



WHITESTONE
solar farm

WHITESTONE SOLAR FARM

Volume 5: Reports and Statements

5.1 Consultation Report Appendix B SoCC Development

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Revision 01
June 2026

Planning Act 2008
Infrastructure Planning
(Applications: Prescribed Forms and
Procedure) Regulations 2009
Regulation 5(2)(q)

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APPENDIX B1 INFORMAL CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT SOCC

Appendix B1.1 Email inviting informal consultation on the draft SoCC

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 27 June 2025 16:01
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Whitestone - Draft SOCC for review
Attachments: Whitestone draft SoCC for informal review 27 june.docx; Whitestone Community Groups List V1.docx

Hello,

Thank you again for meeting with us this Wednesday to discuss the draft SOCC. It is attached here, along with the draft list of community groups. Can you please review and provide your initial feedback by 11 July?

We will then update it and send it back to you for the formal review period from 21 July to 19 August.

Please let us know if you have any questions,

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

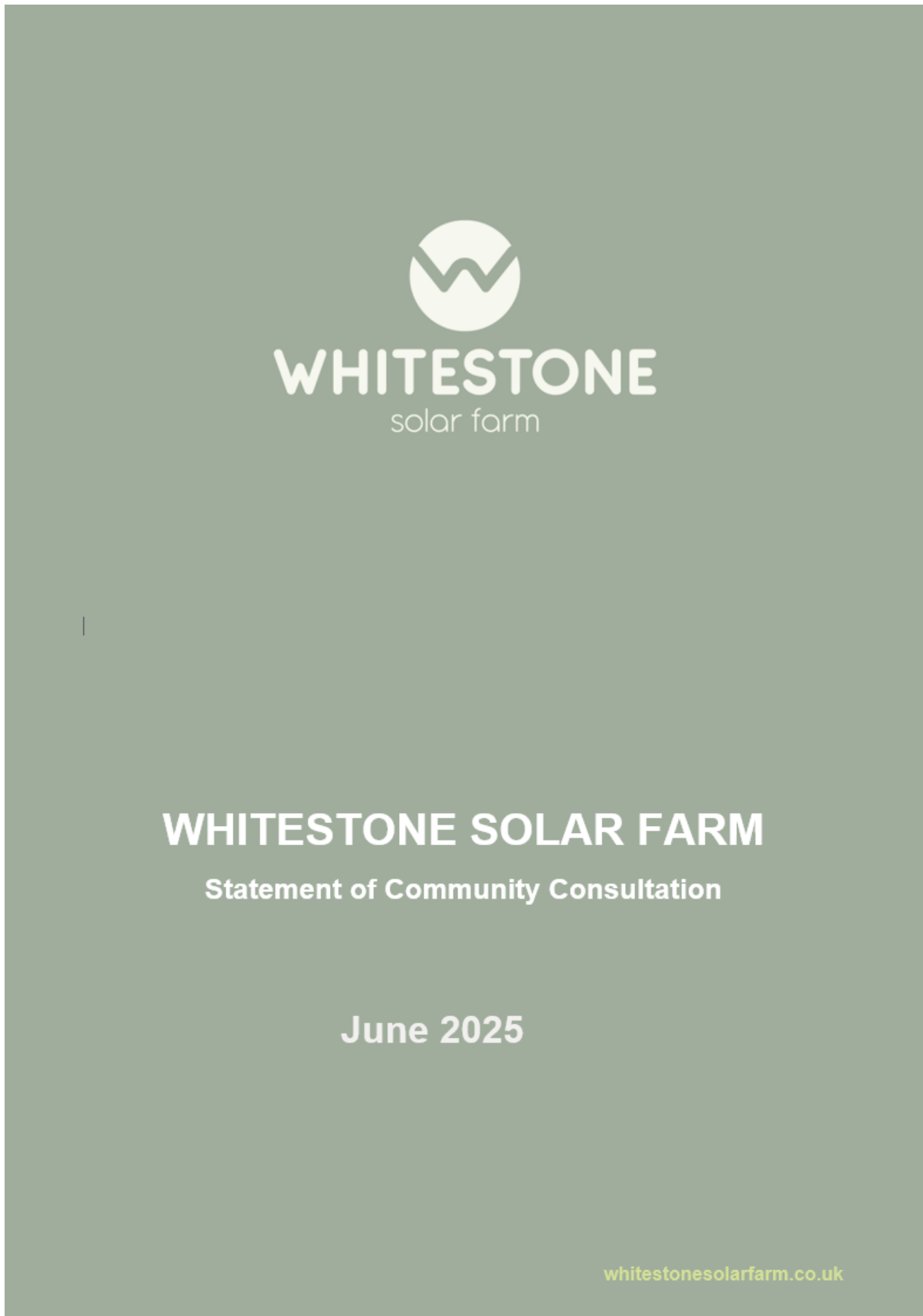
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Appendix B1.2 Draft SoCC for informal consultation



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 About this document

- 1.1.1 This Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) has been prepared on behalf of Whitestone Net Zero Limited ('the Applicant') in relation to a proposed application for development consent under the Planning Act 2008 (hereafter referred to as 'the Application') for the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of the Whitestone Solar Farm (hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development').
- 1.1.2 The applicant is inviting feedback from the local community on the Proposed Development as part of a public consultation from 16 September to 28 October 2025 (indicative dates that may be subject to change).
- 1.1.3 The Proposed Development is a new solar farm with battery storage, that could make a significant contribution to our national energy goals and energy security by producing renewable energy here in the UK. The Proposed Development is located across three parcels between Rotherham and Doncaster, South Yorkshire, and would connect to the proposed new 400 kV National Grid substation near Brinsworth (hereafter referred to as 'the Site').
- 1.1.4 Because the Proposed Development would generate more than 50 MW of energy, it is considered a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). The Planning Act 2008 establishes the planning regime for NSIPs and requires that we apply for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to construct, operate and decommission it. Unlike local planning applications which are decided by local planning authorities, our DCO Application will be decided at the national level by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.
- 1.1.5 We have prepared this document, known as a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC), in accordance with Section 47 of the Planning Act 2008. It explains how we plan to consult with people living in the vicinity of the Proposed Development about our proposals. It will be published according to the requirements of the Planning Act 2008, and includes:
- Information about the Proposed Development and the companies behind it;
 - An explanation of the planning process for the Proposed Development including pre-application consultation and environmental assessments;
 - Our approach to community consultation including who we will consult, when, how, and what about;
 - How we will let people know about the consultation, provide information, and receive feedback; and,
 - The next steps after consultation, including how we will have regard to the feedback we receive.

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1.2 About the Applicant

- 1.2.1 The Applicant has been established as a specialist development business to allow the funding of larger projects, drawing on the expertise of Green Nation, which ensures that there is sufficient funding to build, operate, and decommission the Proposed Development at the end of its life.
- 1.2.2 Since 2011, Green Nation has become one of the leading developers of rooftop solar panels for homes, schools, and businesses in the UK. Green Nation also develop, construct and operate ground-mounted solar farms and battery storage facilities.
- 1.2.3 The current portfolio of Green Nation is shown in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1: Current Green Nation Portfolio

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1.3 About the Proposed Development

- 1.3.1 The Proposed Development is a solar farm with associated battery storage and infrastructure located between Rotherham and Doncaster in South Yorkshire that would help meet the country's need for low-carbon, homegrown energy. This would include three parcels of land, connected by cable routes.
- 1.3.2 The Proposed Development would be located within the City of Doncaster Council and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's administrative areas, close to the M1 and M18. In the southernmost part of the Proposed Development, the boundary crosses into North East Derbyshire District Council and Derbyshire County Council.



Figure 2: Proposed Development Location

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- 1.3.3 The UK is a global leader in the fight against climate change. The Government has made a legally binding agreement to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 and pledged to eliminate all fossil fuels from the power supply as part of the Clean Power 2030 mission. Replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy generated here in the UK will not only help reduce carbon pollution, but also support energy security and help reduce future energy costs.
- 1.3.4 In the UK, demand for electricity continues to increase. As other sectors cut their reliance on fossil fuels, they are shifting to electricity for their power needs. For example, by replacing gas boilers and traditional vehicles with heat pumps and electric cars, demand for electricity is projected to double by 2050.
- 1.3.5 Large scale solar is a key part of the solution; it is a tried and tested technology that is ready to be built now, can be constructed quickly and safely, and generate large amounts of energy.
- 1.3.6 If constructed, the Proposed Development could make a significant contribution to meeting this need. We have an agreement to supply National Grid with up to 750 MW of energy, which is enough to power up to 250,000 homes¹.

¹ This is based on the average energy consumption of 3,200 kWh per year per home.

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1.4 Components of the Proposed Development

1.4.1 The components that will be needed for the Proposed Development in order to collect the energy from sunlight and prepare it to be transferred to the National Grid are illustrated in Figure 3 below.

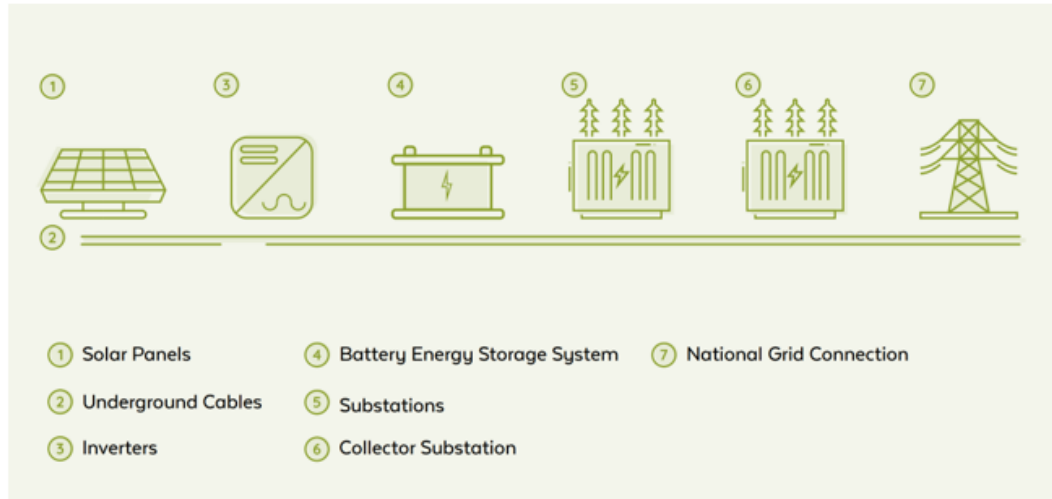


Figure 3: Components of a solar farm

Solar panels (1) would collect energy from sunlight and convert it to low voltage, direct current (DC) electricity.

Underground cables (2) would carry the electricity from the solar panels to other locations around the site.

Inverters (3) would change the power from DC to Alternating Current (AC).

During times of low energy demand, the **Battery Energy Storage System (4)** would store the energy until it is needed. The BESS could also take up extra energy from the grid to store it until it is needed.

Substations (5) located in each of the three parcels would increase the voltage to prepare it to connect to the grid.

The **main project substation (6)** would collect electricity from the three parcels.

Then the energy would be transferred to the **National Grid (7)** at Brinsworth, so that it could power homes and businesses across the UK.

1.4.2 In addition to the technical components that are needed to collect and transport energy, the Proposed Development could also include open spaces around and between the panels. As we develop the Proposed Development, we will incorporate best practices to ensure that it is a well-designed solar farm.

1.4.3 The Proposed Development would be designed to help avoid, reduce or mitigate visual impacts where possible, which could include simply setting the panels back from homes, footpaths, or other key locations. This could also include new planting to create a natural visual barrier, which could help reduce visual impacts, as well as creating new habitats for wildlife and increase biodiversity.

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2 THE PLANNING PROCESS

2.1 The Development Consent Order application process

- 2.1.1 Because the Proposed Development would produce more than 50MW of energy, it is considered a NSIP.
- 2.1.2 The Planning Act 2008 and associated legislation and guidance set out the planning process for NSIPs and require that we apply for a DCO to build and operate the Proposed Development.
- 2.1.3 Unlike planning applications which are determined by local authorities, NSIPs are submitted to and decided at the national level. We will submit our DCO application to the Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate), an independent body that administers the process of reviewing and examining the application on behalf of the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net-Zero.
- 2.1.4 After examination, the Examining Authority will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net-Zero who will then make the final decision as to whether to grant the DCO.
- 2.1.5 Additional information on the NSIP process can be found on the Inspectorate’s website at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-the-stages-of-the-nsip-process-and-how-you-can-have-your-say>
- 2.1.6 Below in Figure 4 is a timeline of the NSIP development process.

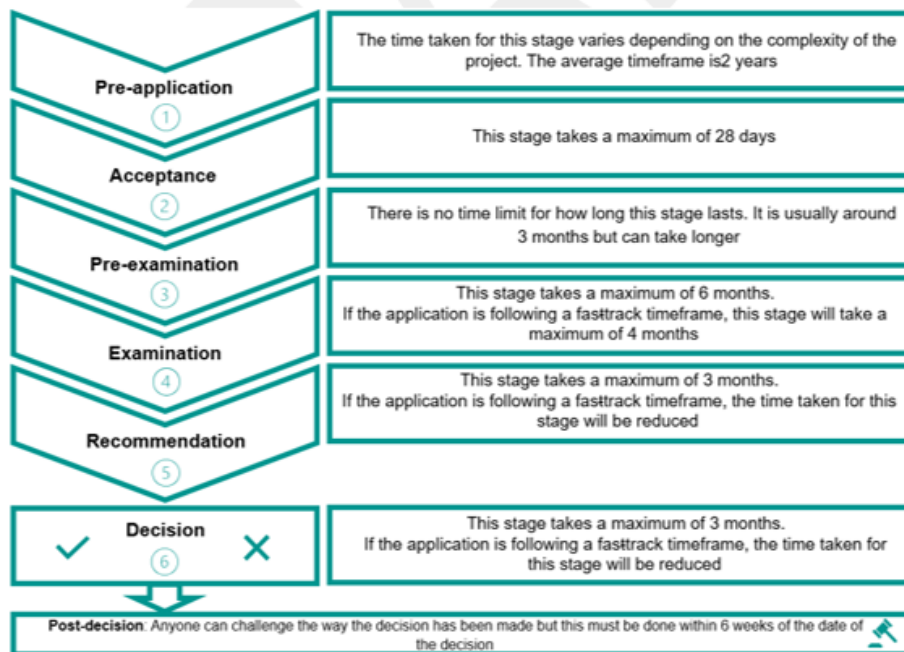


Figure 4: The development process for an NSIP

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2.2 Pre-Application Consultation

2.2.1 Consultation is an important part of the DCO Process. Before we submit our DCO application, the Planning Act 2008 requires us to consult on our proposals. For the Proposed Development, we will consult early and often, throughout the development process, to ensure valuable local knowledge is built into our proposals. Under sections 42 and 47 of the Planning Act 2008, we must consult with:

- Local authorities and parish councils in which the Proposed Development is located, or which neighbour the local authorities and parish councils that are hosting the Proposed Development;
- Persons that have an interest in the land affected by the Proposed Development, including landowners, occupants and tenants;
- Certain organisations and technical bodies (like Historic England and the Environment Agency) which have been prescribed by the Planning Act 2008; and,
- The local community.

2.3 Consultation and the Design Process

2.3.1 The design process for the Proposed Development is iterative, which means that there will be several versions of the design as it develops. Feedback from consultations, results of environmental assessments and ongoing technical and engineering work will inform our evolving proposals at each stage. We have carried out one stage of non-statutory consultation already and anticipate one further round of consultation – a round of statutory consultation, to which this SoCC relates:

2.3.2 **Non-Statutory Consultation:** 18 November 2024 – 31 January 2025 - This first consultation was on our initial proposals for the Proposed Development.

2.3.3 **Statutory Consultation:** 16 September – 28 October 2025 - The statutory consultation will be on our revised proposals, which have been updated based on feedback from the first consultation and ongoing environmental assessments. This is a 'statutory consultation', which will be carried out in accordance with this document and the requirements of the Planning Act 2008 and associated guidance. Feedback from this consultation will inform the updated design we submit in the DCO application.

