



# Oaklands Farm Solar Park

## Consultation Report

Appendix 14.1 - Section 47 and 48 Feedback Summary Report

January 2024

**Applicant:** Oaklands Farm Solar Ltd

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**Author:** Thirty4/7 Communications Ltd

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**1. Section 47 and Section 48 Feedback Summary Report**



**Oaklands Farm Solar**

**S47/48 Feedback Summary Report**

**July 2022**

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# 1. Overview

## 1.1. Purpose of this report

1.1.1. This report provides a detailed review of all comments submitted under section 47 of the Planning Act 2008 (the 2008 Act) during the statutory consultation period for the Oaklands Farm Solar project (the Proposed Development).

1.1.2. A full description of the consultation activity undertaken is included within the full Consultation Report for the Proposed Development.

1.1.3. This report contains details of all written feedback received from feedback forms, emails and via Freepost between 21 April 2022 and 6 June 2022 (the statutory consultation period).

## 1.2. Response overview

1.2.1. In total, 62 responses were received during the statutory consultation period. Of these, 25 were written responses via email, and the remaining 37 were written responses submitted on the feedback form (and either returned in hard copy, or online).

1.2.2. Responses were received from a range of stakeholders and local residents. Some responses contained queries or short statements, which were responded to during the consultation period.

1.2.3. The table below sets out the responses received from stakeholders under section 47. Full responses are contained in the Appendix. All comments and issues raised are included either in the analysis of the Feedback Form questions (if feedback was submitted in that format), and in the Key issues table in Chapter 5.

Stakeholder name	Nature of response
British Horse Society	Requesting addition to consultees list for opportunity to provide feedback.
Cllr Amy Wheelton, SDDC Ward Member for Seales Ward	Requested further information on the proposals. Feedback form response submitted

Stakeholder name	Nature of response
	(included within analysis of feedback form responses in Chapter 2, below).
Cllr Martin Fitzpatrick	Confirming attendance at events. No substantive feedback received.
Cllr Stuart Swann	Feedback form response submitted (included within analysis of feedback form responses in Chapter 2, below).
Coton in the Elms Parish Council	Feedback form response submitted (included within analysis of feedback form responses in Chapter 2, below).
Heather Wheeler, MP	Outline of opposition to development in principle - primarily due to the perceived impact to agricultural land.
Hilton Parish Council	Email received stating support solar in principle, but concerns raised over loss of agricultural land.
Leicestershire & Rutland Bridleways Association	Email received with feedback on local horse ownership/use in the area. Request for bridleways to be incorporated to the proposals.
Lullington Parish Meeting	Feedback form response submitted (included within analysis of feedback form responses in Chapter 2, below).
Michael Fabricant, MP for Lichfield	Confirming receipt of consultation materials. No substantive feedback received.

Stakeholder name	Nature of response
Netherseal Parish Council	Feedback form response submitted (included within analysis of feedback form responses in Chapter 2, below).
Overseal Parish Council	Email received stating that councillors object to this Proposed Development on the basis it is to be sited on top quality farmland which will be a significant loss, also considering this new site would be close to a solar farm already agreed on greenfield land between Coton and Lullington. Cllrs have significant concerns regarding the impact on wildlife and feel for this reason, brown field sites should be identified, or roof spaces used to include warehousing units which are prolific in the area.
Rosliston Parish Council	Feedback form response submitted (included within analysis of feedback form responses in Chapter 2, below).
Walton on Trent Parish Council	Feedback form response submitted (included within analysis of feedback form responses in Chapter 2, below).

1.2.4. Responses were also received from local residents. This feedback is considered, in the analysis in Chapter 2 (if they submitted it via the Feedback Form), of in Chapter 3 (if feedback was submitted directly via email). As noted above, all issues and feedback points submitted are included in the Key issues table contained in the main Consultation Report.

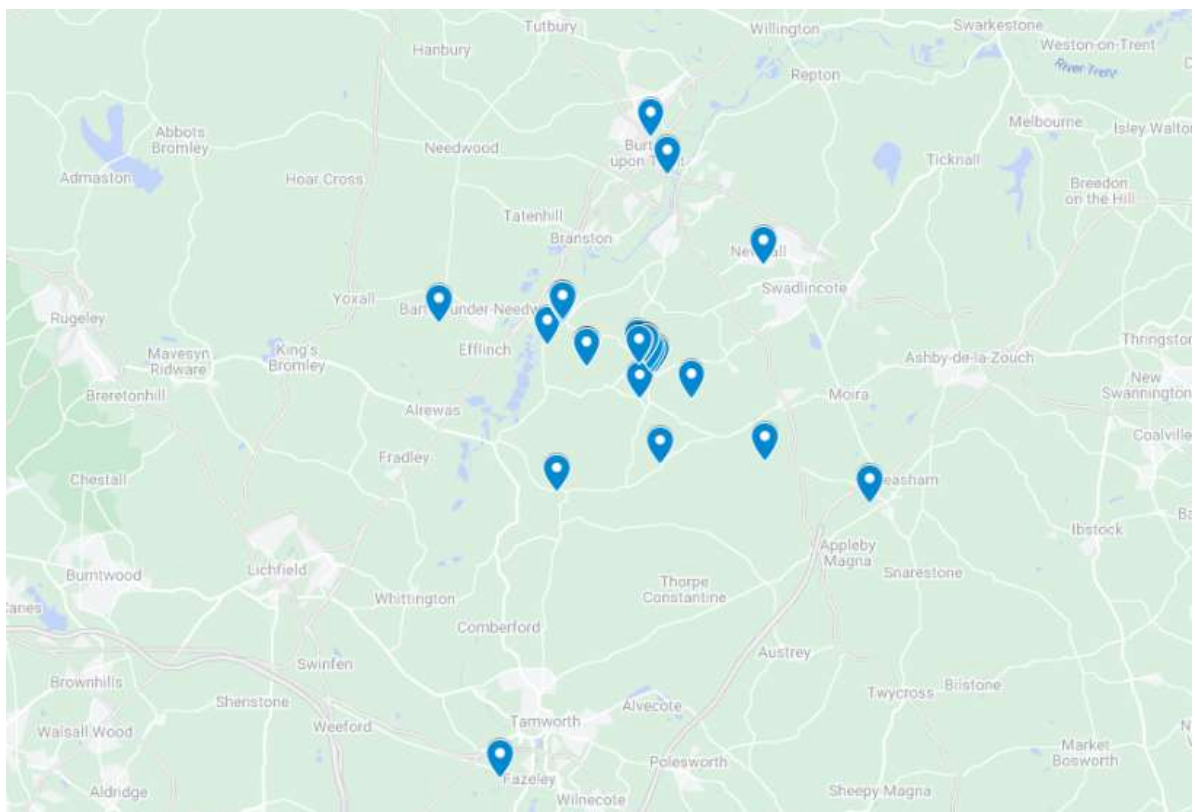
## 2. Feedback Forms

### 2.1. Overview

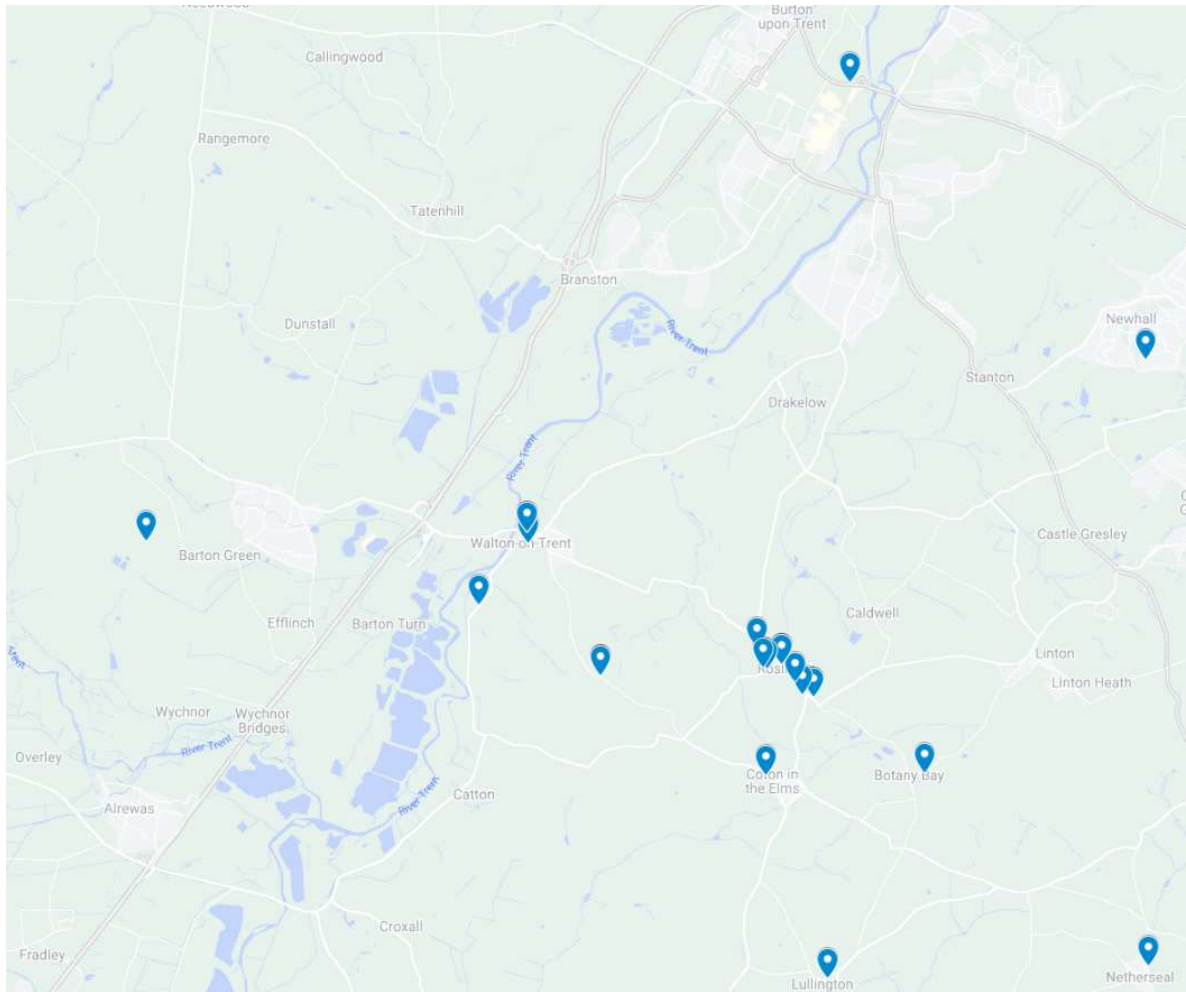
- 2.1.1. The feedback form was designed to direct respondents to provide feedback on specific areas that the Applicant wished to receive feedback, but also allowed space for general feedback where respondents were free to comment on any aspect of the proposals.
- 2.1.2. The feedback form questions linked to the information within the Consultation Summary Document, and detail contained on the exhibition boards. This was designed to assist the respondent with providing information about the topics that were being asked about. A copy of the feedback form is included in Appendix 1.
- 2.1.3. The below overview summarises the responses to each question and sets out the issues raised by respondents. A full list of feedback responses, by question, is included in Appendix 2.

