Longfield Solar Farm

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Consultation Report Appendices

Appendices G-1 to G-6

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Longfield Solar Energy Farm Ltd

APFP Regulation 5(2)(q)

Planning Act 2008

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

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Appendix G-1: Section 46 notification

Jake Stephens, Case Officer
The Planning Inspectorate
National Infrastructure Directorate
Temple Quay House
Temple Quay
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BS16PN

Alexander House
1 Mandarin Road
Rainton Bridge Business Park
Houghton le Spring
DH4 5RA

27 May 2021

Dear Mr Stephens,

Longfield Solar Farm – section 46 notification under the Planning Act 2008

The Secretary of State is hereby notified in accordance with section 46 of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) (the "Act"), of Longfield Solar Energy Farm Ltd's intention to submit a Development Consent Order ("DCO") application to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to authorise the construction, operation (which includes maintenance) and decommissioning of the proposed Longfield Solar Farm (the "Scheme"). Longfield Solar Energy Farm Ltd intends to make this application in Autumn 2021.

We have previously provided notification pursuant to Regulation 8(1)(b) of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 that the Scheme is an Environmental Impact Assessment development ("EIA development"), as defined by those regulations and an Environmental Statement will be submitted as part of the DCO application.

The submission of the application will follow a period of statutory pre-application consultation carried out pursuant to section 42, section 47 and section 48 of the Act, the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedures) Regulations 2009 (the "APFP Regulations"), and the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. The consultation will commence on 1 June 2021 and end on 13 July 2021.

Summary of the Scheme

The Longfield Solar Farm will comprise the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of a solar photovoltaic (PV) array electricity generating facility and energy storage facility with a total capacity exceeding 50 megawatts (MW) and export connection to the National Grid ("The Scheme"). The Scheme would be located on farmland north east of Chelmsford, and north of the A12 between Boreham and Hatfield Peverel, covering an area of approximately 474 hectares (ha) ("the DCO Site"). Of the DCO site, around 60% is likely to be used for the location of the PV Arrays, with other areas being used for the BESS, substations and underground cabling, access tracks, some ancillary buildings, as well as areas of landscaping.

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The proposed DCO will, amongst other things, authorise:

- construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning of ground mounted PV Arrays, Solar Stations and a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS), along with various underground Distribution Cables;
- associated and/or ancillary works including a new substation, known as the Longfield Substation which will be connected to the PV Arrays and BESS via underground Distribution Cables. The Longfield Substation will then link into the existing Bulls Lodge Substation, operated by National Grid. The Scheme includes an extension to the existing Bulls Lodge Substation. Other works will include primary and secondary access tracks, and ancillary buildings such as offices. There will also be parts of the DCO Site used for landscape works which will include features such as biodiversity improvement measures and fencing;
- the compulsory acquisition of land and/or rights and the taking of temporary possession of land;
- the overriding of easements and other rights over or affecting land;
- the application and/or disapplication of legislation relating to the Longfield Solar Farm; and,
- such ancillary, incidental and consequential provisions, licences, property rights, permits and consents as are necessary and/or convenient.

Consultation documents

Section 46 of the Planning Act 2008 requires the Applicant to send to the Secretary of State the information that it intends to provide to consultees under section 42 of the Planning Act 2008, on or before commencing section 42 consultation. As such, please find enclosed the information that is being sent to the section 42 consultees identified:

- A covering letter sent to those consultees pursuant to section 42(1)(a) and section 42(1)(b) and a cover letter sent to those consultees pursuant to section 42(1)(d) – enclosing:
  - A consultation booklet, which provides more information about the Scheme and includes a plan showing the proposed red-line boundary of the Scheme;
  - A consultation questionnaire which may be used to provide feedback on the proposals; and,
  - Notice of the proposed application which has been publicised in accordance with section 48 of the Act and the requirements set out in regulation 4 of the APFP Regulations (for section 42(1)(a) and (b) consultees only).

These documents, as well as a Preliminary Environment Information (PEI) Report and accompanying non-technical summary, will be available using the following link from the start of the consultation period on 1 June 2021: https://www.longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk/downloads/.

We are providing this information in an electronic form to minimise the provision of paper or electronic documentation which has to be physically handled during the COVID-19 pandemic. If, however, the Secretary of State requires the material in an alternative form, please do not hesitate to contact us.

In addition to these documents, there will be additional information on our website, www.longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk and through a virtual public exhibition accessible by the same link. We will also offer consultees the opportunity to speak to the consultation team directly in a manner compliant with Government guidance on COVID 19. Further details of the consultation arrangements can be found in the section 48 notice.

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Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us on info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk or by calling 08081687925.

Yours faithfully,

[redacted]

James Pateman
Project Manager

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Appendix G-2: Copy of consultation information pack

Longfield Solar Farm
Consultation information pack
1 June 2021

Overview

Longfield Solar Energy Farm Ltd is consulting on proposals for Longfield Solar Farm from 1 June to 13 July 2021. This pack has been produced to give you an understanding of the scheme and the way we are consulting, provide you with answers to questions you may receive about the scheme and help you support members of your community responding to the consultation

It includes a summary of the way we are consulting, answers to some common questions and a poster to help publicise the consultation in your area.

What to expect

Background

We want to ensure that the consultation we carry out is meaningful and can influence the scheme. We have taken an iterative approach to consultation, having carried out an initial round of non-statutory consultation between 2 November and 14 December 2020. Having had regard to the responses from the 2020 consultation and having undertaken further design work and environmental assessments of the scheme, we are now carrying out a round of consultation pursuant to the Planning Act 2008.

This approach reflects good practice in design and engagement. It also meets the requirements of the Planning Act 2008, the mechanism through which we are seeking a development consent order (DCO). DCOs are governed by a fixed, statutory process which requires us to:

- consult with persons with an interest in the proposed land and certain bodies as prescribed under section 42 of the Planning Act 2008.
- consult with the local community under section 47 of the Planning Act 2008.
- publicise the proposals locally and nationally under section 48 of the Planning Act 2008, regulation 4 of the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 and regulation 13 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

The process also provides a fixed role as consultees for those local authorities which host the development and means we will be following a well-established and clear process to develop our proposals. Further information about the planning process for the scheme is set out in the Q&A section at the end of this document.

Consultation stages

> **Launching the scheme:**

- We launched the scheme publicly on 23 September 2020. This introduced the scheme to the local community through a newsletter and the launch of our website, www.longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk. We also began early discussions with local authorities, parish councils and residents at this stage.

> **Non-statutory consultation:**

- We held a non-statutory consultation from 2 November to 14 December 2020. The purpose of this was to present the background to the scheme and raise knowledge of the scheme with consultees. In doing so, we wanted to ensure that our later, statutory, consultation would be more effective. We also used the process to assess our own consultation activity to ensure that it is effective in reaching people going forward and to capture any views that they might have.
- For this stage of public consultation, we published information about the project site and sought initial feedback on our design.

> **EIA scoping:**

- At around the same time as the non-statutory consultation, we submitted an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Report to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). PINS consulted on this report with statutory bodies such as the Environment Agency and Natural England and issued a Scoping Opinion in December 2020. We have used this when setting the scope of our assessments. Both the Scoping Report and the Scoping Opinion are on the PINS website for the scheme.

> **Statutory consultation:**

- From the 1 June 2021 – 13 July 2021, we are carrying out a further round of consultation in line with the requirements of the Planning Act 2008. This is therefore called a 'statutory' consultation.
- We have developed a consultation programme designed to allow people from across the community to find out more and respond. This is compatible with different levels of social distancing requirements and will include in-person engagement if possible.
- The objectives of this consultation are to ensure that people potentially affected by our proposals have the opportunity to understand them, provide their views and further influence the scheme's design prior to submission of the DCO application. In doing so, we are also meeting the requirements of the Planning Act 2008.
- We are publishing information that describes the scheme proposals in greater detail. Alongside this, we are also providing details about the outcome of our preliminary environmental assessments and any mitigation proposed or under consideration.
- We will use the feedback that we receive during the statutory consultation to help us develop our final proposals for Longfield Solar Farm before submitting our DCO application.

> **Submission of the application:**

- We plan to submit a DCO application to the Secretary of State (via PINS) in the second half of 2021. PINS will then consider whether to accept the application for examination.
- Following the acceptance of the application, the application will enter a fixed legal process. We will be required to notify and publicise the acceptance of the application, and there will be an opportunity for consultees and members of the public to register as an interested party, make representations and take part in the public examination of the application at this time.

Statutory consultation

We are now at the stage of statutory consultation. We will use the feedback that we receive during the statutory consultation to help us develop our final proposals for Longfield Solar Farm before submitting our DCO application.

We have published a document called a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) setting out how we will consult with the local community. We consulted Braintree District Council, Chelmsford City Council and Essex County Council in developing the SoCC. You can find the SoCC on our website: www.longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk/downloads.

The statutory consultation will run from the 1 June 2021 – 13 July 2021.

What are we consulting on?

During the consultation, we are asking for views on:

- The proposed Longfield Solar Farm.
- The short term and long-term impacts of the proposal including construction impacts, environmental impacts, operational impacts, impacts from decommissioning and other impacts in this period, such as socioeconomic and cumulative impacts.
- Proposed mitigation of these impacts.
- The contribution that Longfield Solar Farm could make to the local community.
- The Preliminary Environmental Impact (PEI) Report– a document which explains the results from the preliminary Environmental Impact Assessment and the likely impact of the proposals on the environment.

How have we told people about the consultation?

We are publicising the consultation widely in accordance with the SoCC. We have:

- Issued a consultation booklet, questionnaire and response envelope to more than 5,800 addresses within the parishes of Terling, Fairstead, Hatfield Peverel, Boreham, Great and Little Leighs and Little Waltham. This area is shown on the plan below.
- Written to elected representatives covering the area at a parish, district, county and Parliamentary level, as well as community groups in the local area.
- Issued a consultation letter to prescribed consultees for the purposes of section 42 of the Planning Act 2008, also enclosing a copy of the newspaper notice published in accordance with section 48 (see below).
- Advertised the consultation in the Chelmsford Weekly News, Braintree and Witham Times and Essex Chronicle and online.
- Publicised the proposed application in the Guardian, London Gazette, Chelmsford Weekly News, Braintree and Witham Times and Essex Chronicle in line with the requirements of the Planning Act 2008
- Provided details of the consultation online at www.longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk.

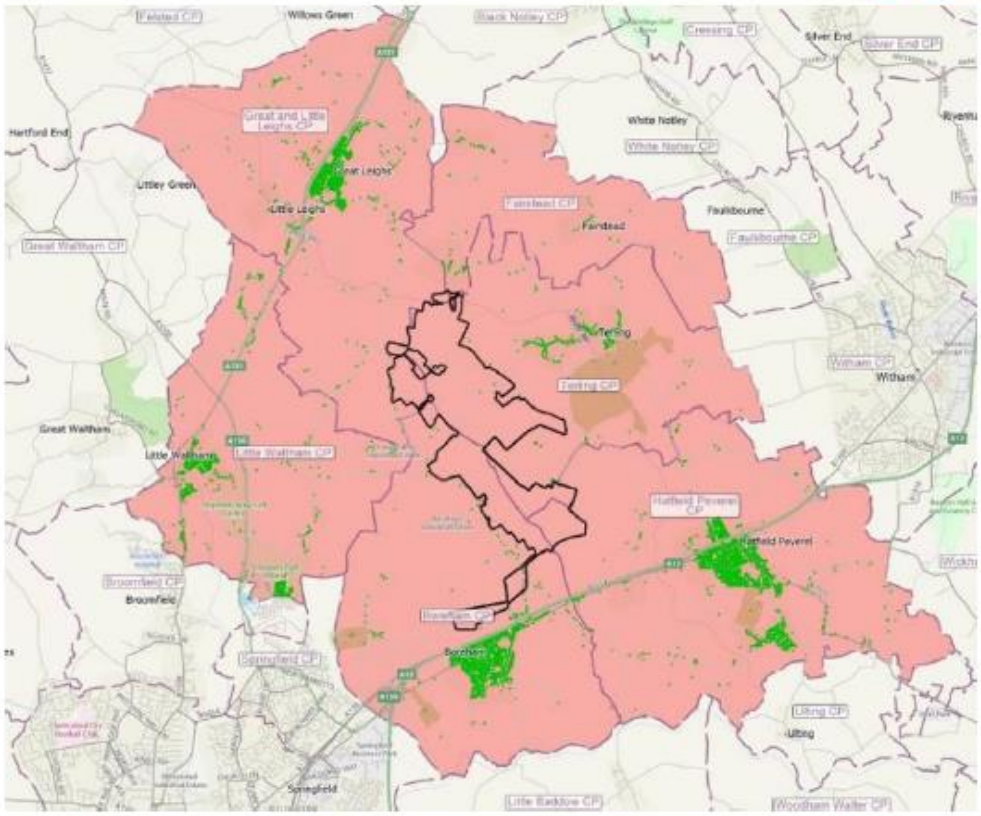

Figure 1: Consultation zone 1. The site boundary is shown in black. Zone 1 consists of any person or group likely to be directly impacted by the proposed Longfield Solar Farm by virtue of their living or working in proximity to the site. This zone is defined by the boundaries of the parishes of Boreham, Fairstead, Great and Little Leighs, Hatfield Peverel, Little Waltham and Terling.

How can people find out more?

Anyone can find out more about the proposals by:

- Reading a Consultation Booklet about the proposals. This summarises our proposals, the way we have responded to previous consultation feedback, the preliminary results of our environmental impact assessments and how to take part in the consultation. This has been sent to properties with the area shown in Figure 1 and is available from our website or on request.
- Booking an appointment to meet with the project team. **Dependent on Government guidance, this will include the opportunity for people who live inside the consultation zone 1 to meet in person and view an exhibition with your household or support bubble at a COVID 19 secure venue.** Online and telephone appointments are also

available. We will release appointments through the consultation period. Initially, people can book using the following links:
    - 8 and 12 June 2021
    - 9 June 2021
- People can also book an appointment by contacting us using the contact details in this information pack or going to www.longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk/public-consultation.
- Viewing a series of webinars we will give about the proposals online. These will offer the opportunity to ask questions about the proposals. Recordings of each webinar will also appear on our website once they have taken place. People can register at our website or by using these links:
    - 1400 on Saturday 5 June 2021
    - 1900 on Thursday 10 June 2021.
- Viewing a virtual public exhibition using this link. The virtual public exhibition includes an **interactive visualisation tool based on a 3D model** which will allow people to look at the potential visual impacts of the scheme in different locations.
- Viewing the PEI Report and other consultation documents online or in paper form at the following points in the local community:
    - Hatfield Peverel Library, The St, Hatfield Peverel, Chelmsford CM3 2DP
    - Witham Library, 18 Newland St, Witham CM8 2AQ
    - Chelmsford Library, Chelmsford County Hall, Market Rd, Chelmsford CM1 1QH
    - St John The Evangelist Church, Church Lane, Little Leighs, Chelmsford CM3 1PQ
- This may change with COVID 19 regulations. We would ask that people contact us in advance for the latest information before making plans to visit.
- Contacting us on 08081687925 or info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk.

How can people respond to the consultation?

We welcome feedback on our proposals for Longfield Solar Farm. Anyone can share their views by:

- Completing a consultation questionnaire online here
  Receiving the questionnaire by paper form by contacting us on 08081687925 or info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk, and then returning it to the address below:
  Longfield Solar Farm consultation, FREEPOST reference RTRB-LUUJ-AGBY, c/o SECNewgate UK, Sky Light City Tower, 50 Basinghall Street, London, EC2V 5DE or by email to info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk
- Submitting their comments by email to info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk or in writing to the above Freepost address.

Responses must be received by the consultation deadline of 11.59pm on 13 July 2021.

Contact us

For further information, please contact us on 08081687925 or info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk.

Question and answers

This document provides answers to common questions about Longfield Solar Farm. If you have a question about the scheme that is not answered here, you can call 08081687925 or email us at info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk.

You can also book an appointment to speak with members of the project team about the proposals individually, should you wish to have a more in-depth response. You can do this using the contact details above or by going to our website, www.longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk.

The scheme

Q: What is Longfield Solar Farm?

A: Longfield Solar Farm is a proposed new solar energy farm co-located with a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS). The proposals also include grid connection infrastructure including a new substation and an extension to an existing National Grid substation, to connect Longfield Solar Farm to the National Grid electricity network. The proposals will include any necessary environmental mitigation, which is currently under development.

Q: Who is behind Longfield Solar Farm?

A: The scheme is being brought forward by a joint venture between two established developers of renewable energy: Padero Solar and EDF Renewables UK (EDFR). The two organisations have brought together a highly experienced project team with an excellent track record in successfully delivering nationally significant infrastructure of this kind. EDF Renewables will own and operate Longfield Solar Farm once built.

Q: How large will it be?

A: Longfield Solar Farm would be located on approximately 459ha of land and, based on today's technology, would be able to generate around 350MWp of electricity. Of this, 432ha will be used for the Solar Farm site. This includes all of the infrastructure required to generate and store solar energy. It will include a Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Array Works Area (292ha), a Landscape Works Area (129ha), an Ancillary Infrastructure Area (6ha) and the BESS Compound Area (5ha). The remainder of the land will be used for the Grid Connection Route (8ha) and Bulls Lodge Substation Site Area (19ha).

Q: Why do we need this scheme?

A: There is a strong need for the UK to introduce new, cleaner, methods of energy generation as the country works to meet the challenges posed by climate change. As a result of this, the UK is undergoing a major change in the way it meets its energy needs. In 2019 the Government legislated to commit the country to achieving 'net zero' greenhouse gas (including carbon dioxide) emissions by 2050 as against 1990 levels.

Energy generation currently makes up a significant portion of the UK's carbon emissions. This must be reduced through the introduction of new, cleaner methods of electricity generation that are able to come online and provide energy to the grid at the same time as older, carbon-intensive methods of energy generation are being phased out. As older methods of electricity generation reach the end of their operating life, the UK faces a potential 'supply gap' where demand for electricity exceeds domestic supply. Schemes such as this one are helping to bridge this gap and are contributing to the development of a modern, low carbon system of energy generation in the UK.

Q: Will you use compulsory purchase (CPO) powers?

A: We are bringing forward these proposals with the support of the main landowner and are in discussions with other affected landowners. As is common with projects such as this, our approach is likely to include the ability to compulsorily acquire the land and rights required to deliver the scheme, should it be necessary once all voluntary options have been pursued.

Q: What are the project timescales?

A: We are in the process of preparing a Development Consent Order (DCO) application for Longfield Solar Farm. This is the first step of securing development consent for the project. Assuming that the scheme progresses to our current timeline, we expect to submit a DCO application in the second half of 2021, with a view to being operational by the mid-2020s. The typical life of the energy project would be around 40 years.

Size and location

Q: Where will Longfield Solar Farm be located?

A: The scheme would be located on farmland north east of Chelmsford and north of the A12 between Boreham and Hatfield Peverel. The site boundary is shown in red below.

Q: Why does it need to be so large?

A: The size of the scheme is proportionate to the size and urgency of the national need, which is substantial. There is also a need to make the most of the connection to the Grid - this is a limited resource.

We do fully accept that this is a site of significant size. This is why we are working very hard to ensure that the design of the site is as sensitive as it can be to the local area. Seeking local opinion and ideas on how to design this site in detail are key requirements of the statutory consultation and something we take very seriously.

Q: Are there any examples of schemes this large in the UK that I can look at?

A: Solar energy generation is well established in the UK, with more than 13GW of installed capacity. However, there are no solar farms of this scale currently operational in the UK. One, Cleve Hill Solar Park, has received a DCO and there are others going through the planning process. Improvements in technology have made solar PV panels and the other elements of solar farms more affordable. This has enabled proposals of a scale which can meaningfully contribute to the UK's urgent need for renewable energy to begin to come forward.

Q: What exact hectarage of solar panels is required to generate 500MW of electricity?

A: We have secured a grid connection agreement for up to 500MW of electricity. That means we will be able to send or receive 500MW from the National Grid. Based on today's technology, we expect the capacity of the PV array to be around 350MW, which will be supported by a BESS with a capacity of above 50MW.