2.3.4 **Consultation Report:** The Consultation Report will set out the consultation undertaken as part of the pre-application process and will explain how the Applicant has had regard to the consultation feedback received. It will also explain if changes have been made to the design of the Proposed Development as a result of consultation responses received.

2.4 Environmental Impact Assessment

2.4.1 Due to the size and nature of the Proposed Development, it is considered 'EIA Development'. This means that we will conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), which we will report on in an Environmental Statement (ES) submitted as part of our DCO application. The EIA will assess the Proposed Development's likely environmental effects in accordance with the requirements of

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the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. If we identify any likely significant environmental effects, we will also explain how we propose to mitigate them in the ES.

- 2.4.2 **Scoping:** An applicant for a DCO can ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net-Zero for their opinion on the scope of the EIA and the level of detail to be presented in the EIA. The Applicant asked the Inspectorate (acting on behalf of the Secretary of State) for a formal written opinion about the information that should be included in the Draft ES on 23 April 2025. The Inspectorate’s response is known as a Scoping Opinion, which was provided on 3 June 2025. The Scoping Opinion will now be used to guide how we will complete our EIA. You can find it on the Inspectorate’s website.
- 2.4.3 **Draft Environmental Statement (ES):** As the Proposed Development is EIA development, we are required to consult on preliminary environmental information in relation to it as part of our statutory consultation. We will do this by preparing and publishing a Draft ES. The purpose of the Draft ES is to provide information to enable stakeholders to develop an informed view of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development. The Draft ES must include the information which is reasonably required for consultation bodies to develop an informed view of the likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development.
- 2.4.4 **Final ES:** Our DCO application will include the final results of the environmental assessments in a final ES, which will be submitted and available to view on the Inspectorate’s website.


2.5 Indicative Timeline of the Proposed Development



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3 OUR APPROACH TO COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

3.1 Overview of the consultation process

- 3.1.1 We aim to ensure that anyone who wants to engage in the consultation is able to do so, by providing a variety of ways people can learn about the proposals and provide their feedback.
- 3.1.2 We have developed the approach set out in this document taking into account what has worked well in the previous round of consultation, feedback from local authorities, and best practice. We have also considered requirements included in the Planning Act 2008, EIA regulations, associated guidance and Inspectorate's advice notes.
- 3.1.3 We will structure our consultation to support accessibility, aiming to make it as easy as possible to take part. This means providing materials both in print and online, using easy to understand, non-technical language. We will schedule events for the community to learn about our proposals in locally convenient and wheelchair accessible locations on various days of the week and times of day to accommodate different work/life schedules. We will also reach out to gateway organisations for hard-to-reach groups, so that we can hear from as many voices as possible.
- 3.1.4 Our approach to consultation has been informed by feedback from local authorities, to ensure that we are utilising local knowledge to inform an effective consultation process. From XX to XX, we consulted with the host local authorities on our proposed approach to the next stage of consultation, as laid out in this document. Our strategy has been updated to include their feedback. 

3.2 Consultation to date

First Consultation – Autumn 2024-Winter 2025

- 3.2.1 A non-statutory consultation was held over ten weeks, from Monday 18 November 2024 to Friday 31 January 2025. This first phase of consultation introduced the Proposed Development, and sought feedback from the local community, elected officials, landowners, local businesses and interest groups on the proposals.
- 3.2.2 We publicised the consultation by sending an introductory newsletter to a consultation zone that was drafted to include all of the host parishes for the Proposed Development, which includes 30,755 addresses around the proposed site. We also issued press releases to local and trade media and publishing adverts in local media outlets and on social media, updating the Proposed Development's website with details of the consultation, and conducting door knocks to the 26 neighbours closest to the Site.
- 3.2.3 On 13 November ahead of the start of the consultation period, we wrote to a range of stakeholder to notify them of our consultation, and invite them to our in-person events or briefings, including:
- South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Mayor
 - City of Doncaster Council Members

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- Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Members
 - Members of Parliament (MPs) for Rawmarsh and Conisbrough, Rother Valley, Rotherham, and Doncaster Central
 - Host and neighbouring parish councils
- 3.2.4 We developed consultation materials in a range of formats, including a consultation booklet, series of maps, pull-up banners and questionnaire.
- 3.2.5 These materials were made available on our website, at public events and sent to community members by mail on request.
- 3.2.6 During the consultation period, we organised and attended 15 site visits on request to neighbours closest to the site, held seven in person events and one webinar for the wider public, and we met with nine parish councils. At these meetings, individuals could ask questions of the wider project team and provide their feedback.
- 3.2.7 Individuals could share their views by completing an online questionnaire, accessed through the Proposed Development's website, emailing the questionnaire to the Proposed Development's email, posting a hard-copy questionnaire to the Freepost address or submitting comments by email or in writing to the Freepost address.
- 3.2.8 We received 940 pieces of feedback from this consultation, which led to significant changes to the design of the Proposed Development. We removed around one fourth of the solar panels from the Proposed Development, in order to create buffers around homes, villages, and public rights of way. We also received feedback on our approach to consultation, including which venues and locations to use and how to refine the consultation zone to include additional villages.

Proposed Development update – Spring 2025

- 3.2.9 After the non-statutory consultation period, we conducted a round of engagement to inform the public of the updated masterplans.
- 3.2.10 On 20-21 March, we revisited 12 near neighbours closest to the site to discuss the changes made in response to their feedback. On 31 March and 3 April, we offered a briefing to the host parishes. On 2 April, we briefed members of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. We also offered to brief members of City of Doncaster Council, which occurred on 29 April.
- 3.2.11 On 26 March, we sent out an email update to all 509 email addresses signed up to our 'keep informed' list and we sent out a leaflet to 29,012 addresses in the area to update the community about the changes to the proposals based on their feedback. The updated maps and leaflets were also added to the Proposed Development's website.
- 3.2.12 We have continued to meet with statutory and technical consultees to assist with the EIA process and the evolution of our design. This includes relevant statutory bodies such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, and National Highways.

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4 APPROACH TO STATUTORY CONSULTATION

4.1 What are we consulting on?

4.1.1 During our statutory consultation from 16 September – 28 October 2025, we will present our updated proposals and ask for your feedback.

4.1.2 In this statutory consultation period, we will be asking for your views on:

- Our proposals for the Proposed Development as a whole;
- The location of the Proposed Development's components, including the solar panels, substations, batteries, and cable routes;
- The Draft ES and potential impacts from the Proposed Development during construction, operation, and decommissioning to the local environment and community;
- Our proposals for mitigating the potential impacts and environmental enhancements;
- Our proposals to contribute to the local community, including local initiatives or organisations that the Proposed Development could support over its lifetime.

4.1.3 Our consultation includes but is not limited to the list above.

4.2 Who are we consulting?

4.2.1 We want to consult widely with anyone who has an interest in or feels impacted by Whitestone Solar Farm. We have identified a variety of stakeholders that we believe may have an interest in the Proposed Development, and developed a plan to notify these groups and individuals – but anyone is welcome to submit their feedback.

4.2.2 We have defined two geographic zones – an inner zone and an outer zone – for the purpose of consulting with the local community. This recognises the fact that levels of potential impact are likely to vary with distance to the Proposed Development. These zones have informed how we will publicise the consultation and are set out below, with further detail about the consultation information detailed in section 4.4.

Inner Zone

4.2.3 The inner zone covers people who live and work closest to the Proposed Development and their political representatives. Our consultation activity will be most intensive within this zone. A map of this zone is shown in Figures 5-7.

4.2.4 We have identified an area that includes around 37,000 addresses by drawing a shape approximately 1km from the Site, expanding further to ensure that entire villages were included. 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 Proposed Development.

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4.2.5 A leaflet will be sent to all properties within the inner zone to notify them of the start of statutory consultation and invite them to attend public information events, which will be located within this area.

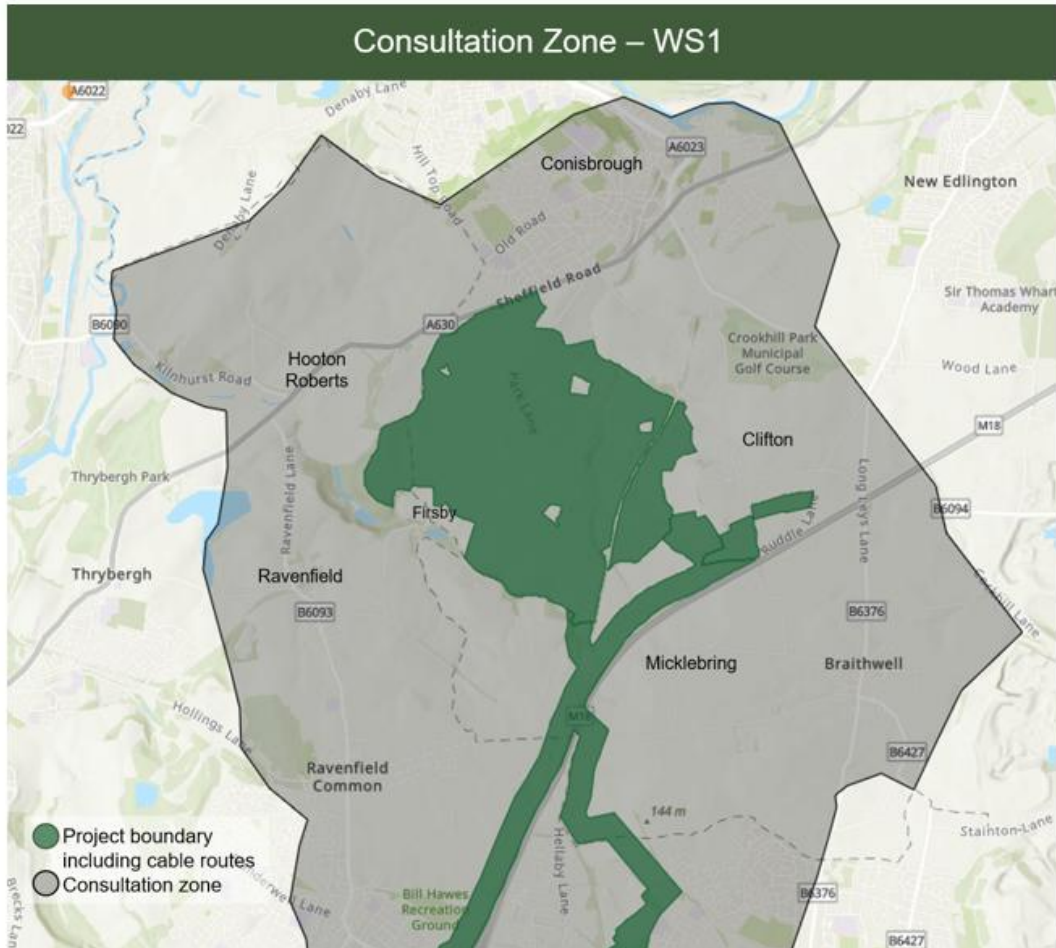


Figure 5: Map of inner consultation zone – WS 1

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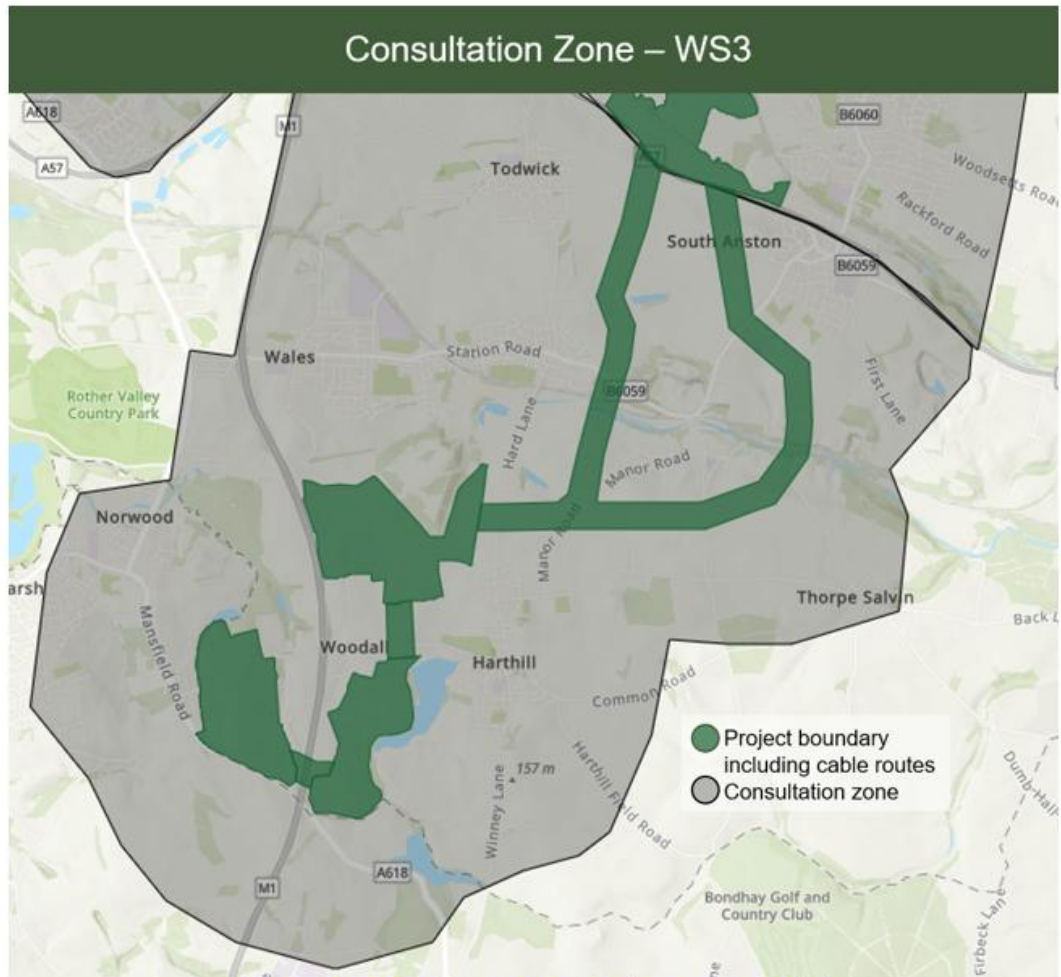


Figure 7: Map of inner consultation zone – WS 3

Outer zone

- 4.2.6 The outer zone covers those living and working in the area outside of the inner zone, who may be affected by or have an interest in our proposals due to the proposals being brought forward in their local authority area. This zone includes others living within the local authority boundaries of the City of Doncaster Council, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and North East Derbyshire District Council.
- 4.2.7 We will publicise the consultation to people in this zone through the Proposed Development’s website and emailing the consultation information to our ‘keep informed’ list. We will also place adverts on social media, publish statutory notices and issue press releases to local media outlets.

Technical stakeholders

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- 4.2.8 At the same time as consulting the local community, we will also consult a range of statutory consultees as set out by Section 42 and Section 48 of the Planning Act 2008 and Regulation 13 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, and additional organisations that we recognise to have an interest in the Proposed Development. These groups include:
- The host and neighbouring local authorities;
 - Statutory bodies (such as the Environment Agency, Historic England, Natural England and others);
 - Other community groups and organisations that may have an interest in the proposals (such as Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, and the Conisbrough Research and Archaeology Group); and,
 - People with an interest in land (e.g. owners or tenants) that may be affected by the proposals.

