



HELIOS RENEWABLE
ENERGY
PROJECT

Consultation Summary Document

Autumn 2023

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Introduction

Welcome to the Helios Renewable Energy Project statutory consultation. We are consulting on proposals for a solar farm with battery energy storage system and associated infrastructure on land west of the village of Camblesforth, and north of the village of Hirst Courtney in Selby, North Yorkshire.

This document contains summary indicative information about our proposals, and the key themes and topics that are being considered as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process.


If you would like more detailed information on the EIA process, you should refer to the Non-Technical Summary of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), or the PEIR itself which can be found on the project website www.helios-renewable-energy-project.co.uk/



190MW of clean renewable energy.

Enough to power around **47,500 homes** each year.

Saving an estimated **36,500 tonnes** of CO2 each year.



We have posed a number of questions throughout this document which relate to questions on our feedback questionnaire. This will help to provide information for you to consider as you complete your questionnaire.



About Helios Renewable Energy Project

The Helios Renewable Energy Project is being brought forward by Enso Green Holdings D Limited, a joint-venture partnership between Enso Energy and Cero Generation.

Enso Energy is one of the UK's most experienced renewable energy developers, with an unparalleled focus on solar energy. Cero Generation is a leading solar energy company, working across Europe to support the transition to a net-zero future.

You can find out more at: ensoenergy.co.uk

The Planning Process

As the proposed development has an expected energy generating capacity in excess of 50MW, an application to the Planning Inspectorate will be submitted under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) regime (Planning Act 2008).

NSIPs are major infrastructure projects (such as larger scale solar farms), which require a type of consent known as ‘development consent’ under procedures governed by the Planning Act 2008. Development consent, where granted, is made in the form of a Development Consent Order (DCO).

Anybody wishing to construct an NSIP must first apply for consent to do so. For such a project, the Planning Inspectorate examines the application and will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero who will make the decision on whether to grant or to refuse development consent. Further information on the process can be found on the Planning Inspectorate website:

infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk

We are aiming to submit our DCO application in 2024.



Why Solar?

This scheme represents an important contribution to meeting the UK’s legally binding target under the Climate Change Act 2008 to achieve ‘net zero’ carbon by 2050.

Like other renewable energies, solar power represents a ‘clean’ source of renewable energy as it doesn’t release any harmful emissions or pollutants.

Solar energy is also one of the cheapest forms of new renewable power generation in the UK, and consequently can contribute to controlling consumer’s energy bills into the future.

Solar projects are non-permanent developments and the land will be returned to agricultural use once the site has been decommissioned. Some agricultural activities can be retained (such as sheep grazing), and there is opportunity to enhance local biodiversity through creation of new habitats and planting around the site. The Helios Renewable Energy Project will have an operational lifespan of 40 years and will be returned to its former use once it has been decommissioned.

The Benefits



Net zero – The proposals will deliver an export capacity of 190MW of renewable energy and will support the UK’s legally binding commitment to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Likewise, the proposals will support the government’s target of reaching 70GW of solar capacity by 2035 – a five-fold increase on current levels.



Reversibility – The development is designed to be entirely reversible. At the end of the solar farm’s 40-year life, all equipment will be dismantled, removed, and largely recycled. The site will then be returned to agricultural use.



Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) – Well-designed and managed solar farms are proven wildlife havens and support a range of ecosystems. The proposals include a comprehensive strategy of landscape and ecological improvements, aimed at significantly boosting nature and ecology.



Landscaping – To minimise visual impact, the solar farm will be screened. This will be achieved through the planting and restoration of hedgerows, as well as the establishment of native trees and vegetation.



Agricultural Land – Intensively farmed arable land can become degraded and infertile over time. A solar farm allows agricultural land to rest, free from fertilisers and pesticides. This helps increase soil organic matter and protects the long-term agricultural use of the site for future generations.



Land Use – Solar farms provide an opportunity for multiple lands uses; in addition to producing renewable energy, the site can continue to be grazed by sheep, supporting biodiversity and farming alongside clean energy generation.



Community Benefit – A contribution to a community benefit fund is being considered to assist with local schemes, initiatives, and worthy causes.

What is Helios Renewable Energy Project?

We are proposing to develop a solar farm with a battery energy storage system and associated infrastructure on land west of Camblesforth and north of Hirst Courtney in North Yorkshire.

The proposed solar farm would provide renewable electricity for distribution to the National Grid via a connection to the Drax National Grid 132Kv Substation, adjacent to Drax Power Station..

The proposal would generate a significant amount of energy each year of the proposed 40-year operational life, while also providing large CO₂ savings when compared to generation of electricity by non-renewable sources, moving us closer to net zero.

In response to the feedback we received during our earlier consultation in 2022, we have developed a new Site Layout, which has reduced the overall footprint of the site (from 757 hectares to 476 hectares) and identified specific areas for landscaping and biodiversity net gain areas, helping screen the solar panels, encourage pollinators and improved local wildlife habitats.



| KEY | | | |
|-----|---|--|--|
| | Site Boundary | | Substation and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Compound Includes: - 132KV Substation - BESS and associated infrastructure - Access Tracks - Access Gates - Fencing - Earth Flood Defence Bund - Attenuation Ponds |
| | Existing Vegetation | | Green Infrastructure Includes: - Habitat Areas - Access Track Crossings |
| | Public Footpath | | National Grid Substation and Access |
| | Other Route with Public Access | | Underground Cable Corridor |
| | Trans Pennine Way | | Existing Culvert |
| | Security Fence | | Proposed Site Entrance |
| | Solar Farm Zone Includes: - Solar PV Modules - Inverters/Transformers - Access Tracks - Access Gates - CCTV | | |



Renewable Energy

The Helios Renewable Energy Project will make a significant contribution towards the UK Government's legally binding target of reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050.



Public Access

The scheme will be designed around existing public rights of way which will remain accessible during construction and operation. We have also identified opportunities to improve connectivity in the local area through the inclusion of a permissive footpath to link Camblesforth and Carlton.



Soils

The project would represent a 40-year period in which the land can 'rest' and be maintained in accordance with a site-specific soil management plan to increase soil organic matter.



Biodiversity

The proposal provides significant opportunities for wildlife through new biodiversity and habitat improvement areas and the enhancement of biological corridors throughout the site as a result of grassland creation, tree planting and new hedgerows.

The proposed creation of diverse grasslands, tree planting and hedgerow planting will create new habitat opportunities for breeding, foraging and overwintering as well as refuge, for a range of species including birds, bats, amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates. These interventions will have the additional benefit of improving biological connectivity throughout the site. The proposed plans will therefore deliver a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).



Planting Proposals

Following feedback from the local community and review from our technical team we have identified areas of planting within the scheme which is designed to screen the development, minimise visual impact for the nearest residential properties and reinforce existing vegetation.



Project overview: What are we proposing?

As shown on the plan on page 10, the Helios proposals consist of a number of different components, including the solar panels, on-site substation, battery energy storage system and associated cabling, fencing and grid connection.

This document provides further detail on the key components within the site, as well as the connection route and associated works to the Drax National Grid 132kV Substation, adjacent to Drax Power Station.