### 2.2. Response summary

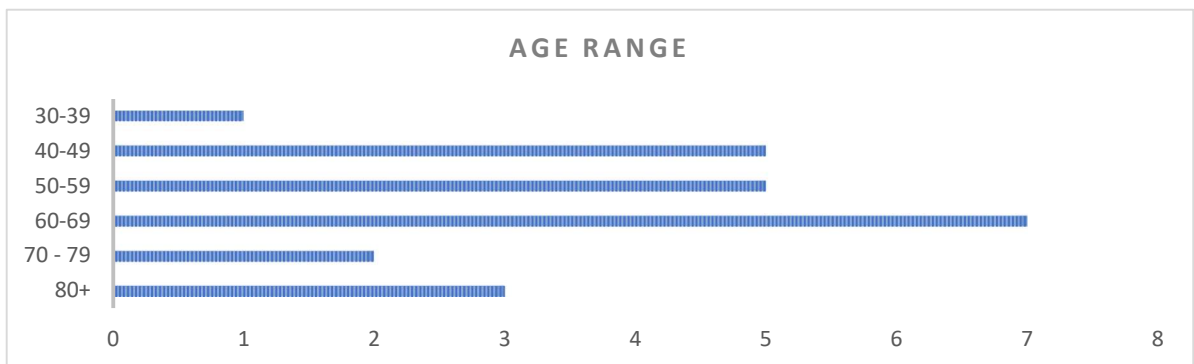
- 2.2.1. In total, 37 feedback forms were completed, either online, at an exhibition, or returned via freepost. As can be seen on the maps below, the majority of respondents live within close proximity to the site.





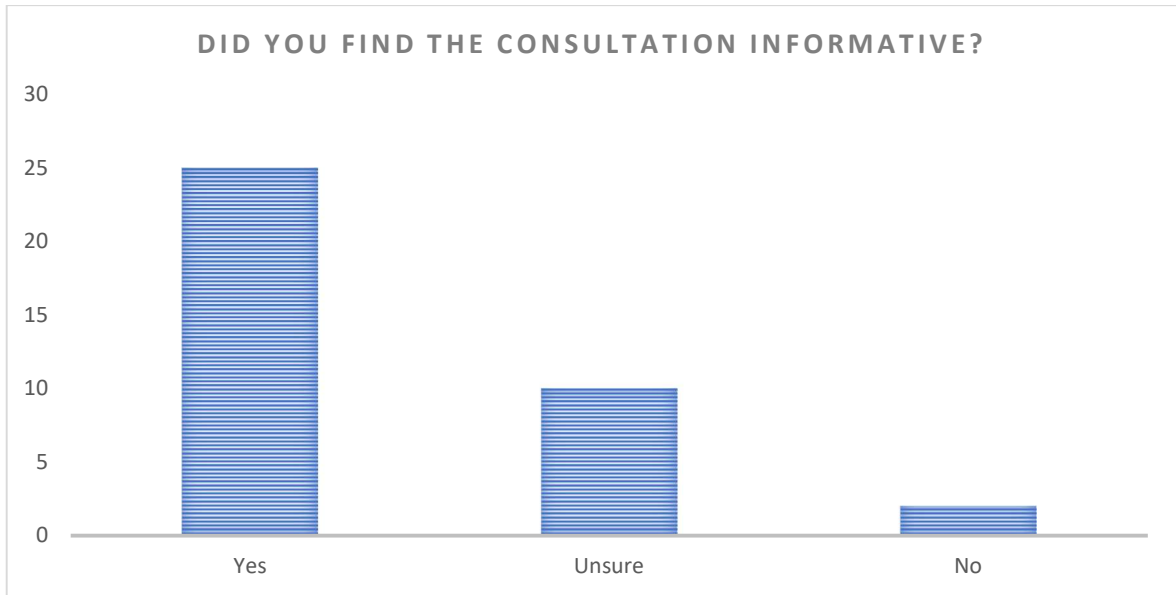


2.2.2. Of those that answered the question, the highest level of response was from those aged between 60 and 69, although there is a spread of ages from those in their thirties, through to over 80.



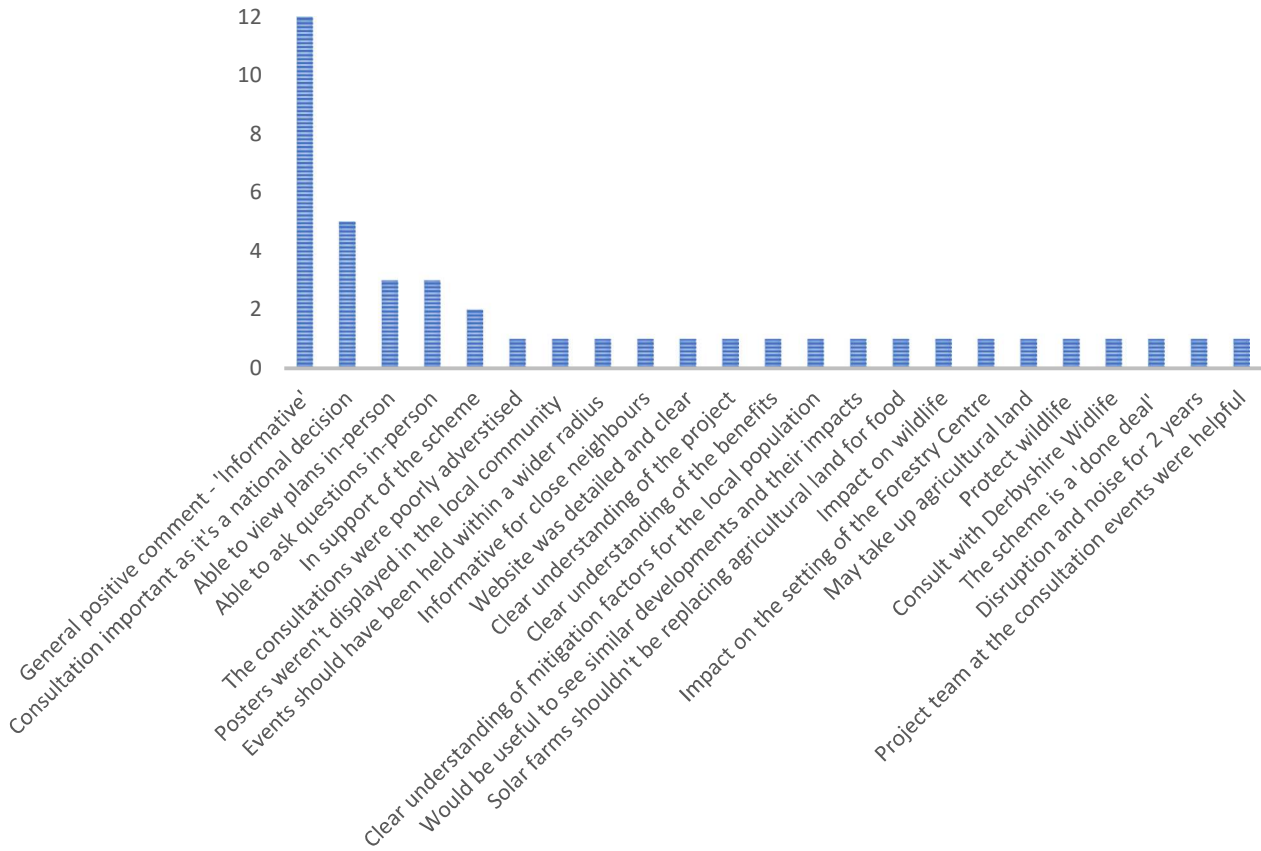
### 2.3. Consultation process

2.3.1. In addition to the general questions on demographics, the feedback form also asked, 'Have you found this consultation exercise informative?'. All respondents answered this question, with 68% stating 'yes', 27% stating 'unsure', and 5% stating 'no'.

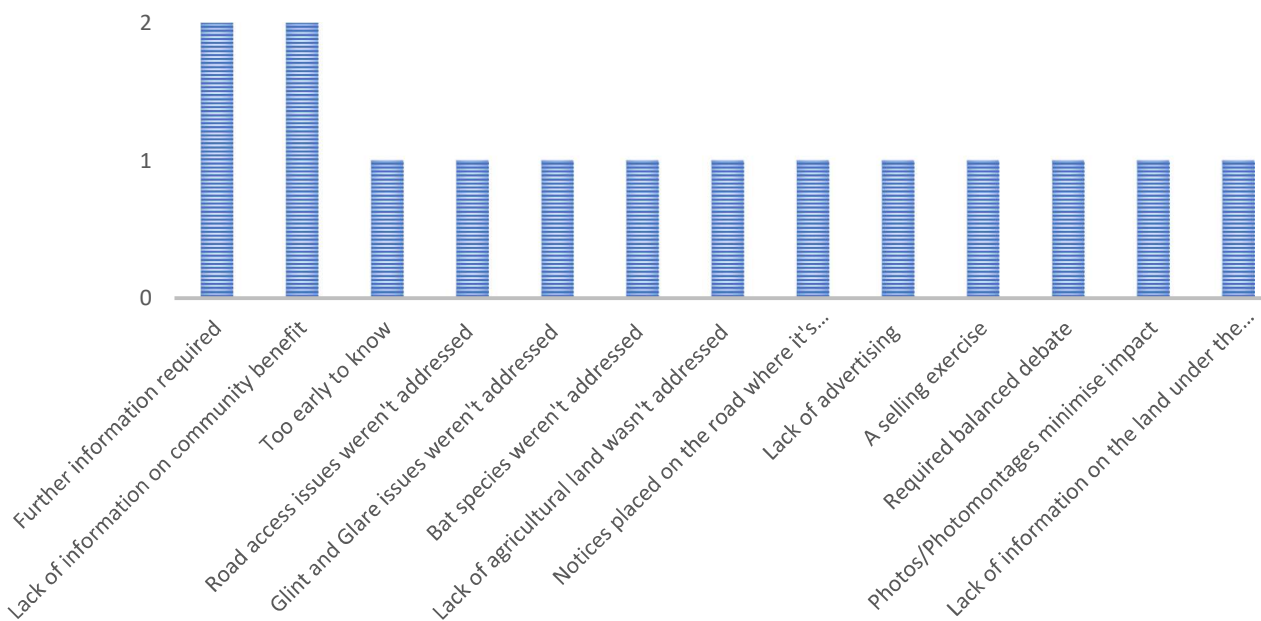


2.3.2. Of those that responded to this question, most used the additional space to clarify or caveat their answer with comments or suggestions about the process. Some respondents also used this space to make broader comments about the proposals. The graphs below show what comments were made depending on whether the respondent noted 'yes' or 'unsure' to the question.