However, unlike a conventional power station, the environmental impacts of a solar farm are not a direct result of the amount of electricity it can generate. For this reason, we are not proposing that the Longfield Solar Farm is restricted by imposing a limit on how much electricity it can generate.

Instead, we will be seeking a DCO that would restrict the aspects of the solar farm which have potential environmental impacts – such as the height of the solar panels, dimensions of infrastructure such as the BESS and where solar panels would be located within the site. These are known as the 'design parameters'.

This approach also ensures Longfield Solar Farm will be able to generate electricity as efficiently as possible, using technology which is constantly improving and may allow greater amounts of electricity to be generated in future within the existing design parameters.

Since the last consultation, we have refined our proposals and are now able to show where we expect to place PV arrays at Longfield Solar Farm. We currently expect to use around 292ha (approximately 64% of the site for PV arrays) but we are currently consulting, and this figure is therefore subject to change.

Q: Why does it need to be here?

A: The land we have identified for Longfield is ideal for grid scale solar because it has a rare combination of factors. Those are:

- The land sits directly under existing 400Kv electricity transmission lines and in close proximity to the Bulls Lodge Substation, which allows for direct connection to the National Grid and the quick distribution of the energy.
- The location is also key to the wider National Grid, as demand in this zone is very high and still growing.
- The local topography (with broken views, expansive woodlands and high hedgerows) lends itself to solar technology.
- With the land being open and allowed to grow grass, and in some cases "wild", this forms a temporary natural carbon-sink in volume, again addressing the wider climate need for safer, purer, breathable clean air.

Grid connection

Q: Where will the substation be located?

A: Longfield Solar Farm will connect to the National Grid at Bulls Lodge substation which will be extended to accommodate this. Another substation, called the Longfield Substation, close to Toppinghoehall Wood will be constructed in order to take the electricity generated by the solar farm up to the right voltage for onward transmission to the National Grid at Bulls Lodge.

Q: Will there be new overhead lines?

A: We are not proposing new overhead lines. This took into account feedback received during the non-statutory consultation that we should avoid new overhead lines.

There will be a tie in point for the Bulls Lodge Substation within the Bulls Lodge Substation Site, which will involve the construction of additional gantries and some temporary diversion works to the overhead lines immediately adjacent to Bulls Lodge Substation.

Q: What does the grid connection require?

A: The grid connection will require an extension to Bulls Lodge substation. This will be similar in appearance to the existing substation components.

Q: How did you select the grid connection?

A: Initially, we defined a series of options for the grid connection. These were published as part of the non-statutory consultation. We worked with National Grid to identify an appropriate location for the grid connection, having regard to feedback from the non-statutory consultation. The extension to Bulls Lodge substation is its preferred choice. This benefits from proximity to the existing substation and is also close to the A12 and railway line, which will help screen the development.

Q: Will local residents have access to cheaper electricity?

A: The project will generate electricity which will be provided directly to the National Grid electricity network. Residents will continue to receive their electricity from domestic electricity suppliers, we will not be able to offer any direct reduction to local residents' bills.

Technology

Q: How will the solar farm generate energy?

A: Longfield Solar Farm will use ground mounted PV panel arrays to generate electricity from the sun. Solar PV is a renewable technology: once set up, the panels make use of sunlight to generate electricity.

Q: What sort of solar panels are you using? How big will they be?

A: We are yet to make a final decision about the PV panels we will use at Longfield Solar Farm. We are therefore consulting on the basis of design parameters – these can be found in Chapter 2 of the PEI Report. We expect the PV arrays to have a maximum height of 3 metres and to face south.

Q: Why do we need battery storage?

A: Battery storage has an important role to play in stabilising the National Grid. At times of an excess or shortfall in demand, battery storage facilities can balance the National Grid by making up for any shortfalls or by storing power (either excess electricity generated from the PV arrays or imported from the grid) to be released later. It can also help manage the intermittency of renewable energy generation which do not generate electricity constantly.

Q: Is battery storage technology safe?

A: Battery storage technology is safe and makes use of tried and tested technology. One of the partners in Longfield Solar Farm, EDF Renewables (EDFR) UK, already operates battery storage projects in the UK.

We will build in safety measures including self-contained units for each battery and an integrated automated fire suppression system. Equipment will be selected to be fire-limiting and the BESS will be monitored 24 hours a day from a dedicated control room.

Q: Where will the batteries be located?

A: The batteries will be located close to the Longfield substation which will be in the vicinity of Toppinghoehall Wood. This location is well-screened and closer to the A12 and a railway line.

Q: How large will the batteries be?

A: The BESS will comprise batteries used to store electricity, an electrical compound made up of a substation and a control building. We expect that the batteries will be a housed in containers with a maximum height of 4.5 metres.

Q: The Guardian newspaper has suggested that some of the raw materials used in a large percentage of solar panels are made using slave labour - what are your comments on this?

A: We completely oppose the abuse of human rights and forced labour anywhere in the global supply chain. We ask all suppliers to ensure compliance with the Modern Slavery Act. We are also actively strengthening our existing procurement process to make every effort to prevent any negative impact on people and the environment.

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Q: Won't the BESS be a blot on the landscape in an area which is very popular with local people?

A: We have worked very hard to determine the best location of the BESS site given the range of criteria that need to be considered including the need to locate it away from homes. The BESS is an essential element of Longfield Solar Farm as it helps to make the creation and distribution of renewable, clean energy as efficiently as possible, and will contribute to the stability of the National Grid electricity network.

Its location close to Toppinghoehall Wood is already well screened. We will be enhancing this through additional landscape planting. You can see what this might look like by using the visualisation tool provided in the virtual exhibition.

Impacts

Q: What will the environmental impacts of the scheme be?

A: To ensure that the environmental impacts of the scheme are adequately assessed, we are working closely with local authorities, technical stakeholders and environmental groups to avoid (and if we cannot avoid, to mitigate) any identified significant adverse impacts on the surrounding natural environment and landscape.

Longfield Solar Farm is EIA development for the purposes of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. We are required to carry out an EIA of our proposals as part of the planning process. The preliminary outputs from this assessment have informed the site design and content of this consultation.

We are sharing the preliminary results of our assessments as part of this consultation. The consultation materials summarise our findings in areas such as ecology, landscape, and visual impacts that were raised during the last consultation. The results are presented in a document called the Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI) Report. You can view the PEI Report on our website (www.longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk/downloads). There is also a non-technical summary of the PEI Report available to view.

Following this statutory consultation, we will have regard to all feedback received and will finalise the Environmental Statement. This will be submitted in support of our DCO application and will set out the final outcomes of our assessments, as well as details of any proposed mitigation.

Q: What environmental impacts will you be considering in your assessments?

A: As part of the EIA design process, we formally 'scoped' our approach with Planning Inspectorate (PINS) (on behalf of the Secretary of State) and, on the 3 December 2020, we received its formal Scoping Opinion. This confirmed the scope of work that should be included in our EIA and should be reported in the comprehensive Environmental Statement that will accompany our DCO application when submitted to the Secretary of State.

In addition to this, we have considered the feedback we received through the non-statutory consultation and have continued to engage with local authorities and other regulatory bodies, such as Historic England and the Environment Agency, on our approach to the EIA.

Our EIA includes the following topics:

- Climate Change
- Cultural Heritage
- Ecology
- Flood Risk, Drainage and Surface Water

- Landscape and Visual Amenity
- Noise and Vibration
- Socio-economics and Land Use
- Transport and Access
- Air Quality
- Glint and Glare
- Ground Conditions
- Human Health
- Major Accidents or Disasters
- Waste

Q: How will the scheme affect wildlife?

A: We are committed to making the local environment appreciably better than before the solar farm was built and operated. That means going beyond simply mitigating any impacts from development to proactively investing in the pursuit of positive change.

We believe this scheme represents a very rare opportunity to substantially improve local ecological conditions because the land will be managed with the twin goals of generating clean, renewable energy and creating better habitats for wildlife.

The scheme will deliver a net gain in biodiversity overall, using a comprehensive site wide biodiversity and landscape management plan, developed through consultation with Natural England and other relevant stakeholders.

Our investment in this process is long term because the site will be operated and managed by the proposers in close association with the supportive landowner, who has a long-term interest in the land and the local community.

Q: Will I be able to see the scheme from my house? Won't it harm the character of the area?

A: We have assessed the potential landscape and visual impacts of Longfield Solar Farm as part of our EIA. Wherever possible, we have designed the scheme to avoid negative impacts on views from residential properties and other key viewpoints such as the Essex Way. Where this has not been possible, we are proposing planting and other forms of screening to mitigate the potential impact. Further information is presented on pages 22-23 of the Consultation Booklet. You can also use the visualisation tool included in our virtual exhibition to look at the landscaping we are proposing in different parts of the site.

Q: How can the loss of a large area of farmland be justified?

A: The scheme will not involve the permanent loss of farmland. It is possible to restore land used for solar energy generation to farmland at the end of a scheme's lifetime. We will also improve biodiversity at the site as part of the development and deliver a net gain in this area during the scheme's operational lifetime.

Additionally, it is possible to use land with a solar farm for agricultural purposes, including grazing, during a scheme's operational lifetime. Solar farms are one of the ways that farmers can continue to make use of land where traditional agricultural uses have become economically challenging.

Q: How will the scheme affect access to footpaths and bridleways?

A: We see the proposals for Longfield Solar Farm as an opportunity to substantially improve access for people locally. Our draft masterplan includes a network of paths, which will connect into the wider network of public rights of way for the lifetime of the scheme. This will include the potential to link to new paths through the planned north east Chelmsford urban extension and country park – helping to improve access to the wider countryside.

There may be some temporary closures of public rights of way during the construction period. These will not be for the whole of the construction period, and we will communicate about any planned closures with local residents and relevant stakeholders.

Q: Your proposed mitigation measures may help to alleviate the impact over the long term, but is it not true that for the next decade local people will be very aware of the solar farm?

A: We recognise that there is genuine concern about how long mitigation measures will need to take effect and that is why we have developed a number of techniques for local people and stakeholders to assess this for themselves during the statutory consultation. These include CGI and photomontages, showing how the mitigation measures will work over the lifetime of the scheme.

The statutory consultation is a key opportunity for local people to express their views on this and we are hoping that they will have had the opportunity to fully inform themselves, from the visual aids on offer - the consultation materials, website and webinars.

In recognition of this concern, the landowner is already planting new trees and hedgerows, in order to kick start the process in particularly sensitive locations. This responds to comments from the non-statutory consultation period.

Q: Will the development affect house prices?

A: There is no evidence to show that solar farms or battery storage reduce the value of homes nearby. We have designed the scheme to minimise impacts on nearby homes and are meeting with residents living in the immediate vicinity of the scheme to inform that process.

Q: Will glare from the solar panels affect me? In which direction will they be facing?

A: The solar panels are proposed to slope towards the south. We have assessed the potential for glint and glare as part of our EIA – this includes on views from roads and local homes. The results of this assessment have informed our design. Due to the topography and abundant amount of woodland and surrounding vegetation at the site, it is anticipated that there will be no significant effects arising in regard to glint and glare. We will update our assessment as part of the Environmental Statement.

Q: Will the scheme have any benefits at all for the local community?

A: The companies behind Longfield Solar Farm have a proud history of investing in the communities in which they work and establishing community benefits for the duration of a project's operating life. As EDF Renewables expects to continue to own and operate Longfield Solar Farm, it will be making a long-term commitment to the local community.

The scheme will have a number of benefits locally. Overall, we expect to create 375 new jobs in the construction phase. There will also be 8 jobs at Longfield Solar Farm once is operational. We expect local expenditure by the scheme to help create the equivalent of 188 new jobs during construction. We will also look to support the development of skills at an earlier stage by working with local schools and other education providers.

Alexander House - 1 Mandarin Road - Rainton Bridge Business Park - Houghton le Spring -DH4 5RA
Registered Company No. 11618210 - longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk

In recognition of the important role Longfield Solar Farm should play locally, we have also established a sponsorship fund open to applications from community projects or groups in the parishes of Terling and Fairstead, Hatfield Peverel, Boreham, Great and Little Leighs and Little Waltham.

This is separate to the planning process for the scheme, and we expect to continue operating the fund for as long as we are working locally. It is managed on our behalf by the Essex Community Foundation and initially will last until the DCO application for Longfield Solar Farm is decided. For more information and to apply, please see the Essex Community Foundation's website: essexcommunityfoundation.org.uk.

If a DCO is granted, we plan to put in place a fund which will be related in size to the energy output of the PV panels. Currently, we expect there to be around £64,000 per year available as part of the fund. This could equate to £2,560,000 over the expected lifetime of the scheme.

Construction, operations and management

Q: How will you manage the construction of Longfield Solar Farm?

A: We will have a robust construction management strategy and will look to use existing infrastructure to access the site wherever possible, minimising use of new materials on-site, potentially phasing construction for the BESS and using a single site entrance to reduce impacts on the wider road network.

We recognise the potential impact of construction on our neighbours and will put in place a plan designed to ensure potential impacts are managed and properly communicated. To aid this, we will include a draft Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) with our DCO application.

Key best practice measures we will put in place during construction include:

- Restricting HGV movements to the A130, Wheelers Hill and Cranham Road
- Minimising HGV movements during certain times of the day, such as between 8am-9am and 5pm-6pm
- Implementing a delivery management system for HGV deliveries from the start of the construction period
- Recording the journeys of all HGVs travelling to and from the site to ensure they use agreed routes
- Implementing temporary traffic management on Waltham Road during the period when the grid connection cables are installed
- Encouraging local construction staff to share cars, to reduce single occupancy car trips
- Implementing a shuttlebus service to transfer non-local staff to and from local worker accommodation
- Providing on-site car and cycle parking
- Best practice measures, including off-site highway improvements at Cranham Road, which could involve small scale road widening to accommodate construction traffic

Q: How long will construction take?

A: If the scheme were to receive consent, we anticipate that the total construction period would take approximately three years to complete. This includes around a year getting the site ready for development and two years building the scheme itself.

We may also phase development of the BESS. The first part, on either side of the Longfield substation, would be delivered during the first and second years of construction. The second part, to the north east of the substation, would be delivered within five years of operation after screening planting has matured.

Q: Will the scheme contribute to congestion on local roads?

A: The main impact on roads is likely to be during construction. The number of staff on site at any one point will vary during construction – at the busiest periods 25 HGVs and 600 staff per day would be expected on site. To minimise impacts on local roads, we will use a single point of access to the site from Cranham Road – vehicles will then use internal access roads. We will also prepare a Construction Traffic Management Plan setting out how we will manage construction traffic as part of our DCO application. Once construction is complete, traffic to and from the site will be minimal.

Q: What will happen at the end of the scheme's operational life?

A: Solar farms are temporary and typically have an operational lifespan of 40 years. Once Longfield Solar Farm reaches the end of its lifespan, its infrastructure will be dismantled and the site returned to its previous condition.

Planning process

Q: What is the planning process for the scheme?

A: The scheme is a type of development known as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). NSIPs are major developments which require development consent to be granted by the relevant Secretary of State through a Development Consent Order (DCO). This is a process established by the Planning Act 2008.

Unlike planning permissions under the Town and Country Planning Act, which are considered by local authorities in the first instance, DCO applications are made to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), which administers the application process on behalf of the Secretary of State.

In the case of Longfield Solar Farm, the relevant Government department is the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

Q: Why does the scheme have to be an NSIP?

A: The Planning Act 2008 sets out thresholds and if a proposed scheme is above the thresholds it is classified as a NSIP. The proposed Longfield Solar Farm is automatically an NSIP because it is a generating station which will have the capacity to generate more than 50MW of electricity.

Q: How do I know that my views will be taken into account if the application won't be determined by my local council?

A: Under the Planning Act 2008 we are consulting with the local community, as well as local authorities, regulatory bodies and other statutory consultees. As part of our application, we will show how we have considered feedback from the consultation and will produce a consultation report. It is important to note that whilst the local authority won't determine whether the scheme is given approval, local authorities still have an important role to play in the Examination of the application.

In making their decision, the Secretary of State is required to have regard to any local impact report submitted by a host local authority, setting out the impact of the scheme on the local area. Local authorities are often also very involved in making representations throughout the Examination process. Similarly, members of the public have the opportunity to be involved in the Examination process, by making representations and / or attending hearings and making submissions in person.

Public Consultation

Q: What feedback did you receive during the last round of consultation?

A: We held an initial round of non-statutory consultation on our proposals for Longfield Solar Farm from 2 November to 14 December 2020.

We are grateful to everyone who took part in the consultation. We received more than 240 responses overall. Common themes raised in responses included:

- Support for the principle of new solar energy generation
- Concern about the overall scale of development and potential loss of agricultural land
- A preference for the grid connection option close to Bulls Lodge substation
- Concern about HGV accesses from Boreham Road and Waltham Road
- A desire for all cables associated with the scheme to be buried underground
- Requests for more information about landscape and visual impact, ecology and local job creation

Q: What has changed since the last round of consultation?

A: Since the last consultation, we have refined our proposals, paying attention to all comments made through the non-statutory consultation, as well as continuing environmental surveys. These have included surveys into the quality of the agricultural land, views in and around the site and ecology.

We also received confirmation from National Grid that it was no longer considering connecting Longfield Solar Farm to the national electricity transmission system at the northernmost option included in the last stage of consultation.

We have therefore:

- reduced the site area considerably, including removing development north of the River Ter.
- confirmed the location of the grid connection at Bulls Lodge substation.
- removed the HGV access to the site from Boreham Road and Waltham Road proposed at the non-statutory consultation from the scheme.
- refined our proposals to minimise the use of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land.
- moved development away from specific views.

Overall, we believe these changes significantly reduce the visual impact of the scheme and in many cases remove it altogether compared to our original plans.

Q: How can I take part in the consultation?

A: This second round of consultation on the project is statutory and is taking place between 1 June 2021 and 13 July 2021. We want as many people to take part in the consultation as possible.

While there has been some relaxation of social distancing requirements by the Government, we still face restrictions on meeting residents in-person. We are therefore making available a range of ways to find out more and respond to the consultation.

We have developed the consultation programme considering best practice guidance and advice from Essex County Council, Chelmsford City Council and Braintree District Council.

This is a statutory consultation which we are carrying out in line with the requirements of the Planning Act 2008. You can find out how we are meeting the requirement to consult with the community by reading the 'Statement of Community Consultation' (SoCC) available on our website.

We will carefully consider all of the comments we receive as part of the consultation and set out how we have had regard to them in a Consultation Report. This will form part of our DCO application.

Find out more

If you live in Zone 1, defined in the SoCC, you can book an appointment to speak with us individually. If Government guidelines allow, this will include an opportunity to meet with us in a COVID 19 secure environment and view a public exhibition. To book an appointment, contact us on 08081687925 or at info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk.

You can also find out more about the proposals by:

- Reading a Consultation Booklet about the proposals. This summarises our proposals, the way we have responded to previous consultation feedback, the preliminary results of our environmental impact assessments, and how to take part in the consultation. This has been sent to properties with the area shown in Figure 1 and is available from our website or on request.
- Booking an appointment to meet with the project team. **Dependent on Government guidance, this will include the opportunity for people who live inside the core consultation zone to meet in person and view an exhibition with your household or support bubble at a COVID 19 secure venue.** Online and telephone appointments are also available. We will release appointments through the consultation period. Initially, you can book using the following links:
  - 8 and 12 June 2021
  - 9 June 2021
- You can also book an appointment by contacting us using the contact details in these Q&As or going to www.longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk/public-consultation.
- Viewing a series of webinars we will give about the proposals online. These will offer the opportunity to ask questions about the proposals. Recordings of each webinar will also appear on our website once they have taken place. You can register at our website or by using these links:
  - 1400 on Saturday 5 June 2021
  - 1900 on Thursday 10 June 2021
- Viewing a virtual public exhibition using this link. The virtual public exhibition includes an **interactive visualisation tool based on a 3D model** which will allow people to look at the potential visual impacts of the scheme in different locations.

