008 (section 6.5). This chapter also includes information about the consultation materials, how the Applicant collected responses and the public information events (sections 6.7-6.9). It should be read alongside **Appendices C and D**.

- 1.1.11 **Chapter 7** sets out responses to the statutory consultation and summarises the regard had to them by the Applicant. This includes responses from consultees under s42(1)(a) and (b) of PA 2008 (sections 7.2-7.3), s42(1)(d) of PA 2008 (section 7.4) and s47 of PA 2008 (section 7.5). None of the consultees who responded identified themselves as specifically responding to the s48 (section 7.5). Changes to the draft masterplan following this consultation are outlined in section 7.6. This chapter should be read alongside **Appendix E**.
- 1.1.12 **Chapter 8** details the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone, it should be read alongside **Appendix F**.
- 1.1.13 **Chapter 9** details the Targeted Consultations and engagement with stakeholders and the community following the Statutory Consultation. It should be read alongside **Appendices G and H**.
- 1.1.14 **Chapter 10** concludes by providing an overview of how the Proposed Development's design has evolved in response to consultation feedback and finally confirming the Applicant's compliance with requirements and guidance for consultation. It should be read alongside **Appendix I**.
- 1.1.15 At each stage, the Applicant has considered and complied with relevant advice and guidance including the MHCLG's **Guidance on the pre-application stage for NSIPs, April 2024** [REF-3] and the Planning Inspectorate's Advice, entitled **Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the Consultation Report** [REF-4]. The information included in **Appendix I** supports this through direct reference to MHCLG's and the Planning Inspectorate's guidance and advice on the pre-application process.
- 1.1.16 As well as preparing this report, the Applicant has set out how it has complied with guidance and advice on consultation in the **s55 checklist [EN110020/APP/1.6]** that is also part of the DCO application documents.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Purpose of the document

2.1.1 This Consultation Report relates to the proposed Whitestone Solar Farm (the Proposed Development). As the Proposed Development would have a generating capacity in excess of 100MW, it is considered to be a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008.

2.1.2 The pre-application consultation for the Proposed Development and the preparation of this Report has been carried out with regard to the following statutes, regulations, guidance, and advice:

- legislative requirements set out in the PA 2008;
- Infrastructure Planning: (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (EIA Regulations) [REF-1];
- Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 (APFP Regulations) [REF-2];
- Guidance on the pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects [REF-3];
- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the Consultation Report [REF-4];
- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the Preparation and Submission of Application Documents [REF-5];
- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on EIA Notification and Consultation [REF-6]; and
- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus [REF-8].

2.1.3 This Report also summarises the responses received during statutory consultation and explains how the Applicant has had regard to these in developing the Application. It also provides information about non-statutory consultation and stakeholder engagement undertaken by the Applicant regarding the Proposed Development.

2.2 The Proposed Development

- 2.2.1 The Proposed Development involves the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of more than 100 MW of solar photovoltaic (PV) array, Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), onsite substations and supporting infrastructure, and grid connection infrastructure. The grid connection infrastructure would connect the Proposed Development to the National Grid at the new National Grid substation Brinsworth (Long Lane 400kV Substation), located east of Long Lane, Rotherham. National Grid has applied to Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council for the development of this new substation which is intended by National Grid to be operational in time for the Proposed Development to connect in 2029. This substation is therefore not included in the Proposed Development and will be subject to a separate planning application taken forward by National Grid. The Order Limits do include the footprint of the substation in order to allow the Applicant to do the cable works needed to connect the Proposed Development to the substation.
- 2.2.2 The Proposed Development would be located within the Order Limits. The Order Limits encompass the total area of the project comprising the Site, Cable Corridors and Highway Works. The Site is specifically the land that is planned to be used for solar PV array and associated infrastructure, BESS, substation, landscaping and habitat enhancement. The Site is split into three areas, Whitestone 1 (W1), Whitestone 2 (W2), and Whitestone 3 (W3). See **Chapter 3: The Site and Surrounding Area [EN0110020/APP/6.3]** and **Chapter 5: The Proposed Development [EN0110020/APP/6.5]**.
- 2.2.3 Highway Works are sections of the highway network that will contain localised improvements, such as improvements to road edge where it is deteriorated, or temporary highway and traffic works required to safely accommodate the Abnormal Indivisible Load (AIL) deliveries. These areas will support the movement of construction vehicles on narrower sections of the local highway network within parts of the construction vehicle routes to the Site (refer to **Chapter 13: Traffic and Transport [EN0110020/APP/6.13]**).
- 2.2.4 The Proposed Development is located within the administrative boundaries of City of Doncaster Council (CDC) and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC). As the project developed, the draft Order Limits were expanded to cross into the administrative boundaries of Derbyshire County Council (DCC) and Northeast Derbyshire District Council (NEDDC) (the host authorities).
- 2.2.5 Refining the design and layout of the Proposed Development was an iterative process, guided by a programme of pre-application consultation and engagement, as well as the outputs of environmental assessments and technical work. The key stages of design and how they relate to the stages of formal pre-application consultation are summarised in the **Design Approach Document [EN110020/APP/5.7]**.

2.3 Overview of the consultation process

- 2.3.1 The Applicant has undertaken a continuous programme of engagement in parallel with, and complementary to, its formal phases of pre-application consultation. The important distinction between consultation and engagement is as follows:
- Engagement relates to discussions between the Applicant, community members and stakeholders outside formal phases of consultation; and
 - Consultation relates to the formal stages of consultation (both non-statutory and statutory), the detail of which is provided in Chapters 3, 5, 6 and 9 of this Report.
- 2.3.2 **Figure 2.1** shows the key consultation milestones, while **Table 2.1** provides a summary of key pre-application consultation and engagement milestones and signposts where these activities are described in the Report.



Figure 2.1: Summary of consultation milestones

Table 2.1: Summary of pre-application consultation and engagement activities

Dates	Activities	Document reference
Early engagement and non-statutory consultation		Chapter 3
01 Nov – 14 Nov 2024	Early engagement with host authorities, members of the community, and near neighbours	
18 Nov 2024 – 31 Jan 2025	Non-statutory consultation	
03 Mar – 3 Apr 2025	Community updates and further engagement	
19 July 2025	Community benefit workshop	
EIA Scoping		Chapter 4
23 Apr 2025	Scoping Report submitted to PINS	
03 June 2025	Scoping Opinion published	
Development of the SoCC		Chapter 5
27 June – 11 July 2025	Informal consultation with local authorities on the SoCC	
24 July – 22 Aug 2025	Consultation with host local authorities on the SoCC as prescribed by s47(3) of the PA 2008	
11 Sept – 18 Sept 2025	Notice of availability of SoCC in the vicinity of the proposal as prescribed by s47(6) of the PA 2008	
Statutory Consultation		Chapter 6
10 Sept 2025	Notification of the proposed application to prescribed consultees under s42 of the PA 2008 and Regulation 13 of the EIA Regulations	
08 Sept 2025	Notification of the Planning Inspectorate (on behalf of the Secretary of State) of proposed application as prescribed by s46 of the PA 2008 and EIA Regulations	
11 Sept – 18 Sept 2025	Publication of the consultation as prescribed by s48 of the PA 2008	
16 Sept – 28 Oct 2025	Consultation as prescribed under s42 of the PA 2008 and in accordance with the SoCC as prescribed by s47(7) of the PA 2008	
Further engagement and consultation after the Statutory Consultation		
23 Mar 2026	Consultation on the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone	Chapter 8
23 Mar – 8 Apr 2026	Parish council and ward member briefings	Chapter 9
Ongoing	Ongoing meetings with technical bodies	Chapter 9
04 Mar 2026	Community update newsletter	Chapter 9
04 Mar – 3 Apr 2026	Targeted Consultation on changes to the Order Limits	Chapter 9
16 Apr – 18 May 2026	Additional Targeted Consultation with new land interests	Chapter 9

3 NON-STATUTORY CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1 The Applicant conducted a period of non-statutory consultation and engagement before the statutory consultation period. This included a period of ‘early engagement’ from 01 November 2024 to 18 November 2024, before a period of non-statutory consultation which occurred between 18 November 2024 and 31 January 2025. After this consultation, there was ongoing engagement until the start of the statutory consultation period.
- 3.1.2 The purpose of this period of non-statutory consultation and engagement was to inform design development and the process of environmental impact assessment by gathering feedback from consultees at an early stage in the design process.
- 3.1.3 This chapter sets out the consultation and engagement activities conducted by the Applicant in advance of the statutory consultation. **Table 3.1** sets out the timeline for activities during this period.

Table 3.1: Timeline of non-statutory consultation and engagement activities

Dates	Activity	Document sections
01 Nov – 12 Nov 2024	Early engagement with Local Authorities	3.2
12 Nov 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Door knock visits to near neighbours 	3.4
13 Nov 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emails and leaflets sent to stakeholders Launch press release sent to media Website goes live Leaflet posted to consultation zone Facebook adverts go live 	3.4
14 Nov 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch letter sent by email to technical stakeholders 	3.4
18 Nov 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start of consultation Materials available online 	3.5
21 Nov 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advert published in local media outlets 	3.4
20 Nov 2024	John Healey MP staff briefing meeting	3.5
02 Jan 2025	Letter sent out to Whitestone 1 properties to announce additional event in Conisbrough and extension of consultation to 31 January	3.4
29 Nov 2024 – 14 Jan 2025	Information events	3.5
02 Dec 2024	Jake Richards MP briefing meeting	3.5
04 Dec 2024 – 20 Jan 2025	Site visits with near neighbours	3.5

Dates	Activity	Document sections
05 Dec 2024 – 21 Jan 2025	Meetings with parish councils	3.5
31 Jan 2025	End of consultation	3.7
3 Mar – 3 Apr 2025	Community update newsletter, meetings with MPs (John Healey MP, Jake Richards MP and Sally Jameson MP), parish council webinars and site visits	3.9
19 July 2025	Community benefit workshop	3.9
8 Aug 2025	Meeting with Sarah Champion MP	3.9
11 Feb – 8 Aug 2025	Engagement with technical stakeholders	3.9

3.2 Early engagement

- 3.2.1 The Applicant conducted consultation outside of the statutory consultation period. This included a period of early engagement from 01 November 2024 to 18 November 2024, before a period of non-statutory consultation which occurred between 18 November 2024 and 31 January 2025. After this non-statutory consultation period, the Applicant continued to engage with stakeholders and the community through March and August 2025.
- 3.2.2 The purpose of this early engagement was to provide information on the early proposals and to seek feedback that could inform design development and the environmental impact assessments at an early stage in the design process as well as to discuss the approach to community consultation.
- 3.2.3 The initial engagement set out in **Table 3.2** informed the early development of the Proposed Development, the approach taken by the Applicant to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) scoping and the approach take to the non-statutory consultation.

Table 3.2: Early engagement meetings with local authorities

Dates	Stakeholders	Topics discussed
01 Nov 2024	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Planning Officers 1 st Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad project description Approach to consultation Planning performance agreement (PPA)
11 Nov 2024	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Planning Officers 2 nd Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draft masterplan Consultation strategy
12 Nov 2024	City of Doncaster Council Planning Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad project description Approach to consultation Planning performance agreement (PPA) Draft masterplan Consultation strategy

3.3 Scope of non-statutory consultation

- 3.3.1 The Applicant conducted a period of non-statutory consultation over ten weeks between 18 November 2024 and 31 January 2025. The consultation period was originally scheduled to end on 17 January 2025 but was extended in response to feedback from the community and local elected officials until 31 January 2025.
- 3.3.2 The Applicant consulted with:
- Local authorities and parish councils in the vicinity of the Proposed Development; and
 - The local community as identified by all properties within the host parish councils of the project boundary, shown in **Figures 3.1-3.3**.
- 3.3.3 During this consultation, the Applicant provided information on:
- The Applicant;
 - Background in developing the Proposed Development;
 - The need for the Proposed Development;
 - The site proposed for the Proposed Development;
 - Representative technology that would be included;
 - Initial proposals including a Draft Masterplan;
 - The Environmental Impact Assessment process;
 - Environmental constraints relevant to the Proposed Development;
 - The planning process for NSIPs;
 - The timeline for development; and
 - How to take part in the consultation.
- 3.3.4 Through the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant sought consultees' views on:
- Initial proposals for the locations of solar panels and environmental mitigation areas;
 - The construction and operation of the Proposed Development;
 - Any information relevant to the Proposed Development and/or the local environment;
 - The potential to include environmental enhancements in the Proposed Development;
 - The potential for the Proposed Development to contribute to community benefits; and
 - Any information it would be helpful to include in the Statutory Consultation.

3.4 Non-statutory consultation notification

3.4.1 To introduce the Proposed Development and non-statutory consultation, the Applicant notified the local community as follows:

Table 3.3: Notification of non-statutory consultation

Dates	Activities
12 Nov 2024	Door knocking to 26 properties particularly close or adjacent to the proposed Order Limits.
13 Nov 2024	Sending emails to MPs, councillors from CDC and RMBC and host parish councils with an offer to meet.
13 Nov 2024	Posting leaflets within the consultation zone (approx. 30,000 addresses) introducing the Proposed Development and upcoming consultation to all properties shown in the zone in Figures 3.1-3.3 .
13 Nov 2024	Launching project website whitstonesolarfarm.co.uk with further project information.
13 Nov 2024	Issuing a press release to local media outlets with information about the Proposed Development and upcoming consultation.
14 Nov 2024	Sending emails to technical consultees who would be considered relevant statutory consultees for the purposes of s42(1)(a) PA 2008.
14 Nov 2024	Publishing notification and advert on Facebook.
21 Nov 2024	Advert published in local media outlets.
02 Jan 2025	Writing to properties in Conisbrough to announce an additional information event and extension of the consultation.
02 Jan 2025	Posting on Facebook about the extension of the consultation.

3.4.2 On 12 November, the Applicant conducted ‘door knocking’ in the local area to 26 properties that had been identified as being located particularly near to the boundary of the Proposed Development. The goal of this activity was to personally introduce the Proposed Development and answer any questions in advance of wider publicity. If no one answered the door, the team left behind a letter as shown in **Appendix A1.1**.

3.4.3 On 13 November, the Applicant contacted elected officials to introduce the Proposed Development and offer to hold a briefing and explain the development process and the scope of the consultation. A copy of the email is included in **Appendix A1.2**. Recipients included named representatives listed in **Table 3.4** and the clerks of parish councils shown in **Figures 3.4-3.6** and listed in **Table 3.5** and **Table 3.6**.

3.4.4 On 13 November 2024, the Applicant posted a leaflet to all addresses within the area shown in **Figures 3.1-3.3** that provided high-level information about the Proposed Development and how to take part in the consultation. This consultation zone was drawn to include the host parish council boundaries and expanded to include entire villages, but reduced in the area around the potential substation location. The leaflet is included in **Appendix A1.4**.

3.4.5 On the same day, the Applicant launched a dedicated project website (www.whitstonesolarfarm.co.uk) with more information about the Proposed Development, the development process, and details of communications lines, including a dedicated freephone number, dedicated email address and freepost address. Images of the website are included in **Appendix A1.5**.

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- 3.4.6 Throughout the consultation, the Applicant maintained several communications channels for enquiries which were staffed during standard working hours (9am-5pm, Monday to Friday). All voicemail messages and emails that were received outside of these hours were responded to promptly on the following weekdays. The channels included:
- a Freephone number (0800 688 9936);
 - an email address (info@whitstonesolarfarm.co.uk); and
 - a Freepost address (Whitstone Solar Farm, Freepost SEC NEWGATE UK LOCAL).
- 3.4.7 Also on 13 November 2024, the Applicant contacted local media outlets with a press release providing more information on the Proposed Development, the application process and the consultation. The press release is included in **Appendix A1.6** and those media outlets are listed in **Appendix A1.7**.
- 3.4.8 The Applicant placed advertisements in the local media (Rotherham Advertiser and Doncaster Free Press) and social media (Facebook). The advertisements can be found in **Appendix A1.8** and **Appendix A1.9**. The Facebook advert has 17,111 impressions and gained 1,231 post engagements.
- 3.4.9 On 14 November 2024, the Applicant contacted technical consultees who would be considered relevant statutory consultees for the purposes of s42(1)(a) PA 2008 to introduce them to the Proposed Development and let them know that the environmental consultants would be in touch to start ongoing engagement on specific topics. The email is included in **Appendix A1.3**.

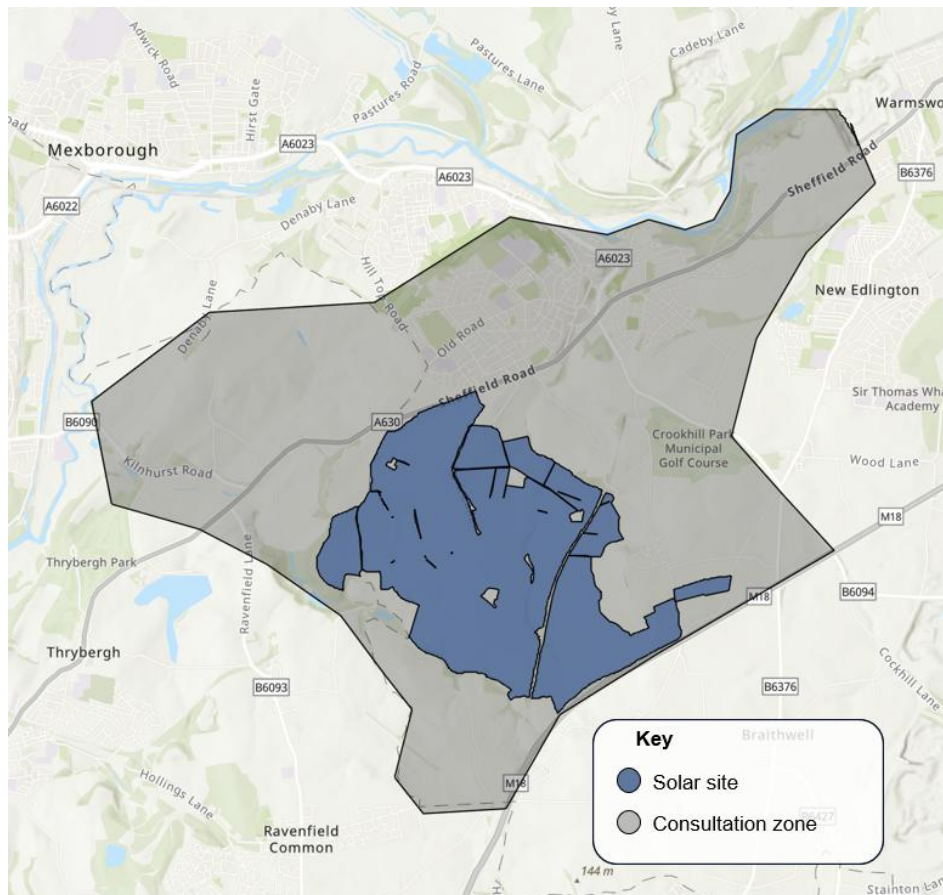


Figure 3.1: Whitstone 1 consultation zone at non-statutory consultation

CONSULTATION REPORT

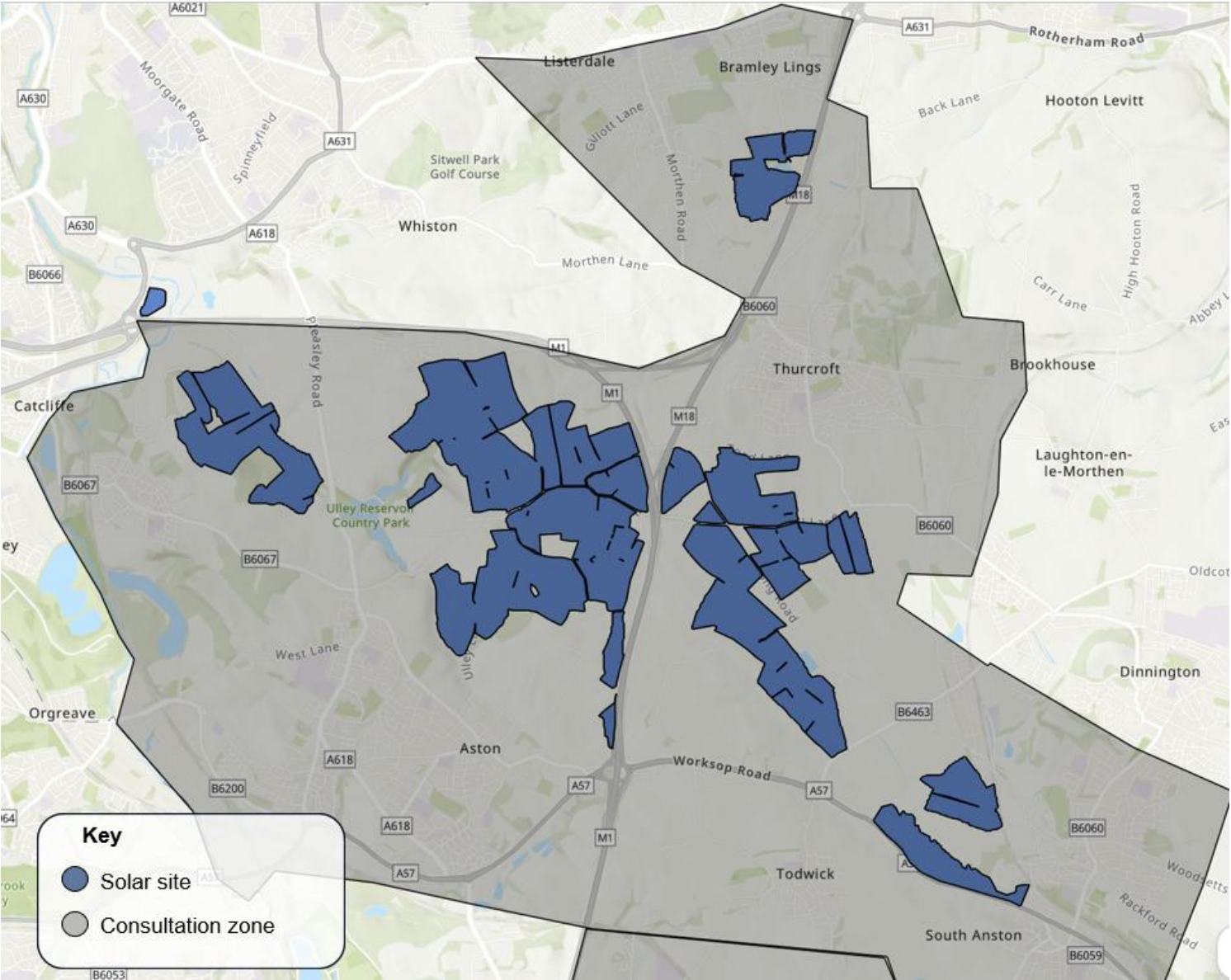


Figure 3.2: Whitestone 2 consultation zone at non-statutory consultation

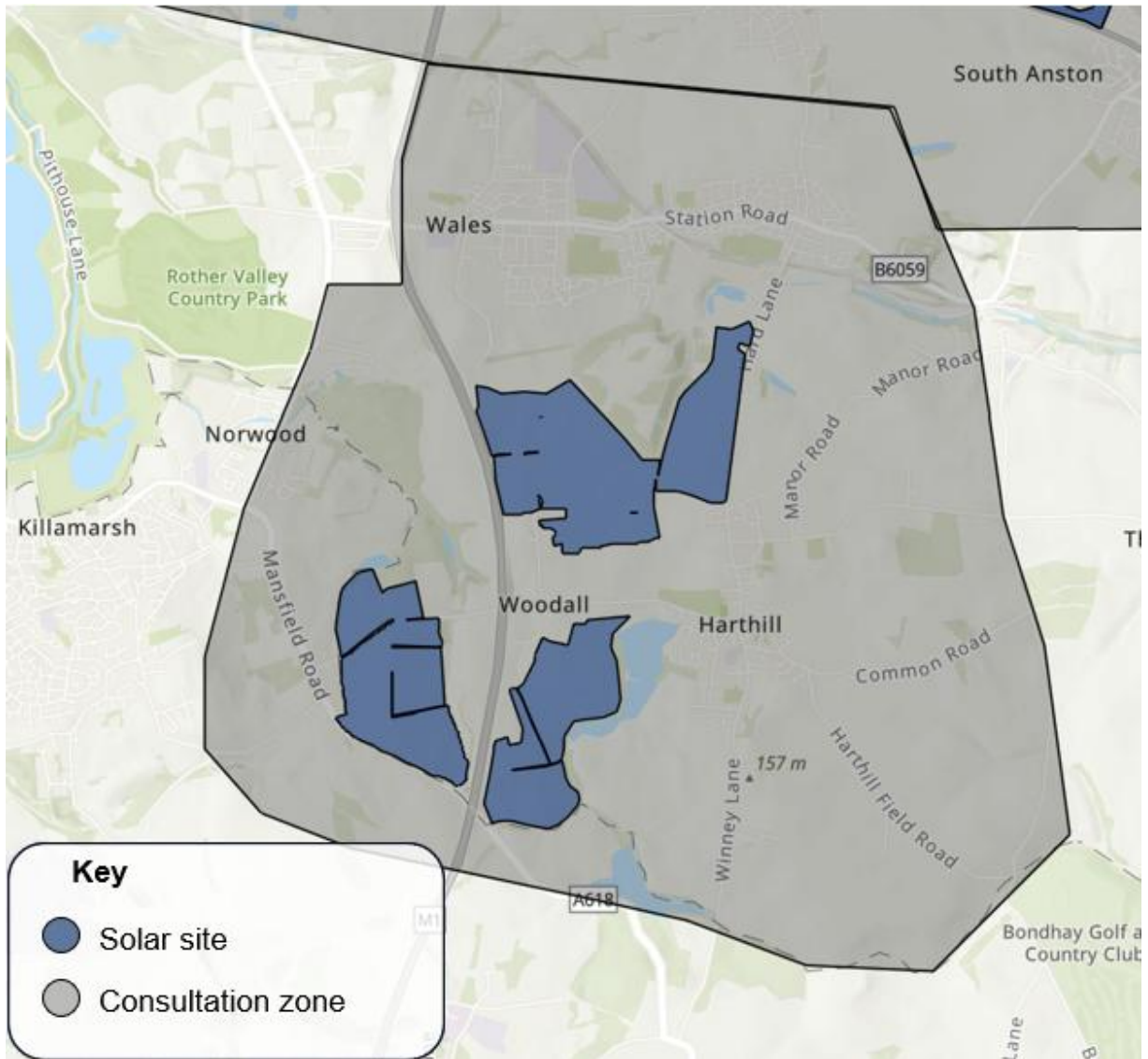


Figure 3.3: Whitestone 3 consultation zone at non-statutory consultation

Table 3.4: Elected officials consulted

Name	Organisation	Title
Members of Parliament		
John Healey MP	UK Parliament	MP for Rawmarsh and Conisbrough
Jake Richards MP	UK Parliament	MP for Rother Valley
Sarah Champion MP	UK Parliament	MP for Rotherham
Sally Jameson MP	UK Parliament	MP for Doncaster Central
County Councils		
Mayor Oliver Coppard	South Yorkshire Combined Authority	Mayor of the Council
District Councils		
Cllr Chris Read	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Leader of the Council and Councillor for Swinton Rockingham
Cllr Dave Sheppard	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Deputy Leader of the Council and Councillor for Rawmarsh East
Cllr Saghir Alam	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Cabinet Member for Finance & Safe and Clean Communities and Councillor for Boston Castle
Cllr Sarah Ann Allen	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Cabinet Member for Housing and Councillor for Aston & Todwick
Cllr Joanna Baker-Rogers	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health and Councillor for Rawmarsh West
Cllr Victoria Cusworth	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and Councillor for Kilnhurst & Swinton East
Cllr Robert Taylor	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Cabinet Member for Transport, Jobs and the Local Economy and Councillor for Aughton & Swallownest
Cllr Sheila Cowen	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Mayor of Rotherham
Cllr Dominic Beck	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Councillor for Wales
Cllr Marnie Havard	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Councillor for Wales
Cllr Tim Baum-Dixon	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Councillor for Anston & Woodsetts
Cllr John Blackham	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Councillor for Anston & Woodsetts
Cllr Drew Tarmey	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Councillor for Anston & Woodsetts

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Name	Organisation	Title
Cllr Joshua Bacon	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Councillor for Aston & Todwick
Cllr Lyndsay Pitchley	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Councillor for Aughton & Swallownest
Cllr Terry Adair	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Councillor for Rother Vale
Cllr Jamie Baggaley	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Councillor for Rother Vale
Cllr Adam Carter	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Councillor for Brinsworth
Cllr Charlotte Carter	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Councillor for Brinsworth
Cllr Tom Collingham	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Councillor for Thurcroft & Wickersley South
Cllr Zachary Collingham	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Councillor for Thurcroft & Wickersley South
Cllr Mike Bower	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Councillor for Sitwell
Cllr David Fisher	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Councillor for Sitwell
Cllr Paul Thorp	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Councillor for Sitwell
Cllr Sophie Castledine-Dack	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Councillor for Dinnington
Cllr Amanda Clarke	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Councillor for Dinnington
Cllr Julia Hall	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Councillor for Dinnington
Cllr Liz Duncan	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Councillor for Bramley & Ravenfield
Cllr Greg Reynolds	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Councillor for Bramley & Ravenfield
Cllr John Williams	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Chair of Planning Board and Councillor for Hooper
Cllr James Mault	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Vice-Chair of Planning Board and Councillor for Wickersley North
Cllr Angham Ahmed	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Planning Committee and Councillor for Rotherham East
Cllr Simon Currie	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Planning Committee and Councillor for Keppel
Cllr Rob Elliott	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Planning Committee and Councillor for Greasbrough
Cllr Ashiq Hussain	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Planning Committee and Councillor for Boston Castle
Cllr Eve Rose Keenan	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Planning Committee and Councillor Rotherham West

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Name	Organisation	Title
Cllr Stuart Knight	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Planning Committee and Councillor for Wickersley North
Mayor Ros Jones CBE	City of Doncaster Council	Mayor of Doncaster
Cllr Glyn Jones	City of Doncaster Council	Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Housing and Business and Councillor for Hexthorpe & Balby North
Cllr Lani-Mae Ball	City of Doncaster Council	Cabinet Member for Early Help, Young People and Children's Social Care and Councillor for Conisbrough
Cllr Nigel Ball	City of Doncaster Council	Cabinet Member for Public Health, Communities, Leisure and Culture and Councillor for Conisbrough
Cllr Joe Blackham	City of Doncaster Council	Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Enforcement and Councillor for Thorne & Moorends
Cllr Phil Cole	City of Doncaster Council	Cabinet Member for Finance, Traded Services and Planning and Councillor for Edlington & Warmsworth
Cllr Sue Farmer	City of Doncaster Council	Cabinet Member for Equalities, Education and Skills and Councillor for Stainforth & Barnby Dun
Cllr Mark Houlbrook	City of Doncaster Council	Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Waste and Councillor for Thorne & Moorends
Cllr Jane Nightingale	City of Doncaster Council	Cabinet Member for Corporate Resources and Councillor for Bentley
Cllr Sarah Smith	City of Doncaster Council	Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Councillor Adwick & Carcroft
Cllr Ian Pearson	City of Doncaster Council	Councillor for Conisbrough
Cllr Martin Greenhalgh	City of Doncaster Council	Councillor for Tickhill & Wadsworth
Cllr Nigel Cannings	City of Doncaster Council	Councillor for Tickhill & Wadsworth
Cllr Susan Durant	City of Doncaster Council	Chair of Planning Committee and Councillor for Thorne & Moorends
Cllr Duncan Anderson	City of Doncaster Council	Vice-Chair of Planning Committee and Councillor for Hatfield

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Name	Organisation	Title
Cllr Iris Beech	City of Doncaster Council	Planning Committee and Councillor for Norton & Askern
Cllr Steve Cox	City of Doncaster Council	Planning Committee and Councillor for Finningley
Cllr Aimee Dickson	City of Doncaster Council	Planning Committee and Councillor for Armthorpe
Cllr Charlie Hogarth	City of Doncaster Council	Planning Committee and Councillor for Bentley
Cllr Sophie Liu	City of Doncaster Council	Planning Committee and Councillor for Hexthorpe & Balby North
Cllr John Mounsey	City of Doncaster Council	Planning Committee and Councillor for Adwick & Carcroft
Cllr Emma Muddiman-Rawlins	City of Doncaster Council	Planning Committee and Councillor for Wheatley Hills & Intake
Cllr Andy Pickering	City of Doncaster Council	Planning Committee and Councillor for Mexborough
Cllr Gary Stapleton	City of Doncaster Council	Planning Committee and Councillor for Stainforth & Barnby Dun

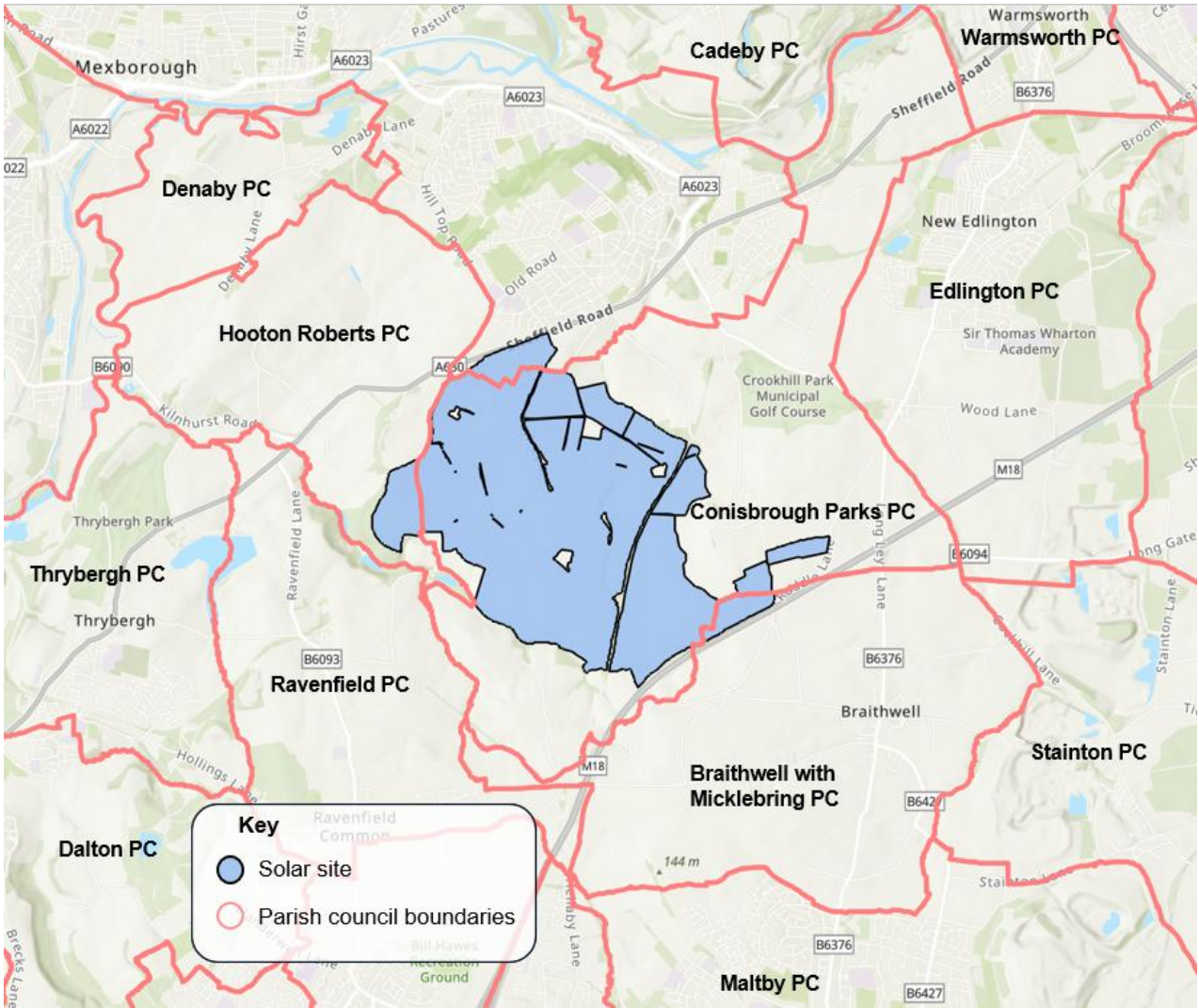


Figure 3.4 Host and neighbouring parish councils in Whitestone 1 at non-statutory consultation

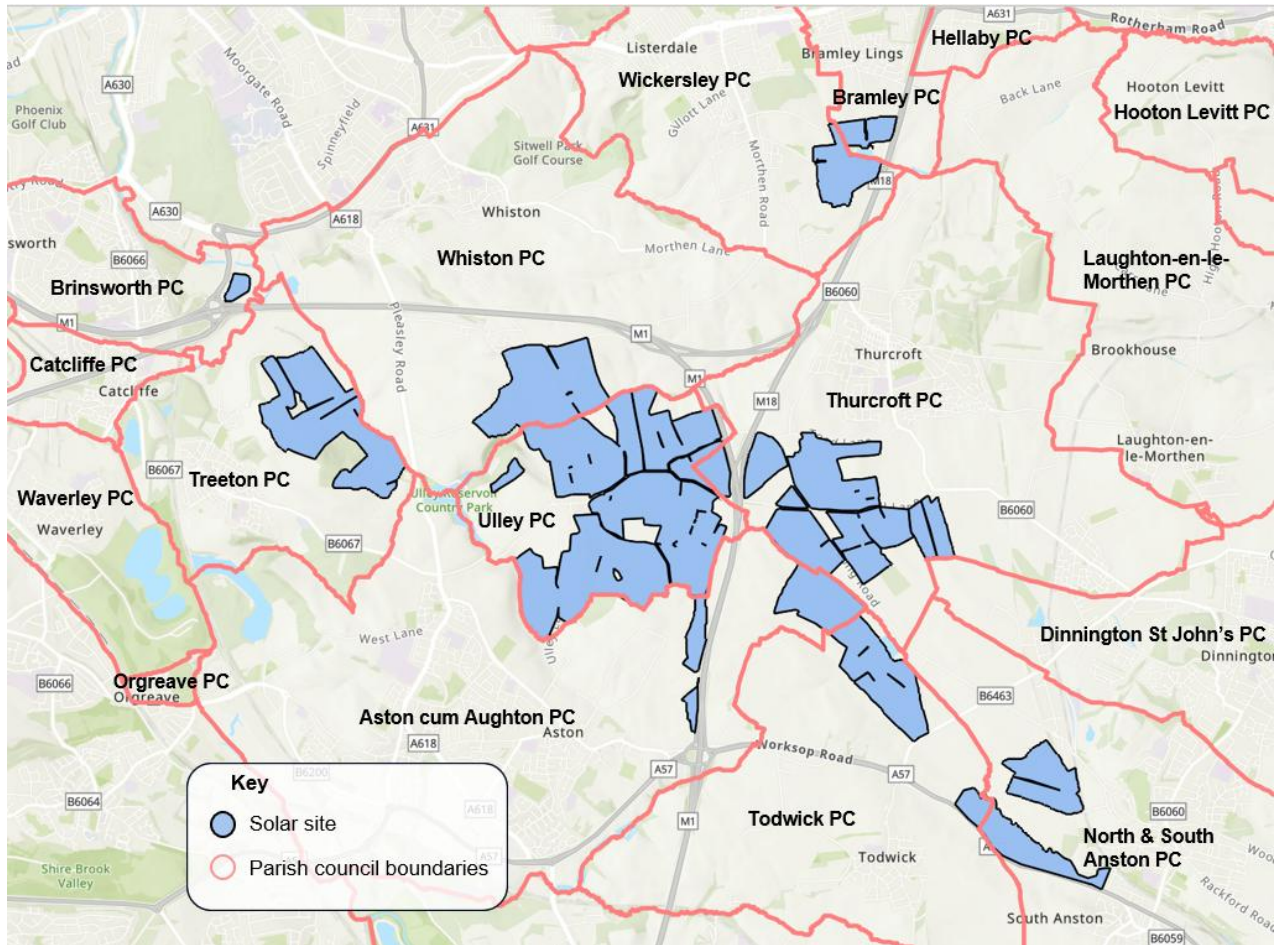


Figure 3.5 Host and neighbouring parish councils in Whitestone 2 at non-statutory consultation

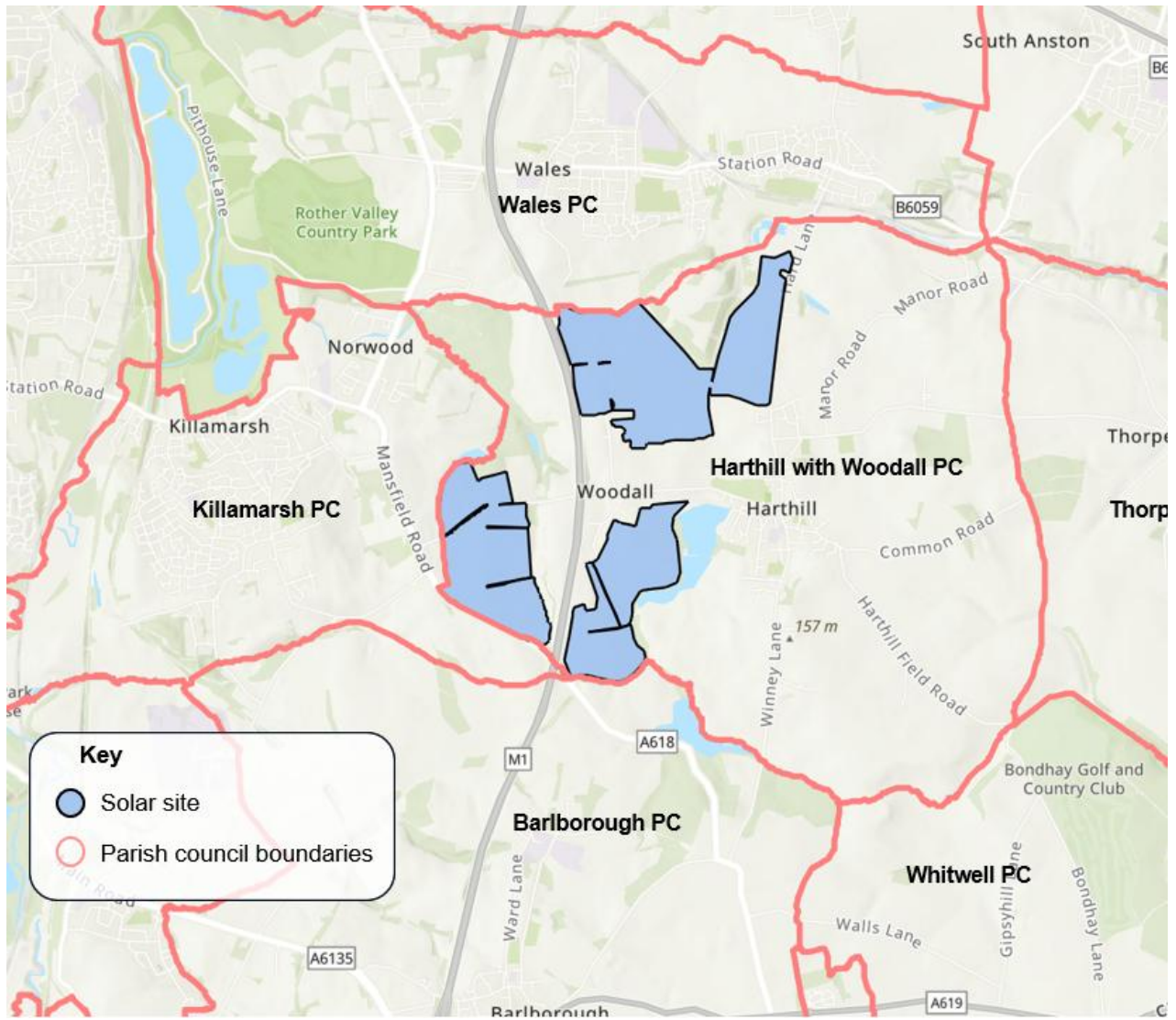


Figure 3.6: Host and neighbouring parish councils in Whitestone 3 at non-statutory consultation

Table 3.5: Host parish councils during non-statutory consultation

Parish council
Aston cum Aughton
Braithwell with Micklebring
Bramley
Brinsworth
Conisbrough Parks
Harthill with Woodall
Hooton Roberts
North and South Anston
Thurcroft
Todwick
Treeton
Whiston
Wickersley
Ulley

Table 3.6: Neighbouring parish councils during non-statutory consultation

Parish council
Adwick upon Dearne
Barlborough
Barnburgh
Cadeby
Catcliffe
Dalton
Denaby
Dinnington St John's
Edlington
Hellaby
High Melton
Hooton Levitt
Killamarsh
Laughton-en-le-Morthen
Maltby
Orgreave
Ravenfield
Shireoaks
Sprotbrough and Cusworth
Stainton
Thorpe Salvin
Thrybergh
Wales
Warmsworth
Waverley
Whitwell
Woodsetts

3.4.10 On 2 January 2025, the Applicant posted a letter to properties surrounding Whitestone 1 (**Figure 3.7**) to announce an additional event in Conisbrough and an extension of the consultation until 31 January 2025. The letter can be found in **Appendix A1.10**. The extension of the consultation was also updated on the website and publicised on Facebook post, which can be found in **Appendix A1.9**.

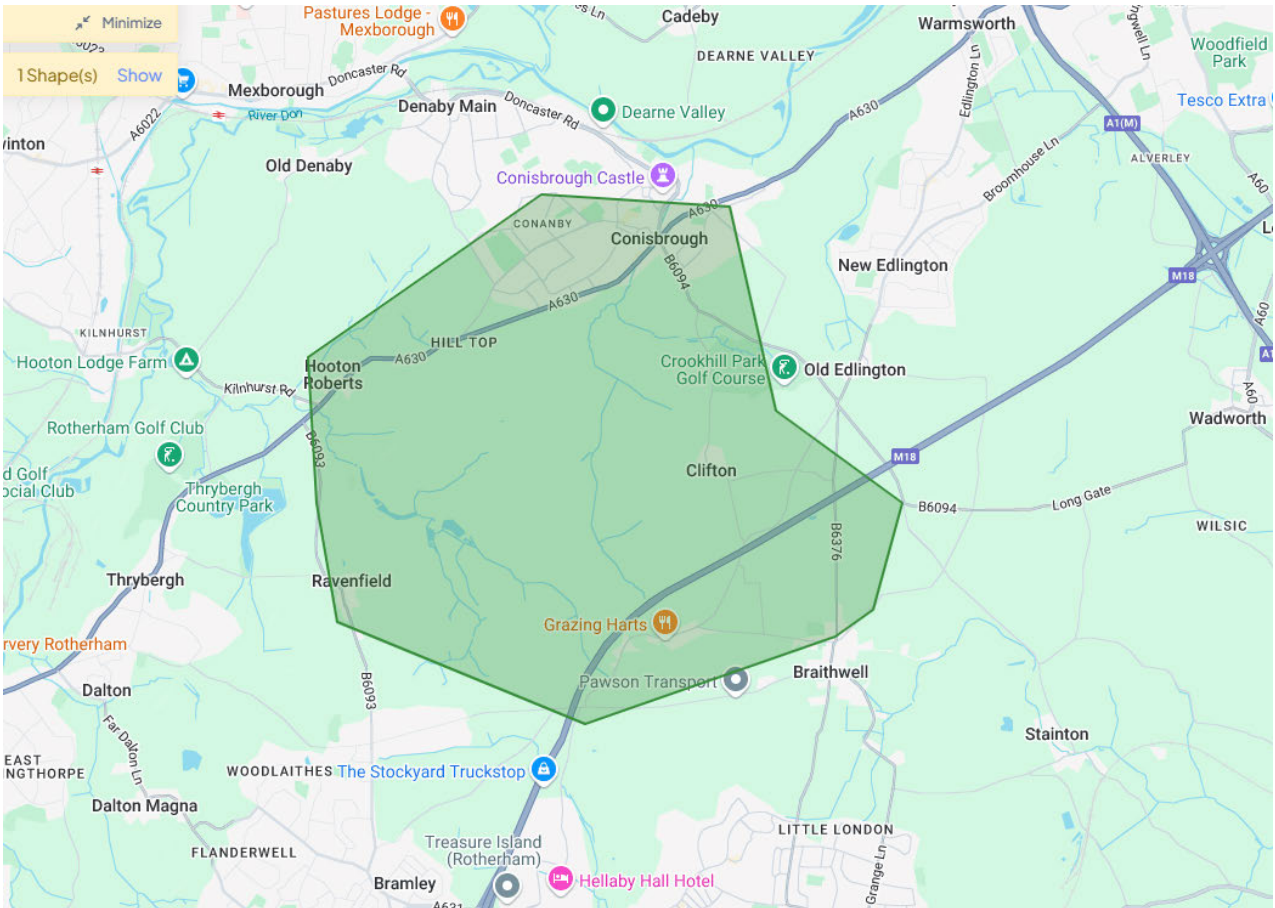


Figure 3.7: Consultation zone for the letter sent out to notify about the additional event in Conisbrough

3.5 Non-statutory consultation activities

Consultation materials

3.5.1 The Applicant produced a booklet summarising the Proposed Development and explaining how to provide feedback during the consultation as well as a questionnaire to provide feedback. The Applicant also produced banners for use in the public events and masterplans showing the initial design for the three sites. These materials, which are included in **Appendices A2.1-2.4**, were made available online through the project website, as well as in hard copy at the public information events shown in **Table 3.7**, and by post for any member of the public who requested them.