Elected representatives

- 4.2.9 At the launch of consultation, relevant elected representatives within the consultation zone will be contacted, including the Members of Parliament (MPs) for Rawmarsh and Conisbrough, Rother Valley, Rotherham, North East Derbyshire, Doncaster Central, and Bolsover, the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Mayor, Derbyshire County Councillors, Doncaster City Council Councillors, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Councillors and North East Derbyshire District Councillors.
- 4.2.10 We will also contact host parish councils to offer them a joint briefing and invite them to our public events, and support them in promoting the consultation using their existing communication channels.
- 4.2.11 We will contact neighbouring parish councils to inform them about the consultation period and invite them to our public events.
- 4.2.12 Host parish councils include:
- Aston cum Aughton Parish Council
 - Barlborough Parish Council
 - Braithwell with Micklebring Parish Council
 - Bramley Parish Council
 - Brinsworth Parish Council
 - Conisbrough Parks Parish Council
 - Harthill with Woodall Parish Council
 - Hellaby Parish Council
 - Hooton Roberts Parish Council
 - Killamarsh Parish Council
 - Laughton-en-le-Morthen Parish Council
 - Maltby Parish Council
 - North and South Anston Parish Council
 - Ravenfield Parish Council
 - Thorpe Salvin Parish Council

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- Thurcroft Parish Council
- Todwick Parish Council
- Treeton Parish Council
- Wales Parish Council
- Whiston Parish Council
- Wickersley Parish Council
- Ulley Parish Council

4.2.13 Neighbouring parish councils include:

- Adwick upon Dearne Parish Council
- Barnburgh Parish Council
- Cadeby Parish Council
- Catcliffe Parish Council
- Dalton Parish Council
- Denaby Parish Council
- Dinnington St John's Parish Council
- Edlington Parish Council
- High Melton Parish Council
- Hooton Levitt Parish Council
- Orgreave Parish Council
- Shireoaks Parish Council
- Spotborough and Cusworth Parish Council
- Stainton Parish Council
- Thrybergh Parish Council
- Warmsworth Parish Council
- Waverley Parish Council
- Whitwell Parish Council
- Woodsetts Parish Council

Seldom heard audiences

4.2.14 It is important to ensure that everyone with an interest in the proposals has the opportunity to comment on our proposals as part of the consultation. We want our consultation to be inclusive and gather feedback from a wide range of audiences, including those who are seldom heard in public consultations such as people without internet access, seasonal workers, younger people and socially isolated people. We will do this by:

- Writing to organisations representing seldom heard individuals and groups directly (list of organisations attached separately).
- Choosing accessible venues for public events.
- Publicising the consultation in digital and print editions of local newspapers.
- Publicising the consultation on social media.

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- Holding public events at a variety of times, including evenings and weekends to enable participation by people with different time commitments.
 - Making provision for people without internet access through the consultation programme. This includes sending a consultation leaflet to every address within the inner zone, holding public events in the area, publicising the consultation in print editions of local newspapers and making hard copies of consultation materials available on-request.
- 4.2.15 Requests for consultation information in alternative formats (e.g. large print) will be considered on a case-by-case basis so we can establish how best to provide the information required.

4.3 Consultation information

- 4.3.1 Information about our proposals will be published for consultation in the following formats:
- 4.3.2 **A consultation leaflet:** a leaflet issued to addresses within the inner zone setting out how to find out more about the proposals and participate in the consultation; including information on accessing materials, the locations and timings of the public events, and how to share their feedback. This will additionally be published on the Proposed Development's website to view and download.
- 4.3.3 **A consultation booklet:** an accessible summary of our proposals for the Proposed Development, the EIA process, the consultation and planning process, approach to community benefit and next steps. This will be available in hard copy at the public events, by post on request and published on the Proposed Development's website to view and download.
- 4.3.4 **A questionnaire:** the main way we will collect feedback from the community. The questions will be easy to understand, and the responses will be considered as we refine our plans. This will be available in hard copy at the public events, posted on request and published on the Proposed Development's website to view and download.
- 4.3.5 **A website:** the Proposed Development's website (www.whitstonesolarfarm.co.uk) will host all of the consultation documents, including the draft ES, consultation booklet and online questionnaire. It will also include details of the public events as well as the communications lines.
- 4.3.6 **Exhibition banners:** an accessible summary of our proposals for the Proposed Development, the EIA process, the consultation and planning process, approach to community benefit and next steps which will be displayed at the public events. The exhibition banners will also be available as PDFs to download from the Proposed Development's website.
- 4.3.7 **The Draft ES:** containing the initial results of our ongoing environmental assessments as well as preliminary information on measures to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any likely significant adverse effects.
- 4.3.8 **Masterplan:** we will provide copies of the updated masterplan on the Proposed Development's website, large hard copies at events, and post hard copies on request.
- 4.3.9 We will provide hard copies of the consultation booklet, questionnaire and SoCC free of charge on request – as well as USBs containing all of the consultation materials (including the Draft ES). We will review requests for hard copies of the

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Draft ES on a case-by-case basis. A fee to cover printing costs (up to a maximum of £750 for one full set of consultation documents) may be charged to the recipient.

- 4.3.10 Requests for consultation information in alternative formats (e.g. large print) will be considered on a case-by-case basis so we can establish how best to provide the information required.

4.4 Publicity and advertising

- 4.4.1 We will send out a leaflet to the inner consultation zone identified in Figures 5-7 and an email update to our 'keep informed' list.
- 4.4.2 We will issue a press release to local and trade media outlets to inform them of the upcoming consultation and associated activities.
- 4.4.3 Statutory notices will be published in line with Section 47 of the Planning Act 2008, in the Rotherham Advertiser, Doncaster Free Press and Derbyshire Times, and Section 48 of the Planning Act 2008, in the Rotherham Advertiser, Doncaster Free Press, Derbyshire Times, London Gazette and a national newspaper. If for reasons outside of the Applicant's control it is not possible to run the Section 47 and 48 notices, an alternative newspaper or other publication will be chosen with an appropriate distribution area.
- 4.4.4 We will use social media advertising to help publicise the consultation and encourage those with an interest in our proposals to get involved. We are unable to accept feedback via social media.

4.5 Public events

- 4.5.1 We will hold in-person public events during the consultation period to enable anyone with an interest in the proposals to find out more about them and ask questions to members of the team. Printed copies of the consultation booklet, SoCC and questionnaire will be available at these events for members of the public to take away. Completed questionnaires will be able to be returned at the events.
- 4.5.2 The suggested dates and times of these events are listed in Table 1 below. The venues and dates are subject to availability and may change. The events would be held in accessible venues around the Proposed Development and would be organised at a range of dates and times to ensure that people with different schedules are able to attend. This includes events after normal working hours and on the weekend.
- 4.5.3 In the unlikely event that there are changes to the locations or times of our events, we will publicise this information on our website.
- 4.5.4 The map showing the suggested locations of the venues is in Figure 8 below.

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Table 1: Public information events

Location	Date and time
Ulley Village Hall	22 September 3pm-7pm
Ravenfield Parish Hall	23 September 10am-2pm
Harthill with Woodall Village Hall	2 October 3pm-7pm
Whiston Village Hall	3 October 12pm-4pm
Conisbrough Ivanhoe Centre	4 October 10am-3pm
Todwick Village Hall	14 October 3pm-7pm
Thurcroft Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall	15 October 10am-2pm

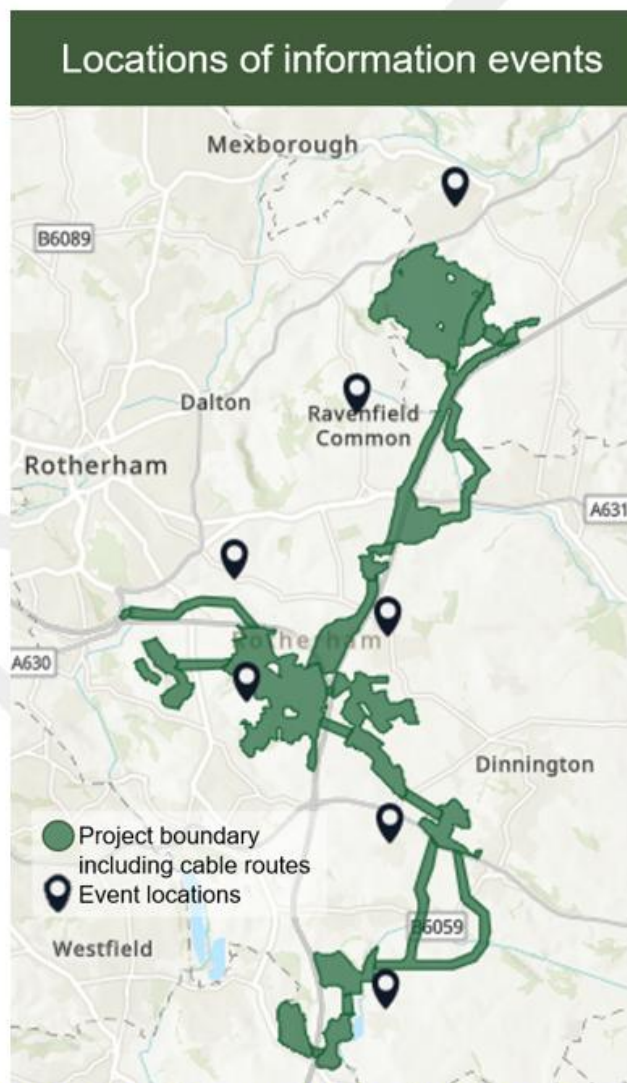


Figure 8: Map of the suggested locations of public events

REPORT

4.6 Presentations and stakeholder meetings

- 4.6.1 We will offer to brief host parishes and local authorities during the consultation period to find out more about the updated proposals, statutory consultation, the draft ES and community benefits.
- 4.6.2 Details of all our consultation activity will be included in a Consultation Report which we will submit as part of our DCO application.

4.7 Communications lines

- 4.7.1 To find out more information or request copies of the consultation materials, anyone can contact the consultation team by freephone (0800 688 9936) during normal business hours (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5:30pm). Outside of these hours, callers will be able to leave a message requesting a callback. Phone calls will not be considered as feedback, and individuals will need to use one of the other communications lines to provide written feedback.
- 4.7.2 Alternatively, individuals can email info@whitestonesolarfarm.co.uk or write to the team via Freepost (no stamp required): Whitestone Solar Farm, FREEPOST SEC Newgate UK LOCAL. Individuals can also submit feedback via these communication lines.

REPORT

5 HOW TO RESPOND TO THE CONSULTATION

5.1 Responding to the consultation

- 5.1.1 We will produce a questionnaire inviting feedback on different elements of the Proposed Development. Responses must be received by the consultation deadline of 11:59pm on 28 October 2025.
- 5.1.2 Respondents will be available to complete questionnaire online through the Proposed Development's website: www.whitstonesolarfarm.co.uk
- 5.1.3 The completed hard-copy questionnaire will also be available in printed form at public events, and on request using the Proposed Development's contact details. The questionnaire can be returned during the consultation period via Freepost address (no stamp required): Whitestone Solar Farm, FREEPOST SEC Newgate UK LOCAL, or at the public events.
- 5.1.4 Alternatively, respondents can write to us via email info@whitstonesolarfarm.co.uk or Freepost (no stamp required): Whitestone Solar Farm, FREEPOST SEC Newgate UK LOCAL. All written feedback will be accepted.

5.2 Consideration of responses

- 5.2.1 In accordance with Section 49 of the Planning Act 2008, all responses received will be carefully considered and the Applicant will have regard to them when finalising the Proposed Development for DCO application.
- 5.2.2 If, as a result of feedback from the statutory consultation or other assessments or engagement, the Proposed Development is amended, then these may be consulted on via targeted consultation on a proportionate basis. Any targeted consultation will be undertaken in a manner that is consistent with the principles and methods set out in this SoCC.
- 5.2.3 The Applicant will summarise consultation responses in a Consultation Report, which will include a description of how the Applicant has had regard of those responses in developing the Proposed Development, and any changes made since the statutory consultation. The consultation report forms part of the DCO application which will be submitted to the Secretary of State via the Planning Inspectorate as required by Section 37(3)(c) of the Planning Act 2008. If the DCO application is accepted, the Consultation Report will be made available for consultees to review how their comments have fed into the process.

5.3 Further information

- 5.3.1 For further information, please contact us by:
- Calling 0800 688 9936 (9:00am to 5:30pm, Monday to Friday)
 - Emailing info@whitstonesolarfarm.co.uk
 - Writing to Whitestone Solar Farm FREEPOST SEC Newgate UK Local.



WHITESTONE
solar farm

Contact

Whitestone Net Zero Ltd
info@whitestonesolarfarm.co.uk
0800 688 9936

Appendix B1.3 Regard had to host authority feedback on informal consultation on the SoCC

Table B1 Informal feedback from host authorities regarding draft SoCC and the Applicant's response

Consultee	Feedback	Applicant Response
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Updated list of community groups	These will all be included.
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Dinnington Town Council should be added to the list of parish councils	This has been updated from Dinnington Parish Council to Dinnington Town Council.
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Suggest reducing the consultation zone so that it is smaller near the cable route than the solar panels	We want to consult broadly and ensure that anyone with an interest in the project is able to take part. There will be multiple ways of notifying the public of the consultation, so anyone who lives near the potential solar areas will be informed.
City of Doncaster Council	As with other SoCC's I would advise that other local newspapers are used, there are others available which are free of charge and distributed locally too so I'd possibly advise that a local newspaper publisher is contacted – i.e. Doncaster Star, Weekender (for the Dearne area) I think their contact is via the Rotherham Advertiser office	No change – These newspapers have a smaller mailout zone than the ones suggested
City of Doncaster Council	Its pleasing to see that they have included some community groups, I know you said that you'd raised some last week – as part of the non-statutory period they may have a list of those who engaged, and/or requested to be included in any further consultation for the development, these groups should also be included.	No other community groups have gotten in contact to ask to be involved, but any who have responded to the project will be included.
City of Doncaster Council	The locations of the public events are welcomed and as with their non-consultation period these venues were possibly used previously or suggested to be used.	Noted.
City of Doncaster Council	From a CDC point of view, I would recommend that the	This has been scheduled.

CONSULTATION REPORT APPENDIX B

Consultee	Feedback	Applicant Response
	<p>newly elected members are contacted and updated (if not already done so), the non-statutory period was held prior to the elections so changes to the Conisbrough Ward and surrounding Parish Councils have now been established.</p>	
<p>City of Doncaster Council</p>	<p>Concern that there is only one event in Conisborough, and that if anyone works on Saturdays they will not be able to attend.</p>	<p>We do not expect any single event to be convenient for everyone in the local area, which is why we have scheduled a series of information events across the broader area at different days of the week and times of day. However, we note that the next closest event would be Ravenfield, so we have changed the timings of this event to be different to the timings of the Conisbrough event to accommodate a variety of work/life schedules.</p>
<p>Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council</p>	<p>NH noted there are no later/evening events proposed in the north.</p>	<p>We have moved the Ravenfield event to the evening so that it is a different day and time as the Conisbrough event.</p>
<p>City of Doncaster Council</p>	<p>Noted that materials should be available in alternative formats to accommodate disabilities, including blindness.</p>	<p>We confirmed that this will be offered upon request and this is clear in the draft SOCC.</p>
<p>Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council</p>	<p>Add Firsby Resident Association to list of community groups</p>	<p>Done.</p>

APPENDIX B2 FORMAL CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT SOCC

Appendix B2.1 Emails inviting formal feedback on the draft SoCC

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 23 July 2025 21:48
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Whitestone SoCC - for formal review
Attachments: Whitestone Community Groups List V2.docx; Whitestone draft SoCC for formal review 23 July.docx

Hi [REDACTED],

Please find the updated draft Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) for your review. This will be the formal review period of 28 days. **Please provide any feedback by 22 August.**

The updated SoCC includes several changes from the previous version in response to the initial feedback received.

- We have changed the dates and times of the information events. Particularly for Conisbrough, there was concern that having one event on a Saturday would not be sufficient and that the nearest other location was scheduled to be a similar time of day on a weekday. To address this concern, we have changed the hours of the event in Ravenfield to be in the evening to accommodate anyone with a standing conflict at that time of day.
- Similarly, we have swapped the events that were scheduled for Thurcroft and Todwick. This means that the next closest event to Harthill, which is Todwick, will be in a different time of day. For the central portion around Whitestone 2, there are three events that are all at different times of day and days of the week. This means that for each event, the next nearest is at a different day of the week and time of day.
- We have corrected the list of parish councils to include Dinnington Town Council.
- We have also updated the list of community groups as requested.
- We have not reduced the consultation zone around the cable route, as it was felt that this would cut off communities, and we want to consult widely with anyone who may have an interest in the project.
- We have not changed the newspapers suggested for the notices at this time, as the ones we have identified appear to have a larger distribution area than the ones suggested. We can continue to review this before finalisation.