### DID YOU FIND THE CONSULTATION INFORMATIVE? - YES



### DID YOU FIND THE CONSULTATION INFORMATIVE? - UNSURE



2.3.3. Those that responded ‘no’ made just one comment stating that the consultation ‘lacked detail’.

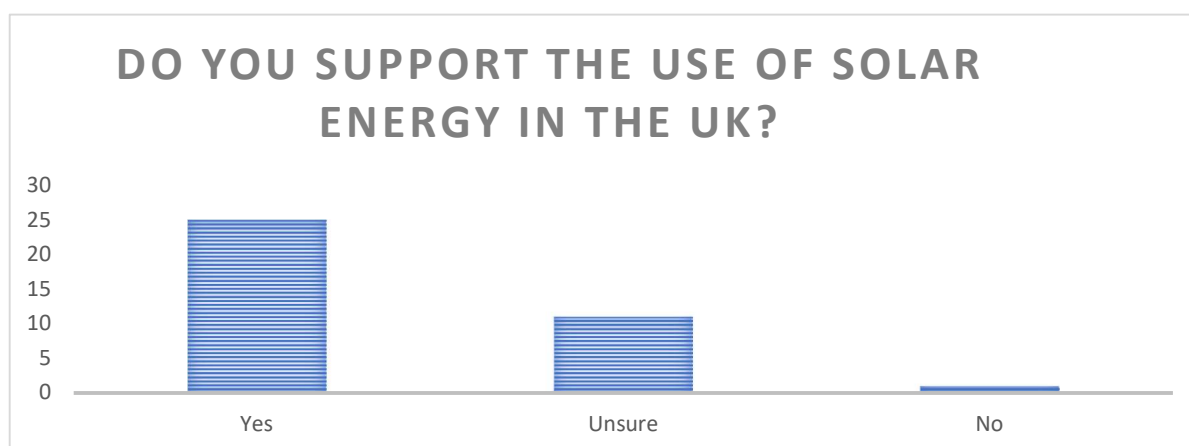
## 2.4. Overview questions

2.4.1. The feedback form posed nine questions, which were aligned to the information presented in the consultation materials and reflected in the Consultation Summary Document. These nine questions are set out individually below and an overview of the responses and key issues raised is accounted for.

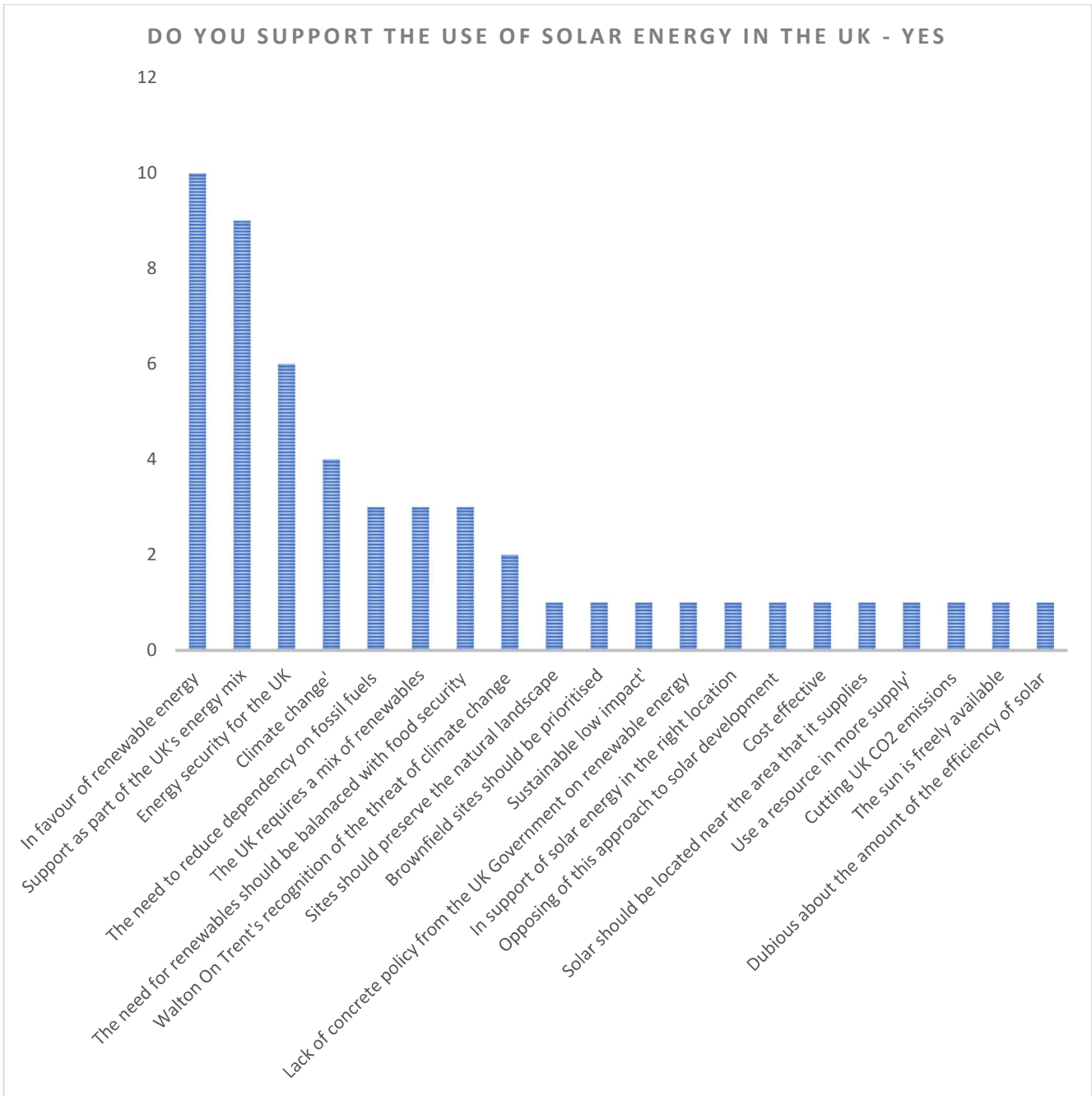
2.4.2. In addition, the feedback form asked respondents to indicate their stance on solar energy and their view on the Proposed Development itself. These questions are set out below:

### **Do you support the use of solar energy to generate electricity in the UK?**

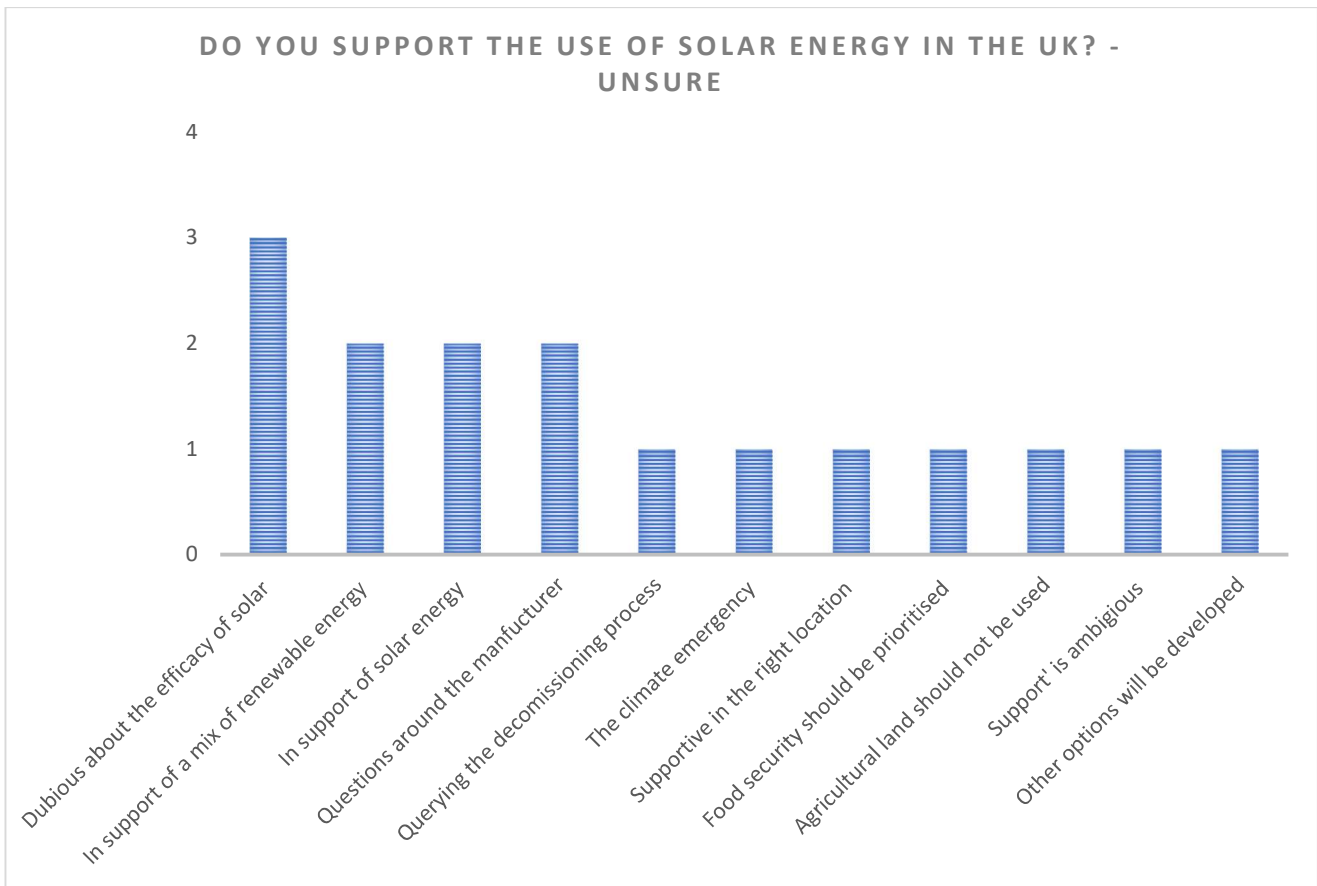
2.4.3. This question was answered by all respondents that filled out the feedback form, with the majority (68%) indicating that they do support the use of solar to generate electricity in the UK. Of the remainder, 30% noted that they were ‘unsure’, and 2% were not in favour.