- Viewing the PEI Report and other consultation documents online or in paper form at the following points in the local community:
  - Hatfield Peverel Library, The St, Hatfield Peverel, Chelmsford CM3 2DP
  - Witham Library, 18 Newland St, Witham CM8 2AQ
  - Chelmsford Library, Chelmsford County Hall, Market Rd, Chelmsford CM1 1QH
  - St John The Evangelist Church, Church Lane, Little Leighs, Chelmsford CM3 1PQ
- This may change with COVID 19 regulations. We would ask that people contact us in advance for the latest information before making plans to visit.
- Contacting us on 08081687925 or info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk.

Respond

We welcome feedback on our proposals for Longfield Solar Farm. Anyone can share their views by:

- Completing a consultation questionnaire online at www.longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk/public-consultation
- Requesting a paper question by contracting us on 08081687925 or info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk, and then returning the questionnaire to: Longfield Solar Farm consultation, FREEPOST reference RTRB-LUUJ-AGBY, c/o SEC Newgate UK, Sky Light City Tower, 50 Basinghall Street, London, EC2V 5DE or info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk
- Submitting their comments by email to info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk or in writing to the above Freepost address.

Responses must be received by the consultation deadline of 11.59pm on 13 July 2021. We will supply paper copies of the questionnaire on request.

Q: Why are you consulting when COVID-19 means you can't hold public meetings?

A: There is an urgent need to progress applications for renewable energy projects. While there has been some relaxation of social distancing requirements by the Government, we still face restrictions on meeting residents in-person. We are therefore making available a range of ways to find out more and respond to the consultation. This includes the opportunity to attend an exhibition and speak with us in-person at a COVID 19 secure setting for people living in consultation zone 1.

Q: I don't have internet access. Can I take part in the consultation?

A: Yes. We are sending a copy of the consultation booklet to people living within the core consultation zone along with a questionnaire. We are also offering in-person appointments for people living in consultation zone 1 and telephone surgeries for anyone interested in the proposals who is without internet access.

Q: I live outside consultation zone 1. Can I receive a paper copy of the materials?

A: Yes, hard copies of the consultation booklet, questionnaire and SoCC are available free of charge on request. Copies of the PEIR will also be made available on USBs free of charge on request. A charge of £0.35 per page will be applicable for hard copies of the PEIR and its non-technical summary.

Q: What happens if the COVID-19 threat levels change the Government's roadmap?

A: We will publicise any changes to the consultation arrangements made as a result of Government legislation or COVID-19 restrictions. This will involve:

- Writing to all addresses, elected representatives, parish councils and community groups within consultation zone 1.
- Issuing a poster to elected representatives, parish councils and community groups for local display.
- Writing to all district and county councillors at Braintree District Council, Chelmsford City Council and Essex County Council (zone 2).
- Writing to all parish councils within consultation zone 2.
- Publicising the change of arrangements in the Chelmsford Weekly News, Braintree and Witham Times, Essex Chronicle and East Anglian Daily Times.
- Publicising the change of arrangements online.

However, as the next stage of the Government's roadmap is not due to be implemented until 21 June, the consultation has been arranged in line with the relaxation introduced on 17 May 2021.

Q: What will you do with feedback from the consultation?

A: We will carefully consider all of the comments we receive as part of the consultation and set out how we have had regard to them in a Consultation Report. This will form part of our DCO application.

Further information

Q: How can I find out more?

A: For further information, please contact us by:

- Visiting the proposed Longfield Solar Farm website: www.longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk
- Calling 08081687925 (9:00am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday)
- Emailing info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk
- Writing to the project team at: Longfield Solar Farm consultation, FREEPOST reference RTRB-LUUJ-AGBY, c/o SEC Newgate UK, Sky Light City Tower, 50 Basinghall Street, London, EC2V 5DE

Appendix G-3: Copy of consultation questionnaire

CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE
1 June to 13 July 2021

Longfield Solar Energy Farm Ltd is consulting on its proposals for Longfield Solar Farm, a new solar energy farm co-located with battery storage on farmland north east of Chelmsford and north of the A12 between Boreham and Hatfield Peverel. As the energy generating capacity of the proposed Longfield Solar Farm would be more than 50MW, the project is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP).

This consultation is your opportunity to express your views on our proposals before we submit an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. We currently expect to submit our application later in 2021. We want as many people as possible to share their views on our proposals as part of this consultation.

How to respond to this consultation

This questionnaire is designed to help you give us your feedback on the proposals. You can respond to the consultation by:

- Completing this questionnaire online: www.longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk
- Completing this questionnaire and returning it to Longfield Solar Farm consultation, FREEPOST reference RTRB-LUUJ-AGBY, SEC Newgate UK, Sky Light City Tower, 50 Basinghall Street, London, EC2V 5DE
- Completing this questionnaire and sending it by email to info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk
- Writing to us directly using the email address or Freepost address set out above

Responses must be received by Longfield Solar Energy Farm Ltd between 1 June 2021 and 11:59pm on 13 July 2021. Following this statutory consultation, we will consider all of the views we receive on time and finalise our DCO application. This will include a Consultation Report setting out how we have considered responses to the consultation.

1. Do you have any comments on our proposals for the solar energy generation element of the scheme?

2. Do you have any comments on our proposals for the battery storage element of the scheme?

3. Do you have any comments on our proposals for connecting to the national electricity system, including laying cables underground and extending Bulls Lodge National Grid Substation?

4. Do you have any comments on the potential environmental impacts and our proposals for enhancements and mitigation during:

a) The construction of Longfield Solar Farm?

b) The operation of Longfield Solar Farm?

c) The decommissioning of Longfield Solar Farm?

5. Do you have any comments on the contribution that the scheme will make to the local community?

6. Do you have any comments on the potential biodiversity enhancements set out on pages 28-29 of the Consultation Booklet?

7. Do you have any further comments?

If you would like to be kept updated on this project, please provide your contact details below:

Name:
Address:
Telephone:
Email address:

Please tick the boxes below as appropriate:

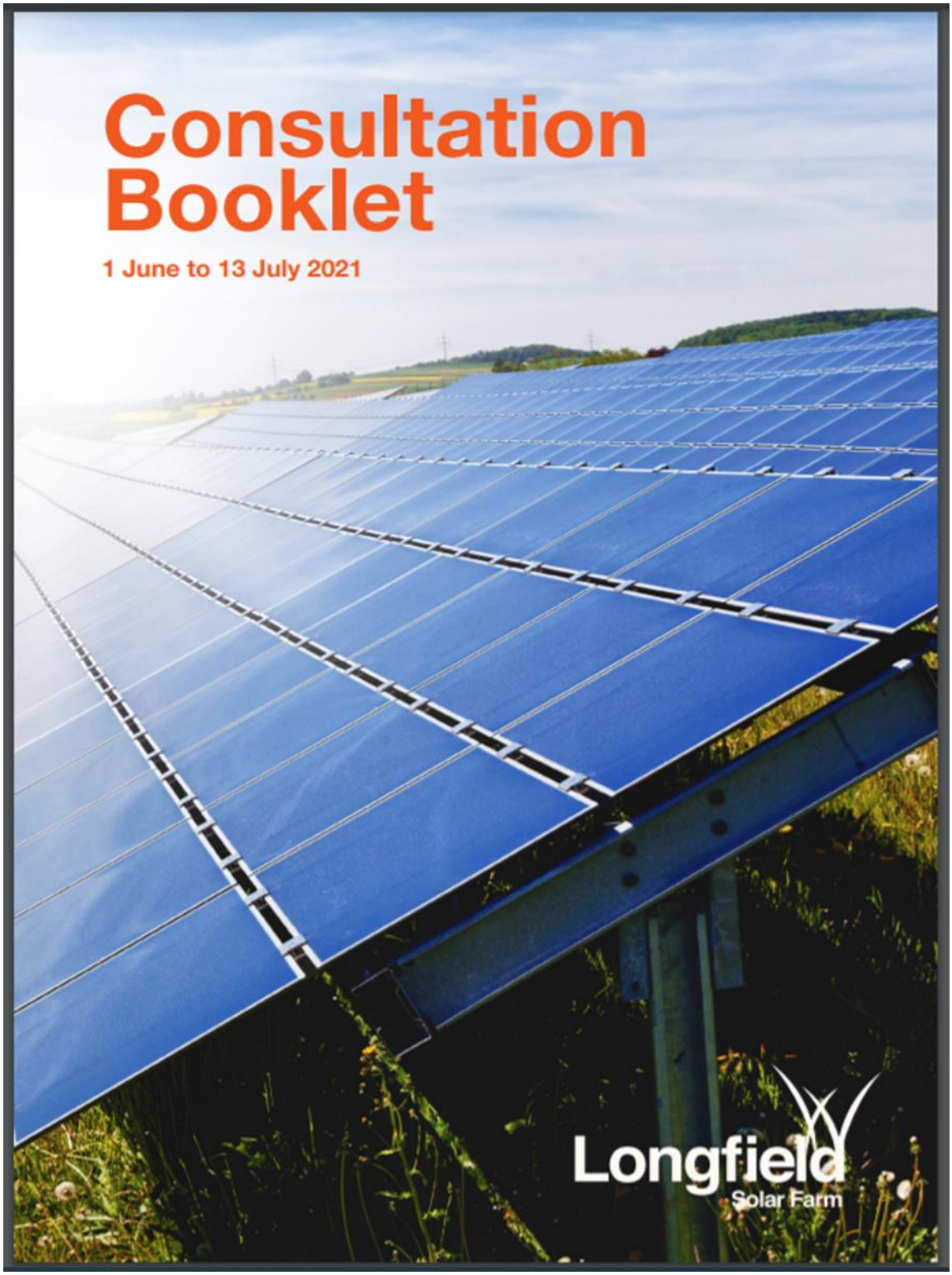
Age:	0-19	20-39	40-59	60-79	79+

Occupation:	Student	Part-time	Full-time	Retired	Unemployed

All consultation questionnaires should be returned by **23:59 on 13 July 2021** to: Longfield Solar Farm consultation, FREEPOST reference RTRB-LUUJ-AGBY, SEC Newgate UK, Sky Light City Tower, 50 Basinghall Street, London, EC2V 5DE or info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk. You can find more information on the proposals and also complete this consultation questionnaire online at www.longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk.

Any comments received will be analysed by Longfield Solar Energy Farm Ltd and any of its appointed agents. Copies may be made available in due course to the Secretary of State, the Planning Inspectorate and other relevant statutory authorities so that feedback can be considered as part of the process. We will request that any personal details are not placed on public record and will be held securely by Longfield Solar Energy Farm Ltd and its agents in accordance with the data protection law and will be used solely in connection with the consultation process and subsequent application for the Order and, except as noted above, will not be passed to third parties. Responses will also form the basis of a Consultation Report that will be one of the factors taken into consideration by the Secretary of State when deciding whether the Application can be accepted for examination. Therefore, in providing any comment, it should be borne in mind that the substance of it may also be communicated to others as part of the Consultation Report.

Appendix G-4: Copy of consultation booklet



Contents

Introduction

We are consulting between **1 June and 13 July 2021**. We would very much encourage you to read this booklet and then share your views by responding to this consultation.

Thank you for taking the time to read this consultation booklet. It contains the information you need to take part in the statutory public consultation on our proposals for Longfield Solar Farm.

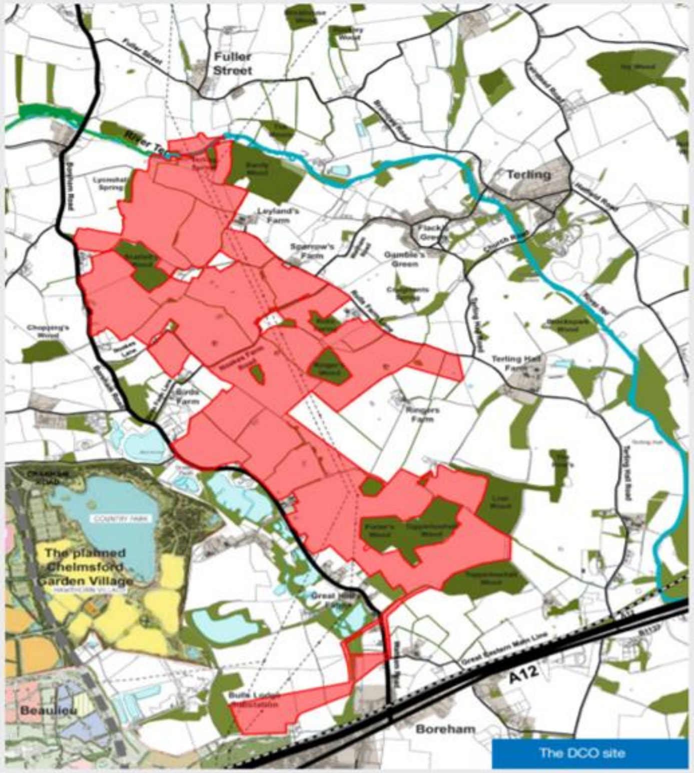
The UK urgently needs to put in place new ways of meeting its needs for energy if it is to achieve the target of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. These proposals for a solar energy farm co-located with battery storage on farmland north east of Chelmsford and north of the A12 between Boreham and Hatfield Peverel would make an important contribution to this goal. Since the previous consultation we held last year, we have refined our proposals, paying attention to all comments made as well as continuing environmental surveys.

We want our proposals to have a positive impact locally – for the community, for the environment and for the economy. This has been an important focus as we develop our plans for Longfield Solar Farm. We are now seeking your views on our updated proposals, as well as the initial results of our environmental impact assessment (EIA).

Longfield Solar Farm is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) requiring a Development Consent Order (DCO). That means we must consult in a certain way set by the Planning Act 2008 – for this reason it is known as a statutory consultation. Further details of the planning process for Longfield Solar Farm are included on page 36 of this booklet.

About Longfield Solar Farm

In this booklet, we set out a summary of our proposals, the way we have refined them since the last consultation, the preliminary results of our environmental impact assessment and how to take part in the consultation.




Our vision for the Longfield Solar Farm is twofold:
It will make a major contribution to the UK's need for renewable energy. We also want it to have a positive impact on the local community and the environment.
Energy generation currently makes up a significant amount of the UK's carbon emissions. The Government is committed to reducing this through a variety of measures including the introduction of new, cleaner methods of electricity generation, including solar power.
This will happen at the same time as older, carbon-intensive methods of energy generation are being phased out. In addition, the ways in which we all use electricity are changing. As we increasingly use electricity to power new modes of transport and industrial activity, it is anticipated that demand for electricity is likely to increase.
Delivering solar energy generation at scale has real benefits for the UK. We believe that Longfield Solar Farm can and should help achieve these national goals whilst delivering real advantages for the local community.
We will therefore carefully consider the local community and environment through our masterplanning process for this project and are committing significant resources over the long term to bring this vision to reality. As part of this, we believe that Longfield Solar Farm can deliver environmental improvements to the local area in terms of both biodiversity and increases to the populations of key local wildlife.
This will be as a result of careful planning based on scientific assessment, the long-term involvement of the local community and the managing of the land in a way that benefits the environment.
We will also create new paths for walking and cycling in the local area, as well as making a direct contribution locally through a Community Fund.
We have already responded to early public engagement by making changes to the design and layout of the scheme before this consultation. We will continue to have regard to comments from the local community received during this consultation as we prepare our DCO application.

Since the last consultation

We held an initial round of non-statutory consultation on our proposals for Longfield Solar Farm from 2 November to 14 December 2020.

We are grateful to everyone who took part in the consultation. We received more than 240 responses overall. Common themes raised in responses included:

- Support for the principle of new solar energy generation
- Concern about the overall scale of development and potential loss of agricultural land
- A preference for the grid connection option close to Bulls Lodge substation
- Concern about HGV accesses from Boreham Road and Waltham Road
- A desire for all cables associated with the scheme to be buried underground
- Requests for more information about landscape and visual impact, ecology and local job creation

Since the last consultation, we have refined our proposals, paying attention to all comments made through the non-statutory consultation, as well as continuing environmental surveys. These have included surveys into the quality of the agricultural land, views in and around the site and ecology.

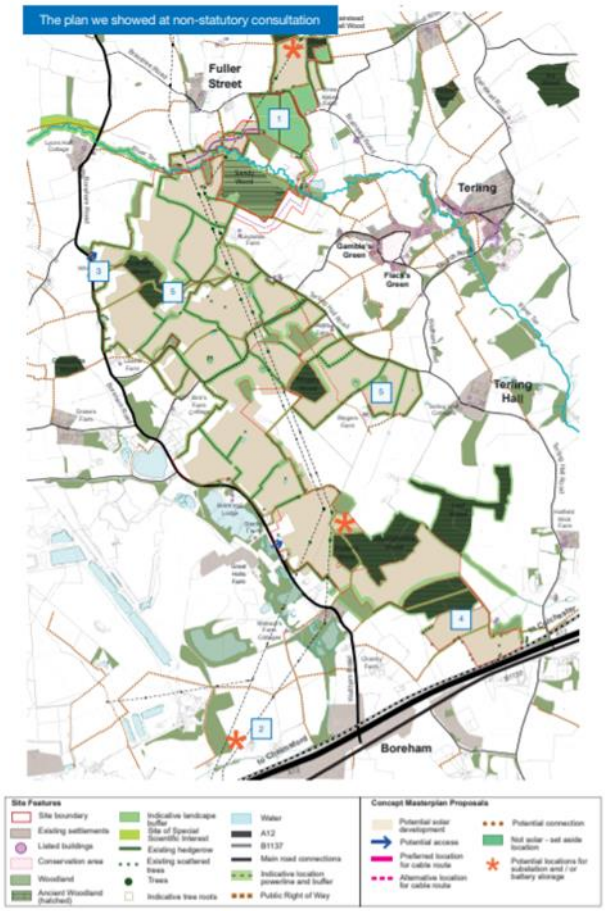
We also received confirmation from National Grid that it was no longer considering connecting Longfield Solar Farm to the national electricity transmission system at the northernmost option included in the last stage of consultation.

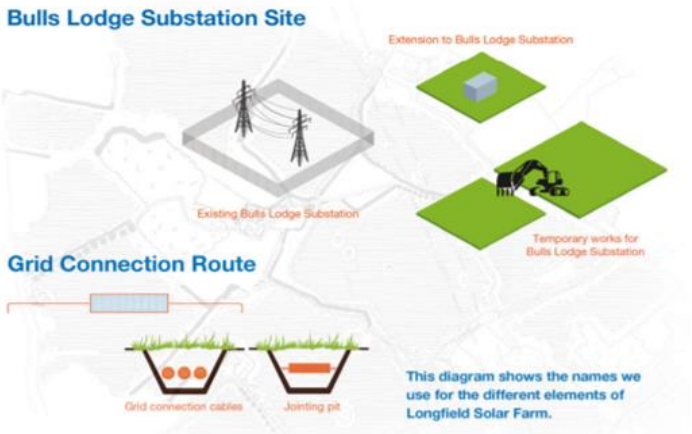
We have therefore:

1. Reduced the site area considerably, including removing development north of the River Ter
2. Confirmed the location of the grid connection at Bulls Lodge substation
3. Removed the HGV accesses to the site from Boreham Road and Waltham Road from the scheme
4. Refined our proposals to reduce the use of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land
5. Moved development away from specific views

Overall, we believe these changes significantly reduce the visual impact of the scheme. The plan opposite shows the emerging masterplan we published as part of our non-statutory consultation and where we have made changes since.

The plan we showed at non-statutory consultation





We have refined our design significantly since the last round of consultation and can now present more detailed information on each of the key components of Longfield Solar Farm.

The plans on the following pages are all indicative and intended to show our current thinking on the design and layout of the scheme for the purposes of statutory public consultation. Following this consultation, we will have due regard to all of the comments we receive and where appropriate update our proposals. Unlike a conventional power station, the environmental impacts of a solar farm are not a direct result of the amount of electricity it can generate. For this reason, we are not proposing that the Longfield Solar Farm is restricted by imposing a limit on how much electricity it can generate.

