

# Cottam Solar Project

## Consultation Report Appendix C5.3: Consultation Approach for Local Authorities

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## **Cottam and West Burton Consultation Approach for Local Authorities**

# Cottam and West Burton Solar Projects: Approach to phase one consultation

## Background

Island Green Power is bringing forward proposals for Cottam Solar Project and West Burton Solar Project. Both are nationally significant solar projects that cross the Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire county border. Together, they could supply enough electricity to power 324,000 homes.

Given the amount of renewable energy these proposals would generate, they will be classified as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) and require Development Consent Orders (DCOs) under the Planning Act 2008.

The Planning Act 2008 requires promoters of NSIP projects to undertake a formal stage of consultation referred to as a 'Statutory Consultation', to take place over a minimum of 28 days.

Prior to this statutory phase of consultation, and in accordance with section 47 of the Planning Act 2008, we will consult on a draft Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) with the host Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), before publicising the final SoCC and making it available for inspection. This is currently planned to take place in Q2 2022.

We also intend to undertake an additional, non-statutory phase of consultation at an earlier stage in the project development process. This approach is in line with best practice and is designed to introduce the project to key stakeholders and the community and help guide the design development of the proposals.

This document has been produced to provide an overview of the approach which will be taken for the non-statutory community consultation planned between October - December 2021 (for a minimum of six weeks), and to seek the views of host local authorities on this approach. We welcome comments and recommendations on this.

## About the projects

### Cottam Solar Project

The Cottam Solar Project is named after its grid connection point at the existing National Grid substation at the Cottam Power Station. The proposals involve a series of three areas of land (named Cottam 1-3) which would host ground-mounted solar panels and be connected by underground cable.

The project would generate around 600 MW of renewable energy, as well as having the capacity to store this energy for when it is needed most.

### West Burton Solar Project

The West Burton Solar Project is named after its grid connection point at the existing National Grid substation at the West Burton Power Station. Proposals involve a series of four areas of land (named West Burton 1-4) which would host ground-mounted solar panels and be connected by underground cable.

The project would generate around 480 MW of renewable energy and have the facility to store 20 MW of energy for when it is needed most.