The plans include:

- Solar PV modules
- Mounting structures
- Field stations
- On-Site 132kV substation and battery energy storage system compound
- Distribution cables
- Grid connection cables
- Fencing, security and ancillary infrastructure
- Access
- Landscape and ecological enhancements



How does solar energy work?

Solar panels convert light into direct current (DC) electricity through a process known as the photovoltaic effect. Photovoltaic cells are predominately made up of glass and aluminium, and two layers of a semi-conducting material, typically silicon. When light hits the silicon molecules in both layers, the electrons start to move. The metallic strips along the panels collect the electrons. The electricity is converted from DC to alternating current (AC) by inverters. Find out more on page 12 and 13.

Design Evolution

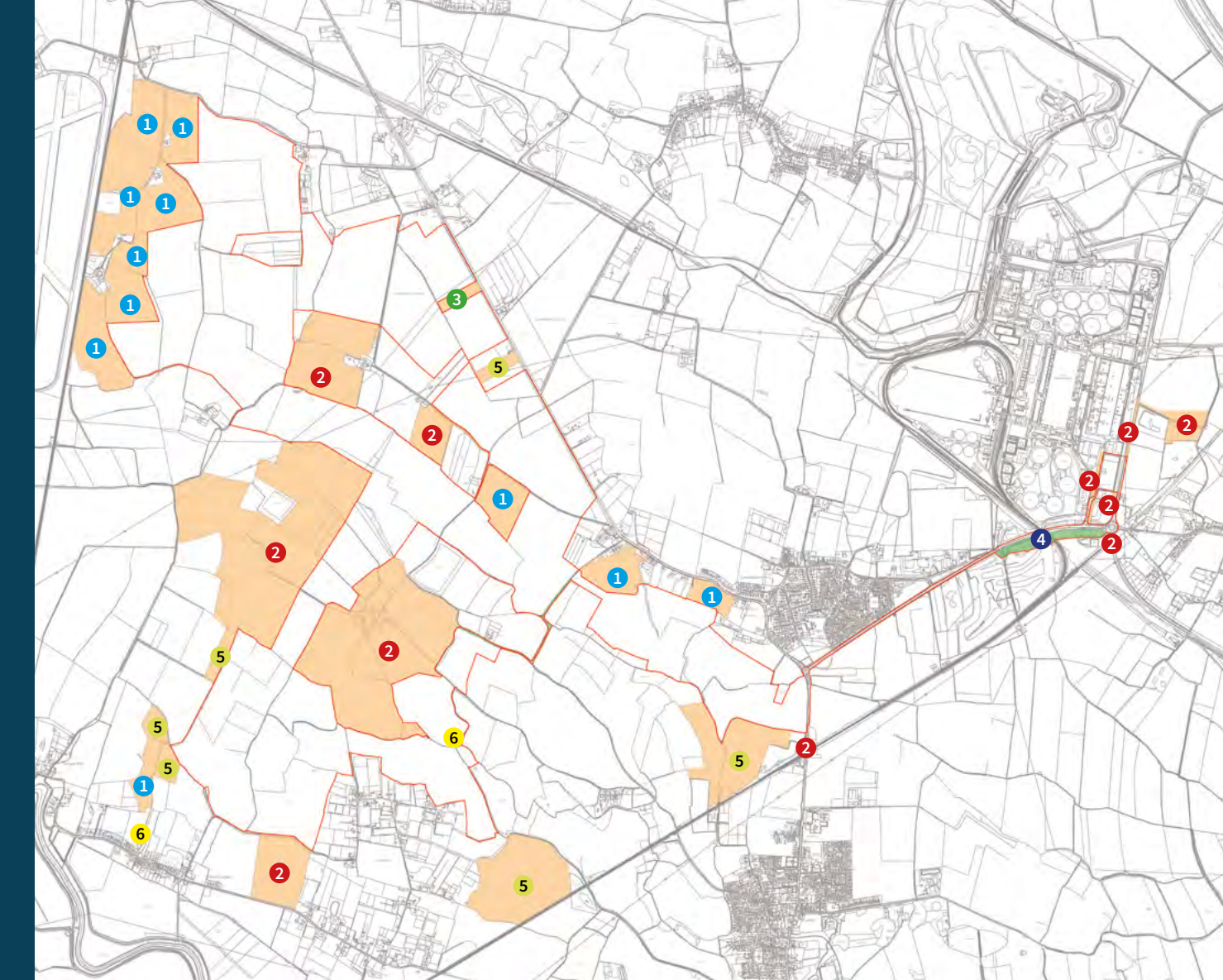
A number of factors have contributed to the current layout of the solar panels. These include ensuring solar panels and associated equipment is set back from neighbouring properties, areas of ecological interest and public rights of way and utilities, feedback from the first phase of consultation and through engagement with landowners and known utility asset owners.

The areas of land removed since the initial phase of consultation are shown on the plan on this page, along with a brief explanation of why they were removed.

One piece of land was added to proposals, shown in green (point 4) on the plan. This was to allow additional space for the grid connection corridor to Drax Power Station.

Some additional updates to the plans include:

- Inclusion of buffers and offsets from residential houses to minimise impacts.
- Nearly 300ha of new grassland created across the site.
- Over 10ha of new broad-leaved woodland to screen the development.
- Enhanced public access to link Camblesforth and Carlton.
- Reduction in land used from approximately 757ha to approximately 476ha.
- Improvements to hedgerow field margins to help integrate the site within the landscape.
- Confirmation of cable route connection corridor via underground cable to minimise disruption.