Instead we will be seeking a DCO that would restrict the aspects of the solar farm which have potential environmental impacts – such as the height of the solar panels, dimensions of infrastructure such as the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and where solar panels would be located within the site. These are known as the 'design parameters'.

This approach also ensures Longfield Solar Farm will be able to generate electricity as efficiently as possible, using technology which is constantly improving and may allow greater amounts of electricity to be generated in future within the existing design parameters.

You can find out more about the design parameters in Chapter 2 of the Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI) Report published as part of this consultation.

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Our proposals

We are proposing a new solar energy farm, co-located with battery storage, to help meet the country's need for low carbon energy. It is located on approximately 459ha of land and, based on today's technology, would be able to generate around 350MWp of electricity. Of this, 432ha will be used for the Solar Farm site. This includes all of the infrastructure required to generate and store solar energy. It will include a Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Array Works Area (292ha), a Landscape Works Area (129ha), an Ancillary Works Area (6ha) and the BESS Compound Area (5ha). This means that approximately 60% of the land involved is likely to be used for PV arrays - solar panels.

The diagram above shows the different elements included in each of these areas.

19ha will be used for the Bulls Lodge Substation Site Area and 8ha for the Grid Connection Route. These will include the infrastructure required to connect Longfield Solar Farm to the National Grid.

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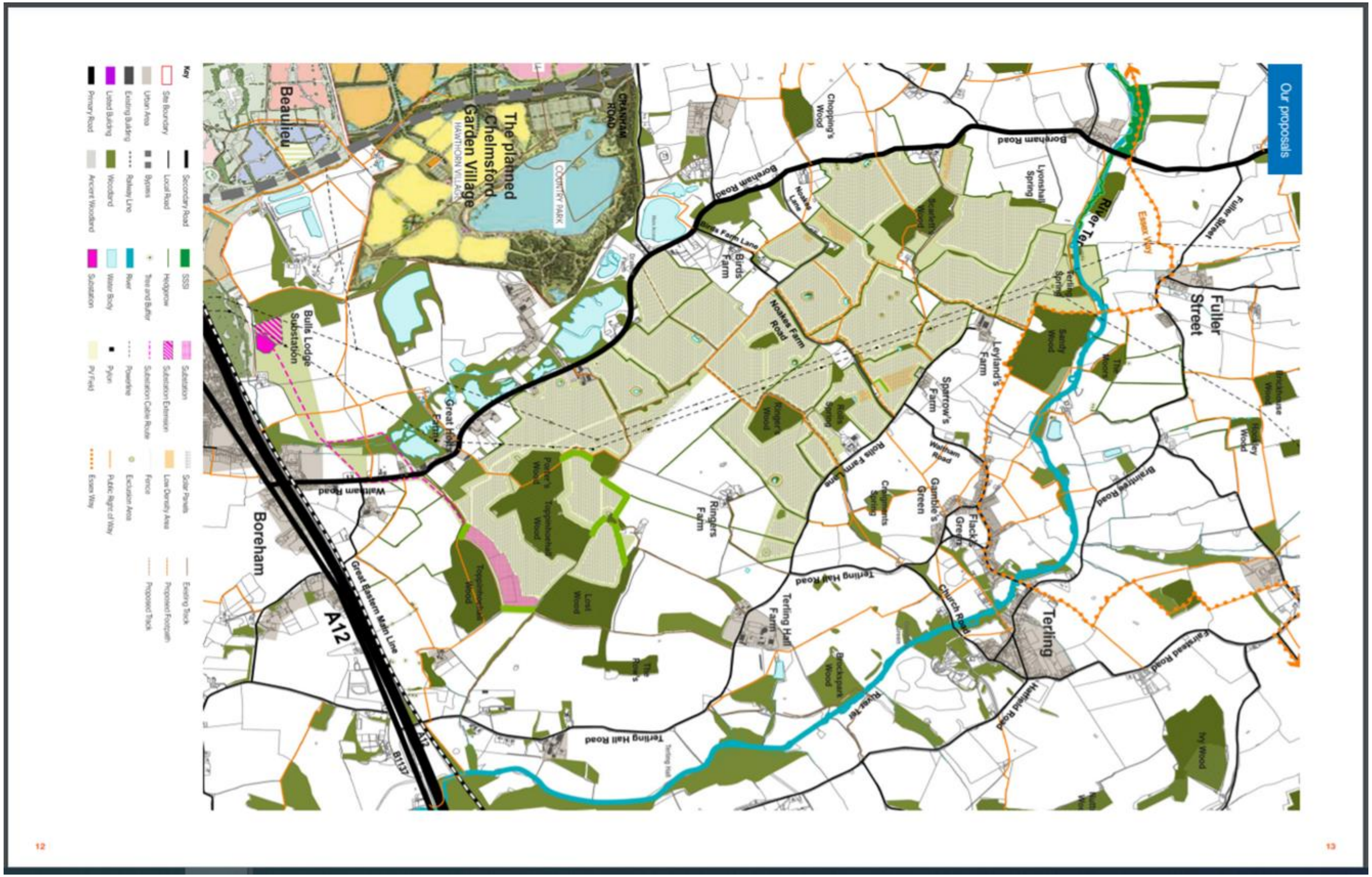
Our proposals
Key
Site Boundary
Urban Area
Existing Building
Listed Building
Primary Road
Secondary Road
Local Road
Bypass
Railway Line
Woodland
Ancient Woodland
SSSI
Hedgerow
Tree and Buffer
River
Water Body
Substation
Substation Extension
Substation Cable Route
Powerline
Pylon
PV Field
Solar Panels
Low Density Area
Fence
Exclusion Area
Public Right of Way
Essex Way
Existing Track
Proposed Footpath
Proposed Track
Beaulieu
The planned Chelmsford Garden Village
HAWTHORN VILLAGE
COUNTRY PARK
CRANHAM ROAD
Boreham Road
Birds Farm Lane
Birds Farm
Noakes Lane
Noakes Farm Road
Chopping's Wood
Lyonshall Spring
River Ter
Essex Way
Fuller Street
Terling Spring
Sandy Wood
Leyland's Farm
Sparrow's Farm
Bulls Lodge Substation
Great Holts Farm
Waltham Road
Boreham
A12
Great Eastern Main Line
Ringers Farm
Rolls Farm Lane
Gamble's Green
Flack's Green
Terling Hall Road
Terling Hall Farm
Church Road
Terling
Braintree Road
Fairstead Road
Hatfield Road
Ivy Wood
Lost Wood
Porter's Wood
B1137
12
13

PV arrays

Electricity will be generated using PV panels across Longfield Solar Farm. We have carefully considered the results of technical surveys into views in and around the site, ecology and the quality of agricultural land when making decisions about the design of the solar PV panels. In the interests of making the solar farm highly efficient, the PV panels will have a maximum height of 3 metres and face south. They will be fixed on support struts driven into the ground. We have looked to preserve existing field patterns and boundaries, as well as existing trees, in developing the layout of the panels.

The panels will be supported by a series of solar stations. These are used to take the electricity from the panels and send it onwards to the Longfield substation and will be located throughout Longfield Solar Farm. The solar stations will comprise:

> **Inverters:** these container-like structures convert the direct current (DC) electricity collected by the solar PV panels into alternating current (AC). This needs to happen to ensure that the electricity generated can be exported to the national electricity transmission system. The maximum height of these will be 3.5 metres.

> **Transformers:** these units control the voltage of the electricity generated across the site before it reaches the substation. The maximum height of these will be 3.5 metres.

> **Switchgear:** a combination of electrical disconnect switches, fuses or circuit breakers used to control, protect and isolate electrical equipment. The maximum height of these will be 3.5 metres.

The transformers, inverters and switchgears will either be standalone or housed together within containers.

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Grid connection

Longfield Solar Farm will need a substation to connect to the National Grid. At the last consultation, we presented three options for where this could be located: one in the north, near Three Ashes, one close to the middle of the site, near Toppinghoehall Wood, and one by the Bulls Lodge National Grid substation.

Following discussions with National Grid we can confirm that the connection point will be at Bulls Lodge. This will involve an extension to the existing substation. The indicative appearance of the substation before and after extension is shown on this page.

There will also be another, on-site, substation, which we are calling the Longfield substation. This is needed to take electricity from the PV panels and BESS up to the right voltage to be sent onwards to the main connection point at Bulls Lodge substation. The Longfield substation will be a maximum of 13 metres tall at its highest point. It will be located close to Toppinghoehall Wood.

Both substations will be connected to the wider site by underground cables. These will be buried to a maximum depth of 2 metres.

Bulls Lodge substation – before extension

Bulls Lodge substation – with extension

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Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)

We also presented three options for the location of the BESS at the last consultation. We are now proposing to locate the BESS close to the Longfield substation near Toppinghoehall Wood. This part of the site is well screened and closer to the A12, a railway line and the Longfield substation.

The BESS will comprise batteries used to store electricity and will be located as part of a compound with switchgear and a control room. We expect that the batteries will be a housed in containers with a maximum height of 4.5 metres. The BESS will also include an integral fire safety management system. We are consulting with the relevant local fire and public health authorities about how this should be designed and implemented to ensure that it is appropriate for the site.

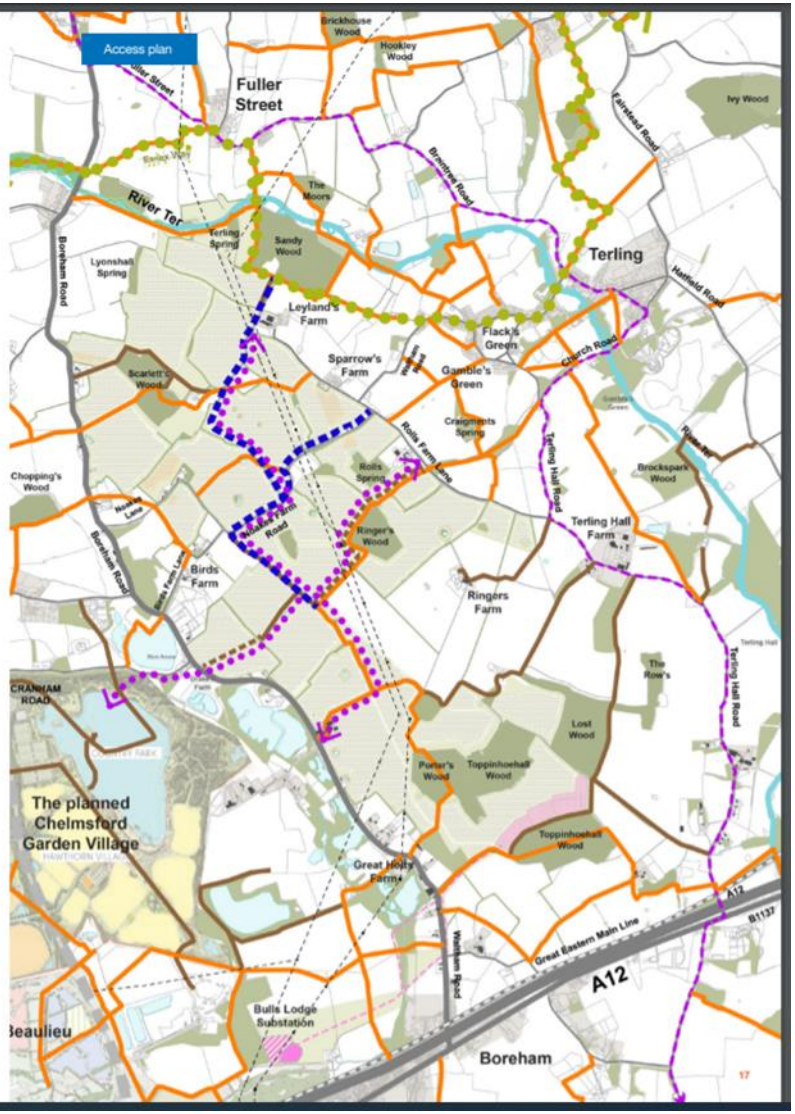
Public access

We see the proposals for Longfield Solar Farm as an opportunity to substantially improve access for people walking, cycling and riding locally. Our draft masterplan includes a network of permissive paths, which will connect into the wider network of public rights of way during the lifetime of the scheme.

This will include the potential to link to new paths through the planned Chelmsford Garden Village and country park – helping to improve access to the wider countryside.

Land use

Since the non-statutory consultation, we have refined our proposals to reduce the use of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land. Overall, we have reduced the amount of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land that we are proposing to use by up to 60%.




Environmental impact assessment
We are committed to making the local environment appreciably better than before Longfield Solar Farm was built and operated. That means going beyond simply mitigating any impacts from development to proactively investing in the pursuit of positive change.
We believe this scheme represents an excellent opportunity to improve the local ecological conditions because the land will be managed with the twin goals of generating clean, renewable energy and creating better habitats for wildlife.
Our investment in this process is long term because the site will be operated and managed by the proposers in close association with the supportive landowner, who has a long-term interest in the land and the local community.
The process
Longfield Solar Farm is EIA development for the purposes of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. We are required to carry out an EIA of our proposals as part of the planning process. The preliminary outputs from this assessment have informed the site design and content of this consultation.
As part of the EIA design process, we formally 'scoped' our approach with the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) on behalf of the Secretary of State. On 3 December 2020, we received its formal Scoping Opinion. This confirmed the scope of work that should be included in our EIA and that should be reported in the comprehensive Environmental Statement that will accompany our DCO application when submitted to the Secretary of State.
In addition to this, we have considered the feedback we received through the non-statutory consultation and have continued to engage with local authorities and other regulatory bodies, such as Historic England and the Environment Agency, on our approach to the EIA.
We are now sharing the preliminary results of our assessment as part of this consultation. This booklet summarises our findings in areas such as ecology, landscape and visual impacts that were raised during the last consultation and where significant effects are expected. The results are presented in a document called the PEI Report. You can view the PEI Report on our website (longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk/downloads). There is also a non-technical summary of the PEI Report available to view.
Following this statutory consultation, we will have regard to all feedback received and will finalise the Environmental Statement. This will be submitted in support of our DCO application and will set out the final outcomes of our assessment, as well as details of any proposed mitigation.
The topics in our EIA include:
> Climate change
> Cultural heritage
> Ecology
> Flood risk, drainage and surface water
> Landscape and visual impact assessment
> Noise and vibration
> Socio-economic and land use
> Transport and access
> Air quality
> Land quality
> Glint and glare
> Ground conditions
> Human health
> Major accidents and disasters
> Telecommunications
> Television reception

Summary of effects

In some cases, we have identified potentially significant impacts as part of our EIA. Where this is the case, we are proposing mitigation measures.

In our DCO application, we will set out more detail on the need for the scheme and the benefits it provides in meeting the UK's urgent need for low carbon energy.

Our application will also set out how we believe we have achieved an appropriate balance between meeting that need and managing potential adverse effects in terms of landscape, cultural heritage and loss of agricultural land.

	Effects	Mitigation
Climate change	We have identified a significant beneficial impact on climate change through the provision of renewable energy.	No mitigation is required.
Cultural heritage	We have identified potential impacts on the settings of a number of heritage assets near the site during the construction period. These include Ringers Farmhouse, Little Russells, Sparrows Farmhouse, the Barn of Noake's Farm, Little Holts and the Church of St Mary the Virgin.	We are consulting with Historic England and relevant local authority officers and will propose an appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy as part of our Environmental Statement. We are also proposing considerable new areas of tree planting and hedgerows to reduce long-distance views into the site. This will reduce impacts on the setting of heritage features.
Landscape and visual impact	We have identified potential impacts on views into the site from a number of points during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases.	We are providing significant mitigation of potential visual impacts as part of the scheme - this is referred to as 'embedded' mitigation. It includes the introduction of 3.55ha of new tree belts and woodland, 4000 specimen trees in hedgerows, filling in the gaps of 21km of existing hedgerows and 2km of new hedgerows.
Socioeconomics and land use	We have identified a potentially beneficial impact on the local economy through employment creation and spending in the construction phase. Our EIA also considers the potential loss of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land. Currently, this is expected to have a significant adverse impact.	We have sought to reduce the use of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land through our proposals.

Other topics

Our EIA has identified no significant negative impacts once mitigation has been applied in the following areas:

- Air quality
- Ecology
- Glint and glare
- Ground conditions
- Human health and wellbeing
- Major accidents and disasters
- Noise and vibration
- Telecommunications
- Television reception and utilities
- Transport and access
- Waste
- Water environment

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Landscape and views

Sensitivity to the local landscape is an essential part of our masterplan for Longfield Solar Farm. The design we are presenting as part of this consultation is informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) carried out as part of our EIA.

Understanding the landscape

Our design process began by surveying the character of the existing landscape. This informed a baseline that we could use to understand what impacts Longfield Solar Farm might have on landscape and views.

We then looked at what could be visible from a number of important points in the landscape. We identified the points that we needed to assess views from in cooperation with local authorities and other stakeholders.

They include homes and businesses near the site, roads and public rights of way and the South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland National Character Area.

Our design

We have refined the proposed layout for Longfield Solar Farm significantly since the last round of consultation, responding to the work we have done to understand the local landscape.

For example, we have located larger elements of Longfield Solar Farm, such as the battery storage and Longfield substation, towards the south. This part of the site is closer to the A12 and a railway line and is already well screened by woodland.

We have also removed land parcels from the most northern and southern parts of the site, as well as excluding small fields. This will mean we avoid negative impacts on the landscape in sensitive areas like the River Ter Valley.

Where the site is visible from homes, roads or public rights of way, we have sought to set development back from lines of sight or screen it. This includes setting back development from Boreham Road to improve existing hedgerows.

We have also reduced the number and height of panels closest to homes to allow for more screening. This will involve extensive tree planting. We have carefully considered what type of screening is most appropriate in each part of the site – in open parts of the site, we have avoided tall screening to allow views to remain open.

The approach we have taken to the landscape will help us improve the environment and ways of getting around the area. Corridors for wildlife and new permissive paths are embedded into the design. This includes a new north-south green route and east-west green links via new permissive paths.

These link a series of focal points at areas of particular natural interest, such as Sandy Wood, the River Ter Valley, Scarletts Farm Wood and Toppinghoehall Wood. The images on the following pages provide more detail on how we will approach these areas.

Effects

Overall, we believe that the careful siting of Longfield Solar Farm within the landscape, as well as conservation of landscape, ecological and archaeological features across the site and creation of new planting and vegetation for screening, avoids and mitigates potential negative impacts on landscape and views to a significant degree.

However, we do expect there to be some temporary impacts while we are building Longfield Solar Farm. We will seek to mitigate this by phasing the delivery of the battery storage units. We will deliver the central battery storage units first because their location is best screened. We will deliver the battery storage units at the edge of rows in a second phase, once new planting is better established.

Our approach to landscape

The sketches on these pages provide an indication of our approach to landscaping in different parts of the site.

Toppinghoehall Wood

Toppinghoehall Wood will screen the BESS and Longfield substation. We will reinforce this with a new native woodland buffer of at least 25 metres.

Noakes Lane and Ringers Wood

We will protect Ringers Wood with a 20 metre wide woodland buffer zone. We will also restore ponds and improve habitats for birds here.

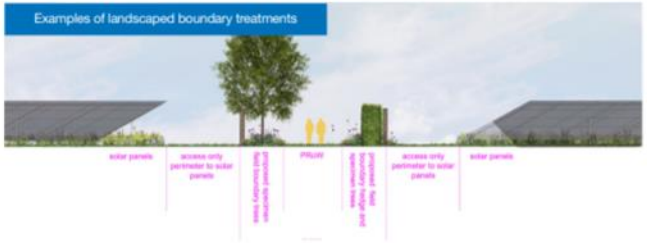
Scarletts Farm

We will set aside land here to protect the setting of the Grade II listed Scarletts Farm. We will also put in place a new pedestrian route running north of Noakes Lane, connecting to the existing public right of way through Scarletts Wood.

Sandy Wood

We will create a 20 metre wide woodland buffer here to allow for natural woodland regeneration. We will also connect a new pedestrian link to the existing public right of way next to Sandy Wood, meaning there will be uninterrupted north-south access through the site.