Public information events

3.5.2 The Applicant hosted eight public information events during the consultation period which are listed in **Table 3.7**. The purpose of these events was to present information about the Proposed Development and provide the opportunity for individuals to ask questions of the Applicant team. Images from the events can be seen in **Figure 3.8** and **Figure 3.9**.

3.5.3 The events were organised to be as accessible as possible for the public by:

- Occurring at various times of day and days of the week to accommodate various work/life schedules;
- Being located at various locations near each of the three sections of the Proposed Development (Whitestone 1, Whitestone 2, and Whitestone 3) within the consultation zone (see **Figures 3.10-3.12**) selected to be not more than roughly 15 minutes from villages in the area, in venues that met requirements for accessibility and would be large enough to accommodate expected attendance; and
- Including a webinar to accommodate anyone who could not attend in person.

3.5.4 At the request of John Healey MP and local feedback, the Applicant added an additional event at the Lord Conyers Hotel, Conisbrough, Doncaster, DN12 3LZ on Monday 13 January 2025 from 3pm-7pm. The Applicant sent out a letter on 2 January 2025 to properties in **Figure 3.7** and can be found in **Appendix A1.10**. The letter also announced the extension of the consultation period until 31 January 2025, which was also updated on the project website.

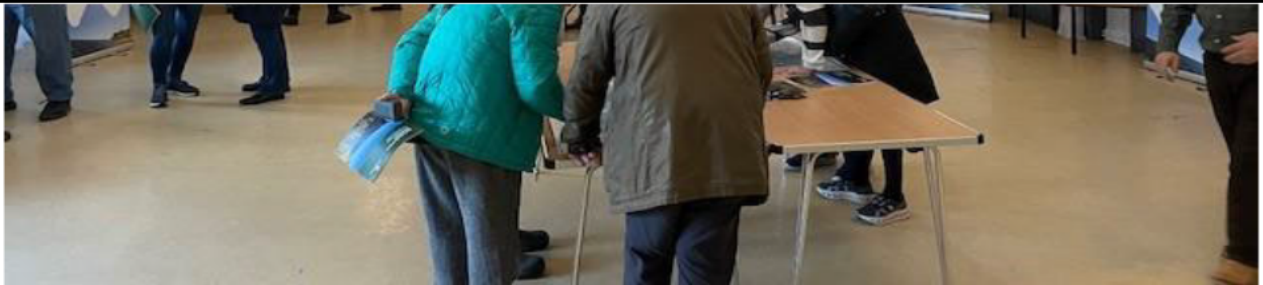
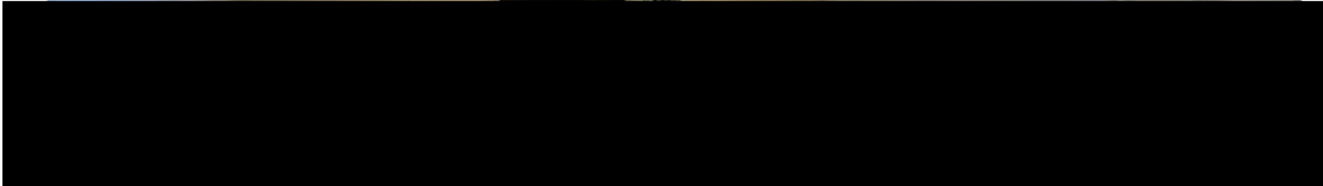


Figure 3.8: Consultation event in Braithwell, 29 November 2024



Figure 3.9: Consultation event in Thurcroft, 4 December 2025

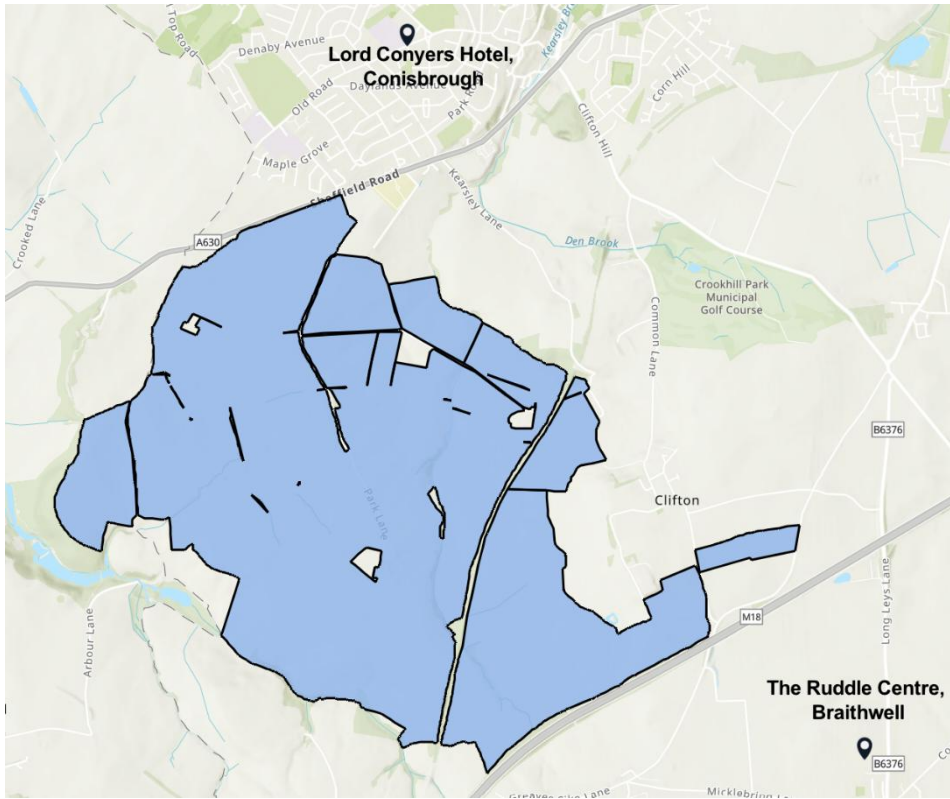


Figure 3.10: Public information events for Whitestone 1 for non-statutory consultation

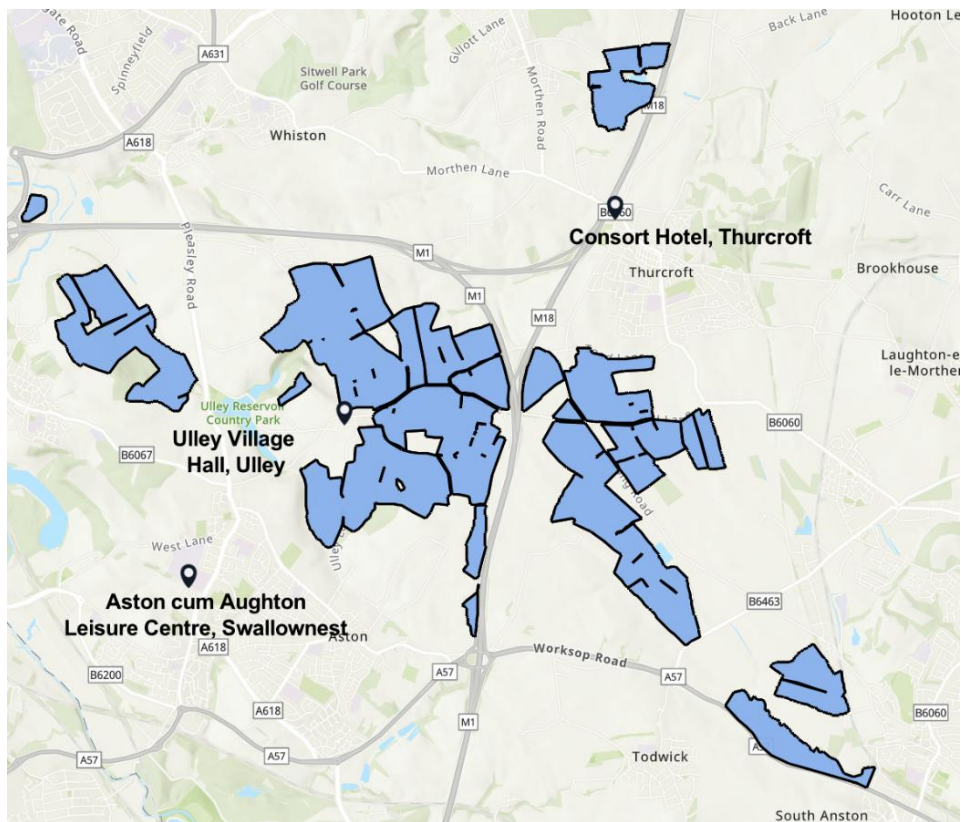


Figure 3.11: Public information events for Whitestone 2 for non-statutory consultation

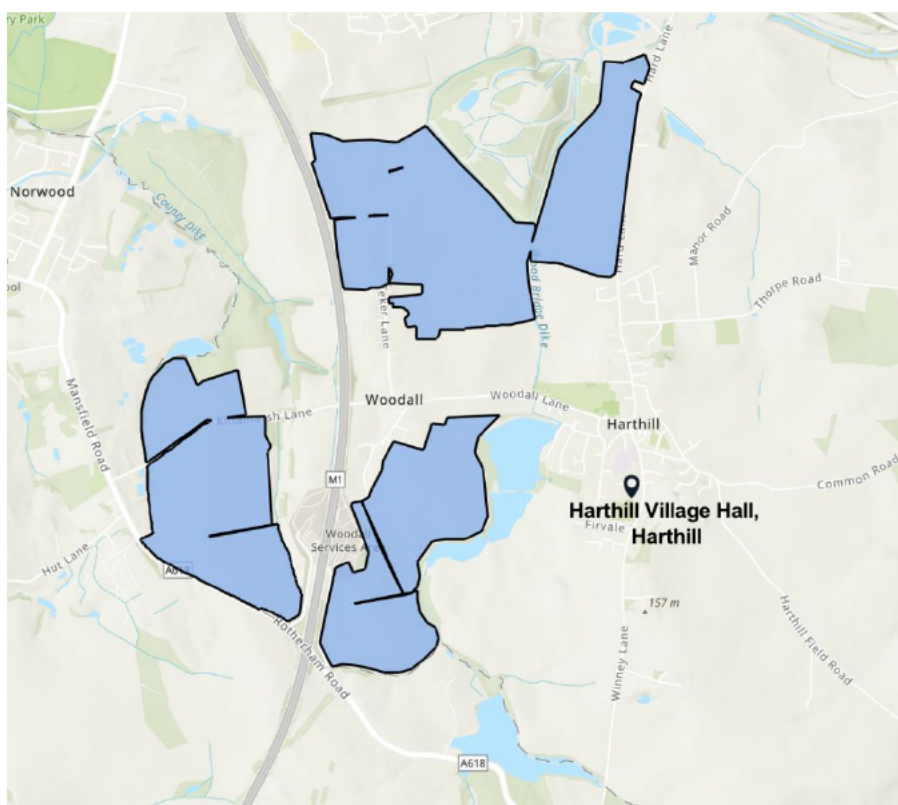


Figure 3.12: Public information events for Whitestone 3 for non-statutory consultation

Table 3.7: Attendance at non-statutory public information events

Dates and times	Location	Public attendance
Friday 29 Nov 2024, 12pm – 4pm	The Ruddle Centre, Doncaster Road, Braithwell, Rotherham S66 7BA	97
Saturday 30 Nov 2024, 10am – 4pm	Aston cum Aughton Leisure Centre, Aughton Rd, Swallownest, Sheffield S26 4SF	67
Tuesday 3 Dec 2024, 2pm – 6pm	Harthill Village Hall, Harthill, Sheffield S26 7YL	134
Wednesday 4 Dec 2024, 2pm – 6pm	Consort Hotel Consort Suite, 8 Brampton Road, Thurcroft, Rotherham S66 9JA	78
Thursday 5 Dec 2024, 10am – 2pm	Ulley Village Hall, Main Street, Ulley, Sheffield S26 3YD	59
Tuesday 10 Dec 2024, 6pm – 7pm	Webinar	7
Monday 13 Jan 2025, 3pm – 7pm	Lord Conyers Hotel, Conisbrough, Doncaster DN12 3LZ	165
Tuesday 14 Jan 2025, 2pm – 6pm	Consort Hotel Consort Suite, 8 Brampton Road, Thurcroft, Rotherham S66 9JA	95
	Total attendance	702

Site visits

- 3.5.5 The Applicant recognised that some individuals lived in properties particularly close to the Proposed Development boundary and may require more targeted engagement (near neighbours). The Applicant offered site visits to local properties where members of the project team visited the households to answer questions and receive feedback about the Proposed Development.
- 3.5.6 These site visits were offered to anyone who stated at the public information events or through the communication lines that they lived particularly close to the Site, or anyone who requested one. A total of 16 site visits took place, as detailed in **Figures 3.13-3.15** and **Table 3.8**. **Figures 3.13-3.15** detail the locations of the site visits and the areas that were requested to be removed from the proposals in feedback.

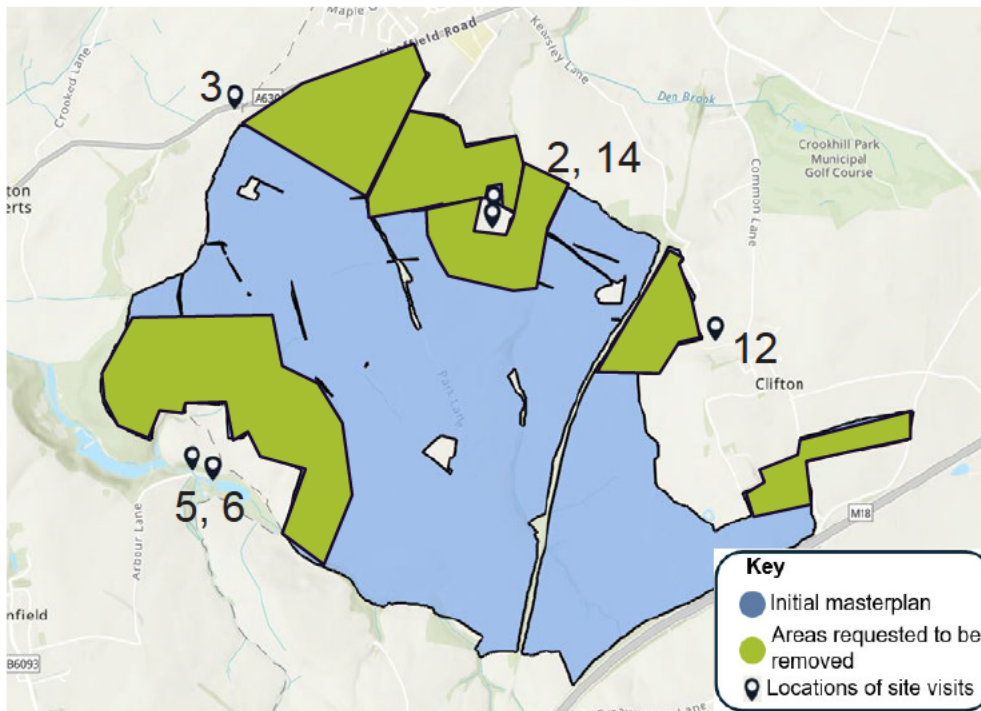


Figure 3.13: Map of Whitestone 1 site visits and spatial feedback during non-statutory consultation

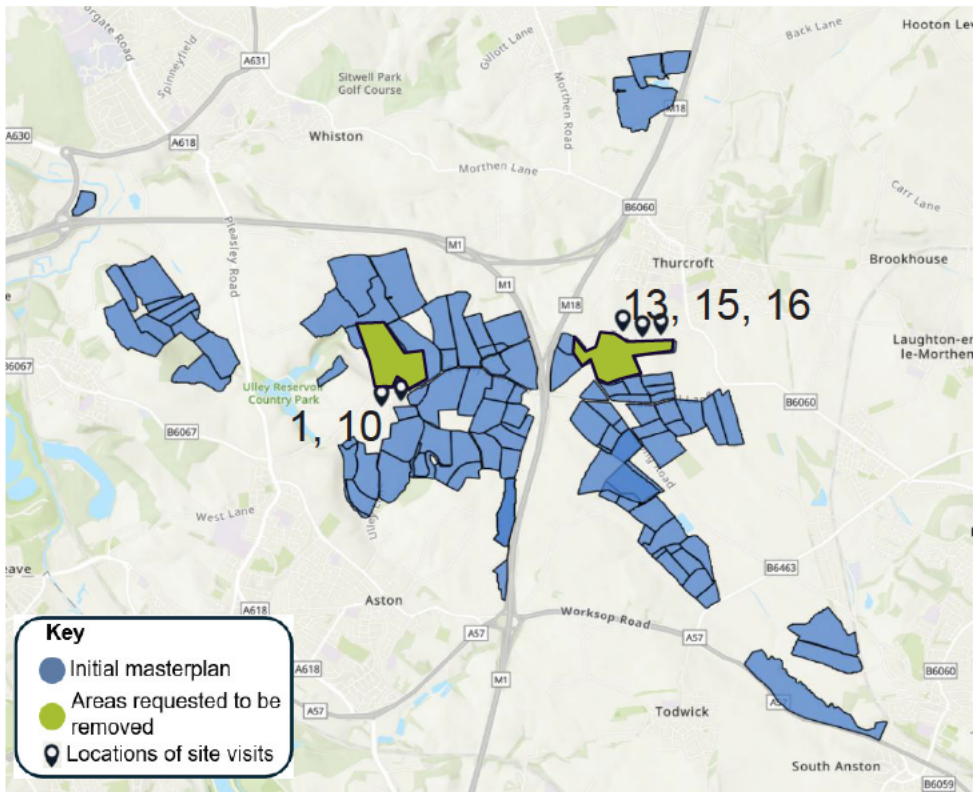


Figure 3.14: Map of Whitestone 2 site visits and spatial feedback during non-statutory consultation

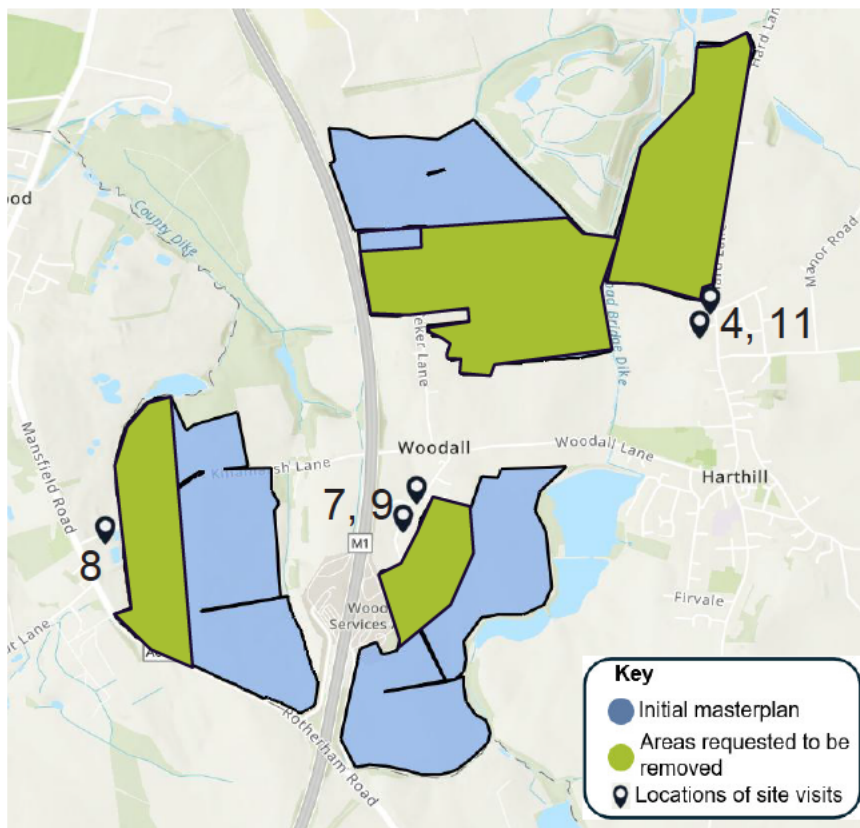


Figure 3.15: Map of Whitestone 3 site visits and spatial feedback during non-statutory consultation

Table 3.8: Site visits during non-statutory consultation

Site visit no.	Dates/times	Key issues raised	Applicant response	Design change
1	5 Dec 2024 – 10am	Concerns raised about the size of the development, the visual impact, glint and glare, impact to wildlife, and impact to ProWs. Requests for removal of parcels to north of Ulley and no battery storage or cable route to be near properties in Ulley.	Based on feedback from the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant removed panels to the north of Ulley. The concerns have been considered in the draft ES, which was prepared ahead of statutory consultation.	Yes
2	5 Dec 2024 – 11am	Concerns raised about visual impact and recreational access. Request to remove parcels to south of A630 up the hill towards Park Lane in Whitestone 1.	Based on feedback from the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant removed panels south of the A630 up to Park Lane. The concerns have been considered in the draft ES, which was prepared ahead of statutory consultation.	Yes
3	5 Dec 2024 – 12pm	Concerns raised about visual impact. Request to remove parcels in Conisbrough Parks area up to Park Lane.	Based on feedback from the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant removed panels on the northern edge of Whitestone 1 around Park Lane. The concerns have been considered in the draft ES, which was prepared ahead of statutory consultation.	Yes
4	12 Jan 2025 – 4pm	Concerns raised about views from Harthill towards Woodall, and the impact to a well-used footpath from Harthill to Woodall. Requests to remove panels from before the crest of the hill to the north of Harthill so they are not visible, remove the fields to the west of Hard Lane and remove the sections to either side of the footpath between Harthill and Woodall.	Based on feedback from the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant removed the land west of Hard Lane from the red line boundary and removed panels from the section of Whitestone 3 before the crest of the hill north of Harthill. The concerns have been considered in the draft ES, which was prepared ahead of statutory consultation.	Yes
5	13 Jan 2025 – 12pm	Concerns raised about impact to local heritage particularly around Conisbrough Parks and flood risk and drainage issues.	Based on feedback from the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant removed panels around the hamlet of Firsby. The concerns have been considered in the draft ES, which	Yes

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Site visit no.	Dates/times	Key issues raised	Applicant response	Design change
		Request for panels to be set back from Firsby on the northern side.	was prepared ahead of statutory consultation.	
6	13 Jan 2025 – 1pm	Concerns raised about the mental health impact to residents in Conisbrough when they lose access to green space, visual impact from properties, impact to PRow's, particularly the path from Firsby towards Micklebring, and the impact to mitigating birds landing on the panels. Request for panels to be set back from Firsby to the north and east.	Based on feedback from the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant removed panels round the hamlet of Firsby. The concerns have been considered in the draft ES, which was prepared ahead of statutory consultation.	Yes
7	13 Jan 2025 – 2pm	Concerns raised about proximity to houses in Woodall, that the project would cut Woodall off from Harthill, the impact of construction on local traffic and noise impact. Queried where the battery storage and inverters would be placed and the access routes. Requests for the section southeast of Woodall to be removed and to screen the path to the south of Woodall from the panels.	Based on feedback from the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant removed the panels from the south of Woodall, near Dowcarr Lane. The concerns have been considered in the draft ES, which was prepared ahead of statutory consultation.	Yes
8	14 Jan 2025 – 9am	Concerns raised about the view from High Moor and the impact to an unofficial path from High Moor to Harthill. Requests for panels to be removed up until the crest of the hill to the east of High Moor and add a permissive path from High Moor to Woodall and Harthill.	Based on feedback from the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant removed the panels away from High Moor to the east of the village. The concerns have been considered in the draft ES, which was prepared ahead of statutory consultation.	Yes
9	14 Jan 2025 – 10am	Concerns raised that the village of Woodall feels surrounded by panels, flood risk around the motorway and access roads, glint and glare,	Based on feedback from the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant removed the panels from the south of Woodall, near Dowcarr Lane.	Yes

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Site visit no.	Dates/times	Key issues raised	Applicant response	Design change
		<p>impact to biodiversity, health risks, and noise impacts. Requests for access to not be through villages, adding a permissive path from Woodall to Harthill, community benefits such as paying for heat pumps and for the panels to the southeast of Woodall to be removed.</p>	<p>The Applicant is proposing permissive paths in the updated masterplan for the statutory consultation, but has not included an option between Woodall and Harthill at this time. The community benefit package will continue to be developed through ongoing engagement and consideration of stakeholder feedback.</p>	
10	14 Jan 2025 – 11:15am	<p>Concerns raised about the cumulative impact of other developments, the benefit to landowners, the efficiency of solar panels, impact to recreational access and that the farming culture of Ulley would be changed. Requests to add new bridleways to avoid equestrians going on the road and the removal of fields to the north of Ulley.</p>	<p>Based on feedback from the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant removed panels to the north of Ulley. The concerns have been considered in the draft ES, which was prepared ahead of statutory consultation.</p>	Yes
11	14 Jan 2025 – 12:30pm	<p>Concerns raised about the visual impact from properties in Harthill, the impact of noise on neurodivergent people, the health impacts due to EMFs, glint and glare, impact to biodiversity and impact of construction traffic. Requests for leisure centre to be built in Harthill, adding a permissive path between Harthill and Woodall, and removal of panels to the west of Hard Lane.</p>	<p>Based on feedback from the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant removed the land west of Hard Lane from the red line boundary and removed panels from the section of Whitestone 3 before the crest of the hill north of Harthill. The concerns have been considered in the draft ES, which was prepared ahead of statutory consultation.</p>	Yes
12	15 Jan 2025 – 11am	<p>Concerns raised about the visual impact from properties, about the impact to horse riders and access and battery storage safety. Requests to add permissive paths and bridleways around Conisbrough Parks, and that they be set away from any</p>	<p>Based on feedback from the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant removed a field of panels between Clifton and the old railway track, next to the PRow. The Applicant has proposed a number of new permissive paths, which the</p>	Yes

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Site visit no.	Dates/times	Key issues raised	Applicant response	Design change
		battery storage, and the removal of panels between Clifton and the old railway track.	Applicant will consult on during statutory consultation. The concerns have been considered in the draft ES, which was prepared ahead of statutory consultation.	
13	15 Jan 2025 – 12pm	Concerns raised about the visual impact to Brampton and the livelihoods of tenant farmers. Request to remove panels from the fields closest to Toad Lane.	Based on feedback from the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant removed panels from the fields next to Brampton and Toad Lane. The concerns have been considered in the draft ES, which was prepared ahead of statutory consultation.	Yes
14	15 Jan 2025 – 4pm	Concerns raised about visual impact. Requests for panels to be removed around properties in Conisbrough Parks and no new permissive paths to be added around Park Lane.	Based on feedback from the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant removed panels south of the A630 up to Park Lane. The concerns have been considered in the draft ES, which was prepared ahead of statutory consultation.	Yes
15	20 Jan 2025 – 4pm	Concerns raised about visual impact to properties in Brampton, the impact on property values, the livelihoods of tenant farmers and the height of the panels. Requests for new footpaths to be added connecting those that already exist, use the community benefit fund for a community venue and removal of panels from the fields closest Toad Lane.	Based on feedback from the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant removed panels from the fields next to Brampton and Toad Lane. The Applicant has proposed a number of new permissive paths, which the Applicant will consult on during statutory consultation. The concerns have been considered in the draft ES, which was prepared ahead of statutory consultation.	Yes
16	20 Jan 2025 – 4:30pm	Concerns raised about fencing and lighting, the livelihoods of tenant farmers, flood risk and the damage storms could have on the panels. Requests that the access road is not off the main road in Brampton and removal of panels from the fields closest to Toad Lane.	Based on feedback from the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant removed panels from the fields next to Brampton and Toad Lane. The concerns have been considered in the draft ES, which was prepared ahead of statutory consultation.	Yes

Meetings with elected officials

3.5.7 The Applicant also offered to meet with elected representatives in the consultation area, including the host parish councils, district councillors and MPs, to provide more information about the Proposed Development and receive their feedback. Two of the MPs, 9 of the parish councils and both host authorities responded. These are detailed in **Table 3.9** below.

Table 3.9: Meetings with elected officials during non-statutory consultation

Dates	Location	Attended by	Topics raised
20 Nov 2024	Microsoft Teams	Holly Williamson (on behalf of John Healey MP)	Concerns raised about the size of the development, whether all communities were notified about the consultation, proximity to properties, loss of amenity, impact to historic landscape, lack of community benefits and battery storage safety. An additional information event was requested in Conisbrough.
2 Dec 2024	Microsoft Teams	Jake Richards MP	Concerns raised about size of development, proximity to villages, the nature conservation site near Brampton and lack of community benefits. Requests for maintaining public footpaths, mitigating the visual impact and considering access routes carefully.
5 Dec 2024	St John the Baptist Church, Hooton Roberts	Hooton Roberts Parish Council	Concerns raised about location, size of the development, use of agricultural land, loss of amenity, flood risk and requests for more detail.
13 Jan 2025	Clifton Church	Conisbrough Parks Parish Council and Braithwell with Micklebring Parish Council	Concerns raised about the size of the development, the environmental impact, effect on biodiversity, loss of agricultural land, visual and landscape impact, loss of Green Belt land, economic effect, impact on property value and impact on nearby residents.
14 Jan 2025	Harthill Village Hall	Harthill with Woodall Parish Council	Concerns about continued disruptions to the local community after Northern Powergrid works, visual impact on the village.
15 Jan 2025	Todwick Village Hall	Todwick Parish Council	Acknowledged the need for renewable energy projects and that many villages have been built on Green Belt land. They encourage continued engagement with the community.
20 Jan 2025	Whiston Parish Hall	Whiston Parish Council	Questions about the development process, and interest in community benefits, particularly for the parish hall.
20 Jan 2025	Wickersley Library	Wickersley Parish Council and Ravenfield Parish Council	Acknowledged the need for renewable energy projects, but raised concerns about the size of the development, loss of agricultural land, cumulative impacts of other proposals, construction vehicle access being difficult, visual impact. Requests that there be biodiversity net gain and all footpaths are maintained. Ravenfield also raised concerns about

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Dates	Location	Attended by	Topics raised
			residents in the parish not receiving leaflets notifying them of the consultation.
21 Jan 2025	Microsoft Teams	Thurcroft Parish Council	Concerns raised about the size of the development, the mental health of residents, the proximity to Brampton, the visual impact and effect on property values.

Meetings with technical stakeholders

3.5.8 The Applicant set up initial stakeholder meetings with LPAs, the Environment Agency, High Speed 2 (HS2) and South Yorkshire Archaeology Services (SYAS). The initial meetings and the topics discussed can be seen in **Table 3.10** below.

Table 3.10: Meetings with technical stakeholders

Date	Stakeholder	Topic of meeting
01 Nov 2024	RMBC	Initial briefing with planning officer
11 Nov 2024	RMBC	Initial briefing with planning officer
12 Nov 2024	CDC	Initial briefing with planning officer
09 Dec 2024	Environment Agency	Discussed Environment Agency's NSIP team, and introduced Whitestone Solar and Green Nation to the team. Discussed review process, and escalation process.
11 Dec 2024	RMBC	Explanation of the DCO progress and role of the LPA
12 Dec 2024	HS2	The Applicant presented the maps showing the project and potential conflicts with HS2 safeguarding. They explained that they expected the safeguarding to be removed by next summer 2025, but that it may take a few months to fully implement. Therefore, they may be a statutory consultee for stat con, in which case they would ask for protective provisions to be in place.
06 Jan 2025	RMBC	The Applicant presented the webinar slide deck to explain the project, the development process and the consultation. They asked questions about why it is an NSIP instead of multiple TCPAs, how we have ended up with this configuration of land, if the project is still viable if one or two of the sections are removed, and if it would be

Date	Stakeholder	Topic of meeting
		possible to display other proposed or connected projects in the area to show cumulative impacts
08 Jan 2025	Environment Agency	Monthly updates with the EA to discuss any project updates or any queries with the comments.
16 Jan 2025	SYAS	Initial meeting to introduce project and discuss the archaeological baseline to inform the future scope of archaeological investigations

3.6 Responding to the non-statutory consultation

3.6.1 Respondents to the consultation were invited to complete a consultation questionnaire which included the following questions:

PART ONE – DRAFT MASTERPLAN

Q1: Please provide your feedback on our draft masterplan.

Q2: Do you have any information we should consider on the potential options for the cable route?

PART TWO – ENHANCEMENTS AND MITIGATION

Q3: Do you have feedback on the environmental impacts you would like us to consider?

PART THREE – FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

Q4: Do you have any thoughts how we can support the local community?

Q5: Do you have any other comments you would like us to consider?

3.6.2 Copies of the questionnaire were available at the information events, or by request. Completed questionnaires could be returned in person at the information events, by freepost, or by email. A digital version was available through the project website. The questionnaire can be seen in **Appendix A2.2**.

3.6.3 Consultees could also submit written feedback by email to the Proposed Development inbox (info@whitestonesolarfarm.co.uk), by post to the freepost address: Whitestone Solar Farm, Freepost SEC NEWGATE UK LOCAL.

3.7 Feedback from the non-statutory consultation

3.7.1 During the consultation period, the Applicant received the following written feedback, shown in **Table 3.11** below.

Table 3.11: Analysis of various feedback sources for non-statutory consultation

Feedback source	Analysis method	Document reference
18 emails from technical organisations	Analysed separately from community feedback	Table 3.12 and Appendix A4.1
476 online questionnaires	Combined and analysed together as 'Community Feedback'	Table 3.11 and Appendix A4.2
55 printed questionnaires		
408 emails		
957 total submissions		

3.7.2 Following the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant analysed all of the responses received. All sources of community feedback, including emails and questionnaires (paper and online) have been aggregated together, summarised and grouped by topic.

3.7.3 Responses from groups and organisations were analysed separately from the community feedback and are included and summarised in **Table 3.12** below. Full feedback responses from these organisations are included in **Appendix A4.1**. The table below includes the summary of feedback and the Applicant's response at the timing of the statutory consultation, to explain how feedback from this round of consultation was considered at this stage of the project's development.

Table 3.12: Feedback from organisations for the non-statutory consultation

Organisation	Comments	Applicant response
British Horse Society	Concerns raised about road safety, with a particular concern for equestrians, the height of fencing near bridleways, less of amenities, and the construction and operational noise.	The Applicant has included more than the requested offset for bridleways and has assessed impacts to road safety in the Chapter 13: Traffic and Transport of the draft ES.
Canal and River Trust	Guidelines on building near Harthill Reservoir to protect the structure, maintaining access to Broadbridge Dyke Feeder, concerns about flood risk and surface water runoff, damage during cable construction, impact on biodiversity, visual impact and risk of pollution.	The Applicant has refined the Order Limits to exclude the area around Harthill Reservoir and has continued to engage with Canal and River Trust on this issue.
Chesterfield Canal	Concerns raised about the impact to the restoration of the Chesterfield Canal and cables crossing existing water supplies to the canal. Request for	The Applicant has assessed potential impacts to the canal through ongoing design and engagement and has continued to engage with Chesterfield Canal on

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Organisation	Comments	Applicant response
	support through community benefit fund.	the design of the Proposed Development. The Applicant has continued to refine the Community Benefit offer through ongoing engagement, but notes this as an important local feature.
Conisbrough Natural Flood Management Scheme	Noted the de-scoping of NFM schemes in the area and potential for a site just off Kearsley Lane to be suitable for NFM measures.	The Applicant notes the potential for a new NFM scheme.
Conisbrough Research and Archaeology Group (CRAG)	Concerns about archaeology impacts around Whitestone 1 and discussion of possible opportunities for the project to assist with archaeological research.	The Applicant responded to explain how there would be more detail at the statutory consultation and this topic has been addressed in Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology of the draft ES .
Environment Agency	To comment on the process, with monthly meetings set up with the team.	The Applicant set up meetings with the EA.
HS2	There is land being safeguarded by HS2, and the potential for the Northern Powerhouse Rail line to go ahead.	The Applicant has continued to engage with HS2 during the development process.
Forestry Commission	Information on the protection of ancient and non-ancient woodland, and mitigation strategies.	The Applicant has included offsets around woodlands and continued to engage with the Forestry Commission to understand potential impacts.
Fulcrum	There are no existing pipes or equipment on or around the site.	Noted.
Historic England	Requests for clear mapping and a robust Heritage Assessment.	The Applicant has conducted a Heritage Assessment in Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology of the draft ES .
Natural England	Information on the ecological and landscape baseline and flagging topics to consult on in the future.	The Applicant has conducted ecological baseline surveys and has presented them in Chapter 6: Biodiversity of the draft ES .
National Gas	There are no National Gas Transmission assets affected in the area.	Noted.
National Highways	Requests to consider current capacity and safety problems for access routes, consider any construction safeguards, undertaken glint and glare	The Applicant has assessed potential impacts to traffic and transport in Chapter 13: Traffic and Transport of the draft ES ,

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Organisation	Comments	Applicant response
	assessments, a transport assessment and Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP).	and will include an outline CTMP in the DCO application.
NATS	The site does not conflict with safeguarding criteria.	Noted.
NGET	There is existing infrastructure within the site, including Brinsworth and Thurcroft Substations and overhead lines, and requests that existing and future assets are given due consideration.	Noted.
Severn Trent Water	There are sewers within the proposed area, and assessments and mitigations should be put in place.	The Applicant has identified potential sewers and updated the design to minimise impacts.
SYAS	Information on archaeological baseline and future scope of archaeological investigations.	The Applicant has conducted a Heritage Assessment in Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology of the draft ES and has continued to engage with SYAS through this process.
Yorkshire Wildlife Trust	Concerns raised about the impact on wildlife and biodiversity, loss of habitat and cumulative effects, and requests that there is habitat creation or enhancement.	The Applicant has conducted ecological baseline surveys and presented the initial results in Chapter 6: Biodiversity of the draft ES .

3.7.4 Key themes from the community feedback are presented along with the Applicant's response at this stage of the project's development in **Table 3.13**. This table highlights the most common feedback received from the community through questionnaires and by email and letter (excluding feedback from the organisations). The detailed community feedback is presented in **Appendix A4.2**. Codes have been applied to each item of feedback to protect personal information, which are included in the tables as a means of showing the frequency of each comment.

Table 3.13: Key issues from community feedback during non-statutory consultation

Comment	Frequency	Applicant response
Concern about visual impact to countryside views	419	In response to feedback from the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant has reduced the solar area by more than a quarter. Further information is provided in Chapter 7: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment of the draft ES .
Concerns about impact to biodiversity and wildlife	411	<p>Compared to agricultural land, solar farms are quiet places after construction, with little activity for maintenance and few if any chemicals. This allows the land to rest and wildlife to thrive. Projects like this are now required to increase biodiversity by 10%, but solar farms can often go much further than this minimum requirement. After the end of the lifespan of the solar farm, most infrastructure would be removed, and the land would be improved and could be returned to farming.</p> <p>The Applicant is looking for opportunities to protect existing wildlife and create new habitats for native species across the site, including planting native grasses and wildflowers, as well as hedgerows and trees around the site, and incorporating features like mammal gates within fences. Based on feedback from the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant has removed over a quarter of the proposed solar area but retained the land in the proposals for potential landscape mitigation and enhancement. The Applicant has assessed impacts to wildlife and biodiversity within Chapter 6: Biodiversity of the draft ES.</p>
General opposition to the proposals	335	Noted.
Concern about using agricultural land	308	<p>The Applicant secured an agreement to connect into the grid at Brinsworth substation and then searched for land near the grid connection point that would be suitable for solar. The Applicant sought to avoid environmentally sensitive areas and the highest quality agricultural land where possible.</p> <p>Solar farms occupy less than 0.1% of the UK's land and it is government policy to prioritise putting solar on land that is not considered 'best and most versatile'. Government plans to significantly scale up solar in line with its net-zero target are expected to bring this up to just 0.4% of the UK land area. Further detail is provided in Chapter 4: Alternatives and Design Evolution of the draft ES.</p>
Request to use rooftops, industrial	273	The Applicant started as a rooftop solar developer and continues to build new rooftop projects for homes,

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Comment	Frequency	Applicant response
units, supermarkets, car parks, railways, or brownfield sites instead		<p>schools and businesses, as well as smaller scale solar projects. To reach national energy targets, we need an energy mix – not all roofs are suitable or available for solar.</p> <p>The site selection process included reviews of the CDC and RMBC Brownfield Land Registers; however there was no brownfield land of an adequate land area to facilitate a large-scale solar project either individually or in combination with other sites. Further detail is provided in Chapter 4: Alternatives and Design Evolution of the draft ES.</p>
Concern about building on Green Belt land	272	<p>The Applicant recognises that the land identified for the project is on the Green Belt. The Applicant is working to develop the project in a manner that supports many of the same goals as the Green Belt, such as providing opportunities for ongoing agriculture under the panels through grazing, as well as continued recreational access through current public rights of way and new permissive paths across the site. Solar farms also provide habitats for local wildlife, and can increase biodiversity across the site. Further detail is provided in Chapter 4: Alternatives and Design Evolution of the draft ES.</p>
Concern about flood risk and panels increasing the risk of flooding	257	<p>The Applicant has included a Flood Risk Assessment to assess the potential impacts of the Proposed Development. This is included in Chapter 13: Traffic and Transport of the draft ES.</p>
Concern about the impact on food security and food production	189	<p>The UK needs to balance both the need for food security and energy security, but it takes a very small amount of land (less than 0.4% of the UK land area to achieve the Government's target) to meet solar energy goals, which would have a negligible impact on food production. In fact, climate change is the biggest threat to agricultural production.</p>
Concern about impact to public rights of way, including footpaths and bridleways	174	<p>The Applicant recognises the importance of PRowS and is committed to continuing recreational access through current PRowS and new permissive paths across the site.</p> <p>Based on feedback from the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant has suggested new permissive paths to expand recreational access across the site and formalise informal paths that are already being used. The Applicant has committed to including a 15m offset from either side of paths. In most cases, the Applicant has been able to provide more than this minimum by removing panels from the field on one side of the path.</p>

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Comment	Frequency	Applicant response
Concern about the impact on the historic Conisbrough Parks	120	As part of the EIA, the Applicant has consulted with SYAS and other stakeholders to understand existing heritage features in the local area and our approach to mitigating potential impacts. The Applicant has also completed geophysical surveys across the majority of the solar areas to identify underground cultural assets and desk-based assessments to identify above-ground assets, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments. This information is detailed in Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology of the draft ES .
Concern about the size and scale of the proposals and request to reduce the size	119	In response to feedback from the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant has reduced the solar area by more than a quarter.
Concern about impact to property values	118	There is no evidence to suggest that there is any impact on house prices due to nearby solar projects in the UK. At this stage, the Applicant has looked to design the Proposed Development to help avoid, reduce or mitigate visual impacts as much as possible.
Concern about noise of construction and construction vehicles	116	As part of our EIA, the Applicant has assessed the potential impacts during construction, and identify solutions to minimise these potential significant impacts. This included developing a traffic management plan, in consultation with local highways authorities, to minimise the traffic impacts on local roads as well as using appropriate mitigation measures to reduce dust, noise and other impacts as much as possible. The Applicant has completed noise assessments to understand what the current, baseline noise levels are in the area. This information is detailed in Chapter 14: Noise and Vibration of the draft ES .
Concern about effect to Conisbrough Castle, Roman Villa and St Peter's Church and the views from them	115	As part of the EIA, the Applicant has consulted with the SYAS and other stakeholders to understand existing heritage features in the local area and our approach to mitigating potential impacts. The Applicant has also completed geophysical surveys across the majority of the solar areas to identify underground cultural assets and desk-based assessments to identify above-ground assets, including listed buildings, conservation areas and scheduled monuments. This information is detailed in Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology of the draft ES .

3.8 Summary of changes after non-statutory consultation

3.8.1 After the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant removed around one quarter of the areas for solar panels to create offsets around homes, villages and public rights of way in response to feedback from the consultation. **Figures 3.16-3.18** show the feedback that was received marked on top of the masterplans, and how the Applicant had regard to this feedback. The dark green areas show the solar areas that were requested to be removed but retained in the Proposed Development at this stage. The light green areas show the places where a consultee requested the fields to be removed and the Applicant made this change. The yellow areas are additional solar areas that were removed, but that are not directly attributable to consultation feedback. Please note that this includes specific design feedback, not general feedback in opposition to the Proposed Development as a whole. The updated masterplans can also be found in **Appendix A3.4-A3.6**. Key changes include:

- In Whitestone 1, removing solar from fields south of Conisbrough, north of Firsby and Clifton;
- In Whitestone 2, removing solar areas from fields south of Brampton-en-le-Morthen and north of Ulley; and
- In Whitestone 3, removing solar areas east of High Moor and between Harthill and Woodall.