KEY

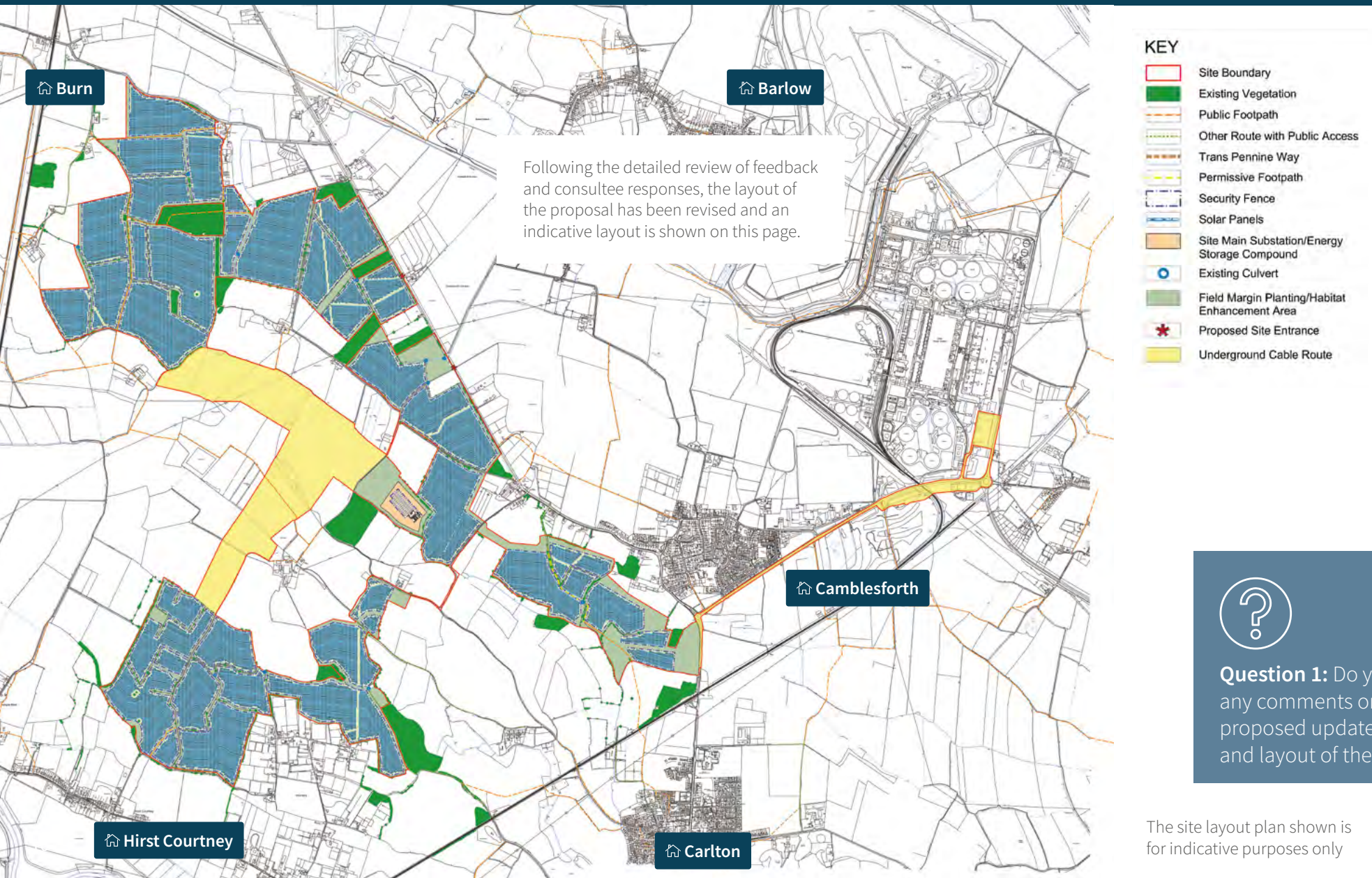
- Site Boundary
- Areas Added
- Areas Removed

Main Reasons:

- Proximity to receptor(s) (e.g. houses).
- No longer required.
- Woodland.
- Grid connection corridor.
- Constrained area for solar panel placement.
- Access requirement.

Further detailed information about the site location and constraints can be found in Chapter 3 of the PEIR.

Indicative Site Layout



Question 1: Do you have any comments on the proposed updated siting and layout of the solar farm?

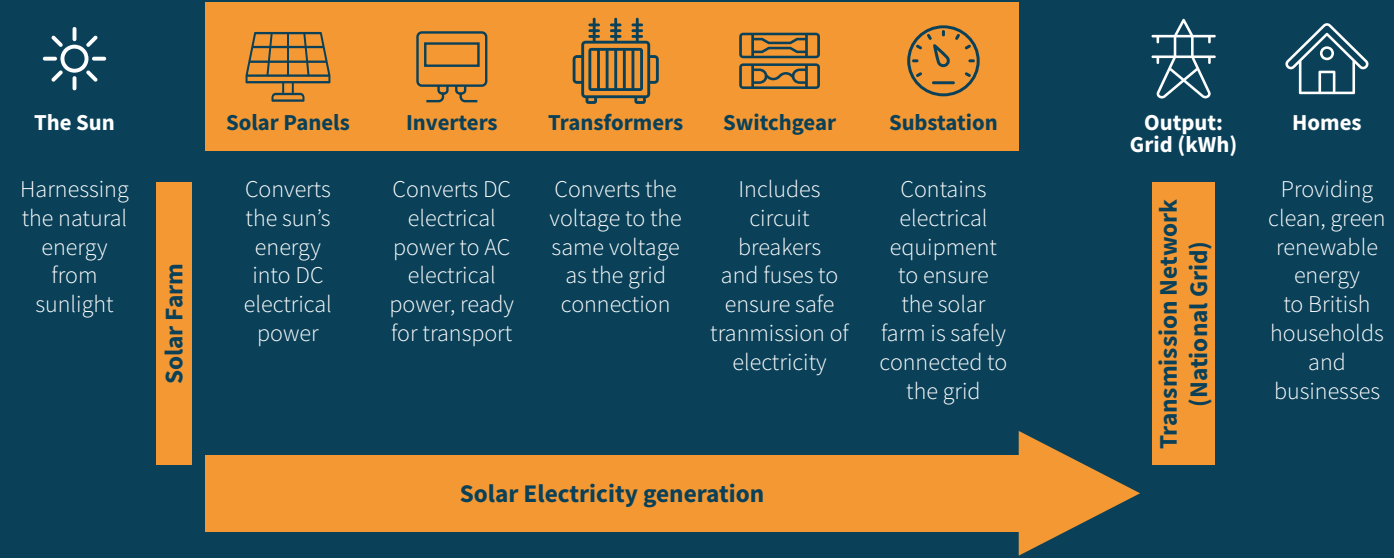
The site layout plan shown is for indicative purposes only



Key project components

How a solar farm works

The illustration (below) is indicative of the components usually found on a solar farm.



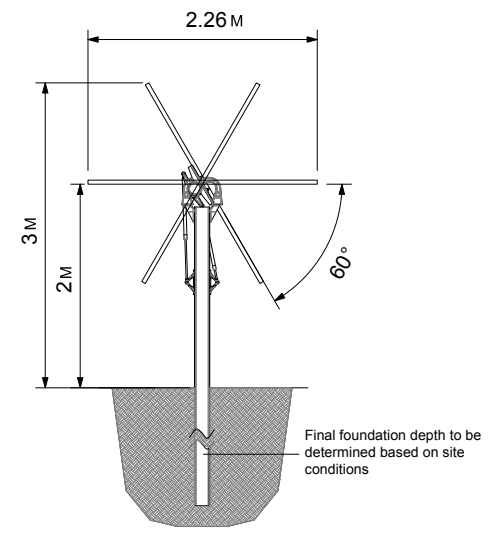
Solar panels

The development encompasses the installation of photo-voltaic (PV) modules positioned on mounting structures, organised in rows.

These solar PV panels will be constructed using silicon glass and will incorporate an anti-reflective coating to reduce the impact of glint and glare.

The spacing between the rows of PV tables will be subject to variations based on the local terrain and to ensure optimal efficiency. However, a minimum separation of 2 metres will be maintained between these rows to allow sufficient access for maintenance.

The solar panels proposed are 'single axis trackers' which move slowly to follow the sun. These panels are more efficient as they seek the optimum angles to gather the sun's energy throughout the day.



Side elevation of indicative single axis tracker solar panel

On-site substation

We are proposing to include a single on-site substation in the centre of the site, away from sensitive receptors (such as local houses). The substation connects all the electricity being generated across the site and acts as a single point from which electricity is then transmitted to the main grid connection at Drax National Grid Substation via underground cable.

The substation itself will be housed in a compound, and comprises an earthing transformer, surge arresters, earth switch, circuit breaker, 33kV intake switch room and generator transformers. The component of the greatest height within the substation is the generator transformer, standing up to approximately 6.5m.