Examples of landscaped boundary treatments



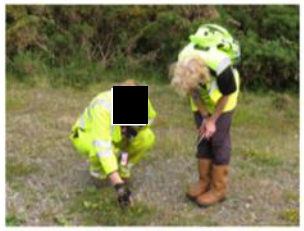
Ecology and biodiversity

We have assessed potential impacts from Longfield Solar Farm on ecology and biodiversity as part of our EIA. But we want to do more than simply mitigate impacts – we want to improve the outlook for wildlife across the site.

Understanding the context

Our EIA has considered impacts on species and habitats that are important at a local, national and international level.

There are six statutory sites for nature conservation in the area we assessed. These are designated for biodiversity reasons. The closest, the River Ter SSSI, is located immediately adjacent to the site. There are also 31 non-statutory sites designated for nature conservation within 2km of Longfield Solar Farm. These sites have been designated as local wildlife sites (LoWS) for their biodiversity value at a local level and are known to support a wide variety of protected and ecologically important species and habitats. We also assessed for species on the site including fish, breeding birds, wintering birds, bats, reptiles, badger, otter, other mammals and some rare species of plants.



Effects

We will put in place measures that will lead to a net gain in biodiversity across the site. We will prepare a Biodiversity Net Gain report as part of the Environmental Statement. The DCO application will also include an Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP). This will set out how we will protect and manage landscape and ecology and inform more detailed plans in the future.

There are some potential temporary impacts during construction that we will need to mitigate, such as those from site clearance. A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be included in the DCO application to explain how these will be managed. This is included in draft as part of the PEI Report.

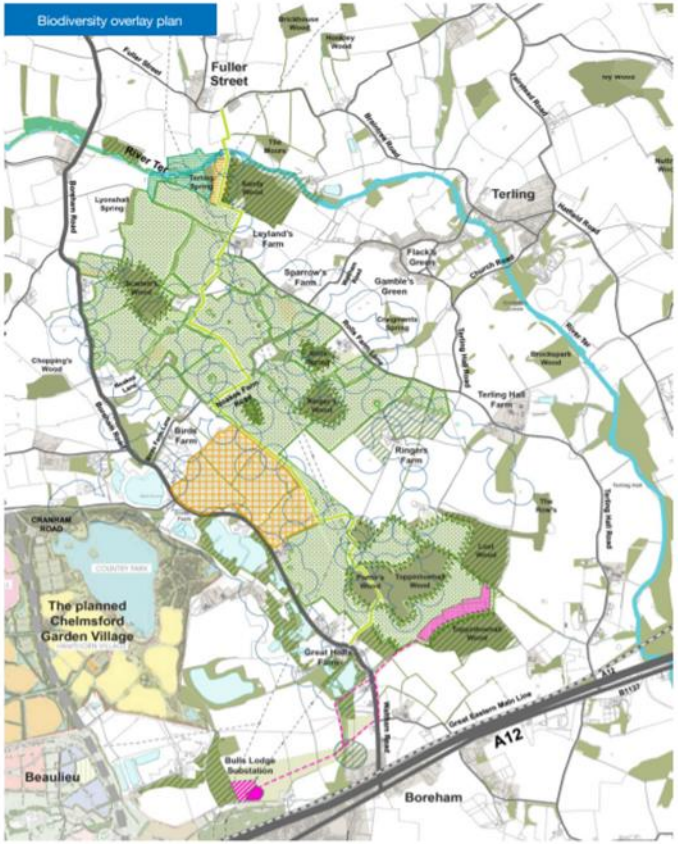
We want to do more than simply mitigate our impacts. We are therefore exploring opportunities to include enhancements with our proposals.

Enhancements

Our proposals for Longfield Solar Farm are set out in their current form in this booklet and more fully in the PEI Report - in particular Chapter 2 "The Scheme". The environmental assessment we have undertaken to date is based on this. As part of the preliminary environmental work we have done, we have identified the measures necessary to mitigate any significant adverse impacts where possible.

Through our assessment of current environmental characteristics of the site, we have also identified opportunities to improve biodiversity voluntarily, by way of a series of enhancements. These enhancement measures are not required to mitigate any significant adverse impacts of the scheme – the steps we need to take to do that have already been identified and form part of the scheme. Some of the land identified for these enhancements is outside of the DCO Site and their impacts have not therefore been assessed as part of the PEI Report.

However, we are considering providing enhancements which would allow us to go above and beyond simply mitigating potential impacts. We have not yet finalised our plans for these measures. We would therefore welcome your views.



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Species rich grassland

In these areas, we could create a biodiverse meadow rich in invertebrates by seeding the grassland beneath PV panels and around heritage assets. These areas would be grazed by sheep to keep competitive grasses under control and allow wildflowers to thrive. The insects attracted to the wildflowers will support birds such as turtle dove and yellowhammer nesting in the restored hedgerows. Away from the PV panels, we will manage field margins to increase biodiversity. Restoring farmland to grassland would also help restore soil health and absorb carbon.

The Biodiversity Trial Area

This is a proposal for an exciting learning zone made up of four fields. This visionary space could be used to trial simple conservation intervention aimed at improving the understanding of biodiversity and natural capital benefits alongside solar farms. Outcomes from the trials would help to inform land management across new solar farms.

Woodland restoration zone

There is an opportunity to improve biodiversity in the woodlands within and near the site. These are a mix of younger plantation and ancient woodland. Working with the landowner, we could restore the woodland with traditional woodland management practices, such as coppicing. Ending the management of the woodland edges would help create a more varied set of habitats, potentially attracting birds like nightingales, willow warblers and garden warblers.

We could also establish regenerated woodland belts and restore hedgerows to connect the ancient woodland currently isolated within the arable land. This would allow bats, birds and butterflies to move effectively through the wooded landscape.

Enhanced waterscape

The network of drainage ponds and ditches that exist across the site are currently in a poor state and the River Ter is currently failing on phosphate levels. The water quality is poor owing to overshading and agricultural run-off.

We could enhance these by removing vegetation, desilting and putting in place more appropriate planting. This would help stop agricultural run-off into the water. We would also create a network of ponds throughout the site to create corridors for wildlife.

Rewilding scrub

Other than some low intensity grazing for conservation purposes, we could avoid intervening in this area to allow it to become wild again. This will create a range of grassland and scrub habitats, supporting reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates. The scrub would provide habitat that could be used by nightingales and other woodland edge species.

Floodplain grassland and conservation grazing

We could relax management along the floodplain, creating wet grassland. In the higher areas above the flood zone, this would provide invertebrate-rich habitat for nesting skylark. This area would be rich in plants like angelica that thrive in moist soils within floodplain habitats. This is another area where enhancements would also absorb carbon.

Pollination and wildflower greenway

This could be an attractive nature path extending north to south through Longfield Solar Farm. We could plant wildflower seed mixtures designed specifically for wild pollinating insects along the greenway. This would be an attractive feature for people walking along the path while also supporting pollinators.

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Construction

If the scheme were to receive consent, we anticipate that the total construction period would take approximately three years to complete. This includes around a year getting the site ready for development and two years building the scheme itself.

We will work to a series of well-established principles in building Longfield Solar Farm. Where possible, we will look to use existing infrastructure to access the site, minimise use of new materials on-site, phase construction and use a single site entrance to reduce impacts on the wider road network.

Before we begin construction, we will establish the site entrance, internal roads for getting around the site, construction compounds and security fencing. This will help us reduce the impact of our work on the wider area.

We would likely use the following techniques while building the scheme:

- **PV arrays:** the mounting structures for the PV panels will be pushed into the ground. Some localised trenching would be required to install the necessary cabling and solar stations, which will be on small foundations
- **BESS:** the construction of the BESS would require us to dig foundations and install the required cabling and equipment to allow the batteries to export and import electricity to and from the National Grid
- **Cabling:** we will bury the cables underground. We will install the cables by digging a trench, laying the cables in sections and covering them again
- **Substations:** As with the BESS, building the substations will involve digging foundations and installing the required cabling and equipment

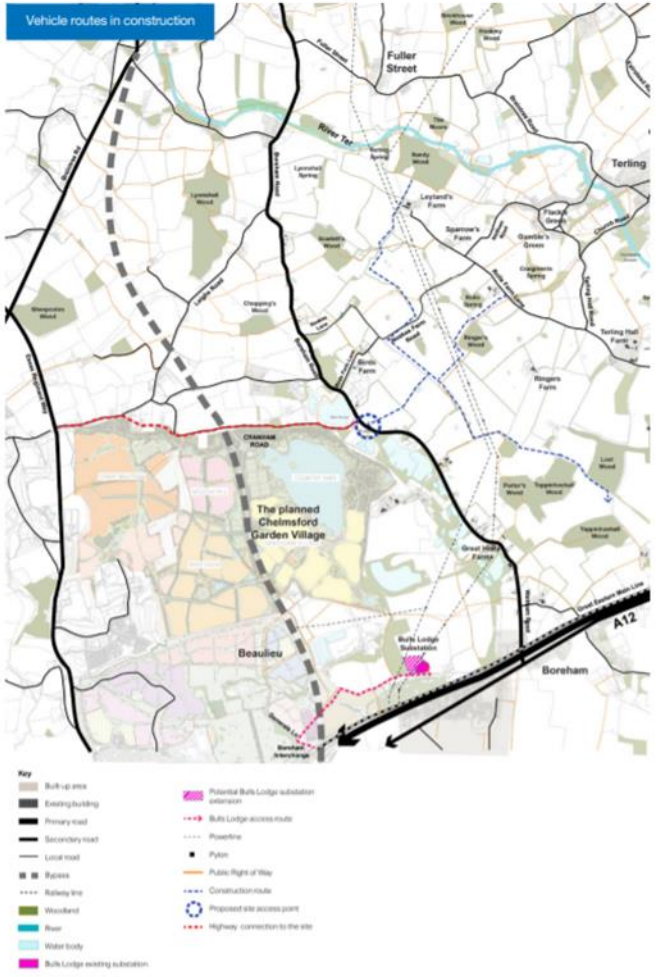
Construction management

We anticipate that working hours onsite will run from 7am to 7pm. Working days will be Monday to Saturday. The number of staff on site at any one point will vary during construction – at the busiest periods 25 HGVs and 600 staff per day would be expected on site.

There will be vehicles travelling to and from the site while we are building the scheme. These will access the site using a single entrance at the location shown on the plan. The numbers of vehicles accessing the site will vary from day to day.

We will build Longfield Solar Farm in phases. This means that we will not be working across the whole site for the entire construction period - we will work in one area and then move on to the next.

In particular, we may deliver different parts of the BESS at different phases. The first part, on either side of the Longfield substation, would be delivered during the first and second years of construction. The second part, to the north east of the substation, would be delivered later, after screening planting has matured.



Key measures

We recognise the potential impact of construction on our neighbours and will put in place a plan designed to ensure potential impacts are managed and properly communicated. To aid this, we will include a draft Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) with our DCO application.

These will set out the principles, controls, and measures we will use to manage and mitigate potential environmental impacts during construction.

Measures we will put in place during construction include:

- Restricting HGV movements to the A130, Wheelers Hill and Cranham Road
- Restricting HGV movements during certain times of the day, such as between 8am-9am and 5pm-6pm
- Implementing a delivery management system for HGV deliveries from the start of the construction period
- Recording the journeys of all HGVs travelling to and from the site to ensure they use agreed routes
- Implementing temporary traffic management on Waltham Road during the period when the grid connection cables are installed
- Encouraging local construction staff to share cars, to reduce single occupancy car trips
- Implementing a shuttlebus service to transfer non-local staff to and from local worker accommodation
- Providing on-site car and cycle parking
- Off-site highway improvements at Cranham Road are likely to be needed, which could involve small scale road widening to accommodate construction traffic

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Operations

EDF Renewables is committed to operating Longfield Solar Farm in the long term.

While the scheme is operational, activity across the site would be minimal and largely restricted to monitoring, maintenance and the management of the visual and ecological mitigation features.

Decommissioning

Solar farms typically have a design lifespan of 40 years. Longfield Solar Farm has been designed so that once it has reached the end of its lifespan it can be dismantled. A decommissioning plan will be prepared.

Jobs and skills

Longfield Solar Farm will create jobs and skills, as well as creating wider economic benefits. We are committed to ensuring that these advantages are felt in the local community. To this end, we are already consulting with local businesses, business organisations and skills providers such as schools and colleges to assess how the local community might benefit from employment opportunities at key stages of the project's development. Overall, we expect to create 375 new jobs in the construction phase and 8 permanent roles once Longfield Solar Farm is operational. We also expect local expenditure as a result of the scheme to help create the equivalent of 188 new jobs. Whilst the majority of the manufacturing process of the panels, batteries and related components is currently located overseas, where possible, we will source materials from the UK and encourage domestic suppliers.

Health and safety

We recognise that there is interest in how health and safety will be managed at Longfield Solar Farm. Nothing is more important to us than the health and safety of our neighbours and our staff.

We are already engaging with the Health and Safety Executive and the Essex Fire and Rescue Service on the design of Longfield Solar Farm. This is to ensure that the management of health and safety is built into Longfield Solar Farm from the start.

We will put in place appropriate training and codes of conduct for all staff working at the site. This will include an induction covering health and safety and how to behave on site, which all staff must complete before beginning work.

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Community engagement

The companies behind Longfield Solar Farm have a proud history of investing in the communities in which they work and establishing community benefits for the duration of a project's operating life. One of the project partners, EDF Renewables, expects to continue to own and operate Longfield Solar Farm. This means it can make a long-term commitment to the local community. The community can expect that its views will be taken seriously at every stage of the lifetime of the project. We will establish a community liaison group (CLG) that will enable local community representatives to have a formal channel for monitoring and influencing developments at the site.

In recognition of the important role Longfield Solar Farm will play locally, we have also established a sponsorship fund open to applications from community projects or groups in the parishes of Terling and Fairstead, Hatfield Peverel, Boreham, Great and Little Leighs and Little Waltham.

It is managed on our behalf by the Essex Community Foundation and is currently in place until the DCO application for Longfield Solar Farm is decided.

For more information and to apply for funding, please see the Essex Community Foundation's website: essexcommunityfoundation.org.uk/

If a DCO is granted, we plan to put in place a fund which will be related in size to the energy output of the PV panels. Currently, we expect there to be around £64,000 per year available as part of the fund. This could equate to £2,560,000 over the expected lifetime of the scheme.

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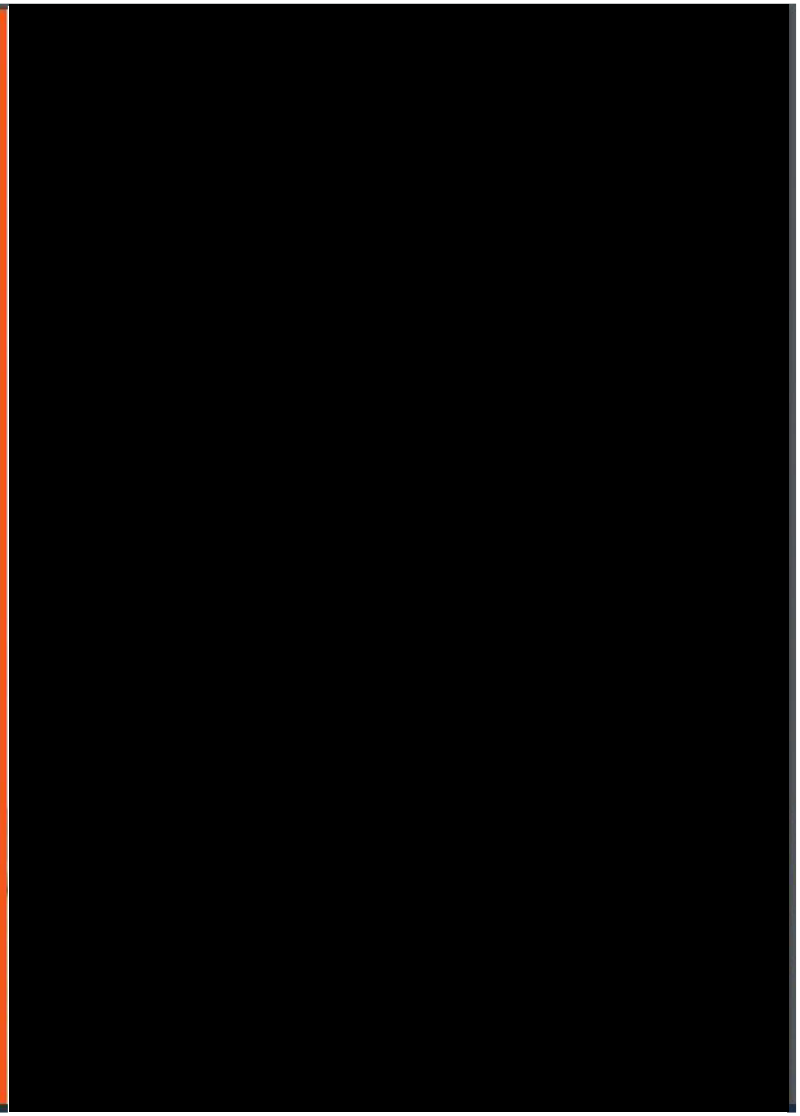

The planning process

Longfield Solar Farm is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) because its generating capacity would be more than 50MW.

NSIPs are major developments which require development consent to be granted by the relevant Secretary of State through a Development Consent Order (DCO). This is a process established by the Planning Act 2008. The diagram on this page explains each stage of the process and where you can get involved.

Unlike local planning permissions, which are considered by local authorities, DCO applications are made to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). PINS administers the application process on behalf of the Secretary of State. In this case, the relevant Government Department is the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

The Planning Act 2008 requires consultation with the local community before we submit our DCO application. We are carrying out this consultation in line with this requirement – it is therefore referred to as 'statutory consultation'. Following the consultation, we will have due regard to all comments received and prepare our DCO application for submission to PINS.

You can find out more about the DCO process at PINS' website: https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/
PINS has also published guidance on the process for members of the public. This can be viewed online at: https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Advice-note-8.0.pdf

Indicative Project Timeline

We are here

Q4 2020 – 1. Non-statutory consultation
We held a non-statutory consultation seeking initial feedback on our design and environmental impact assessment.

2021 – 2. Statutory consultation
We have considered feedback from the non-statutory consultation and the outcomes of environmental surveys. We are now consulting again in line with the requirements of the Planning Act 2008.

Q4 2021 – 3. Submission of DCO application
We will have due regard to all consultation responses and will prepare our DCO application for submission.

2022 – 4. Examination
This is a set process with statutory timescales. The DCO application will be scrutinised by an independent Examiner. There will be an opportunity to make representations as part of the Examination.

2022-2023 – 5. Decision
The independent Examiner will make a recommendation on whether our application for a DCO should be granted. The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy will make the final decision.

2024-2026 – 6. Construction
We will build Longfield Solar Farm in phases.

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Public consultation

This second round of consultation on the project is statutory and is taking place between 1 June and 13 July 2021. We want as many people to take part in the consultation as possible.

While there has been some relaxation of social distancing requirements by the Government, we still face restrictions on meeting residents in-person. We are therefore making available a range of ways to find out more and respond to the consultation.

We have developed the consultation programme considering best practice guidance and advice from Essex County Council, Chelmsford City Council and Braintree District Council.

We will carefully consider all of the comments we receive as part of the consultation and set out how we have had regard to them in a Consultation Report. This will form part of our DCO application.

You can find out more by:

1. Viewing a virtual exhibition and consultation documents on our website: **http://www.longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk/downloads**

Subject to Government guidance on COVID 19, we also hope to make the consultation documents available to view at following locations in the local area:

Hatfield Peverel Library, The St, Hatfield Peverel, Chelmsford CM3 2DP
Witham Library, 18 Newland St, Witham CM8 2AQ
Chelmsford Library, Chelmsford County Hall, Market Rd, Chelmsford CM1 1QH

Please check our website or contact us for the latest information before making plans to visit one of these locations.