2.4.4. Those that responded ‘yes’ to this question made several additional comments, either to affirm their support of solar, or to note some caveats to their answer. These are set out in the graph below:



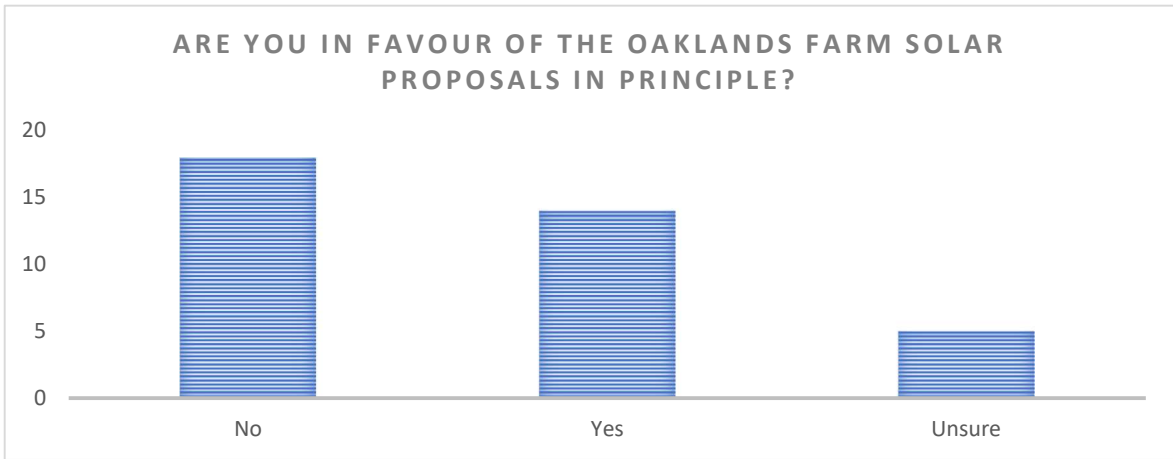
2.4.5. Of those that responded that they were 'unsure' to this question, the following comments were made:



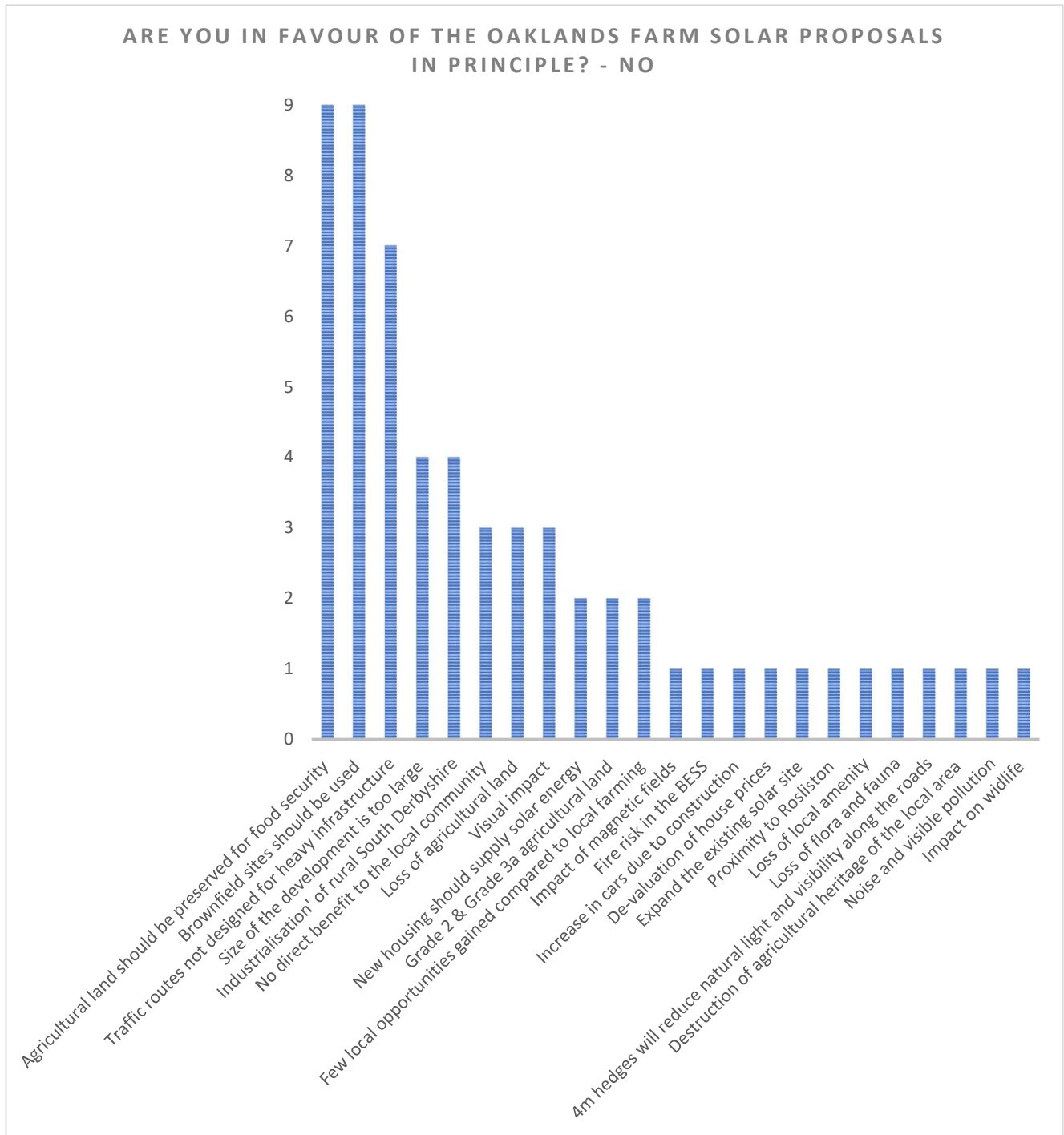
2.4.6. Of those that responded 'no' to this question, the issue of food security was raised as a qualifying comment.

**Are you in favour of the proposals for Oaklands Farm Solar Park in principle?**

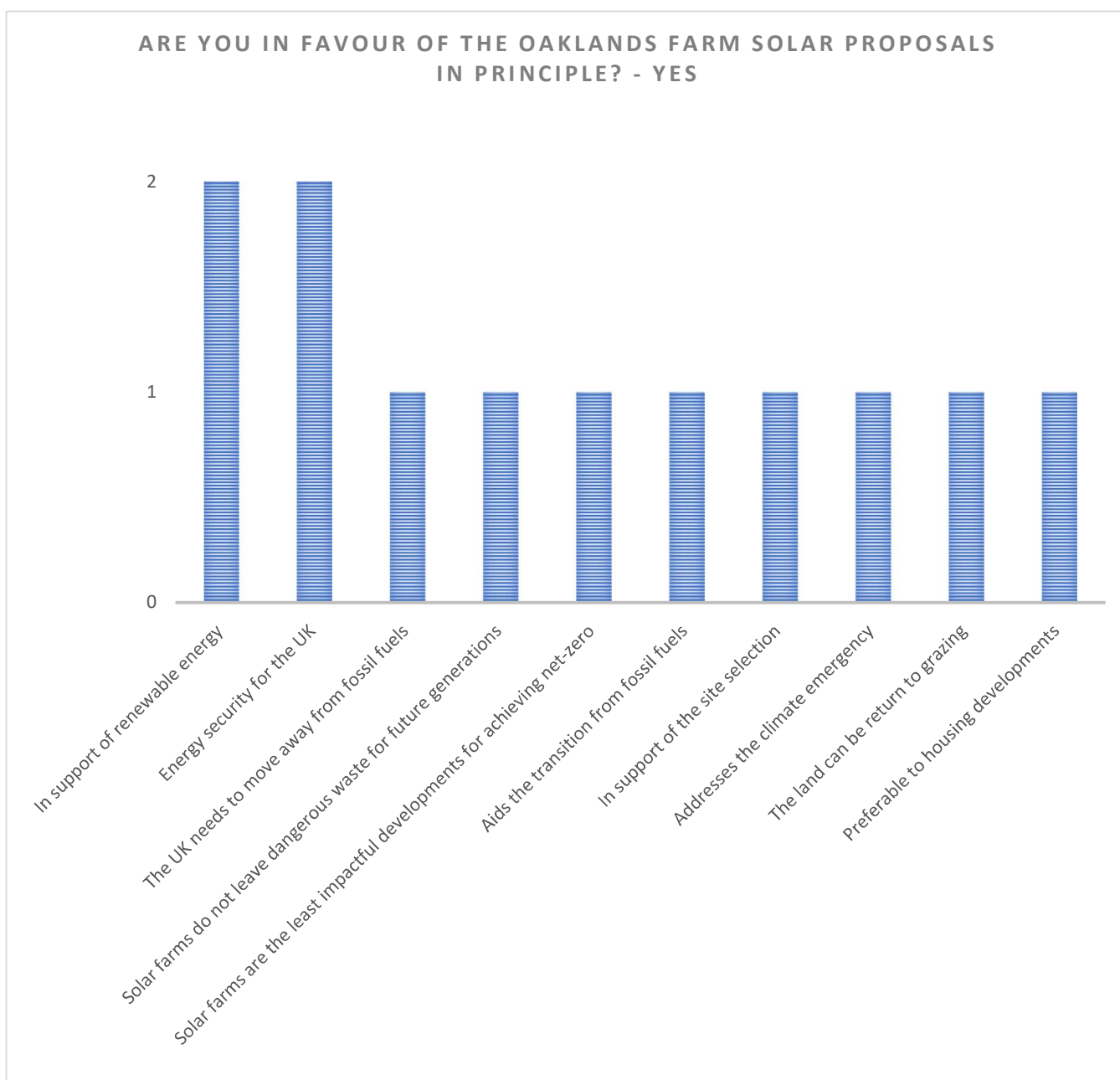
2.4.7. This question was answered by all respondents that filled out the feedback form, with just under half (49%) indicating that they are not in favour of the proposals for Oaklands Farm Solar Park in principle. Of the remainder, 38% noted that they were 'in favour', and 13% were 'unsure'.



2.4.8. Those that provided a comment alongside their answer to this question noted several reasons why they weren't in favour of the proposals. The most common issue raised was related to the land use and loss of agricultural land / preference for brownfield sites. Others noted that the development was felt to be too large, and that it would result in the 'industrialisation' of rural South Derbyshire. Other comments and suggestions related to lack of community benefit, alternative sites for solar and concerns over fire risk of the battery energy storage system. A full breakdown of the comments is included in the graph below.



2.4.9. There were less supporting comments from those that indicated that they were in favour of the proposals, however those that did provide additional comments were generally focused around in principle support for renewable energy and the part that solar has to play in the energy mix. Various comments relating to the benefits of solar, including that it does not produce harmful waste, that is less impactful than other technologies and that land can still be used for grazing were also noted.