Field Stations: Inverters, transformers and switchgear

To enable the energy generated by the PV modules to be transmitted to the onsite substation, essential infrastructure is required using inverter stations (called Field Stations). These stations house various components, including inverters, transformers, and switchgear.

Inverters play a vital role in the system as they convert the direct current (DC) electricity collected from the PV modules into alternating current (AC). This AC electricity is suitable for export to the national grid.

Transformers are essential to elevate the voltage of the electricity produced by the PV modules before it reaches the onsite substation.

Switchgear, which refers to a collection of devices such as disconnect switches, fuses, or circuit breakers, is used to control, safeguard, and isolate electrical apparatus. Switchgear serves the purpose of de-energising equipment for maintenance purposes and resolving faults downstream.

Onsite cabling

The cables that carry electricity between the solar panels and the inverters (distribution cables) are usually placed above ground level on the mounting structure. They are then buried underground in a trench connecting the solar panel arrays and the field stations.

The size of the trench varies depending on the number of cables and ducts it holds, but it can be up to 1.5m wide and with a depth of at least 0.9 metres. Soil will then be re-laid and the whole process will follow a soil management plan to ensure that there is no detrimental effect on the soil structure and quality as a result.

The inverters will then convert DC electrical power to AC electrical power before transmitting the energy to the onsite substation at a higher rated voltage. These cables will also be laid underground.



Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)

The Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) plays a crucial role in optimising the solar farm's output. During periods of peak energy demand, the battery energy storage system will step in and supply electricity directly to the grid.

This feature enhances the reliability and stability of the renewable energy generated by the solar farm, making it a dependable and consistent part of the UK's energy supply.

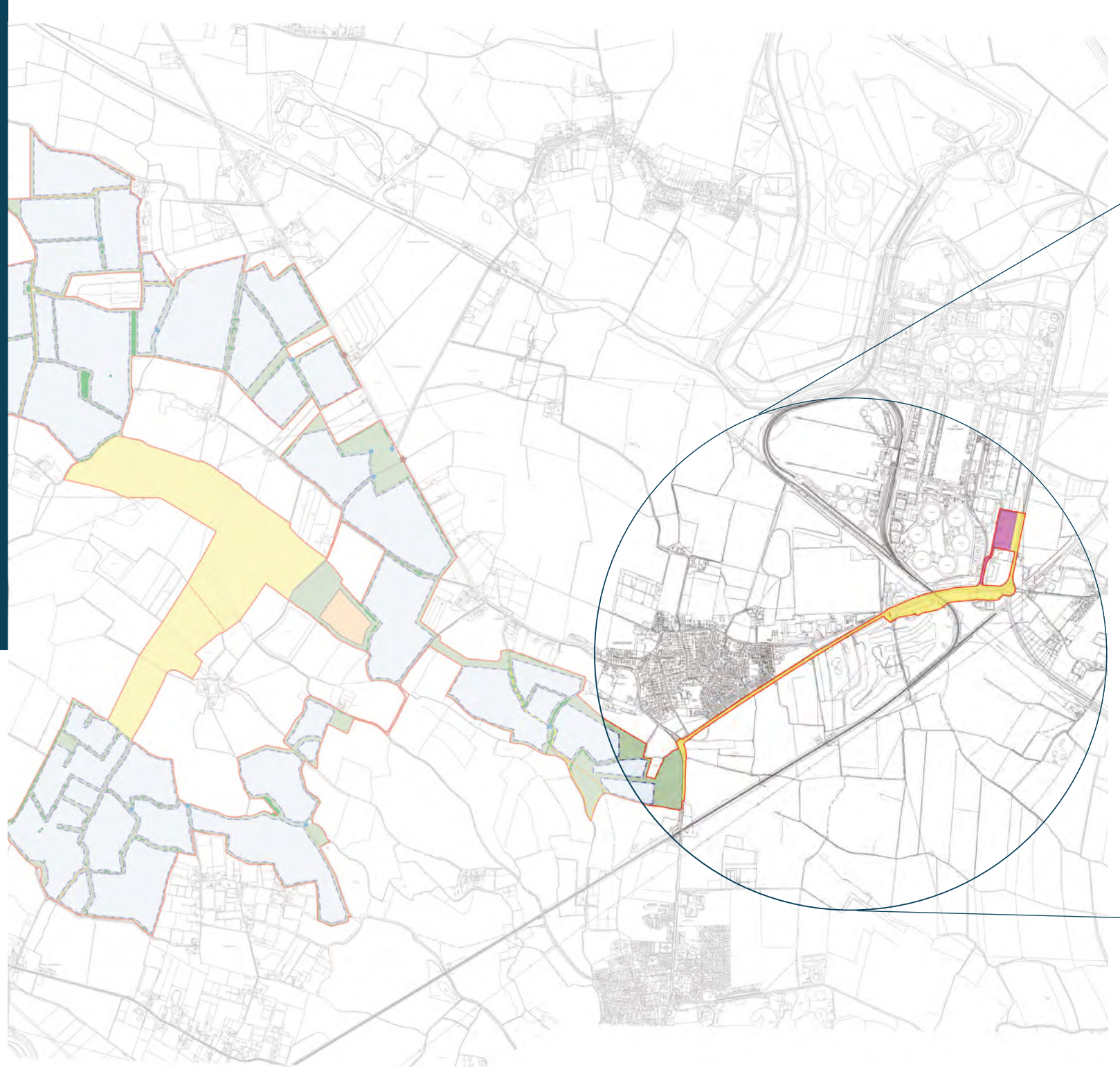
The BESS and onsite 132kV substation will be housed together in a compound, which will include battery containers, a control room, inverter transformers and a switchroom.

Connecting to the grid

The Site will connect to the Drax National Grid Substation via underground cabling. The voltage for the underground grid connection cable will be up to 132kV.

The plan on this page shows the proposed grid connection route from the edge of the site. Cables will run within the site from the onsite substation to the edge of the development area and then along the route identified in the blue circle.

Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) will be required to allow the grid connection cables to be installed under the railway near Drax Power Station. The width of the HDD is expected to be 1.2m (subject to ground conditions). The maximum depth of the HDD is dependent on ground conditions, borehole entry and exit positions, and the requirements of the railway owner/operator.



| KEY | |
|-----|--|
| | Site Boundary |
| | Existing Vegetation |
| | Public Footpath |
| | Other Route with Public Access |
| | Trans Pennine Way |
| | Permissive Footpath |
| | Security Fence |
| | Solar Farm Zone Includes: - Solar PV Modules - Inverters/Transformers - Access Tracks - Access Gates - CCTV |
| | Substation and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Compound Includes: - 132kV Substation - BESS and associated infrastructure - Access Tracks - Access Gates - Fencing - Earth Flood Defence Bund - Attenuation Ponds |
| | National Grid Substation and Access |
| | Existing Culvert |
| | Green Infrastructure Includes: - Habitat Areas - Access Track Crossings |
| | Proposed Site Entrance |
| | Underground Cable Corridor |

Question 2: Do you have any comments on our proposed cable route corridor to connect to the national grid at Drax National Grid Substation?



Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

The EIA Process

A full EIA has been undertaken to identify and assess potential environmental effects of building this project.