2. Registering to take part in an online webinar. These are due to take place at 2pm on Saturday 5 June 2021 and 7pm on Thursday 10 June 2021 and will offer the opportunity to ask questions about the proposals. You can register for the webinar on our website or using the contact details below.
3. Booking an appointment to talk with members of our technical and design teams about the proposals by telephone using the contact details below.
4. Contacting us on **0808 168 7925** or **info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk**

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Consultation Questions

We are seeking your views on the following questions as part of the consultation:

1. Do you have any comments on our proposals for the solar energy generation element of the scheme?
2. Do you have any comments on our proposals for the battery storage element of the scheme?
3. Do you have any comments on our proposals for connecting to the national electricity system, including laying cables underground and extending Bulls Lodge National Grid Substation?
4. Do you have any comments on the potential environmental impacts and our proposals for enhancements and mitigation during:
   a) The construction of Longfield Solar Farm?
   b) The operation of Longfield Solar Farm?
   c) The decommissioning of Longfield Solar Farm?
5. Do you have any comments on the contribution that the scheme will make to the local community?
6. Do you have any comments on the potential biodiversity enhancements set out on page 28 of the Consultation Booklet?
7. Do you have any further comments?

Respond

We welcome feedback on our proposals for Longfield Solar Farm. Anyone can share their views by:

> Completing a consultation questionnaire online at **longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk/public-consultation**

> Returning a questionnaire to Longfield Solar Farm consultation, FREEPOST reference RTRB-LUUJ-AGBY, c/o SECNewgate UK, Sky Light City Tower, 50 Basinghall Street, London, EC2V 5DE or info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk

> Submitting their comments by email to info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk or in writing to the above Freepost address.

Please note, responses must be received by the consultation deadline of 11.59pm on 13 July 2021.

Contact us

Phone: 0808 168 7925
Email: info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk
longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk

Appendix G-5: Copies of consultation advert and poster

We are consulting on our proposals for Longfield Solar Farm, a solar energy farm co-located with battery storage, on farmland north east of Chelmsford and north of the A12 between Boreham and Hatfield Peverel

The proposal could generate enough renewable electricity to meet the needs of 96,000 households. The proposal is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) as it would generate more than 50MW of electricity

Find out more

- View a virtual public exhibition at our website: **longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk**
- Take part in an online Q&A webinar at **1400 on Saturday 5 June 2021** and **1900 on Thursday 10 June 2021**. You can register for a webinar on our website.
- Book an appointment to speak to a member of our technical team by telephone using the contact details below.

Subject to Government guidance on COVID 19, we also hope to make consultation documents available to view at the following locations:

Location

Hatfield Peverel Library, The St, Hatfield Peverel, Chelmsford CM3 2DP

Witham Library, 18 Newland St, Witham CM8 2AQ

Chelmsford Library, Chelmsford County Hall, Market Road, Chelmsford CM1 1QH

Please check our website or contact us directly for the latest information before making plans to visit one of these locations.

Contact us

Website: **longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk**

Phone: **0800 019 4576** (9:00am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday)

Email: **info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk**

Post: **Longfield Solar Farm consultation,** FREEPOST reference RTRB-LUUJ-AGBY, Sky Light City Tower, 50 Basinghall Street, London, EC2V 5DE

East Anglian Daily Times | Tuesday June 1, 2021 5

News

4,000 Suffolk motorists fined for doing 35mph in a 30mph zone

Thousands of motorists were caught trying to push the speed limit by mobile enforcement units in 30mph zones last year, figures have revealed.

TOM POTTER

A total of 4,030 offences were recorded for vehicles travelling at 35mph in a 30mph zone across Suffolk during 2020.

Another 2,928 offences were recorded for vehicles travelling at 36mph.

However, not a single offence was recorded for vehicles travelling at speeds of between 31mph and 34mph, as Suffolk Constabulary applied National Police Chiefs' Council guidelines recommending a margin of leeway equal to 10% of the speed limit, plus 2mph.

The number of motorists caught travelling at 35mph or 36mph on more built-up roads by enforcement vans, or police officers equipped speed cameras, fell by almost a third during a year in which traffic levels also dropped significantly.

The fall interrupted a trend of annual increases of 41% and 31%, according to figures obtained under the Freedom of Information Act.

Last October, Department for Transport (DfT) data showed that 54% of cars exceeded the limit in 30mph zones in 2019, with the average speed being 31mph, and a fifth of all cars exceeding the limit by more than 5mph.

The data also showed that 88% of speeding offences resulted in conviction at courts in England and Wales – although most are dealt with out-of-court by way of fine or penalty points.

Suffolk Constabulary stressed that the NPCC's "10% +2mph" recommendation serves as a guideline, rather than a rule.

Although the force applies the guidance on all fixed and mobile cameras, individual officers can use greater discretion based on surrounding circumstances.

A police spokeswoman said: "NPCC guidelines state that 35mph and above would be a ticket and they're the guidelines we like to follow.

"We have moved our thresholds before and we can still issue tickets below the threshold."

Speed is one of the "fatal four" most common causes of serious and deadly collisions on roads, along with using a mobile phone, not wearing a seatbelt and drink or drug-driving.

The risk of killing a pedestrian in a collision is between 3.5 and 5.5 times higher at 40mph than at 30mph, according to DfT studies.

Recent Department for Transport data showed that 54% of cars exceeded the limit in 30mph zones Picture: SARAH LUCY BROWN

news

House fire

Suffolk Fire and Rescue and Suffolk police were at the scene of a house fire in Burrell Road in Ipswich PICTURE: ARCHANT

A large amount of smoke was seen coming from an Ipswich house after a fire broke out.

Suffolk Fire and Rescue teams were called to the two-storey property in Burrell Road, near the Princes Street bridge, early in the morning on Monday, May 31.

Five crews from Colchester, Ipswich and Princes Street fire stations extinguished the blaze and checked the house, leaving the scene at 6am.

Suffolk police had earlier closed the road, after they were called at 5.14am, but it has since reopened.

All occupants of the house have been accounted for.

UK Power Networks also attended the scene to isolate the electricity supply, so the fire service and police could work safely.

Longfield Solar Farm

Public consultation

Tuesday 1 June 2021 – Tuesday 13 July 2021

We are consulting on our proposals for Longfield Solar Farm, a solar energy farm co-located with battery storage, on farmland north east of Chelmsford and north of the A12 between Boreham and Hatfield Peverel

This proposal could generate enough renewable electricity to meet the needs of 95,000 households. The proposal is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) as it would generate more than 50MW of electricity

Find out more

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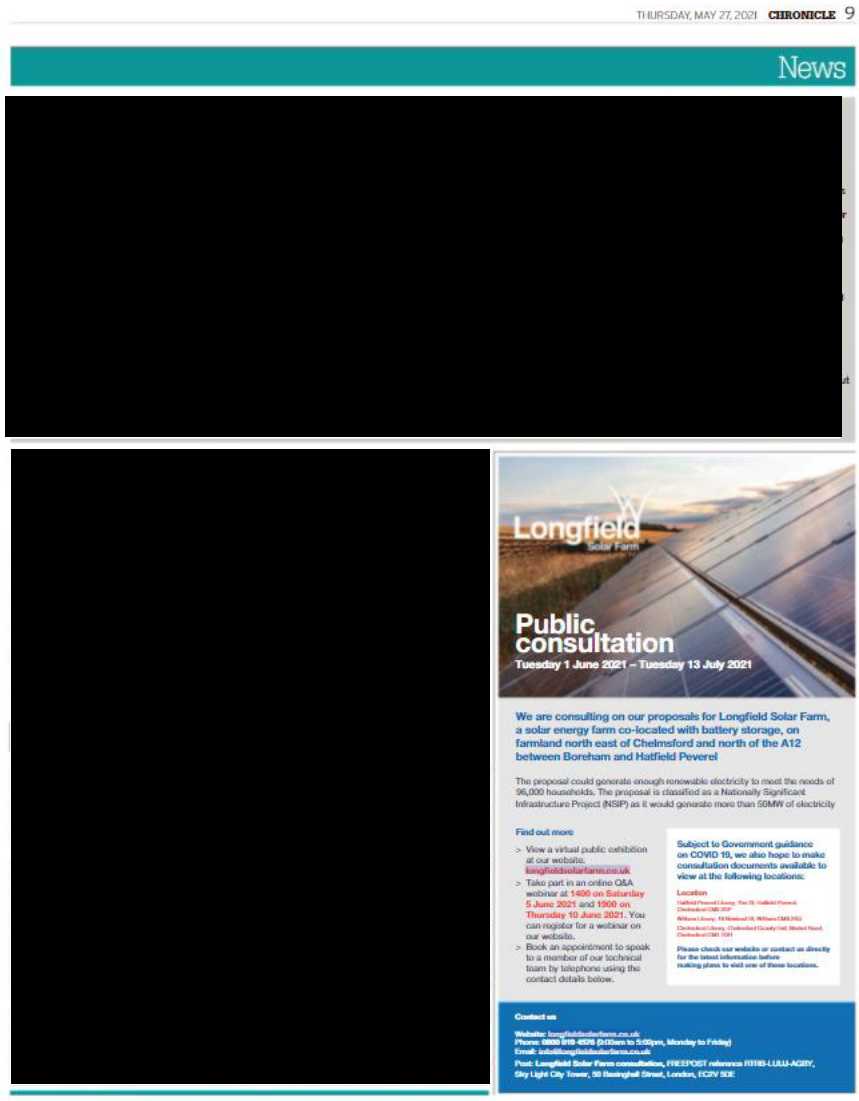
Contact us

Example of advert – East Anglian Daily Times 1 June 2021



Example of advert – Essex Chronicle 27 May 2021

Mid Essex Series May 27, 2021 NEWS 9

School celebrating £2k IT boost

[redacted]

IT CROWD: New Rickstones pupils will benefit from £2,000 worth of IT equipment

A SCHOOL has received a generous donation to help boost education. New Rickstones Academy, in Witham, has been given £2,000 of IT equipment from green energy firm Engie, in partnership with Sanctuary Housing. The donation included iPads, classroom projection equipment, scientific calculators and headphones to support students learning through the pandemic. Assistant headteacher Adam Wilding said: "The equipment will be used to enhance the education experience of students when using ICT equipment. "This will mean enabling them to have their own equipment as opposed to sharing. "Some of the equipment can also be used as rewards for students working well in lessons. "We were delighted to receive the kind and generous donation and are sure students will benefit from their brand new ICT equipment."

Thug to spend 15 years behind bars

More jail time for man who nearly killed ex

By Chris Wilkin

A VICIOUS thug who attacked his former partner in her own home has had his sentence increased.

John Berry, 32, had been in a relationship with Mary Connor and after his release from prison on a separate charge he started visiting his former partner at her home in Dunmow.

On July 24, 2017, Berry broke into his victim's home and attacked her, strangling her and repeatedly striking her body and head.

During the attack she sustained seven facial fractures, resulting in a broken cheek and jawbone.

Her spleen was also ruptured.

The victim's injuries were similar to those usually found to be as a result of a high-speed car collision.

Police said she could have died.

Berry had 13 previous convictions for 40 offences, including five against the victim in this case.

He was arrested in Cambridge in March 2018 following a police investigation and manhunt.

Berry, of Mansfield Mews, Quedgeley, Gloucester, claimed the victim had attacked him with a knife.

He was convicted of causing grievous bodily harm with intent and sentenced to nine years in prison at Chelmsford Crown Court on November 2, 2020.

Following a referral to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme, the court found Berry to be a dangerous offender and ruled that the sentence was unduly lenient.

The court imposed an extended determinate sentence of 15 years, followed by five years on licence.

Attorney General Michael Ellis QC, who personally presented the case to the curt, said it underscored the seriousness with which he views domestic abuse offences.

Following sentencing, he said: "Berry entered into his victim's home and viciously attacked her, inflicting life-changing injuries.

"He then sought to escape justice both before and after being arrested.

"His actions have caused significant harm to the victim, who I hope will feel some comfort from today's decision."

Berry had gone on the run following the attack.

Crimestoppers offered a £5,000 reward for information.

The public were urged people not to approach Berry, but to call 999.

Dave Hunter, of Crimestoppers, said at the time: "This was a nasty assault and the injuries suffered by Mary Connor almost killed her.

"This is a scary ordeal she has gone through and John Berry needs to answer the police's questions.

"Please speak up and keep your community safe."

[redacted]

His actions have caused significant harm to the victim, who I hope will feel some comfort from today's decision

Attorney General Michael Ellis

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Longfield
Public consultation
Tuesday 1 June 2021 – Tuesday 13 July 2021

We are consulting on our proposals for Longfield Solar Farm, a solar energy farm co-located with battery storage, on farmland north east of Chelmsford and north of the A13 between Boreham and Hatfield Peverel

Find out more

Contact us

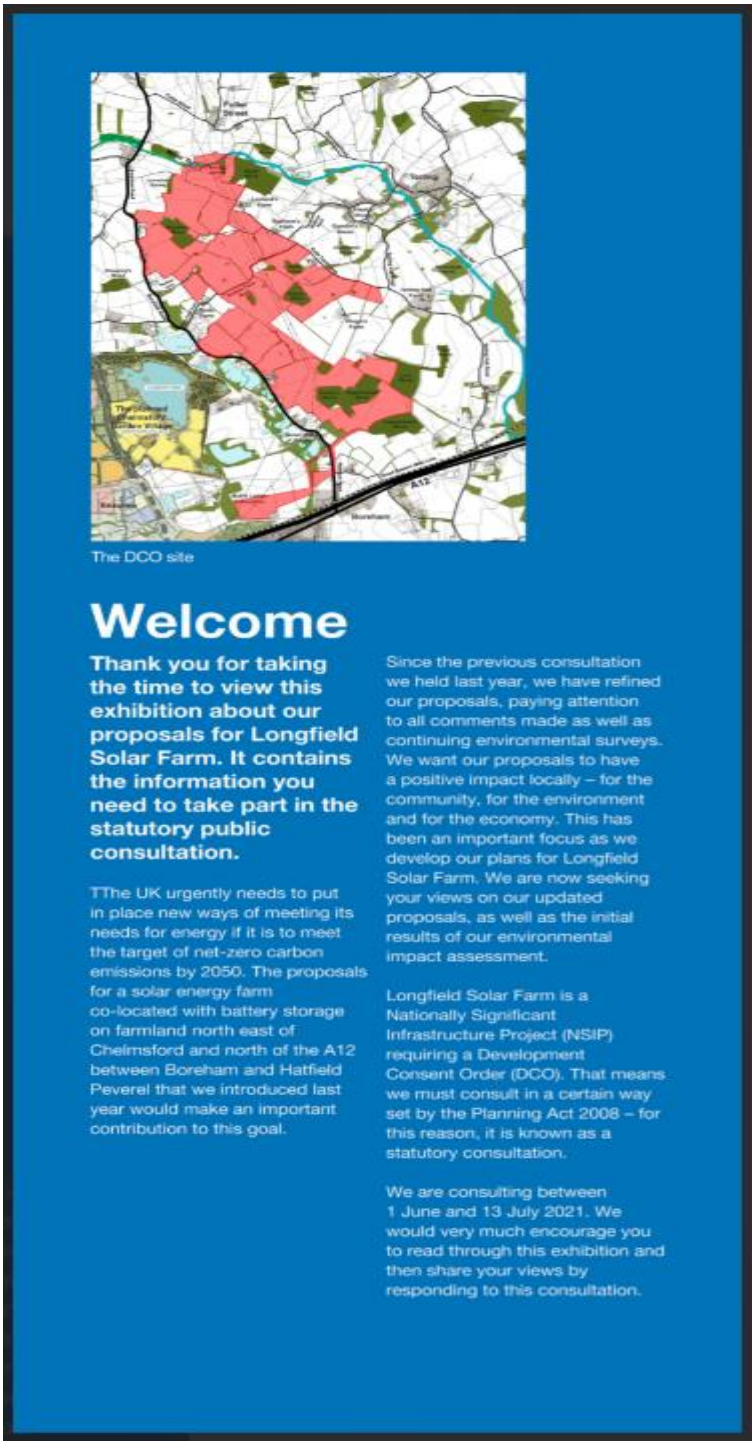
Location

Example of advert – Braintree and Witham Times 27 May 2021

Example digital advert (20,000 impressions across Braintree and Witham Times and Chelmsford and Mid Essex Times websites and social media platforms from 27 May 2021 to 3 June 2021)

Appendix G-6: Copies of event information boards and virtual exhibition

G-6.1 Event information boards



The DCO site

Welcome

Thank you for taking the time to view this exhibition about our proposals for Longfield Solar Farm. It contains the information you need to take part in the statutory public consultation.

TThe UK urgently needs to put in place new ways of meeting its needs for energy if it is to meet the target of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. The proposals for a solar energy farm co-located with battery storage on farmland north east of Chelmsford and north of the A12 between Boreham and Hatfield Peverel that we introduced last year would make an important contribution to this goal.

Since the previous consultation we held last year, we have refined our proposals, paying attention to all comments made as well as continuing environmental surveys. We want our proposals to have a positive impact locally – for the community, for the environment and for the economy. This has been an important focus as we develop our plans for Longfield Solar Farm. We are now seeking your views on our updated proposals, as well as the initial results of our environmental impact assessment.

Longfield Solar Farm is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) requiring a Development Consent Order (DCO). That means we must consult in a certain way set by the Planning Act 2008 – for this reason, it is known as a statutory consultation.

We are consulting between 1 June and 13 July 2021. We would very much encourage you to read through this exhibition and then share your views by responding to this consultation.

Who is proposing Longfield Solar Farm?

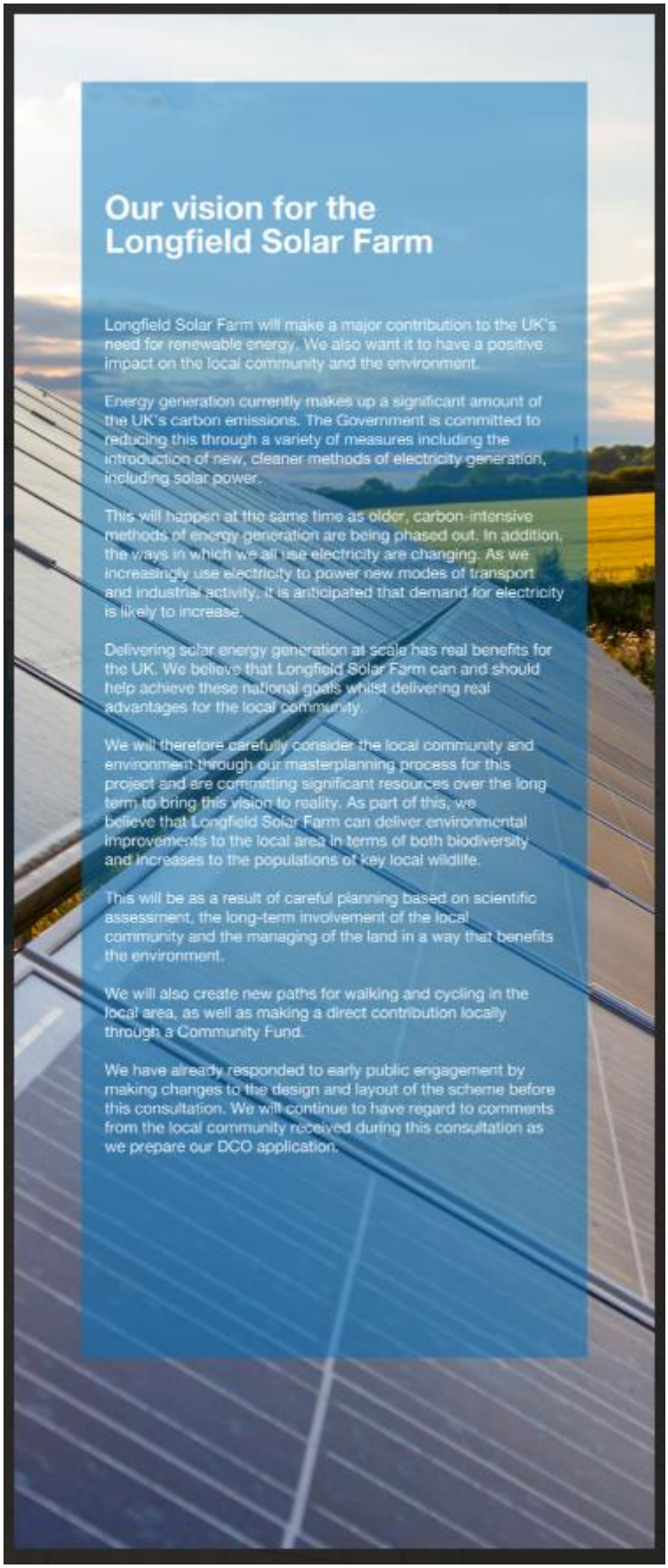
Longfield Solar Farm is being brought forward by Longfield Solar Energy Farm Ltd, a joint venture between two established developers of renewable energy: EDF Renewables (EDFR) and Padero Solar. The two organisations have brought together a highly experienced project team with an excellent track record in successfully delivering nationally significant infrastructure of this kind.