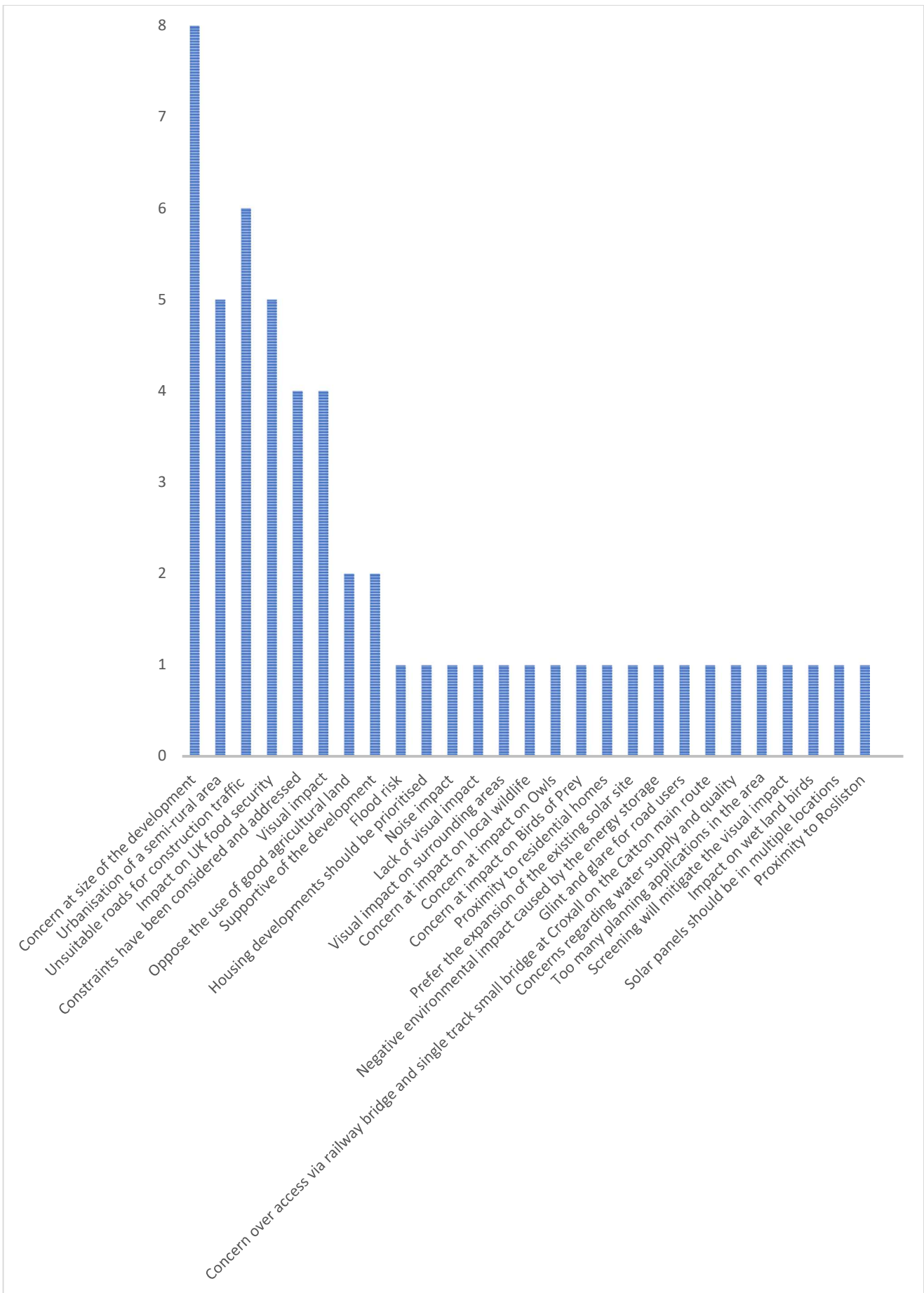


2.4.10. Only one additional comment was made by respondents indicating that they were unsure if they were in favour of the proposals. This noted a concern that the Proposed Development would distract from the benefits of living in the National Forest.



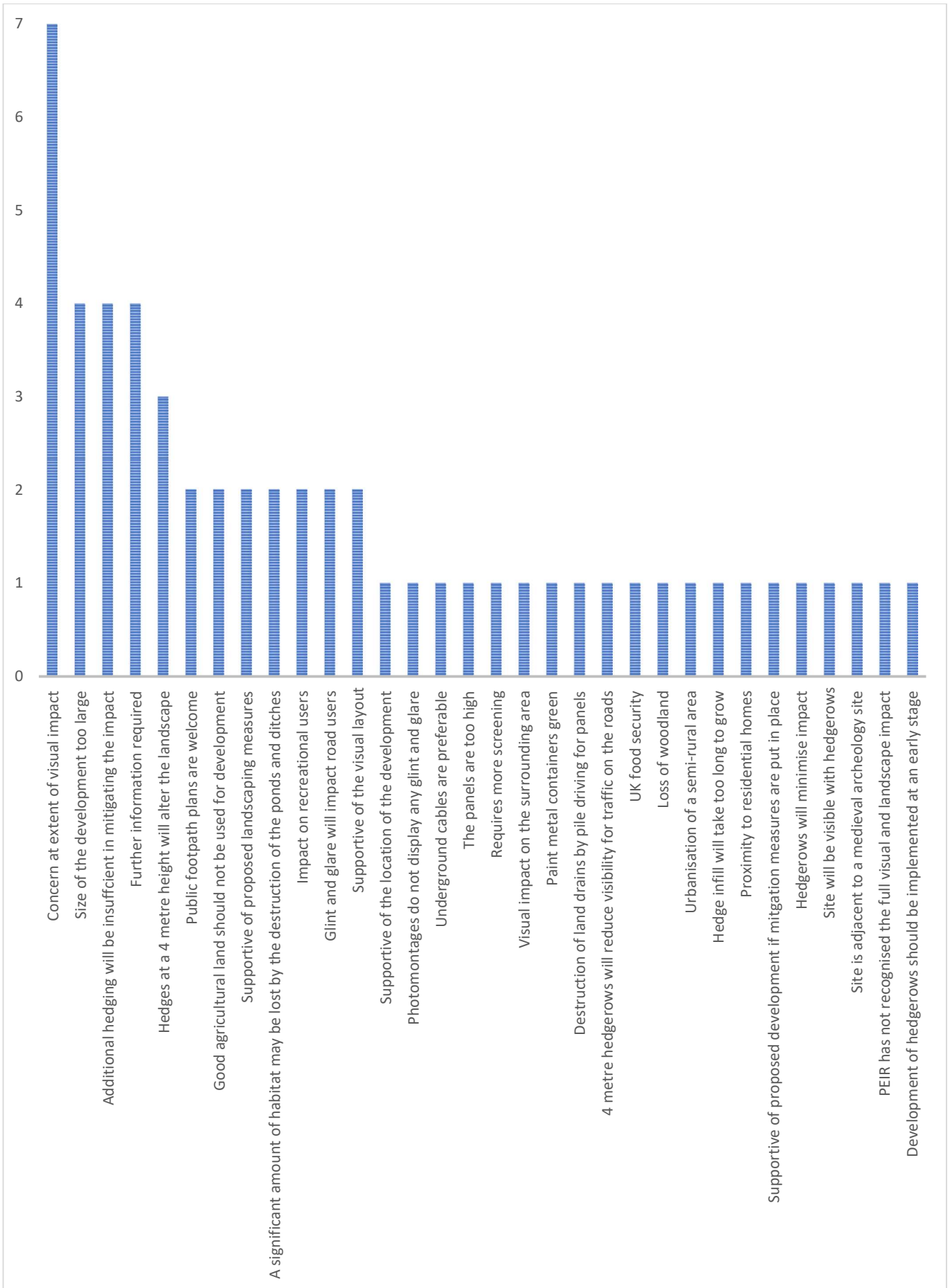
**2.5. Question 1: Do you have any comments on the proposed siting or layout of the solar farm and energy storage facility taking into account any known constraints in the area?**

- 2.5.1. Respondents to this question provided a range of feedback, comments, thoughts, and suggestions. The most common issue raised was related to the size of the development, with the indication that it is 'too large', causes undue visual impacts and the 'industrialisation' of the rural landscape in the vicinity. Further detail on this issue is included in the feedback to question 2.
- 2.5.2. Other common points were raised in relation to traffic and transport, with respondents noting a concern over the impacts to the local road network. The use of agricultural land was raised as a concern by some respondents with a preference for siting elsewhere.
- 2.5.3. Concerns around the use of agricultural land and the requirement for UK food security were also raised by several respondents.
- 2.5.4. Several general statements in support of the proposals, and that the constraints had been suitably considered, as well as general comments in opposition to the proposals were also noted.
- 2.5.5. There were also several general comments in support of the proposals, as well as several individual comments or suggestions, which are included in the below graph.



**2.6. Question 2: Do you have any comments on our assessment of any landscape and visual impact considerations including our landscaping proposals as set out in the Landscape Strategy Plan?**

- 2.6.1. As with question 1, the most common issue raised in response to this question related to concern at the extent of visual impact as a result of the size of the development. The general sentiment of those making these points was that the proposals are too large within the context of the surrounding landscape.
- 2.6.2. Feedback relating to the hedgerows and screening mitigation suggested that current proposals would not adequately address the visual impacts, or that hedges will themselves represent a visual impact due to their height.
- 2.6.3. Other comments welcomed the public footpath proposals and the proposed landscaping measures set out in the consultation materials.
- 2.6.4. Some respondents noted a request for additional information, and various individual respondents made general comments such as in relation to the need for more screening, or concern over the impact of glint and glare. Some suggestions include the potential to paint the battery energy storage containers green to help them blend with the landscape, and to place infrastructure, such as the cabling, below ground.
- 2.6.5. A full list of issues, comments and suggestions is summarised in the graph below:



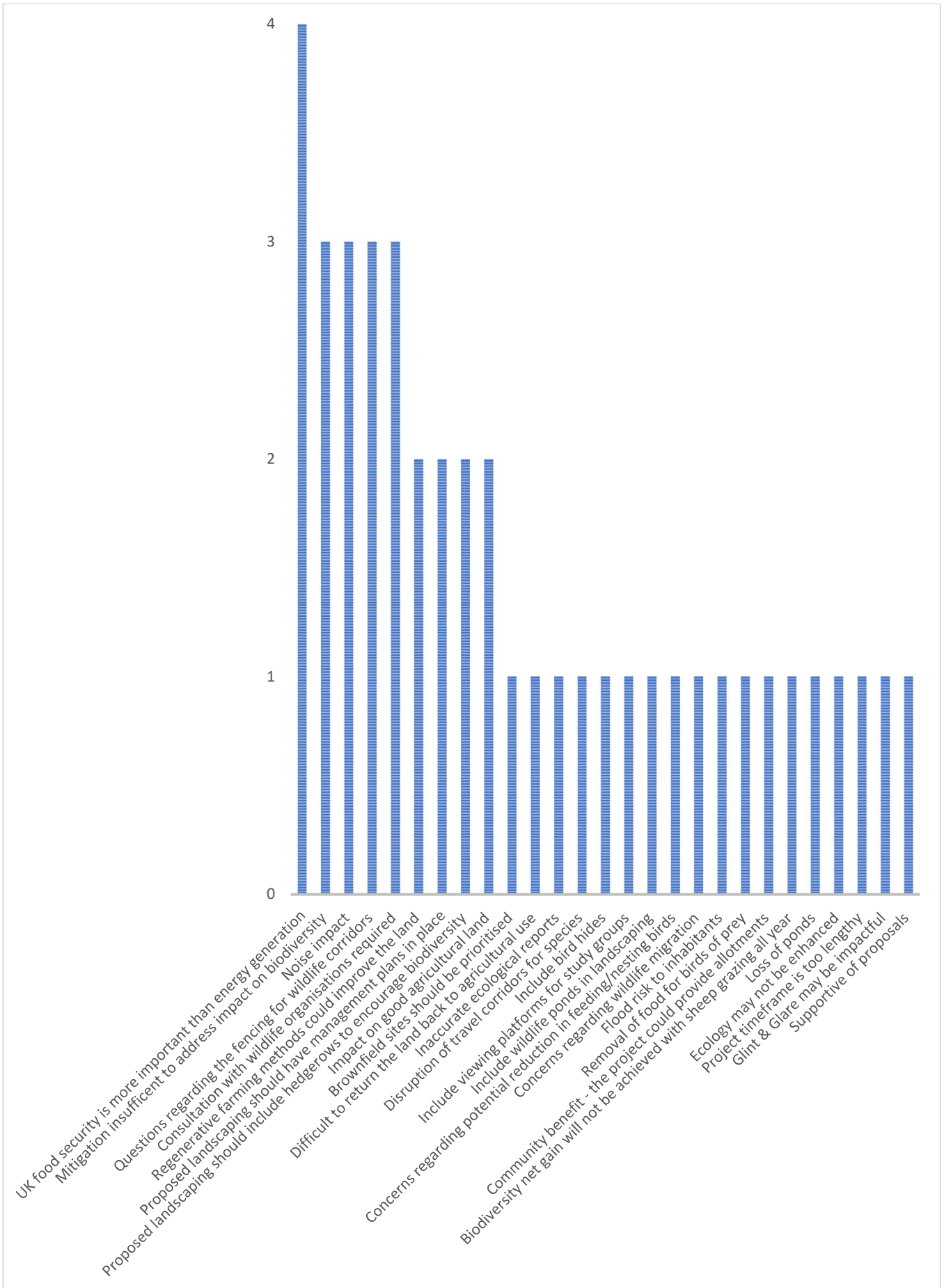
**2.7. Question 3: With regard to ecology, biodiversity, and land use, do you have any views on the environmental considerations of the proposals and the mitigation measures required to address any impacts identified?**