This is an important process, which is developed and assessed in close consultation with relevant statutory bodies (such as the Environment Agency, Natural England and local authority planning specialists) to ensure all potential effects are identified and that they are mitigated or reduced to an acceptable level.

A 'Preliminary Environmental Information Report' (PEIR) has been produced that sets out the results of the technical assessments undertaken to date. This document can be viewed on our project website and at our consultation events.

The detailed results of the EIA will be presented in an Environmental Statement (ES) which will be submitted with the DCO application. The ES will outline how any comments received on the PEIR have shaped the design of the proposed solar farm.

Further detailed information about the EIA process can be found in Chapter 2 of the PEIR.



The Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) and associated Non-Technical Summary (NTS) document has been produced and is available to review online at www.helios-renewable-energy-project.co.uk, or at our consultation events. See page 15 for further information on how to access information.

The full suite of PEIR documentation can be found on our website. The information is set out in specific themes by chapter:

- Chapter 1 Introduction
- Chapter 2 EIA Methodology
- Chapter 3 Site & Development Description
- Chapter 4 Alternatives & Design Evolution
- Chapter 5 Construction & Decommissioning Methodology & Phasing
- Chapter 6 Cultural Heritage
- Chapter 7 Landscape & Views
- Chapter 8 Biodiversity
- Chapter 9 Water Environment
- Chapter 10 Transport & Access
- Chapter 11 Noise and Vibration
- Chapter 12 Climate Change
- Chapter 13 Socio-Economics
- Chapter 14 Soils & Agricultural Land
- Chapter 15 Cumulative Schemes
- Chapter 16 Summary & Residual Effects

The PEIR contains a series of appendices and technical plans, which can also be accessed on our website or viewed at one of our consultation events.

A non-technical summary (NTS) of the PEIR is also available to view on the project website, at consultation events or a hard copy can be sent on request.

Summary of effects

As part of the EIA process we have identified areas where there are potentially significant impacts. Where these have been identified to be adverse, we set out proposed mitigation measures. Some of these key impacts are summarised below, with further information on following pages and detailed overview set out in the specific PEIR Chapters (listed on page 16).

| Assessment | Effects | Proposed mitigation |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Landscape and visual impact | We identified potential impacts on a number of viewpoints looking into the proposed site. | We have refined the proposals through removing areas of land that were close to local homes or sensitive areas, proposed significant additional areas of planting between and around the development and identified areas for sensitive landscaping to assist with screening views. See further information on page 18-22. |
| Soils and Agricultural Land | Potential temporary loss of agricultural land. | During the construction phase and decommissioning phase, soils will be handled in accordance with a Soil Management Plan. During operation, operational activities will not result in any significant adverse effects to agricultural land quality, therefore no additional mitigation is required. Beneficial effects are identified to the soil quality, although not significant. The site will be grazed by sheep during the operational phase which will provide diversity of income to the current farmers, in addition to income from renewable generation. |
| Noise and vibration | Potential for noise and vibration during construction. | Construction would be carried out in the daytime and measures to reduce potential noise impacts would be adhered to. A Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be agreed with the Local Authority to ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are followed. |
| Climate change | The proposed development will make a positive contribution to climate change by producing green energy for the UK. | No mitigation needed. |
| Socio-economic | Assessments show that there will be a beneficial impact through the creation of jobs and opportunity for investment in the local area over the lifetime of the Project. | No mitigation needed. |
| Transport & Access | During the Proposed Development's construction and decommissioning phases, the majority of effects will be negligible, short-term and temporary. During operation all effects will be negligible. | A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) a Travel Plan, and a Road Safety Audit will be implemented through the construction and decommissioning phases. |
| Cumulative impacts | The proposed development will have a positive effect to local habitats and also to a reduction in carbon emissions due to the cumulative operation of several schemes related to the generation or storage of renewable energy. | No mitigation needed. |

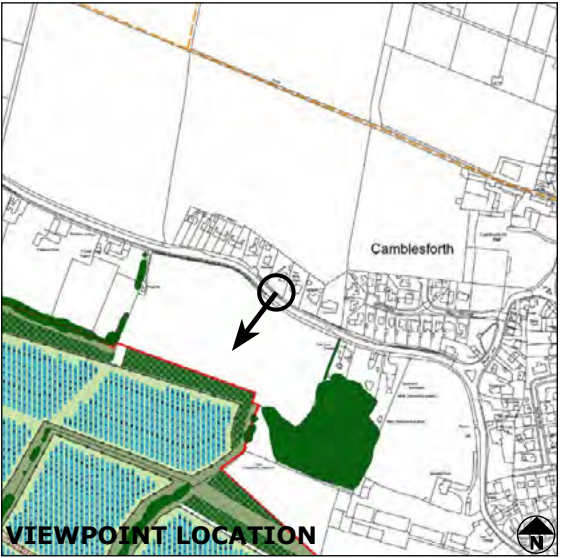
Landscape and visual assessment

To assess what the proposed scheme would look like, a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) is being carried out as part of the EIA. This gives information on the design of the scheme and will identify key areas where visual and landscape mitigation (such as planting) is required.

The solar panels will be fixed to the ground on piled frames which will be fully removed in the decommissioning phase. The panels will sit no higher than 3 metres from the ground, which, given the flat nature of the surrounding land, means that many will be screened from view from existing hedgerows, through enhancing existing hedgerows or planting new ones.

An assessment of various viewpoints around the site has been undertaken, with visualisations to help show what the site would look like from locations around the site.

More examples of viewpoints can be found on the project website – www.helios-renewable-energy-project.co.uk



Viewpoint 14 – viewpoint looking south from the A1041, next to residential properties.





A site wide **Hedgerow Improvement Strategy** is planned, which will include the reinforcement of over 8ha of existing hedgerows and 13km of new hedgerow planting. Over 60,000 hedgerow plants will be provided as part of the scheme.

Hedgerow field margins will be seeded and managed to create nearly 50 hectares of **Tussocky Native Grassland** to provide habitat for wildlife and integrate the scheme within the landscape.

Nearly 300 hectares of **New Grassland** will be created on existing intensively farmed arable farmland. These areas will be managed with appropriate conservation grazing or mowing methods.

A series of **Biodiversity Improvement Areas** have been included within the scheme to maximise wildlife benefits.

Proposed **Security Fencing** will be timber post and wire, a type used for protecting new forestry planting from browsing animals.

15m wide **Native Tree Belts** will be provided on the northern edge of the scheme near Camblesforth, to create a green corridor.

Over 10 hectares of **New Broadleaved Woodland** will be established to screen the development and provide new woodland habitat, with over 25,000 new trees and shrubs from a palette of 11 locally characteristic native species.

The field margins adjacent to the ditches and watercourses to be seeded and managed as **Wet Meadow Grassland**.

The proposed substation compound will be surrounded by a 15m wide **Native Tree Belt** to minimise visual impact.

Planting of **Parkland and Hedgerow Trees**, including rare native species such as black poplar to enhance areas of public access.

A series of **Wetland habitats** will be created on the site, with a total area equivalent to 24 full size tennis courts.

Enhanced Public Access by incorporating permissive pathways to link Camblesforth and Carlton.