3.8.2 Additionally, some areas that were included in the draft Order Limits were removed entirely in response to feedback. These include:

- Fields south of Clifton in Whitestone 1
- The field north of Harthill in Whitestone 3

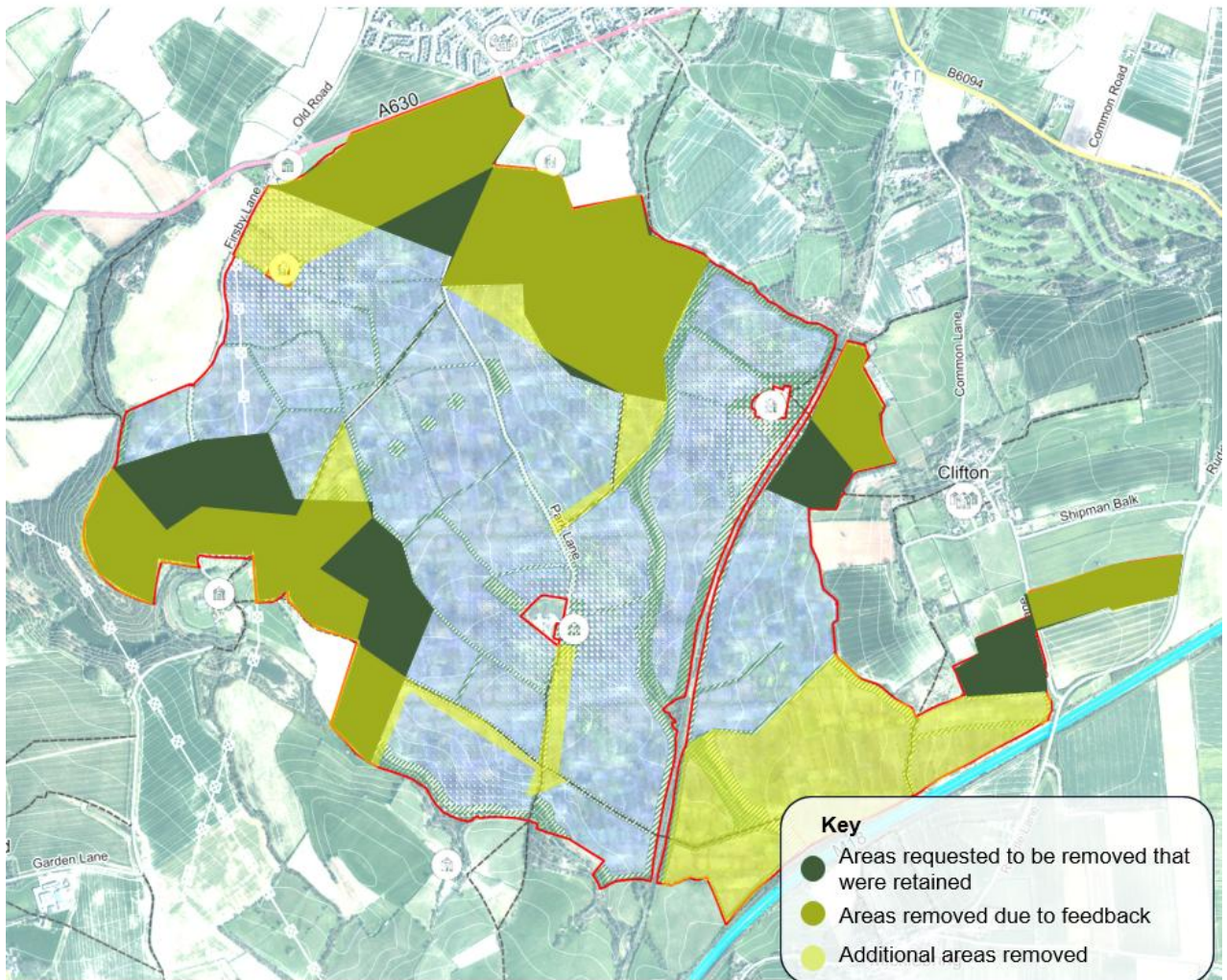


Figure 3.16: Summary of spatial feedback and changes to masterplan after non-statutory consultation Whitestone 1

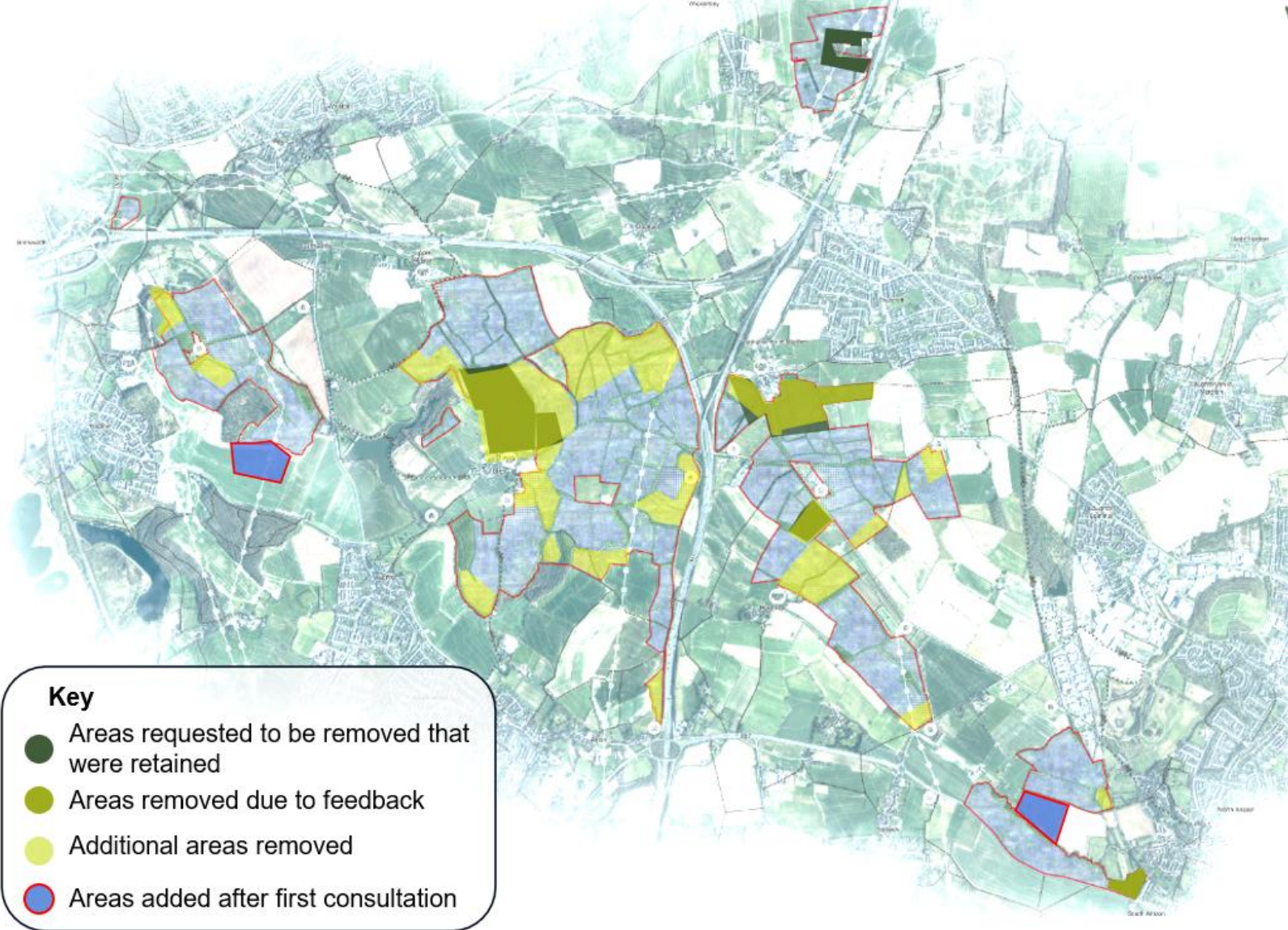


Figure 3.17: Summary of spatial feedback and changes to masterplan after non-statutory consultation Whitestone 2

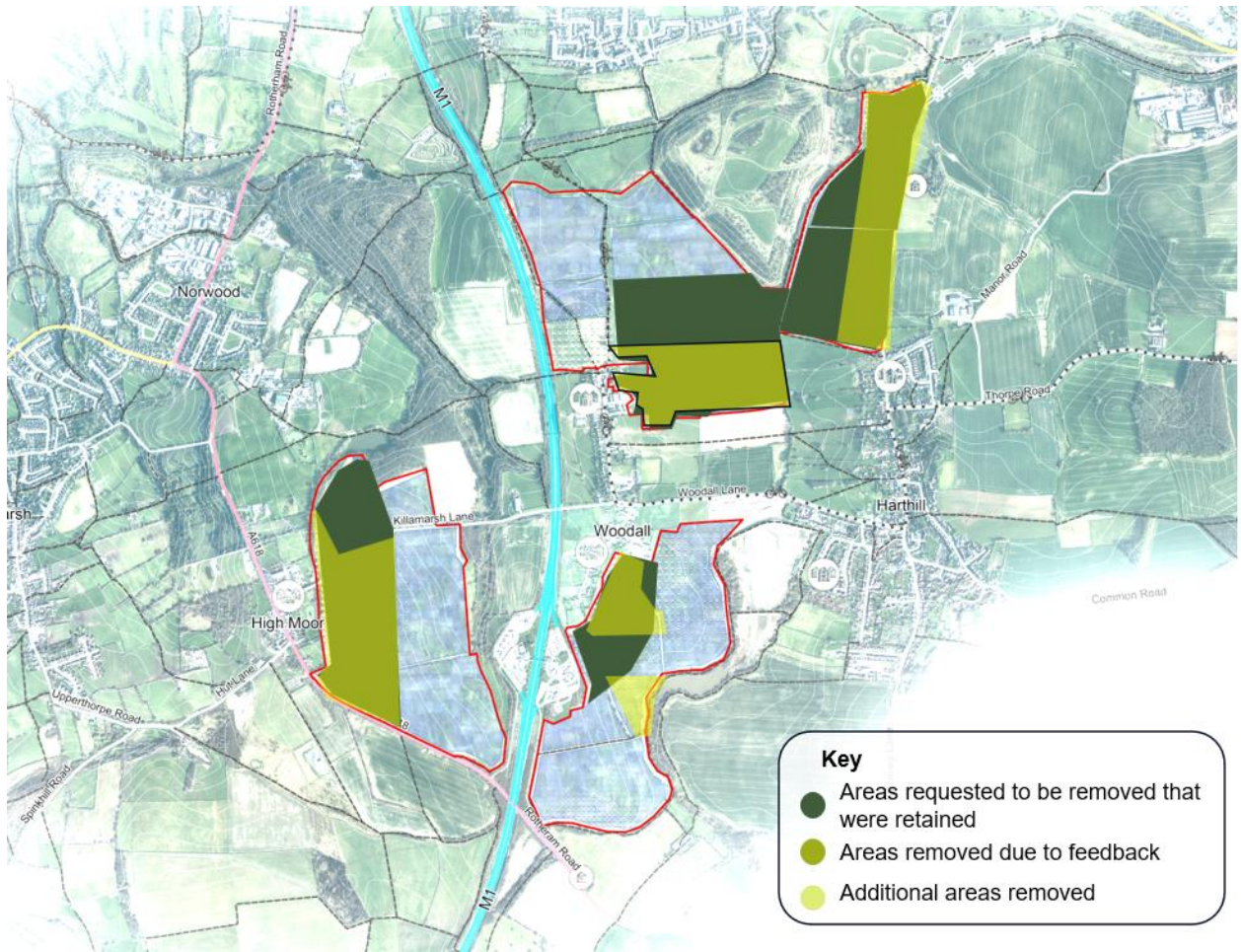


Figure 3.18: Summary of spatial feedback and changes to masterplan after non-statutory consultation Whitestone 3

3.9 Ongoing engagement

March – April 2025 – Updates following the non-statutory consultation

3.9.1 After the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant engaged with the local community and stakeholders to explain how the Proposed Development had been updated in response to consultation feedback and the next steps in the development process. Key dates are included in **Table 3.14** below.

Table 3.14: Summary of engagement after the non-statutory consultation

Date	Stakeholders	Activity
11 Feb 2025	CDC – Members briefing	Introduction to the Doncaster cabinet members on the project, the consultation that has just ended and the process ahead. Ward members were invited but did not attend. Questions around community benefit.
03 Mar 2025	John Healey MP, Jake Richards MP, Sally Jameson MP	In person meeting to discuss updated masterplan
12 Mar 2025	Jake Richards MP	In person meeting to discuss updated masterplan
12 Mar 2025	Staff of John Healey MP	Teams meeting to discuss updated masterplan
20-22 Mar 2025	Near neighbours	Site visits to provide the updated masterplan (see paragraph 3.9.3)
26 Mar 2025	Local Media	A press release was shared with local media providing the updated masterplan and highlighting key changes
31 Mar 2025	Consultation Zone	A newsletter posted to the consultation zone with the updated masterplans and next steps in the development process
31 Mar and 4 Apr 2025	Parish Councils	The Applicant hosted a webinar with host parish councils to explain how the Proposed Development had been updated in response to feedback and explain next steps in the development process.
2 Apr 2025	RMBC - Members briefing	Presentation on updated masterplan - overview of non-stat consultation events and feedback, overview of changes to masterplan showing non-stat and updated masterplan for W1, W2 and W3 followed by Q&A.
8 Aug 2025	Sarah Champion and staff	Site visit to view potential visual impacts around Treeton. Discussion about the development process, and supply chain.
8 Aug 2025	Near neighbours	Follow up meetings with near neighbours in Firsby and Hill Top House to discuss ongoing concerns

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- 3.9.2 The Applicant contacted the same near neighbours that had received site visits during the non-statutory consultation to organise a follow-up meeting to provide the updated masterplan and explain how it had changed specifically in response to their feedback.
- 3.9.3 These site visits were offered by email on 6 March 2025 to those same individuals at non-statutory consultation. The site visits were held between 20 March and 22 March 2025. A total of 12 site visits took place, as detailed in **Figures 3.19-3.21**.

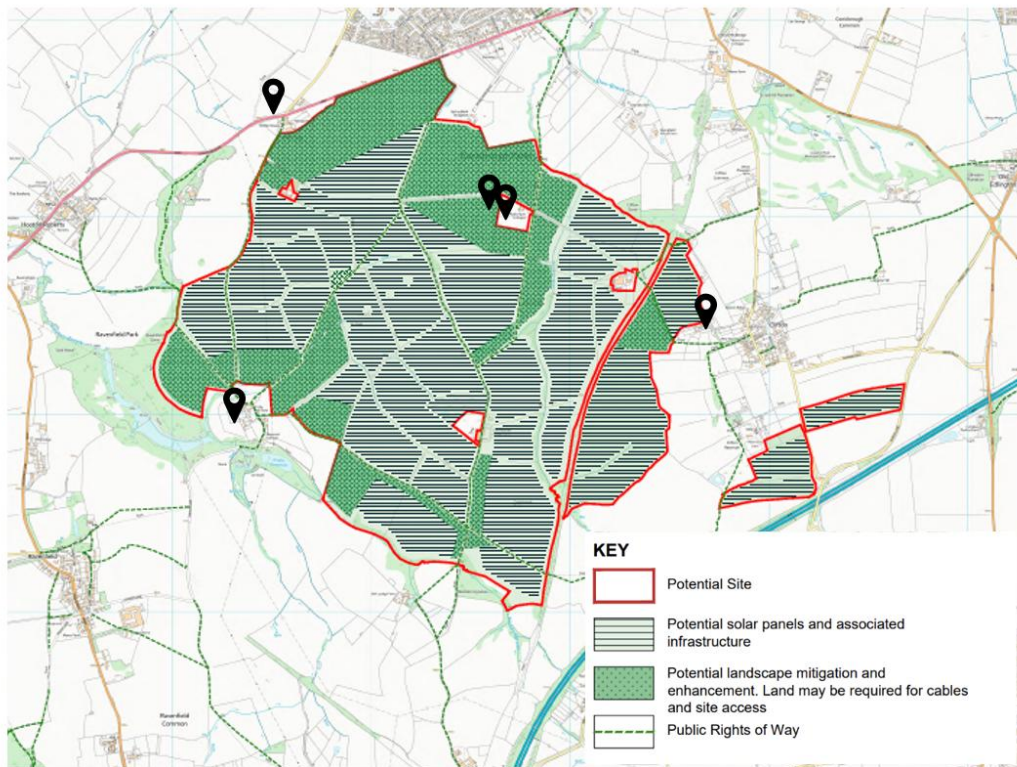


Figure 3.19: Map of Whitestone 1 March 2025 site visits

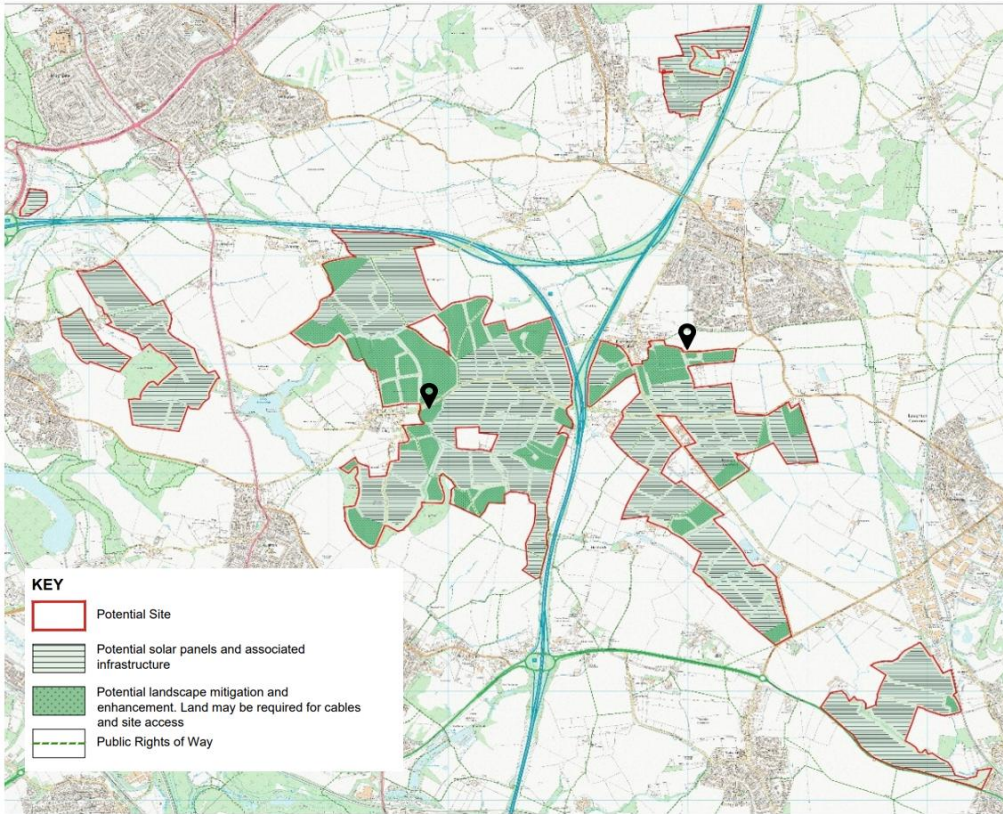


Figure 3.20: Map of Whitestone 2 March site visits

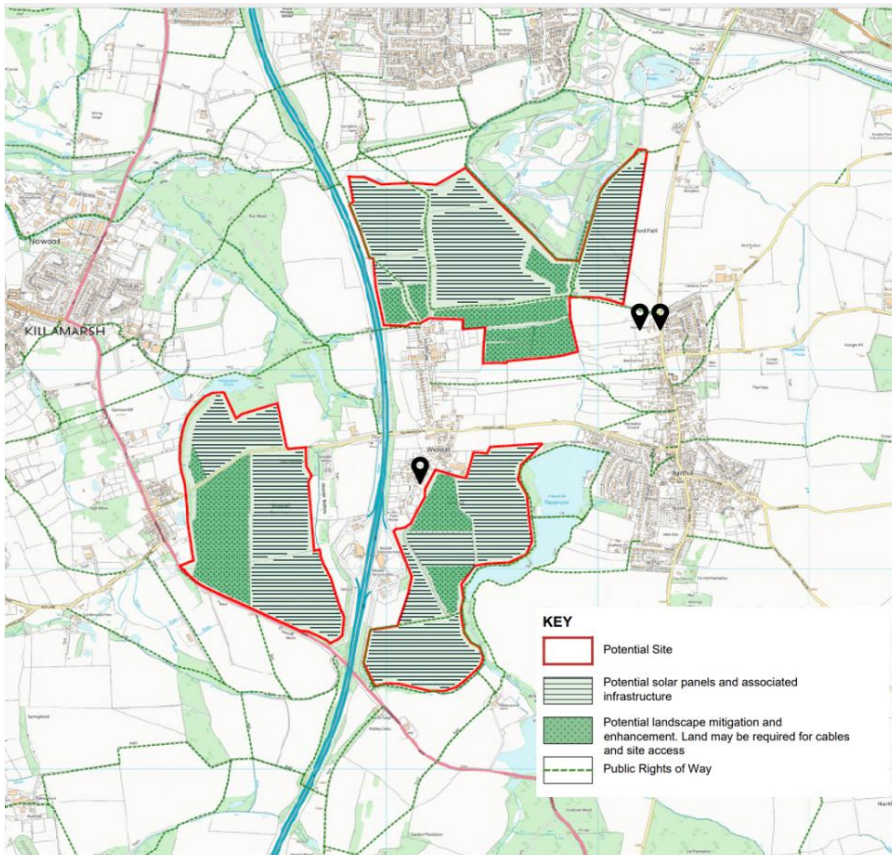


Figure 3.21: Map of Whitestone 3 March site visits

- 3.9.4 On 11 March 2025, the Applicant emailed the host parish councils to invite them to attend a Zoom meeting about the updated masterplans and changes to the Proposed Development based on feedback from the non-statutory consultation. The email invite can be found in **Appendix A3.9**.
- 3.9.5 The host parish council webinars were held on 31 March 2025 and 3 April 2025. The webinar was structured with a presentation by the Applicant about the latest updates to the design and then a Q&A section for the parish councillors.
- 3.9.6 The parish councils in attendance are listed below:
- Hooton Roberts
 - Conisbrough Parks
 - Braithwell with Micklebring
 - Ravenfield
 - Bramley
 - Hellaby
 - Wickersley
 - Whiston
 - Treeton
 - Ulley
 - Thurcroft
 - Aston cum Aughton
 - Killamarsh
 - Harthill with Woodall
- 3.9.7 On 26 March 2025, the Applicant shared a press release with the updated masterplan to local and trade media. The press release can be seen in **Appendix A3.7**.
- 3.9.8 On 31 March 2025, the Applicant posted a newsletter to all addresses within the area shown in **Figures 3.22-3.24** to share information about the updated masterplan and how feedback from the community at non-statutory consultation had informed the design. The leaflet is included in **Appendix A3.1-A3.3**.
- 3.9.9 There were three different versions of the newsletter for each of the project areas: Whitestone 1, Whitestone 2, and Whitestone 3, showing the changes made to the Proposed Development and the updated masterplan for that corresponding area. All versions of the newsletters were available online at the project website.

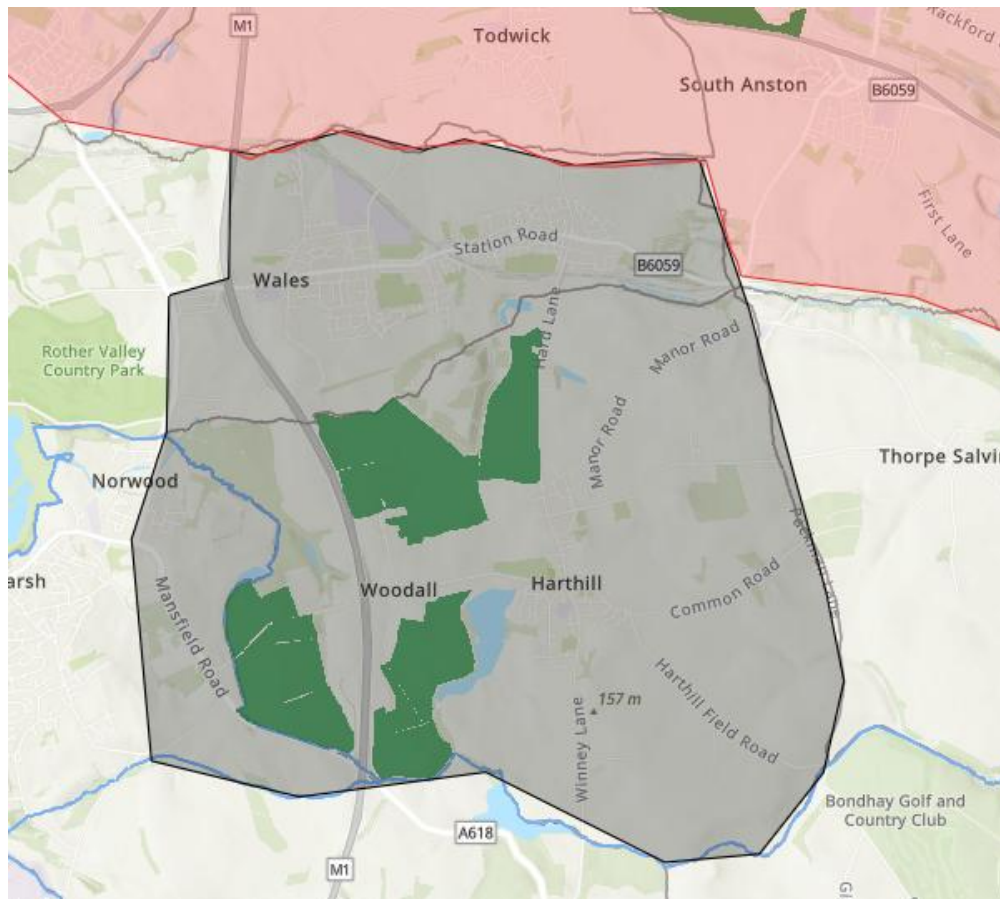


Figure 3.24: Whitestone 3 mailout zone for the March update community newsletter

- 3.9.10 The Applicant also emailed the same information about the updated masterplan to the ‘keep informed’ list on 26 March 2025. The keep informed list is open for anyone in the community to sign up to through the website. We securely collect the emails to share key updates about the Proposed Development. The email is included in **Appendix A3.8**.

Stakeholder meetings – technical stakeholders

3.9.11 During the interim period between non-statutory and statutory consultation, the Applicant continued to engage with technical stakeholders. The engagement is shown below in **Table 3.15**.

Table 3.15: Interim technical stakeholder engagement

Date	Stakeholder	Topic of meeting
12 Feb 2025	Environment Agency	Monthly updates with the EA to discuss any project updates or any queries with the comments.
13 Feb 2025	PINS	PINS Inception meeting - project team ran through the proposed development, consenting programme, engagement to date, environmental constraints, EIA scoping etc. Advised PINS we are wanting to pursue the standard tier pre-application service which PINS agreed with.
26 Feb 2025	LPA Monthly Meeting	First joint monthly meeting with both LPAs - ran through project update and discussed consultation feedback and approach to PPAs
26 Mar 2025	LPA Monthly Meeting	Monthly meeting with LPA - presented updated masterplans and discussed scoping and PPA.
10 Apr 2025	Monthly EA Meeting	Monthly meeting to update the EA on project progress, including submission of the scoping report. Discussed natural flood management schemes, touched on engineering queries etc.
23 Apr 2025	Meeting with CRAG (Conisbrough Research and Archaeology Group)	Face-to-face meeting to discuss the archaeology around W1 and local concerns from the research group. Discussion of possible opportunities for the project to assist with archaeological research.
24 Apr 2025	Initial Meeting with Natural England	Initial meeting to introduce the project and discuss the ecological and landscape baseline, while flagging topics we would like to consult with them on in the future.
29 Apr 2025	Doncaster - Members briefing	Presentation on updated masterplan - overview of non-stat consultation events and feedback, overview of changes to masterplan showing non-stat and updated masterplan for W1, W2 and W3 followed by Q & A. Cllr N Ball raised the following questions/concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Query regarding details of what is proposed within mitigation areas and a concern regarding experience

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Date	Stakeholder	Topic of meeting
		<p>of users of PRoWs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Query regarding impact on farming practices as a result of underground cabling – confirmed no impact • Query regarding community benefits • Concern raised regarding loss of ALC and flooding impacts.
7 May 2025	LPA Monthly Meeting	Monthly meeting with LPAs - discussed post non-stat consultation, Scoping report and PPA.
9 May 2025	NE Derbyshire LPA	Initial meeting with NE Derbyshire to introduce the project and discuss potential options/implications for including land within NE Derbyshire.
21 May 2025	Derbyshire County Council LPA	Initial meeting with NE Derbyshire to introduce the project and discuss potential options/implications for including land within Derbyshire County Council.
28 May 2025	LPA Monthly Meeting	Monthly meeting with LPAs - discussed scoping, upcoming SoCC, changes to RLB to include Derbyshire and NE Derbyshire and PPA.
04 Jun 2025	Highways	<p>Discussion around the need for a RRRAP assessment and agreement this would not be needed</p> <p>Request to view any Emergency Plans, and explanation that the outline Battery Safety Management Plan would be drafted with consultation with South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue</p>
25 Jun 2025	Doncaster LPA - SoCC Briefing	Meeting with Doncaster - provided brief project update and talked through approach to consultation and SoCC. Discussed objector groups engagement with Council officers.
04 Jul 2025	Rotherham LPA - SoCC Briefing	Meeting with Rotherham - provided brief project update and talked through approach to consultation and SoCC.
14 Jul 2025	SY police	Discussion around community feedback related to safety, SY Police advised that threats to break panels in construction or operation are likely and suggested incorporating mitigation in design. Also recommended contacting them ahead of consultation events or other meetings, which the Applicant has done.
09 Jul 2025	Environment Agency	Scoping Comments discussed; raised discussion survey approach with ecology team; happy with hydrology approach; discussed watercourse crossings.

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Date	Stakeholder	Topic of meeting
15 Jul 2025	Yorkshire Wildlife Trust	Introduction to project; discussed draft LNRS, discussed development in Brampton Common LWS.
17 Jul 2025	SYAS	On the right track re. the trial trenching plan, but could not provide detailed feedback until the baseline was fully understood (geophysics completed etc) - ERM to issue baseline information to SYAS for review.
23 Jul 2025	Exagen - Thurcroft solar	Discussed potential cable routes and interaction with their proposed development. Exagen stated their preference for 2a over 2b.
30 Jul 2025	LPA Monthly Meeting	Monthly meeting with LPAs - discussed SoCC, technical officer contact details, cable route and PPA process.
13 Aug 2025	CDC - Contamination Officer	Discussion of Minerals Safeguarding Areas and historic landfills around W1.
19 Aug 2025	Environment Agency	General Monthly Meeting; discussed Draft ES, work package tracker, and EA land within the scheme.
24 Aug 2025	LPA Monthly Meeting	Monthly meeting with LPAs - discussed statutory consultation, LPA procurement process and next steps.
10 Sept 2025	Environment Agency	Monthly EA Meeting; provided general update on project and discussed water consumption plan.
24 Sept 2025	LPA Monthly Meeting	Monthly meeting with LPAs - discussed members briefings, stat con, LPA procurement updates.

Community benefit workshop – July 2025

- 3.9.12 During the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant committed to providing a community benefit package to ensure that there are local benefits from the Proposed Development, that would be developed collaboratively with the community to ensure that it would provide a meaningful benefit that supports local initiatives and priorities.
- 3.9.13 During the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant asked a question on community benefits in the questionnaire to understand initial views on the topic. To further advance the development of the community benefit package, the Applicant organised a workshop in the interim period between consultations so that more detailed proposals could be presented in the statutory consultation.
- 3.9.14 To manage numbers and facilitate a workshop discussion, the Applicant focused on elected representatives for this event. The Applicant invited a representative from all the host parish councils in the area, host ward councillors, and MPs. The email invite can be found in **Appendix A3.10**.
- 3.9.15 One MP, 4 ward councillors and 15 parish councils attended the event, including:
- Jake Richards MP – MP for Rother Valley
 - Cllr David Fisher – Sitwell Ward
 - Cllr Sarah Allen – Aston and Todwick Ward
 - Cllr Gregory Reynolds – Bramley and Ravenfield Ward
 - Cllr John Blackham – Anston and Woodsetts Ward
 - Cllr Cheryl Jones – Brinsworth Parish Council
 - Cllr Bill Mawson – Aston cum Aughton Parish Council
 - Cllr Maggie Godfrey – Wickersley Parish Council
 - Cllr Fiona Radford – Harthill Parish Council
 - Cllr Sarah Day – Harthill Parish Council
 - Cllr Philip Knight – Conisbrough Parks Parish Council
 - Cllr Liam Herbert – Hooton Roberts Parish Council
 - Cllr Richard Robson – Ulley Parish Council
 - Clerk Tricia Smith – Bramley Parish Council
 - Cllr Robert Croxton – Treeton Parish Council
 - Cllr Clive Jepson – Anston Parish Council
 - Cllr Cheryl Biggin – Maltby Town Council
 - Cllr Donna Sutton – Maltby Town Council
 - Cllr Rebecca Jupp – Ravenfield Parish Council
 - Cllr Avril Froggatt – Wales Parish Council
- 3.9.16 The Applicant explained that the purpose of the workshop was to get more feedback from the elected officials about what they would like to see in the community benefit fund. The Applicant also offered new information about the size of the fund, as around £400/MW, which would add up to £300,000/year for the lifetime of the project, or around £18 million total. The Applicant explained that this

funding level as well as the structure of the benefit fund will continue to be developed through ongoing engagement with local communities.

- 3.9.17 The format of the workshop was both discussion and written based. The Applicant managed a discussion in groups on various questions, and encouraged attendees to also write down their thoughts on a worksheet provided, which is included in **Appendix 3.11. Table 3.16** shows the summarised key points raised by attendees:

Table 3.16: Feedback from the community benefit workshop

Topic	Summary of point raised
Fund administration	General consensus that neither the districts or parish councils should receive funds directly, and a 3rd party administrator should be used to manage the fund.
	Ensure that the fund is handled with openness and transparency.
	Some suggested the parish council should manage the fund and accept applications, but others highlighted that administration would be difficult for parish councils and some areas (Conisbrough) do not have parish councils and would be excluded.
	If a third party is involved, parish councils and local authorities should be included on the board to help make decisions
	Concerns that funding should be allocated to communities based on their impact, not population or an even split between councils.
Education	Support educational initiatives including apprenticeships, work experience in secondary schools, and classroom sessions in primary schools.
	Educate about green careers and support employment.
	Provide educational sessions on biodiversity and climate change impacts.
	Support existing organisations, including Skills Street at Gulliver's Valley.
Solar panels and reduced energy bills	Some raised that rooftop solar on community buildings such as schools could be considered but had questions about maintenance.
	Uncertainty about implementing rooftop solar on private property.
	There was not as much support for reduced energy bills as expected. Many felt reduced energy bills may not be the most effective use of the fund when considering the level of funding spread across a large number of properties.
	Challenges raised including future energy price uncertainty and varying home insulation.
Local projects and infrastructure	Ensure the fund is bespoke to the area.
	Funding for local projects was considered the most important use.
	Help fund the Canal Trust to complete the Norwood Tunnel work.
	Improve local transport, such as local buses.
	Support sports facilities to offer reduced prices for young people.
	Carefully consider how funding is split between parish councils of different sizes and boundaries.
	Provide funding for flood defences.
	Support local sports clubs.
	Support local church groups.
Improve health services, such as funding cancer support groups.	

3.9.18 The Applicant used this feedback to develop a more defined proposal to present in the statutory consultation, in order to acquire more feedback from the broader community.

3.10 Engagement with the Planning Inspectorate

3.10.1 The Applicant has held regular meetings with the Planning Inspectorate throughout the pre-application stage since its Inception Meeting on 13 February 2025. The purpose of these meetings has been to provide updates on the Proposed Development and seek advice on aspects of the Application.

3.10.2 A summary of the advice given by the Planning Inspectorate during the pre-application stage (“s51 advice”) and how the Applicant has had regard to it in preparing the Application is detailed in **Table 3.17** below.

Table 3.17: Summary of s51 advice given and regard had by the Applicant

Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
13 August 2025 advice		
Programme updates	<p>The Applicant provided an update on its project and confirmed the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) is currently with the Local Planning Authorities for consultation and it would be published in early September 2025, with statutory consultation due to take place between September and October 2025. The applicant confirmed they plan to submit their Development Consent Order (DCO) application in May 2026.</p> <p>The Applicant enquired how the Inspectorate recommends they make best use of the standard level tier of its pre-application service. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to, where possible, provide questions seeking specific advice in advance of project update meetings thus enabling it to provide considered advice.</p>	<p>The LPAs were formally consulted on the SoCC between 24 July – 22 August 2025, with the final SoCC published on 10 September. The final SoCC can be found in Appendix B3. Statutory consultation ran between 16 September – 28 October 2025.</p> <p>The Applicant provided questions seeking specific advice prior to project update meetings, and issued agendas for these meetings of topics the Applicant wished to cover.</p>
Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AoCM)	<p>The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to inform it, at the earliest opportunity, of any changes to their project timetable that may affect the submission of the AoCM statement. The Inspectorate referred the Applicant to the pre-application prospectus for guidance on timetabling the submission of the AoCM – typically received at least three months before application</p>	<p>The Applicant drafted the AoCM Report in line with the guidance, as described in Chapter 8 and Appendix H.</p>

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
	<p>submission, and with sufficient time to consider s51 advice. The Inspectorate advised that the AoCM statement is checked against the expected content as set out in the government's pre-application stage guidance.</p>	
Draft documents	<p>The Inspectorate enquired when the Applicant intended to submit its draft documents for review as their current Programme Document did not include this in the project timeline. The Inspectorate advised that its review period was normally six weeks, and that it was common practice for applicants to submit all the documents they wish to be reviewed – under the standard tier of service as per the prospectus - at the start of the review period. The Inspectorate welcomed the Applicant to arrange a project update meeting to discuss the draft document feedback, if it deemed it useful, once they had considered the advice received.</p>	<p>The Applicant decided to not submit draft documents to PINS for review.</p>
Scoping Opinion	<p>The Applicant informed the Inspectorate it had reviewed the Inspectorate's Scoping Opinion and explained where it they were seeking to provide justifications for different approaches as compared with the opinion. The Inspectorate explained that the Scoping Opinion is based on the information provided within the Scoping Report. The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to provide any further appropriate justification for their approaches in the Environmental Statement, along with any consultation activities undertaken, and any agreements reached with relevant bodies on the Applicant's proposed methodologies and assessment outputs.</p> <p>In relation to Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) surveys for the cable route corridor, the Inspectorate advised the Applicant to support its approach with appropriate evidence</p>	<p>The Scoping Report can be found in Appendix 2.1 of the ES and the approach taken in the ES is based on the feedback provided in PINS' Scoping Opinion.</p> <p>Further appropriate justification for the approaches taken to assessment is provided in the relevant chapters of the ES.</p> <p>Further detail on ALC surveys on cable corridor land is provided in Chapter 9: Ground conditions and land quality [EN0110020/APP/6.9] of the ES. During the process, the Applicant has engaged with Natural England. The Applicant developed the assessment methodology having regard to relevant experience on other solar NSIPs including Oaklands.</p>

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
	<p>and agreement with relevant statutory bodies such as Natural England. Justification should be set out in the Environmental Statement, which should apply a reasonable worst-case scenario for the assessment of areas subject to flexible options under the Rochdale Envelope, such as the assessment of the cable route and location of the new National Grid substation.</p> <p>The Applicant may wish to review the recent Secretary of State decision on Oaklands Solar Farm Park (dated 19 June 2025) and the accompanying Examining Authority’s Recommendation Report on the extent of ALC surveying of the projects cable route (at paras 4.57 to 4.61). The Examining Authority’s Report summarised why further survey work of the cable route was requested during the examination. It also conveyed the agreement reached between the Applicant and statutory bodies to achieve an accurate baseline and demonstrate the likely potential impacts and effects (see paras 3.3.64 to 3.3.71). The Inspectorate noted that each application is considered on its own merits and that the circumstances in Oaklands and the Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land mix for Whitestone may differ, but the decision is nonetheless shared for interest.</p>	
<p>Cable corridor and new National Grid substation</p>	<p>The Applicant informed the Inspectorate that it had narrowed the cable route corridor from a range of 200 metres to 100 metres width since scoping, and this was likely to be reduced following further surveys. Therefore, the Inspectorate queried whether there was likely to be optionality in relation to the cable corridor route at submission. The Applicant confirmed that some optionality may still be present at this time.</p>	<p>In relation to cable route options, the Order Limits at submission still include some optionality. The cable corridor is of variable width, has been narrowed throughout the Proposed Development based on environmental assessments, and will be reduced further prior to construction.</p> <p>The statutory consultation included cable route options and</p>

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
	<p>The Inspectorate advised the Applicant to ensure that appropriate detail is provided at statutory consultation stage about its optionality as well as the likely location of National Grid's new substation, to ensure parties can provide informed responses under the Gunning Principles. The Applicant may also need to consider undertaking further, targeted consultation if its Order Limits change. The Applicant was prepared on this issue and has been holding discussions with National Grid about the siting zone of the substation in relation to its Order Limits.</p>	<p>information about the location of the new National Grid substation for parties to comment on.</p> <p>Between 4 March and 3 April 2026, the Applicant held a Targeted Consultation on changes to the Order Limits. These included changes relating to road safety, cable routing, drainage works and landscaping. More detail on the Targeted Consultation can be found in Chapter 9 of this report and Appendix F.</p>
Glint and glare	<p>The Inspectorate asked if more information could be shared at the next project update meeting regarding the Applicant's glint and glare assessments, given the proximity of the scheme to nearby motorways and residential settlements.</p>	<p>The Applicant prepared updates on glint and glare for PINS at the next meeting. This included explaining how the Applicant had evaluated glint and glare using ForgeSolar modelling and identified nine road and rail receptors at risk of potential glint and glare effects. The Applicant said further analysis would be conducted to validate and determine the significance of potential effects in those locations. Any significant effects should be reduced through design and mitigation measures (such as planting hedgerows), the applicant added.</p>
Statutory undertakers	<p>The Inspectorate respectfully reminded the applicant of the need to draft protected provisions and discuss these with relevant statutory undertakers during the pre-application stage to assist an efficient examination. An update on its discussions with Network Rail would be welcome given the potential for the scheme to cross a nearby railway line. The Inspectorate also requested the applicant to advise them if any Crown Land or special category land is affected by the proposed development.</p>	<p>The Applicant has engaged with statutory undertakers regarding the Proposed Development to ascertain the need for protective provisions where necessary. Where appropriate, the Applicant shared draft protective provisions with statutory undertakers.</p> <p>The Applicant confirmed at the time that no Crown Land or special category land is affected by the Proposed Development.</p>

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
		However, the Applicant has since identified that there is Crown Land and is engaging with the Crown Estate.
Approach to examinations	The Inspectorate advised that it is seeking to achieve more proportionate examinations and shorter pre-examination stages, particularly for Solar schemes, following the previous government’s ‘Nationally Significant Infrastructure: Action plan for reforms to the planning process’ (February 2023) and the current government’s measures. The Inspectorate referenced the examination timetables for Oaklands Solar and Peartree Hill Solar as examples.	Noted by the Applicant.
Programme Document (post-meeting advice)	<p>The Inspectorate has reviewed the Applicant’s latest Programme Document (August 2025 version), which has been produced having regard to the government’s guidance on the pre-application stage and the expected content of Programme Documents as set out at paragraph 10. It is considered that the Programme Document provides a good description of the proposed development, timetable of pre-application activities, and the Applicant’s approach to stakeholder engagement.</p> <p>However, the Inspectorate referred the Applicant to its previous advice on the Programme Document illustrated in its inception meeting note. It advised the Applicant to provide an outline of the ‘risks’ identified at this stage in addition to how those risks will be managed (see paragraph 10 of the government’s guidance). The Inspectorate also conveyed that it would be helpful if the Programme Document included an estimate of the generating capacity of the proposed development, indicated if an Issues Tracker will be used (and submitted with a Potential Main Issues for Examination document with the DCO application), and whether the</p>	<p>The Applicant notes PINS’ advice on the Programme Document.</p> <p>The Applicant added the ‘risks’ to the Programme Document in the latest version (March 2026) under section 3. In terms of stating generating capacity of the Proposed Development, the Applicant has said this is ‘up to 750MW’, but not a more specific figure than this.</p> <p>The Applicant created an Issues Tracker, which was kept regularly updated throughout the process. The tracker detailed progress made against the issues identified and any agreements reached with relevant statutory bodies. PINS had sight of the tracker and this fed into the PMIE.</p> <p>The Applicant had open lines of communication with statutory bodies about the programme, so did not share the Programme Document itself with those bodies.</p>

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
	<p>Programme Document has or will be shared with relevant statutory bodies for their views on the proposed programme.</p> <p>The applicant should also include within its 'Table 2.1 Whitestone Solar Farm Key Pre-application Activity Dates', milestones for any likely project update meetings with the Inspectorate, the draft document review stage, the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone statement stage, and dates for any multiparty meetings or the evidence plans process if these are being pursued by the applicant.</p> <p>The Inspectorate noted the main issues table setting out the Applicant's view of the issues for resolution and the activities it will undertake to address those. It advised that this table should be kept regularly under review and updated as the application progresses through the pre-application stage. It should contain appropriate detail on the progress made against identified issues and any agreements reached with relevant statutory bodies on its proposed methodologies and assessment outputs. This information will help keep the Inspectorate, statutory parties, and members of the public informed.</p> <p>The Inspectorate enquired about the Applicant's approach to HRA. The Applicant advised that NE has verbally agreed to scope it out. The Applicant would submit a HRA briefing statement and NE would respond in writing with its advice and agreement.</p> <p>The Inspectorate also requested the Applicant to provide its methodology for assessment of Cumulative Effects in the draft ES and drew the applicant's attention to the Gate Burton DCO application where concerns were</p>	<p>In relation to PINS enquiries about the Applicant's approach to HRA, the Applicant advised that NE has verbally agreed to scope it out. The Applicant would submit a HRA briefing statement and NE would respond in writing with its advice and agreement.</p> <p>The Applicant provided the methodology for the assessment of Cumulative Effects in Chapter 17: Cumulative Effects [EN0110020/APP/6.17] of the ES.</p> <p>A number of additional consents and licences will be needed, and these are detailed in the in the Consents and Agreements Position Statement [EN0110020/APP/5.4]. The Applicant has submitted a Design Approach Document [EN0110020/APP/5.7] and Policy Compliance Document (this can be found as Appendix ".1" of each Appendix of the ES) as part of the DCO application.</p>

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
	<p>raised regarding the assessment of Cumulative Effects.</p> <p>The Inspectorate also stated that it would be helpful if the Programme Document indicated whether any non-DCO licences or consents are needed, as well as whether the applicant intends to submit a Design Approach Document and Policy Compliance Document with its DCO application.</p>	
28 October 2025 advice		
Pre-application Prospectus	<p>The Inspectorate has advised that, following a six-month review, the Pre-application Prospectus has been updated. Applicants with live projects at the pre-application stage should familiarise themselves with the revised document and consider any implications for their engagement with the Inspectorate. Key updates include:</p> <p>The establishment of land and rights negotiations tracking as a core service feature. All applicants are now expected to develop and share a tracker using one of two standard templates, regardless of service tier. Clarified expectations for applicants ahead of meetings with the Inspectorate. This includes confirmation that the Inspectorate may delay or refuse service where pre-meeting requirements, such as the timely submission of an updated programme or issues tracker, are not met.</p>	The Applicant has reviewed and had regard to the updated Pre-application Prospectus document.
26 November 2025 advice		
Progress update	<p>The Applicant gave an update on the status of the programme document, confirmed their updated Programme Document is on their project website, and that they intend to submit their application in May 2026.</p> <p>The Inspectorate has reviewed the Applicant's updated Programme Document (November 2025 version) and notes that it continues to provide the expected content as set out in the</p>	The Applicant created an Issues Tracker, which was kept regularly updated throughout the process. The tracker detailed progress made against the issues identified and any agreements reached with relevant statutory bodies. PINS had sight of the tracker and this fed into the PMIE.