2.7.1. Respondents provided a range of feedback and comments to this question. The most frequent comment related to land use and the need to safeguard agricultural land to ensure food security.

2.7.2. Other common issues raised related to environmental considerations and whether or not the proposed mitigation put forward in the consultation materials would be sufficient. Specific comments relating to the need for landscape management plans, the inclusion of hedgerows, fencing for wildlife corridors and the deployment of regenerative farming were included.

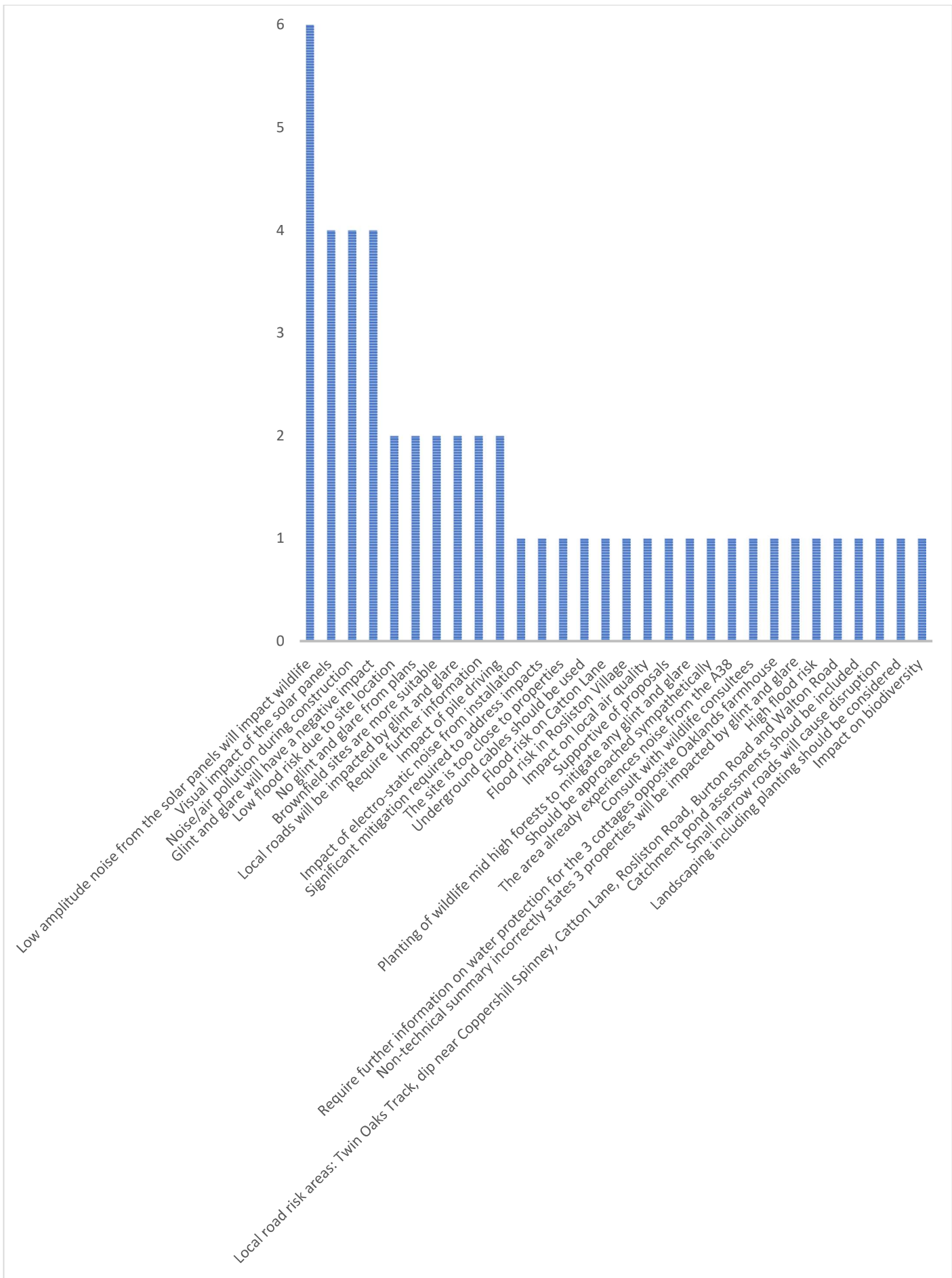
2.7.3. A range of suggestions and further individual comments were also received, including the potential to utilise bird hides, and viewing platforms for local groups, issues and concerns around impacts to birds and wildlife migration, and the issue of biodiversity net gain.

2.7.4. The following graph contains a summary of the issues included within feedback:



**2.8. Question 4: With regard to water resources and flood risk, glint and glare, air quality, noise, historic environment, or cumulative impacts, do you have any views on the environmental considerations of the proposals and the mitigation measures required to address any impacts?**

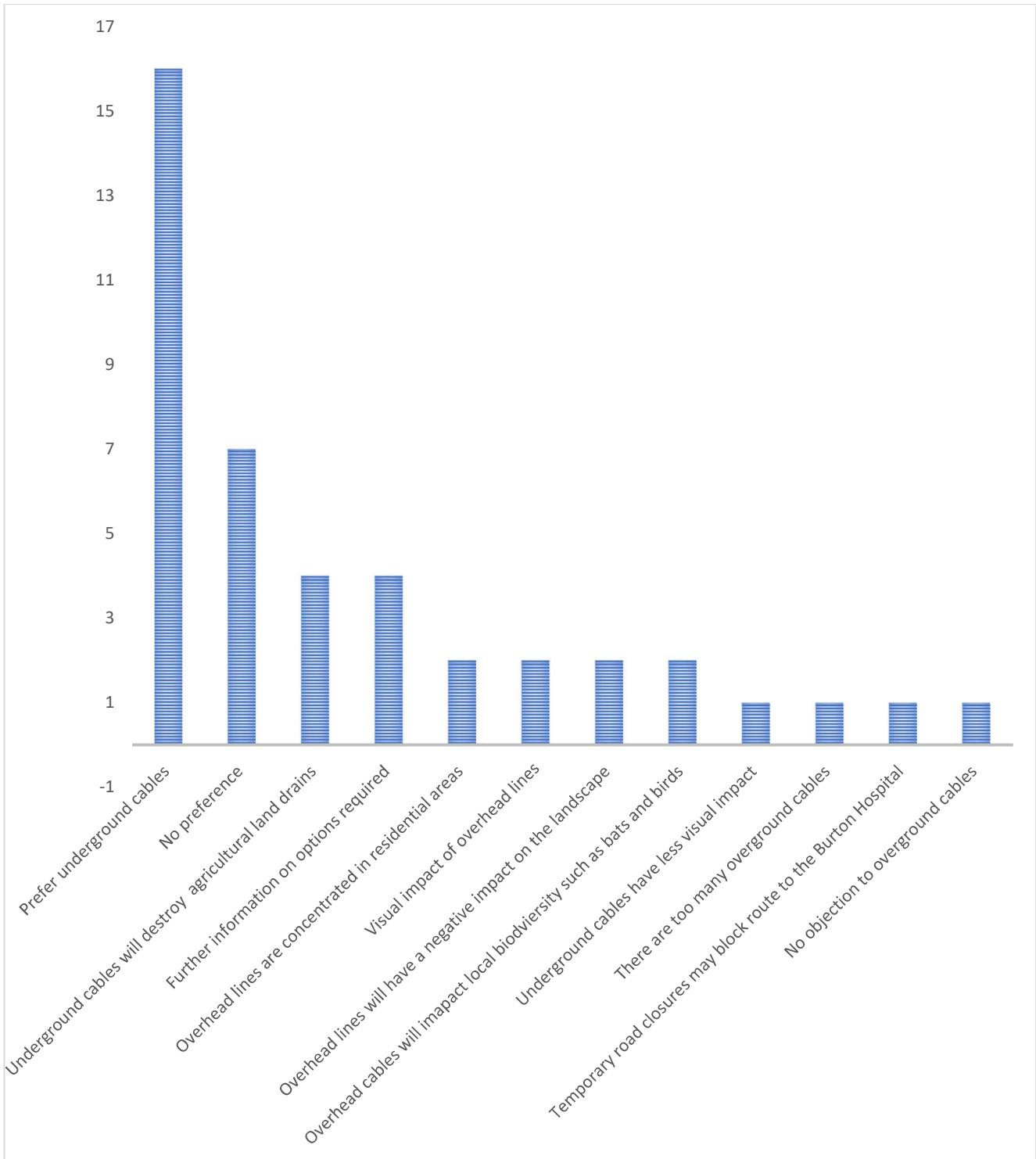
- 2.8.1. There was a range of feedback from this question across several areas, but with some common themes and issues raised. Firstly, about noise, respondents noted some concerns over the potential for the 'low amplitude' noise to affect wildlife in the vicinity of the panels. Noise from construction (for example because of pile driving the stanchions into the ground) was also raised as a concern.
- 2.8.2. Another common general issue raised was the site location, both in terms of it being located on agricultural land (with a preference to find alternative, brownfields sites), and the proximity in some areas to residential areas.
- 2.8.3. With regard to water resources and flood risk, some mixed comments were received relating to the issue of flooding, with some respondents noting that the site has a low risk of flooding, but with others raising concern about flooding in specific locations, such as on Catton Lane, Twin Oaks Track, Rosliston Road, Burton Road and Rosliston village itself. Suggestions were also noted such as the potential inclusion of water catchment ponds in the proposals.
- 2.8.4. Air quality was noted in feedback several times, with concerns raised over the impacts during construction, and more general comments relating to concerns over the impact on local air quality.
- 2.8.5. The issue of glint and glare was raised by several respondents who noted general concerns over potential impacts on the surrounding area.
- 2.8.6. Other general comments were made including supportive statements about the plans and mitigation, general statements of concern over the level of mitigation suggested and impacts to local wildlife were also noted.