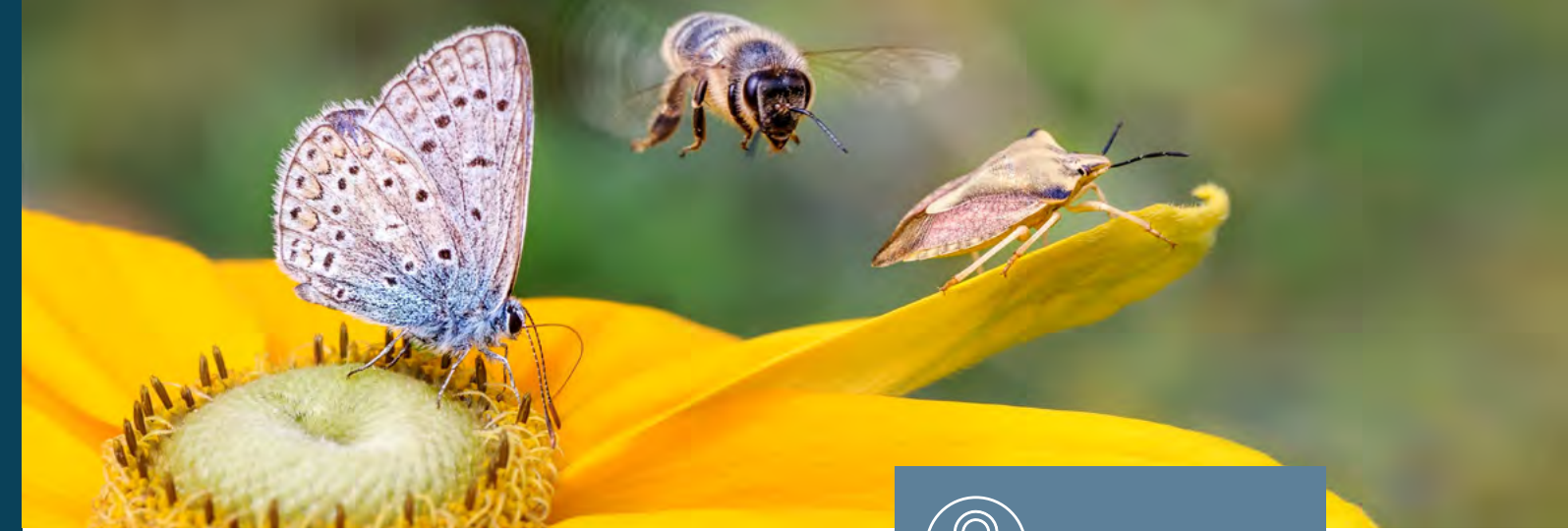
Existing tree belts on the perimeter of the site to be reinforced with over 8,000 **Native Woodland Species**.

A series of **Interpretation Boards** will be provided in key locations to provide information on the site and the proposals.

Over 5 hectares of species rich **Wildflower Grassland** will be created.

Landscape Strategy Plan

As part of our work on developing a site layout that takes into account the landscape and visual impact considerations, we have developed a Landscape Strategy Plan. This sets out how we intend to structure the planting of new trees, shrubs, and vegetation, as well as the enhancement of existing hedgerows to help screen panels and improve biodiversity. Consideration of how people move around and through the site is also shown.



Biodiversity enhancements

Biodiversity enhancements have been central to our thinking during the development of the proposals. A well-designed solar farm provides many opportunities for local ecological and biodiversity improvements.

The project would represent a 40-year period in which the intensively farmed land can 'rest' while the boundary vegetation is improved and maintained to improve biodiversity. In addition, the following biodiversity benefits are being considered:

- Tree and hedgerow planting, as well as opportunities to create diverse grasslands, will deliver a quantifiable Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).
- Installation of features to promote wildlife habitation, such as bird boxes and bat roost boxes.
- Creation of new habitats of high ecological value, including wildflower meadow grassland, wetland meadow, and hedgerow woodland belt, providing habitat and foraging opportunities.
- Keeping the land pesticide and chemical free, enabling species to thrive, particularly for invertebrates, and improve soil quality.

Further detailed information about ecology and biodiversity can be found in Chapter 8 of the PEIR.



Question 4: Do you have any comments on the proposed improvements to biodiversity or ecology and nature?

Ecology

We have undertaken an assessment of the potential ecological effects and proposed mitigation measures required to address any impacts of our proposals on the local environment.

This has included undertaking surveys and consultation with relevant specialist consultees to provide us with detailed information on a number of environmental considerations, which have been assessed within the PEIR.



Question 3: Do you have any suggestions for how we approach our Landscape Strategy, particularly in relation to the permissive footpath linking Camblesforth and Carlton, and our suggested planting across the site?



Cultural Heritage

We have undertaken an assessment on the archaeological and cultural historic assets in proximity to the site. Through sensitive site design and proposed mitigation measures, there will be no significant effect on identified heritage resources.

Further detailed information about cultural heritage assessments undertaken can be found in Chapter 6 of the PEIR.



Soils and Agricultural Land

We have undertaken an assessment of the land within the red line area of the proposed application and a detailed Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) study has been carried out.

As part of the work undertaken through the EIA process, we are required to assess the amount of agricultural land being impacted and consider the impacts in the wider context as part of this assessment we are required to consult Natural England. One of the benefits of solar development is the protection and improvement of soil quality as it will no longer be subjected to intensive farming or use of pesticides and herbicides. At the end of its operational life the solar panels will be removed and the land returned to agricultural use.

We intend to continue to use the land for grazing as part of the management of the grass within the solar farm, and the construction and decommissioning of the infrastructure will have little impact on the land quality due to the nature of the proposals and construction methods utilised.

Crucially, once the solar farm reaches the end of its operational life, the land designation does not change, meaning that it will return to agricultural land when the site is decommissioned.

Further detailed information about land use can be found in Chapter 14 of the PEIR.



Question 5: Do you have any comments on the proposed approach to soils and agricultural land?



Water resources and flood risk

As part of the application, we are required to assess drainage and flood risk and put in place appropriate drainage and other mitigation measures to ensure that there is no net increase in water runoff from the site taking climate change into account.

The assessments that have been carried out so far on the refined proposed design, show that there are no significant identified impacts to watercourses, surface water runoff rate, water quality and flood risk during operation of the solar farm. Flood resilience and resistance measures, including refinement of the site design and a sequential approach to layout, avoids placement of equipment in areas of elevated flood risk to minimise wider potential impacts.

Some potential risks have been identified during construction should there be spillage or pollution as a result of an accident, however these are considered manageable and temporary with good construction practices, and we have carefully considered how to minimise the potential for these impacts. Ongoing monitoring is proposed, and where required, additional mitigation measures will be agreed.

Further detailed information about water resources and flood risk can be found in Chapter 9 of the PEIR.



Noise and vibration

Solar farms generate very little noise. They have very few moving parts and require little ongoing maintenance. Transformers are required to convert the electricity to the correct voltage to export, and although are not particularly noisy, they do generate a 'low hum' at close distances. However, use of 'silenced' equipment, acoustic enclosures and placement of the substation and BESS in the centre of the site, means there is not expected to be significant operational noise impacts.

By its nature, the solar farm is only operational during daylight hours, so noise impacts at night would be negligible.

During construction, noise from construction vehicles and plant materials would be generated. This noise would vary, however normal daytime operating period and measures to reduce potential noise impacts would be adhered to. A Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be agreed with the Local Authority to ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are followed.