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
	<p>government’s guidance on the pre-application stage. However, the Inspectorate further advises that it should contain an outline of the ‘risks’ identified at this stage in addition to how those risks will be managed (see paragraph 10 of the government’s guidance). The Applicant is also asked to include high level commentary on any agreements reached with relevant statutory parties on its methodologies and approaches to assessments or mitigation, in further iterations (especially in the absence of an Issues Tracker). This will help the Inspectorate to understand the readiness of the application before submission.</p>	
<p>Consultation update</p>	<p>The Applicant provided an update on its statutory consultation stage (from 16 September to 28 October 2025). The Applicant was carrying out its assessment of feedback to inform any design changes / application refinements accordingly.</p> <p>The Applicant also reported that it had received limited feedback from the City of Doncaster and Rotherham Borough Council to date, owing to some resource constraints. The Applicant explained that PPAs had been agreed, but that the councils had yet to procure specialists for most topics. The Applicant also explained that it had received no feedback from Derbyshire County Council and Northeast Derbyshire District Council (potentially owing to only a small part of the access track falling within their administrative boundaries). The Applicant was encouraged by the Inspectorate to seek agreement with these authorities to confirm that they do not wish to comment at pre-application or engage in the examination (specifying any reasons and to confirm that they will not be discharging authorities for any post-DCO consents).</p>	<p>Statutory consultation was held between 16 September – 28 October 2025. 10,315 pieces of feedback were received, which are analysed along with an Applicant Response in Appendix E of this report.</p> <p>RMBC and CDC engaged specialists after the statutory consultation, and meetings with the LPAs and the specialists have been ongoing. The Applicant confirmed that NEDDC did provide feedback to the statutory consultation, which is included in Appendix E of this report.</p> <p>The Applicant confirmed it had received feedback from seven statutory undertakers and that their consultation responses are being considered as part of any redesign assessment as well as the drafting of protective provisions. Discussions had been held with Network Rail in relation to potential crossing of (or buffers required to protect) the nearby railway line. the Applicant has since identified</p>

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
	<p>The Applicant has confirmed that, following the Project Update Meeting, a written response to the Statutory Consultation was received from Northeast Derbyshire District Council.</p> <p>In answer to a previous request from the Inspectorate, the Applicant said it had received feedback from seven statutory undertakers and that their consultation responses are being considered as part of any redesign assessment as well as the drafting of protective provisions. Discussions had been held with Network Rail in relation to potential crossing of (or buffers required to protect) the nearby railway line. The applicant also confirmed there is no Crown Land involved.</p> <p>In answer to a question from the Inspectorate, the Applicant said that no specific feedback had been received at this stage from Historic England, other than through Council submissions in relation to potential historic assets effects. The Applicant later in the meeting clarified they have received a response from Historic England, and it was sent to the wrong inbox, and that further engagement with Historic England and SYAS is underway.</p>	<p>that there is Crown Land and is engaging with the Crown Estate.</p> <p>The Applicant confirmed that the response from Historic England was received and included in Appendix E of this report.</p>
Environmental issues	<p>The Applicant stated it had evaluated glint and glare using ForgeSolar modelling and identified nine road and rail receptors at risk of potential glint and glare effects. The Applicant said they will conduct further analysis to validate and determine the significance of potential effects in those locations. Any significant effects should be reduced through design and mitigation measures (such as planting hedgerows), the applicant added.</p> <p>In answer to questions from the Inspectorate, the Applicant stated that its glint and glare assessments would likely sit in the 'other relevant</p>	<p>The Applicant confirmed during the meeting that glint and glare has been evaluated using ForgeSolar modelling and identified nine road and rail receptors at risk of potential glint and glare effects. The Applicant said they will conduct further analysis to validate and determine the significance of potential effects in those locations. Any significant effects should be reduced through design and mitigation measures (such as planting hedgerows), the applicant added. Further details can be found in Chapter</p>

Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
	<p>environmental topic' chapter, and that intra and inter cumulative effects would be captured in relevant assessments, but that it was still considering options.</p> <p>The Inspectorate advised that, in relation to the Landscape and Visual Assessment, the Applicant submits as many site sections and photos taken at different times of the year as necessary, to show the changes in seasonality as well as ensuring night and daytime perspectives are captured. The Inspectorate referred to recent section 51 advice issued following the acceptance letter of the East Midlands Gateway 2 application.</p> <p>The Inspectorate asked the Applicant to clarify whether it had identified any other DCO developments in the area (asking whether the Helios Renewable Energy Project was near to northern edge of the Order Limits). The Applicant said that it would continue to develop its long and short lists of developments in the area in consultation with the LPAs in view of the Inspectorate's published advice, but that currently no other NSIPs appeared in its zone of influence at this stage and that the Councils had not reported such developments.</p> <p>In respect of the Cable Route Corridor, the Applicant was still seeking flexibility with its cable route options at this stage, with assessment / operating widths shown at statutory consultation at up to 300m, and a working width of 75m. The Inspectorate referred to recent s51 draft document review advice which advised an applicant to justify the degree of flexibility in the cable corridor widths in its DCO. The Applicant explained that the 300m would be refined and finalised at the DCO application stage and they would</p>	<p>7: Landscape and Visual [EN0110020/APP/6.7] of the ES.</p> <p>In relation to the LVIA, the Applicant undertook the assessment and the methodology is detailed in Appendix 7.2 of the ES [EN0110020/APP/6.20].</p> <p>The long list of developments in the area and further details are provided in Chapter 17: Cumulative Effects [EN0110020/APP/6.17] of the ES. For the long list of cumulative developments see ES Volume 3, Figures [EN0110020/APP/6.19], Figure 17.2: Long List of Cumulative Developments.</p> <p>In relation to cable route options, the Order Limits at submission still has optionality, but the cable corridor has been narrowed throughout the project based on environmental assessments.</p> <p>Following a query from the Inspectorate, the Applicant confirmed that Natural England agreed that there is no functionally linked land along the preferred cable corridor. The Applicant also said it had engaged with Natural England on their approach to ALC surveys for the solar array areas / desk-based data to inform the ES assessment.</p>

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
	<p>only submit the width needed for the Project.</p> <p>The Applicant reported that it is undertaking surveys of the preferred cable corridor identified after statutory consultation. It is not proposing to survey reptiles and birds (breeding and wintering birds) owing to temporary impacts and reasonable avoidance measures proposed. Some surveys may be taken out of season too and the applicant was not going to undertake Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) surveys of the cable corridor options. The Inspectorate advised to obtain agreements with relevant statutory parties on these proposed approaches and to include appropriate justification on its approach in the Environmental Assessment, to avoid issues at examination and potential delays in the DCO process.</p> <p>Following a query from the Inspectorate, the Applicant confirmed that Natural England agreed that there is no functionally linked land along the preferred cable corridor. The Applicant also said it had engaged with Natural England on their approach to ALC surveys for the solar array areas / desk-based data to inform the ES assessment. ALC Surveys are being conducted across the solar areas. The Applicant also confirmed that cable route ALC surveys are not proposed due to the temporary nature of works along the cable corridor, which is also an approach consistent with other DCOs. The Applicant also confirmed that all impacts will be minimised during the construction phase through adherence to an Outline Soil Management Plan that will be submitted with the DCO, which will contain mitigation measures.</p>	

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
	<p>The Inspectorate advised that any evidence of agreement on the approach to determining baseline conditions should be provided in the application.</p>	
AOB	<p>The Applicant requested that the date for the submission of draft documents to The Planning Inspectorate for review be amended to reflect a submission in the week commencing 26 January 2026. The Applicant highlighted they are aware of the six-week review period and suggested booking a project update meeting in March 2026.</p> <p>The Inspectorate advised to submit as complete drafts of documents as possible, including the DCO, to enable the Inspectorate to provide more comprehensive advice. The Applicant should also set out in advance any requests for specific advice it is seeking as part of the review process.</p>	<p>The Applicant decided to not submit draft documents to PINS for review.</p>
13 February 2026 advice		
Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker	<p>We note your decision not to provide us with a land and rights negotiation tracker before the submission of the application, which is your choice.</p> <p>While the tracker is not a statutory requirement, the Inspectorate continues to encourage applicants to provide us with the information outlined under the 'primary service features' in the Inspectorate's 2024 Pre-application Prospectus during the pre-application stage.</p> <p>The Land and Rights negotiation tracker is intended to provide a high-level summary of information on the general status of land required for the proposed development and the progress made to date with any voluntary agreements or significant issues arising in respect of potential compulsory acquisition matters. This information is designed to help the interactions between the applicant and</p>	<p>The Applicant agreed with PINS that updates would be issued at the monthly meetings rather than producing a Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker. However, the Applicant noted that the final Application includes a Land and Rights Negotiation Tracker [EN0110020/APP/4.4].</p>

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
	<p>the Inspectorate during the pre-application stage and the production of any s51 advice needed to identify and address any risks. Without this information, the Inspectorate is unlikely to be able to reach an informed view on the preparedness of the application in relation to land rights before submission.</p> <p>It is our experience that unresolved land and rights issues can complicate and extend the duration of post-submission stages and add to the volume / complexity of Examining Authority questions and potential Compulsory Acquisition Hearings (should an application be accepted for examination). These are risks that an applicant needs to consider and accept.</p>	
27 February 2026 advice		
<p>Programme Document Update</p>	<p>The Inspectorate welcomed the applicant's updated information in its Programme Document (February 2026 version), such as the latest activities in respect of engagement, and notes that it continues to meet most of the expected content as set out in paragraph 10 of the government's guidance on the pre-application stage. However, the applicant is referred to the Inspectorate's previous advice on the 13 August 2025, that an outline of the 'risks' should be included in addition to how those risks will be managed. The Inspectorate also conveyed that it would be helpful if the Programme Document included an estimate of the generating capacity of the proposed development.</p> <p>It would also be helpful, for the Inspectorate and others, if the main issues section could include the names of any specific designated sites, protected landscapes, sensitive receptors (such as airfields) and/or</p>	<p>The Applicant added the 'risks' to the Programme Document in the latest version (March 2026) under section 3. In terms of stating generating capacity of the Proposed Development, the Applicant has said this is 'up to 750MW', but not a more specific figure than this.</p> <p>The Applicant created an Issues Tracker, which was kept regularly updated throughout the process. The tracker detailed progress made against the issues identified and any agreements reached with relevant statutory bodies. PINS had sight of the tracker and this fed into the PMIE.</p>

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
	<p>heritage assets that require assessment and/or mitigation (as this helps provide context to the site and local area and the type of issues in discussion with relevant statutory parties).</p>	
Local Authority Engagement	<p>The Inspectorate noted the progress the applicant is making with the relevant local authorities and the discussions held for them to secure technical specialists for certain topics (where there are identified gaps in the Council resources). The applicant confirmed that the Planning Performance Agreements have all been signed, with RMBC and CDC signing theirs in July 2025 but still awaiting the finalisation of procuring their external consultants.</p> <p>The applicant confirmed that North East Derbyshire District Council have now engaged since the last Project Update Meeting in November and engagement is ongoing.</p>	<p>RMBC and CDC engaged specialists after the statutory consultation, and meetings with the LPAs and the specialists have been ongoing. The Applicant continued to engage with RMBC, CDC and NEDDC.</p>
Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AoCM) statement	<p>The Inspectorate advised that it is important to include the views and any relevant supporting material from the local authorities in the AoCM statement, together with the applicant's summary of the elements of consultation which have been carried out compared with the components set out in the Programme Document and the Statement of Community Consultation. With the views of the local authorities and applicant together, the Inspectorate will be able to gain a holistic view on whether "the pre-application programme is on track, and if it is seriously adrift the Planning Inspectorate will advise the applicant about the steps necessary to enable the application to be submitted having fulfilled the statutory requirements" (using the wording at paragraph 25 of the government's guidance on the pre-application stage).</p>	<p>The Applicant included the views and relevant support material from the local authorities in the AoCM statement. The AoCM Report is detailed in Chapter 8 and Appendix H.</p>

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
Impact of AI in Examination	<p>The applicant queried what the guidelines were for using artificial intelligence (AI) in examination for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects for all parties involved in the process.</p> <p>The Planning Inspectorate advised that it has recently issued new guidance on the use of (AI) as part of any appeal, application or examination being dealt with by the Planning Inspectorate and referred the applicant to the latest information in its procedural letters on the subject, such as the Rule 6 letter issued for the Norwich to Tilbury application.</p> <p>The Inspectorate would be continuing to review the use of AI in submissions as technology evolves and would issue updated guidance where necessary.</p> <p>The Inspectorate further advised that liaising with recognised interest groups on how to participate effectively in the examination (should the application be accepted), can help with the overall DCO process. The Inspectorate has a series of published Advice for Members of the Public on its Find a National Infrastructure website, for this purpose. The applicant stated that it was continuing to engage with parties in the local area.</p> <p>The Inspectorate also advised that the applicant declare its use of AI in any form during the application process, for example where such technology is used to review and summarise relevant representations. Where the applicant wishes to use data scraping of the Inspectorate’s website to collate data, the applicant should liaise with the Inspectorate on timing to minimise potential impacts to the website.</p>	<p>The Applicant reviewed and had regard to the guidance on the use of AI. The DCO application includes a brief statement within the covering letter as per PINS guidance.</p> <p>The Applicant confirmed continued engagement with the local community was anticipated.</p>

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
Design Updates	<p>The applicant gave an overview of any design updates.</p> <p>The Inspectorate advised the applicant to ensure that it clearly sets out how the good design criteria in the National Policy Statements have been applied in the application, as well as the evolution of the design, including how designated assets and sensitive receptors have been considered and mitigated (where needed), and how the design encompasses placemaking. Clarity in the design narrative is likely to reduce the number of questions from the Examining Authority during examination.</p> <p>The applicant confirmed it was already aware of the criteria on design and will be submitting a design document to demonstrate how it has satisfied design-related policy requirements and provide important context for the design of the project presented in the final form of the application.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes the advice on good design criteria and reviewed and had regard to the National Policy Statements.</p> <p>The Applicant has submitted a Design Approach Document [EN0110020/APP/5.7] as part of the DCO application.</p>
Targeted Consultation	<p>The applicant outlined that it has identified a few places where it needs to make minor amendments to the project boundary, so targeted consultation on these minor changes will run from 4th March – 3rd April 2026.</p> <p>The Inspectorate advised that the scope of assessment of any additional land outside of the red line boundary presented at scoping would need to be justified and explained in the Environmental Statement. The Inspectorate advised that consultation can help define an appropriate assessment scope.</p>	<p>Between 4 March and 3 April 2026, the Applicant held a Targeted Consultation on specific changes to the Order Limits that were proposed in order to mitigate potential issues. These included changes relating to road safety, cable routing, drainage works and landscaping. These areas are included in the environmental assessments included in the ES. More detail on the Targeted Consultation can be found in Chapter 9 of this report and Appendix F.</p>
Grid Connection	<p>The Inspectorate advised the applicant to set out in the draft DCO and relevant application documents, clear reasoning for the extent of flexibility / optionality</p>	<p>The Applicant continued to progress conversations with National Grid about their new substation at Long Lane.</p>

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
	<p>the applicant is seeking in relation to the grid connection corridor and the point of connection. The applicant should also provide an updated position on the deliverability / progress of the planned National Grid 'Long Lane' Substation, as an Examining Authority is likely to ask questions and / or seek a Statement of Common Ground if there is uncertainty. The applicant said that the cable route is reflected in the draft Order Limits and was progressing discussions with National Grid on the siting and consenting route for the new Substation.</p>	
<p>Land and Rights Update</p>	<p>The Inspectorate advised to progress draft protected provisions with relevant statutory undertakers and where agreements can be reached as soon as possible before examination, to avoid such risks in the DCO process.</p> <p>The applicant pointed out that the lands and rights tracker is one of the last deliverables before submission and that the order limits would need to be fixed along with the Book of reference and land plans. The applicant will therefore submit a land right and negotiation tracker at submission date.</p> <p>The Inspectorate advised the applicant that the intention for the land and rights tracker being asked at pre-application is to give an indication as to what is expected during examination and to ensure efficient use of the examination period. The applicant instead gave an in-meeting update, which included a summary on where the land and rights negotiations were. Owing to the advanced stage of the pre-application process, the impending submission of the application and other circumstances, it was agreed in these</p>	<p>The Applicant has engaged with statutory undertakers regarding the Proposed Development to ascertain the need for protective provisions where necessary. Where appropriate, the Applicant shared draft protective provisions with statutory undertakers.</p> <p>The Applicant agreed to submit a Lands and Rights Negotiation Tracker in the Application [EN0110020/APP/4.4].</p>

CONSULTATION REPORT

Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
	<p>circumstances that the applicant could provide updates during PUM meetings instead of submitting the pre-application tracker at pre-application.</p> <p>The Inspectorate suggested the applicant reviews the Land and Rights tracker for Keadby Next Generation Power Station Project as an example, prior to DCO submission.</p>	
AOB	<p>The Inspectorate advised that it can provide the applicant with the service level agreement (SLA) for hearing venues and the Inspectorate's requirements and can provide examples of other venues used by projects of a similar size.</p>	<p>The Applicant noted this advice.</p>
Issues Tracker	<p>[Post-meeting advice] The Inspectorate welcomed receipt of the applicant's Issues Tracker and the information provided. The Inspectorate advises the applicant on the following.</p> <p>General points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst the tracker appears to cover the type of subjects relevant to the project and solar developments, it is brief in most areas and would benefit from including more detail about the outstanding matters with relevant statutory consultees to aid understanding. • There appear to be topics which the applicant seems content to leave to examination to resolve, some of which include matters relevant to assessment methodologies. It is critical that agreement is reached on such matters before the submission of the application to ensure an efficient examination and to reduce any risks. <p>Biodiversity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There appears to be no reference to any views received from the host local planning 	<p>The Applicant notes the feedback provided on the Issues Tracker.</p> <p>The Applicant has continued to progress discussions on topic-specific issues with the relevant stakeholders. A list of ongoing engagement meetings can be found in Chapter 9 of this report.</p>

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
	<p>authorities on biodiversity matters. These should be added to the Issues Tracker.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tracker notes that surveys for protected species could be conducted outside of guideline periods. Justification for taking a different approach, citing any relevant precedents, should be included. <p>Agricultural Land</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is noted that there is disagreement in respect of the soil survey sampling methodology and extent of surveying with Natural England. The applicant should do all it can to resolve this issue before submission of the application. <p>Cultural Heritage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is noted there is disagreement with Historic England in respect of survey methodology. The applicant should do all it can to resolve this issue before the submission of the application. <p>Glint and Glare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is reference to the need to provide design solutions and mitigation for highway receptors and Netherthorpe Airfield. It is essential that the applicant has considered this and is confident that there are robust options for mitigation available before submission of the application. 	
23 March 2026 advice		
Local Authority Engagement and Planning Performance Agreement (PPA)	The Inspectorate advised that the remaining Planning Performance Agreements (PPA) should be agreed as soon as possible ahead of acceptance. The Applicant confirmed that PPAs were entered into from July 2025 with the following LPAs –	PPAs have been set up with RMBC, CDC and NEDDC to progress topic-specific meetings. These meetings are ongoing.

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council • City of Doncaster Council <p>Delays in progressing topic-specific meetings has arisen due to the LPAs' internal procurement processes, which have slowed the procurement of external consultants. These delays are therefore accountable to the LPAs rather than to the Applicant's PPA process.</p> <p>The Applicant also confirmed that a PPA was signed and entered into with North East Derbyshire District Council at a later date. It can be confirmed that engagement with this LPA is ongoing and topic meetings have been held. The movement of these topic meetings has been due to the District Council's use of internal resource.</p> <p>Relevant local authorities should be aware of the Development Consent Order process and have the requisite resources in place (including any technical consultants) to provide consultation feedback and evidence at examination (such as Local Impact Reports), as well as carrying out any discharging duties should the proposed development receive consent.</p> <p>Post Meeting Note</p> <p>The Applicant advises that, despite multiple efforts to initiate engagement with Derbyshire County Council since the launch of the project in Autumn 2024, the Council only responded on 31/03/2026 confirming its interest in being involved in the project.</p> <p>As a result, a PPA has not yet been established with the Council. The Applicant is currently awaiting</p>	

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
	confirmation of the Council's availability so that initial meetings can be arranged.	
Biodiversity	In answer to questions from the Inspectorate, the applicant confirmed there is a small number of solar panels and a mitigation area proposed within the Brampton Common Local Wildlife Site (LWS). The Inspectorate advised that the Environmental Statement should provide clear reasons for any infrastructure placed in designated areas, having considered alternative sites and applied the mitigation hierarchy.	The ES includes information about Brampton Common LWS and Chapter 6: Biodiversity and Nature Conservation [EN0110020/APP/6.6] includes detail about the surveys undertaken and mitigation put in place.
Agricultural Land Classification	<p>The applicant restated that it does not intend to carry out Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) surveys for the cable route corridor owing to the temporary effects of laying underground cables, with soils controlled through a Soils Management Plan. The likely grade of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) Land in the cable route corridor is to be informed by desk-based mapping.</p> <p>The Inspectorate further advised the applicant to seek agreement with Natural England on its approach before acceptance (or outline areas of fundamental disagreement). The Inspectorate advised that a worst case scenario would need to be assessed where any assumptions are made, supported by appropriate evidence. Where restoration is proposed, the baseline environment must be accurately described to ensure that restoration can be achieved to an appropriate condition.</p> <p>Whilst impacts to soil quality and land use are distinctly different, one may relate to the other and it is important these interactions and distinctions are set out clearly in the ES, while clearly setting</p>	<p>In relation to cable route options, the RLB at submission still has optionality, but the cable corridor has been narrowed throughout the project based on environmental assessments.</p> <p>Following a query from the Inspectorate, the Applicant confirmed that Natural England agreed that there is no functionally linked land along the preferred cable corridor. The Applicant also said it had engaged with Natural England on their approach to ALC surveys for the solar array areas / desk-based data to inform the ES assessment.</p>

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
	<p>out how it proposes to reinstate / use the land and manage soil quality, as separate issues, within the Environmental Statement. Any vagueness needs to be reduced with clear application of the mitigation hierarchy, to avoid the matter becoming protracted between parties at examination and to reduce the number of Examining Authority questions.</p>	
Heritage	<p>In respect of a newly designated Roman Villa near the site, and having received comments from a Parish Council in the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone statement that this should have necessitated an updated heritage assessment and the retaking of statutory consultation, the Inspectorate advised the applicant to review the East Park Energy consultation report in respect of that applicant's approach to consultation in respect of discovered below ground archaeology during that pre-application. The Applicant confirmed that the Villa's status is accurately reflected within the final Environmental Statement assessment.</p>	<p>The Applicant confirmed that the Villa's status is accurately reflected within the final Environmental Statement assessment. Further detail can be found in Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN0110020/APP/6.8] of the ES.</p>
Glint and Glare	<p>In answer to questions from the Inspectorate, the applicant stated that it was using the Forge Solar modelling software to assess glint and glare effects on sensitive receptors (residential, road, rail and aviation) and would be applying anti-reflecting coating to remove effects on the flight paths of the nearby Netherthorpe Airfield.</p>	<p>In answer to questions from the Inspectorate, the applicant stated that it was using the Forge Solar modelling software to assess glint and glare effects on sensitive receptors.</p>
Flood risk	<p>The Inspectorate advised the applicant to progress its consultation with the Environment Agency on its flood risk modelling, assessment and proposed mitigation (for example the potential flood risk increase from the proposed development in Conisbrough) prior to submission.</p>	<p>The Applicant progressed its consultation with the EA on flood risk.</p>

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
Land and Rights	<p>In respect of crossing land owned by Network Rail, National Highways and the Canal & River Trust, the Inspectorate advised the applicant to progress, as far as feasibly possible, negotiations on protected provisions (and with any other identified statutory undertakers) prior to submission. The applicant should expect Statements of Common Ground to be requested before or early in examination (should the application be accepted). The applicant acknowledged this, stating that three standard forms of protective provisions were being advanced with certain statutory undertakers, with the drafting of bespoke provisions for six others underway.</p>	<p>The Applicant has discussed with the relevant statutory undertakers their interface with the Proposed Development and on the protective provisions which are included in Schedule 11 to the Draft DCO [EN0110020/APP/3.1].</p>
AOB	<p>The Inspectorate advised that size of venues required for hearing will depend on various factors (such as the number of relevant representations received), but the proposed 200-seat capacity should be suitable for this proposed development.</p> <p>In respect of the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone statement and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's view that a s42 consultee had been missed, the Inspectorate advised the applicant to clearly set out how it has met its statutory consultation duties in the Consultation Report on this (and other) matters.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes the advice on the examination venue.</p> <p>The Applicant has described in this Consultation Report how the statutory consultation duties were met.</p>
<p>Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AoCM) statement feedback, 24 March 2026</p>		
Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AoCM)	<p>The Inspectorate received the applicant's AoCM statement on 9 March 2026, almost three-months before the intended submission date for the application.</p> <p>The AoCM statement has been prepared and submitted having had regard to the government's statutory guidance on the pre-application stage, as well as the Inspectorate's 2024 Pre-</p>	<p>The Applicant drafted the AoCM Report in line with the guidance, as described in Chapter 8 and Appendix H.</p> <p>The Applicant has described in this Consultation Report, and the above chapter and appendix, how the statutory consultation duties were met and considered</p>

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
	<p>application Prospectus. The Inspectorate considers overall that it clearly sets out the elements of consultation which have been carried out by the applicant compared with the components set out in the Programme Document and the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC), as well as describing how the applicant has reviewed and taken account of responses received during the statutory consultation stage.</p> <p>Three local authorities have provided their views on the consultation carried out at Appendix E. Doncaster Council and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council both consider that the information in the AoCM provides “comprehensive detail” on how the applicant has approached consultation under sections 42, 47 and 48 of the Planning Act 2008 and the level of engagement undertaken during the preparation of the SoCC. Based on the information presented, both Councils respectively state that they are satisfied that the statutory requirements for consultation have been met and that the Councils were appropriately identified and consulted as host authorities (though reserve their right to provide Adequacy of Consultation responses if the application is submitted for acceptance). Similarly, Northeast Derbyshire District Council considers that the consultation carried out was adequate.</p> <p>However, the Inspectorate notes the various concerns outlined in these responses about the “overall quality and effectiveness” of the consultation to date. For example, Doncaster Council has raised concerns about the regard the applicant has had to feedback in relation to the ‘Whitestone 1’ site following changes made to the draft masterplan.</p>	<p>the other applications referenced.</p>

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
	<p>The Council asserts that it “does not consider that these minor changes meaningfully address the detailed feedback provided in the statutory consultation response” and that subsequent meetings held between the applicant and council “have not sought to address that feedback in any substantive way”.</p> <p>Appended to Doncaster Council’s response is a letter from Conisbrough Parks Parish Council expressing a number of significant concerns about the community consultation. These concerns include, for example, the Parish Council’s view that the consultation material was not adequate or accessible enough, with certain appendices missing, and that there was a lack of suitable venues. The Parish Council also asserts that there was “outdated and incomplete information”, that the heritage assessment was “fundamentally flawed” since Historic England designated a Roman Villa at Conisbrough Parks as a Scheduled Monument after the heritage assessment was completed, and consequently, that the assessment “fails to account for this site” which should have necessitated a full round of further consultation. Overall, the Parish Council considers that the statutory requirements under section 47 of the Planning Act 2008 have not been met in respect of the applicant’s community consultation.</p> <p>Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council similarly set out concerns raised by Parish Councils, local residents and elected Ward Members, reporting (for example) that the “consultation process lacked transparency, clarity and genuine community engagement”, that consultation material included</p>	

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
	<p>incorrect Freepost addresses (“raising concerns about whether responses were received”) and “not all directly affected residents received communication about consultation events”, and that there was a lack of information in regard to infrastructure locations and conversely, too much technical documentation for local communities to digest. The Council has also stated that no section 42 notice was served on a joint legal owner of Springvale Farm “despite the owner’s clear status as a statutory consultee”.</p> <p>The Inspectorate advises the applicant to clearly demonstrate in its Consultation Report, how it has complied with the relevant statutory requirements for consultation under Chapter 2 of Part 5 of the Planning Act 2008, including how it notified prescribed persons and had regard to consultation responses. The applicant should seek to clearly address, as far as reasonably practicable, any relevant concerns raised by the parish councils and others about the extent of consultation material provided (amongst the other allegations about the effectiveness of the consultation) in view of the Gunning Principles.</p> <p>The Inspectorate’s published s55 checklists for Gatwick Airport and Botley West Solar address certain concerns raised by parties about alleged breaches to the Gunning Principles in those cases and the Inspectorate’s response. The applicant may also wish to review the Consultation Report and relevant material provided by the applicant for East Park Energy, in respect of the consultation undertaken by that applicant during the discovery and subsequent designation of a Roman site during the pre-application stage,</p>	

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
	<p>should it share any similarity to the circumstances in Whitestone. The applicant should consider, in view of the responses received to its AoCM statement, as to whether any further consultation and / or assessment work is needed prior to submitting its application.</p>	
27 April 2026 advice		
Local Authority Engagement Update	<p>The Inspectorate advised that any issues arising from local authority engagement and any impacts on the applicant's programme of pre-application engagement activities and consultation, should be suitably captured and explained in the consultation report.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes this and confirms this Consultation Report covers engagement with LPAs.</p>
Targeted Consultation Update	<p>The Inspectorate advised the applicant to ensure that the consultation report clearly distinguishes between the non-statutory, statutory consultation and targeted consultation stages, and provides the reasons for the different rounds of consultation.</p>	<p>The Applicant confirms that this Consultation Report ensures there are separate and clearly distinct sections for the non-statutory, statutory and targeted consultation stages.</p>
Land and Rights Update	<p>In respect of Crown consent, the Inspectorate advised that this should be progressed and agreed as feasibly possible and at the earliest opportunity, to prevent the issue impacting the examination and decision-making stages.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes this and has continued to progress conversations in relation to Crown consent.</p>
Protective Provisions Update	<p>The Inspectorate advised the applicant to progress discussions on draft protected provisions (PPs) as far as feasibly practicable prior to the potential examination, as statements of common ground (SoCG) between the applicant and statutory undertakers are often requested early in the examination stage by Examining Authorities on these matters.</p> <p>[post-meeting advice]: applicants are often asked to provide updates to the schedule of progress regarding any outstanding matters, objections, and agreements in relation to land rights and the schedule of progress regarding PPs with statutory undertakers,</p>	<p>The Applicant notes this advice and has continued to progress discussions on draft PPs.</p>

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
	<p>ensuring that any changes to the Book of Reference are, where necessary, carried through to the Statement of Reasons. Examining Authorities will want to receive confirmation from the applicant and statutory undertakers that discussions on standard or bespoke provisions are being progressed and are capable of being agreed within the statutory examination period, that the protections are adequate for specific assets and/or protecting the integrity of affected works, outlining any remaining areas of dispute and pathways to resolution as well as where reliance is being made on similar PPs within made DCOs for Solar NSIPs (or where different approaches or disapplication are needed and the reasons for these).</p> <p>The applicant may wish to review the Examining Authorities' First Written Questions issued during the examinations for 'One Earth Solar Farm' (Table 2: Examining authority's general questions arising from the draft Development Consent Order (DCO)), 'Peartree Hill Solar Farm' (Table 2: Examining authority's general questions arising from the draft Development Consent Order (DCO)), and 'Botley West Solar Farm' (Botley West Solar Farm - Examining Authority's First Written Questions), which provide examples of the type of questions asked in respect of PPs.</p>	
Submission Process Discussion	<p>The Inspectorate advised that later this week a pre-submission letter will be sent to the applicant containing a link to the DCO submission portal. The Inspectorate advised that documents can begin to be uploaded immediately, and not to wait until near submission to begin uploading.</p> <p>The Inspectorate advised that an Applications, Prescribed Forms and Procedures 2009 (APFP) regulation</p>	The Applicant notes this.

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Topic	PINS advice	Applicant response
	<p>can be assigned to a document when uploaded. When uploading a bundle of documents (maximum total file size of 1GB), currently only a single APFP regulation can be assigned to that bundle.</p> <p>A secure SharePoint site will be created ready for the applicant to use – as a last resort – in case an unresolvable issue occurs with the DCO submission portal.</p> <p>The Inspectorate advised that occasionally, due to layering issues and file sizes and the impact this has on opening and reviewing multiple maps and plans at the same time, the Inspectorate has had to request new versions of these documents following acceptance. The applicant may wish to review the s51 advice issued by the Inspectorate following the acceptance of the Fosse Green Solar Farm application (s51 advice following acceptance letter) on these matters.</p>	

4 EIA SCOPING

- 4.1.1 On 23 April 2025, the Applicant submitted an EIA Scoping Report and a request for a Scoping Opinion to the Planning Inspectorate (on behalf of the Secretary of State) under the provisions of the EIA Regulations. This described the scope and methodology for the technical studies proposed to provide an assessment of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development and, where necessary, described suitable mitigation measures. It also described topics and sub-topics proposed to be scoped out of the EIA process, and the justification for doing so. The EIA Scoping Report was developed following consultation with a number of statutory consultees. Meetings that took place as part of this process are set out in more detail in the relevant topic chapters of the **Environmental Statement, Volume 2, Chapters 5-17 [EN110020/APP/6.5-6.18]**.
- 4.1.2 Following consultation with statutory bodies, the Planning Inspectorate (on behalf of the Secretary of State) adopted a Scoping Opinion (see **ES, Volume 3, Appendix 6.23: Scoping Opinion [EN110020/APP/6.20]**) on 3 June 2025. The Environmental Statement is based on the Scoping Opinion. The Scoping Opinion can be found online at <https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/EN0110020/project-updates>.
- 4.1.3 Key issues raised in the Scoping Opinion and the Applicant's response are set out in the **ES, Volume 3, Appendix 6.23: Scoping Opinion [EN110020/APP/6.20]**. All issues have been considered during the EIA process.
- 4.1.4 Following the adoption of the Scoping Opinion, consultation was undertaken with relevant statutory consultees in the preparation of the Draft ES (available on the website at <https://whitestonesolarfarm.co.uk/document-library/>) and has also been considered in the preparation of the ES (including where required by the Scoping Opinion). (including where required by the Scoping Opinion). (including where required by the Scoping Opinion). (including where required by the Scoping Opinion).
- 4.1.5 The Applicant additionally reviewed the list of consultees contacted by the Planning Inspectorate as part of its consultation on its Scoping Opinion to ensure that all organisations contacted by the Planning Inspectorate were included in subsequent consultation activity. All consultees included in Appendix 1 and 2 of the Scoping Opinion were consulted as part of Statutory Consultation.
- 4.1.6 The Applicant was not notified of any additional consultation bodies under Regulation 11(1)(c) of the EIA Regulations.

5 DEVELOPMENT OF THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

5.1 Overview

5.1.1 As required by section 47(1) of the PA 2008, the Applicant prepared a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) setting out how it proposed to consult people living in the vicinity of the Proposed Development. In accordance with section 47(2) of the PA 2008, the Applicant consulted each local authority within section 43(1) of the PA 2008 (i.e. the host authorities) on the contents of the draft SoCC. The Applicant then updated the SoCC in response to feedback from the local authorities and made available for inspection and published the SoCC in accordance with section 47(6) of the PA 2008.

5.2 Approach to community consultation

5.2.1 In preparing the draft SoCC, the Applicant's approach was informed by best practice, guidance from the Planning Inspectorate, Regulation 12 of the EIA Regulations, engagement with the host authorities and feedback from the non-statutory consultation.

5.2.2 The Applicant's approach to pre-application statutory consultation was designed to ensure not just that the consultation would meet legal requirements, guidance and best practice for applications for development consent under the PA 2008, but that anyone with an interest in the Proposed Development had the opportunity to learn more about the proposals and provide their feedback. To ensure the consultation was accessible, the Applicant included the following:

- Providing several mechanisms by which individuals could be notified directly: the Keep Informed email list; by contacting parish councils and other elected representatives directly; the list of community groups, which includes gateway organisations for hard-to-reach individuals in addition to the direct-mail leaflet to addresses within the consultation zone; press releases and advertisements on social media.
- Developing multiple materials for individuals to learn more about the proposals for the Proposed Development using non-technical language in multiple formats.
- Providing multiple methods for interested parties to provide their written feedback.
- Offering to provide materials in alternative formats upon request, including large print, etc.
- Hosting events at venues across the project location, selected for their size and accessibility, to be roughly 15 minutes from any property in the area
- Hosting events at different times of the day and on different days of the week, including a Saturday, to accommodate various work/life schedules.

5.3 Development of the SoCC

- 5.3.1 The Applicant provided the opportunity for two rounds of consultation on the draft SoCC with the host authorities. The first round was considered informal in order to provide initial views ahead of the formal consultation required by section 47(2) of the PA 2008.
- 5.3.2 The Applicant contacted the host authorities to offer a meeting on the draft SoCC. It was agreed that the local authorities would have until 11 July 2025 to review the draft document in advance of the formal 28-day consultation period. The covering email is included in **Appendix B1.1**, and the draft SoCC for informal review is included in **Appendix B1.2**. The Applicant met with RMBC on 25 June 2025 and with CDC on 4 July 2025.
- 5.3.3 Their informal feedback is provided as a summary in **Table 5.1** and in full in **Appendix B1.3**. NEDDC responded to say that they were unable to attend a meeting, and DCC did not respond.

Table 5.1: Informal feedback on the draft SoCC

Stakeholder	Informal feedback on draft SoCC	Applicant response
CDC	<p>Moving the Ravenfield event to the evening to be at a different time of day to the Conisbrough event.</p> <p>Organising an update for newly elected members at CDC.</p> <p>Adding Firsby Residents Association to the list of community groups.</p>	<p>The Applicant moved the Ravenfield event to the evening to be at a different time of day to the Conisbrough event.</p> <p>The Applicant organised a briefing meeting for newly elected members at CDC.</p> <p>The Applicant ensured that Firsby Residents Association was added to the list of community groups and invited them to the parish council briefing webinar.</p>
RMBC	Correcting the list of parish councils to include Dinnington Town Council rather than “Dinnington Parish Council”.	The Applicant corrected the list of parish councils to read Dinnington Town Council.
NEDDC	No response	Noted
DDC	No response	Noted

5.4 Formal consultation on the draft SoCC

- 5.4.1 The Applicant formally consulted the host authorities on the draft SoCC from 24 July to 22 August 2025, in accordance with section 47(2) of the PA 2008.
- 5.4.2 The Applicant’s covering email is included at **Appendix B2.1**: Emails inviting host authority feedback on the draft SoCC. A copy of the draft SoCC for formal review issued to the host authorities is included at **Appendix B2.2**.
- 5.4.3 The Applicant had regard to the responses from the host authorities as required by section 47(5) of PA 2008 and then finalised the SoCC for publication.
- 5.4.4 Three of the host authorities responded, while Derbyshire County Council did not respond. The feedback received to the formal consultation and how the Applicant had regard to that feedback in preparing the final version of the SoCC is provided in **Table 5.2** and **Appendix B2.3**.
- 5.4.5 The host authorities had no further comments to make on the SoCC after having provided feedback during the informal review period

Table 5.2: Formal feedback on draft SoCC

Stakeholder	Feedback on draft SoCC	Applicant response
CDC	No further comments	Noted
RMBC	No further comments	Noted
NEDDC	Add Eckington Parish Council to the “Keep Informed” list	Eckington Parish Council is a relevant parish council and will be notified as required.
DCC	No response	Noted

5.5 Publication of the SoCC

- 5.5.1 In accordance with Section 47(6) of the PA 2008, on 10 September the SoCC was published on the Applicant’s dedicated project website where it was available to download free of charge. It was also available in printed copy, or on USB, by request (though the Applicant did not receive any such request).
- 5.5.2 In accordance with Section 47(6) of the PA 2008, on 11 September the applicant published a notice in a newspaper circulated in the vicinity of the land that explained where the SoCC could be inspected. These publications were chosen as they have the highest average circulation figure of local newspapers with a distribution area covering areas of Whitestone 1, Whitestone 2 and Whitestone 3. **Table 5.3** shows the dates and publications the notice was published in.
- 5.5.3 A copy of this notice as published, which confirms the name of the publication and the date it was published, is provided in **Appendix C3.1-3.9**.

Table 5.3: Publication of s47 notices with SoCC availability

Date	Publication
11 Sept 2025	Derbyshire Times, Doncaster Free Press, Rotherham Advertiser
16 Sept 2025	London Gazette, The Guardian
18 Sept 2025	Derbyshire Times, Doncaster Free Press, Rotherham Advertiser

- 5.5.4 The SoCC was published on 11 September 2025 (see **Appendix B3**) and made available for inspection by the public free of charge in accordance with section 47(6) of the PA 2008 on the Whitestone Solar Farm website (<https://whitstonesolarfarm.co.uk/document-library/>) and at the public information events in the locations listed in **Table 5.4**.

Table 5.4: Attendance at public information events during the statutory consultation

Date and time	Location	Public Attendance
2 October 10am-2pm	Thurcroft Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall, S66 9DD	64
3 October 1pm-5pm	Todwick Village Hall, S26 1HJ	43
4 October 10am-3pm	Conisbrough Ivanhoe Centre, DN12 3JX	157
7 October 3pm-7pm	Harthill Village Hall, S26 7YL	108
8 October 3pm-7pm	Ravenfield Parish Hall, S65 4PT	108
13 October 2-6pm	Treeton Village Centre, S60 5QT	82
14 October 3-7pm	Ulley Village Hall, S26 3YD	74
15 October 12pm-4pm	Whiston Village Hall, S60 4HX	82
Total		718

- 5.5.5 The Applicant subsequently carried out local community consultation in accordance with the SoCC. The Applicant has listed the requirements of the SoCC, and how it has carried out the consultation in accordance with each requirement in **Appendix F**. Details of activity carried out as part of the consultation can be found in Chapter 6 of this Report.

6 STATUTORY CONSULTATION

6.1 Overview

- 6.1.1 The Applicant conducted a period of statutory consultation on the Proposed Development from 16 September to 28 October 2025.
- 6.1.2 The purpose of consultation was to seek the views of statutory consultees and members of the community on the updated proposals of the Proposed Development.
- 6.1.3 The Applicant conducted consultation in accordance with the requirements of s42, s47 and s48 of the PA 2008 and Regulation 13 of the EIA Regulations 2017 [REF-1] in parallel. This meant that all materials made available for consultation under s47 and s48 of the PA 2008 were available to consultees under s42 of the PA 2008 and Regulation 13 of the EIA Regulations 2017 [REF-1].

6.2 Consultation under s42 of the PA 2008

- 6.2.1 Section 42 of the PA 2008 requires the Applicant to consult with the prescribed consultees under s42(1)(a), relevant local authorities under s42(1)(b), and PILs under s42(1)(d). Consultation was not undertaken with the Greater London Authority under s42(1)(c) given that the Proposed Development is outside of that authority's administrative area.

Identification of consultees under s42(1)(a)

- 6.2.2 Prescribed consultees under s42(1)(a) are defined in Schedule 1 of the APFP Regulations [REF-2], which sets out the circumstances in which there is a requirement to consult or notify a specific party.
- 6.2.3 **Appendix C1.1** of this Report sets out each consultee prescribed in Schedule 1 of the APFP Regulations [REF-2], whether that consultee was included in the consultation, and a justification for that inclusion or exclusion, where relevant – for example, consultation was not undertaken with the Marine Management Organisation given the Proposed Development is not likely to affect the marine environment.
- 6.2.4 When identifying relevant s42(1)(a) prescribed consultees, the Applicant had regard to the Planning Inspectorate's Advice on EIA Notification and Consultation [REF-6].
- 6.2.5 To identify the host and neighbouring parish councils, the Applicant applied the Order Limits that were updated following non-statutory consultation to the administrative boundaries and identified 21 host and 25 neighbouring parishes, or a total of 46 relevant parish councils. This is a larger list of parish councils than was included in the non-statutory consultation described in Chapter 2 due to the addition of Cable Corridors, access roads, and other changes to the Order Limits. The relevant parish councils are shown in **Figure 6.1** and listed in **Table 6.1**. Please note that there are not neighbouring parish councils on the west and north of the Proposed Development, as the area gets closer to the metropolitan areas of Sheffield, Conisbrough and Rotherham.

CONSULTATION REPORT

6.2.6 The Applicant consulted with all parties identified under s42(1)(a) of the PA 2008 at that time. Sample letters are included in **Appendix C1.2**.

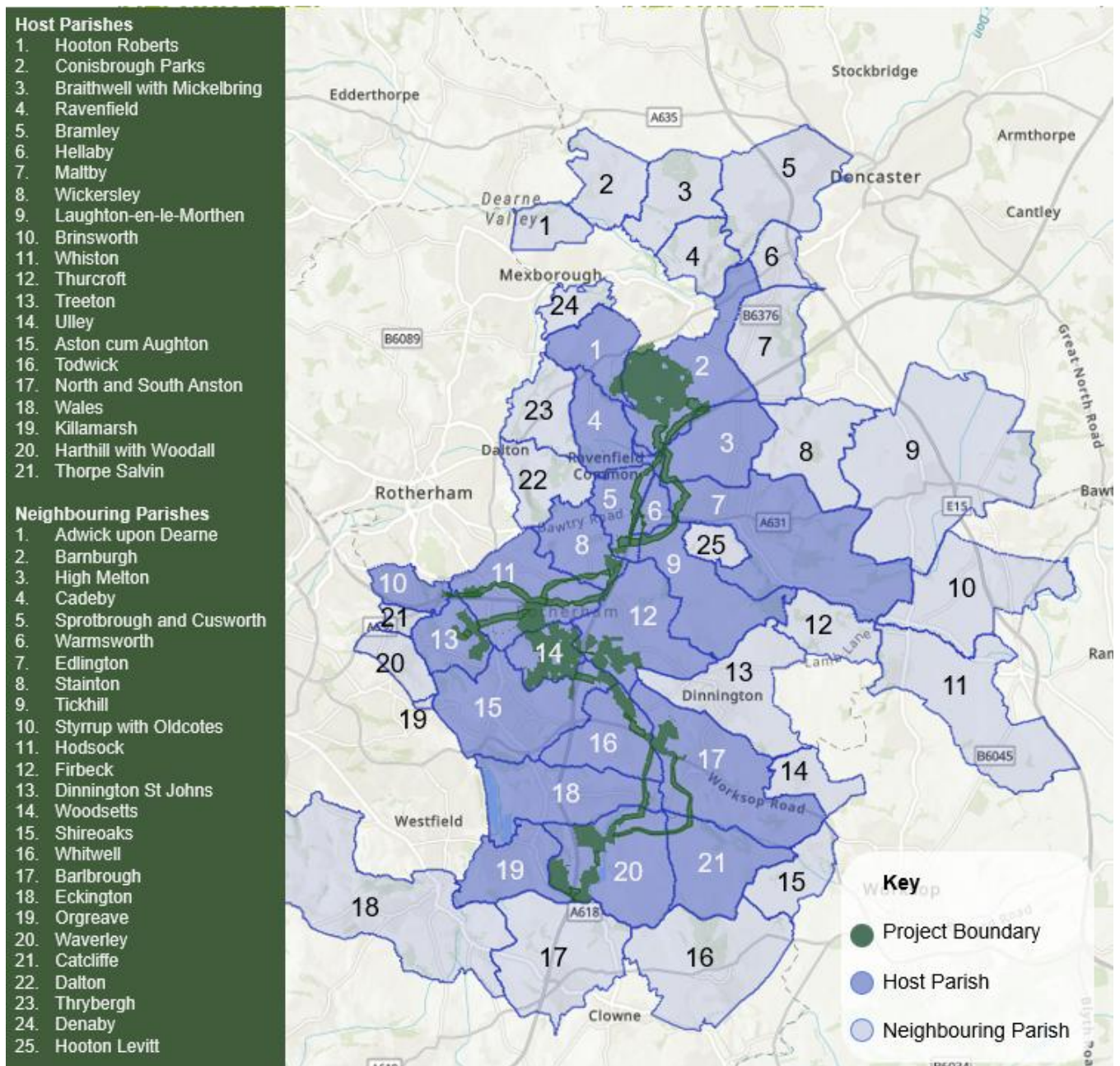


Figure 6.1: Relevant parish councils for the purposes of consultation under s42(1)(a)

Table 6.1: Relevant Parish Councils for consultation under s42(1)(a)

Parish council	Host or neighbouring
Anston Parish Council	Host
Aston cum Aughton Parish Council	Host
Braithwell with Micklebring Parish Council	Host
Bramley Parish Council	Host
Brinsworth Parish Council	Host
Conisbrough Parks Parish Council	Host
Harthill with Woodall Parish Council	Host
Hellaby Parish Council	Host
Hooton Roberts Parish Meeting	Host
Killamarsh Parish Council	Host
Laughton-en-le-Morthen Parish Council	Host
Maltby Town Council	Host
Ravenfield Parish Council	Host
Thorpe Salvin Parish Council	Host
Thurcroft Parish Council	Host
Todwick Parish Council	Host
Treeton Parish Council	Host
Ulley Parish Council	Host
Wales Parish Council	Host
Whiston Parish Council	Host
Wickersley Parish Council	Host
Adwick upon Dearne Parish Council	Neighbouring
Barlborough Parish Council	Neighbouring
Barnburgh and Harlington Parish Council	Neighbouring
Cadeby Parish Council	Neighbouring
Catcliffe Parish Council	Neighbouring
Dalton Parish Council	Neighbouring
Dinnington St Johns Town Council	Neighbouring
Eckington Parish Council	Neighbouring
Edlington Town Council	Neighbouring
Firbeck Parish Council	Neighbouring
High Melton Parish Council	Neighbouring
Hodsock Parish Council	Neighbouring
Hooton Levitt Parish Council	Neighbouring
Old Denaby Parish Council	Neighbouring
Orgreave Parish Council	Neighbouring
Shireoaks Parish Council	Neighbouring
Sprotbrough and Cusworth Parish Council	Neighbouring
Stainton Parish Council	Neighbouring
Styrrup with Oldcotes Parish Council	Neighbouring
Thrybergh Parish Council	Neighbouring
Tickhill Town Council	Neighbouring
Waverley Community Council	Neighbouring
Warmsworth Parish Council	Neighbouring
Whitwell Parish Council	Neighbouring
Woodsetts Parish Council	Neighbouring

Identification of consultees under s42(1)(b)

6.2.7 S42(1)(b) of the PA2008 requires the Applicant to consult with the local authorities identified in s43 of the PA 2008, which sets out four categories of authority:

- A is a neighbouring local authority (s43(2)) that shares a boundary with a unitary council or lower-tier district 'B' council within whose area development is situated
- B is either a unitary council or a lower-tier district council in which the development is situated – a host local authority
- C is an upper-tier county council in which the development is situated – a host local authority
- D is either a unitary council or an upper tier county council which shares a boundary with a host 'C' authority – a neighbouring local authority (s43(2A))

6.2.8 Details of the identification of relevant local authorities, including whether they are an A, B, C or D authority, and the criteria for their identification, are included in **Table 6.2** and shown in **Figures 6.2** and **6.3**.