Please let us know if you have any feedback on either the SOCC or the list of community groups attached.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

T: [REDACTED]

M: [REDACTED]

E: [REDACTED]

dwd-ltd.co.uk



Chartered Surveyors & Town Planners

DWD

Appendix B2.2 Draft SoCC for formal consultation



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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 About this document

- 1.1.1 This Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) has been prepared on behalf of Whitestone Net Zero Limited ('the Applicant') in relation to a proposed application for development consent under the Planning Act 2008 (hereafter referred to as 'the Application') for the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of the Whitestone Solar Farm (hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development').
- 1.1.2 The applicant is inviting feedback from the local community on the Proposed Development as part of a public consultation from 16 September to 28 October 2025.
- 1.1.3 The Proposed Development is a new solar farm with battery storage, that could make a significant contribution to our national energy goals and energy security by producing renewable energy here in the UK. The Proposed Development is located across three parcels between Rotherham and Doncaster, South Yorkshire, and would connect to the proposed new 400 kV National Grid substation near Brinsworth (hereafter referred to as 'the Site').
- 1.1.4 Because the Proposed Development would generate more than 50 MW of energy, it is considered a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). The Planning Act 2008 establishes the planning regime for NSIPs and requires that we apply for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to construct, operate and decommission it. Unlike local planning applications which are decided by local planning authorities, our DCO Application will be decided at the national level by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.
- 1.1.5 We have prepared this document, known as a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC), in accordance with Section 47 of the Planning Act 2008. It explains how we plan to consult with people living in the vicinity of the Proposed Development about our proposals. It will be published according to the requirements of the Planning Act 2008, and includes:
- Information about the Proposed Development and the companies behind it;
 - An explanation of the planning process for the Proposed Development including pre-application consultation and environmental assessments;
 - Our approach to community consultation including who we will consult, when, how, and what about;
 - How we will let people know about the consultation, provide information, and receive feedback; and,
 - The next steps after consultation, including how we will have regard to the feedback we receive.

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1.2 About the Applicant

- 1.2.1 The Applicant has been established as a specialist development business to allow the funding of larger projects, drawing on the expertise of Green Nation, which ensures that there is sufficient funding to build, operate, and decommission the Proposed Development at the end of its life.
- 1.2.2 Since 2011, Green Nation has become one of the leading developers of rooftop solar panels for homes, schools, and businesses in the UK. Green Nation also develop, construct and operate ground-mounted solar farms and battery storage facilities.
- 1.2.3 The current portfolio of Green Nation is shown in Figure 1 below.

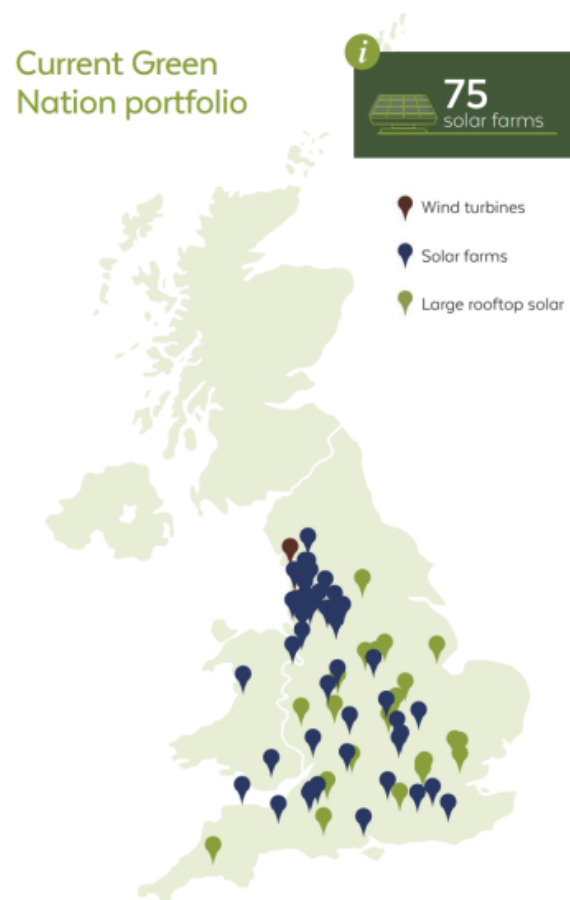


Figure 1: Current Green Nation Portfolio

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1.3 About the Proposed Development

- 1.3.1 The Proposed Development is a solar farm with associated battery storage and infrastructure located between Rotherham and Doncaster in South Yorkshire that would help meet the country's need for low-carbon, homegrown energy. This would include three parcels of land, connected by cable routes.
- 1.3.2 The Proposed Development would be located within the City of Doncaster Council and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's administrative areas, close to the M1 and M18. In the southernmost part of the Proposed Development, the boundary crosses into North East Derbyshire District Council and Derbyshire County Council.



Figure 2: Proposed Development Location

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- 1.3.3 The UK is a global leader in the fight against climate change. The Government has made a legally binding agreement to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 and pledged to eliminate all fossil fuels from the power supply as part of the Clean Power 2030 mission. Replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy generated here in the UK will not only help reduce carbon pollution, but also support energy security and help reduce future energy costs.
- 1.3.4 In the UK, demand for electricity continues to increase. As other sectors cut their reliance on fossil fuels, they are shifting to electricity for their power needs. For example, by replacing gas boilers and traditional vehicles with heat pumps and electric cars, demand for electricity is projected to double by 2050.
- 1.3.5 Large scale solar is a key part of the solution; it is a tried and tested technology that is ready to be built now, can be constructed quickly and safely, and generate large amounts of energy.
- 1.3.6 If constructed, the Proposed Development could make a significant contribution to meeting this need. We have an agreement to supply National Grid with up to 750 MW of energy, which is enough to power up to 250,000 homes¹.

¹ This is based on the average energy consumption of 3,200 kWh per year per home.

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1.4 Components of the Proposed Development

1.4.1 The components that will be needed for the Proposed Development in order to collect the energy from sunlight and prepare it to be transferred to the National Grid are illustrated in Figure 3 below.

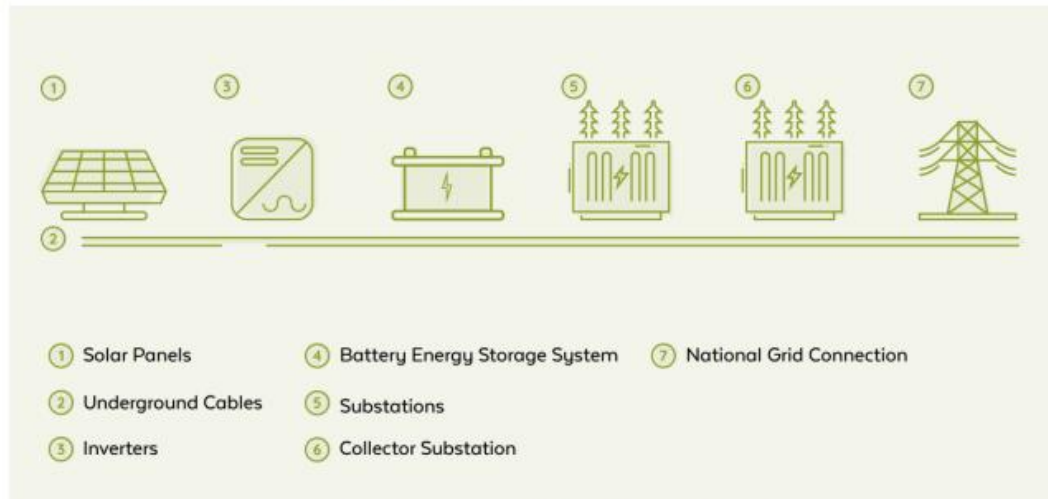


Figure 3: Components of a solar farm

Solar panels (1) would collect energy from sunlight and convert it to low voltage, direct current (DC) electricity.

Underground cables (2) would carry the electricity from the solar panels to other locations around the site.

Inverters (3) would change the power from DC to Alternating Current (AC).

During times of low energy demand, the **Battery Energy Storage System (4)** would store the energy until it is needed. The BESS could also take up extra energy from the grid to store it until it is needed.

Substations (5) located in each of the three parcels would increase the voltage to prepare it to connect to the grid.

The **main project substation (6)** would collect electricity from the three parcels.

Then the energy would be transferred to the **National Grid (7)** at Brinsworth, so that it could power homes and businesses across the UK.

1.4.2 In addition to the technical components that are needed to collect and transport energy, the Proposed Development could also include open spaces around and between the panels. As we develop the Proposed Development, we will incorporate best practices to ensure that it is a well-designed solar farm.

1.4.3 The Proposed Development would be designed to help avoid, reduce or mitigate visual impacts where possible, which could include simply setting the panels back from homes, footpaths, or other key locations. This could also include new planting to create a natural visual barrier, which could help reduce visual impacts, as well as creating new habitats for wildlife and increase biodiversity.

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2 THE PLANNING PROCESS

2.1 The Development Consent Order application process

- 2.1.1 Because the Proposed Development would produce more than 50MW of energy, it is considered a NSIP.
- 2.1.2 The Planning Act 2008 and associated legislation and guidance set out the planning process for NSIPs and require that we apply for a DCO to build and operate the Proposed Development.
- 2.1.3 Unlike planning applications which are determined by local authorities, NSIPs are submitted to and decided at the national level. We will submit our DCO application to the Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate), an independent body that administers the process of reviewing and examining the application on behalf of the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net-Zero.
- 2.1.4 After examination, the Examining Authority will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net-Zero who will then make the final decision as to whether to grant the DCO.
- 2.1.5 Additional information on the NSIP process can be found on the Inspectorate’s website at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-the-stages-of-the-nsip-process-and-how-you-can-have-your-say>
- 2.1.6 Below in Figure 4 is a timeline of the NSIP development process.

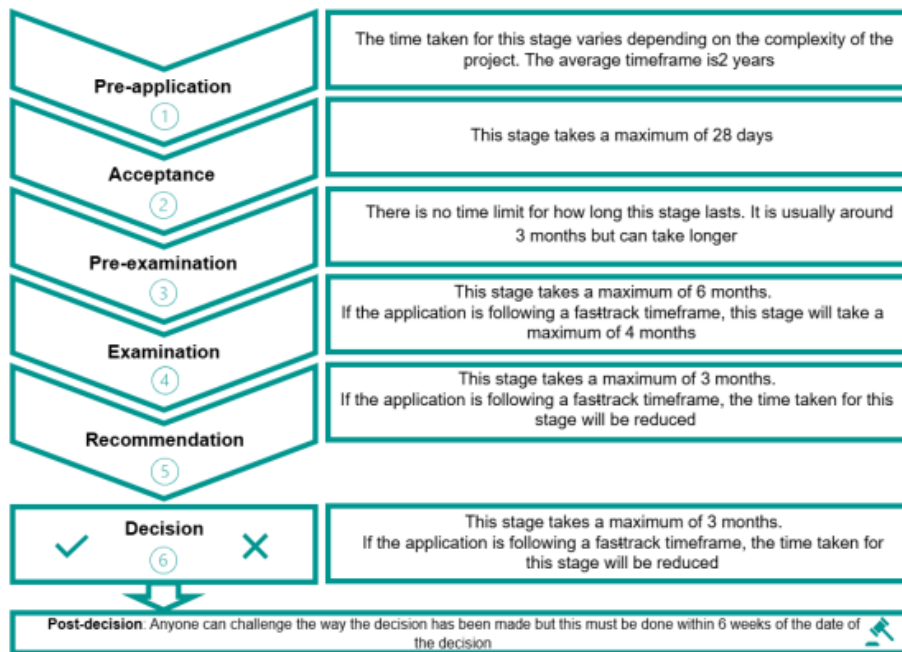


Figure 4: The development process for an NSIP

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2.2 Pre-Application Consultation

2.2.1 Consultation is an important part of the DCO Process. Before we submit our DCO application, the Planning Act 2008 requires us to consult on our proposals. For the Proposed Development, we will consult early and often, throughout the development process, to ensure valuable local knowledge is built into our proposals. Under sections 42 and 47 of the Planning Act 2008, we must consult with:

- Local authorities and parish councils in which the Proposed Development is located, or which neighbour the local authorities and parish councils that are hosting the Proposed Development;
- Persons that have an interest in the land affected by the Proposed Development, including landowners, occupants and tenants;
- Certain organisations and technical bodies (like Historic England and the Environment Agency) which have been prescribed by the Planning Act 2008; and,
- The local community.

2.3 Consultation and the Design Process

2.3.1 The design process for the Proposed Development is iterative, which means that there will be several versions of the design as it develops. Feedback from consultations, results of environmental assessments and ongoing technical and engineering work will inform our evolving proposals at each stage. We have carried out one stage of non-statutory consultation already and anticipate one further round of consultation – a round of statutory consultation, to which this SoCC relates:

2.3.2 **Non-Statutory Consultation:** 18 November 2024 – 31 January 2025 - This first consultation was on our initial proposals for the Proposed Development.

2.3.3 **Statutory Consultation:** 16 September – 28 October 2025 - The statutory consultation will be on our revised proposals, which have been updated based on feedback from the first consultation and ongoing environmental assessments. This is a 'statutory consultation', which will be carried out in accordance with this document and the requirements of the Planning Act 2008 and associated guidance. Feedback from this consultation will inform the updated design we submit in the DCO application.

2.3.4 **Consultation Report:** The Consultation Report will set out the consultation undertaken as part of the pre-application process and will explain how the Applicant has had regard to the consultation feedback received. It will also explain if changes have been made to the design of the Proposed Development as a result of consultation responses received.

2.4 Environmental Impact Assessment

2.4.1 Due to the size and nature of the Proposed Development, it is considered 'EIA Development'. This means that we will conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), which we will report on in an Environmental Statement (ES) submitted as part of our DCO application. The EIA will assess the Proposed Development's likely environmental effects in accordance with the requirements of

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the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. If we identify any likely significant environmental effects, we will also explain how we propose to mitigate them in the ES.

- 2.4.2 **Scoping:** An applicant for a DCO can ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net-Zero for their opinion on the scope of the EIA and the level of detail to be presented in the EIA. The Applicant asked the Inspectorate (acting on behalf of the Secretary of State) for a formal written opinion about the information that should be included in the Draft ES on 23 April 2025. The Inspectorate's response is known as a Scoping Opinion, which was provided on 3 June 2025. The Scoping Opinion will now be used to guide how we will complete our EIA. You can find it on the Inspectorate's website.
- 2.4.3 **Draft Environmental Statement (ES):** As the Proposed Development is EIA development, we are required to consult on preliminary environmental information in relation to it as part of our statutory consultation. We will do this by preparing and publishing a Draft ES. The purpose of the Draft ES is to provide information to enable stakeholders to develop an informed view of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development. The Draft ES must include the information which is reasonably required for consultation bodies to develop an informed view of the likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development.
- 2.4.4 **Final ES:** Our DCO application will include the final results of the environmental assessments in a final ES, which will be submitted and available to view on the Inspectorate's website.

2.5 Indicative Timeline of the Proposed Development



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3 OUR APPROACH TO COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

3.1 Overview of the consultation process

- 3.1.1 We aim to ensure that anyone who wants to engage in the consultation is able to do so, by providing a variety of ways people can learn about the proposals and provide their feedback.
- 3.1.2 We have developed the approach set out in this document taking into account what has worked well in the previous round of consultation, feedback from local authorities, and best practice. We have also considered requirements included in the Planning Act 2008, EIA regulations, associated guidance and Inspectorate's advice notes.
- 3.1.3 We will structure our consultation to support accessibility, aiming to make it as easy as possible to take part. This means providing materials both in print and online, using easy to understand, non-technical language. We will schedule events for the community to learn about our proposals in locally convenient and wheelchair accessible locations on various days of the week and times of day to accommodate different work/life schedules. We will also reach out to gateway organisations for hard-to-reach groups, so that we can hear from as many voices as possible.
- 3.1.4 Our approach to consultation has been informed by feedback from local authorities, to ensure that we are utilising local knowledge to inform an effective consultation process. From 24 July to 22 August 2025, we consulted with the host local authorities on our proposed approach to the next stage of consultation, as laid out in this document. Our strategy has been updated to include their feedback.