EDF Renewables has more than 25 years' worth of experience in delivering renewable energy projects in more than 20 countries around the world. In the UK, it provides much needed new affordable low carbon energy through 36 wind farms and one of the UK's largest battery storage units (together totalling almost 1GW). It has a portfolio of rooftop solar and grid scale solar energy generation in development. EDF Renewables will own and operate Longfield Solar Farm once built.

Padero Solar has helped to develop more than 25 Solar Farms in the UK, and this has delivered over 390MWs of renewable energy. Padero Solar is part of a group of three companies, these include; PS Renewables, who are behind a number of solar projects, including Eveley Solar Farm (Hampshire), and PSH Operations, an Operations & Maintenance business managing over 1.3GWs of Solar Farm assets in the UK.

Our goal as project partners is to contribute to a net zero energy future through Longfield Solar Farm. Projects like this are creating business opportunities and economic activity which contribute to the country's green recovery.

Together, we are committed to the communities in which we work and exercise good stewardship over our projects for the long term.


Our vision for the Longfield Solar Farm
Longfield Solar Farm will make a major contribution to the UK's need for renewable energy. We also want it to have a positive impact on the local community and the environment.
Energy generation currently makes up a significant amount of the UK's carbon emissions. The Government is committed to reducing this through a variety of measures including the introduction of new, cleaner methods of electricity generation, including solar power.
This will happen at the same time as older, carbon-intensive methods of energy generation are being phased out. In addition, the ways in which we all use electricity are changing. As we increasingly use electricity to power new modes of transport and industrial activity, it is anticipated that demand for electricity is likely to increase.
Delivering solar energy generation at scale has real benefits for the UK. We believe that Longfield Solar Farm can and should help achieve these national goals whilst delivering real advantages for the local community.
We will therefore carefully consider the local community and environment through our masterplanning process for this project and are committing significant resources over the long term to bring this vision to reality. As part of this, we believe that Longfield Solar Farm can deliver environmental improvements to the local area in terms of both biodiversity and increases to the populations of key local wildlife.
This will be as a result of careful planning based on scientific assessment, the long-term involvement of the local community and the managing of the land in a way that benefits the environment.
We will also create new paths for walking and cycling in the local area, as well as making a direct contribution locally through a Community Fund.
We have already responded to early public engagement by making changes to the design and layout of the scheme before this consultation. We will continue to have regard to comments from the local community received during this consultation as we prepare our DCO application.

Since the last consultation

We held an initial round of non-statutory consultation on our proposals for Longfield Solar Farm from 2 November to 14 December 2020.

We are grateful to everyone who took part in the consultation. We received more than 240 responses overall. Common themes raised in responses included:

- Support for the principle of new solar energy generation
- Concern about the overall scale of development and potential loss of agricultural land
- A preference for the grid connection option close to Bulls Lodge substation
- Concern about HGV accesses from Boreham Road and Waltham Road
- A desire for all cables associated with the scheme to be buried underground
- Requests for more information about landscape and visual impact, ecology and local job creation

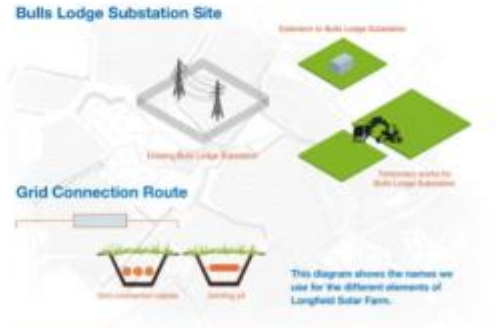
Since the last consultation, we have refined our proposals, paying attention to all comments made through the non-statutory consultation, as well as continuing environmental surveys. These have included surveys into the quality of the agricultural land, views in and around the site and ecology.

We also received confirmation from National Grid that it was no longer considering connecting Longfield Solar Farm to the national electricity transmission system at the northernmost option included in the last stage of consultation.

We have therefore:

1. Reduced the site area considerably, including removing development north of the River Ter
2. Confirmed the location of the grid connection at Bulls Lodge substation
3. Removed the HGV accesses to the site from Boreham Road and Waltham Road from the scheme
4. Refined our proposals to reduce the use of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land
5. Moved development away from specific views

Overall, we believe these changes significantly reduce the visual impact of the scheme.



Our proposals

We have refined our design significantly since the last round of consultation and can now present more detailed information on each of the key components of Longfield Solar Farm. The diagram on this board shows each of the different elements of Longfield Solar Farm and the names used for them in consultation documents.

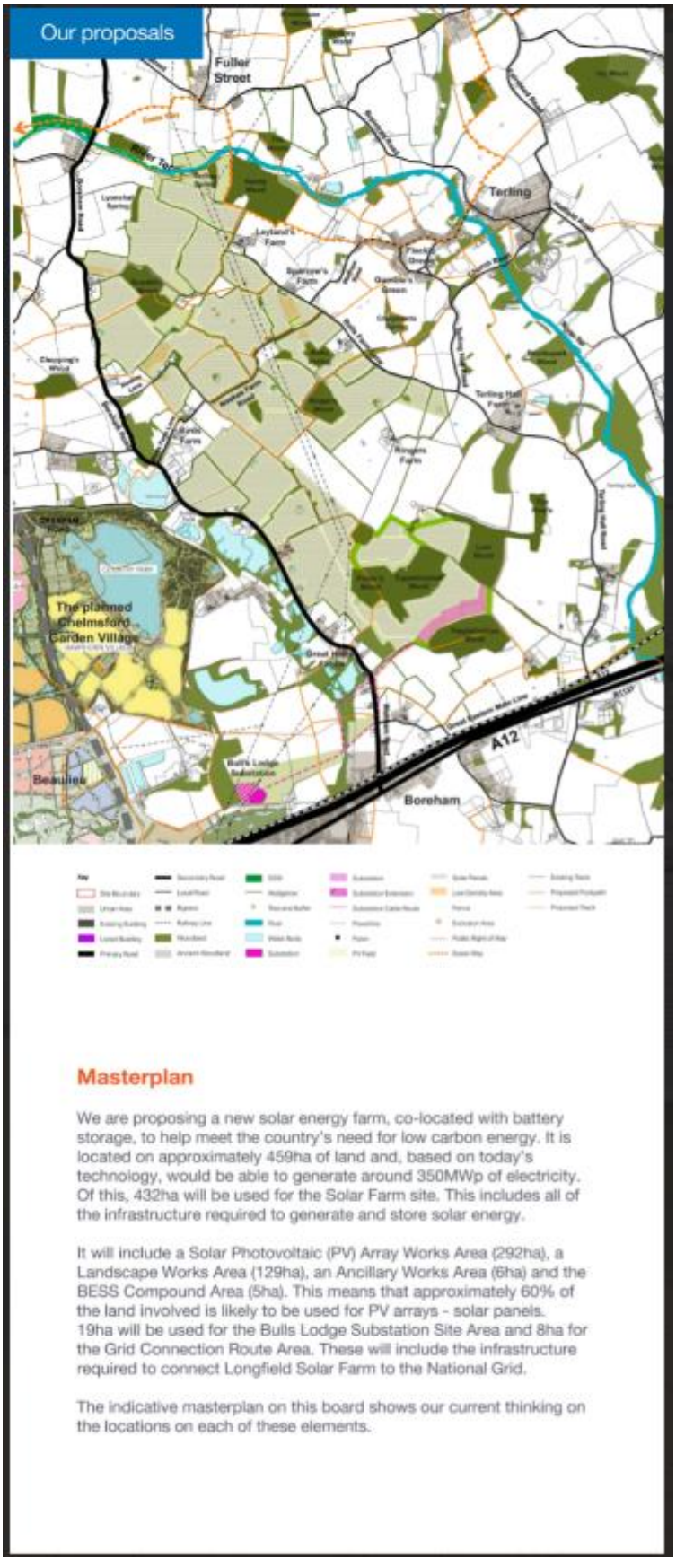
The plans on display as part of this exhibition all indicative and intended to show our current thinking on the design and layout of the scheme for the purposes of statutory public consultation. Following this consultation, we will have due regard to all of the comments we receive and where appropriate update our proposals.

Unlike a conventional power station, the environmental impacts of a solar farm are not a direct result of the amount of electricity it can generate. For this reason, we are not proposing that the Longfield Solar Farm is restricted by imposing a limit on how much electricity it can generate.

Instead, we will be seeking a development consent that would restrict the aspects of the solar farm which have potential environmental impacts – such as the height of the solar panels, dimensions of infrastructure such as the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and where within the site solar panels would be located. These are known as the 'design parameters'.

This approach also ensures the Longfield Solar Farm will be able to generate electricity as efficiently as possible, using technology which is constantly improving and may allow greater amounts of electricity to be generated in future within the existing design parameters.

You can find out more about the design parameters in Chapter 2 of the Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI) Report published as part of this consultation. We have also summarised the key elements of Longfield Solar Farm in pages 10 to 17 of the Consultation Booklet.



Masterplan

We are proposing a new solar energy farm, co-located with battery storage, to help meet the country's need for low carbon energy. It is located on approximately 459ha of land and, based on today's technology, would be able to generate around 350MWp of electricity. Of this, 432ha will be used for the Solar Farm site. This includes all of the infrastructure required to generate and store solar energy.

It will include a Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Array Works Area (292ha), a Landscape Works Area (129ha), an Ancillary Works Area (6ha) and the BESS Compound Area (5ha). This means that approximately 60% of the land involved is likely to be used for PV arrays - solar panels. 19ha will be used for the Bulls Lodge Substation Site Area and 8ha for the Grid Connection Route Area. These will include the infrastructure required to connect Longfield Solar Farm to the National Grid.

The indicative masterplan on this board shows our current thinking on the locations on each of these elements.

Environmental impact assessment

We are committed to making the local environment better than before Longfield Solar Farm was built and operated. That means going beyond simply mitigating any impacts from development to proactively investing in the pursuit of positive change.

We believe this scheme represents an excellent opportunity to improve the local ecological conditions because the land will be managed with the twin goals of generating clean, renewable energy and creating better habitats for wildlife.

Our investment in this process is long term because the site will be operated and managed by the proposers in close association with the supportive landowner, who has a long-term interest in the land and the local community.

The process

Longfield Solar Farm is Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development for the purposes of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. We are required to carry out an EIA of our proposals as part of the planning process. The preliminary outputs from this assessment have informed the site design and content of this consultation.

As part of the EIA design process, we formally 'scoped' our approach with the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) on behalf of the Secretary of State. On 3 December 2020, we received its formal Scoping Opinion. This confirmed the scope of work that should be included in our EIA and that should be reported in the comprehensive Environmental Statement that will accompany our Development Consent Order (DCO) application when submitted to the Secretary of State.

In addition to this, we have considered the feedback we received through the non-statutory consultation and have continued to engage with local authorities and other regulatory bodies, such as Historic England and the Environment Agency, on our approach to the EIA.

The topics in our EIA include:

- Climate change
- Cultural heritage
- Ecology
- Flood risk, drainage and surface water
- Landscape and visual impact assessment
- Noise and vibration
- Socio-economic and land use
- Transport and access
- Air quality
- Land quality
- Glint and glare
- Ground conditions
- Human health
- Major accidents and disasters
- Telecommunications
- Television reception

We are now sharing the preliminary results of our assessment as part of this consultation. This exhibition summarises our findings in areas such as ecology, landscape and visual impacts that were raised during the last consultation and where significant effects are expected. The results are presented in a document called the Preliminary Environmental Information Report.

You can view the PEI Report on our website **(longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk/downloads)**. There is also a non-technical summary of the PEI Report available to view. Following this statutory consultation, we will have regard to all feedback received and will finalise the Environmental Statement. This will be submitted in support of our DCO application and will set out the final outcomes of our assessment, as well as details of any proposed mitigation.

Summary of environmental effects

In some cases, we have identified potentially significant impacts as part of our EIA. Where this is the case, we are proposing mitigation measures.

In our DCO application, we will set out more detail on the need for the scheme and the benefits it provides in meeting the UK's urgent need for low carbon energy.

Our application will also set out how we believe we have achieved an appropriate balance between meeting that need and managing potential adverse effects in terms of landscape, cultural heritage and loss of agricultural land.

Climate change	**Effects** We have identified a significant beneficial impact on climate change through the provision of renewable energy.	**Mitigation** No mitigation is required.
Cultural heritage	**Effects** We have identified potential impacts on the settings of a number of heritage assets near the site during the construction period. These include Ringers Farmhouse, Little Russells, Sparrows Farmhouse, the Barn of Noake's Farm, Little Hults and the Church of St Mary the Virgin.	**Mitigation** Historic England and relevant local authority officers and will propose an appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy as part of our Environmental Statement. We are also proposing considerable new areas of tree planting and hedgerows to reduce long-distance views into the site. This will reduce impacts on the setting of heritage features.
Landscape and visual impact	**Effects** We have identified potential impacts on views into the site from a number of points during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases.	**Mitigation** We are providing significant mitigation of potential visual impacts as part of the scheme - this is referred to as 'embedded' mitigation. It includes the introduction of 3.93ha of new tree belts and woodland, 4000 specimen trees in hedgerows, filling in the gaps of 21km of existing hedgerows and 2km of new hedgerows.
Socioeconomics and land use	**Effects** beneficial impact on the local economy through employment creation and spending in the construction phase. Our EIA also considers the potential loss of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land. Currently, this is expected to have a significant adverse impact.	**Mitigation** We have sought to reduce the use of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land through our proposals.

Other topics

Our EIA has identified no significant negative impacts once mitigation has been applied in the following areas:

- Air quality
- Ecology
- Glint and glare
- Ground conditions
- Human health and wellbeing
- Major accidents and disasters
- Noise and vibration
- Telecommunications
- Television reception and utilities
- Transport and access
- Waste
- Water environment

Landscape and views

Sensitivity to the local landscape is an essential part of our masterplan for Longfield Solar Farm. The design we are presenting as part of this consultation is informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) carried out as part of our Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

Our approach to landscape

The sketches on this boards show our approach to the landscape in different parts of the site.

Toppinghoehall Wood will screen the BESS and Longfield substation. We will reinforce this with a new native woodland buffer of at least 25 metres.

We will protect Ringers Wood with a 20 metre wide woodland buffer zone. We will also restore ponds and improve habitats for birds here.

We will set aside land here to protect the setting of the Grade II listed Scarletts Farm. We will also put in place a new pedestrian route running north of Noakes Lane, connecting to the existing public right of way through Scarletts Wood.

We will create a 20 metre wide woodland buffer here to allow for natural woodland regeneration. We will also connect a new pedestrian link to the existing public right of way next to Sandy Wood, meaning there will be uninterrupted north-south access through the site.

Ecology and biodiversity

We have assessed potential impacts from Longfield Solar Farm on ecology and biodiversity as part of our EIA.

Understanding the context

Our EIA has considered impacts on species and habitats that are important at a local, national and international level.

There are six statutory sites for nature conservation in the area we assessed. These are designated for biodiversity reasons. The closest, the River Ter SSSI, is located immediately adjacent to the site. There are also 31 non-statutory sites designated for nature conservation within 2km of Longfield Solar Farm. These sites have been designated as local wildlife sites (LoWS) for their biodiversity value at a local level and are known to support a wide variety of protected and ecologically important species and habitats. We also assessed for species on the site including fish, breeding birds, wintering birds, bats, reptiles, badger, otter, other mammals and some rare species of plants.

Effects

We will put in place measures that will lead to a net gain in biodiversity across the site. We will prepare a Biodiversity Net Gain report as part of the Environmental Statement. The DCO application will also include an Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP). This will set out how we will protect and manage landscape and ecology and inform more detailed plans in the future.

There are some potential temporary impacts during construction that we will need to mitigate, such as those from site clearance. A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be included in the DCO application to explain how these will be managed. This is included in draft as part of the PEI Report.

We want to do more than simply mitigate our impacts. We are therefore exploring opportunities to include enhancements with our proposals.

Enhancements

Our proposals for Longfield Solar Farm are set out in their current form in this exhibition and more fully in the Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI) Report - in particular Chapter 2 "The Scheme". The environmental assessment we have undertaken to date is based on this. As part of the preliminary environmental work we have done, we have identified the measures necessary to mitigate any significant adverse impacts where possible.

Through our assessment of current environmental characteristics of the site, we have also identified opportunities to improve biodiversity voluntarily, by way of a series of enhancements. These enhancement measures are not required to mitigate any significant adverse impacts of the scheme – the steps we need to take to do that have already been identified and form part of the scheme. Some of the land identified for these enhancements is outside of the Development Consent Order (DCO) Site and their impacts have not therefore been assessed as part of the PEI Report.

However, we are considering providing enhancements which would allow us to go above and beyond simply mitigating potential impacts. We have not yet finalised our plans for these measures. We would therefore welcome your views.

Enhancements

Species rich grassland

In these areas, we could create a biodiverse meadow rich in invertebrates by seeding the grassland beneath PV panels and around heritage assets. These areas would be grazed by sheep to keep competitive grasses under control and allow wildflowers to thrive. The insects attracted to the wildflowers will support birds such as turtle dove and yellowhammer nesting in the restored hedgerows. Away from the PV panels, we will manage field margins to increase biodiversity. Restoring farmland to grassland would also help restore soil health and absorb carbon.

The Biodiversity Trial Area

This is a proposal for an exciting learning zone made up of four fields. This visionary space could be used to trial simple conservation intervention aimed at improving the understanding of biodiversity and natural capital benefits alongside solar farms. Outcomes from the trials would help to inform land management across new solar farms.

Woodland restoration zone

There is an opportunity to improve biodiversity in the woodlands within and near the site. These are a mix of younger plantation and ancient woodland. Working with the landowner, we could restore the woodland with traditional woodland management practices, such as coppicing. Ending the management of the woodland edges would help create a more varied set of habitats, potentially attracting birds like nightingales, willow warblers and garden warblers.

We could also establish regenerated woodland belts and restore hedgerows to connect the ancient woodland currently isolated within the arable land. This would allow bats, birds and butterflies to move effectively through the wooded landscape.

Enhanced waterscape

The network of drainage ponds and ditches that exist across the site are currently in a poor state and the River Ter is currently failing on phosphate levels. The water quality is poor owing to overshading and agricultural run-off.

We could enhance these by removing vegetation, desilting and putting in place more appropriate planting. This would help stop agricultural run-off into the water. We would also create a network of ponds throughout the site to create corridors for wildlife.

Rewilding scrub

Other than some low intensity grazing for conservation purposes, we could avoid intervening in this area to allow it to become wild again. This will create a range of grassland and scrub habitats, supporting reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates. The scrub would provide habitat that could be used by nightingales and other woodland edge species.

Floodplain grassland and conservation grazing

We could relax management along the floodplain, creating wet grassland. In the higher areas above the flood zone, this would provide invertebrate-rich habitat for nesting skylark. This area would be rich in plants like angelica that thrive in moist soils within floodplain habitats. This is another area where enhancements would also absorb carbon.

Pollination and wildflower greenway

This could be an attractive nature path extending north to south through Longfield Solar Farm. We could plant wildflower seed mixtures designed specifically for wild pollinating insects along the greenway. This would be an attractive feature for people walking along the path while also supporting pollinators.