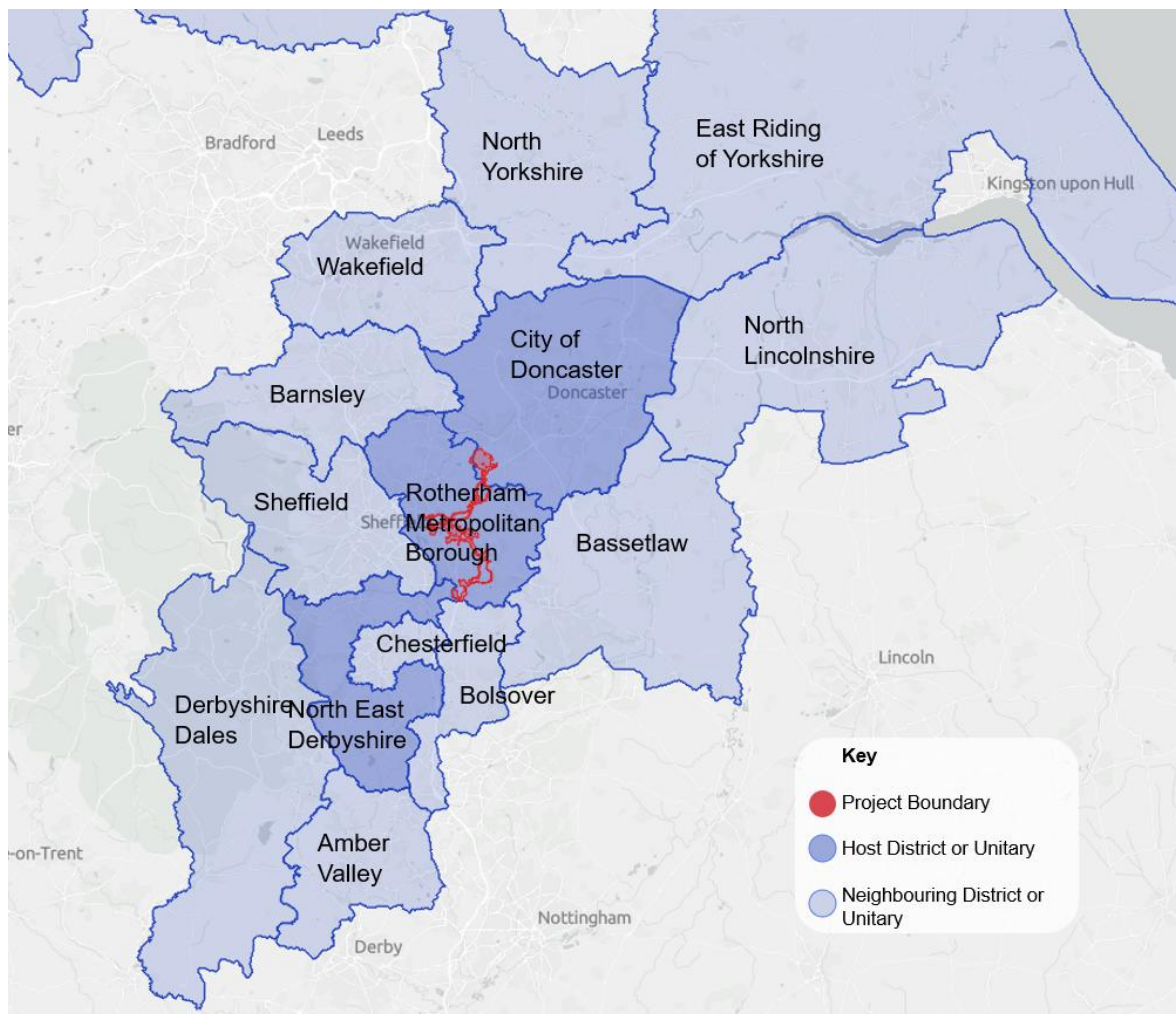


Figure 6.2: Relevant A and B authorities for the purposes of consultation under s42(1)(b)

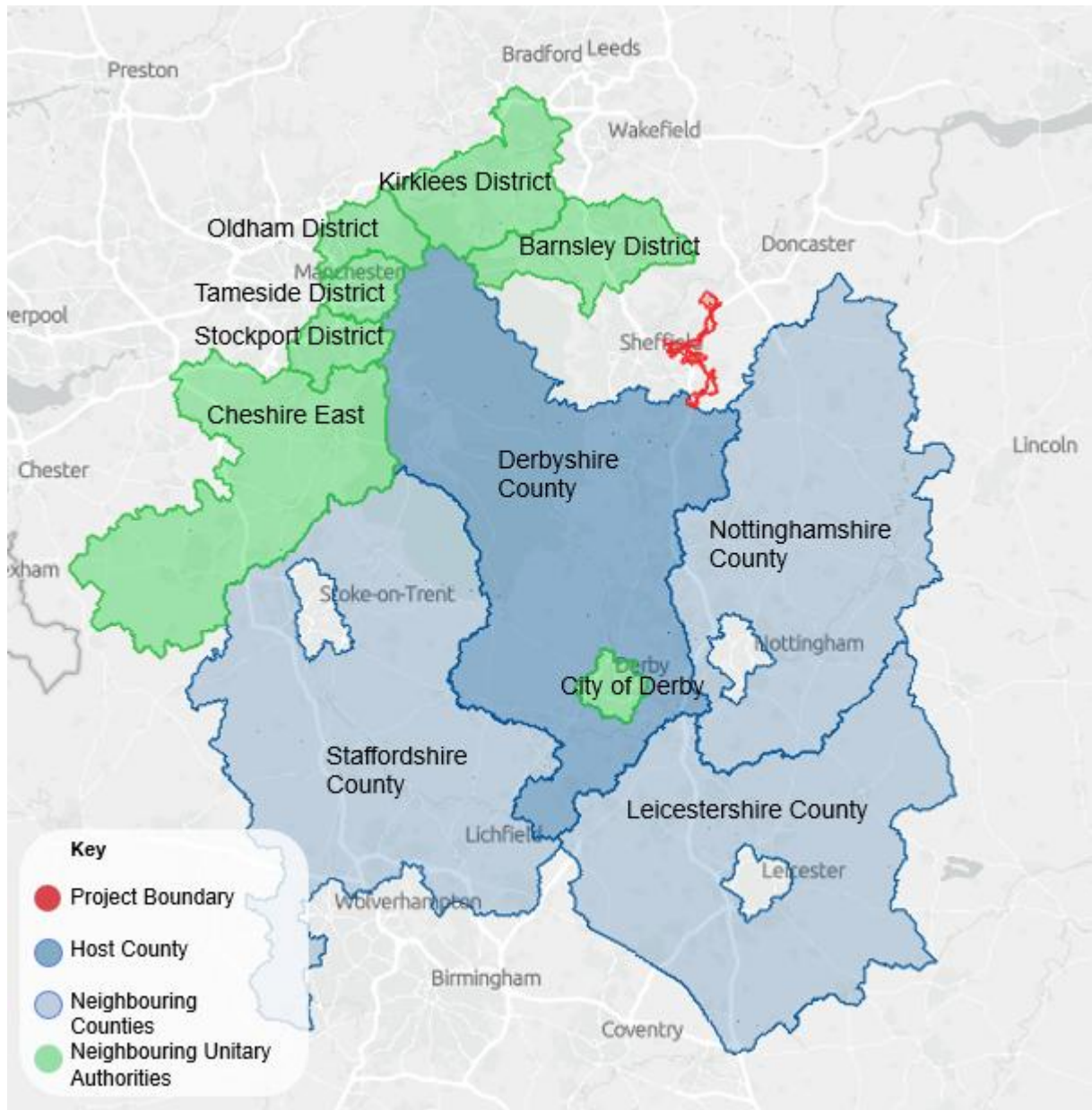


Figure 6.3: Relevant C and D authorities for the purposes of consultation under s42(1)(b)

Table 6.2: Relevant Local Authorities for consultation under S42(1)(b)

Name	A, B, C, or D authority	Criteria for identification
City of Doncaster Council	B	The Proposed Development would be located in this unitary authority.
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	B	The Proposed Development would be located in this unitary authority.
North East Derbyshire District Council	B	The Proposed Development would be located in this district council.
Derbyshire County Council	C	The Proposed Development would be located in this county council.
Amber Valley Borough Council	A	This district council neighbours one of the host districts or unitary authorities.
Bolsover District Council	A	This district council neighbours one of the host districts or unitary authorities.
Chesterfield Borough Council	A	This district council neighbours one of the host districts or unitary authorities.
Bassetlaw District Council	A	This district council neighbours one of the host districts or unitary authorities.
North Lincolnshire Council	A	This unitary authority neighbours one of the host districts or unitary authorities.
East Riding of Yorkshire Council	A	This unitary authority neighbours one of the host districts or unitary authorities.
North Yorkshire Council	A	This unitary authority neighbours one of the host districts or unitary authorities.
Wakefield Metropolitan District Council	A	This unitary authority neighbours one of the host districts or unitary authorities.
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council	A, D	This unitary authority neighbours one of the host districts or unitary authorities and the host county council.
Sheffield City Council	A, D	This unitary authority neighbours one of the host districts or unitary councils and the host county council.
Derbyshire Dales District Council	A	This district council neighbours one of the host districts or unitary councils.
Nottinghamshire County Council	D	This county council neighbours the host county council.
Leicestershire County Council	D	This county council neighbours the host county council.
Staffordshire County Council	D	This county council neighbours the host county council.
Cheshire East Council	D	This unitary authority neighbours the host county council.
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council	D	This unitary authority neighbours the host county council.
Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council	D	This unitary authority neighbours the host county council.

Name	A, B, C, or D authority	Criteria for identification
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council	D	This unitary authority neighbours the host county council.
Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council	D	This unitary authority neighbours the host county council.
Derby City Council	D	This unitary authority neighbours the host county council.
South Yorkshire Combined Authority	D	This combined authority neighbours the host county council.
Peak District National Park Authority	D	This planning authority neighbours the host county council.

Identification of consultees under s42(1)(d)

6.2.9 Section 42(1)(d) of the PA 2008 requires the Applicant to consult each person who is within one or more of the categories set out in s44 of the PA 2008 with respect to the Application as follows:

- Category 1 persons: landowners, lessees, tenants or occupiers (s44(1));
- Category 2 persons: those with an interest in the land or the power to sell and convey or release the land (s44(2)); and
- Category 3 persons: those who the Applicant thinks that, if an order for development consent were to be made and fully implemented, would or might be entitled to make a relevant claim for compensation (s44(4)).

6.2.10 Section 44 Landowner Identification Process: The Applicant’s land referencing consultancy employed a number of methods to identify Section 44 persons, adopting good practice and in accordance with relevant guidance and advice. Methods included:

- the issue of Land Interest Questionnaire (LIQ) letters to all landowners/occupiers and utility companies potentially affected;
- searches at the Land Registry;
- review of legal title documents;
- Companies House and Electoral Roll searches;
- searches for registered correspondence to the relevant address (where appropriate); site visits; and
- discussions with known owners/occupiers, amongst others.

6.2.11 Where an interest remained in ‘unknown’ ownership, or where it was not clear whether an interest existed or not (in each case following diligent inquiry), the Applicant posted a site notice in the vicinity of the land in question as part of the Statutory Consultation. The notices were secured in place by cable ties and monitored weekly. The notices were monitored for six weeks alongside the general notices. Where notices were removed or damaged before the end of the monitoring period they were replaced, and at the end of the monitoring period the notices and cable ties were taken down and removed. In addition to this, enquiries were also made with adjacent landowners via phone, email and in-person contact to identify owners of unregistered land.

- 6.2.12 Section 44 places a duty on the Applicant to make ‘diligent inquiry’ as to the identification of Category 1, 2, or 3 persons. The term ‘diligent inquiry’ is not defined in the PA 2008, but it sets a threshold of inquiry to allow the termination of that inquiry when reasonable and recognised avenues of research have been exhausted. The Applicant also had regard to the Planning Inspectorate’s Advice Note 4 ‘Section 52’ (March 2017) (now replaced by Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the process for obtaining information about interests in land (under Section 52 of the Planning Act 2008))(August 2024)) [REF-7].
- 6.2.13 Environmental Impact Assessment: As part of the preparation of the draft ES, the Applicant’s environmental specialists and land referencing teams collaborated in identifying receptors potentially impacted by the Proposed Development with a view to understanding whether there were any ‘Category 3’ persons who might have a ‘relevant claim’ for compensation as defined by section 44(6) of the PA 2008. The Applicant determined that there were no potential Category 3 individuals due to the Applicant’s commitment to not significantly increase noise levels.
- 6.2.14 During a consultation event an interested party identified themselves as having not received a statutory consultation letter. After undertaking an internal inquiry, it was confirmed a notification letter had been sent to the correct address. The interested party provided us with an alternative address that they wished to receive a copy. On 23 October 2025, a copy of the statutory consultation letter was sent to the alternative address, and the consultation period was extended until 23 November 2025 for that consultee.
- 6.2.15 A list of the Category 1, 2 and 3 interests is provided in the **Book of Reference [EN110020/APP/4.3]**. For the Statutory Consultation, there were 340 Category 1 and 2 consultees. This includes 180 individuals under Category 1, 90 under Category 2, and 70 that were both Category 1 and 2. No one was identified under Category 3.

Consultation notification under s42 of the PA 2008

- 6.2.16 The Applicant wrote to all consultees identified under s42 of the PA 2008 to notify them of the consultation. The Applicant wrote by first class post to consultees identified as falling within s42(1)(a), s42(1)(b), and s42(1)(d) of the PA 2008 on 8 September 2025, providing information on the Proposed Development, explaining the Applicant’s intention to submit the Application, listing the documents being provided as part of the consultation, explaining how to respond to the consultation and providing the deadline for submitting feedback.
- 6.2.17 Within the letter sent on 8 September 2025, the Applicant included a link to its website, where the consultees could find a copy of consultation materials including the consultation booklets, the masterplans, the draft ES, the SoCC, and the questionnaire.
- 6.2.18 A notice of the proposed application which was publicised in accordance with s48 of the PA 2008 and the requirements set out in Regulation 4 of the APFP Regulations [REF-2]. A copy of the notice was also provided to relevant consultation bodies in accordance with Regulation 13 of the EIA Regulations [REF-1]. This notice was included as an attachment to both the 8 September 2025 letters to the s42(1)(a), s42(1)(b), and s42(1)(d) consultees. The s42(1)(d) consultees also received a map showing the Proposed Order Limits.

- 6.2.19 The host parish councils as shown in **Figure 6.1** and **Table 6.1** were contacted by email and first-class post with a similar letter, including an invitation to meet during the Statutory Consultation period.
- 6.2.20 Copies of the letters sent to consultees under s42 of the PA 2008 are included in **Appendices C1.2-1.4** of this Report.
- 6.2.21 All of the letters and emails were delivered without any bounce-backs or failed deliveries.

6.3 Notification under s46 of the PA 2008

- 6.3.1 Pursuant to s46 of the PA 2008, the Applicant must send the Planning Inspectorate (on behalf of the Secretary of State) the s42 consultation documents on or before commencing the s42 consultation. The Applicant wrote to the Planning Inspectorate on 8 September 2025 to provide this notification.
- 6.3.2 The notification provided on 8 September 2025 included a link to the Applicant's website where the consultation materials including the booklet, the masterplan, the questionnaire, and the draft ES could be viewed. This letter is included in **Appendix C2.1**.
- 6.3.3 The Applicant received an acknowledgement of the receipt of its notification under s46 of the PA 2008 from the Planning Inspectorate on 10 September 2025 (**Appendix C2.2**).

6.4 Consultation under s47 of the PA 2008

- 6.4.1 The Applicant consulted with the local community in accordance with the SoCC provided in **Appendix B3**, as prescribed by s47(7) of the PA 2008. Full details of compliance with the SoCC are included in **Appendix F**.

Identification of the community under s47 of the PA 2008

- 6.4.2 For the purposes of community consultation, the Applicant defined two zones of consultation:
- Zone 1: Core Consultation Zone: An area that included around 45,000 addresses which was drawn 2km from the Proposed Development boundary and then expanded further to ensure parts of communities were not excluded. Being in close proximity to the Proposed Development, this zone was selected as the group of homes and businesses that would have the greater interest in the project. An image of the core consultation zone around each of the three sections of the Proposed Development is included in **Figures 6.4-6.6**. This area increased after the non-statutory consultation in order to add the cable routes and other changes to the Proposed Order Limits.
 - Zone 2: The Broader Area: which is defined as the host districts of RMBC, CDC, and NEDDC.

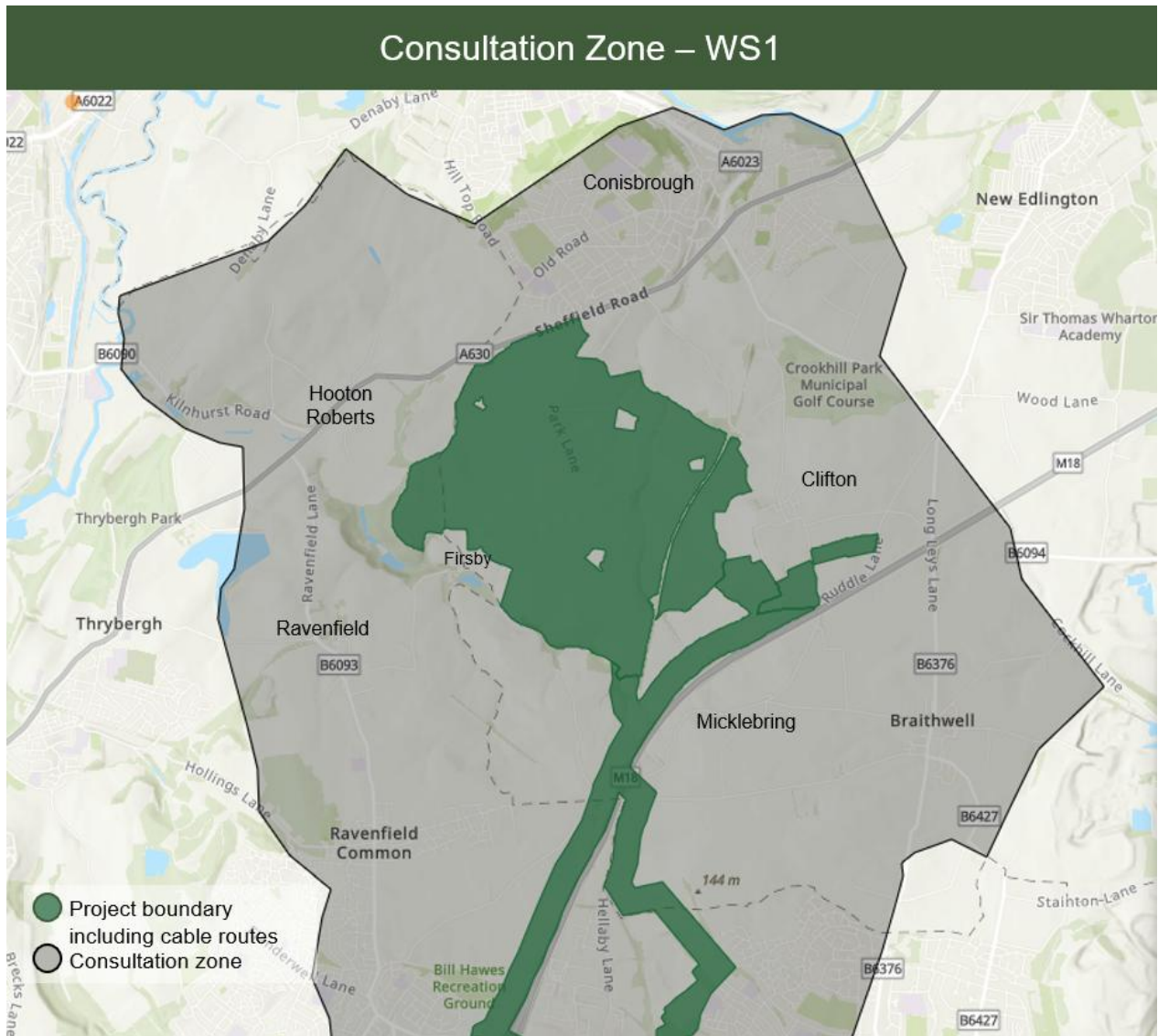


Figure 6.4: Core Consultation Zone – Whitestone 1

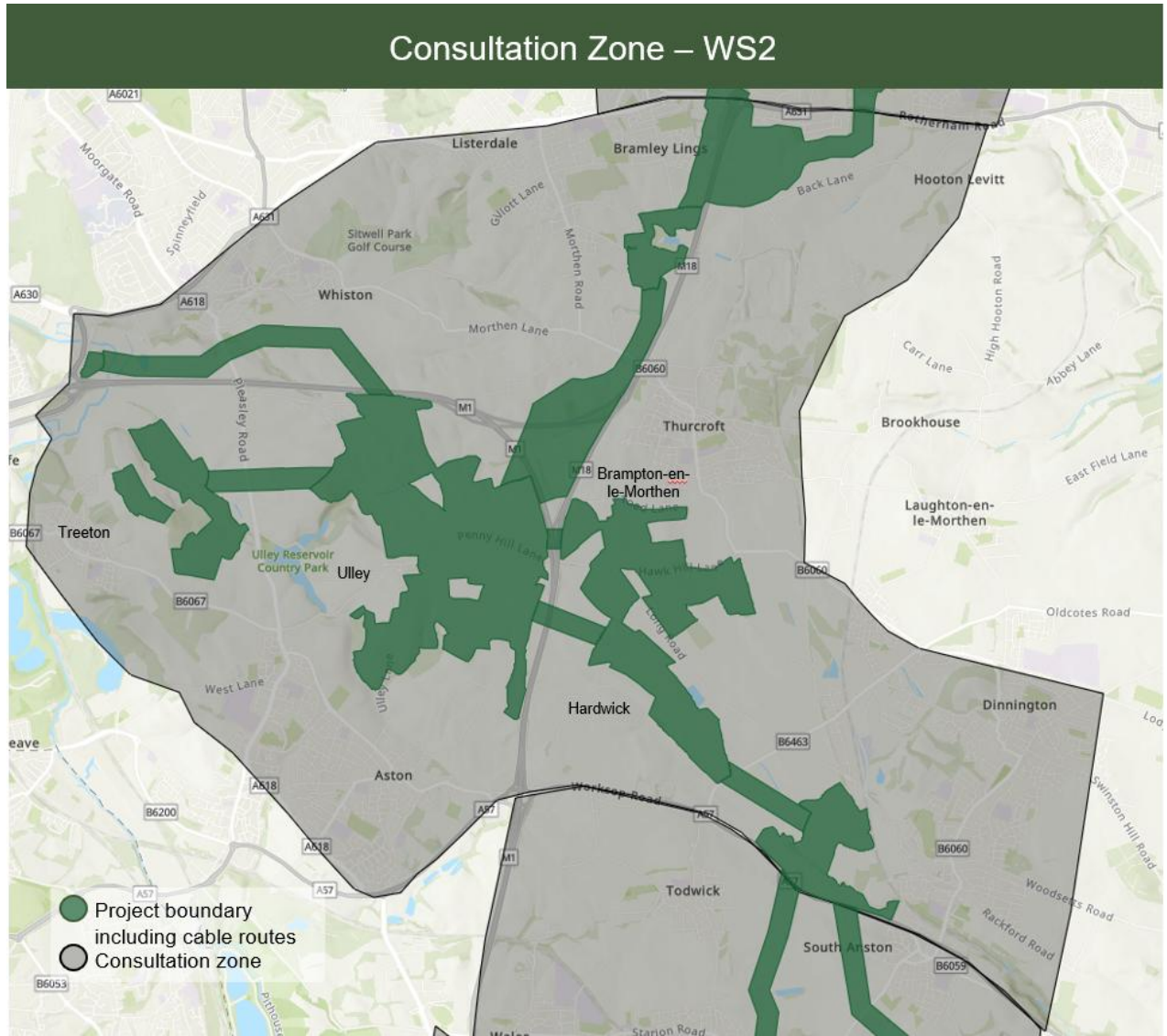


Figure 6.5: Core Consultation Zone – Whitestone 2

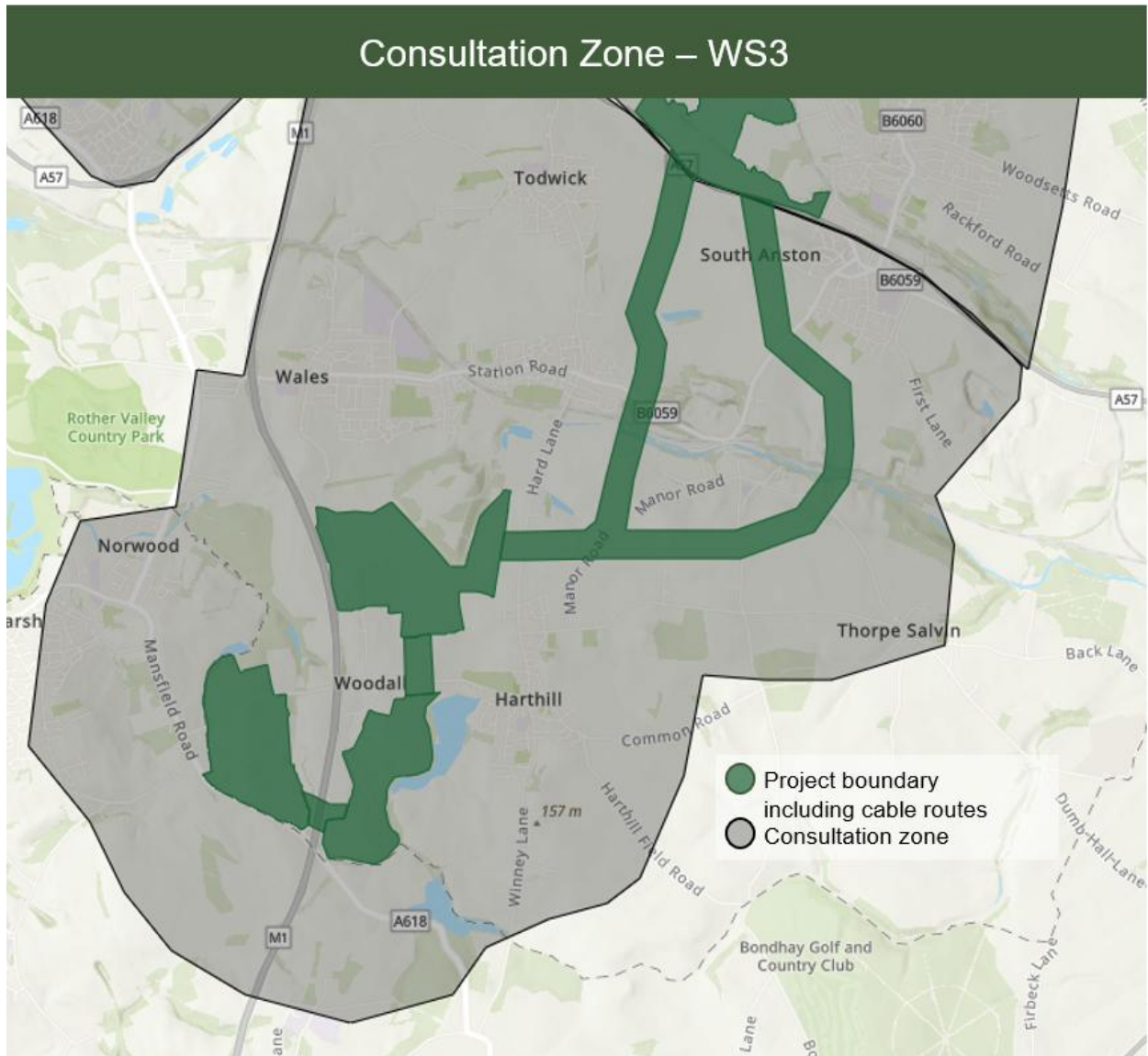


Figure 6.6: Core Consultation Zone – Whitestone 3

6.5 Notification of consultation as specified in the SoCC

- 6.5.1 Section 48 of the PA 2008 requires the Applicant to publish a notice of the proposed application in accordance with Regulation 4 of the APFP Regulations [REF-2].
- 6.5.2 The Applicant published a combined section 47 and 48 notice as required in the London Gazette, a national paper (the Guardian), and for two consecutive weeks in local newspapers, as described in **Table 6.3** below.
- 6.5.3 The local newspapers were chosen as they have the highest average circulation figure of local newspapers with a distribution area covering areas of Whitestone 1, Whitestone 2 and Whitestone 3. A copy of this notice as published, which confirms the name of the publication and the date it was published, is provided in **Appendix C3.1-3.9** of this Report.
- 6.5.4 All notices were published at least 28 days before the deadline to submit feedback on 28 October 2025 as shown in **Table 6.3** below.

Table 6.3: Dates of publication of s47/48 notice in newspapers

Publication	Date of publication
Doncaster Free Press	11 September 2025
Rotherham Advertiser	11 September 2025
Derbyshire Times	11 September 2025
The Guardian	16 September 2025
London Gazette	16 September 2025
Doncaster Free Press	18 September 2025
Rotherham Advertiser	18 September 2025
Derbyshire Times	18 September 2025

- 6.5.5 In addition to the statutory notices above and consistent with the SoCC, the Applicant provided several methods to notify the community of the upcoming consultation and how to take part, summarised in **Table 6.4**.
- 6.5.6 After the start of the consultation, the Applicant received feedback from the local MP and community requesting an additional information event to be held in Treeton. This additional event was communicated to the community in Treeton through an additional letter sent on 30 September 2025 and a copy of the letter is included in **Appendix C4.6**.

Table 6.4: Consultation notification under s47 of the PA 2008

Date	Event
11 - 18 Sept 2025	S47/48 notices in papers in Zone 2
10 Sept 2025	Leaflet sent to Zone 1
16 Sept 2025	Website updated with materials
18 Sept 2025	Facebook adverts live
18 Sept 2025	Emails sent to keep informed list
23 Sept 2025	Emails sent to community groups and elected officials in Zone 2
26 Sept 2025	Press release sent to local media in Zone 2
30 Sept 2025	Letter sent to Treeton about additional event
2 Oct – 15 Oct 2025	Site visits to near neighbours

- 6.5.7 On 10 September 2025, the Applicant notified the consultation zone shown in **Figures 6.4-6.6** of the start of the Statutory Consultation via a leaflet, which also included the dates and times of the public information events, how to submit feedback and FAQs. The leaflet can be found in **Appendix C4.1**.
- 6.5.8 The Applicant also posted a Facebook advert regarding the start of the consultation on 16 September, targeting those living in Zones 1 and 2. The Facebook advertising can be found in **Appendix C4.2**.
- 6.5.9 On 18 September, the Applicant sent out an email to all members of the public who had signed up to the keep informed list to announce the start of the consultation and explain how to submit feedback. The sample email can be found in **Appendix C4.3**.
- 6.5.10 The Applicant sent the same email found in **Appendix C4.3** notifying non-prescribed consultees and gateway organisations of the start of the Statutory Consultation and how to provide feedback. The list of non-prescribed consultees and gateway organisations contacted along with the email notification can be found in **Appendix C4.4**.

6.6 Media

- 6.6.1 On 26 September 2025, the Applicant sent a press release to local and trade media publications about the start of the Statutory Consultation. A copy of the press release can be found in **Appendix C4.5**.
- 6.6.2 The local publications were chosen to cover the Broader Area Zone 2. **Table 6.5** shows the publications with whom the Applicant shared the press release.
- 6.6.3 All media enquiries that came into the project inbox throughout the consultation period were answered promptly, including requests for statements and interviews.

Table 6.5: Media list for the Statutory Consultation

Publication	Type of publication
Rotherham Advertiser	Local
Doncaster Free Press	Local
Sheffield Star	Local
Derbyshire Times	Local
Yorkshire Post	Local
Yorkshire Live	Local
BBC South Yorkshire	Local
Business Green	Trade
Climate Home News	Trade
Energy Live News	Trade
Energy Storage News	Trade
Energy Voice	Trade
Future Net Zero	Trade
Infrastructure Journal	Trade
Recharge	Trade
Renewable Energy Association	Trade
reNEWS	Trade
Solar Media	Trade
Solar Power Portal	Trade

6.7 Consultation materials

- 6.7.1 The Applicant made the following materials available as part of consultation with the local community:
- The SoCC, which set out the Applicant's approach to consulting with the community (**Appendix B3**)
 - A consultation booklet providing a non-technical overview of the Proposed Development, the development process, initial EIA results, and next steps for each of W1, W2 and W3 (**Appendix D1.1-D1.3**)
 - The draft ES and accompanying Non-Technical Summary (<https://whitstonesolarfarm.co.uk/document-library/>)
 - Pop-up banners that described the Proposed Development, changes from the non-statutory consultation, and development process (**Appendix D5**)
 - Updated masterplans (**Appendix D2.1-D2.4**)
 - A questionnaire to collect feedback (**Appendix D3**)
- 6.7.2 All materials were available on the project website to download for free. Printed copies of the booklet, masterplans and questionnaire as well as a USB containing the draft ES were also available for free upon request. There were several requests for the USB with all consultation materials, which were completed by first-class post. Printed copies of materials other than the draft ES were also available upon request, and many individuals requested these materials which were also sent out by post.
- 6.7.3 The draft ES was available in printed copy for a fee of £750, however no one requested this option. This reflects the high cost of printing the document due to its size. This is a greatly subsidised rate in order to reduce potential burden on interested parties. The Applicant made the full printed version of the document available at all the public information events.
- 6.7.4 As explained in the SoCC, materials were also available in alternative formats upon reasonable request, however there were no such reasonable requests made.
- 6.7.5 The project website was updated at the start of the Statutory Consultation and can be found in **Appendix D4**.

6.8 Collection of responses

6.8.1 To capture feedback, the Applicant produced a consultation questionnaire inviting comments on the different elements of the Proposed Development. The questionnaire was made available online at the project website. Printed copies were also provided at the public events and by request. The consultation questionnaire can be found in **Appendix D3**.

6.8.2 The questionnaire asked the following questions:

Q1: Which site are you most interested in? (please tick)

Whitestone 1

Whitestone 2

Whitestone 3

All of the above

Q2: Please provide your feedback on our updated masterplan.

Q3: Do you have feedback about the proposed permissive paths? Are there other paths you would like to see?

Q4: Please provide any feedback you have on the potential locations for the substations and batteries.

Q5: Please provide any feedback on the potential cable route options.

Q6: What would you like to see in the community benefit package? Are there other ideas that you think should be included or considered?

Q7: Do you have any comments on the environmental topics and the mitigation proposed?

Q8: Do you have any other comments you would like us to consider?

6.8.3 Consultees were able to submit their written feedback through the below methods. All written feedback via these methods was recorded and analysed.

- Completing the online questionnaire at the project website
- Completing the printed questionnaire and returning to the Freepost address: Whitestone Solar Farm, Freepost SEC NEWGATE UK Local
- Emailing the project inbox: info@whitstonesolarfarm.co.uk
- Writing to the same Freepost address above

6.9 Public information events

- 6.9.1 The Applicant hosted several public information events during the consultation period. The purpose of these events was to present information about the Proposed Development through the consultation materials and by asking questions of the project team. The locations of the events are shown in **Figure 6.7** and listed in **Table 6.6** below.
- 6.9.2 The Applicant added an additional event in Treeton at the Reading Rooms from 2-6pm on 13 October 2025 at the request of Sarah Champion MP. To notify the public of this additional event, the Applicant sent out a letter to the village of Treeton on 30 September 2025 and updated the website with the additional event. The letter sent out can be found in **Appendix C4.6**.

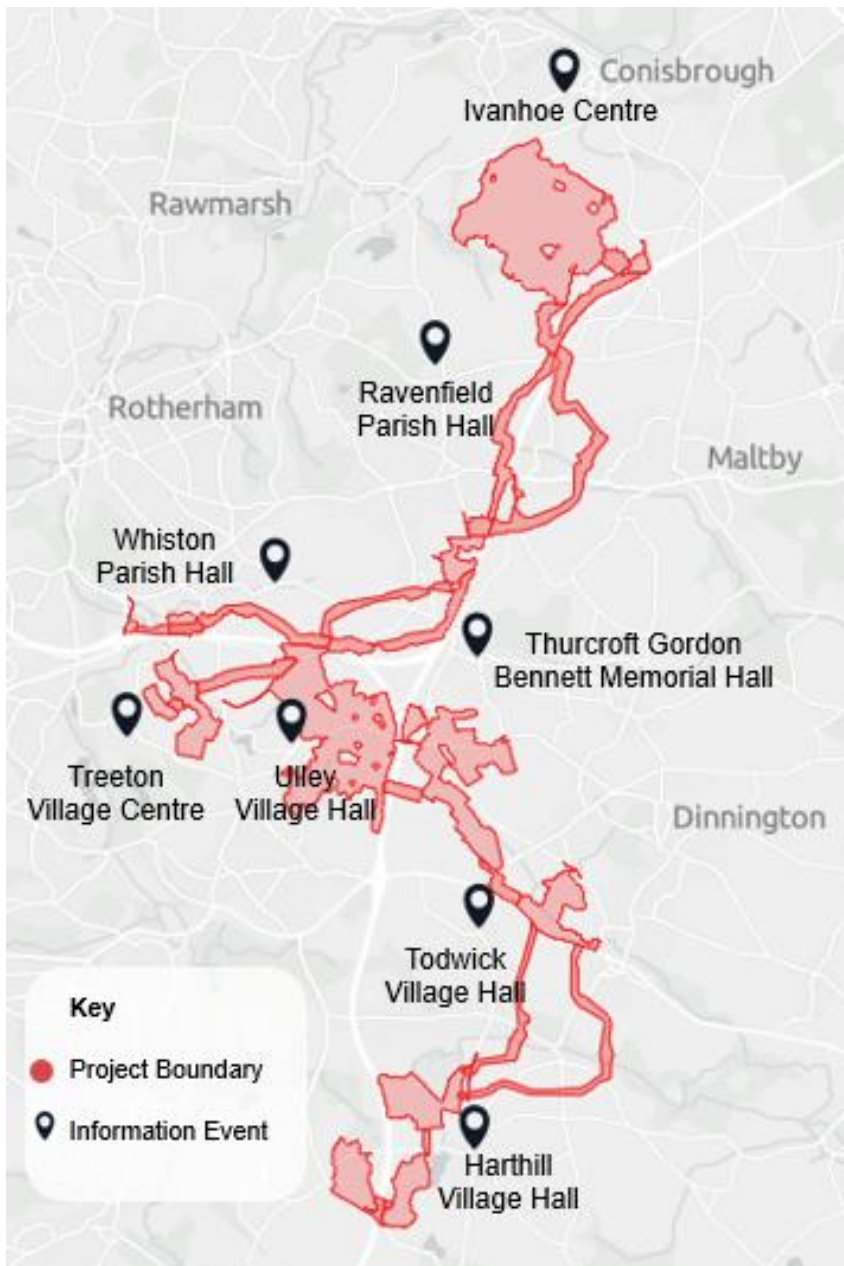


Figure 6.7: Location of public information events during the Statutory Consultation

Table 6.6: Attendance at public information events during the Statutory Consultation

Date and time	Location	Public Attendance
Thursday, 2 October 10am-2pm	Thurcroft Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall, S66 9DD	64
Friday, 3 October 1pm-5pm	Todwick Village Hall, S26 1HJ	43
Saturday, 4 October 10am-3pm	Conisbrough Ivanhoe Centre, DN12 3JX	157
Tuesday, 7 October 3pm-7pm	Harthill Village Hall, S26 7YL	108
Wednesday, 8 October 3pm-7pm	Ravenfield Parish Hall, S65 4PT	108
Monday, 13 October 2-6pm	Treeton Village Centre, S60 5QT	82
Tuesday, 14 October 3-7pm	Ulley Village Hall, S26 3YD	74
Wednesday, 15 October 12pm-4pm	Whiston Village Hall, S60 4HX	82
Total		718

6.9.3 The events were organised to be as accessible as possible for the public by:

- Occurring at various times of day and days of the week to accommodate various work/life schedules;
- Being located in at least one venue in each of the three sections of the Proposed Development, with the next nearest venue at a different time of day; and
- Using accessible venues with sufficient capacity to accommodate the anticipated number of attendees.

6.10 Meetings with stakeholders

Elected officials

6.10.1 On 17 September 2025, the Applicant wrote to the host parish councils and the Firsby Residents Association to notify them of the upcoming consultation and how to take part. The letter invited them to join a Zoom meeting on 30 September or to attend an in-person meeting before or after the public information events. Only one parish requested the in-person meeting. The Applicant also offered the host MPs a meeting during the Statutory Consultation. **Table 6.7** details the meetings that took place.

Table 6.7: Meetings with elected officials during the Statutory Consultation

Date	Time	Location	Attendees	Activity
30 September 2025	6pm-7:30pm	Zoom	Braithwell with Micklebring PC, Conisbrough Parks PC, Thurcroft PC, Wickersley PC, Maltby PC, Firsby Residents Association, Harthill with Woodall PC, Ravenfield PC, Ulley PC, Bramley PC	Briefing on statutory consultation, updated masterplans and Q&A
13 October 2025	6pm	Treeton Reading Rooms	Treeton Parish Council	Briefing on statutory consultation, updated masterplans and Q&A
16 October 2025	2:30pm	Microsoft Teams	Jake Richards MP	Updates on statutory consultation
21 October 2025	11am	Parliament	Sally Jameson MP	Update on changes to the Proposed Development, the statutory consultation and community benefits

Technical stakeholders

6.10.2 The Applicant continued to engage with technical stakeholders during the statutory consultation. A list of the meetings that took place can be found in **Table 6.8** below.

Table 6.8: Meetings with technical stakeholders during the Statutory Consultation

Date	Stakeholder	Topic of meeting
6-Oct-25	Environment Agency	Discussion of proposed scope of aquatic surveys for the Proposed Development and baseline findings.
8-Oct-25	Environment Agency	Monthly EA Meeting, catching up following ecology meeting and providing general project updates.
22-Oct-25	Natural England	<p>NE asked if the Applicant had done ALC surveys on alternative sites. The Applicant responded that the NE base map data was used.</p> <p>NE noted they would have liked to be consulted on the reduced density sampling.</p> <p>NE would like to see 1 in 1 ha rather than 1 in 2 on hard infrastructure and remaining surveys (semi detailed based on coverage).</p> <p>NE disagreed with the Applicant undertaking no ALC on cable route and advised that the Applicant should be doing so as without ALC surveys the planning inspectorate cannot make a decision on baseline.</p> <p>Where other projects have also not done ALC surveys on the cable route that has also been against the advice of NE.</p>
23-Oct-25	SY Police	<p>The Applicant described feedback from the community about potential risks of theft. The Police confirmed that this is a significant risk and their concerns that people would break into the site to steal cables or damage panels, concerns about safety issues if someone tries to break into the substations, requests for information of indicative response times and how call outs would be managed, SY Police did not consider deer fencing to be a sufficient security measure, suggestions that the PROWs be away from the site to keep people out of the area and introduce bollards on PROWS to minimise 4 wheeler access.</p>

Near neighbours

6.10.3 Between 2 October and 15 October 2025, the Applicant conducted seven site visits to near neighbours to the Proposed Development. Some of these near neighbours the Applicant had met with at non-statutory consultation, and met with again if they requested further updates, as well as additional residents with specific queries, such as landowners on the proposed cable routes or those that raised queries around traffic safety. The locations of the meetings are shown in **Figure 6.8** and **Figure 6.9** on the masterplans, and the key issues raised are in **Table 6.9** below.

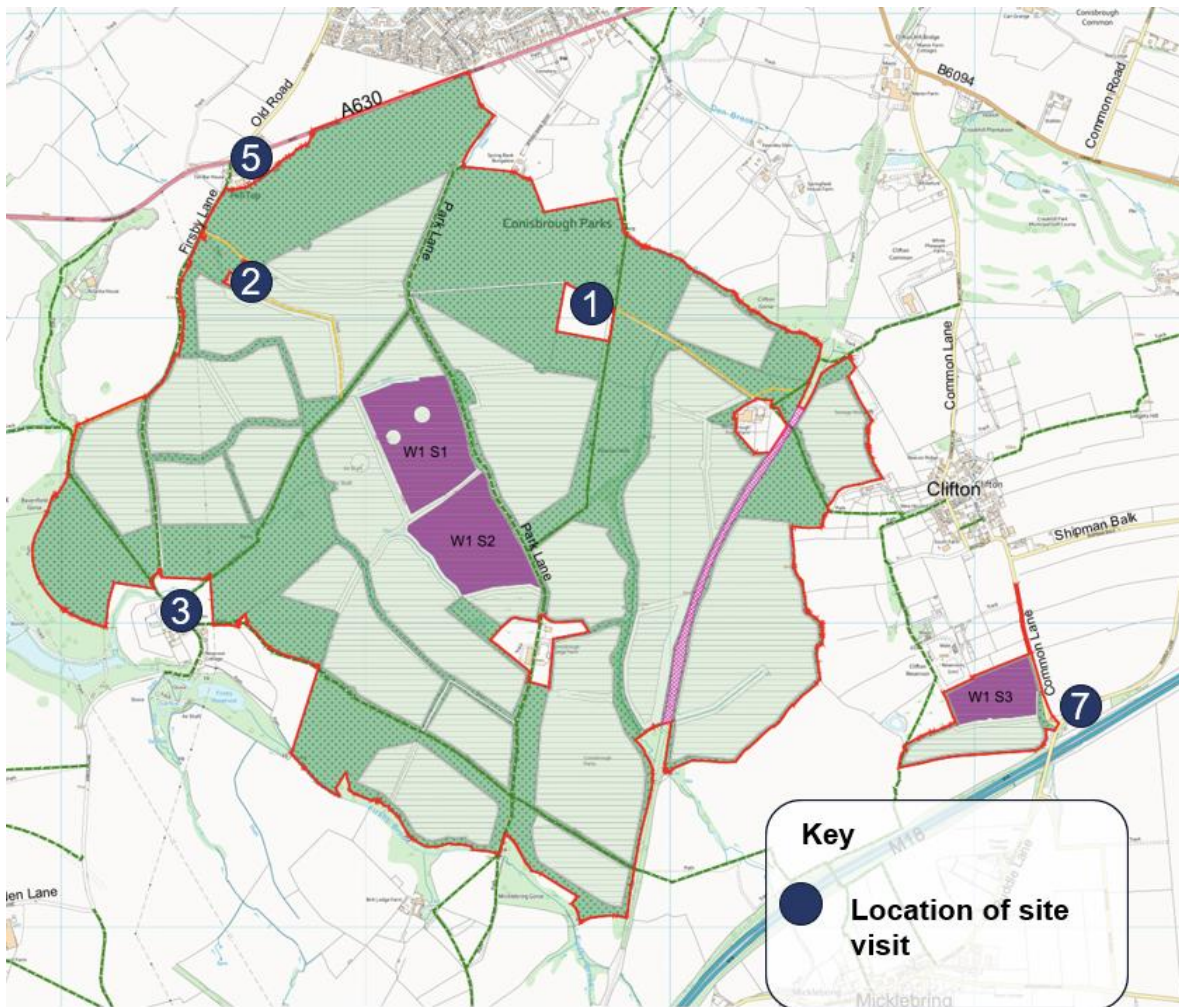


Figure 6.8: Site visits during the Statutory Consultation in Whitestone 1

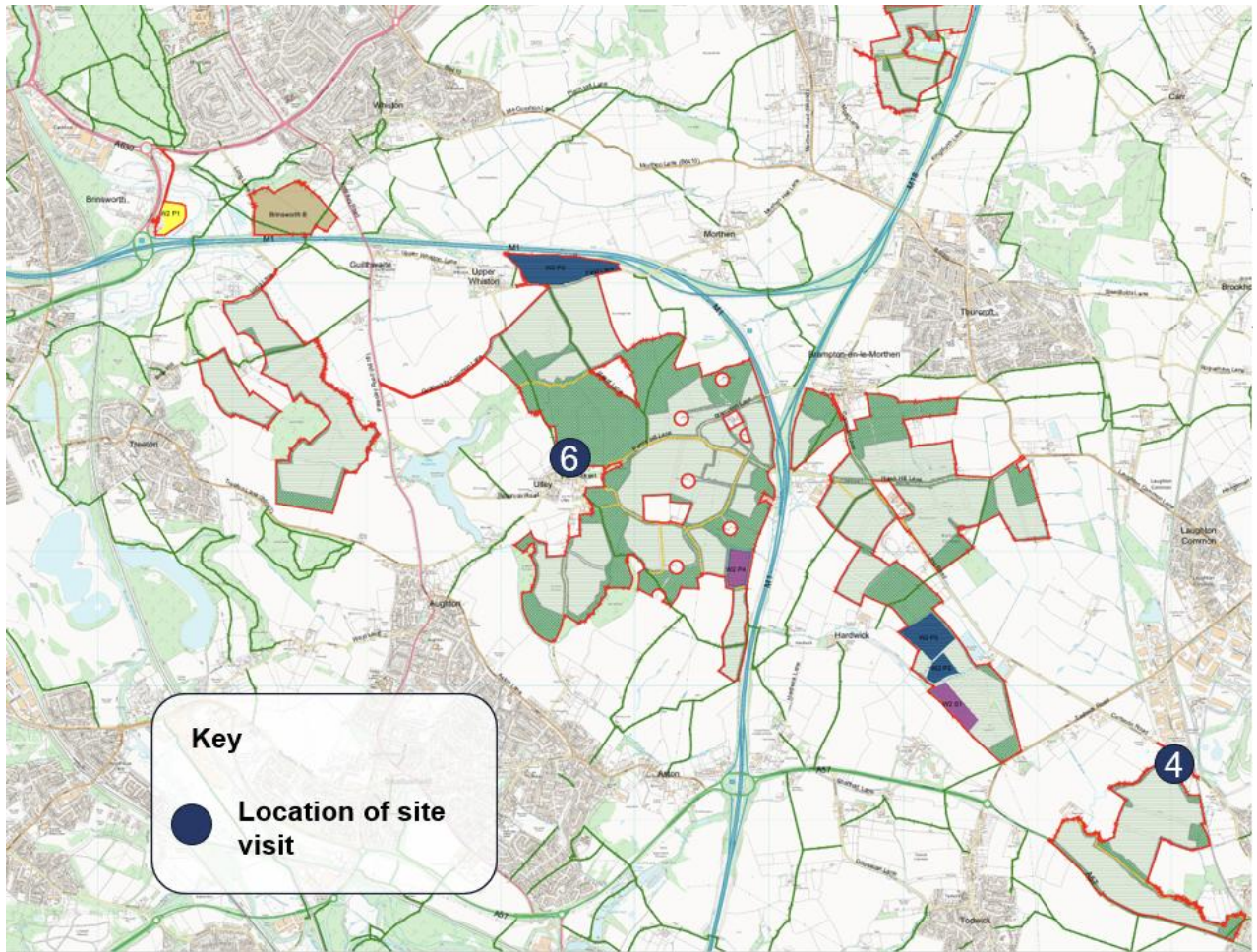


Figure 6.9: Site visits during the Statutory Consultation in Whitestone 2

Table 6.9: Site visits with near neighbours during the Statutory Consultation

Visit no.	Date	Issues raised	Applicant response
1	2 Oct 2025	Discussion about the use of disused railway and preferred cable crossing location	The Applicant amended the Order Limits in light of discussions had during the Site Visit to accommodate the preference for how the Proposed Development would interface with the disused railway.
2	2 Oct 2025	Discussion about visual impact around isolated property on Firsby Lane.	The Applicant has removed panels south of this property.
3	2 Oct 2025	Discussion about impacts to Firsby and approach to consultation	The Applicant has further reduced panels around Firsby and agreed a solution for coordinating use of the Ivanhoe Centre with the stakeholder group during a public event held on 4 October 2025, with safety concerns in mind. This solution was to have the stakeholder group in a room in the Ivanhoe Centre at the same time as the event was being held.
4	3 Oct 2025	Discussion about use of part of a property with mixed residential and commercial use for access to the Site	The Applicant has removed the plot of land of concern as a potential access point.
5	15 Oct 2025	Discussion about impacts to business and request to keep access to field in W1, concern about impact to field drain, discussion around location of permissive path	The Applicant has removed the plot of land of concern from the Order Limits so that it is no longer part of the Proposed Development. The Applicant has moved the permissive path to the requested location, further from the property.
6	15 Oct 2025	Concern about view looking north of Ulley to solar panels on top of south facing hill	After the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant had removed some panels from the south-facing slope to the north of Ulley, and on the north-facing slope entirely.
7	15 Oct 2025	Concern about impact to horse riders around Clifton due to construction traffic	The Applicant has removed this potential substation and solar area and the proposed access point from the Order Limits.