3.2 Consultation to date

First Consultation – Autumn 2024-Winter 2025

- 3.2.1 A non-statutory consultation was held over almost eleven weeks, from Monday 18 November 2024 to Friday 31 January 2025. This first phase of consultation introduced the Proposed Development, and sought feedback from the local community, elected officials, landowners, local businesses and interest groups on the proposals.
- 3.2.2 We publicised the consultation by sending an introductory newsletter to a consultation zone that was drafted to include all of the host parishes for the Proposed Development, which includes 30,755 addresses around the proposed site. We also issued press releases to local and trade media and publishing adverts in local media outlets and on social media, updating the Proposed Development's website with details of the consultation, and conducting door knocks to the 26 neighbours closest to the Site.
- 3.2.3 On 13 November ahead of the start of the consultation period, we wrote to a range of stakeholder to notify them of our consultation, and invite them to our in-person events or briefings, including:

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

whitstonesolarfarm.co.uk

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- South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Mayor
 - City of Doncaster Council Members
 - Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Members
 - Members of Parliament (MPs) for Rawmarsh and Conisbrough, Rother Valley, Rotherham, and Doncaster Central
 - Host and neighbouring parish councils
- 3.2.4 We developed consultation materials in a range of formats, including a consultation booklet, series of maps, pull-up banners and questionnaire.
- 3.2.5 These materials were made available on our website, at public events and sent to community members by mail on request.
- 3.2.6 During the consultation period, we organised and attended 15 site visits on request to neighbours closest to the site, held seven in person events and one webinar for the wider public, and we met with nine parish councils. At these meetings, individuals could ask questions of the wider project team and provide their feedback.
- 3.2.7 Individuals could share their views by completing an online questionnaire, accessed through the Proposed Development's website, emailing the questionnaire to the Proposed Development's email, posting a hard-copy questionnaire to the Freepost address or submitting comments by email or in writing to the Freepost address.
- 3.2.8 We received 940 pieces of feedback from this consultation, which led to significant changes to the design of the Proposed Development. We removed around one fourth of the solar panels from the Proposed Development, in order to create buffers around homes, villages, and public rights of way. We also received feedback on our approach to consultation, including which venues and locations to use and how to refine the consultation zone to include additional villages.

Proposed Development update – Spring 2025

- 3.2.9 After the non-statutory consultation period, we conducted a round of engagement to inform the public of the updated masterplans.
- 3.2.10 On 20-21 March, we revisited 12 near neighbours closest to the site to discuss the changes made in response to their feedback. On 31 March and 3 April, we offered a briefing to the host parishes. On 2 April, we briefed members of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. We also offered to brief members of City of Doncaster Council, which occurred on 29 April.
- 3.2.11 On 26 March, we sent out an email update to all 509 email addresses signed up to our 'keep informed' list and we sent out a leaflet to 29,012 addresses in the area to update the community about the changes to the proposals based on their feedback. The updated maps and leaflets were also added to the Proposed Development's website.
- 3.2.12 We have continued to meet with statutory and technical consultees to assist with the EIA process and the evolution of our design. This includes relevant statutory bodies such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, and National Highways.

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4 APPROACH TO STATUTORY CONSULTATION

4.1 What are we consulting on?

4.1.1 During our statutory consultation from 16 September – 28 October 2025, we will present our updated proposals and ask for your feedback.

4.1.2 In this statutory consultation period, we will be asking for your views on:

- Our proposals for the Proposed Development as a whole;
- The location of the Proposed Development's components, including the solar panels, substations, batteries, and cable routes;
- The Draft ES and potential impacts from the Proposed Development during construction, operation, and decommissioning to the local environment and community;
- Our proposals for mitigating the potential impacts and environmental enhancements;
- Our proposals to contribute to the local community, including local initiatives or organisations that the Proposed Development could support over its lifetime.

4.1.3 Our consultation includes but is not limited to the list above.

4.2 Who are we consulting?

4.2.1 We want to consult widely with anyone who has an interest in or feels impacted by Whitestone Solar Farm. We have identified a variety of stakeholders that we believe may have an interest in the Proposed Development, and developed a plan to notify these groups and individuals – but anyone is welcome to submit their feedback.

4.2.2 We have defined two geographic zones – an inner zone and an outer zone – for the purpose of consulting with the local community. This recognises the fact that levels of potential impact are likely to vary with distance to the Proposed Development. These zones have informed how we will publicise the consultation and are set out below, with further detail about the consultation information detailed in section 4.4.

Inner Zone

4.2.3 The inner zone covers people who live and work closest to the Proposed Development and their political representatives. Our consultation activity will be most intensive within this zone. A map of this zone is shown in Figures 5-7.

4.2.4 We have identified an area that includes around 45,000 addresses by drawing a shape approximately 1km from the Site, expanding further to ensure that entire villages were included. 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 Proposed Development.

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4.2.5 A leaflet will be sent to all properties within the inner zone to notify them of the start of statutory consultation and invite them to attend public information events, which will be located within this area.

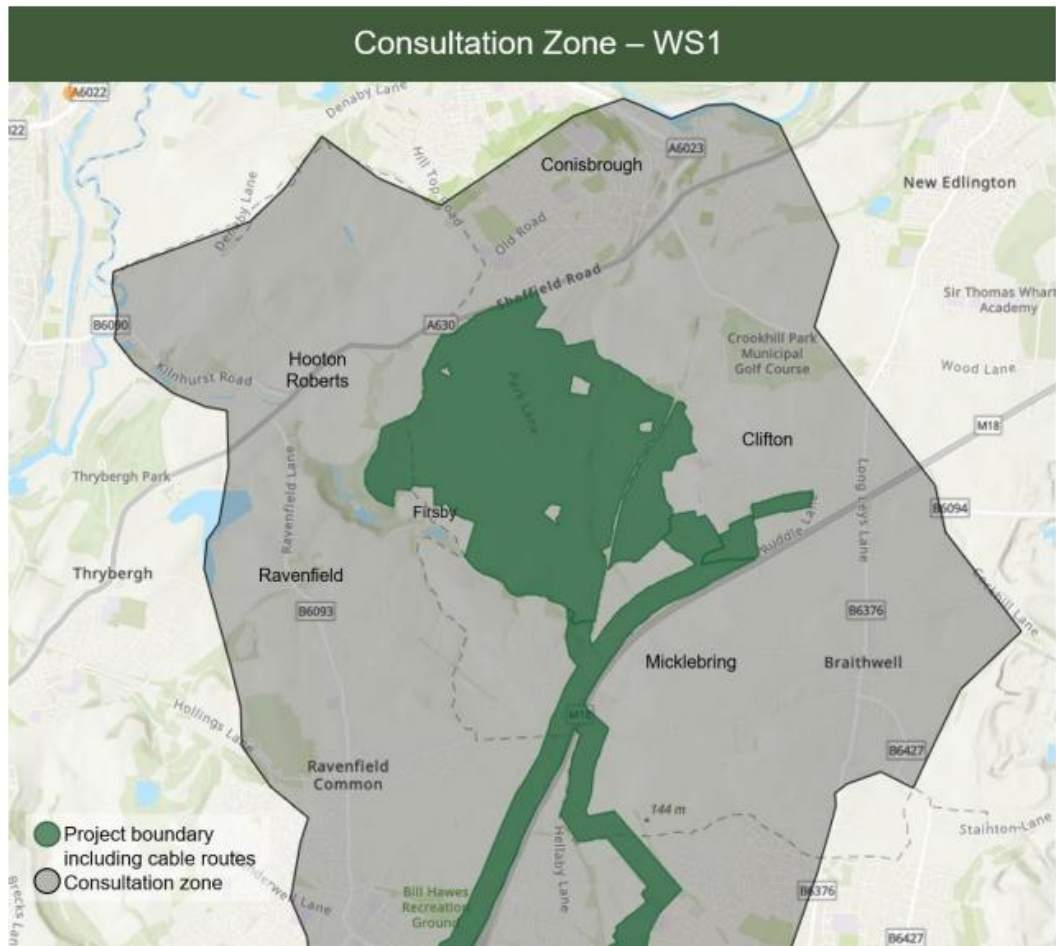


Figure 5: Map of inner consultation zone – WS 1

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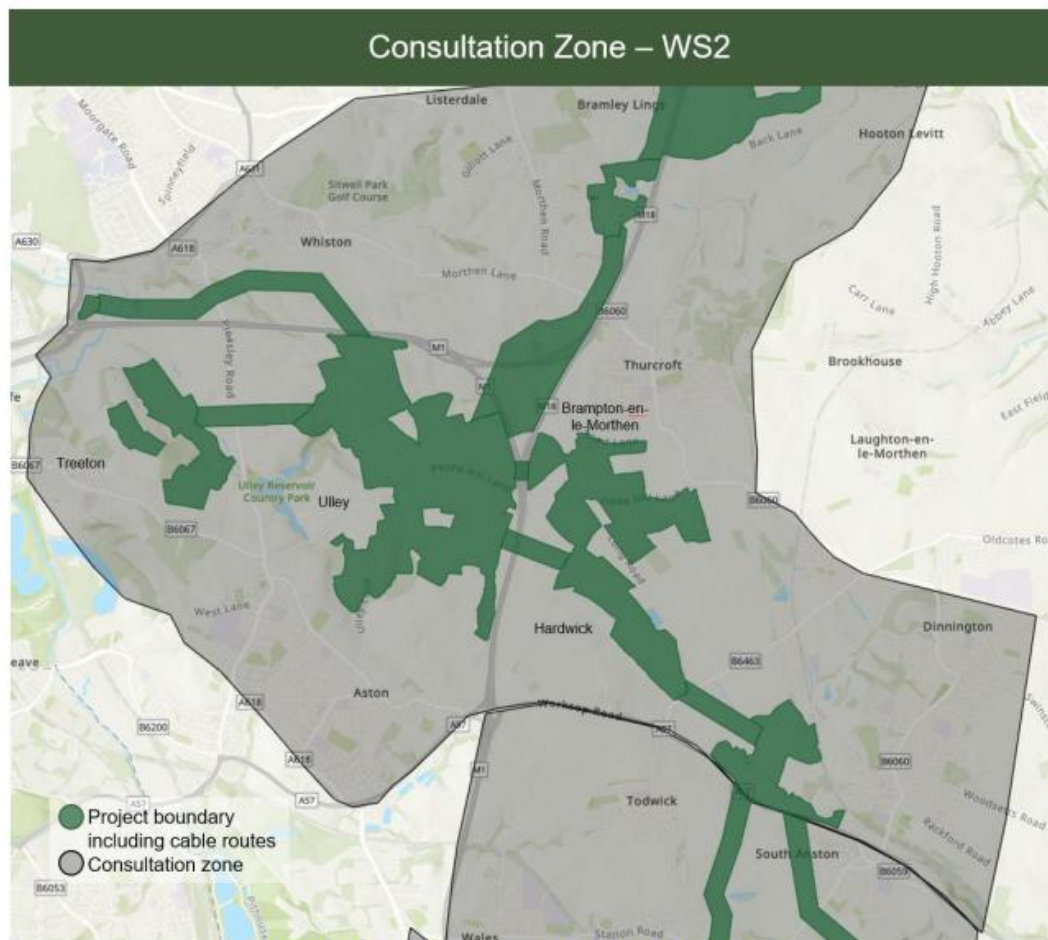


Figure 6: Map of inner consultation zone – WS 2

REPORT

- 4.2.8 At the same time as consulting the local community, we will also consult a range of statutory consultees as set out by Section 42 and Section 48 of the Planning Act 2008 and Regulation 13 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, and additional organisations that we recognise to have an interest in the Proposed Development. These groups include:
- The host and neighbouring local authorities;
 - Statutory bodies (such as the Environment Agency, Historic England, Natural England and others);
 - Other community groups and organisations that may have an interest in the proposals (such as Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, and the Conisbrough Research and Archaeology Group); and,
 - People with an interest in land (e.g. owners or tenants) that may be affected by the proposals.

Elected representatives

- 4.2.9 At the launch of consultation, relevant elected representatives within the consultation zone will be contacted, including the Members of Parliament (MPs) for Rawmarsh and Conisbrough, Rother Valley, Rotherham, North East Derbyshire, Doncaster Central, and Bolsover, the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Mayor, Derbyshire County Councillors, Doncaster City Council Councillors, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Councillors and North East Derbyshire District Councillors.
- 4.2.10 We will also contact host parish councils to offer them a joint briefing and invite them to our public events, and support them in promoting the consultation using their existing communication channels.
- 4.2.11 We will contact neighbouring parish councils to inform them about the consultation period and invite them to our public events.
- 4.2.12 Host parish councils include:
- Aston cum Aughton Parish Council
 - Barlborough Parish Council
 - Braithwell with Micklebring Parish Council
 - Bramley Parish Council
 - Brinsworth Parish Council
 - Conisbrough Parks Parish Council
 - Harthill with Woodall Parish Council
 - Hellaby Parish Council
 - Hooton Roberts Parish Council
 - Killamarsh Parish Council
 - Laughton-en-le-Morthen Parish Council
 - Maltby Parish Council
 - North and South Anston Parish Council
 - Ravenfield Parish Council
 - Thorpe Salvin Parish Council

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- Thurcroft Parish Council
- Todwick Parish Council
- Treeton Parish Council
- Wales Parish Council
- Whiston Parish Council
- Wickersley Parish Council
- Ulley Parish Council

4.2.13 Neighbouring parish councils include:

- Adwick upon Dearne Parish Council
- Barnburgh Parish Council
- Cadeby Parish Council
- Catcliffe Parish Council
- Dalton Parish Council
- Denaby Parish Council
- Dinnington St John's Town Council
- Edlington Parish Council
- High Melton Parish Council
- Hooton Levitt Parish Council
- Orgreave Parish Council
- Shireoaks Parish Council
- Spotborough and Cusworth Parish Council
- Stainton Parish Council
- Thrybergh Parish Council
- Warmsworth Parish Council
- Waverley Parish Council
- Whitwell Parish Council
- Woodsetts Parish Council

Seldom heard audiences

4.2.14 It is important to ensure that everyone with an interest in the proposals has the opportunity to comment on our proposals as part of the consultation. We want our consultation to be inclusive and gather feedback from a wide range of audiences, including those who are seldom heard in public consultations such as people without internet access, seasonal workers, younger people and socially isolated people. We will do this by:

- Writing to organisations representing seldom heard individuals and groups directly (list of organisations attached separately).
- Choosing accessible venues for public events.
- Publicising the consultation in digital and print editions of local newspapers.
- Publicising the consultation on social media.

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- Holding public events at a variety of times, including evenings and weekends to enable participation by people with different time commitments.
 - Making provision for people without internet access through the consultation programme. This includes sending a consultation leaflet to every address within the inner zone, holding public events in the area, publicising the consultation in print editions of local newspapers and making hard copies of consultation materials available on-request.
- 4.2.15 Requests for consultation information in alternative formats (e.g. large print) will be considered on a case-by-case basis so we can establish how best to provide the information required.