Construction

If the scheme were to receive consent, we anticipate that the total construction period would take approximately three years to complete. This includes around a year getting the site ready for development and two years building the scheme itself.

We will work to a series of well-established principles in building Longfield Solar Farm. Where possible, we will look to use existing infrastructure to access the site, minimise use of new materials on-site, phase construction and use a single site entrance to reduce impacts on the wider road network.

Construction management

We anticipate that working hours onsite will run from 7am to 7pm. Working days will be Monday to Saturday. The number of staff on site at any one point will vary during construction – at the busiest periods 25 HGVs and 600 staff per day would be expected on site.

There will be vehicles travelling to and from the site while we are building the scheme. These will access the site using a single entrance at the location shown on the plan. The numbers of vehicles accessing the site will vary from day to day.

We will build Longfield Solar Farm in phases. This means that we will not be working across the whole site for the entire construction period - we will work in one area and then move on to the next.

In particular, we may deliver different parts of the BESS at different phases. The first part, on either side of the Longfield substation, would be delivered during the first and second years of construction. The second part, to the north east of the substation, would be delivered later, after screening planting has matured.

Operations

We are committed to operating Longfield Solar Farm in the long term.

While the scheme is operational, activity across the site would be minimal and largely restricted to monitoring, maintenance and the management of the visual and ecological mitigation features.

Decommissioning

Solar farms typically have a design lifespan of 40 years. Longfield Solar Farm has been designed so that once it has reached the end of its lifespan it can be dismantled. A decommissioning plan will be prepared.

Health and safety

We recognise that there is interest in how health and safety will be managed at Longfield Solar Farm. Nothing is more important to us than the health and safety of our neighbours and our staff.

We are already engaging with the Health and Safety Executive and the Essex Fire and Rescue Service on the design of Longfield Solar Farm. This is to ensure that the management of health and safety is built into Longfield Solar Farm from the start.

We will put in place appropriate training and codes of conduct for all staff working at the site. This will include an induction covering health and safety and how to behave on site, which all staff must complete before beginning work.

Jobs and skills

Longfield Solar Farm will create jobs and skills, as well as creating wider economic benefits. We are committed to ensuring that these advantages are felt in the local community. To this end, we are already consulting with local businesses, business organisations and skills providers such as schools and colleges to assess how the local community might benefit from employment opportunities at key stages of the project's development. Overall, we expect to create 375 new jobs in the construction phase and 8 permanent roles once Longfield Solar Farm is operational. We also expect local expenditure as a result of the scheme to help create the equivalent of 188 new jobs. Whilst the majority of the manufacturing process of the panels, batteries and related components is currently located overseas, where possible, we will source materials from the UK and encourage domestic suppliers.

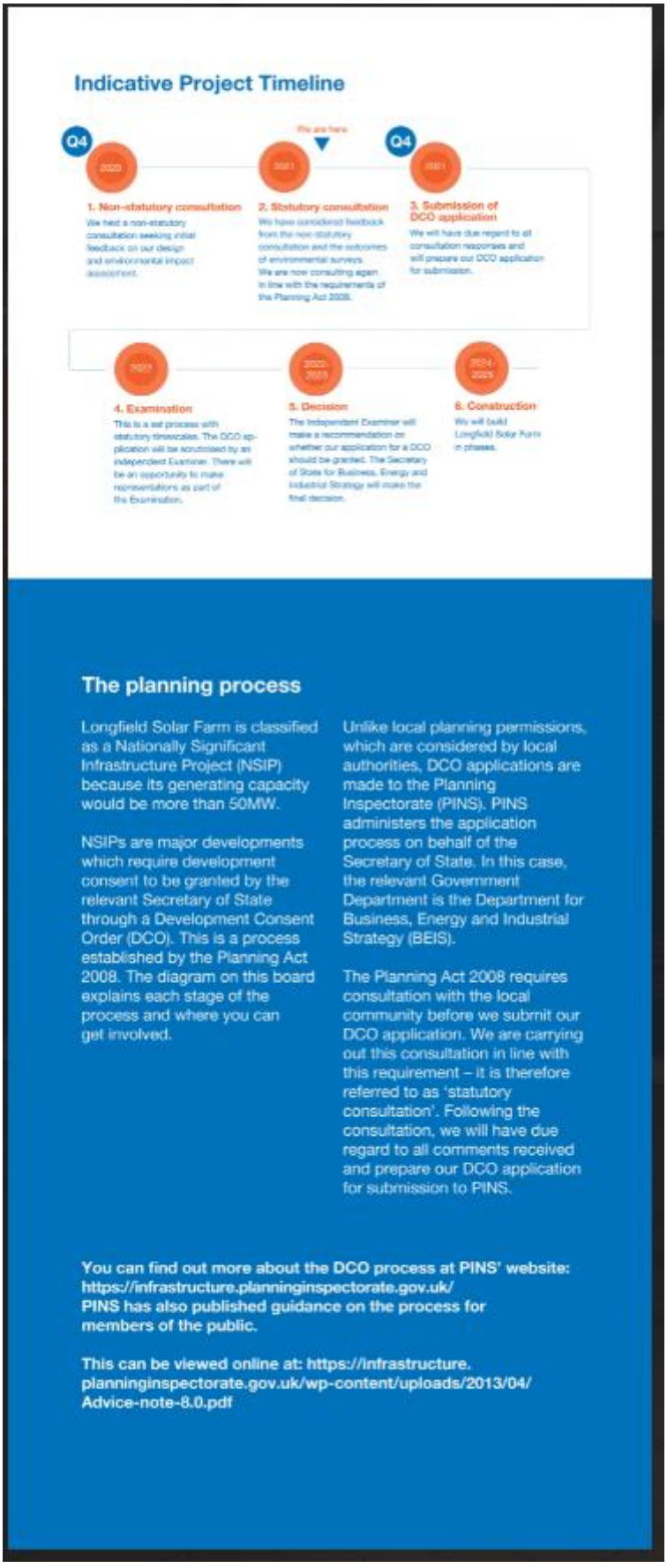
Community engagement

The companies behind Longfield Solar Farm have a proud history of investing in the communities in which they work and establishing community benefits for the duration of a project's operating life. One of the project partners, EDF Renewables, expects to continue to own and operate Longfield Solar Farm. This means it can make a long-term commitment to the local community. The community can expect that its views will be taken seriously at every stage of the lifetime of the project. We will establish a community liaison group (CLG) that will enable local community representatives to have a formal channel for monitoring and influencing developments at the site.
In recognition of the important role Longfield Solar Farm will play locally, we have also established a sponsorship fund open to applications from community projects or groups in the parishes of Terling and Fairstead, Hatfield Peverel, Boreham, Great and Little Leighs and Little Waltham.

It is managed on our behalf by the Essex Community Foundation and is currently in place until the DCO application for Longfield Solar Farm is decided.

If a DCO is granted, we plan to put in place a fund which will be related in size to the energy output of the PV panels. Currently, we expect there to be around £64,000 per year available as part of the fund. This could equate to £2,560,000 over the expected lifetime of the scheme.

For more information and to apply for funding, please see the Essex Community Foundation's website: essexcommunityfoundation.org.uk/


Indicative Project Timeline
Q4
We are here
Q4
1. Non-statutory consultation
We held a non-statutory consultation seeking initial feedback on our design and environmental impact assessment.
2. Statutory consultation
We have considered feedback from the non-statutory consultation and the outcomes of environmental surveys. We are now consulting again in line with the requirements of the Planning Act 2008.
3. Submission of DCO application
We will have due regard to all consultation responses and will prepare our DCO application for submission.
4. Examination
This is a set process with statutory timescales. The DCO application will be scrutinised by an independent Examiner. There will be an opportunity to make representations as part of the Examination.
5. Decision
The Independent Examiner will make a recommendation on whether our application for a DCO should be granted. The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy will make the final decision.
6. Construction
We will build Longfield Solar Farm in phases.
The planning process
Longfield Solar Farm is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) because its generating capacity would be more than 50MW.
NSIPs are major developments which require development consent to be granted by the relevant Secretary of State through a Development Consent Order (DCO). This is a process established by the Planning Act 2008. The diagram on this board explains each stage of the process and where you can get involved.
Unlike local planning permissions, which are considered by local authorities, DCO applications are made to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). PINS administers the application process on behalf of the Secretary of State. In this case, the relevant Government Department is the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).
The Planning Act 2008 requires consultation with the local community before we submit our DCO application. We are carrying out this consultation in line with this requirement – it is therefore referred to as 'statutory consultation'. Following the consultation, we will have due regard to all comments received and prepare our DCO application for submission to PINS.
You can find out more about the DCO process at PINS' website: https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/
PINS has also published guidance on the process for members of the public.
This can be viewed online at: https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Advice-note-8.0.pdf

Public consultation

This second round of consultation on the project is statutory and is taking place between 1 June and 13 July 2021. We want as many people to take part in the consultation as possible.

While there has been some relaxation of social distancing requirements by the Government, we still face restrictions on meeting residents in-person. We are therefore making available a range of ways to find out more and respond to the consultation.

We have developed the consultation programme considering best practice guidance and advice from Essex County Council, Chelmsford City Council and Braintree District Council.

We will carefully consider all of the comments we receive as part of the consultation and set out how we have had regard to them in a Consultation Report. This will form part of our DCO application.

You can find out more by:

1. Viewing a virtual exhibition and consultation documents on our website: **http://www.longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk/downloads**

Subject to Government guidance on COVID 19, we also hope to make the consultation documents available to view at following locations in the local area:

Hatfield Peverel Library, The St, Hatfield Peverel, Chelmsford CM3 2DP
Witham Library, 18 Newland St, Witham CM8 2AQ
Chelmsford Library, Chelmsford County Hall, Market Rd, Chelmsford CM1 1QH

Please check our website or contact us for the latest information before making plans to visit one of these locations.

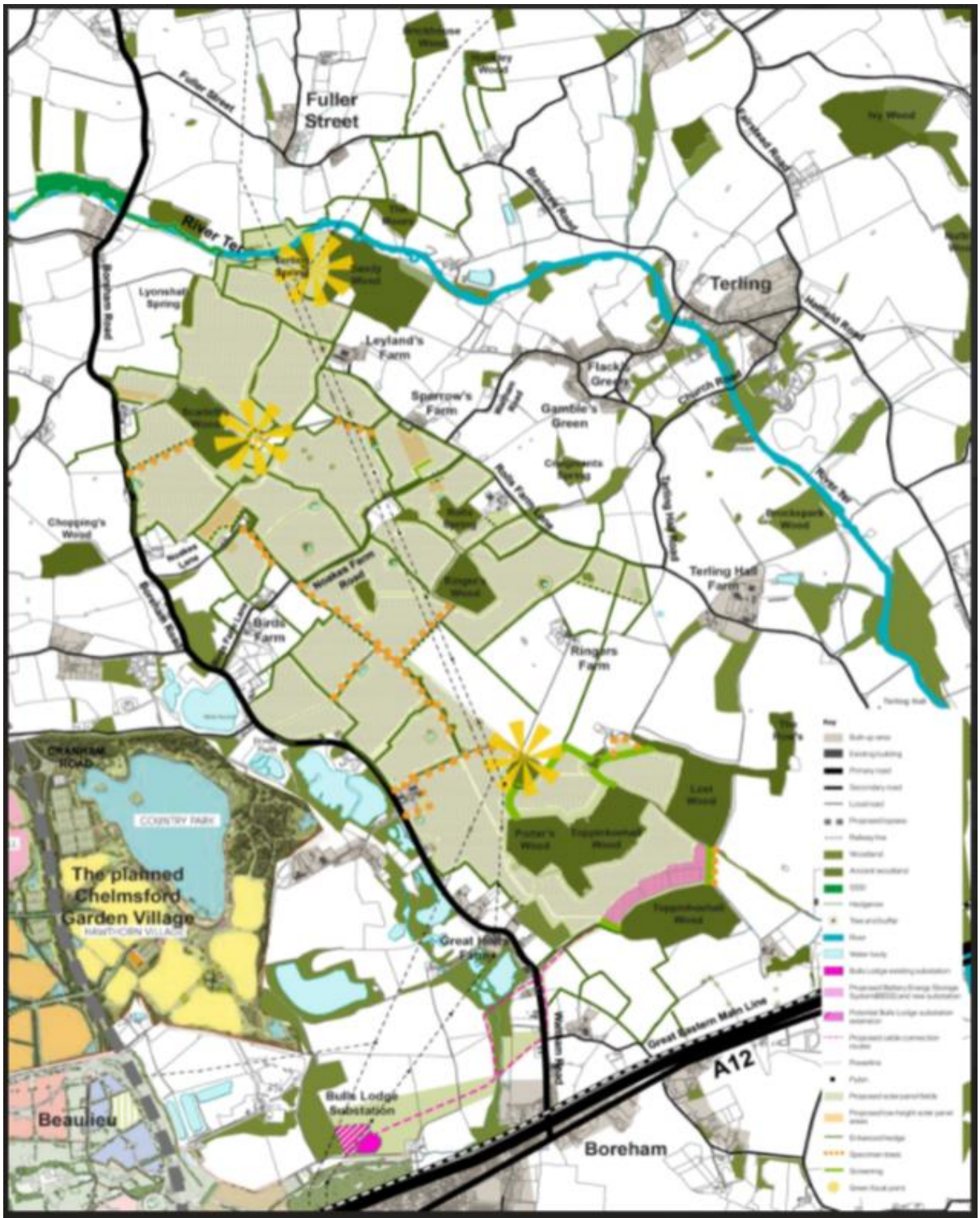
2. Reading a Consultation Booklet summarising our proposals. You can download this from our website: www.longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk or request a hard copy using the contact details below.
3. Booking an appointment to talk with members of our technical and design teams about the proposals by telephone using the contact details below.
4. Contacting us on **0808 168 7925** or **info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk**

Consultation Questions

We are seeking your views on the following questions as part of the consultation:

1. Do you have any comments on our proposals for the solar energy generation element of the scheme?
2. Do you have any comments on our proposals for the battery storage element of the scheme?
3. Do you have any comments on our proposals for connecting to the national electricity system, including laying cables underground and extending Bulls Lodge National Grid Substation?
4. Do you have any comments on the potential environmental impacts and our proposals for enhancements and mitigation during:
   a) The construction of Longfield Solar Farm?
   b) The operation of Longfield Solar Farm?
   c) The decommissioning of Longfield Solar Farm?
5. Do you have any comments on the contribution that the scheme will make to the local community?
6. Do you have any comments on the potential biodiversity enhancements set out on page 28 of the Consultation Booklet?
7. Do you have any further comments?

Longfield Red Line Boundary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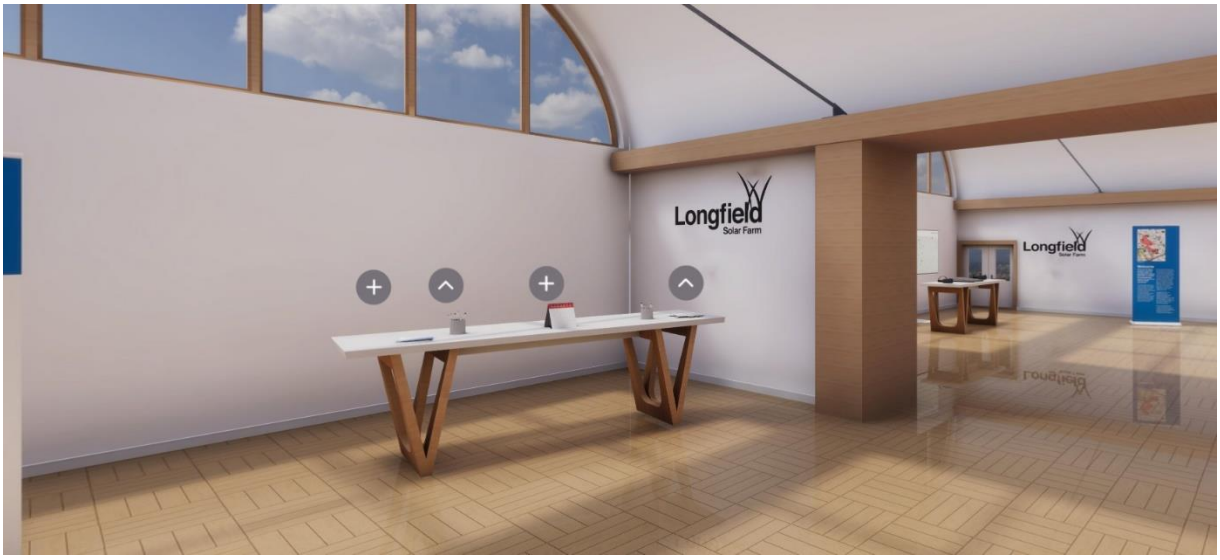
River Ter
Terling
Leyland's Farm
Sparrow's Farm
Gamble's Green
Flacks Green
Church Road
Hadfields Road
Lyonshall Spring
Boreham Road
Chapping's Wood
Southlees Lane
Howlett's Farm Road
Birds Farm
Ringers Farm
Terling Hall Farm
Terling Hall Road
River Ter
Braintree Road
Rolls Farm Lane
Ringers Wood
Porter's Wood
Lost Wood
Tippendowlands Wood
Great Hall Spring
Bulls Lodge Substation
Great Eastern Main Line
A12
Boreham
Beaulieu
The planned Chelmsford Garden Village
COUNTRY PARK
HAWTHORN VILLAGE
CRANHAM ROAD
Longfield LA Masterplan

G-6.2 Screenshots of virtual exhibition


Longfield
Solar Farm


Longfield
Solar Farm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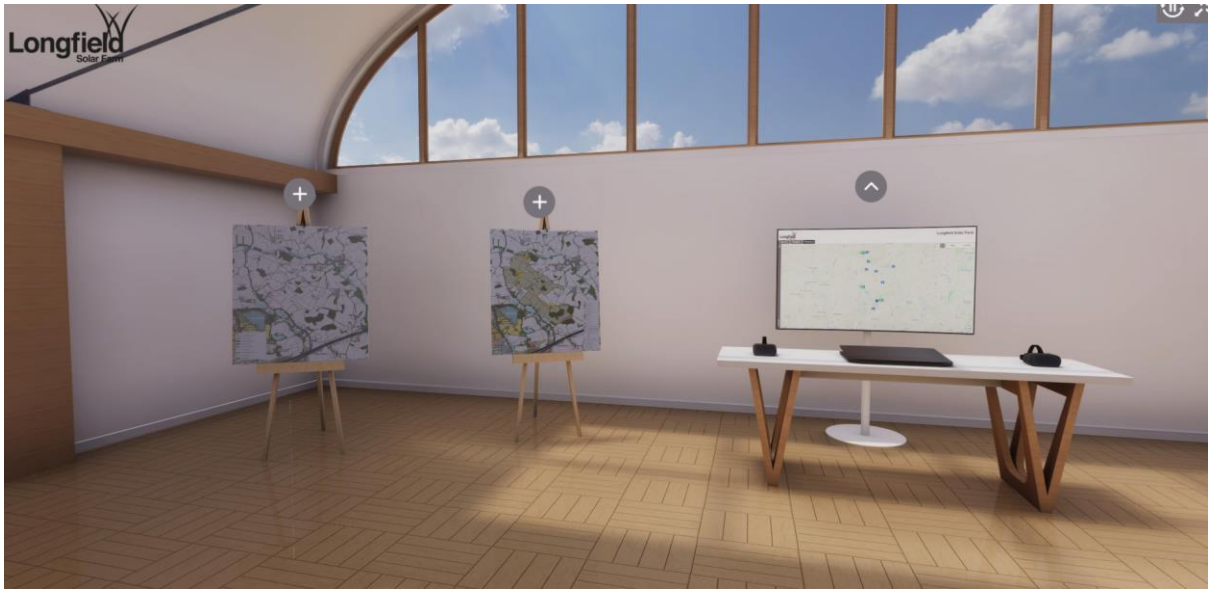
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