As part of the EIA, we have undertaken a noise assessment, utilising information about the proposed scheme including proposed construction activities. To inform this, we have undertaken baseline noise monitoring to understand current noise levels around the site.

Further detailed information about noise and vibration can be found in Chapter 11 of the PEIR.



Question 6: Do you have any comments on our approach to water management and flood risk mitigation?



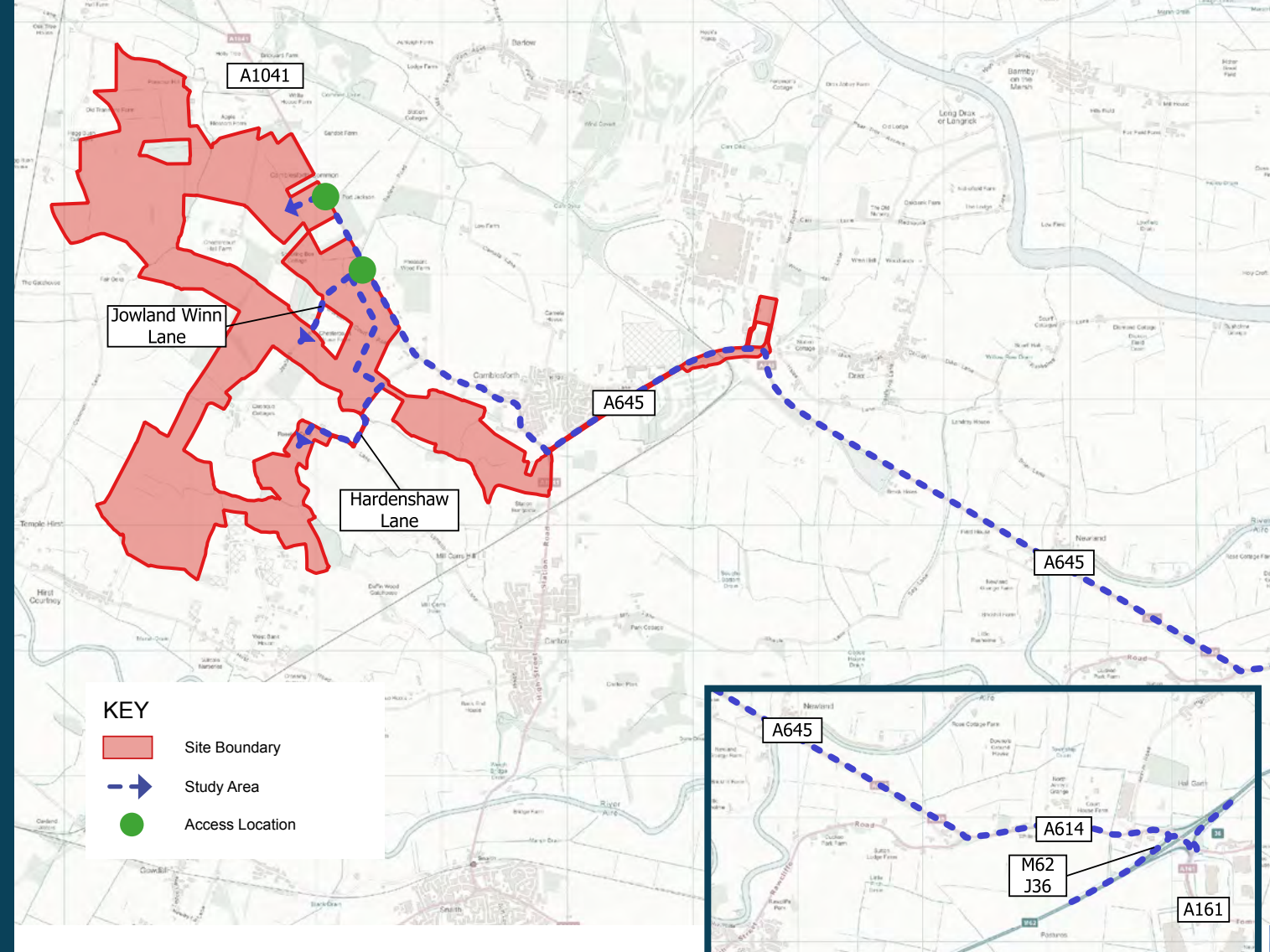
Question 7: Do you have any comments on noise and vibration?

Construction, Operations and Decommissioning

Construction

The construction of the solar farm is expected to last approximately 12 months, which equates to approximately 260 working days. 200 FTE jobs will also be supported directly through construction. Deliveries to the site and shift changes will be carefully managed to reduce the number of vehicles travelling during the morning and evening peaks.

Chapter 10 of the PEIR provides more details of proposed access arrangements, the anticipated programme, construction vehicle numbers and type, construction worker numbers and the proposed construction hours.



| KEY | |
|---|-----------------|
| ▭ | Site Boundary |
| - - - - - ➔ | Study Area |
| ● | Access Location |

Traffic and access

As can be seen on the plan, the proposed construction routes approach from the south and north using Junction 36 of the M62, via the A465 and the A1041. The anticipated average number of HGV deliveries would be 36 per day (18 arrivals and 18 departures) across the 12 month construction period. At its peak, 52 HGV movements are expected (26 arrivals and

26 departures). The suitability of these routes will be confirmed by detailed on-site assessment and traffic surveys and agreed with North Yorkshire Council and National Highways.

Our traffic assessments show that there is likely to be very little impact on the local road network. However, a Construction

Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) will be prepared to outline specific points, such as delivery times, restrictions, and routes to ensure that construction traffic does not have a detrimental impact to the local road network. An Outline CTMP will be available to review within the Environmental Statement, as part of the main DCO application.

Construction compounds

A primary construction compound will be set up within the site, close to the entrance at the A4141. It will include welfare facilities, storage for materials, parking and an HGV turning area. The construction compound will be temporary and will be removed once the construction has been completed.

Ongoing operation

Given the nature of the proposed scheme, there will not be a significant amount of traffic required during the operational lifetime of the project. Solar farms generally require little maintenance (when compared to other energy generating facilities) and so traffic to the site will consist of intermittent visits from an engineer.

Security

The site will be secured during construction with fencing and temporary lighting at the construction compounds and grid connection works. Once the solar farm is operational, lighting will be limited and will be directed away from sensitive receptors and vegetation. CCTV will also be installed using night vision technology, and remote monitoring, to avoid the need for lighting at night.

Decommissioning

The project lifetime is 40 years, meaning that we would be looking at decommissioning the site in the 2060s. As part of the decommissioning phase, all of the solar panels, BESS compound and other infrastructure will be removed for recycling or disposal where materials can't be recycled. Whilst the exact details of the process will be agreed closer to the time, the decommissioning activity will likely mirror the construction process in duration and activity. A separate Decommissioning Traffic Management Plan (DTMP) will be developed and agreed with the Local Authority for this final phase.

Further detailed information about construction can be found in Chapter 5 of the PEIR.



Question 8: Do you have any comments on our approach to traffic and access during construction?