**2.9. Question 5: Do you have any comments on the connection route or whether you would prefer the use of overhead or underground cables?**

- 2.9.1. Respondents to this question most frequently commented on the issue of overhead versus underground cable for the connection route. The majority stated that they preferred the use of underground cables, however a several noted that they had no preference.
- 2.9.2. Supporting comments noted that overhead cables were visually intrusive and that underground cables had less impact. There was also acknowledgement that there are 'too many' existing overhead cables in the area already.
- 2.9.3. Some respondents noted a concern that with the use of underground cables, there was a risk of damaging or destroying existing agricultural land drains.
- 2.9.4. Others requested further information and detail about the either overhead or underground cables, and some individual comments raised concerns around issues such as potential road closures to lay the cables impacting emergency routes to Burton Hospital.



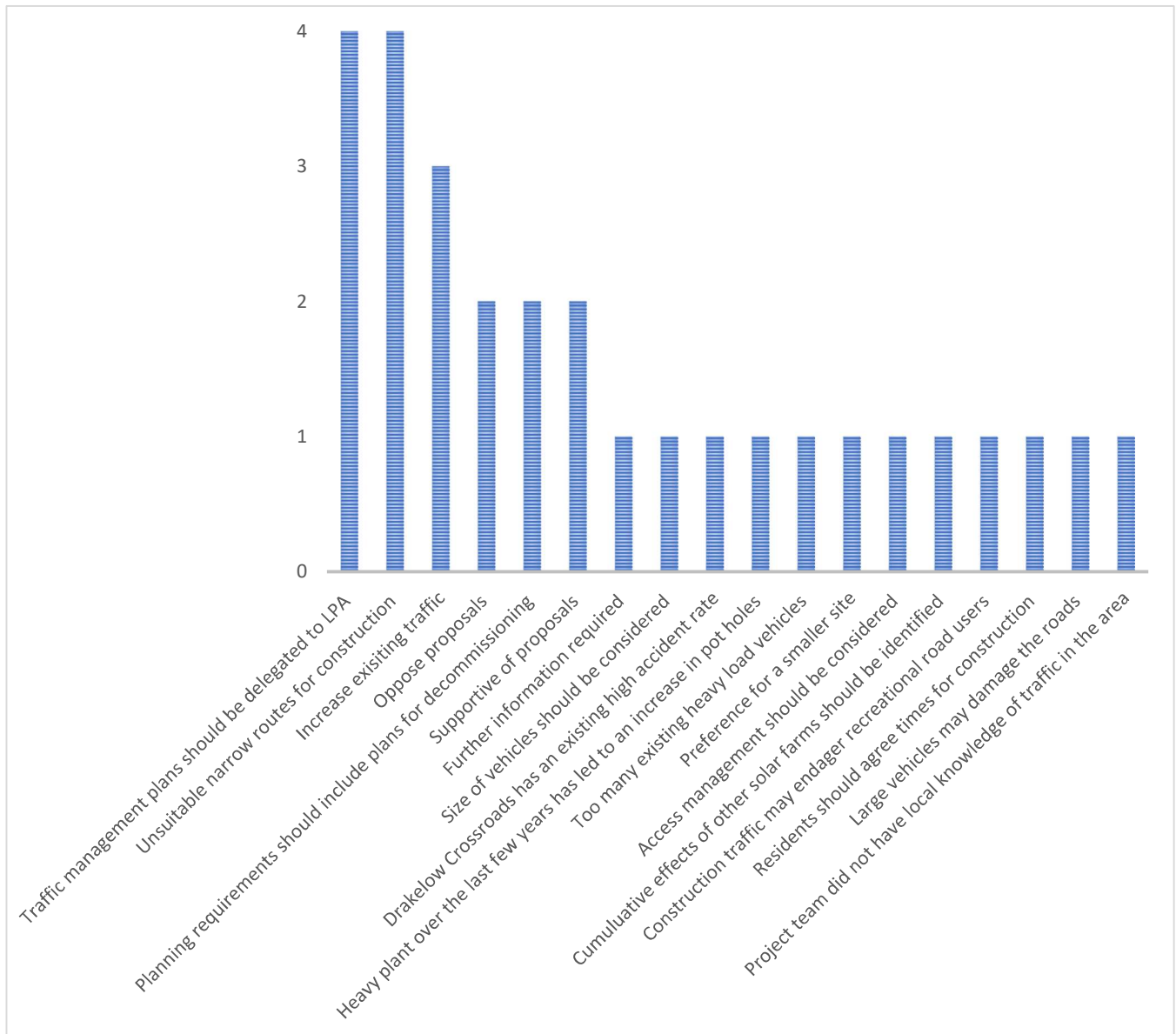
**2.10. Question 6: With regard to traffic, transport and construction, do you have any views on the proposals and the mitigation measures required to address any impacts identified?**

2.10.1. The issue of traffic and transport has been a common theme through the responses to the feedback form. Residents feel that the existing road network is insufficient to accommodate the construction traffic, and that there is a detrimental cumulative impact to the local road

network as a result of other developments (such as new housing at Drakelow).

2.10.2. Common responses include the request that traffic management should be carefully planned and that agreed with the local authority, that the roads were generally unsuitable to accommodate construction vehicles, and that the increase in traffic will exacerbate existing problems residents see on the roads which have become very busy.

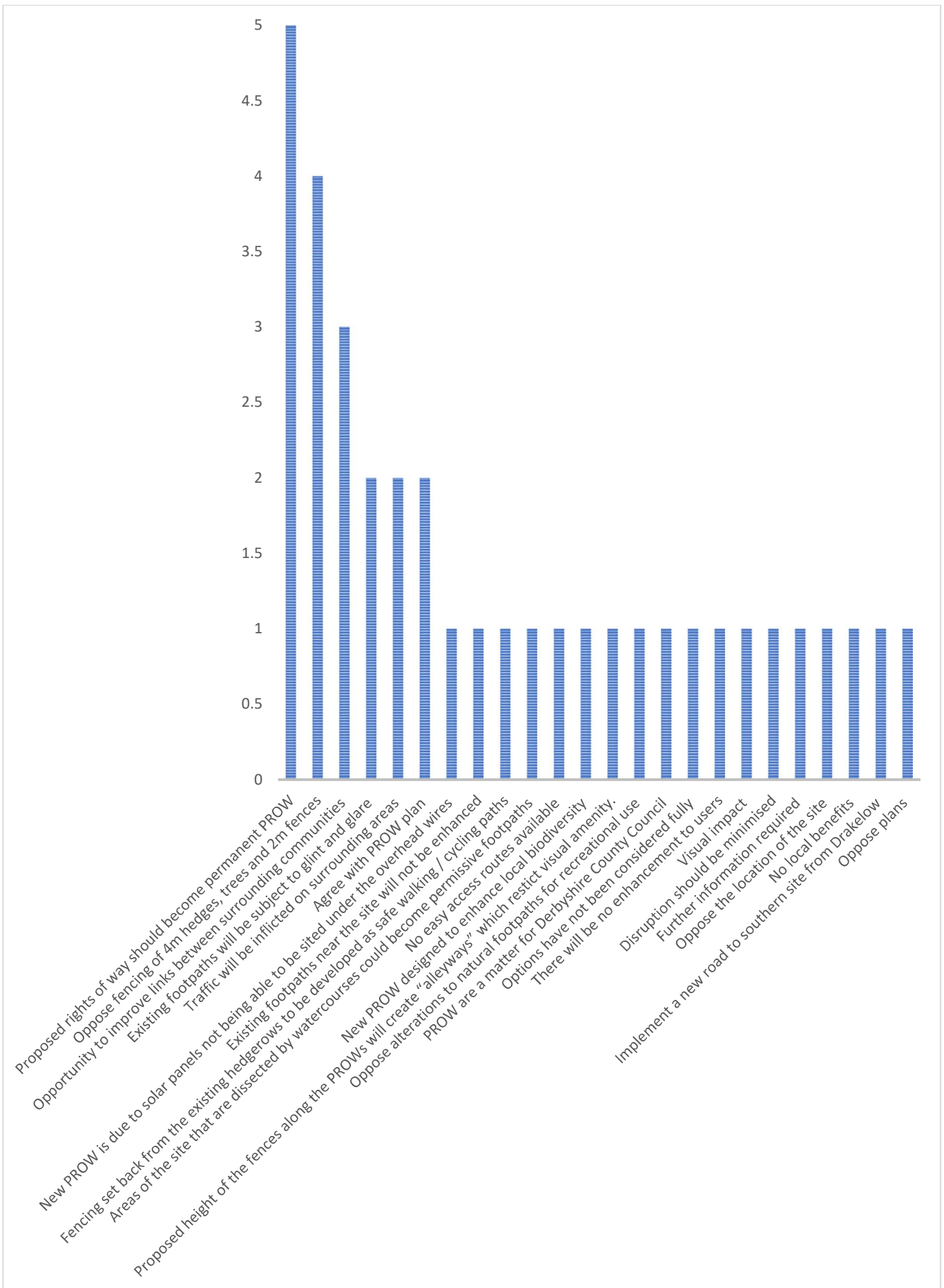
2.10.3. Other comments and suggestions include the requirement to consider road safety in certain locations (such as the ‘Drakelow Crossroads’), the effect of additional heavy vehicles on the road surface and condition, and that the size of construction vehicles should be considered to minimise impacts.



**2.11. Question 7: Do you feel that the proposed new right of way shown on the**

**consultation materials is appropriate? Do you have any alternative suggestions for local access and routes through or around the site?**

- 2.11.1. The issue of public rights of way and pedestrian access through and around the site was noted by numerous respondents in general comments. Specifically in relation to this question, aside from general support for the new identified route, the most common point raised was that the proposed new rights of way should become permanent for use by the local community. There was a desire for improved local, non-vehicular connections between the communities around the site (Rosliston, Walton on Trent and Drakelow) linking into existing public rights of way.
- 2.11.2. There was also the suggestion that the security fencing around the site could be set back from the existing hedgerows to allow for further off-road pedestrian/cycling routes along busy roads.
- 2.11.3. Other frequent comments related to the appearance of the local area and how the hedgerows, fencing and potential glint and glare would affect visual amenity around the site.
- 2.11.4. Some individual general comments were made around opposition to the scheme in general and its effect on the local amenity, requests for disruption to local access minimised as far as possible and request for further information.