7 RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION

7.1 Overview

- 7.1.1 This chapter of the Consultation Report provides an overview of responses received from consultees under s42, s47 and s48 of the PA 2008, as well as the details of the regard had to them by the Applicant in accordance with s49 of the PA 2008.
- 7.1.2 A total of 10,315 relevant responses as defined by s49 of the PA 2008 were received in response to the Statutory Consultation. **Table 7.1** includes a breakdown of responses by consultee. There was one late response from a local authority which is included in this analysis. No other late submissions were considered. No one specified that they were submitting feedback under s48.

Table 7.1: Document references for feedback to the Statutory Consultation by consultee

Consultee	Number of Responses	Document Reference	Relevant Appendix
s42 (1)(a) – Technical Bodies	46	7.2	Appendix E
s42 (1)(b) – Local Authorities	11	7.2	Appendix E
s42 (1)(d) – Persons with an Interest in Land	54	7.3	Appendix E
s47 – Members of the Community	10,204	7.4	Appendix E

- 7.1.3 Responses were received, securely recorded and analysed by a consultancy specialising in public consultation and stakeholder engagement. The following process was utilised:
- When a response was received which provided identifying details (e.g. a postcode, name), the Applicant identified whether the response had been submitted by an individual or organisation under s42, s47 or s48;
 - Each response was assigned a unique code, and their feedback was recorded against this code in a secure database;
 - Hard copy questionnaires and letters were transcribed and recorded against the respondent's unique code;
 - Responses were analysed at sentence level, using thematic coding to group together comments on similar topics, with unique codes logged against comments to indicate frequency; and
 - An individual response was analysed in as many layers as required to ensure that the entire sentiment was captured.

- 7.1.4 The analysis process enabled all responses to be indexed according to the issues raised by respondents and allowed a detailed summary to be prepared of the content by themes and topics raised.
- 7.1.5 As recommended by the Planning Inspectorate’s Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the Consultation Report (August 2024), in preparing this section, the Applicant considered grouping the responses under the three strands of consultation – s42, s47 and s48 – and then further by their relation to the Proposed Development – prescribed consultees/local authorities, members of the local community and landowners/ those with a land interest.
- 7.1.6 None of the consultees who responded identified themselves as specifically responding to the s48 notice and so there is no separate grouping for s48 notice respondents. The Applicant notes that all consultees prescribed under s42(1)(a) and (b) were required to receive the s48 notice.

7.2 Feedback from s42 (1)(a) – Technical Bodies

- 7.2.1 The Applicant asked that consultees provide written responses to consultation under s42 of the PA 2008 by letter, email, or via the digital or paper questionnaire.
- 7.2.2 A total of 46 responses were received from consultees under s42(1)(a) of the PA 2008. The list of s42(1)(a) consultees other than parish councils that responded are in **Table 7.2** below. Where these consultees are also identified as land interests under s42(1)(d) this is indicated as well. The feedback and Applicant response are in **Appendix E**.

Table 7.2: s42(1)(a) consultees other than parish councils that responded to the Statutory Consultation

Also s42(1)(d)	Organisation
Yes	Cadent Gas
Yes	Canal and River Trust
Yes	Coal Authority/Mining Remediation
	Environment Agency
	Forestry Commission
	Health and Safety Executive
	Health Security Agency
	Historic England
	Indigo Network
Yes	National Highways
	Natural England
Yes	Network Rail
Yes	NET
Yes	Severn Trent
Yes	SY Fire and Rescue
Yes	Yorkshire Water
Yes	GTC
	Data Communications Company Operations, Dŵr Cymru NDC Welsh Waters, North Yorkshire Police, Northern Gas Networks,

Also s42(1)(d)	Organisation
	South West Water, Water Regulations South, West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue, West Yorkshire Police (confirmation of no response)

7.2.3 16 parish councils that are s42(1)(a) consultees responded to the consultation. The list of parish councils is included below, and the key issues that were raised are included in **Table 7.3** below. The full feedback and Applicant response is included in **Appendix E**.

- Anston Parish Council;
- Aston-cum-Aughton Parish Council;
- Braithwell with Micklebring Parish Council;
- Bramley Parish Council;
- Catcliffe Parish Council;
- Conisbrough Parks Parish Council;
- Edlington Town Council;
- Firbeck Parish Council;
- Harthill with Woodall Parish Council;
- Hooton Roberts Parish Meeting;
- Ravenfield Parish Council;
- Treeton Parish Council;
- Todwick Parish Council;
- Ulley Parish Council;
- Wales Parish Council; and
- Wickersley Parish Council.

Table 7.3 Key issues in feedback from parish councils and Applicant response

Key concerns raised	Number of parish councils	Applicant response
General concern about other developments in the area	10	The Applicant has completed a Cumulative Impact Assessment that considers the other developments in the local area. It is included in Chapter 17: Cumulative Effects of the ES [EN0110020/APP/6.17] .
Concern about development on the Green Belt	9	The Order Limits are located in the Green Belt. A full assessment of the impacts on the Green Belt and relevant policies have been undertaken by the Applicant in the Green Belt Assessment. The Green Belt Assessment can be found in Appendix 2 of the Planning Statement [EN0110020/APP/5.4] . More on the site selection process is included in Chapter 4: Alternatives and Design Evolution [EN0110020/APP/6.4] .
Concern about the loss of agricultural land and potential impacts to food security	9	National Policy Statement EN-3 [REF-10] directs developers to avoid the best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land where possible. The Applicant did seek to avoid using BMV land and through the site selection process kept BMV land to only 19% of the Site area. Through the design evolution, the Applicant reduced excess mitigation land to ensure that it would remain with the current landowner to maximise agricultural production. The Applicant would like to pursue sheep grazing under the panels, as a way to continue agricultural production. Furthermore, to meet national energy targets, only 0.4% of UK land is needed, which is a minimal impact on national food production. Further detail is provided in Appendix 1 - Site Selection Assessment of the Planning Statement [EN0110020/APP/5.4] , and Chapter 4: Alternatives and Design Evolution [EN0110020/APP/6.4] . More detail on the loss of ALC is provided in Chapter 15: Socio-economics, Tourism, Recreation and Land Use [EN0110020/APP/6.15] .
Objection to the size & scale of the proposals	9	To produce enough energy to meet the grid connection, the Proposed Development requires a significant amount of land. However, the Proposed Development has been reduced significantly in response to consultation feedback, and is now 37% smaller in developable area and 18% smaller in total size than the original proposals. See the Design Approach Document [EN0110020/APP/5.7] for further information.

7.3 Feedback from s42 (1)(b) Local Authorities

- 7.3.1 The Applicant asked that consultees provide written responses to consultation under s42 of the PA 2008 by letter, email, or via the digital or paper questionnaire.
- 7.3.2 A total of 11 responses were received from consultees under s42(1)(b) of the PA 2008. The consultees that responded and a summary of their feedback and Applicant response is included in **Table 7.4** below, while the detailed comments made by consultees under s42(1)(b) and the Applicant's response to them, are included within **Appendix E**.

Table 7.4: Summarised feedback from s42(1)(b) Local Authorities

Consultee	Summary of response	Applicant response
Amber Valley Borough Council, Chesterfield Borough Council, Derby City, City of York Council, Kirklees Council, North Lincolnshire Council, Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council	No comments	Noted
Bolsover District Council	Support of heritage assessment of Barlborough House	Noted
City of Doncaster Council	Concerns about biodiversity, landscape and visual, heritage, land, air quality, traffic, noise and health	The Applicant has continued to engage with the host authorities to better understand concerns and potential issues. The relevant ES chapters have been drafted to complete full assessments of each of the topics raised [EN0110020/APP/6.5 – 6.18] . Further engagement with local authorities is ongoing, can be seen in Chapter 9 of this report.
North East Derbyshire District Council	Support for permissive paths, screening around major infrastructure, coal mine risk assessment, ecology, archaeology, landscape and flood risk assessments	
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Concerns about biodiversity, landscape and visual, heritage, traffic, noise, socio economics and health	The Potential Main Issues for Examination describes the remaining outstanding issues [EN0110020/APP/5.10] , and draft statements of common ground with each of the local authorities are included at [EN0110020/APP/5.11] .

7.4 Feedback from s42 (1)(d) – Persons with an Interest in Land

- 7.4.1 54 individuals submitted feedback as s42 (1)(d) - individuals with a land interest. Key topics are listed in **Table 7.5** below. The full details of the feedback and the Applicant response are included in **Appendix E**.

Table 7.5 Key themes in feedback from s42(1)(d) Land Interests

Key theme	Applicant response
Concern about landscape and visual impact	The Applicant has reduced the developable area by 37% in response to consultation feedback, to create offsets around homes, villages, and public rights of way in order to reduce potential visual impacts. Additionally the Applicant has proposed landscaping, including hedgerows and trees in key locations to provide a natural barrier to reduce visual impacts. While some significant impacts remain, the Applicant has mitigated these where possible. Chapter 7 includes the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment [EN0110020/APP/6.7] .
Concern about impact to heritage and archaeology, particularly Conisbrough Castle and the Roman Villa	The Applicant originally included the Roman Villa before it was a scheduled monument within the Order Limits presented in the non-statutory consultation. In the statutory consultation, after the villa had become a scheduled monument, the Applicant removed solar panels from this field. Following the statutory consultation, the Applicant has removed this field and the other nearby field from the Order Limits entirely. The Applicant has also reduced solar panels near Conisbrough so that the nearest panel is now 1.8km from the castle. The Applicant has consulted both SYAS and Historic England on the heritage assessment included in Chapter 8: Cultural Heritage and Archaeology [EN0110020/APP/6.8] . This chapter finds that there are no significant impacts to these assets.
Concern about the consultation being inadequate, including not being long enough and being inaccessible	The Applicant developed a comprehensive consultation and engagement programme that goes beyond the requirements in PA2008 and associated guidance and advice. The approach to consultation was set out in the SOCC, as described in Chapter 5 of this Report, to create opportunities for meaningful consultation with anyone who had an interest in the Proposed Development.
Concern about traffic and construction disruption	As a result of consultation feedback, the Applicant has made changes to the traffic access plan to shift the access point on the A630 to a different location, remove the access point near Clifton, and create a new access point near Treeton to help reduce traffic impacts at this location. The full traffic assessment is included in Chapter 13 Traffic and Transport [EN0110020/APP/6.13] and access points are shown on the Rights of Way, Streets and Access Plan [EN0110020/APP/2.4] .

7.5 Feedback from s47 – Members of the Community

- 7.5.1 This section sets out relevant responses for the purposes of s49 of the PA 2008, received from the local community, including a summary of the most common topics raised in feedback received.
- 7.5.2 The Applicant received 10,204 responses to the s47 consultation between 16 September and 28 October 2025. The responses received via each of the available methods is set out in **Table 7.6** below. This shows that there was a mix of digital responses and paper responses received through the Freepost address.

Table 7.6: Feedback from members of the community by method during the Statutory Consultation

Method of feedback	Number of responses
Digital responses	1,395
Online questionnaires	541
Emails	854
Printed responses	8,809
Paper questionnaires	81
Letters	199
Petitions	8,529
Total responses from the community	10,204

Questionnaires, emails and letters

- 7.5.3 A total of 541 online questionnaires and 79 paper questionnaires were submitted, for 620 total questionnaires that are considered in the following paragraphs. As set out in section 6.8.2, this included 8 questions seeking feedback on various aspects of the Proposed Development.
- 7.5.4 The questionnaire included a text box to enter the respondent's name, email and postcode. The heat map below in **Figure 7.1** shows the postcode data, to indicate where the respondent was located. This shows that feedback came from across the broader area and every settlement within the consultation zone, but that there were several 'hot spots' of feedback, particularly Braithwell near W1; Wickersley, Whiston, Treeton, Ulley, Aughton, North Anston in W2; and Kiveton Park, Harthill and Woodall in W3.

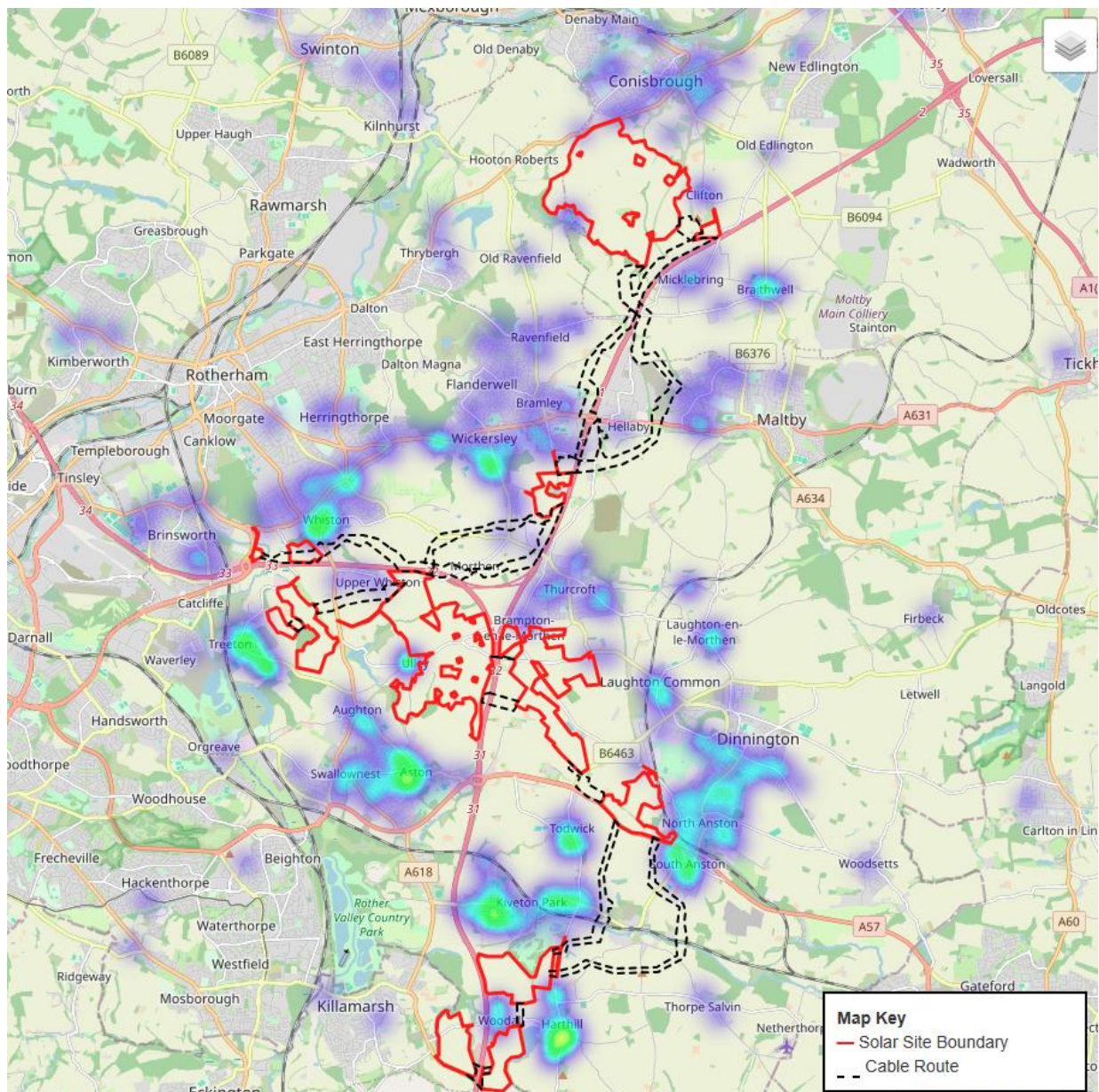


Figure 7.1: Heat map showing location of feedback from paper and online questionnaires

7.5.5 854 emails and 201 letters were received via the project inbox or the Freepost address. Key themes are included below in **Table 7.7**, and the detailed responses are included in **Appendix E**.

Table 7.7: Key themes from community feedback

Key theme	Applicant response
General objection	The Applicant notes the general objections to the Proposed Development and has sought to explain both the site selection process, and the design process that has led to significant changes to the Proposed Development in response to consultation feedback.
Concern about the loss of agricultural land	The Applicant has sought to avoid best and most versatile agricultural land through the site selection process, and then further reduced mitigation areas by 25% to ensure that these areas stay with their current land use to maximise agricultural production.
General concern about visual impact	The Applicant has reduced the developable area by 37% around homes, villages and public rights of way to reduce impacts, and proposed landscaping to help mitigate visual impacts. Chapter 7 includes the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. [EN0110020/APP/6.7]
Concern about total size of the project	The Applicant has sought to balance design principles to both maximise renewable energy production whilst also minimising potential impacts to the local community and environment. As a result, the developable area has been reduced by 37%, while the total project has been reduced by 18%. The Design Approach Document [EN0110020/APP/5.7] provides more information.
Concern of loss of wildlife	The Applicant has conducted ecological surveys to identify protected species and habitats, and set aside 458 hectares for environmental mitigation. Chapter 6: Biodiversity and Nature Conservation [EN0110020/APP/6.6] provides more information. The Proposed Development will deliver Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) well in excess of the statutory 10% requirement. The approach to BNG, including detailed enhancement proposals and a commitment to a minimum 30-year management period, is presented in ES Volume 3, Appendix 6.4: Biodiversity Net Gain Report [EN0110020/APP/6.20] .
Request for using rooftops, brownfields and other locations	The starting point for the Proposed Development was the grid connection at Brinsworth substation. The Applicant then sought land nearby that would be suitable for solar. While brownfields were assessed, they were not appropriate or large enough to meet the grid connection capacity. Rooftops are an important part to meet our national energy needs, but not enough on their own to meet targets. The Statement of Need [EN0110020/APP/5.9] sets out why the Proposed Development is needed in addition to the development of rooftop solar in order to meet the UK's energy targets.

Petitions

7.5.6 A total of 8,529 copies of petitions were received by the Applicant during the consultation period. There were 22 different petitions that highlighted various topics or villages, and the number of responses to each petition is included in **Table 7.8** below.

Table 7.8: Number of responses to each of the petitions

Petition name	Number received
Petition 1: Biodiversity	628
Petition 2: Consultation	1250
Petition 3: Flooding	561
Petition 4: Heritage	880
Petition 5: Landscape and Visual	733
Petition 6: Green Belt Objection	598
Petition 7: Micklebring	68
Petition 8: Treeton	290
Petition 9: Harthill	692
Petition 10: Roman Villa	585
Petition 11: National Highways	516
Petition 12: Environment Agency	543
Petition 13: Incomplete Assessments	465
Petition 14: Communities Under Threat	444
Petition 15: Ulley	52
Petition 16: OnPath Energy	159
Petition 17: Access and Routes	44
Petition 18: ALC	14
Petition 19: Safety for Schoolchildren	1
Petition 20: Industrial Scale	1
Petition 21: W1 As a Whole	3
Petition 22: Area 1	2

7.5.7 The petitions included space for the individual to write and sign their names and leave their postcode. **Figure 7.2** below maps the postcodes to show where petitions were sent from, and that this was predominantly in Conisbrough, but also the other villages across the vicinity of the Proposed Development. The response to each of the petitions is included in **Appendix E**.

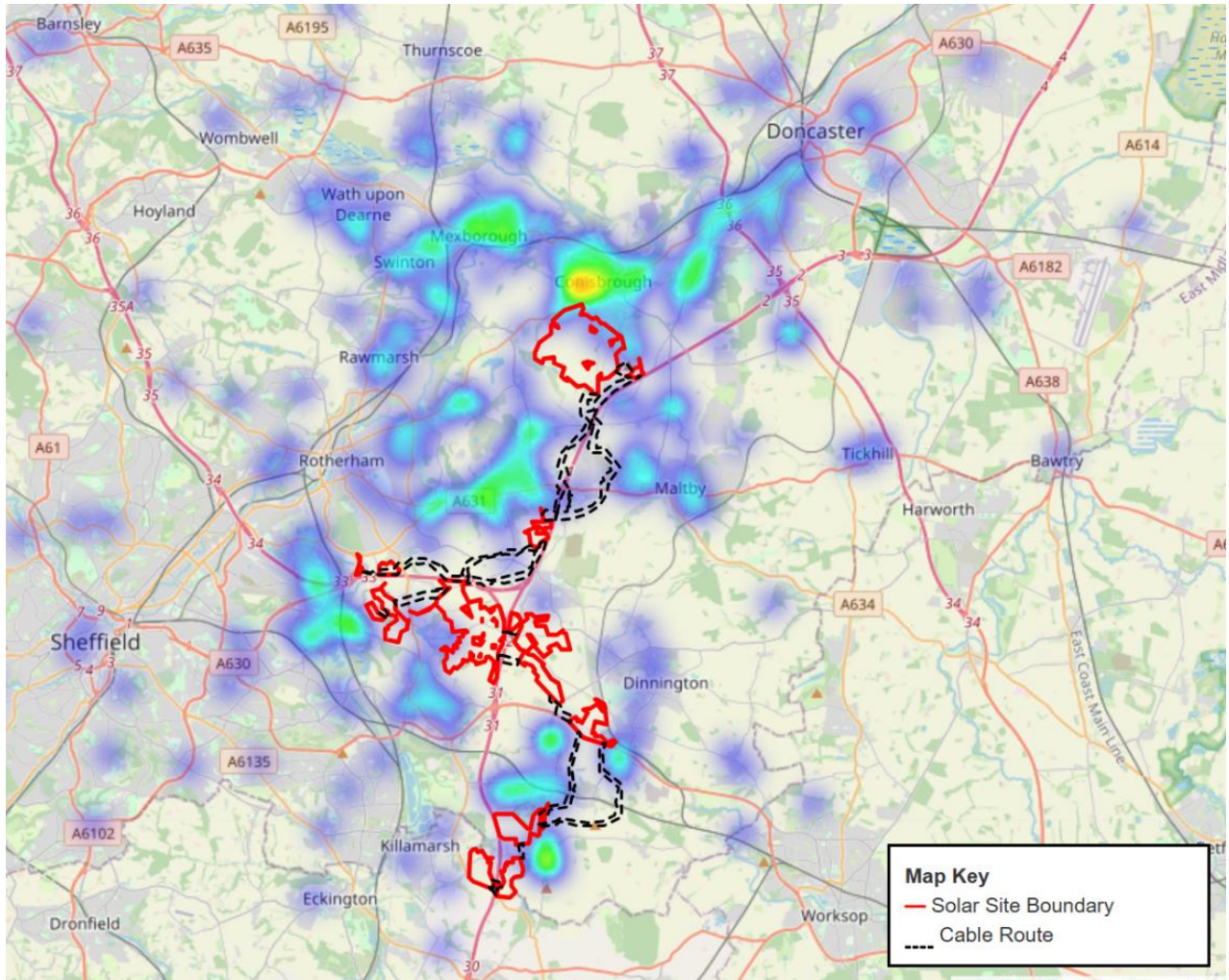


Figure 7.2: Heat map showing location of feedback from petitions

Spatial Feedback

7.5.8 Feedback received by email, letter, or questionnaire that included specific requests for changes to the masterplan are included in **Figures 7.3-7.5** and **Tables 7.9-7.11** below. The fields that were requested to have solar panels removed are shown in dark green, and the Applicant's response is shown in light green. The areas are marked on the masterplan as a base layer. Please note that this includes specific spatial feedback, rather than general feedback in opposition to the Proposed Development more generally.

Table 7.9 Spatial Feedback and Applicant Response for Whitestone 1

Requested change to solar area	Applicant Response	Design Change
Field north of Firsby	This has been removed to reduce visual impacts from properties in Firsby.	Yes
Field south of Hill Top Farm	This has been removed in part to create an offset from the property.	Yes
Field removed northeast of Hill Top Farm to Park Lane	This has not been removed as the existing offset is sufficient to reduce visual impacts.	No
Fields south of Park Farm Cottages to Conisbrough Lodge Farm	This has not been included as the existing offset is sufficient to reduce visual impacts.	No
Fields north of the PROW between Firsby and Mickelbring	This has not been included as the existing offset is sufficient to reduce visual impacts.	No
Fields between Park Farm Cottages and Conisbrough Park Farm	This has not been included as the existing offset is sufficient to reduce visual impacts.	No
Fields South of Conisbrough Park Farm	The land is substantially set back from residential areas and as such result in a limited impact. The change was therefore not included.	No
Fields northwest of Clifton	This has been included.	Yes
Fields south of Clifton	This has been included.	Yes

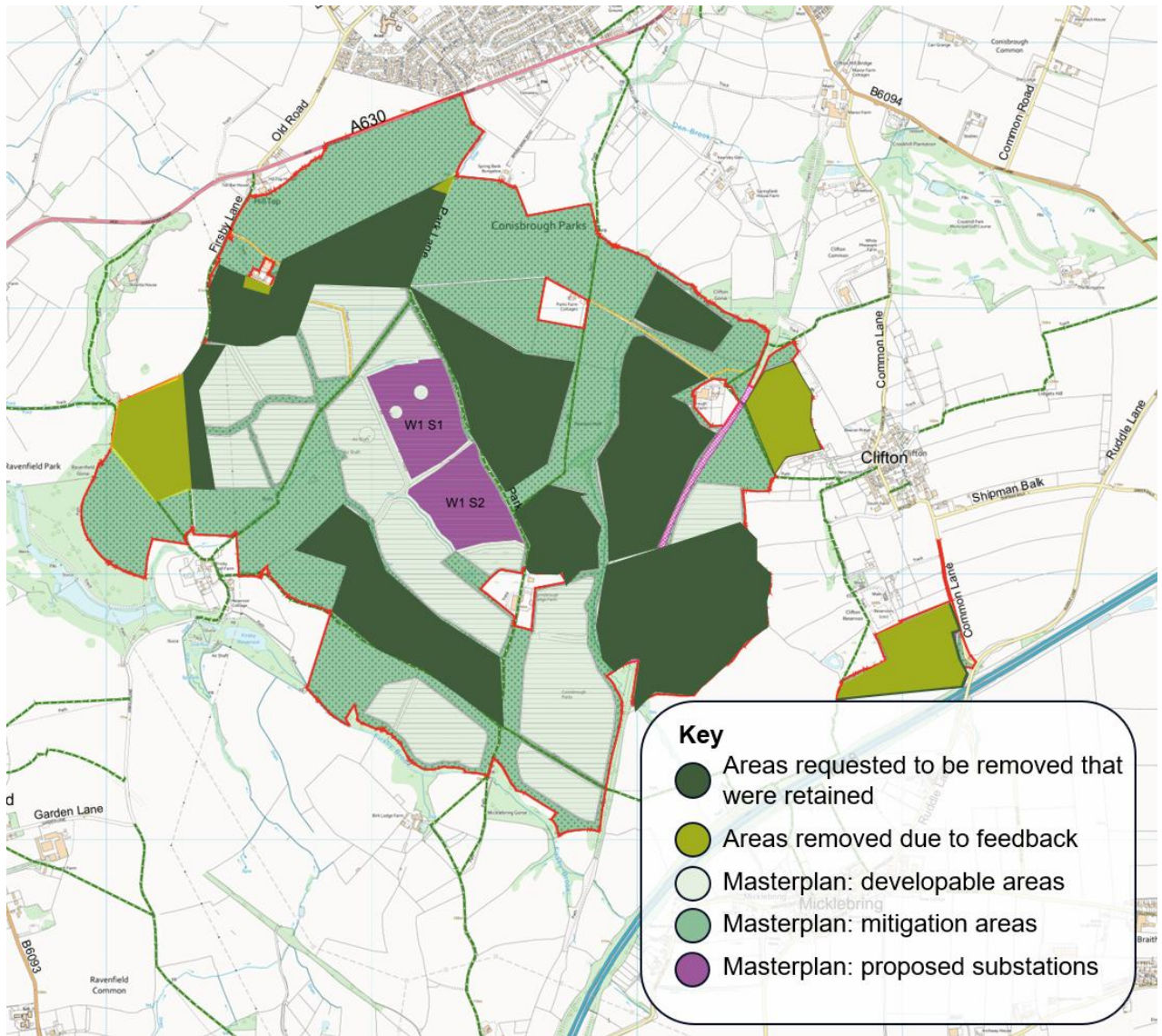


Figure 7.3: Spatial feedback received during the Statutory Consultation and applicant response Whitestone 1

7.5.9. In Whitestone 2, the spatial feedback and Applicant response is described in **Table 7.10** and shown in **Figure 7.4** below.

Table 7.10 Spatial Feedback and Applicant Response for Whitestone 2

Requested change to solar area	Applicant Response	Design Change
Request to remove all of the solar around Spa Farm and east of Treeton	The Applicant has removed an area of solar panels between Treeton and the crest of the hill to reduce visual impact from the village	Yes
Request to remove south-facing solar areas north of Ulley	The fields are in the background of northerly views from Ulley. Therefore, whilst visible, introduction of solar in the fields would be substantially set back from the settlement. The extent of solar in the land north of Ulley was reduced in previous iterations. No further reduction was made.	No
Request to remove fields south east of Ulley along Turnshaw Road	The Applicant has removed some of this area to create an offset from the property.	Yes
Request to remove fields east of Ulley	New landscape planting was introduced to minimise the appearance of new solar panels east of Ulley. Offsets from Penny Hill Lane were also introduced, as set out below, which contributes to the experience of entering and exiting the east of the village.	No
Request to remove panels along Penny Hill Lane for road safety	The Applicant has removed panels to create a larger buffer for increased road visibility.	Yes
Request to remove panels opposite Greenlands property along Long Lane	The Applicant has removed a smaller area to create an offset from the property.	Yes
Requests to remove panels along the A57 and west of Anston	The introduction of panels in this field would mostly be visible by motorists and therefore, whilst noticeable, would have a limited impact and therefore no change was made.	No

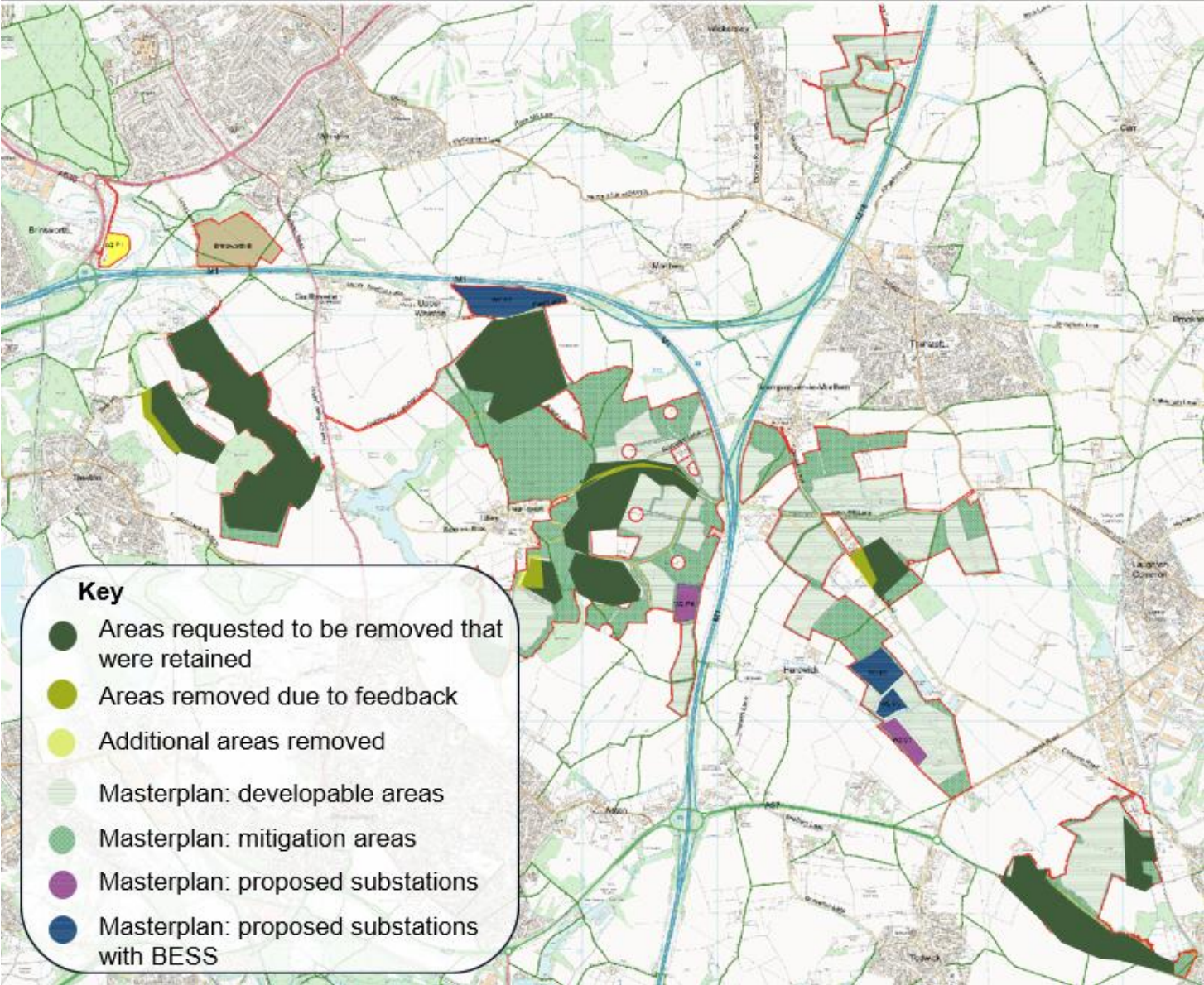


Figure 7.4: Spatial feedback received during the Statutory Consultation and applicant response Whitestone 2

7.5.10. In Whitestone 3, the spatial feedback and Applicant response is described in **Table 7.11** and shown in **Figure 7.5** below.

Table 7.11 Spatial Feedback and Applicant Response for Whitestone 3

Requested change to solar area	Applicant Response	Design Change
Request to remove the field north of Harthill, parallel to Harthill Lane	The Applicant has removed the south-facing portion of this hill which would be viewable from local homes	Yes
Request to remove the fields between Harthill and Woodall south of Kiveton Park	The Applicant has removed a portion of this area southwest of Kiveton Park to maintain a sense of openness experienced when travelling on the PRoW between the two settlements.	Yes
Request to remove the field between Harthill and Woodall south of Woodall Lane and along the Harthill Reservoir	The Applicant has removed the northern portion of this field to reduce visual impact from the reservoir and between the villages.	Yes

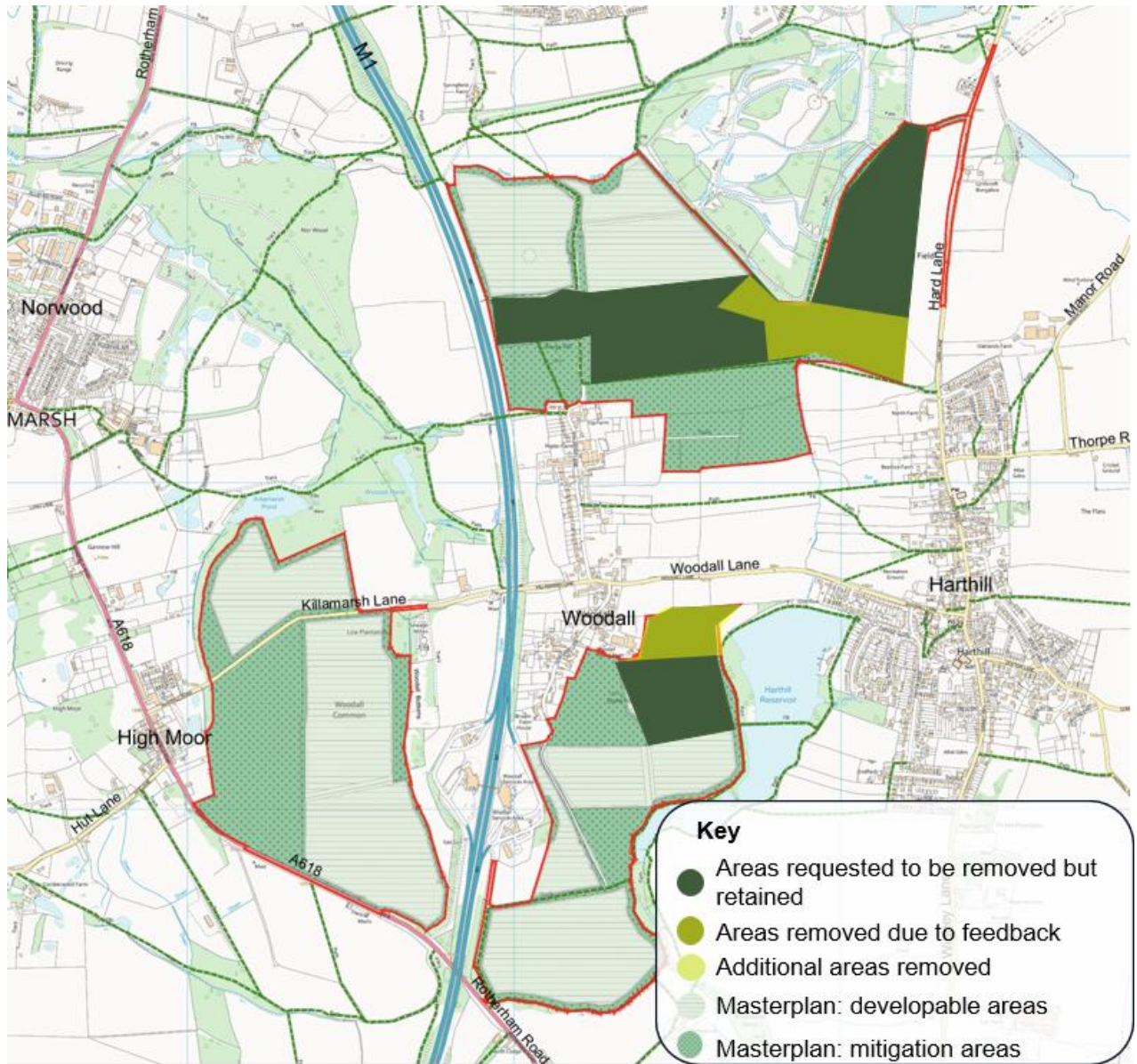


Figure 7.5: Spatial feedback received during the Statutory Consultation and Applicant response Whitestone 3

7.6 Feedback about the consultation itself

Accessibility of consultation materials

- 7.6.1 A key concern that was raised across all formats of feedback from stakeholders was about the accessibility of consultation materials, and in particular that paper copies of the draft ES were provided at a cost of £750 upon request.
- 7.6.2 To take part in the consultation, an individual needed to access consultation materials and provide their written feedback. To maintain the core value of accessibility, the Applicant produced a variety of consultation materials in various formats and accepted written feedback through a variety of methods.
- 7.6.3 The Applicant produced a variety of documents at various levels of detail for different audiences. Short, plain language summaries were available through newsletters, leaflets and consultation booklets. These materials were available for the general public and written in plain language for general audiences to comprehend. For those individuals that wanted more information, the non-technical summary of the draft Environmental Statement provided more information on the Environmental Assessments written in slightly more technical language, while the draft ES provided the full detail for those audiences that wanted the technical information. To take part in the consultation, the consultation booklets provided enough information to understand the Proposed Development and provide informed feedback, while the other documents were provided for those individuals that wanted more information, but were not essential to respond to the consultation.
- 7.6.4 Consultation materials were all provided digitally through the project website, whitstonesolarfarm.co.uk for download free of charge. These materials all remained available for reference throughout the preapplication period and continue to be accessible.
- 7.6.5 To ensure that individuals who did not have digital access could also view the consultation materials, the Applicant also provided printed copies of these materials. The consultation booklet, questionnaire, masterplans, SoCC, and non-technical summary of the Draft ES were all available at the public information events or by request. Many individuals did request paper copies of these materials, which the Applicant then printed and posted to them upon request. A total of roughly 1,000 copies of these materials were printed and made available to consultees.
- 7.6.6 A copy of the draft ES was available to view at the public events and was also available at no charge via USB by request. There were several requests for this material by USB. The Applicant stipulated that print copies of the draft ES would be available upon request for £750. The total print cost of the full ES, which is over 8,000 pages long was estimated at £10,000. Therefore, the £750 charge would be a heavily subsidised cost to help discourage excessive printing of this very large, technical document. After the last consultation event, the Applicant left the printed copy in the Ulley Village Hall so that it would be available for those individuals that wanted to read it.

Freepost address

- 7.6.7 Another common piece of feedback was concern about the Freepost address, which appeared in two slightly different formats on consultation materials. On most documents it was shown as ‘Whitestone Solar Farm Freepost SEC Newgate UK Local’ (all on one line), whereas banners at the public events showed the address split on two lines due to spacing. The Applicant received feedback in concern that the alternate format might not be deliverable.
- 7.6.8 The Applicant consulted Royal Mail and confirmed that the differences in formatting would not be problematic. Royal Mail explained that any post with a combination of the words ‘Whitestone’ or ‘Newgate’ generated in the Doncaster/Sheffield/Rotherham areas would be delivered to the correct address. In fact, many pieces of post that were addressed to alternative versions of the address were successfully delivered, as shown in **Figure 7.6** below.



Figure 7.6: Various pieces of feedback received with different Freepost addresses

Accessibility of information events

- 7.6.9 A common concern was raised about the location and number of consultation events with requests for more events located in more villages.
- 7.6.10 The public information events are only one component of the consultation, but an important part of the process. These in-person events allow individuals to view consultation materials and converse with the project team to understand more about the Proposed Development.
- 7.6.11 It is not possible to host public events in every village or hamlet near the Proposed Development. In many cases, there are not venues that would meet accessibility or size requirements to host large events. It would also not be proportionate to host this many events. Therefore, the Applicant developed a programme of events located at venues across the local area such that no one would need to travel more than roughly 15 minutes to access an event.
- 7.6.12 The locations of the events were informed by consultation and engagement throughout the development process. For the non-statutory consultation, the events were informed by initial conversations with the local authorities, as well as desk-based research to identify appropriate venues that would be near the solar site. In response to feedback from MP John Healey, the Applicant added an additional venue in Conisbrough. Based on the attendance at the first round of events, the Applicant identified new venues for the second round of consultation, which were discussed in the SoCC consultation with local authorities. MP Jake Richards requested an event in Todwick, which the Applicant included in the second round of consultation. During the course of the statutory consultation, MP Sarah Champion requested the addition of another event in Treeton, which the Applicant added. As shown in **Figure 7.7** below, the locations of events in the second round of consultation included some of the previous locations used in the first round, as well as new locations that had been identified through engagement with stakeholders.

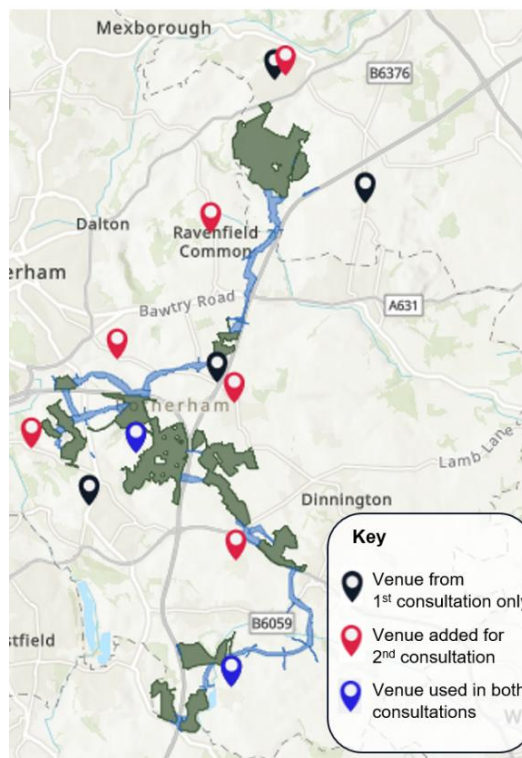


Figure 7.7: Locations of public events for both consultations

7.6.13 **Table 7.12** below shows that the public attendance at both consultations included 8 events, but the locations of events were shifted to different venues in the second round of consultation to result in slightly higher overall attendance.

Table 7.12: Comparison of public attendance at information events in both stages of consultation

Information event location	Attendance at non-statutory consultation	Attendance at statutory consultation
Whitestone 1	262	265
Lord Conyers Hotel, Conisbrough, Doncaster DN12 3LZ	165	N/A
Conisbrough Ivanhoe Centre, DN12 3JX	N/A	157
The Ruddle Centre, Doncaster Road, Braithwell, Rotherham S66 7BA	97	N/A
Ravenfield Parish Hall, S65 4PT	N/A	108
Whitestone 2	299	345
Ulley Village Hall, Main Street, Ulley, Sheffield S26 3YD	59	74
Aston cum Aughton Leisure Centre, Aughton Rd, Swallownest, Sheffield S26 4SF	67	N/A
Consort Hotel Consort Suite, 8 Brampton Road, Thurcroft, Rotherham S66 9JA	78	N/A
Consort Hotel Consort Suite, 8 Brampton Road, Thurcroft, Rotherham S66 9JA	95	N/A
Thurcroft Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall, S66 9DD	N/A	64
Treeton Village Centre, S60 5QT	N/A	82
Whiston Village Hall, S60 4HX	N/A	82
Todwick Village Hall, S26 1HJ	N/A	43
Whitestone 3	134	108
Harthill Village Hall, Harthill, Sheffield S26 7YL	134	108
Webinar	7	
Total attendance	702	718

7.6.14 Furthermore, members of the public were asked upon entering the public events to sign in with their postcode. This was a voluntary option, and not all attendees signed in, however, for those that did, **Figure 7.8** below shows the locations of where attendees lived. This demonstrated that not only did the local populations attend the events in their area, but individuals from villages without an event were able to travel to attend an event in the nearby area.

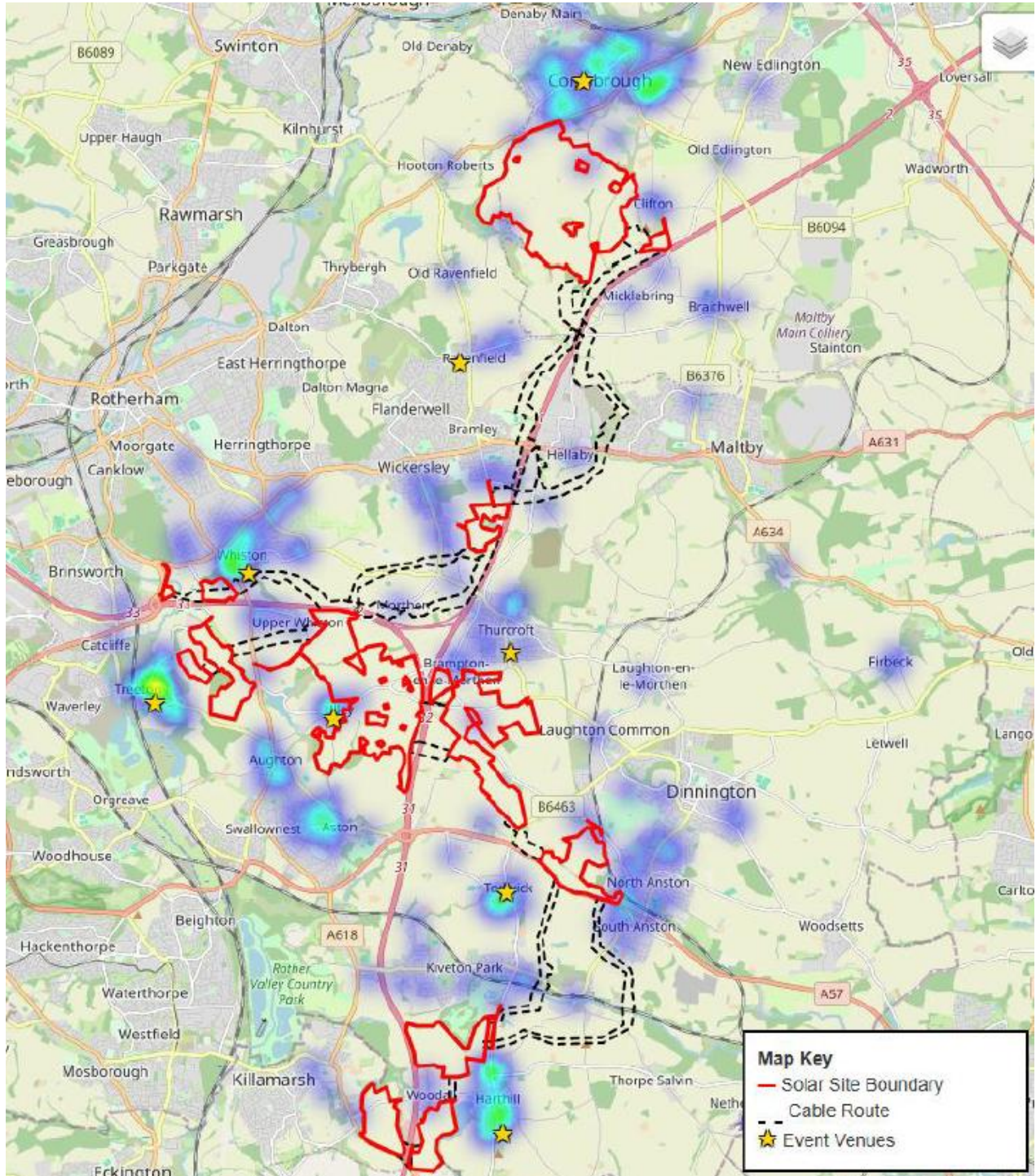


Figure 7.8: Heat map showing home locations of attendees at public events

7.7 Summary of changes after the Statutory Consultation

7.7.1 In response to feedback from the statutory consultation, the Applicant further reduced the solar areas around villages, homes, and sensitive areas. Across all three parts of the Proposed Development, this is a total reduction of 37% of the developable area, as compared to the original masterplan presented for the non-statutory consultation. Key changes include:

- Removal of the field north of Firsby;
- Removal of the field north of Clifton;
- Removal of the fields south of Clifton;
- Removal of the field north of Conisbrough Lodge Farm;
- Removal of panels between Treeton and the crest of the hill;
- Removal of panels south of Ulley and east of Turnshaw Road;
- Removal of panels opposite Greenlands property on Long Road;
- Removal of panels north of Harthill to the crest of the hill; and
- Removal of panels between Harthill and Woodall south of Woodall Road near Harthill Reservoir.