4.3 Consultation information

- 4.3.1 Information about our proposals will be published for consultation in the following formats:
- 4.3.2 **A consultation leaflet:** a leaflet issued to addresses within the inner zone setting out how to find out more about the proposals and participate in the consultation; including information on accessing materials, the locations and timings of the public events, and how to share their feedback. This will additionally be published on the Proposed Development's website to view and download.
- 4.3.3 **A consultation booklet:** an accessible summary of our proposals for the Proposed Development, the EIA process, the consultation and planning process, approach to community benefit and next steps. This will be available in hard copy at the public events, by post on request and published on the Proposed Development's website to view and download.
- 4.3.4 **A questionnaire:** the main way we will collect feedback from the community. The questions will be easy to understand, and the responses will be considered as we refine our plans. This will be available in hard copy at the public events, posted on request and published on the Proposed Development's website to view and download.
- 4.3.5 **A website:** the Proposed Development's website (www.whitstonesolarfarm.co.uk) will host all of the consultation documents, including the draft ES, consultation booklet and online questionnaire. It will also include details of the public events as well as the communications lines.
- 4.3.6 **Exhibition banners:** an accessible summary of our proposals for the Proposed Development, the EIA process, the consultation and planning process, approach to community benefit and next steps which will be displayed at the public events. The exhibition banners will also be available as PDFs to download from the Proposed Development's website.
- 4.3.7 **The Draft ES:** containing the initial results of our ongoing environmental assessments as well as preliminary information on measures to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any likely significant adverse effects.
- 4.3.8 **Masterplan:** we will provide copies of the updated masterplan on the Proposed Development's website, large hard copies at events, and post hard copies on request.
- 4.3.9 We will provide hard copies of the consultation booklet, questionnaire and SoCC free of charge on request – as well as USBs containing all of the consultation materials (including the Draft ES). We will review requests for hard copies of the

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Draft ES on a case-by-case basis. A fee to cover printing costs (up to a maximum of £750 for one full set of consultation documents) may be charged to the recipient.

- 4.3.10 Requests for consultation information in alternative formats (e.g. large print) will be considered on a case-by-case basis so we can establish how best to provide the information required.

4.4 Publicity and advertising

- 4.4.1 We will send out a leaflet to the inner consultation zone identified in Figures 5-7 and an email update to our 'keep informed' list.
- 4.4.2 We will issue a press release to local and trade media outlets to inform them of the upcoming consultation and associated activities.
- 4.4.3 Statutory notices will be published in line with Section 47 and Section 48 of the Planning Act 2008, in the Rotherham Advertiser, Doncaster Free Press, Derbyshire Times, London Gazette and a national newspaper. If for reasons outside of the Applicant's control it is not possible to run the Section 47 and 48 notices, an alternative newspaper or other publication will be chosen with an appropriate distribution area.
- 4.4.4 We will use social media advertising to help publicise the consultation and encourage those with an interest in our proposals to get involved. We are unable to accept feedback via social media.

4.5 Public events

- 4.5.1 We will hold in-person public events during the consultation period to enable anyone with an interest in the proposals to find out more about them and ask questions to members of the team. Printed copies of the consultation booklet, SoCC and questionnaire will be available at these events for members of the public to take away. Completed questionnaires will be able to be returned at the events.
- 4.5.2 The dates and times of these events are listed in Table 1 below. The venues and dates are subject to availability and may change. The events would be held in accessible venues around the Proposed Development and would be organised at a range of dates and times to ensure that people with different schedules are able to attend. This includes events after normal working hours and on the weekend.
- 4.5.3 In the unlikely event that there are changes to the locations or times of our events, we will publicise this information on our website.
- 4.5.4 The map showing the locations of the venues is in Figure 8 below.

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Table 1: Public information events

Date and time	Location
2 October 10am-2pm	Thurcroft Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall, S66 9DD
3 October 1pm-5pm	Todwick Village Hall, S26 1HJ
4 October 10am-3pm	Conisbrough Ivanhoe Centre, DN12 3JX
7 October 3pm-7pm	Harthill Village Hall, S26 7YL
8 October 3pm-7pm	Ravenfield Village Hall, S65 4PT
14 October 3pm-7pm	Ulley Village Hall, S26 3YD
15 October 12pm-4pm	Whiston Village Hall, S60 4HX



Figure 8: Map of the suggested locations of public events

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4.6 Presentations and stakeholder meetings

- 4.6.1 We will offer to brief host parishes and local authorities during the consultation period to find out more about the updated proposals, statutory consultation, the draft ES and community benefits.
- 4.6.2 Details of all our consultation activity will be included in a Consultation Report which we will submit as part of our DCO application.

4.7 Communications lines

- 4.7.1 To find out more information or request copies of the consultation materials, anyone can contact the consultation team by freephone (0800 688 9936) during normal business hours (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5:30pm). Outside of these hours, callers will be able to leave a message requesting a callback. Phone calls will not be considered as feedback, and individuals will need to use one of the other communications lines to provide written feedback.
- 4.7.2 Alternatively, individuals can email info@whitstonesolarfarm.co.uk or write to the team via Freepost (no stamp required): Whitestone Solar Farm, FREEPOST SEC Newgate UK LOCAL. Individuals can also submit feedback via these communication lines.

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5 HOW TO RESPOND TO THE CONSULTATION

5.1 Responding to the consultation

- 5.1.1 We will produce a questionnaire inviting feedback on different elements of the Proposed Development. Responses must be received by the consultation deadline of 11:59pm on 28 October 2025.
- 5.1.2 Respondents will be available to complete questionnaire online through the Proposed Development's website: www.whitestonesolarfarm.co.uk
- 5.1.3 The completed hard-copy questionnaire will also be available in printed form at public events, and on request using the Proposed Development's contact details. The questionnaire can be returned during the consultation period via Freepost address (no stamp required): Whitestone Solar Farm, FREEPOST SEC Newgate UK LOCAL, or at the public events.
- 5.1.4 Alternatively, respondents can write to us via email info@whitestonesolarfarm.co.uk or Freepost (no stamp required): Whitestone Solar Farm, FREEPOST SEC Newgate UK LOCAL. All written feedback will be accepted.

5.2 Consideration of responses

- 5.2.1 In accordance with Section 49 of the Planning Act 2008, all responses received will be carefully considered and the Applicant will have regard to them when finalising the Proposed Development for DCO application.
- 5.2.2 If, as a result of feedback from the statutory consultation or other assessments or engagement, the Proposed Development is amended, then these may be consulted on via targeted consultation on a proportionate basis. Any targeted consultation will be undertaken in a manner that is consistent with the principles and methods set out in this SoCC.
- 5.2.3 The Applicant will summarise consultation responses in a Consultation Report, which will include a description of how the Applicant has had regard of those responses in developing the Proposed Development, and any changes made since the statutory consultation. The consultation report forms part of the DCO application which will be submitted to the Secretary of State via the Planning Inspectorate as required by Section 37(3)(c) of the Planning Act 2008. If the DCO application is accepted, the Consultation Report will be made available for consultees to review how their comments have fed into the process.

5.3 Further information

- 5.3.1 For further information, please contact us by:
- Calling 0800 688 9936 (9:00am to 5:30pm, Monday to Friday)
 - Emailing info@whitestonesolarfarm.co.uk
 - Writing to Whitestone Solar Farm FREEPOST SEC Newgate UK Local.



WHITESTONE
solar farm

Contact

Whitestone Net Zero Ltd
info@whitestonesolarfarm.co.uk
0800 688 9936

Appendix B2.3 Regard had to formal feedback from local authorities on the draft SoCC

Table B2 – Formal feedback from host authorities regarding draft SoCC and the Applicant’s response

Consultee	Feedback	Applicant Response
City of Doncaster Council	No further feedback to add to the current Draft SoCC	No comment required.
North East Derbyshire District Council	No further feedback to add to the current Draft SoCC	No comment required.
North East Derbyshire District Council	Ensure Eckington PC are added to the keep informed list	Confirmed that Eckington PC is in our list of host parish councils to contact when launching statutory consultation and providing any updates to parish councils.
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	No further feedback to add to the current Draft SoCC	No comment required.

APPENDIX B3 FINAL SOCC



WHITESTONE
solar farm

**Statement of Community
Consultation**

**September
2025**

whitstonesolarfarm.co.uk

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 About this document

- 1.1.1 This Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) has been prepared on behalf of Whitestone Net Zero Limited ('the Applicant') in relation to a proposed application for development consent under the Planning Act 2008 (hereafter referred to as 'the Application') for the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of the Whitestone Solar Farm (hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development').
- 1.1.2 The applicant is inviting feedback from the local community on the Proposed Development as part of a public consultation from 16 September to 28 October 2025.
- 1.1.3 The Proposed Development is a new solar farm with battery storage, that could make a significant contribution to our national energy goals and energy security by producing renewable energy here in the UK. The Proposed Development is located across three parcels between Rotherham and Doncaster, South Yorkshire, and would connect to the proposed new 400 kV National Grid substation near Brinsworth (hereafter referred to as 'the Site').
- 1.1.4 Because the Proposed Development would generate more than 50 MW of energy, it is considered a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). The Planning Act 2008 establishes the planning regime for NSIPs and requires that we apply for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to construct, operate and decommission it. Unlike local planning applications which are decided by local planning authorities, our DCO Application will be decided at the national level by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.
- 1.1.5 We have prepared this document, known as a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC), in accordance with Section 47 of the Planning Act 2008. It explains how we plan to consult with people living in the vicinity of the Proposed Development about our proposals. It will be published according to the requirements of the Planning Act 2008, and includes:
- Information about the Proposed Development and the companies behind it;
 - An explanation of the planning process for the Proposed Development including pre-application consultation and environmental assessments;
 - Our approach to community consultation including who we will consult, when, how, and what about;
 - How we will let people know about the consultation, provide information, and receive feedback; and,
 - The next steps after consultation, including how we will have regard to the feedback we receive.

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1.2 About the Applicant

- 1.2.1 The Applicant has been established as a specialist development business to allow the funding of larger projects, drawing on the expertise of Green Nation, which ensures that there is sufficient funding to build, operate, and decommission the Proposed Development at the end of its life.
- 1.2.2 Since 2011, Green Nation has become one of the leading developers of rooftop solar panels for homes, schools, and businesses in the UK. Green Nation also develop, construct and operate ground-mounted solar farms and battery storage facilities.
- 1.2.3 The current portfolio of Green Nation is shown in Figure 1 below.

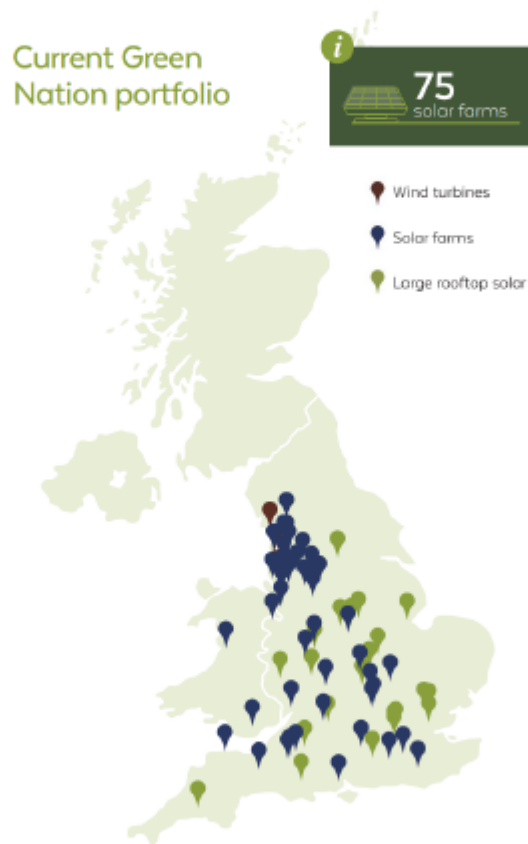


Figure 1: Current Green Nation Portfolio

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1.3 About the Proposed Development

1.3.1 The Proposed Development is a solar farm with associated battery storage and infrastructure located between Rotherham and Doncaster in South Yorkshire that would help meet the country's need for low-carbon, homegrown energy. This would include three parcels of land, connected by cable routes.

1.3.2 The Proposed Development would be located within the City of Doncaster Council and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council's administrative areas, close to the M1 and M18. In the southernmost part of the Proposed Development, the boundary crosses into North East Derbyshire District Council and Derbyshire County Council.



Figure 2: Proposed Development Location

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- 1.3.3 The UK is a global leader in the fight against climate change. The Government has made a legally binding agreement to reach net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 and pledged to eliminate all fossil fuels from the power supply as part of the Clean Power 2030 mission. Replacing fossil fuels with renewable energy generated here in the UK will not only help reduce carbon pollution, but also support energy security and help reduce future energy costs.
- 1.3.4 In the UK, demand for electricity continues to increase. As other sectors cut their reliance on fossil fuels, they are shifting to electricity for their power needs. For example, by replacing gas boilers and traditional vehicles with heat pumps and electric cars, demand for electricity is projected to double by 2050.
- 1.3.5 Large scale solar is a key part of the solution; it is a tried and tested technology that is ready to be built now, can be constructed quickly and safely, and generate large amounts of energy.
- 1.3.6 If constructed, the Proposed Development could make a significant contribution to meeting this need. We have an agreement to supply National Grid with up to 750 MW of energy, which is enough to power up to 250,000 homes¹.

¹ This is based on the average energy consumption of 3,200 kWh per year per home.

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1.4 Components of the Proposed Development

1.4.1 The components that will be needed for the Proposed Development in order to collect the energy from sunlight and prepare it to be transferred to the National Grid are illustrated in Figure 3 below.

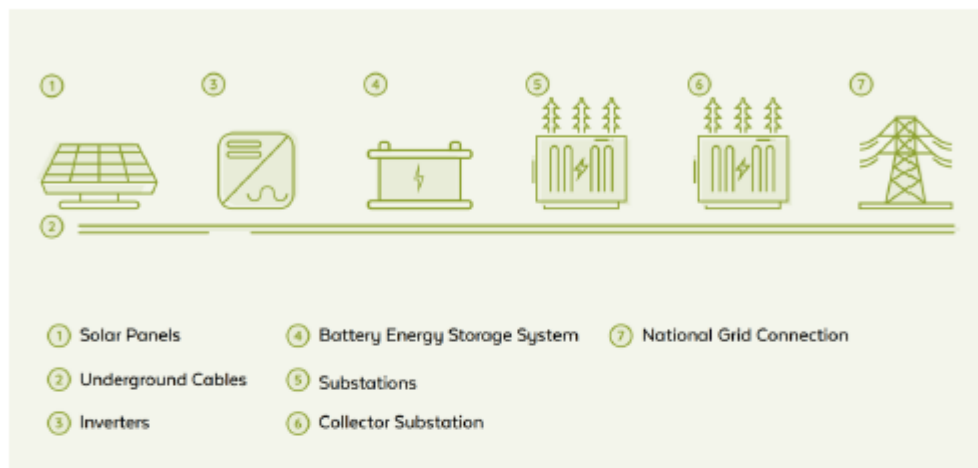


Figure 3: Components of a solar farm

Solar panels (1) would collect energy from sunlight and convert it to low voltage, direct current (DC) electricity.

Underground cables (2) would carry the electricity from the solar panels to other locations around the site.

Inverters (3) would change the power from DC to Alternating Current (AC).

During times of low energy demand, the **Battery Energy Storage System (4)** would store the energy until it is needed. The BESS could also take up extra energy from the grid to store it until it is needed.

Substations (5) located in each of the three parcels would increase the voltage to prepare it to connect to the grid.

The **main project substation (6)** would collect electricity from the three parcels.

Then the energy would be transferred to the **National Grid (7)** at Brinsworth, so that it could power homes and businesses across the UK.

1.4.2 In addition to the technical components that are needed to collect and transport energy, the Proposed Development could also include open spaces around and between the panels. As we develop the Proposed Development, we will incorporate best practices to ensure that it is a well-designed solar farm.

1.4.3 The Proposed Development would be designed to help avoid, reduce or mitigate visual impacts where possible, which could include simply setting the panels back from homes, footpaths, or other key locations. This could also include new planting to create a natural visual barrier, which could help reduce visual impacts, as well as creating new habitats for wildlife and increase biodiversity.