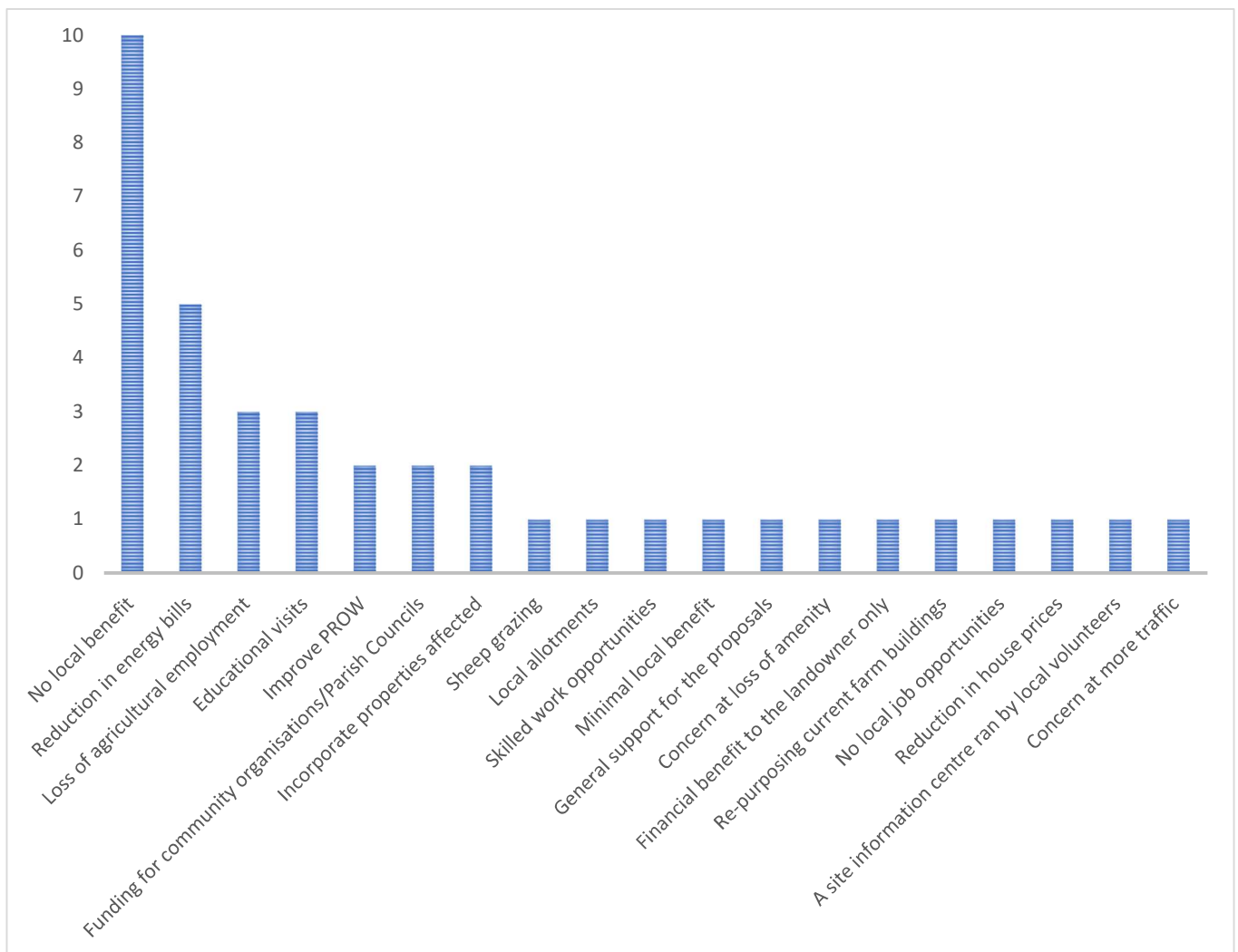


**2.12. Question 8: Do you have any thoughts on how this project could provide local community benefit**

2.12.1. The most common response to this question from respondents was a general statement that the proposals would not be able to provide any local benefit. Concerns also related to a loss in agricultural jobs, reduction in house prices locally and that there would be only financial benefit to the landowners.

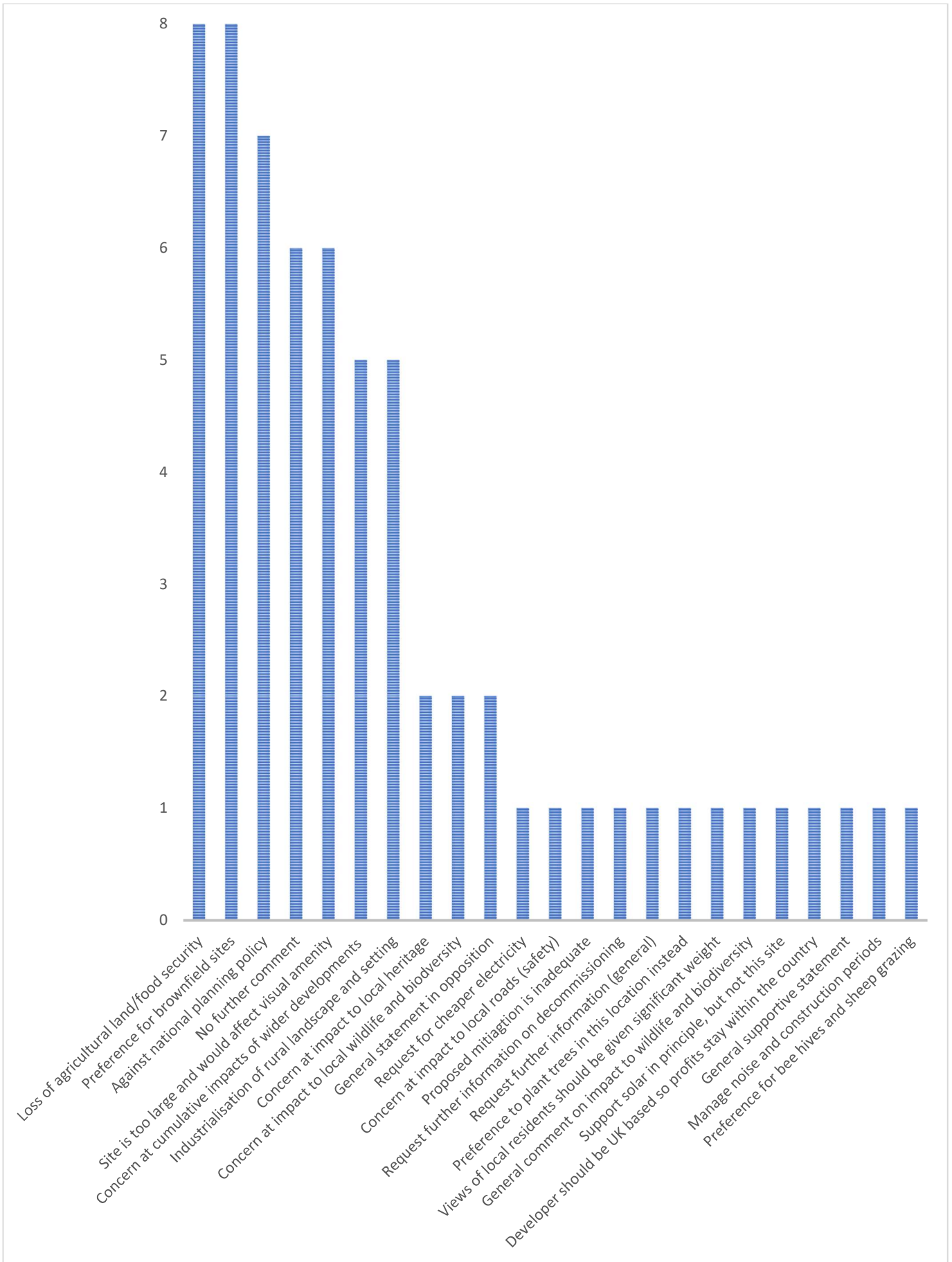
2.12.2. However, other responses to this question included numerous useful suggestions about how the Proposed Development could deliver local community benefit.

2.12.3. The most frequent of these suggestions was a request for a reduction in local energy bills. Other suggestions included providing opportunity for educational visits, allotments, sheep grazing, skilled work opportunities, public rights of way improvements and a local information centre. Contributions and funding for local community organisations and parish councils was also suggested.



## **2.13. Question 9: Do you have any other comments on the proposals for Oaklands Farm Solar Park?**

- 2.13.1. Most respondents used this space and this question to provide additional details about previous answers, or to repeat comments made on other questions.
- 2.13.2. The most frequent comments related to concerns over the loss of agricultural land and the impact this would have on UK national food security. Equal numbers of comments related to the general preference for the use of brownfield sites in the region, instead of agricultural land.
- 2.13.3. Other frequent comments included the fact that these proposals were ‘against national planning policy’, that the site was too large and visually intrusive for the local area, which would result in an industrialization of the existing rural landscape character and setting of the surrounding villages.
- 2.13.4. Various other specific concerns around impacts to local heritage and wildlife around the site, as well impacts on local roads were noted. A full breakdown of issues raised is included in the below graph.





## 3. Emails

### 3.1. Overview

3.1.1. In addition to the feedback form responses received during the statutory consultation period, written responses were also received via email under section 47. In total, 25 responses were received via email under section 47.

3.1.2. Of these written responses, ten were submitted by residents of The Chase, Rosliston and made the same, or very similar points. The Chase in Rosliston is located at the northern end of the village and would likely have sight of the Proposed Development.

3.1.3. The issues raised in these collective responses is summarised below, and responses to these points are noted in the Issues and Response table in Chapter 5:

- Solar farms should not be located in the countryside
- Solar farms can't produce a lot of energy in adverse weather conditions such as cloud or rain;
- Offshore wind will be sufficient for UK households by 2030;
- Solar Energy UK estimates that there are over 617,000 acres of suitable south-facing commercial rooftops available for solar;
- Loss of high-quality agricultural land for domestic food production;
- Loss of public and residential amenity;
- Loss of recreational amenity;
- Noise of disturbance and use;
- Damage to nature conservation/Ecosystem;
- Loss of trees;
- Contravenes local, strategic, regional, national planning policies;
- Environmental concerns regarding solar panels.

3.1.4. In addition to those responses received from residents of The Chase, Rosliston, a number of other individual local residents provided written comments on a range of issues. These are summarised below:

- Support for solar technology in general, however concern raised over impact to wildlife in

this location;

- Clarification of storage capacity of the energy storage system noted on consultation materials;
- Specific queries relating to local homeowners and their properties;
- Requesting further information and considers there has been a lack of transparency through the process;
- Industrialisation of the rural landscape;
- Loss of agricultural land and the impact on food security;
- Impacts to local amenity as a result of the new development;
- General comments in opposition, stating that building on green fields is not appropriate;
- Comments relating to the lifespan of the Proposed Development and its impact on future generations;
- Specific comments on the consultation materials (the viewpoints and indicative imagery shown is during summer with all leaves on the trees and vegetation to screen the development);
- Comments relating to the topography of the site – the undulating nature of the site means that it will be hard to hide all the panels if they are raised up;
- Queries relating to jobs and employment and how many will actually be identified in the local area;
- Issues relating to construction access routes and the consideration that local road network was not adequate to accommodate the proposed construction traffic.

3.1.5. A full overview of issues and responses to these points are noted in the Issues and Response table contained in the main Consultation Report.