7.7.2 The Applicant also reviewed all of the land that had been set aside for environmental mitigation to determine if these fields were necessary. Wherever possible, any areas considered unnecessary have now been removed from the Proposed Development and will continue under their current land use to maximise agricultural production. This results in an 18% reduction in the total size of the Proposed Development, compared to the original masterplan presented for the non-statutory consultation. Key changes include:

- Removal of fields north and west of Firsby;
- Removal of fields south of Conisbrough and around Park Farm Cottages;
- Removal of fields northwest of Clifton, including the Roman Villa;
- Removal of fields south of Clifton;
- Removal of fields north of Ulley;
- Removal of fields south of Brampton-en-le-Morthen;
- Removal of fields between Harthill and Woodall north of Woodall Road; and
- Removal of field east of High Moor.

8 ADEQUACY OF CONSULTATION MILESTONE

8.1 Report

- 8.1.1 In 2024, the Government introduced new statutory guidance for NSIPs:
- Planning Act 2008: Guidance on the pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (published April 2024) [REF-3] and
 - Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus (updated 3 March 2026) [REF-8].
- 8.1.2 Both the Guidance and the Prospectus introduce a pre-application requirement for prospective applicants to record and submit to the Planning Inspectorate an Adequacy of Consultation Milestone (AoCM) Report which:
- establishes the consultation undertaken to date;
 - confirms that the commitments set out in the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) have been met; and
 - provides a summary of consultation responses received and how these responses are shaping the application.
- 8.1.3 The AoCM Report should enable the Planning Inspectorate and the host authorities to give early consideration of the adequacy of consultation undertaken by the Applicant to date, minimising the risk of non-acceptance at the acceptance stage. The AoCM Report and its appendices are included in **Appendix F**.
- 8.1.4 The AoCM Report provides an overview of how the Applicant has complied with pre-application statutory requirements set out in the PA 2008. This Report does not include detailed information about the non-statutory consultation or other engagement activities, which are included in Chapter 3 of the Consultation Report.
- 8.1.5 **Table 8.1** below provides a checklist to demonstrate that each of these requirements has been fulfilled and indicates where in the AoCM Report more information can be found. The accompanying appendices provide evidence of how each of the requirements has been met.

Table 8.1 Checklist of consultation requirements under sections 42-48 PA 2008

Requirement	Requirement met / comment
<p>Section 42(1)(a) - Did the Applicant consult such persons as may be prescribed?</p> <p>(The persons prescribed for the purposes of s42(1)(a) are the statutory bodies listed in Schedule 1 to The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 (as amended by the Infrastructure Planning (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2024) (the APFP Regulations)). [REF-2]</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Paragraphs 4.2.2-4.2.5 of the AoCM Report explain how the Applicant identified the relevant s42(1)(a) prescribed consultees.</p> <p>Paragraphs 4.2.15-4.2.21 of the AoCM Report set out that on 8 September 2025 the Applicant notified the prescribed consultees identified under s42, stating that responses must be received by 11:59pm on 28 October 2025.</p> <p>The list of prescribed consultees is included at Appendix C1.1. A copy of the letter sent to prescribed consultees is provided at Appendix C1.2.</p>
<p>Section 42(1)(aa) - Did the Applicant consult the Marine Management Organisation (MMO)?</p> <p>The MMO must be consulted in any case where the proposed development would affect, or would be likely to affect, any of the areas specified in s42(2) of the PA 2008.</p>	<p>Not Applicable</p>
<p>Section 42(1)(b) Did the Applicant consult each local authority that is within s43?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Paragraph 4.2.7 of the AoCM Report explain how the Applicant identified the relevant local authorities, which are listed in Table 4.2 of this Report.</p> <p>Paragraphs 4.2.15-4.2.21 of the AoCM Report set out that those local authorities were notified on 8 September 2025 of the Applicant's intention to submit the Application and of the requirement to consult.</p> <p>A copy of the letter of notification is included in Appendix C1.3 of this report.</p>
<p>Section 42(1)(c) - Did the Applicant consult the Greater London Authority (if in Greater London area)?</p>	<p>Not Applicable</p>
<p>Section 42(1)(d) - Did the Applicant consult each person who is within one or more categories set out in section s44?</p>	<p>Yes</p>

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Requirement	Requirement met / comment
	<p>Paragraphs 4.2.8-4.2.14 of the AoCM Report explain how all persons with an interest in land (PILs) were identified.</p> <p>Paragraphs 4.2.15-4.2.21 of the AoCM Report explain that the Applicant wrote to PILs on 8 September 2025. A copy of the letter is included in Appendix C1.4 of this Report.</p>
<p>Section 45(1)-(2) - Did the Applicant notify the persons consulted under s42 of the deadline for the receipt of responses to the consultation; and if so was the deadline notified 28 days or more starting with the day after receipt of the consultation documents?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Paragraph 4.2.15 of the AoCM Report explains that the Applicant provided notification on 8 September that consultation responses were due by 28 October, which is more than 28 days.</p> <p>Copies of the letters sent to the relevant consultees under s42 are provided at Appendices C1.2-C1.4 of the AoCM Report.</p>
<p>Section 46(1)-(2) - Did the Applicant supply information to notify the Planning Inspectorate (acting on behalf of the Secretary of State) of the proposed application; and if so was the information supplied to The Planning Inspectorate on or before the date it was sent to the s42 consultees? Was this done on or before commencing consultation under s42?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Section 4.3 of the AoCM Report sets out that the Applicant supplied information to notify the Planning Inspectorate in accordance with s46 on 8 September 2025, which was (i) on the same date as the notification to the s42 consultees and (ii) before the commencement of the s42 consultation on 16 September 2025.</p> <p>A copy of the s46 notification letter is provided at Appendix C2.1 of the AoCM Report and a copy of the s46 notification acknowledgement letter from the Planning Inspectorate is provided at Appendix C2.2 of the AoCM Report.</p>
<p>Section 47(1) - Did the Applicant prepare a statement setting out how the Applicant proposes to consult, about the proposed application, people living in the vicinity of the land?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>A copy of the Applicant's final Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) is provided at Appendix B3 of the AoCM Report.</p>
<p>Section 47(2) - Were the relevant local authorities consulted about the content of the statement?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Section 3.3 of the AoCM Report describes that relevant local authorities were consulted from 24 July – 22 August 2025.</p>

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Requirement	Requirement met / comment
Section 47(5) - Has the Applicant had regard to any responses received when preparing the statement?	<p>Yes</p> <p>Table 3.1 and 3.2 of the AoCM Report sets out the changes the Applicant made to the draft SoCC in response to feedback from the local authorities.</p>
Section 47(6) - Was the statement made available for inspection in a way that is reasonably convenient for people living in the vicinity of the land; and was a notice published in a newspaper circulating in the vicinity of the land which states where and when the SoCC could be inspected?	<p>Yes</p> <p>Section 3.4 of the AoCM Report sets out that the SoCC was published on the Applicant's project website on 10 September 2025 and notices were published in local papers on 11 September.</p> <p>A copy of the notices and the newspaper clippings are included in Appendix C3 of the AoCM Report.</p>
Regulation 12 of Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (the "EIA Regulations") - does the statement set out whether the development is EIA development; and does it set out how the applicant intends to publicise and consult on the preliminary environmental information?	<p>Yes</p> <p>Pages 8-9 of the final SoCC explain that the Proposed Development is EIA development for the purposes of the EIA Regulations and set out how the Applicant would publicise and consult on the preliminary environmental information.</p>
Section 47(7) - Has the Applicant carried out the consultation in accordance with the proposals set out in the statement?	<p>Yes</p> <p>Section 4.4 of the AoCM Report sets out how the community consultation was carried out in line with the final SoCC. Appendix F provides evidence that the commitments within the final SoCC have been carried out.</p>
Regulation 4(2) of the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 (the "APFP Regulations 2009") - Did the Applicant publicise the proposed application in the prescribed manner set out in regulation 4(2) of the APFP Regulations?	<p>Yes</p> <p>Paragraphs 4.4.3-4.4.6 of the AoCM Report explain that the Applicant produced a combined s47/s48 notice. The notice is included at Appendix C3.1 and the newspaper clippings are included at Appendix C3 of the AoCM Report.</p>
Did the s48 notice include the required information set out in regulation 4(3) of the APFP Regulations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • The published combined s47/s48 notice, supplied at Appendix C3.1 of the AoCM Report, contains the required information as set out below:

Requirement	Requirement met / comment
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The name and address of the applicant (page 1, paragraph 1); • a statement that the applicant intends to make an application for development consent to the Secretary of State (page 1, paragraph 1); • a statement as to whether the Proposed Development is EIA development (page 2, paragraph 2); • a summary of the main proposals, specifying the location or route of the Proposed Development (page 1, paragraphs 4-6; and • a statement that the documents, plans and maps showing the nature and location of the Proposed Development were available on a website maintained by or on behalf of the applicant (page 2, paragraph 6); • the address of the website where the documents, plans and maps may be inspected (page 2, paragraph 6); • a telephone number which can be used to contact the applicant for enquiries in relation to the documents, plans and maps (page 4, paragraph 1); • the latest date on which those documents, plans and maps will be available for inspection on the website (being a date not earlier than the deadline on page 3, paragraph 3 (page 2, paragraph 6); • whether a charge will be made for copies of any of the documents, plans or maps and the amount of any charge (page 2, paragraph 6); • details of how to respond to the publicity (page 3, paragraph 2); and • a deadline for receipt of those responses by the Applicant, being not less than 28 days following the date when the notice is published (page 3, paragraph 2).
<p>Regulation 13 of the EIA Regulations - Has a copy of the s48 notice been sent to the EIA consultation bodies and to any person notified to the Applicant?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>A copy of the combined s47/s48 notice was sent to the relevant consultation bodies as part of the s42 consultation.</p> <p>A sample of the s42 consultation letter provided at Appendix C1.2 of the AoCM</p>

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Requirement	Requirement met / comment
	Report, confirms a copy of the combined s47/s48 notice was enclosed.
Section 49(2)-(3) - Has the Applicant had regard to any relevant responses to the s42 and s47 consultations and s48 publicity?	<p>Yes</p> <p>Chapter 4 of the AoCM Report describes how the Applicant has reviewed and taken account of the responses received during the statutory consultation as February 2026.</p> <p>Further engagement with relevant prescribed consultees will continue and shape how this feedback is addressed in the Application documents. The detailed responses to feedback are included in the Consultation Report and its Appendix E.</p>
Section 50 – Has the Applicant had regard to the relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State about pre-application procedure?	<p>Yes</p> <p>As covered in paragraphs 1.1.4 and 1.1.5 of the AoCM Report and Appendix I of the Consultation Report.</p>

8.2 LPA Engagement and Responses

8.2.1 The Applicant shared a copy of the AoCM Report with the host authorities on 4 February 2026. Between 25-27 February 2026, CDC, RMBC and NEDDC responded with their feedback on the AoCM Report. **Table 8.2** below includes the feedback from the LPAs and the Applicant’s response.

Table 8.2. Local authority feedback on the AoCM and Applicant Response

Response	Applicant Response
City of Doncaster Council	
<p>Compliance with Statutory Requirements CDC notes that the AoCM report sets out, in comprehensive detail, how the Applicant approached consultation under Sections 42, 47 and 48 of the Planning Act 2008. Based on the information presented, the Council is satisfied that the statutory requirements have been met and that CDC was appropriately identified and consulted as a host authority.</p> <p>Engagement with CDC on the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) CDC confirms that engagement has taken place with the Applicant since 2024, including during the preparation of the SoCC and throughout the subsequent statutory consultation stages.</p> <p>Community Consultation CDC acknowledges the consultation undertaken by the Applicant, including leaflet distribution, in-person events, online engagement tools and accessibility measures. The Council is therefore satisfied that the Applicant has complied with the agreed SoCC.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes this comment.</p>
<p>However, Conisbrough Parks Parish Council has written to CDC expressing significant concerns regarding the community consultation that has taken place to date. This is included in full as an Appendix to this response. The Ward Councillors for Whitestone 1 have also been contacted to seek their feedback on the experiences of residents involved in the consultation and CDC reserves the right to share any such further feedback once received. Furthermore, CDC understands from liaison with Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, another Host Authority, that they received feedback raising significant</p>	<p>The Applicant has responded to each of the items included in the Conisbrough Park Parish Council submission at the end of this table.</p>

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Response	Applicant Response
<p>concerns regarding the overall quality and effectiveness of the consultation, and that consequently this has been perceived as inadequate by stakeholders. Based on the above, CDC has concerns regarding the efficacy of the consultation that has been undertaken.</p>	
<p>Consideration of Feedback: CDC notes that the Applicant has made changes to the draft masterplan following the Statutory Consultation, and these are provided at Figure 4.8 of the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone Report. However, CDC does not consider that these minor changes meaningfully address the detailed feedback provided in the Statutory Consultation response whatsoever. Moreover, the meetings that have subsequently been held between the Applicant and the Host Authorities have not sought to address that feedback in any substantive way. CDC made clear through this process the conclusion that Whitestone 1 should be removed from the Order limits completely. It is disappointing that so little has been done by the Applicant to properly acknowledge this position. Indeed, this lack of acknowledgement is reflected by the fact that the changes that have been incorporated in no way meaningfully address the objections raised</p>	<p>The Applicant notes that CDC’s statutory consultation feedback requested the removal of all of Whitestone 1 from the Proposed Development. The Applicant has sought to balance national policy statements that call for increased solar development [REF 9, REF 10], with the need to design a Proposed Development that minimises potential significant impacts. To fully remove Whitestone 1 would impact the viability of the project as a whole, thus this was not seen as a reasonable request. However, the Applicant has reviewed feedback from CDC and other stakeholders and members of the community to identify the specific locations that could lead to significant impacts. Across the entire Proposed Development, this has resulted in a decrease of 37% of the developable area, which is a significant reduction. In Whitestone 1, this is an even larger reduction of 49% compared to the initial proposals. This includes removing fields around Firsby, Clifton, Micklebring, Conisbrough, and isolated dwellings near the Order Limits. These reductions were made in response to specific feedback received by the community and technical stakeholders to address potential impacts to visual and biodiversity, as well as traffic and access. See Design Approach Document [EN0110020/APP/5.7] for more information. The Applicant has sought to engage with CDC and other parties throughout the pre-application period to further understand CDC’s feedback and explain how the Proposed Development is responding to it.</p>
<p>Equally, some of the fundamental questions CDC raised through the Statutory Consultation response concerning the relative contribution that Whitestone 1 would make to energy generation when viewed against the very harmful impacts arising to the special, historic landscape have not been acknowledged or answered by the Applicant, despite repeatedly raising this with them.</p>	<p>Throughout the development process, the Applicant has considered energy output alongside consultation feedback and the results of environmental assessments at the field level. This has led to the final masterplan that is included in the DCO application as a Proposed Development that is viable, produces a significant amount of renewable energy to meet national energy</p>

Response	Applicant Response
	<p>targets, while minimising potential significant impacts. This design process is further described in the Design Approach Document [EN0110020/APP/5.7]. Chapter 7 – Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment [EN0110020/APP/6.7] includes the assessment of landscape character.</p>
<p>CDC does not consider that dialogue in these respects has been altogether constructive and therefore questions whether the engagement to date has been meaningful. For example, on topic specific discussions regarding heritage and historic landscape matters, very little was understood on the part of the Applicant of the special character of the historic landscape comprising Whitestone 1, other than their focus on intervisibility with Conisbrough Castle and its immediate setting. This is a fundamental oversight, betraying a clear misunderstanding of the wider historic landscape and CDC consequently does not consider the Applicant has taken reasonable steps to understand or engage with its objections in this respect.</p>	<p>The Applicant has continued to engage with the local authority throughout the development of the project, incorporating feedback into the evolving environmental assessments.</p> <p>The Applicant received a significant amount of feedback from the community about the impact to Conisbrough Castle, which required appropriate consideration. This resulted in removing the panels south of Conisbrough to create a larger offset from this heritage asset. The Applicant notes that the area has changed over the years but has remained relatively uninhabited and with some access to the open spaces. See Chapter 8 [EN0110020/APP/6.8] for more on the assessment of the castle and Roman Villa and Chapter 7 [EN0110020/APP/6.7] on the assessment of landscape character.</p>
<p>Furthermore, it is notable that, despite the Host Authorities requesting sight of the draft DCO on various occasions, no draft has yet been provided. Officers are therefore concerned that the Applicant’s intention to submit the DCO to PINS in May 2026 will provide very limited time for meaningful review by CDC prior to submission. This is not conducive to effective collaborative working and is contrary to the Government’s guidance on early and ongoing engagement with local authorities during the NSIP process. We therefore reserve the right to make representations to PINS on this point in due course.</p>	<p>The Applicant is aware that the local authority had requested to see the draft DCO. Though this is not a requirement, the Applicant has agreed to share the relevant sections once they are finalised and ready to be shared. On 8 May 2026, the Applicant provided the relevant sections to CDC and RMBC.</p>
<p>Conclusion CDC is satisfied that the Applicant has addressed the statutory duties under sections 42, 47 and 48 of the Planning Act 2008. However, CDC has concerns about</p>	<p>The Applicant welcomes the acknowledgement that the consultation met requirements. As detailed in this document, the Applicant has gone above and beyond to not just meet the necessary requirements for consultation, but to provide meaningful</p>

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Response	Applicant Response
<p>how meaningful the engagement has been on fundamental aspects of the project. CDC will provide a full statutory adequacy of consultation response when formally requested by the Planning Inspectorate under section 55.</p>	<p>opportunities for engagement and consultation that have led to significant changes to the Proposed Development.</p>
<p>Conisbrough Parks Parish Council (Appended to the CDC response)</p>	
<p>Over-reliance on Digital Platforms: The process relied heavily on online materials, excluding elderly residents in communities such as Conisbrough Parks, Conisbrough, Ravenfield, Hooton Roberts, Micklebring, Clifton, and Firsby. Local Experience: In Conisbrough Parks, many residents are elderly or lack reliable internet access, making it extremely difficult for them to participate meaningfully in a process so heavily dependent on digital communication. These points were brought to the attention of the Parish Council by residents who felt excluded and unable to access key documents or submit their views.</p> <p>Limited Information Provided: The Parish Councils did not receive all the documentation with information that needs consideration prior to this response. For example, the 'Draft Environmental Statement' was only available by request at an event and refers to numerous appendices that have not been circulated by Green Nation. As a statutory consultee, the Parish Council did not receive necessary documents despite written emailed requests. Most of the meaningful documents required for an informed consultation response were only available online and should have been provided free of charge to all statutory consultees, including this Parish Councils.</p>	<p>The Applicant provided both digital and printed copies of materials and accepted both digital and written feedback to consult with members of the community with varying digital access. Printed copies of consultation materials were available at all of the in-person events described in section 6.9 of this Report or by request. A total of approximately 1,000 printed copies were requested and posted or delivered. Similarly, as described in section 7.5 of this Report, nearly 9,000 pieces of feedback were received in paper form, either through the paper feedback form or other letters or petitions sent to the Freepost address. This allowed for those that did not have digital access to engage with the consultation to learn more and submit their feedback.</p> <p>All information was made available through the project website, including all of the appendices. A full copy of the draft ES was available in the in-person events described in section 6.9.</p> <p>The Applicant notes that the parish council requested large, printed copies of the masterplan, which were posted to the parish council, and no further requests for materials were received.</p>
<p>Technical Complexity Barrier: The Environmental Statement uses impenetrable technical jargon that the Non-Technical Summary fails to adequately translate for ordinary residents. For example, the Non-Technical Summary describes "Moderate to Major Adverse (Significant)" effects in technical language that obscures serious harm and fails to explain in plain English how residents' daily lives will be affected. Non-Technical summary inadequacies: The summary downplays significant impacts, describing 'Moderate to Major Adverse</p>	<p>The Applicant developed a variety of materials for the Statutory Consultation for various audiences. The main consultation document for the public was the Consultation Booklet, which is included in Appendix D. This document is written in plain, non-technical language for the general public and includes enough information to respond to the consultation.</p> <p>The draft ES is a technical document that is drafted for consultation with technical bodies. It is written in technical language that has a</p>

Response	Applicant Response
<p>(Significant)' effects in technical language that obscures serious harm. It fails to explain in plain English how residents' daily lives will be affected and omits key information about heritage impacts due to Roman villa designation. Technical document complexity: The Environmental Statement chapters are impenetrable to ordinary residents, using expert-level language without adequate explanation. The volume and complexity, hundreds of pages, requires professional expertise to understand, and information is scattered across multiple volumes and appendices, making cross-referencing difficult. Residents reported that even the so-called Non-Technical Summary was difficult to interpret, and that attempts to seek clarification from the developer were met with generic or unhelpful responses.</p>	<p>specific meaning, for example, 'moderate to major adverse effects' is EIA terminology to describe the level of impact. The non-technical summary is written for general audiences in less technical language with more detail on the EIA. Both the draft ES and the non-technical summary were made available for the general public but were not necessary to engage with the consultation.</p>
<p>Prohibitive Costs: The Non-Technical Summary states that hard copies of the full Environmental Statement cost "up to £750", creating an unacceptable financial barrier to accessing essential information.</p>	<p>The draft ES is roughly 8,000 pages long and costs approximately £10,000 to print. The Applicant asked for consultees to pay £750 for a printed copy of the draft ES to help reduce unnecessary paper waste and costs. The draft ES was available for free to download from the website or by USB. Several consultees did request a full copy by USB, which the Applicant produced and posted to them. Additionally, one paper copy of the draft ES was available at the public events described in section 6.9.</p>
<p>Furthermore, the consultation documents miss several points and there are many inaccuracies in the details and maps.</p>	<p>The Applicant used an OS map as the base layer for the masterplans. Feedback from the consultation highlighted that this base map was out of date and omitted a housing development near Harthill, so the Applicant updated the base layer in the updated masterplan [EN0110020/APP/2.7]. The Applicant is not aware of other inaccuracies in the maps.</p>
<p>Lack of Inclusivity and Accessibility: The second consultation events did not include one in Clifton, despite Whitestone (Green Nation) having previously attended meetings in an available village hall at the initial stage last year. Residents without internet access or transport to Conisbrough or elsewhere have not been treated in a fair and considerate manner, a matter brought to the attention of Parish Councillors and City of Doncaster Ward Councillors. This failure is</p>	<p>The Applicant developed a programme of public events that were designed to be at various locations across the consultation zone. It is not proportionate to have an event in every village within the consultation zone, and many villages or hamlets do not have adequate public spaces that meet accessibility and size requirements. Clifton, Firsby, and Hooton Roberts do not have public spaces that are large enough and meet accessibility and safety requirements for large public events. The Applicant has</p>

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Response	Applicant Response
<p>unsatisfactory given that Whitestone 1 has a direct impact on landscape views from the village. Insufficient Public Events: Only seven public events were held for a development affecting multiple communities across nearly 2,000 hectares.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor Geographic Coverage: Smaller communities like Clifton (part of Conisbrough Parks), Firsby, and Hooton Roberts were poorly served, forcing residents to travel significant distances. • Limited Accessibility: Events were poorly timed for working families, with insufficient weekend options. • Conisbrough Parks Impact: The nearest event for many Conisbrough Parks residents was held several miles away, with no provision for those with limited mobility or without private transport. This further disadvantaged those already struggling to access information. 	<p>used the church in Clifton for several small meetings and has also met with residents of Firsby multiple times in a resident's home, but these are not spaces for large public events (See sections 3.5, 3.10 and 6.10 of this Report). The locations that were selected were informed by desk research to identify locations no more than roughly 15 minutes' drive, as well as through consultation on the SoCC. (See chapter 5). See paragraph 7.6.12 for more information.</p> <p>The timing of the events was designed such that events would be at different times of day and days of the week, with one longer event on a Saturday. In response to CDC in the development of the SoCC (see section 5.3), the Applicant altered the proposed timing of these events so that the next nearest event would be a completely different time of day, so that if a person could not make one event due to timing, the nearest event would be a different time of day. Thus the event in Conisbrough occurred on a Saturday from 10-3pm, and the next nearest event was in Ravenfield on a Wednesday evening from 3-7pm.</p>
<p>Communications to residents via post in the parish were not consistent, some received correspondence and details of consultation whilst others did not, parishioners reporting these concerns to Parish Councillors. This demonstrates exclusion of residents and inadequacy of their consultation and engagement, especially given that a number of elderly residents don't have access to electronic communication.</p>	<p>To notify the community of the consultation, the Applicant posted a leaflet to the consultation zone shown in Figures 6.4-6.6. Every property within this area was sent the same information.</p> <p>Additionally, in response to feedback during the consultation, the Applicant decided to add an event in Treeton, and sent a letter to the community around Treeton to notify this additional event. A copy of this letter is included in Appendix C.</p>
<p>Consultation Response Time: The consultation response time of six weeks during September and October 2025 was of great concern, given the volume and number of documents to consider, read, and process, in addition to the 'Consultation Booklet'. This is particularly pertinent when considering that the first consultation between November 2024 and January 2025 was eleven weeks with less information to read and process. This matter was brought to Whitestone's notice by numerous individuals and recognised organisations, including Ward Councillors and MPs. The Parish Council</p>	<p>The PA2008 includes a requirement to consult with local communities for a period of at least 28 days. The Applicant developed a programme for consultation that would be six weeks, rather than the minimum 4-week requirement to allow for additional opportunities to engage.</p> <p>The Applicant planned for the non-statutory consultation period to occur over an 8-week time period, to account for the fact that it would be over Christmas and New Years bank holidays. In response to feedback from the community and MP, the Applicant added</p>

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<p>raised extreme concern that the time to read and process documents for the second consultation was far too short, not allowing for full discussion at meetings and to formulate this written response. As a Parish Council, Councillors requested an extension in a letter to Jonathan Thompson (CEO of Green Nation) earlier in the consultation (which was not responded to), and again in a letter in response to the consultation of 23rd October, specifically requesting that the consultation period be extended until 28th November 2025. ...</p> <p>Timeline inadequacy: Insufficient time for communities to coordinate responses to complex development. ...Despite requests from Conisbrough Parks Parish Council and several other parish councils across the consultation area, Whitestone Net Zero Limited declined to extend the consultation period. Given the geographical scale of the proposed development and the number of communities affected, an extension would have been both proportionate and reasonable. The refusal to allow more time has limited the ability of residents and local councils to fully understand and respond to the proposals.</p>	<p>an additional event in Conisbrough and then extended the consultation another two weeks to ensure that this community had sufficient time to respond to the consultation after the event. (See Chapter 3).</p> <p>For the statutory consultation period, the Applicant purposefully avoided holidays and school term breaks so that the six-week consultation period would be sufficient.</p>
<p>Heritage Assessment Rendered Obsolete: The heritage assessment is now fundamentally flawed. Historic England recently designated the Roman Villa at Conisbrough Parks as a Scheduled Monument after the heritage assessment was completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Underestimated Significance: The assessment fails to account for this site, described as "undoubtedly one of the best surviving and most important sites in the region". • Inadequate Reassessment: This designation should have triggered a complete consultation restart, not just cosmetic updates. • Local Context: The Parish Council notes that the Roman Villa is a site of exceptional local and national importance, and its new status was not properly communicated to residents or reflected in consultation materials. This omission deprived the community of the opportunity to comment on 	<p>The Roman Villa became a scheduled monument in July 2025 prior to the Statutory Consultation. Its status as a designated monument is considered in the draft ES in Chapter 8- Cultural Heritage and Archaeology, as well as the final ES Chapter [EN0110020/APP/6.8].</p>

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<p>a key heritage issue.... and outdated heritage assessments</p>	
<p>Despite receiving 940 responses in the first consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantive Concerns Dismissed: Community objections about fundamental site unsuitability were treated as minor design issues. • Cosmetic Changes Only: Claimed design changes failed to address core problems raised by residents. • No Genuine Dialogue: Technical responses failed to engage with community concerns. 	<p>The Applicant reviewed and considered the feedback from the non-statutory consultation, which is included in Appendix A. This resulted in significant changes to the project design, including a reduction of roughly one quarter of the solar panel areas. These areas were identified specifically through consultation feedback, either from site visits to near neighbours, concerns about visual impacts on the public rights of way or near villages, as well as the general concern about the total size of the Proposed Development. The changes after the non-statutory consultation are detailed in section 3.8. The Applicant then made further reductions after the statutory consultation, which are detailed in section 7.7. Altogether, this resulted in the solar areas being reduced by 37% compared to the initial proposals, in response to both general and specific feedback about the size of the Proposed Development. See the Design Approach Document [EN0110020/APP/5.7].</p>
<p>The consultation fails to meet statutory requirements for meaningful community engagement.</p>	<p>As detailed in the Adequacy of Consultation Milestone Report and this report, the Applicant has met all of the statutory requirements for consultation which are set by PA 2008, regulations, guidance and advice, as well as the requirements of the SoCC. This engagement has gone above and beyond requirements to provide opportunities for meaningful engagement, which has resulted in significant changes to the Proposed Development. See Appendix F and I for the detailed description of how the consultation met requirements.</p>
<p>Consulting on incomplete surveys</p>	<p>EIA regulations [REF-1] specify that the Applicant should consult on preliminary environmental information. The purpose of consulting at this stage is to help fact-check initial results at an early stage in the development process, which it is still possible to change the approach. The statutory consultation included this information in the form of the draft ES, so that feedback at this stage could inform the final ES which is being submitted with the DCO application.</p>

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<p>The council notes that several key documents were updated or replaced during the consultation period, causing confusion and making it difficult to know which information was current or relevant.</p>	<p>During the consultation, the Applicant chose to add an event in Treeton. This was the only change from the original planned consultation approach and therefore the only inconsistency in consultation materials. To ensure clarity, the Applicant notified residents around Treeton of the additional event and updated the website to include the full list of events.</p>
<p>Concerns regarding the Freepost address were raised early in the second consultation period, yet no correction was issued. The address advertised by Whitestone - 'Whitestone Solar Farm, Freepost SEC Newgate UK Local' was confirmed by the Royal Mail's Response Services Team as non-compliant with the Freepost name licence held by SEC Newgate UK. The correct format should have been Freepost SEC NEWGATE UK LOCAL' with the project name placed separately. Royal Mail confirmed that items addressed using the incorrect format were initially flagged for surcharge or potential return, and delivery depended on manual intervention by Sheffield Mail Centre staff. This process relied on items being posted from the 'local catchment' even through the consultation area extends over 20km and crosses multiple mail regions and counties. As a result, responses from some parts of the area or from national organisations may not have benefited from local intervention, risking lost or delayed submissions. The administrative error undermines the accessibility and reliability of the statutory consultation process required under section 42 of the planning act 2008 and raises serious doubt as to whether all public feedback has been properly received and recorded. Whitestone's unwillingness to acknowledge or correct the issue, even when alerted by Parish Councils and by Members of Parliament suggests a dismissive approach to local engagement and procedural accuracy.</p>	<p>As described in section 7.6, the freepost address worked throughout the consultation period and received nearly 9,000 pieces of written feedback. The Applicant was made aware of the concern about the address and contacted Royal Mail for clarity. They advised that differences in capitalisation, spacing or order of words would not impact delivery, and the additional words to specify the project name prior to the address were not relevant. As a result, any letter that included key words 'Whitestone' or 'Newgate' was flagged and delivered to the project team, recorded and processed. This message was then communicated back to the relevant parish councils and Members of Parliament.</p>
<p>Whitestone's (Green Nation) consultation represents a fundamental failure to engage meaningfully with affected communities as required by law. The systematic exclusion of residents through cost barriers, technical complexity, incomplete information and</p>	<p>As detailed above, the Applicant provided a mix of digital and printed materials and accepted both digital and written feedback so ensure that individuals could engage with the consultation, regardless of their digital access. The core consultation material was</p>

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Response	Applicant Response
<p>rushed timelines violates both the letter and spirit of democratic participation in planning decisions. A development of this scale, affecting multiple historic communities and heritage assets, deserved proper consultation that genuinely includes and engages with those whose lives will be permanently affected.</p>	<p>the consultation booklet, which was written for the general public, while more technical documents were also available for interested parties. The Applicant has shown how the consultation met the requirements for consultation, but also provided additional opportunities for engagement throughout the pre-application period for meaningful engagement with local stakeholders and members of the community.</p>
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	
<p>Compliance with Statutory Requirements RMBC notes that the AoCM report sets out, in comprehensive detail, how the Applicant approached consultation under Sections 42, 47 and 48 of the Planning Act 2008. Based on the information presented, the Council is satisfied that the statutory requirements have been met and that RMBC was appropriately identified and consulted as a host authority.</p> <p>Engagement with RMBC on the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) RMBC confirms that constructive engagement has taken place with the Applicant since 2024, including during the preparation of the SoCC and throughout the subsequent statutory consultation stages. The AoCM Report accurately reflects input and the corrections sought during this process.</p> <p>Community Consultation RMBC acknowledges the consultation undertaken by the Applicant, including leaflet distribution, in-person events, online engagement tools and accessibility measures.</p> <p>The Council is therefore satisfied that the Applicant has complied with the agreed SoCC.</p>	<p>The Applicant appreciates and notes this statement that the consultation met requirements.</p>
<p>However, it is worth noting at this juncture, significant concerns have been raised by Parish Councils, local residents, and elected Ward Members. These concerns indicate that, while statutory compliance may have been achieved, the quality and effectiveness of the consultation has been perceived as inadequate by these stakeholders. Issues reported to officers include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation process lacked transparency, clarity, and genuine community engagement. 	<p>All consultation materials were drafted to be clear and easy to understand. In some places, the Applicant could not answer a question about specific details, such as the final locations of the substations, because those decisions had not yet been made and would be decided in consideration of consultation feedback.</p> <p>The Applicant engaged genuinely and transparently throughout this process. The public events described in section 6.9 were staffed by multiple members of the project team, including specialists that could answer</p>

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	detailed questions about the Proposed Development. More than 700 members of the public attended events during both rounds of consultation. Additionally, the Applicant met with near neighbours during each round of consultation. These conversations have helped shape the Proposed Development throughout the two stages of consultation and ongoing engagement described in this report.
Flyers resembled junk mail and were frequently discarded; some also contained incorrect Freepost addresses, raising concerns about whether responses were received	If individuals failed to open the leaflets that were posted to them, there were other methods to notify the community of the consultation, as described in Chapter 6. There was no issue with the Freepost address, as described above, which ultimately roughly 9,000 pieces of post.
Not all directly affected residents received communication about consultation events.	The consultation zone shown in Figure 6.4-6.6 was drawn to include properties within 1km of the Order Limits, and then further expanded to include entire communities. This is a standard approach to developing a consultation zone, considering both the zone of theoretical visibility as well as the level of development in the area that would reduce visibility from further distances. This consultation zone was consulted on through the development of the SoCC as described in Chapter 5. All addresses within this zone were sent multiple letters and leaflets during the pre-application stage as described in Chapter 3 and Chapter 5, however, there were also other methods to notify individuals, as described in Chapter 6.
Only a small number of drop-in sessions were held across a very large geographical area, many during working hours, with no formal presentations.	The Applicant hosted 8 public events during the statutory consultation, as described in section 6.9 and further in section 7.6 of this Report. The events were held in locations across the entire project site, including multiple events outside of traditional 9-5 working hours. The events were held as drop-in sessions where individuals could come view materials and ask questions of the project team. This format is more conducive to conversations with individuals to understand their unique concerns, and better accommodates individual schedules, rather than a fixed start time.
Consultation events were poorly advertised and offered limited opportunity for meaningful participation	The consultation events were advertised through a variety of methods, including the direct mail to the consultation zone, as well

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	as notices in newspapers, site notices, and emails to community groups and elected officials as described in section 6.5. During these events, individuals had the opportunity to ask questions of the project team and submit their written feedback.
Treeton was initially excluded from both consultation rounds and only included after pressure from the local MP.	As described above, there is no requirement to host an event in every village. Instead the Applicant developed a programme of public events in locations that would be convenient to the entire consultation zone. There were two planned events near to Treeton, at Whiston and Ulley, roughly 4 miles and 2.5 miles away, respectively. The village of Treeton was included in consultation zone and did receive the notification leaflet alerting them to these events. In addition, the Applicant added an event in Treeton at the request of the MP.
Whitestone representatives showed poor local knowledge, dismissive attitudes, and were unable to answer key questions regarding flooding, traffic, biodiversity, and community benefits.	The events described in section 6.9 were staffed with representatives of the project team. Each individual had a working knowledge of the project as a whole, as well as detailed knowledge of their issue specialism. If a member of the team could not answer a specific question which was outside of their expertise, they clearly indicated this and introduced the individual to the correct team member. Due to the early stage of design, there were some questions that could not be answered because the decisions had not yet been made and would be informed by feedback from this consultation.
After two years of planning, key infrastructure locations (cable corridors, battery storage, substations) remain undetermined and were not clearly presented.	Consultation materials clearly described the potential locations for the substations, batteries, and Cable Corridors and explained that the Applicant was asking for feedback on these options in order to select the final locations. The consultation materials also clearly described the design process, to explain that some decisions would be made during the detailed design process if the project is consented.
Technical documentation was extensive, but the consultation period was too short for residents and organisations to review and understand its implications	The main document for the public consultation was the Consultation Booklet, included in Appendix D . This document is written for the general public in plain, non technical language and has sufficient information to respond to the consultation. Additional technical documents were available for anyone who wanted to view

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	them, but were not necessary to respond to the consultation. The six-week consultation period is longer than the 28-day requirement that is set by the PA2008.
No consideration was given to extending the consultation period despite issues with incorrect or inconsistent addressing on leaflets and display materials.	There was no issue with the Freepost address, as described above and in section 7.6, and therefore no reason to extend the consultation.
Engagement with both Inner Zone and Outer Zone communities was inadequate, leaving many residents unaware of the scale and impact of the development.	The Applicant did a variety of things to notify the community within the consultation zone and the wider community in the broader area of the Proposed Development and consultation. This includes a leaflet to the consultation zone, site notices, notices in newspapers, emails to the Keep Informed List, elected officials and community groups. This notification was detailed in the SoCC, which was consulted upon with the local authorities.
Communication relied heavily on unclear maps and hard-to-read materials, making it difficult for residents to identify local impacts.	The consultation booklet was the main document produced for the community to understand the Proposed Development and its potential impacts. It was written in plain language and included a number of maps and graphics to clearly explain the text.
No information has been provided on the Community Benefit Fund.	The consultation booklet included two pages about the proposed community benefit package, including the funding amount and proposed allocation system for consultation. There was also a banner in the public events that described the proposed benefit package and explained how this would continue to be refined through ongoing stakeholder engagement. The booklet and banners are included in Appendix D .
The scale of the scheme, approx. 3,400 acres of Green Belt is not reflected in the limited and superficial consultation undertaken.	The total size of the project is clear in all materials including the consultation booklets, masterplans, and website materials (see Appendix D). The Applicant has provided an extensive consultation which meets requirements in statute, regulation, guidance and advice, as detailed in the AoCM Report and Appendix I .
Parish Council(s) believe the overall consultation process is unfit for purpose and should be declared null and void.	The Applicant has shown in this chapter and the AoCM report that the consultation met requirements and went above and beyond to provide opportunities for meaningful engagement, which resulted in significant changes to the project design.
Statutory Notice Failure - No Section 42 notice has ever been served on joint legal owner of Springvale Farm, despite the	The Applicant served the s42 notice to the owners of Springvale Farm, using the due diligence process outlined in Chapter 6 to

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<p>owners clear status as a statutory consultee. Whitestone were informed in October 2025 that the site forms part of a residential home and is an active Camping and Caravan Club Certified Site. Despite invitations to engage, telephone calls on 17 and 18 February went unanswered. A representative from Whitestone subsequently attempted entry without notice, contrary to the owners 48-hour requirement issued on 9 February. The representative opened the owners private residential gates and drove into their yard, blocking access. The follow-up email acknowledged a communication issue but not the perceived civil trespass. The engagement to date has not reflected statutory obligations, accurate mapping, or the operational realities of the Certified Site. The current access strategy is not legally or technically viable.</p>	<p>identify land interests. The Applicant has demonstrated that this individual is not listed on the land registry as having an interest in this land. The Applicant notes that there was a miscommunication regarding access to complete surveys on this site, however, this is not related to the s42 notice.</p>
<p>Consideration of Feedback RMBC notes that the Applicant has made changes to the draft masterplan following consultation feedback, including reductions in solar panel areas and refinements to parcels of land adjacent to Rotherham communities. RMBC welcomes these changes and will continue to examine the evidence base when further submission documents are provided within the Environmental Statement (ES) and draft DCO.</p>	<p>This is noted and appreciated.</p>
<p>RMBC will, in particular, scrutinise detailed assessments on transport, landscape, green belt, heritage, ecology, agricultural land quality, and other relevant environmental matters through the Local Impact Report and subsequent stages. Officers welcome continued constructive dialogue with the Applicant’s technical advisors as the Environmental Statement is finalised and note that there are particular areas of concern, such as the LVIA where no meetings have yet taken place since the Council’s initial comments on the draft ES.</p>	<p>The Applicant has continued to meet with the local authority officers on topics following the Statutory Consultation, as described in Chapter 9. This includes a meeting specifically on the LVIA on 3 March 2026. The Applicant further notes that many conversations were delayed due to the fact that both local authorities had a significant delay in appointing a specialist consultant for many topics. The Applicant continued to meet with planning officers each month during this period. The Applicant welcomes the opportunity to continue to meet on key topics to address key concerns.</p>
<p>Furthermore, RMBC wishes to highlight that, despite requesting sight of the draft DCO on various occasions, no draft has yet been provided. Officers are therefore concerns that the Applicant’s intention to submit the</p>	<p>The Applicant notes this request. While there is no requirement to share the draft DCO in advance, the Applicant has since shared the relevant portions on 8 May 2026.</p>

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<p>DCO to PINS in May 2026 will provide very limited time for meaningful review by RMBC prior to submission. This is not conducive to effective collaborative working and runs counter to the Government's guidance on early and ongoing engagement with local authorities during the NSIP process. We therefore reserve the right to make reps to PINS on this point in due course.</p>	
<p>Conclusion Although the Council recognises that the applicant has endeavoured to satisfy the statutory consultation obligations pursuant to section 42 of the Town and Country Act, at this point due to the failure to serve the appropriate notice at Springvale Farm the Council's position must be that statutory consultation requirements have not been fully satisfied, unless you can provide appropriate evidence that service has legally taken place. Furthermore, RMBC wishes to emphasise the considerable dissatisfaction expressed by some local communities regarding the quality of the consultation experience. Subject to Data Protection legislation, this information can be provided and will be submitted to PINS in due course. RMBC also remains concerned regarding the absence of the draft DCO and the implications this may have for constructive pre-submission engagement.</p> <p>RMBC will provide a full statutory adequacy of consultation response when formally requested by the Planning Inspectorate under section 55.</p>	<p>The Applicant has provided evidence that the required notices to the owners of Springvale Farm as well as all statutory consultees were issued as required.</p> <p>As described above, the Applicant has proven that the consultation not only met requirements but went above and beyond to provide a meaningful consultation with the community that led to significant changes to the Proposed Development.</p>
<p>North East Derbyshire District</p>	
<p>Thank you for consulting North East Derbyshire District Council on the above. I am writing to inform you that the council considers the consultation is adequate, however we do request that any future consultations are also sent to the Killamarsh West Ward members: Cllr Stephen Clough, Cllr Clive Fletcher and Cllr Carol Lacey as originally requested by us.</p> <p>Otherwise we appreciate the work you have done to inform the local community and the changes made to the scheme following the feedback received.</p>	<p>The Applicant contacted the ward members to offer a meeting but had no response.</p>

9 TARGETED CONSULTATION AND ONGOING ENGAGEMENT

9.1 Targeted Consultation

9.1.1 In response to feedback from the Statutory Consultation and other project developments, the Applicant identified locations where the draft Order Limits needed to be increased to address potential issues, as described in **Table 9.1** below.

Table 9.1 Summary of changes in the Targeted Consultation

Type of change	Description of works	Number of changes
Road Safety	Additional land is proposed in multiple locations along local roads to comply with highway safety standards where construction vehicles would access the Proposed Development. The works could include trimming hedges or roadside vegetation for safe visibility, installing temporary road signage and/or temporary speed limits during construction.	25
Cable routes	In several locations, we are proposing to alter the cable routes that would connect the solar areas together and into the National Grid. All cabling would be underground, and after works are complete, normal activities could resume. In all cases, these changes create alternative options for the cable to be located, rather than additional cable routes.	8
Drainage works	To the west of the proposed main substation, the Applicant proposes to enter a neighbouring piece of land to connect into an existing drainage point.	1
Landscaping	In several locations, new land is proposed for landscaping in order to reduce potential glint and glare impacts on local roads. Works in these areas would including planting trees, hedgerows, or other landscaping and visual barriers if needed to ensure road safety.	3
Total		37

9.1.2 As described in paragraphs 6.2.12-6.2.14, the Applicant used the same land referencing methods to identify land interests under Category 1, 2, and 3 of section 44. The Applicant identified a total of 111 land interests, of which 74 were category 1, 13 were category 2, and 24 were both category 1 and 2. No one was identified under category 3.

- 9.1.3 The Applicant also identified the host parish councils for the changes and relevant statutory bodies as listed in **Appendix G1.4**. Only the identified consultees were considered relevant for this Targeted Consultation.
- 9.1.4 The Applicant conducted a Targeted Consultation from 4 March – 3 April 2026 on these changes. To notify the consultees of the consultation, the Applicant wrote to the consultees by post and included a pre-paid envelope and questionnaire to provide feedback. The notice described that the consultees could find more information on the proposed changes through a leaflet located on the project website. Copies of the leaflet, questionnaire and website are included in **Appendix G1.1-1.3**.
- 9.1.5 Consultees could provide their written feedback by 11:59pm 3 April 2026 through the following methods:
- Through the online feedback form located on the project website whitstonesolarfarm.co.uk;
 - By email to the project inbox info@whitstonesolarfarm.co.uk; or
 - By paper feedback form with the pre-paid envelope.
- 9.1.6 The Applicant received the following feedback, listed in Table 9.1 below with the Applicant Response. The detailed feedback and applicant responses are included in **Appendices G2.1-2.3**.

Table 9.2. Responses to Targeted Consultation by consultee type

Consultee type	Count
s42(1)a	16
s42(1)b	2
s42(1)d	4

- 9.1.7 Throughout the development process, the Applicant continued the land referencing as described in sections 6.2.12-6.2.14. New land interests were identified after the Statutory Consultation through this ongoing due diligence. The Applicant hosted one final Targeted Consultation with these individuals to ensure that they had been properly notified and consulted on the Proposed Development.
- 9.1.8 The Applicant identified 38 new land interests, of which 34 were category 1 and 4 were category 2. There were no category 3 interests identified.
- 9.1.9 These individuals were sent a letter by post that explained the dates of the consultation were 16 April to 18 May 2026, and provided a link to the project website with information about the updated masterplans and draft ES. Copies of these notices are included in Appendix G. No responses were received.
- 9.1.10 Through ongoing due diligence, the Applicant identified addresses for two Affected Persons with a Category 2 interest in the Order Limits (as defined under Sections 44(2) and 57(2) of the PA 2008). During the Statutory Consultation, the Applicant erected an unregistered/unknown site notice at the appropriate location but on 11 May identified mailing addresses for these Affected Persons. As the discovery was just before submission of the Application, it was not possible to complete a full 28-day consultation, however, the Applicant is now engaging with these persons in accordance with the Planning Inspectorate's guidance on new interests in land identified very shortly before the intended submission of an application [REF-3]. These Affected Persons have been included in the **Book of Reference [EN0110020/APP/4.3]** and will receive a Section 56 notice if the Application is accepted for Examination.