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2 THE PLANNING PROCESS

2.1 The Development Consent Order application process

- 2.1.1 Because the Proposed Development would produce more than 50MW of energy, it is considered a NSIP.
- 2.1.2 The Planning Act 2008 and associated legislation and guidance set out the planning process for NSIPs and require that we apply for a DCO to build and operate the Proposed Development.
- 2.1.3 Unlike planning applications which are determined by local authorities, NSIPs are submitted to and decided at the national level. We will submit our DCO application to the Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate), an independent body that administers the process of reviewing and examining the application on behalf of the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net-Zero.
- 2.1.4 After examination, the Examining Authority will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net-Zero who will then make the final decision as to whether to grant the DCO.
- 2.1.5 Additional information on the NSIP process can be found on the Inspectorate's website at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-the-stages-of-the-nsip-process-and-how-you-can-have-your-say>
- 2.1.6 Below in Figure 4 is a timeline of the NSIP development process.

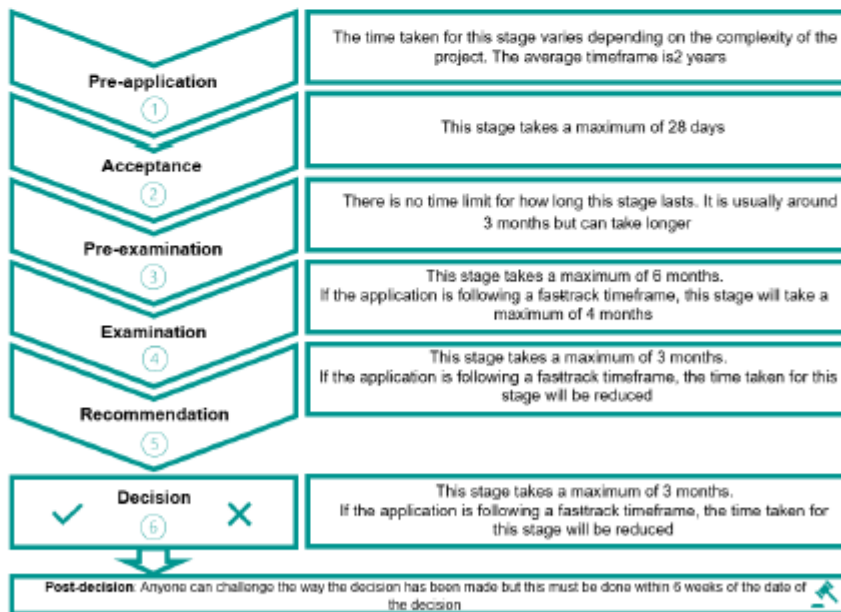


Figure 4: The development process for an NSIP

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2.2 Pre-Application Consultation

2.2.1 Consultation is an important part of the DCO Process. Before we submit our DCO application, the Planning Act 2008 requires us to consult on our proposals. For the Proposed Development, we will consult early and often, throughout the development process, to ensure valuable local knowledge is built into our proposals. Under sections 42 and 47 of the Planning Act 2008, we must consult with:

- Local authorities and parish councils in which the Proposed Development is located, or which neighbour the local authorities and parish councils that are hosting the Proposed Development;
- Persons that have an interest in the land affected by the Proposed Development, including landowners, occupants and tenants;
- Certain organisations and technical bodies (like Historic England and the Environment Agency) which have been prescribed by the Planning Act 2008; and,
- The local community.

2.3 Consultation and the Design Process

2.3.1 The design process for the Proposed Development is iterative, which means that there will be several versions of the design as it develops. Feedback from consultations, results of environmental assessments and ongoing technical and engineering work will inform our evolving proposals at each stage. We have carried out one stage of non-statutory consultation already and anticipate one further round of consultation – a round of statutory consultation, to which this SoCC relates:

2.3.2 **Non-Statutory Consultation:** 18 November 2024 – 31 January 2025 - This first consultation was on our initial proposals for the Proposed Development.

2.3.3 **Statutory Consultation:** 16 September – 28 October 2025 - The statutory consultation will be on our revised proposals, which have been updated based on feedback from the first consultation and ongoing environmental assessments. This is a 'statutory consultation', which will be carried out in accordance with this document and the requirements of the Planning Act 2008 and associated guidance. Feedback from this consultation will inform the updated design we submit in the DCO application.

2.3.4 **Consultation Report:** The Consultation Report will set out the consultation undertaken as part of the pre-application process and will explain how the Applicant has had regard to the consultation feedback received. It will also explain if changes have been made to the design of the Proposed Development as a result of consultation responses received.

2.4 Environmental Impact Assessment

2.4.1 Due to the size and nature of the Proposed Development, it is considered 'EIA Development'. This means that we will conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), which we will report on in an Environmental Statement (ES) submitted as part of our DCO application. The EIA will assess the Proposed Development's likely environmental effects in accordance with the requirements of

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the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. If we identify any likely significant environmental effects, we will also explain how we propose to mitigate them in the ES.

- 2.4.2 **Scoping:** An applicant for a DCO can ask the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net-Zero for their opinion on the scope of the EIA and the level of detail to be presented in the EIA. The Applicant asked the Inspectorate (acting on behalf of the Secretary of State) for a formal written opinion about the information that should be included in the Draft ES on 23 April 2025. The Inspectorate’s response is known as a Scoping Opinion, which was provided on 3 June 2025. The Scoping Opinion will now be used to guide how we will complete our EIA. You can find it on the Inspectorate’s website.
- 2.4.3 **Draft Environmental Statement (ES):** As the Proposed Development is EIA development, we are required to consult on preliminary environmental information in relation to it as part of our statutory consultation. We will do this by preparing and publishing a Draft ES. The purpose of the Draft ES is to provide information to enable stakeholders to develop an informed view of the likely significant effects of the Proposed Development. The Draft ES must include the information which is reasonably required for consultation bodies to develop an informed view of the likely significant environmental effects of the Proposed Development.
- 2.4.4 **Final ES:** Our DCO application will include the final results of the environmental assessments in a final ES, which will be submitted and available to view on the Inspectorate’s website.

2.5 Indicative Timeline of the Proposed Development



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3 OUR APPROACH TO COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

3.1 Overview of the consultation process

- 3.1.1 We aim to ensure that anyone who wants to engage in the consultation is able to do so, by providing a variety of ways people can learn about the proposals and provide their feedback.
- 3.1.2 We have developed the approach set out in this document taking into account what has worked well in the previous round of consultation, feedback from local authorities, and best practice. We have also considered requirements included in the Planning Act 2008, EIA regulations, associated guidance and Inspectorate's advice notes.
- 3.1.3 We will structure our consultation to support accessibility, aiming to make it as easy as possible to take part. This means providing materials both in print and online, using easy to understand, non-technical language. We will schedule events for the community to learn about our proposals in locally convenient and wheelchair accessible locations on various days of the week and times of day to accommodate different work/life schedules. We will also reach out to gateway organisations for hard-to-reach groups, so that we can hear from as many voices as possible.
- 3.1.4 Our approach to consultation has been informed by feedback from local authorities, to ensure that we are utilising local knowledge to inform an effective consultation process. From 24 July to 22 August 2025, we consulted with the host local authorities on our proposed approach to the next stage of consultation, as laid out in this document. Our strategy has been updated to include their feedback.

3.2 Consultation to date

First Consultation – Autumn 2024-Winter 2025

- 3.2.1 A non-statutory consultation was held over almost eleven weeks, from Monday 18 November 2024 to Friday 31 January 2025. This first phase of consultation introduced the Proposed Development, and sought feedback from the local community, elected officials, landowners, local businesses and interest groups on the proposals.
- 3.2.2 We publicised the consultation by sending an introductory newsletter to a consultation zone that was drafted to include all of the host parishes for the Proposed Development, which includes 30,755 addresses around the proposed site. We also issued press releases to local and trade media and publishing adverts in local media outlets and on social media, updating the Proposed Development's website with details of the consultation, and conducting door knocks to the 26 neighbours closest to the Site.
- 3.2.3 On 13 November ahead of the start of the consultation period, we wrote to a range of stakeholder to notify them of our consultation, and invite them to our in-person events or briefings, including:

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

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- South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Mayor
 - City of Doncaster Council Members
 - Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Members
 - Members of Parliament (MPs) for Rawmarsh and Conisbrough, Rother Valley, Rotherham, and Doncaster Central
 - Host and neighbouring parish councils
- 3.2.4 We developed consultation materials in a range of formats, including a consultation booklet, series of maps, pull-up banners and questionnaire.
- 3.2.5 These materials were made available on our website, at public events and sent to community members by mail on request.
- 3.2.6 During the consultation period, we organised and attended 15 site visits on request to neighbours closest to the site, held seven in person events and one webinar for the wider public, and we met with nine parish councils. At these meetings, individuals could ask questions of the wider project team and provide their feedback.
- 3.2.7 Individuals could share their views by completing an online questionnaire, accessed through the Proposed Development's website, emailing the questionnaire to the Proposed Development's email, posting a hard-copy questionnaire to the Freepost address or submitting comments by email or in writing to the Freepost address.
- 3.2.8 We received 940 pieces of feedback from this consultation, which led to significant changes to the design of the Proposed Development. We removed around one fourth of the solar panels from the Proposed Development, in order to create buffers around homes, villages, and public rights of way. We also received feedback on our approach to consultation, including which venues and locations to use and how to refine the consultation zone to include additional villages.

Proposed Development update – Spring 2025

- 3.2.9 After the non-statutory consultation period, we conducted a round of engagement to inform the public of the updated masterplans.
- 3.2.10 On 20-21 March, we revisited 12 near neighbours closest to the site to discuss the changes made in response to their feedback. On 31 March and 3 April, we offered a briefing to the host parishes. On 2 April, we briefed members of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. We also offered to brief members of City of Doncaster Council, which occurred on 29 April.
- 3.2.11 On 26 March, we sent out an email update to all 509 email addresses signed up to our 'keep informed' list and we sent out a leaflet to 29,012 addresses in the area to update the community about the changes to the proposals based on their feedback. The updated maps and leaflets were also added to the Proposed Development's website.
- 3.2.12 We have continued to meet with statutory and technical consultees to assist with the EIA process and the evolution of our design. This includes relevant statutory bodies such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, and National Highways.

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4 APPROACH TO STATUTORY CONSULTATION

4.1 What are we consulting on?

4.1.1 During our statutory consultation from 16 September – 28 October 2025, we will present our updated proposals and ask for your feedback.

4.1.2 In this statutory consultation period, we will be asking for your views on:

- Our proposals for the Proposed Development as a whole;
- The location of the Proposed Development's components, including the solar panels, substations, batteries, and cable routes;
- The Draft ES and potential impacts from the Proposed Development during construction, operation, and decommissioning to the local environment and community;
- Our proposals for mitigating the potential impacts and environmental enhancements;
- Our proposals to contribute to the local community, including local initiatives or organisations that the Proposed Development could support over its lifetime.

4.1.3 Our consultation includes but is not limited to the list above.

4.2 Who are we consulting?

4.2.1 We want to consult widely with anyone who has an interest in or feels impacted by Whitestone Solar Farm. We have identified a variety of stakeholders that we believe may have an interest in the Proposed Development, and developed a plan to notify these groups and individuals – but anyone is welcome to submit their feedback.

4.2.2 We have defined two geographic zones – an inner zone and an outer zone – for the purpose of consulting with the local community. This recognises the fact that levels of potential impact are likely to vary with distance to the Proposed Development. These zones have informed how we will publicise the consultation and are set out below, with further detail about the consultation information detailed in section 4.4.

Inner Zone

4.2.3 The inner zone covers people who live and work closest to the Proposed Development and their political representatives. Our consultation activity will be most intensive within this zone. A map of this zone is shown in Figures 5-7.

4.2.4 We have identified an area that includes around 45,000 addresses by drawing a shape approximately 1km from the Site, expanding further to ensure that entire villages were included. 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 Proposed Development.

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- 4.2.5 A leaflet will be sent to all properties within the inner zone to notify them of the start of statutory consultation and invite them to attend public information events, which will be located within this area.

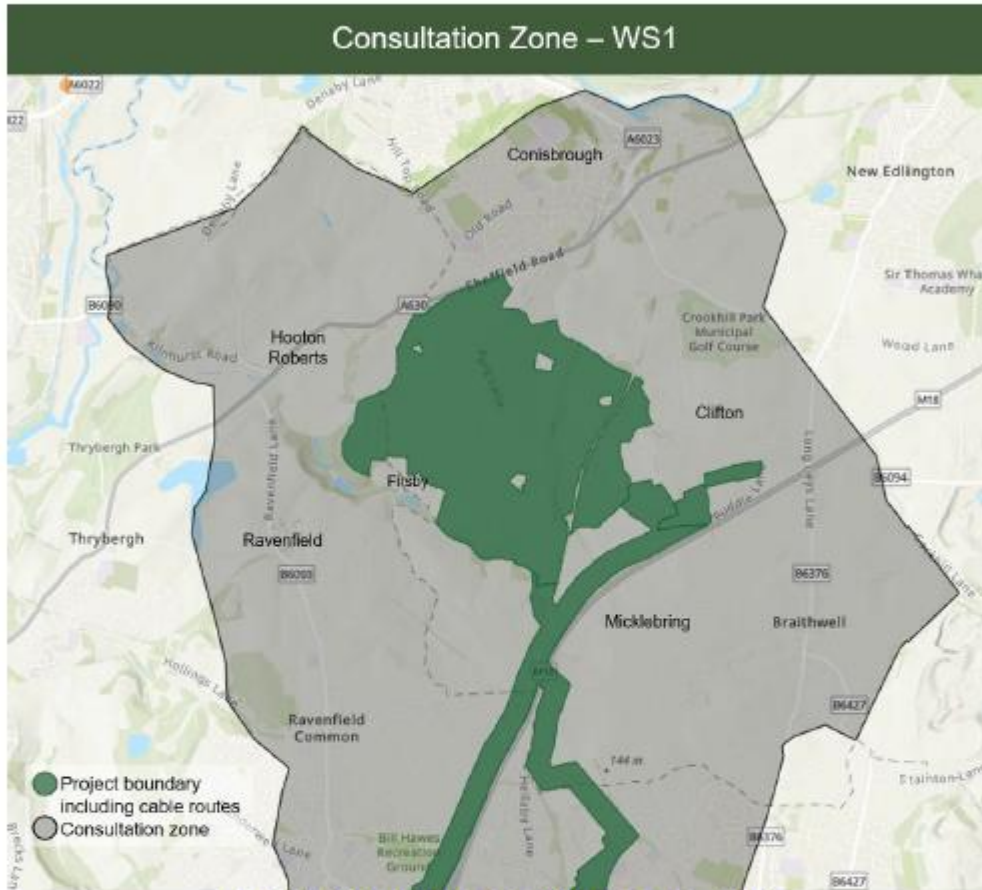


Figure 5: Map of inner consultation zone – WS 1

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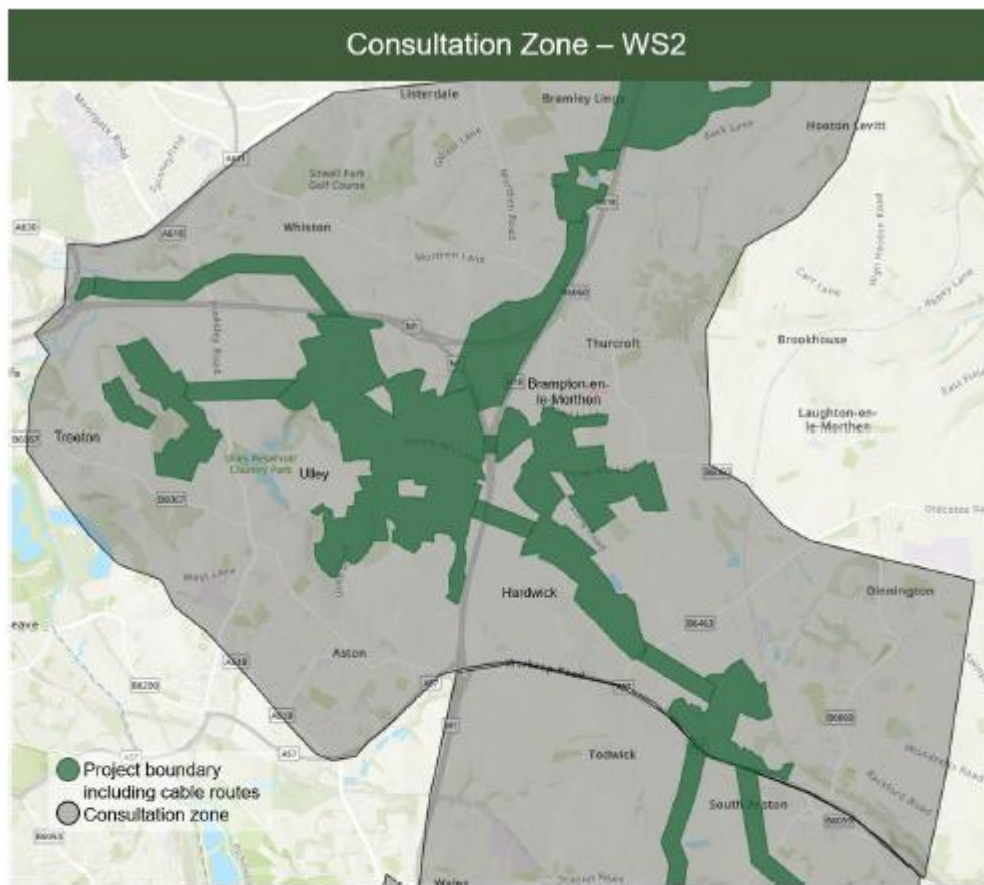