Social Considerations: Community benefits and economic benefits

This scheme represents an important contribution to meeting the UK's legally binding target under the Climate Change Act 2008 to achieve a 'net zero' carbon by 2050. Renewable energy developments deliver secure supply of low carbon electricity for local communities and the wider population that is generated domestically using the UK's natural resources. Solar power represents a 'clean' source of energy as it does not release any harmful emissions or pollutants.

Solar energy is also one of the cheapest forms of power generation in the UK and, in the future, can deliver lower energy bills for consumers by reducing the UK's energy market's reliance on foreign energy imports. This will help ensure a secure energy supply for future generations.

In addition, local benefits include:



Local jobs and investment – we are committed to using local labour and contractors wherever we can throughout the construction and ongoing operational life of the project.



Potential biodiversity enhancements including reinforcement of existing hedgerows and the planting of new hedgerows, native grasses and wildflowers within and adjacent to the solar farm itself.



Maintenance and enhancement of footpaths throughout the site as well as identified additional permissive footpaths to improve connectivity in the local area.



Community Benefit Contribution – A contribution to a community benefit fund is being considered to assist with local schemes, initiatives, and worthy causes.

Through the consultation process, we are also keen to hear about any other potential local benefits that we could facilitate or deliver directly.

Further detailed information about social considerations can be found in Chapter 13 of the PEIR.



Question 9: Do you have any thoughts on how the project could provide community benefit for local communities?



Question 10: Do you support the scheme? Please provide reasons for your answer.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are you proposing to develop here?

One of the key drivers for siting renewable energy projects is being close to a suitable connection point to export power to the National Grid. A point of connection to the National Grid at Drax Power Station has been agreed, and the land identified for the project has been refined following a site selection process.

When the project has reached the end of its life, will the land be deemed 'brownfield', making it easier to be developed on in future?

No. The planning approval will require the site to be fully decommissioned and returned to agricultural use at the end of the project life. This application will not change the classification of the land, meaning it remains 'agricultural land'.

Will the panels be visible from my house?

Visibility of the site from surrounding areas has been a key design consideration. The height of the panels will be relatively low lying therefore much of the site won't be visible from most local residential areas in surrounding villages.

We have pulled the proposed panels back from areas where we felt they posed too much potential impact on local views from houses or key viewpoints.

Provision of other mitigation, such as additional screening planting and enhancing the hedgerows throughout the site has also been proposed to improve screening from local roads and villages.

Why are you developing on agricultural land? Why not brownfield land elsewhere?

As noted above, one of the key influences on where a project like can be built is the proximity to an available grid connection.

Understanding the nature and quality of the land (Agricultural Land Classification – ALC) within the site is an important assessment that

we have undertaken as we have progressed the scheme design.

For context, the latest agricultural land statistics¹ (DEFRA, 2021) state that in 2021, there was just over 8.8 million hectares of utilised agricultural land in England.

A recent publication by the Conservative Energy Network (CEN) states that 'Currently, 0.08% of all land is taken up by solar farms. This would only increase to just under 0.4% if we managed to increase solar coverage to 70GW of capacity, which the Energy Security Strategy stated as the target for 2035. This is the equivalent of less than one third of the land currently occupied by golf courses across the United Kingdom.'²

The solar panels will be fixed to the ground on fully removeable piled frames which will be removed in the decommissioning phase. There are areas within the site where fixed equipment is proposed which will, for the purpose of assessment, be considered as permanent development. These make up less than 3% of the site. The ALC grading and quantum of these areas has been considered and the significance of the loss assessed against the methodology in IEMA's "A New Perspective on Land and Soil in Environmental Impact Assessment" (2022). A Soil Resource Plan, as necessary tied in with a Soil Management Plan, can be used to avoid or reduce the impacts on agricultural land.



[1] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/farming-statistics-land-use-livestock-populations-and-agricultural-workforce-as-at-1-june-2021-england> Accessed in May 2022.

[2] <https://www.cen.uk.com/our-blog-list/2022/6/1/how-harnessing-the-sun-can-help-secure-our-energy-and-food-supplies> Accessed June 2022

The deadline date for comments is 11:59pm 7 December 2023

How to have your say?

Formal Consultation

We would like the opportunity to understand the views of the local community on these proposals before we submit our application. We'd therefore like to invite you take part in the formal consultation on the proposals and provide your feedback by filling in a form.

Electronic copies of the PEIR, which comprises a detailed set of documents, including maps, figures, and photomontages describing the Project, as well as a set of plans showing the overall location of the Project and a much shorter non-technical summary (NTS) may be accessed online and will be available to view free of charge for inspection during the statutory consultation period at our public consultation events, along with other key documents.

Electronic copies of the PEIR and NTS can also be viewed or downloaded from the Project website during the statutory consultation period. Where a copy of the documents is requested from the Applicant, this can be provided on a USB device. The documents can be made available in hard copy format on request at a cost of:

- Non-Technical Summary of Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) – **Free**;
- Full Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) with annexes – **£1,000**;
- A set of Site Location Plans – **Free**

Public Consultation Events

We are also holding the following public consultation events at the following times and locations:

| | |
|--|---|
| Camblesforth Hall Brigg Lane, Camblesforth, Selby, YO8 8HJ | Carlton Village Hall Church Lane, Carlton, DN14 9PB |
| Wednesday 8 November, 2pm – 7pm | Thursday 9 November, 12pm – 5.30pm |

The following libraries in the area have free access to the internet should you wish to review the online information related to the project:

Selby Library, 52 Micklegate, Selby, YO8 4EQ

Email: selby.library@northyorks.gov.uk

Tel: 01609 534521

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Monday 9:30am – 7:30pm | Thursday 9:30am – 12:30pm | Sunday Closed |
| Tuesday 9:30am – 5:30pm | Friday 9:30am – 5:30pm | |
| Wednesday 9:30am – 5:30pm | Saturday 9:30am – 12:30pm | |

Snaith Library, 27 Market Place, Snaith, Goole, DN14 9HE

Email: snaith.library@eastriding.gov.uk

Tel: 01405 860096

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Monday Closed | Thursday 10am – 4pm | Sunday Closed |
| Tuesday 2pm – 6pm | Friday Closed | |
| Wednesday Closed | Saturday 10am – 12pm | |

(The opening times of these organisations are dependent on and are governed by them and may be subject to change.)

*** Free internet access is also available at Goole library.**

Please contact Goole library for opening hours.

Let us know your views

We're keen to understand the views of the local community and encourage you to provide your thoughts and feedback on the proposals. Any responses or representations in respect of the Project can be made via the feedback form (available at events, above noted locations, on the project website and upon request) or in writing via:

Email:
info@helios-renewable-energy-project.co.uk

Feedback forms:
These will be available at our consultation events or on the project website
www.helios-renewable-energy-project.co.uk

Alternatively you can request a hard copy by writing to us at the Freepost address or Freephone number below

Freepost:
You can send your feedback form to **FREEPOST TC CONSULTATION** (no further address or stamp required)

If you have any queries about the consultation process you can call – **0800 699 0081** (Freephone – Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm excluding public holidays)

The deadline date for comments is 11.59pm 7 December 2023

As part of the NSIP planning process, the Applicant is required to prepare and submit a Consultation Report detailing the consultation undertaken and how feedback has been taken into account for the project.



Scan the QR code to find out the latest information, view documents or get in touch with the team.