9.2 Engagement after the Statutory Consultation

- 9.2.1 To update the community and other stakeholders on how the design had been updated in response to feedback from the consultation, the Applicant conducted a round of engagement which included updates to the project website to show the updated masterplan and key changes. These masterplans are included in **Appendix H1.1-H1.3**.
- 9.2.2 On 4 March 2026, the Applicant sent a newsletter to the Keep Informed List, showing the updated masterplan and explaining key changes and next steps. On the same day, the Applicant published the newsletter, updated masterplans and change plans to the website, and the updated sections of the project website can be seen in **Appendix H2.1**. The newsletter can be found in **Appendix H3.1**. On 6 March 2026, the Applicant sent the same project update newsletter to host and neighbouring parish councils, host council Cabinet Members, Planning Committee members and ward members. A copy of this email is included in **Appendix H3.3**.
- 9.2.3 On 9 March 2026, the Applicant sent an email to host parish councils to offer a briefing on 23 March 2026, which can be found in **Appendix H3.4**. The Applicant provided a short update on the masterplan and next steps and then allowed parish councillors to ask questions. The represented parishes are listed below, and the topics raised are included in **Table 9.3** below.
- Anston;
 - Braithwell with Micklebring;
 - Bramley;
 - Conisbrough Parks;
 - Firsby Residents Association;
 - Harthill with Woodall;
 - Hooton Roberts;
 - Ravenfield;
 - Treeton;
 - Wales; and
 - Wickersley.

Table 9.3: Key issues raised from parish council meeting 23 March 2026

Issue Raised	Applicant Response
Questions about access for Whitestone 1, the impact of a newly consented housing development and the implication of removing the access point near Clifton	The Applicant explained that all access would be through the access point on the A630, but that this location had been moved slightly down the road to avoid cumulative impacts with the housing development. No traffic will travel along Park Lane, but will use internal access tracks instead.
Questions about construction traffic traveling through Micklebring.	The Applicant explained that no construction traffic was planned to travel through Micklebring, and that the CEMP would include restrictions that require the lorry drivers to stay on strict routes with no deviation.
Question about potential traffic impacts to a nearby cemetery in Wickersley.	The Applicant explained that through the development of the CEMP and access strategy, sensitive receptors would be identified to reduce potential impacts where possible.

9.2.4 On 27 March 2026, the Applicant emailed the ward and cabinet members to offer a briefing on 8 April, and the invite can be found in **Appendix H3.5**. The attendees are listed in **Table 9.4** below. The project team explained the updated masterplan and changes made since the Statutory Consultation.

Table 9.4: Attendees and key issues raised from ward member meeting 8 April 2026

Ward member and ward	Issues raised and Applicant response
Cllr Rachel Reed, Conisbrough	<p>Question around whether the Proposed Development would go ahead if the proposed National Grid substation does not get consented or constructed for any reason. The Applicant explained that the Proposed Development would still proceed, but would use the existing substation</p> <p>Question if the masterplan is now final, the Applicant explained that yes, this is the masterplan that will be submitted in the Application, but it is possible that further changes could be made through the examination process,</p> <p>Question if landowners would still receive compensation for land removed from the Order Limits, the Applicant explained that any land that was no longer part of the Order Limits would remain with the current landowner. Details of commercial agreements however will not be made public.</p>
Cllr Mick Bower, Sitwell, Cllr David Nevett, Edenthorpe and Kirk Sandall	None

9.2.5 The Applicant also continued to meet with key stakeholders to understand feedback from the consultation, explain how the project was addressing these concerns and other developments. The list of stakeholder meetings is included below in **Table 9.5**. This is current as of 13 April 2026, but meetings are still ongoing.

Table 9.5: Ongoing stakeholder engagement after the Statutory Consultation

Date	Stakeholder	Topic of meeting
04-Nov-25	Doncaster - Traffic and Transport	Concerns raised around long peak hours giving a higher risk to construction vehicles.
06-Nov-25	National Highways	Discussions around peak hours, oCTMP timing, and glint and glare.
14-Nov-25	Environment Agency	Monthly EA Meeting and provided a general project update.
26-Nov-25	Monthly LPA Meeting	Discussions around PPA procurement, an overview of statutory consultation and concerns around cumulative impacts.
26-Nov-25	PINS Meeting	Discussions around programme update, LPA engagement, an overview of statutory consultation and next steps.
18-Dec-25	North-East Derbyshire Council	Introduction to the project, discussion on next steps and topic specific meetings.
04-Dec-25	Network Rail	Initial meeting to discuss cable route crossings of NR assets and BAPA process.
12-Jan-26	RMBC, YWT, S&RWT, South Yorkshire Mayoral Authority	Meeting to discuss Brampton Common LWS. RMBC still object to the Proposed Development being located within the LWS and Whitestone provided some suggestions in terms of mitigation / opportunities.
14-Jan-26	Doncaster and Rotherham LPAs	Discussion about Cumulative Assessment.
14-Jan-26	Harmony Energy	Initial discussion regarding alternative for cable route 2A.
14-Jan-26	Canal and River Trust	Discussion about key concerns related to Order Limits crossing into C&RT land. Other statutory consultation comments were also discussed.

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Date	Stakeholder	Topic of meeting
16-Jan-26	Mining Remediation	No key concerns beyond development on top of old mine entries / shafts. Discussion about conservative zones of influence to be assessed within the application.
19-Jan-26	Natural England	Confirmed no HRA required; ALC surveys remain as potential concern; assessment of SSSIs to be revisited in ES to confirm no connectivity.
21-Jan-26	Doncaster LPA	Discussion of statutory consultee comments raised regarding biodiversity. Particular focus given to BNG considerations and CDC's desire to ensure what is proposed is realistic.
22-Jan-26	Derbyshire County Council - Highways	Discussion on highway elements.
22-Jan-26	CDC PRoW	Discussion on PRoW elements associated with CDC PRoWs.
26-Jan-26	Network Rail	Discussion regarding PPs, land rights, business clearance and undertaking.
26-Jan-26	Northern Powergrid	Discussion regarding route 1A technical requirements and interaction plans.
26-Jan-26	Doncaster and Rotherham LPAs	Discussion of statutory consultee comments raised regarding heritage, including providing details of design changes with relevance to heritage.
28-Jan-26	Environment Agency	Discussion about design updates for the Proposed Development and general project updates.
28-Jan-26	Historic England	Dynamic Setting Assessment required for Conisbrough Castle. Photography required from Barlborough Hall.
30-Jan-26	Sally Jameson MP	Discussion about community benefit package, looking for support particularly for Micklebring which is not on the gas mains. Supportive of jobs and skills plan
03-Feb-26	NEDDC	Provided overview of heritage and archaeology approach to NEDDC.
03-Feb-26	NEDDC	Provided overview of LVIA approach to NEDDC.

CONSULTATION REPORT

Date	Stakeholder	Topic of meeting
04-Feb-26	City of Doncaster and Rotherham MBC Monthly Meeting	Discussion about Adequacy of Consultation Milestone, and an overview of Targeted Consultation, including showing the updated masterplans.
04-Feb-26	North East Derbyshire District Council	Discussion about Adequacy of Consultation Milestone, and an overview of Targeted Consultation, including showing the updated masterplans.
06-Feb-26	Exagen	Discussion regarding project interactions and crossing route for Cable Corridor 2A.
06-Feb-26	South Yorkshire FRS	Discussion regarding outline Battery Safety Management Plan.
06-Feb-26	Cadent	Introductory discussion regarding DCO scheme and interaction points.
09-Feb-26	NGET	Meeting to discuss the grid connection point into the proposed new substation on Long Lane
10-Feb-26	NEDDC	Provided overview of biodiversity approach to NEDDC.
24-Feb-26	Environment Agency	Discussion regarding proposed approach to FRA for where panels are located in Flood Zones (including climate change allowance).
25-Feb-26	City of Doncaster and Rotherham MBC Monthly Meeting	Discussion regarding next steps, Targeted Consultation update and external procurement process.
27-Feb-26	PINS	Project Update Meeting 4 – focusing on design changes made following Statutory Consultation
03-Mar-26	Jake Richards MP	Update on the masterplan after the statutory consultation and introduction to the Targeted Consultation and next steps.
04-Mar-26	Rotherham LPA	Discussion of statutory consultation comments related to LVIA, and discussion of mitigation and photomontages.
04-Mar-26	SYAS	Discussion of overarching archaeological investigation strategy, including providing an update on ongoing investigations, proposed zoning, and design changes.

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Date	Stakeholder	Topic of meeting
09-Mar-26	MP John Healey	Update on the masterplan after the statutory consultation and introduction to the Targeted Consultation and next steps
11-Mar-26	Environment Agency	Update on delivery of documents; general project catch-up
17-Mar-26	City of Doncaster and Rotherham MBC + Stantec	Indicative Masterplan Update
17-Mar-26	National Highways	Discussion about glint and glare planting mitigation.
23-Mar-26	PINS	Project Update Meeting 4 - focusing on environmental updates.
23-Mar-26	Parish councils	All host parish councils to update on masterplans.
25-Mar-26	LPA Monthly Meeting	Stantec were involved in this monthly meeting, focused upon the key areas for discussion pre-submission (highlighting that not all comments can be included to date) and also discussed the examination PPA.
01-Apr-26	Jobs and Skills Meeting with CoD and RMBC	Initial discussion around jobs and skills, focusing on how it will feed into the Outline Skills and Supply Chain Management Plan
10-Apr-26	SY Police	Update on how the updated design addresses their feedback on fencing and access

10 CONCLUSIONS

10.1 Overview

- 10.1.1 As described in this Report, the Applicant developed and implemented an ongoing engagement programme throughout the pre-application period, including two consultations on the project as a whole and two additional targeted consultations. Chapter 3 describes the non-statutory consultation activities, feedback and resulting changes to design, Chapter 5 describes the process of developing the approach to community consultation through consultation with local authorities, and Chapters 6 and 7 describe the statutory consultation activities, feedback and resulting changes to design. Chapter 8 describes how the consultation met all of the requirements of PA2008, and Chapter 9 explains the additional targeted consultations and further engagement activities.
- 10.1.2 This final chapter summarises the engagement and consultation as a whole with various stakeholder groups, across the entire pre-application stage. Along with **Appendix I**, this chapter describes how the consultation not only met requirements in statute, regulations, guidance and advice, but went further to create opportunities for meaningful consultation and ongoing engagement to result in significant changes to the Proposed Development.

10.2 Gunning Principles

- 10.2.1 In addition to the consultation requirements of PA 2008 and associated guidance, the Gunning Principles define standards for consultation. The Applicant has demonstrated each of these principles through the consultation and engagement that has been described in this document. **Table 10.1** below outlines the Gunning Principles and how the Applicant complied with them.

Table 10.1: Gunning Principles and compliance

Gunning Principles	Evidence of Compliance
Formative stage: Consultation must take place when the proposals are still at a formative stage and final decisions have not yet been made	The Applicant held two rounds of consultation on the project as a whole. The non-statutory consultation included high level proposals for the land under consideration for the Proposed Development. Feedback from this consultation resulted in significant changes to the masterplan around where the solar panels could be located to minimise potential impacts, resulting in a reduction of one quarter of this area. During the statutory consultation, the Applicant presented the updated locations for the solar areas, as well as the options for Cable Corridors, substations, and batteries. Feedback from this consultation helped inform the final locations for these components and led to further reductions in the solar areas. Feedback at each stage came at a time when the design was still flexible and could be updated to address potential concerns. See the Design Approach Document [EN0110020/APP/5.7] for more information on how the design changed during this period in response to feedback.
Sufficient information: The developer must give	Throughout the development process, the Applicant produced various materials to provide information about the

CONSULTATION REPORT

Gunning Principles	Evidence of Compliance
<p>sufficient reasons and information for the proposal to allow for intelligent consideration and a proper response.</p>	<p>Proposed Development. For the non-statutory consultation, materials focused on the site selection and needs case, development and design process, and components of a solar farm (see Appendix A). Community newsletters provided updated masterplans and responses to Frequently Asked Questions. For the statutory consultation, materials provided more detailed information about the EIA initial findings, updated masterplan and technical components (Appendix D).</p> <p>In line with the first principle, the draft ES included early results of the assessments so that they were still at a formative stage that could be adjusted in response to consultation feedback. The potential locations for technical components such as substations, batteries and Cable Corridors were provided for consultation feedback so that the consultation could help inform these decisions.</p> <p>Materials were also provided in various levels of detail for different audiences. For example, in addition to the consultation booklets, which were the main document for the general public, the non-technical summary of the draft ES was available with more information about the environmental assessments, and the full draft ES was available for those that wanted the full technical details.</p>
<p>Adequate Time: Adequate time must be given for individuals to consider the proposals and formulate a response.</p>	<p>The PA 2008 sets a minimum requirement for consultation as 28 days, though common practice is to allow for six weeks. During the non-statutory consultation, the Applicant provided a 10-week consultation period, in recognition that part of the consultation occurred over the Christmas period, to ensure that everyone had sufficient time to respond. The statutory consultation was scheduled to avoid any holidays or school term breaks to accommodate a six-week period. In addition, the Applicant provided notice in advance of each of these consultation periods so that individuals and organisations would have time to prepare. (See sections 6.2, 6.4 and 6.5).</p>
<p>Conscientious consideration: The product of the consultation must be conscientiously taken into account before finalising any decisions</p>	<p>The Applicant has read and considered all of the feedback that was received throughout the multiple stages of consultation as shown in Appendix A, Appendix E and Appendix G. This feedback has resulted in significant changes to the Proposed Development at each stage as described in Section 3.8 and Section 7.7. In total, the solar areas have been reduced by 37% compared to the initial proposals. Other elements of the project design, including construction traffic access also changed significantly in response to consultation feedback, including the addition of a second access point near Treeton and removal of an access point near Clifton. These changes demonstrate that feedback was considered and taken into account to finalise key decisions.</p>

10.3 Continuous stakeholder engagement

10.3.1 In addition to the consultation activities, the Applicant developed a programme of continuous engagement with various stakeholders to gather feedback on the Proposed Development throughout the pre-application period. These stakeholders were defined based on their proximity to and estimated potential impacts of the development.

- Near neighbours: individuals who live particularly close to the draft Order limits that would be able to provide specific feedback about the potential impacts of the Proposed Development at their location;
- Elected officials: individuals who represent the local community that hear feedback from their constituents and could provide a higher level view on the broader implications of the Proposed Development in their constituency;
- General public: individuals in the broader area who may have general concerns about the Proposed Development; and
- Media: Reporters that cover local news and provide information to the broader community.

10.3.2 As shown in **Figure 10.1** below, this engagement occurred continuously throughout the preapplication period to provide for ongoing feedback between stakeholders and Applicant to identify issues and develop potential solutions. Please note this is not inclusive of emails and phone calls.

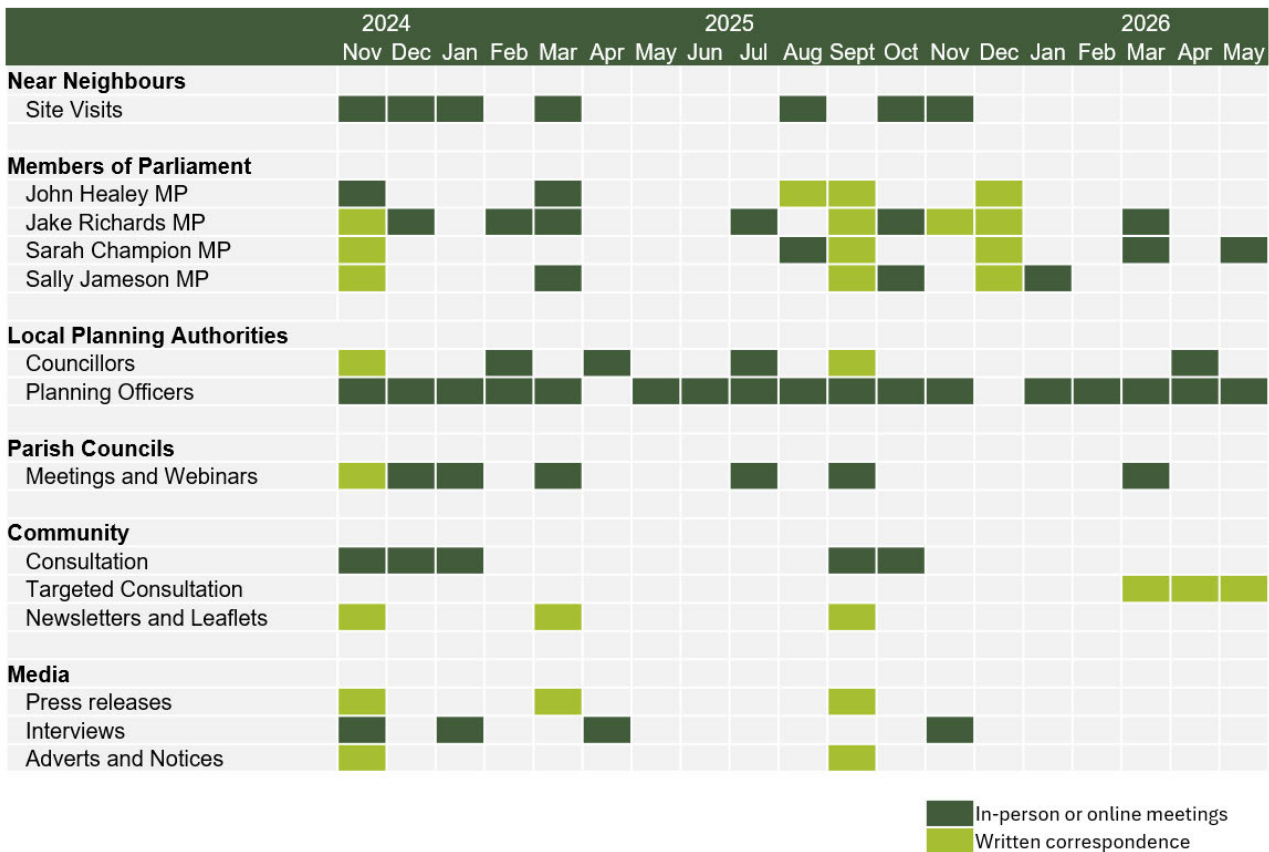


Figure 10.1 Ongoing Engagement with Stakeholder Groups throughout the pre-application period

Near Neighbours

- 10.3.3 Throughout the pre-application period, the Applicant sought to engage with individuals who live particularly near the Order Limits. In total, the Applicant held 35 meetings with these ‘near neighbours’, across the project site as shown in **Figure 10.2** below. Many of these were repeat visits to describe how the project had been updated in response to their feedback and understand if further changes were needed.
- 10.3.4 In some cases, it was not possible to arrange a requested meeting with a near neighbour, so the Applicant was able to consider the written feedback submitted, alongside on-site knowledge of the local area to understand the potential impacts of the project and make changes as needed to minimise impacts.
- 10.3.5 Feedback from this stakeholder group was very specific and included requests to remove panels, permissive paths or access points in specific locations, which the Applicant was largely able to respond to in the updated masterplans, resulting in significant changes to the project design after each stage of consultation (See **Tables 3.8** and **Table 6.9**).

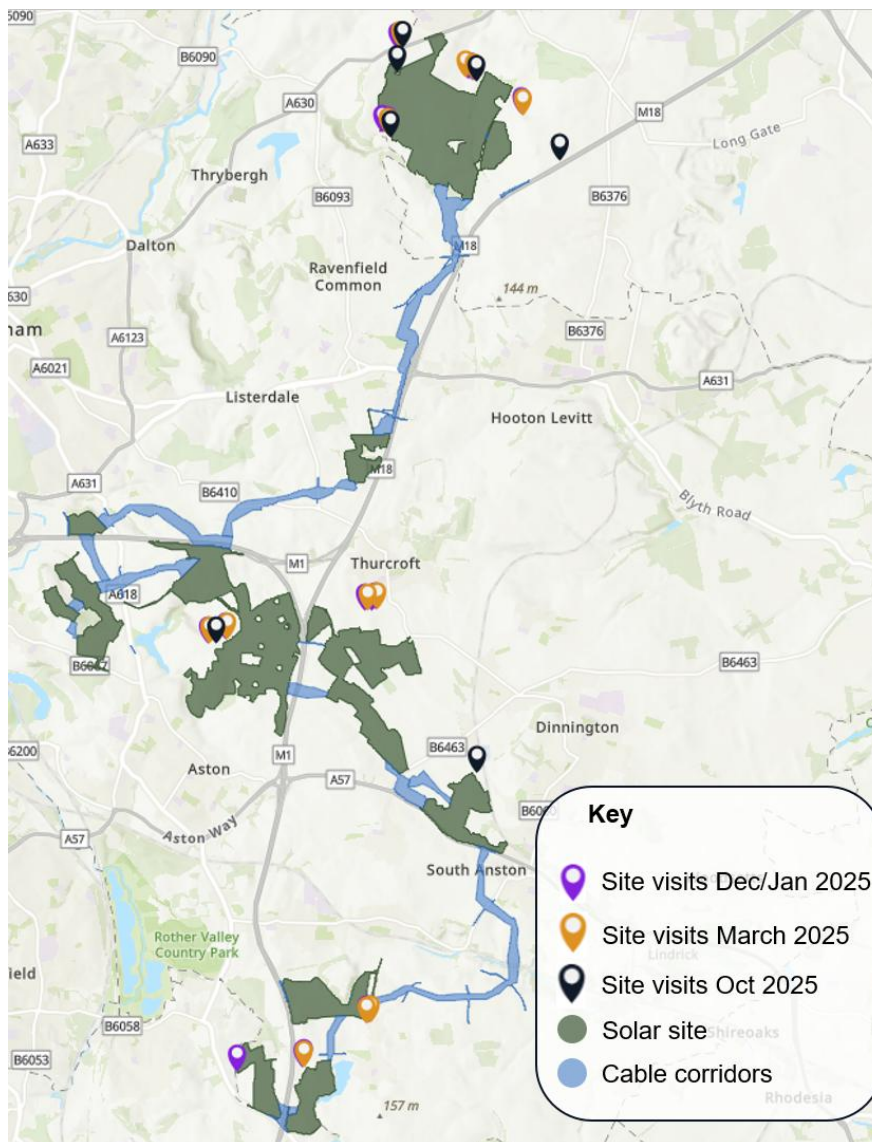


Figure 10.2: Site visits with near neighbours throughout the pre-application period

Elected Officials

- 10.3.6 The Applicant identified the local elected officials that represent the area around the Proposed Development, including Members of Parliament, ward members, and parish councils. These individuals often live in or around the local area and represent their local communities. Therefore, they can provide feedback they may hear from their constituents and provide a response that takes account of the broader impacts across the community as a whole.
- 10.3.7 The Applicant met each of the four MPs at least twice and responded to formal correspondence, which was often publicised through their social media. Several of the MPs also were in regular communication to identify issues that had been raised to them by constituents for response. This served as a channel to voice the concerns they were hearing and publicise the Applicant's response in between consultation periods.
- 10.3.8 The Applicant identified 28 host ward members, though the individuals changed as a result of local elections during this period. The Applicant offered briefings to host ward members at key project update points. The Applicant also held monthly meetings with planning officers from both CDC and RMBC jointly. These also served as a useful channel for information. For example, the Planning Officers shared concerns about the Freepost Address as described in section 7.6, which the Applicant quickly responded to.
- 10.3.9 The Applicant identified 21 host parishes and 25 neighbouring parishes during the statutory consultation period as described in paragraph 6.2.5. These numbers have changed throughout the development process, when Cable Corridors were introduced for the statutory consultation and then reduced following the statutory consultation. The final Order Limits now include 15 host parishes. Due to the number of parish councils, it was not feasible for the Applicant to conduct ongoing in person meetings with each organisation. Therefore the Applicant initially offered an in-person meeting for each parish council, and then subsequently offered combined online meetings for project updates. Including these meetings and feedback received at each stage of consultation, the Applicant interacted at least once with all of the parish councils, with the exception of Thorpe Salvin, as shown in **Figure 10.3** below.
- 10.3.10 Generally, these meetings provided feedback that was higher level than the feedback received from near neighbours, and included topics that would impact the entire community, such as traffic, public rights of way and permissive paths, and community benefits. Detailed responses are included in **Appendix A** and **Appendix E**.

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Parish Council	Initial Meeting	Submitted feedback 1 st consult.	Attended Webinar Mar 2025	Attended Workshop 19 July 2025	Attended Webinar 30 Sept 2025	Submitted feedback 2 nd consult.	Attended Webinar 23 Mar 2026
Host: Solar Site							
Conisbrough Parks	13 Jan 25						
Bramley							
Wickersley	20 Jan 25						
Whiston	20 Jan 25						
Treeton					13 Oct 25		
Ulley							
Thurcroft	21 Jan 25						
Aston cum Aughton							
Todwick	15 Jan 25						
Anston							
Harthill with Woodall	14 Jan 25						
Host: Cable and access							
Braithwell with Mickelbring	13 Jan 25						
Ravenfield	20 Jan 25						
Killamarsh							
Thorpe Salvin							
Formerly Host Parish							
Hooton Roberts	05 Dec 24						
Hellaby							
Maltby							
Brinsworth							
Laughton-en-le-Morthen							
Wales							

Figure 10.3: Engagement with Host Parish Councils throughout the pre-application period

Media

- 10.3.16 Whilst the media is not a direct stakeholder, it is a conduit for information to the general public. Therefore, the Applicant engaged directly with local media to help publicise the Proposed Development to a broader geographic area, to provide accurate information, while helping direct individuals to where they could go for further information.
- 10.3.17 The Applicant identified local media sources and then engaged directly with them throughout the project's development in the form of press releases, interviews and advertisements and notices, as shown in **Figure 10.1** above.
- 10.3.18 In addition to these, the Applicant responded to numerous press inquiries throughout this period to answer questions, dispel misinformation, and respond to concerns raised by other parties to help provide a balanced narrative.
- 10.3.19 The Applicant continued to monitor local media, both through traditional and social media formats, to understand community sentiment and directly correct misinformation. While this was not used as a form of formal feedback, it did help inform the Applicant throughout the development period about growing concerns or issues. For example, the Applicant noted a Facebook post on concerns around archaeological trial trenching surveys that were taking place in Whitestone 1. The Applicant responded in an email to the parish councils and update to the website to explain what was happening and when it would be complete.

10.4 Resulting changes

10.4.1 As a result of feedback through this period, the Applicant made significant changes to the Proposed Development. The total developable areas were reduced by 37% compared to the initial design.

10.4.2 In Whitestone 1, key changes are shown in **Figure 10.5** below and include the following changes:

- Withdrew proposed solar by 300m from southern edge of Conisbrough, reducing visual impact from the southern edge of the settlement and in views experienced when travelling along Sheffield Road;
- Increased offset in proximity to individual residential properties including 255m from Hill Top House, 250m from Parks Farm Cottages, removal of proposed panels on land south of Spring Bank Bungalow and removal of proposed panels on land south of Hill Top Farm;
- Removed proposed solar panels on land north, east and west of Firsby with offset ranging between 250 – 500m in response to existing views and topography;
- Expanded offsets from PRowS, maintaining one side open in several instances to maintain feeling of openness; and
- Removed solar and proposed substation around Clifton.

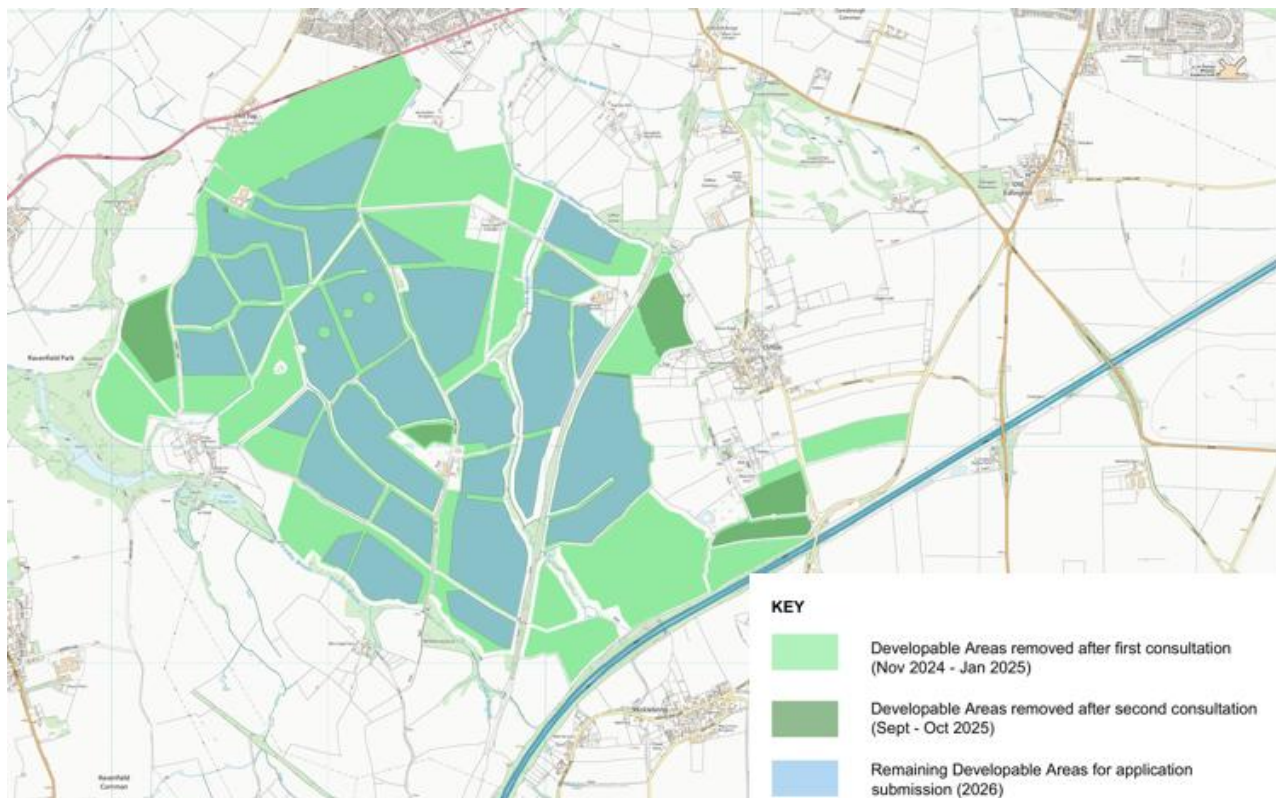


Figure 10.5: Reductions in developable areas Whitestone 1

10.4.3 In Whitestone 2, changes are shown in **Figure 10.6** below and include the following key changes:

- Included a 220m offset across land south of Upper Whiston to minimise impact on setting,
- Removed proposed solar panels north of Ulley to minimise impact on the setting and views from the village, and to fragment the Proposed Development across the wider landscape.

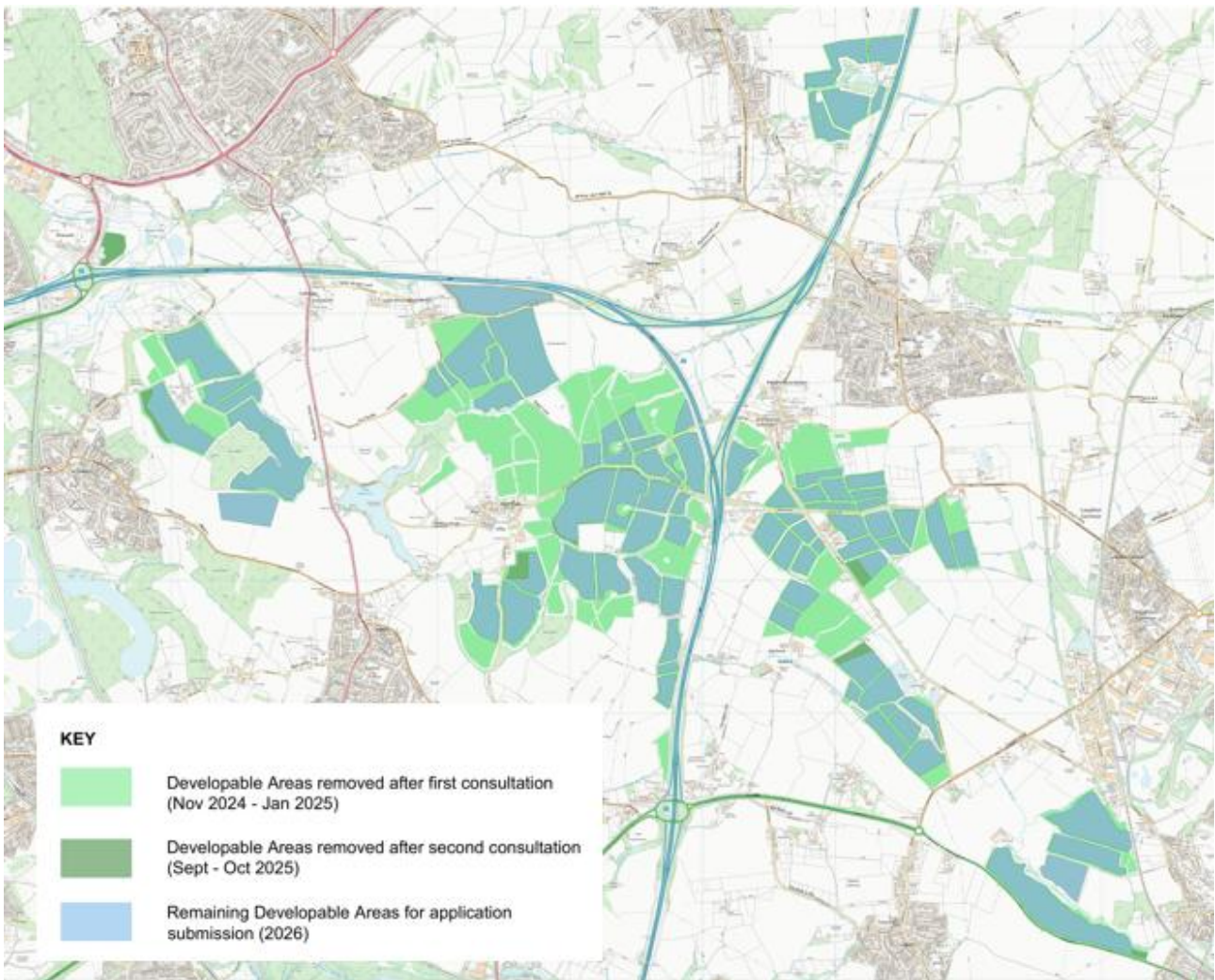


Figure 10.6: Reductions in developable areas Whitestone 2

10.4.4 In Whitestone 3, changes are shown in **Figure 10.7** below and include the following:

- Increased offset from High Moor, siting solar beyond landform to minimise potential for visual impact from settlement;
- Removed proposed solar on land between Woodall and Harthill, north of Harthill Reservoir, to maintain openness between the two villages and reduce visual impact;
- Removed proposed solar to the east of Dowcarr Lane in Woodall;
- Removed proposed solar north of Harthill on south-facing slope; and
- Removed proposed solar between Woodall and Harthill between public right of way and Woodall Lane.

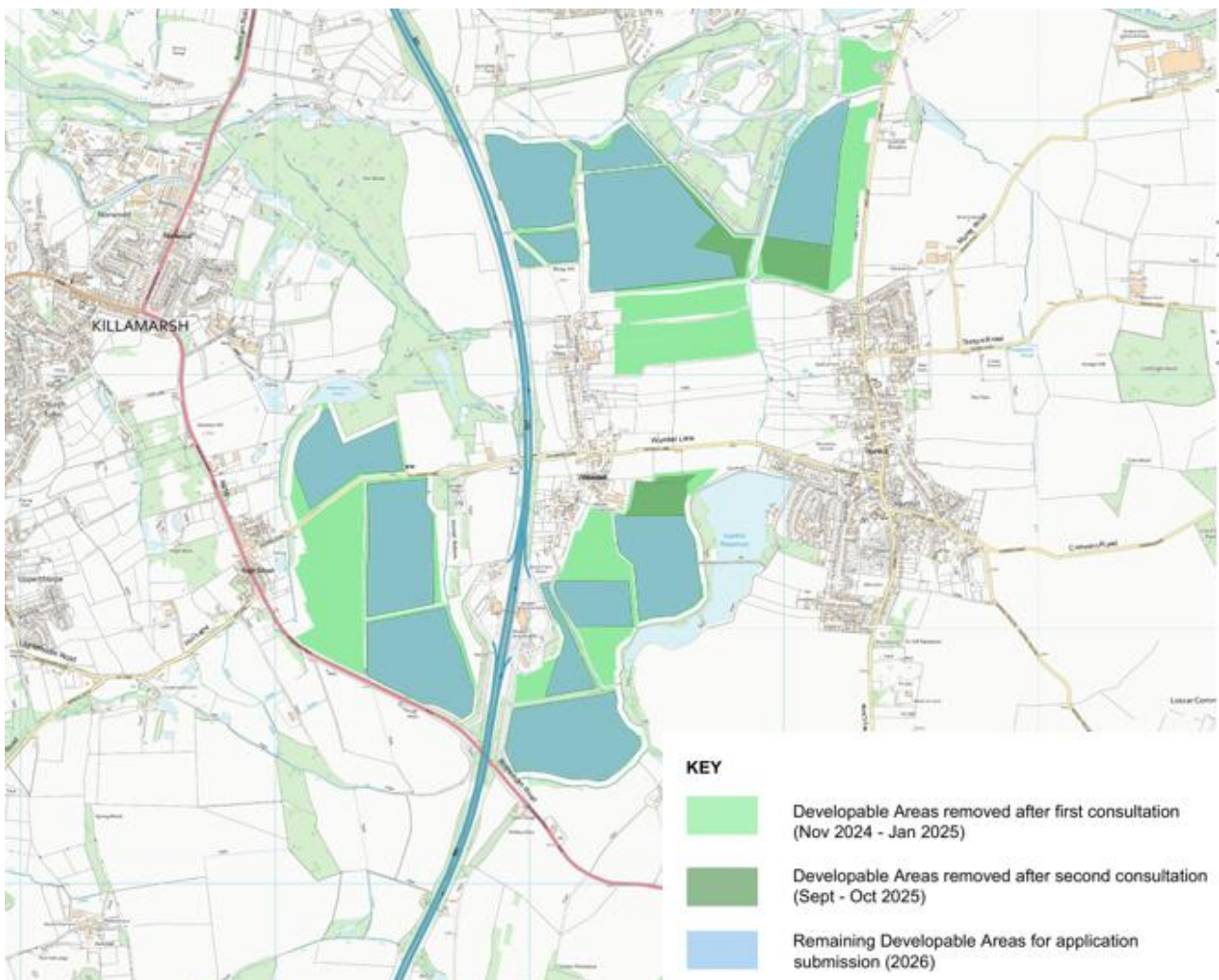


Figure 10.7: Reductions in developable areas Whitestone 3

10.4.5 In response to feedback, some areas were removed from the Order Limits entirely. The fields that were removed from the solar site Order Limits are shown in **Figure 10.8** below after each stage of consultation.

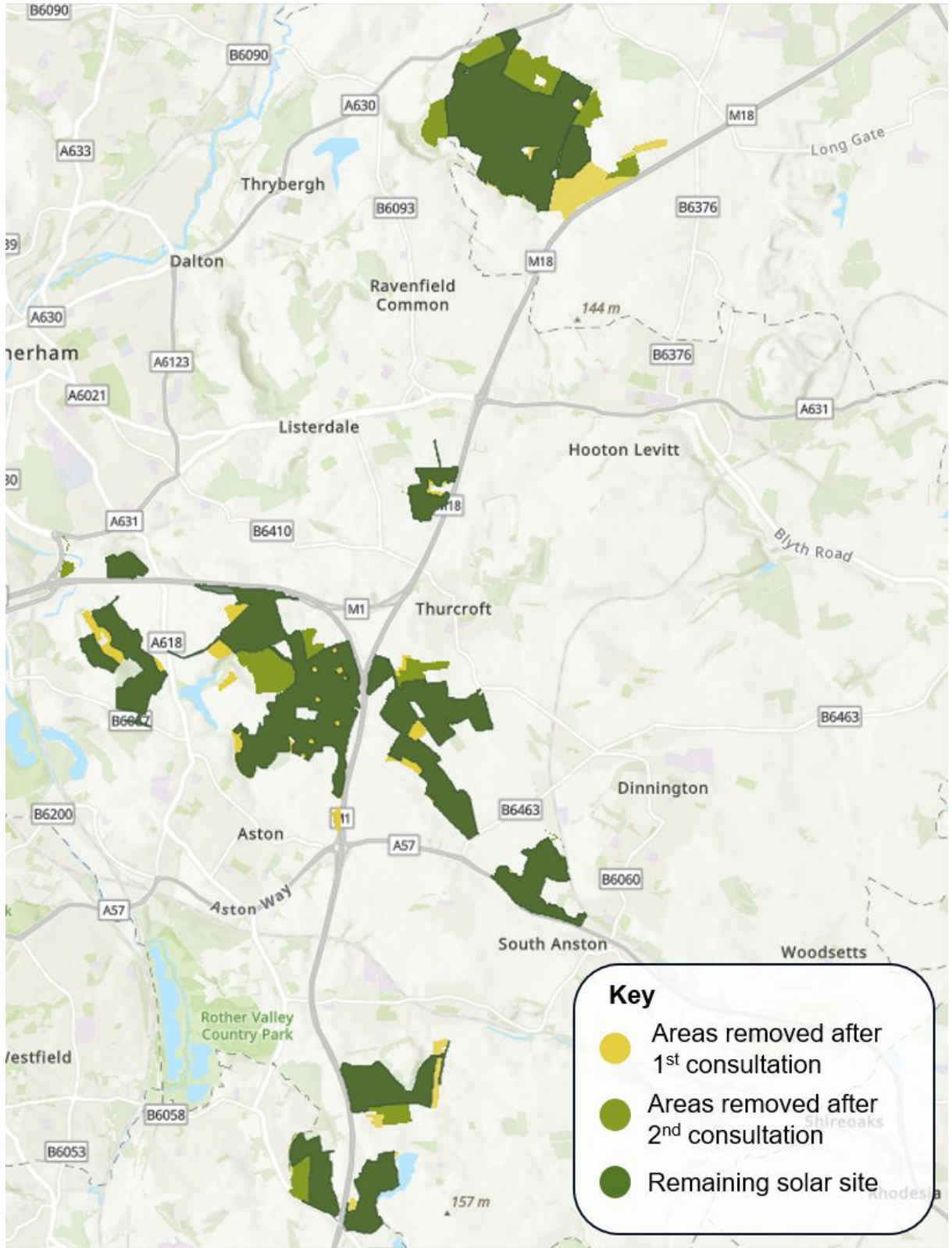


Figure 10.8: Changes to the Order Limits for the solar site throughout the pre-application period

10.4.6 Also in response to feedback from the consultation and other technical and environmental assessments, the Applicant was able to reduce the optionality in the Cable Corridors following the statutory consultation. Through the Targeted Consultation described in section 9.1, the Applicant added a few additional cable options to help minimise potential impacts. The changes at each stage are included in **Figure 10.9** below.

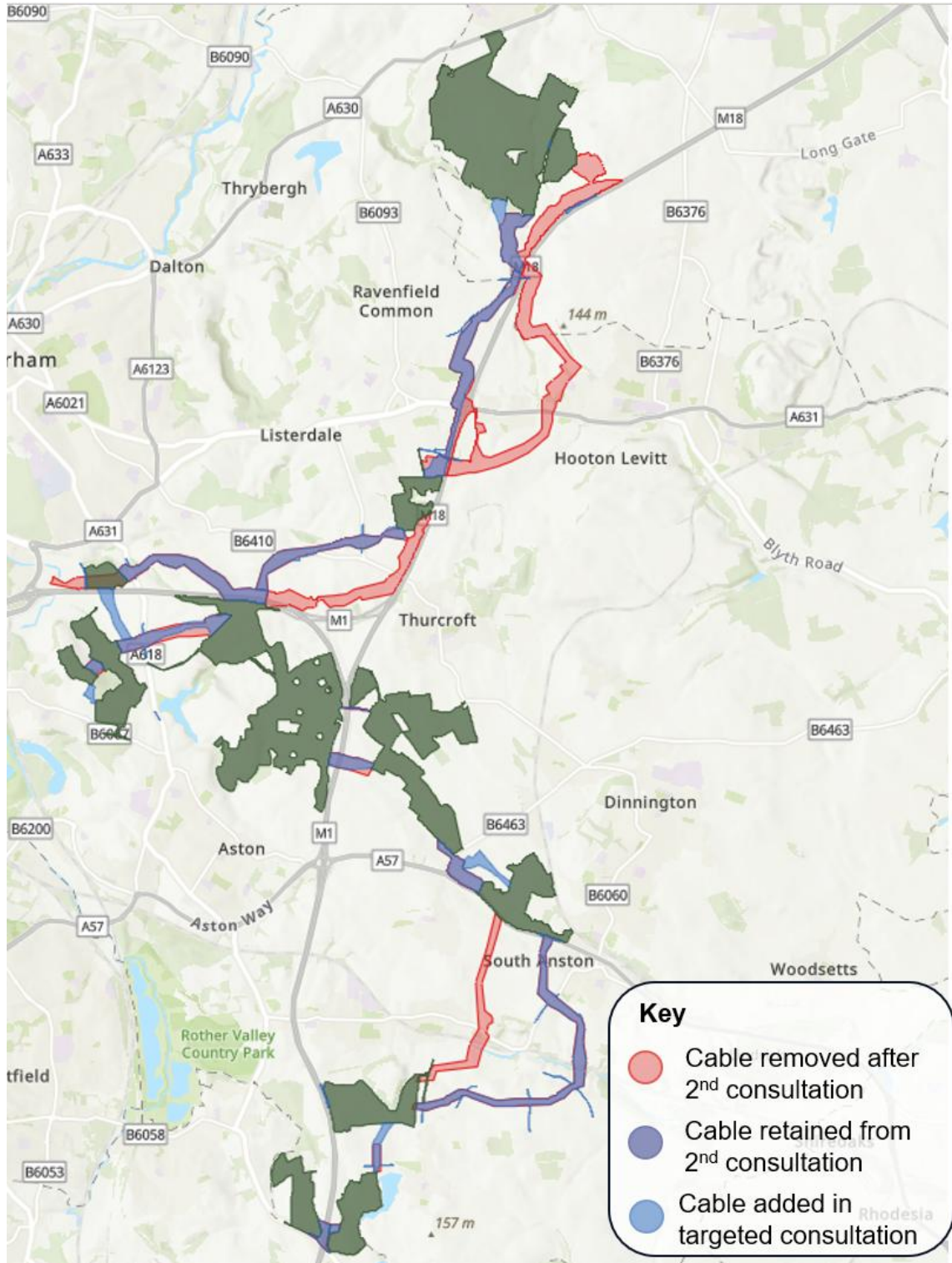


Figure 10.9: Changes to the draft Order Limits for the Cable Corridors throughout the pre-application period

10.5 Conclusions

- 10.5.1 Since November 2024, the Applicant has engaged continuously and held multiple stages of consultation with the community, elected officials and technical bodies. This feedback has led to significant changes to the Proposed Development, as well as the approach to consultation and engagement itself.
- 10.5.2 While the level of interest and engagement in this Proposed Development is high, the Applicant has addressed key concerns and mitigated potential significant issues whenever possible to develop a proposal that supports national energy targets and policies, in a way that is sensitive to the local environment and community.
- 10.5.3 If consented, the Applicant will continue to engage with the local community and stakeholders throughout the construction and operational stages to identify concerns and develop solutions to minimise potential impacts where possible.

11. REFERENCES

REF-1: The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (EIA Regulations 2017).

REF-2: Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 (APFP Regulations 2009) (as amended by the Infrastructure Planning (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2024)

REF-3: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024). Guidance on the pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs)

REF-4: Planning Inspectorate (2025). Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the Consultation Report.

REF-5: Planning Inspectorate (2026). Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the Preparation and Submission of Application Documents

REF-6: Planning Inspectorate (2025). Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on EIA Notification and Consultation.

REF-7: Planning Inspectorate (2025). Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the process for obtaining information about interests in land (under section 52 of the Planning Act 2008).

REF-8: Planning Inspectorate (2026). Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus

REF-9: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2025). Overarching National Policy Statement for Energy (EN-1).

REF-10: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2026). National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3).

REF-11: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2024). Clean Power 2030 Action Plan.

REF-12: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2025). Solar Roadmap.



WHITESTONE
solar farm

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