Figure 6: Map of inner consultation zone – WS 2

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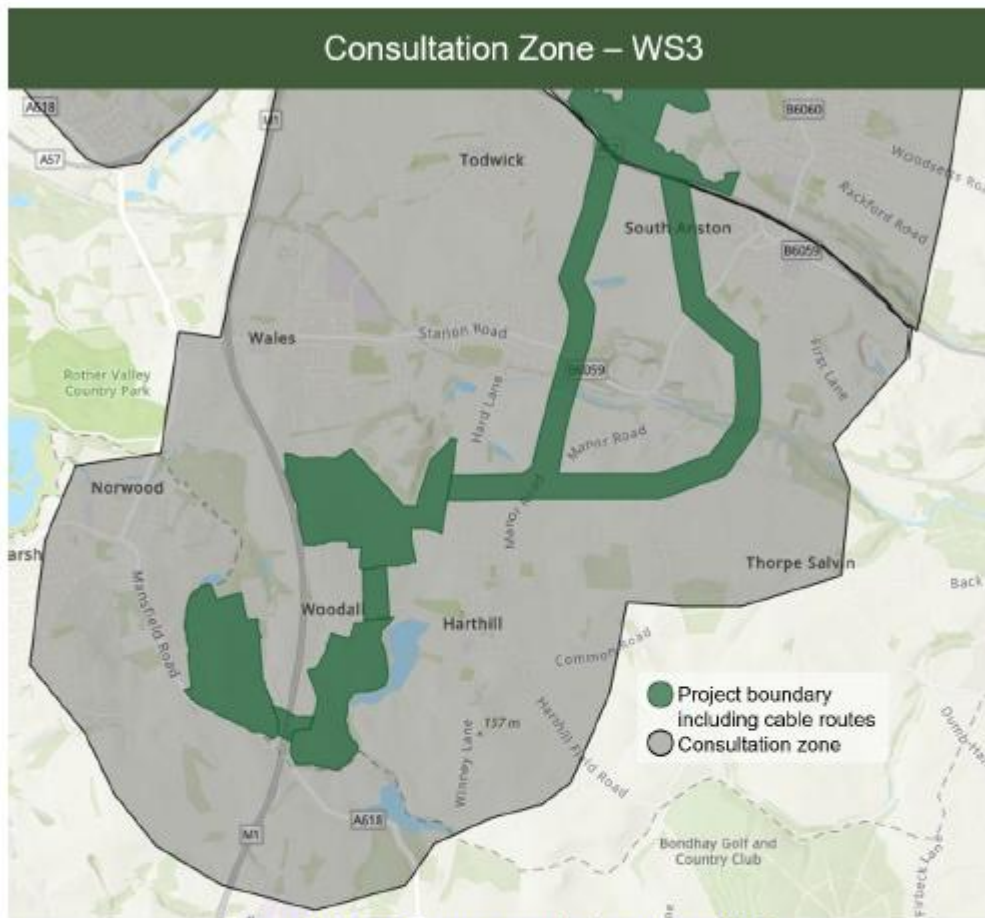


Figure 7: Map of inner consultation zone – WS 3

Outer zone

- 4.2.6 The outer zone covers those living and working in the area outside of the inner zone, who may be affected by or have an interest in our proposals due to the proposals being brought forward in their local authority area. This zone includes others living within the local authority boundaries of the City of Doncaster Council, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and North East Derbyshire District Council.
- 4.2.7 We will publicise the consultation to people in this zone through the Proposed Development’s website and emailing the consultation information to our ‘keep informed’ list. We will also place adverts on social media, publish statutory notices and issue press releases to local media outlets.

Technical stakeholders

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- 4.2.8 At the same time as consulting the local community, we will also consult a range of statutory consultees as set out by Section 42 and Section 48 of the Planning Act 2008 and Regulation 13 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, and additional organisations that we recognise to have an interest in the Proposed Development. These groups include:
- The host and neighbouring local authorities;
 - Statutory bodies (such as the Environment Agency, Historic England, Natural England and others);
 - Other community groups and organisations that may have an interest in the proposals (such as Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, and the Conisbrough Research and Archaeology Group); and,
 - People with an interest in land (e.g. owners or tenants) that may be affected by the proposals.

Elected representatives

- 4.2.9 At the launch of consultation, relevant elected representatives within the consultation zone will be contacted, including the Members of Parliament (MPs) for Rawmarsh and Conisbrough, Rother Valley, Rotherham, North East Derbyshire, Doncaster Central, and Bolsover, the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority Mayor, Derbyshire County Councillors, Doncaster City Council Councillors, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Councillors and North East Derbyshire District Councillors.
- 4.2.10 We will also contact host parish councils to offer them a joint briefing and invite them to our public events, and support them in promoting the consultation using their existing communication channels.
- 4.2.11 We will contact neighbouring parish councils to inform them about the consultation period and invite them to our public events.
- 4.2.12 Host parish councils include:
- Aston cum Aughton Parish Council
 - Barlborough Parish Council
 - Braithwell with Micklebring Parish Council
 - Bramley Parish Council
 - Brinsworth Parish Council
 - Conisbrough Parks Parish Council
 - Harthill with Woodall Parish Council
 - Hellaby Parish Council
 - Hooton Roberts Parish Council
 - Killamarsh Parish Council
 - Laughton-en-le-Morthen Parish Council
 - Maltby Parish Council
 - North and South Anston Parish Council
 - Ravenfield Parish Council
 - Thorpe Salvin Parish Council

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- Thurcroft Parish Council
- Todwick Parish Council
- Treeton Parish Council
- Wales Parish Council
- Whiston Parish Council
- Wickersley Parish Council
- Ulley Parish Council

4.2.13 Neighbouring parish councils include:

- Adwick upon Deame Parish Council
- Bambergh Parish Council
- Cadeby Parish Council
- Catcliffe Parish Council
- Dalton Parish Council
- Denaby Parish Council
- Dinnington St John's Town Council
- Edlington Parish Council
- High Melton Parish Council
- Hooton Levitt Parish Council
- Orgreave Parish Council
- Shireoaks Parish Council
- Spotborough and Cusworth Parish Council
- Stainton Parish Council
- Thrybergh Parish Council
- Warmsworth Parish Council
- Waverley Parish Council
- Whitwell Parish Council
- Woodsetts Parish Council

Seldom heard audiences

4.2.14 It is important to ensure that everyone with an interest in the proposals has the opportunity to comment on our proposals as part of the consultation. We want our consultation to be inclusive and gather feedback from a wide range of audiences, including those who are seldom heard in public consultations such as people without internet access, seasonal workers, younger people and socially isolated people. We will do this by:

- Writing to organisations representing seldom heard individuals and groups directly (list of organisations attached separately).
- Choosing accessible venues for public events.
- Publicising the consultation in digital and print editions of local newspapers.
- Publicising the consultation on social media.

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- Holding public events at a variety of times, including evenings and weekends to enable participation by people with different time commitments.
 - Making provision for people without internet access through the consultation programme. This includes sending a consultation leaflet to every address within the inner zone, holding public events in the area, publicising the consultation in print editions of local newspapers and making hard copies of consultation materials available on-request.
- 4.2.15 Requests for consultation information in alternative formats (e.g. large print) will be considered on a case-by-case basis so we can establish how best to provide the information required.

4.3 Consultation information

- 4.3.1 Information about our proposals will be published for consultation in the following formats:
- 4.3.2 **A consultation leaflet:** a leaflet issued to addresses within the inner zone setting out how to find out more about the proposals and participate in the consultation; including information on accessing materials, the locations and timings of the public events, and how to share their feedback. This will additionally be published on the Proposed Development's website to view and download.
- 4.3.3 **A consultation booklet:** an accessible summary of our proposals for the Proposed Development, the EIA process, the consultation and planning process, approach to community benefit and next steps. This will be available in hard copy at the public events, by post on request and published on the Proposed Development's website to view and download.
- 4.3.4 **A questionnaire:** the main way we will collect feedback from the community. The questions will be easy to understand, and the responses will be considered as we refine our plans. This will be available in hard copy at the public events, posted on request and published on the Proposed Development's website to view and download.
- 4.3.5 **A website:** the Proposed Development's website (www.whitstonesolarfarm.co.uk) will host all of the consultation documents, including the draft ES, consultation booklet and online questionnaire. It will also include details of the public events as well as the communications lines.
- 4.3.6 **Exhibition banners:** an accessible summary of our proposals for the Proposed Development, the EIA process, the consultation and planning process, approach to community benefit and next steps which will be displayed at the public events. The exhibition banners will also be available as PDFs to download from the Proposed Development's website.
- 4.3.7 **The Draft ES:** containing the initial results of our ongoing environmental assessments as well as preliminary information on measures to avoid, prevent, reduce or, if possible, offset any likely significant adverse effects.
- 4.3.8 **Masterplan:** we will provide copies of the updated masterplan on the Proposed Development's website, large hard copies at events, and post hard copies on request.
- 4.3.9 We will provide hard copies of the consultation booklet, questionnaire and SoCC free of charge on request – as well as USBs containing all of the consultation materials (including the Draft ES). We will review requests for hard copies of the

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Draft ES on a case-by-case basis. A fee to cover printing costs (up to a maximum of £750 for one full set of consultation documents) may be charged to the recipient.

- 4.3.10 Requests for consultation information in alternative formats (e.g. large print) will be considered on a case-by-case basis so we can establish how best to provide the information required.

4.4 Publicity and advertising

- 4.4.1 We will send out a leaflet to the inner consultation zone identified in Figures 5-7 and an email update to our 'keep informed' list.
- 4.4.2 We will issue a press release to local and trade media outlets to inform them of the upcoming consultation and associated activities.
- 4.4.3 Statutory notices will be published in line with Section 47 and Section 48 of the Planning Act 2008, in the Rotherham Advertiser, Doncaster Free Press, Derbyshire Times, London Gazette and a national newspaper. If for reasons outside of the Applicant's control it is not possible to run the Section 47 and 48 notices, an alternative newspaper or other publication will be chosen with an appropriate distribution area.
- 4.4.4 We will use social media advertising to help publicise the consultation and encourage those with an interest in our proposals to get involved. We are unable to accept feedback via social media.

4.5 Public events

- 4.5.1 We will hold in-person public events during the consultation period to enable anyone with an interest in the proposals to find out more about them and ask questions to members of the team. Printed copies of the consultation booklet, SoCC and questionnaire will be available at these events for members of the public to take away. Completed questionnaires will be able to be returned at the events.
- 4.5.2 The dates and times of these events are listed in Table 1 below. The venues and dates are subject to availability and may change. The events would be held in accessible venues around the Proposed Development and would be organised at a range of dates and times to ensure that people with different schedules are able to attend. This includes events after normal working hours and on the weekend.
- 4.5.3 In the unlikely event that there are changes to the locations or times of our events, we will publicise this information on our website.
- 4.5.4 The map showing the locations of the venues is in Figure 8 below.

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Table 1: Public information events

Date and time	Location
2 October 10am-2pm	Thurcroft Gordon Bennett Memorial Hall, S66 9DD
3 October 1pm-5pm	Todwick Village Hall, S26 1HJ
4 October 10am-3pm	Conisbrough Ivanhoe Centre, DN12 3JX
7 October 3pm-7pm	Harthill Village Hall, S26 7YL
8 October 3pm-7pm	Ravenfield Village Hall, S65 4PT
14 October 3pm-7pm	Ulley Village Hall, S26 3YD
15 October 12pm-4pm	Whiston Village Hall, S60 4HX



Figure 8: Map of the suggested locations of public events

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4.6 Presentations and stakeholder meetings

- 4.6.1 We will offer to brief host parishes and local authorities during the consultation period to find out more about the updated proposals, statutory consultation, the draft ES and community benefits.
- 4.6.2 Details of all our consultation activity will be included in a Consultation Report which we will submit as part of our DCO application.

4.7 Communications lines

- 4.7.1 To find out more information or request copies of the consultation materials, anyone can contact the consultation team by freephone (0800 688 9936) during normal business hours (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5:30pm). Outside of these hours, callers will be able to leave a message requesting a callback. Phone calls will not be considered as feedback, and individuals will need to use one of the other communications lines to provide written feedback.
- 4.7.2 Alternatively, individuals can email info@whitstonesolarfarm.co.uk or write to the team via Freepost (no stamp required): Whitestone Solar Farm, FREEPOST SEC Newgate UK LOCAL. Individuals can also submit feedback via these communication lines.

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5 HOW TO RESPOND TO THE CONSULTATION

5.1 Responding to the consultation

- 5.1.1 We will produce a questionnaire inviting feedback on different elements of the Proposed Development. Responses must be received by the consultation deadline of 11:59pm on 28 October 2025.
- 5.1.2 Respondents will be available to complete questionnaire online through the Proposed Development's website: www.whitestonesolarfarm.co.uk
- 5.1.3 The completed hard-copy questionnaire will also be available in printed form at public events, and on request using the Proposed Development's contact details. The questionnaire can be returned during the consultation period via Freepost address (no stamp required): Whitestone Solar Farm, FREEPOST SEC Newgate UK LOCAL, or at the public events.
- 5.1.4 Alternatively, respondents can write to us via email info@whitestonesolarfarm.co.uk or Freepost (no stamp required): Whitestone Solar Farm, FREEPOST SEC Newgate UK LOCAL. All written feedback will be accepted.

5.2 Consideration of responses

- 5.2.1 In accordance with Section 49 of the Planning Act 2008, all responses received will be carefully considered and the Applicant will have regard to them when finalising the Proposed Development for DCO application.
- 5.2.2 If, as a result of feedback from the statutory consultation or other assessments or engagement, the Proposed Development is amended, then these may be consulted on via targeted consultation on a proportionate basis. Any targeted consultation will be undertaken in a manner that is consistent with the principles and methods set out in this SoCC.
- 5.2.3 The Applicant will summarise consultation responses in a Consultation Report, which will include a description of how the Applicant has had regard of those responses in developing the Proposed Development, and any changes made since the statutory consultation. The consultation report forms part of the DCO application which will be submitted to the Secretary of State via the Planning Inspectorate as required by Section 37(3)(c) of the Planning Act 2008. If the DCO application is accepted, the Consultation Report will be made available for consultees to review how their comments have fed into the process.

5.3 Further information

- 5.3.1 For further information, please contact us by:
- Calling 0800 688 9936 (9:00am to 5:30pm, Monday to Friday)
 - Emailing info@whitestonesolarfarm.co.uk
 - Writing to Whitestone Solar Farm FREEPOST SEC Newgate UK Local.



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solar farm

Contact

Whitestone Net Zero Ltd

info@whitstonesolarfarm.co.uk

0800 688 9936



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