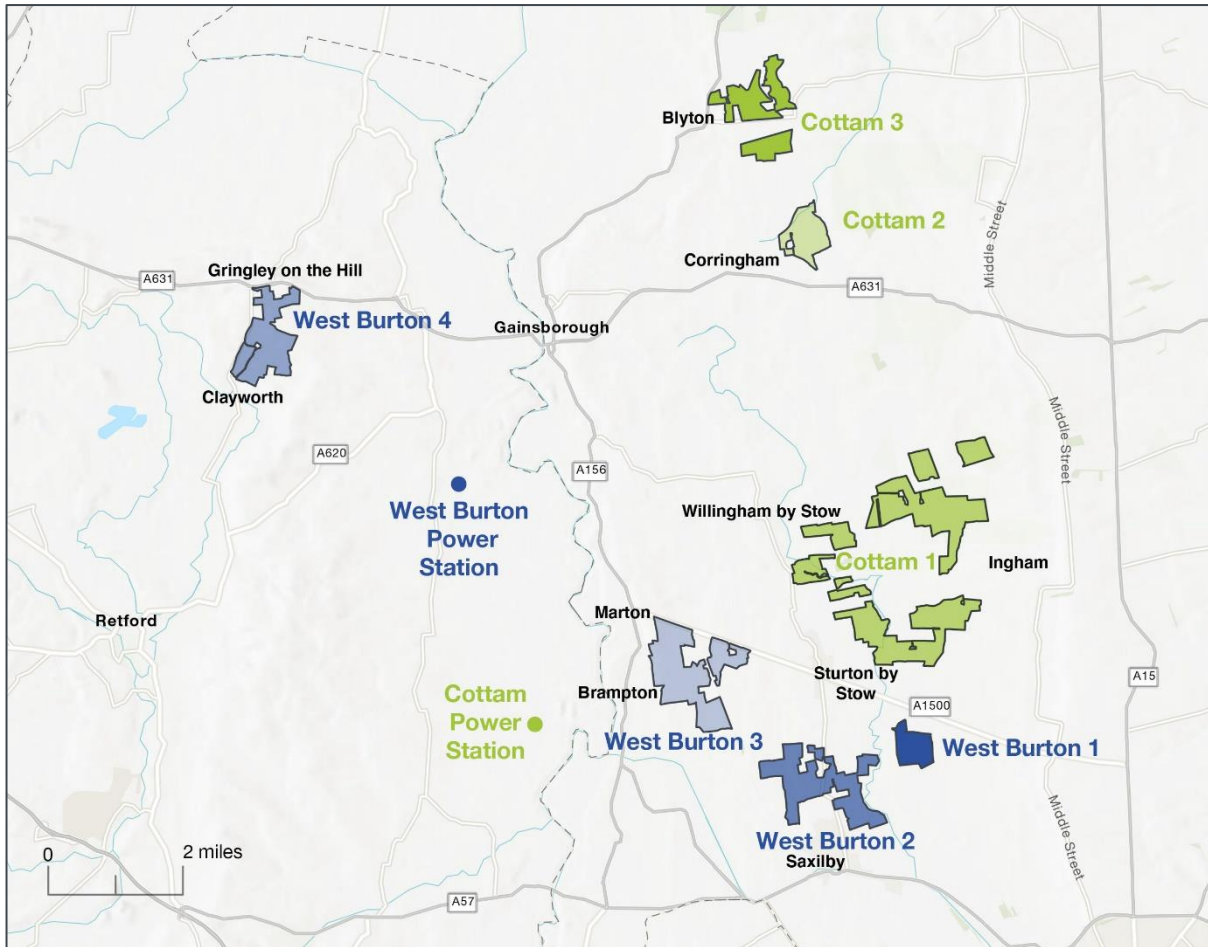


Figure 1: Map of project land parcels and grid connection points.

## Our consultation process

### A parallel approach

Both projects are in close geographical proximity, and proposals are being developed simultaneously. We are therefore proposing to coordinate consultation activities on both projects.

Practically, this will involve:

- **Joint consultation periods** for both projects, being held in parallel.
- **A shared core consultation zone** receiving information and hosting events with information relevant to both projects.
- **Combined feedback mechanisms** allowing respondents to confirm whether they consider their feedback to be relevant to both projects, or whether they would like to comment on one project (or site) specifically.

We consider the merits of a coordinated approach to be:

- **Efficiency for respondents:** Community members interested in both projects will not be required to submit phase one consultation feedback twice. This approach allows them to feedback comments on both projects in a single submission.
- **Clarity for communities:** clearly aligning the programmes and providing information on both projects in consultation literature allows us to clearly

explain both projects (and their relationship with one another) in single documents.

- **Cross-project learnings and consistency of approach:** alignment of programmes allows feedback to consider potential cumulative impacts and inform both projects where relevant.
- **Increased opportunities (e.g. events relevant to both):** a coordinated approach results in each project benefiting from a larger consultation zone and number of events than would be the case were they being consulted on separately.

## An iterative approach

We are proposing an iterative consultation process for the projects, allowing the feedback and information we receive to help inform the refinement of project options. Our consultation strategy consists of two phases, including:

- **A non-statutory consultation**, held in Q4 2021 to introduce the proposals and seek initial feedback on the project, key issues, and concerns to consider through design development, opportunities to explore, and our approach to consultation.
- **A statutory consultation**, when the project is at a more advanced stage. The timing of this consultation is yet to be confirmed, but is anticipated to take place in Q3 2022. Consultation will seek to gather feedback on the refined design, proposed mitigations, and information presented in the Preliminary Environmental Information Report.

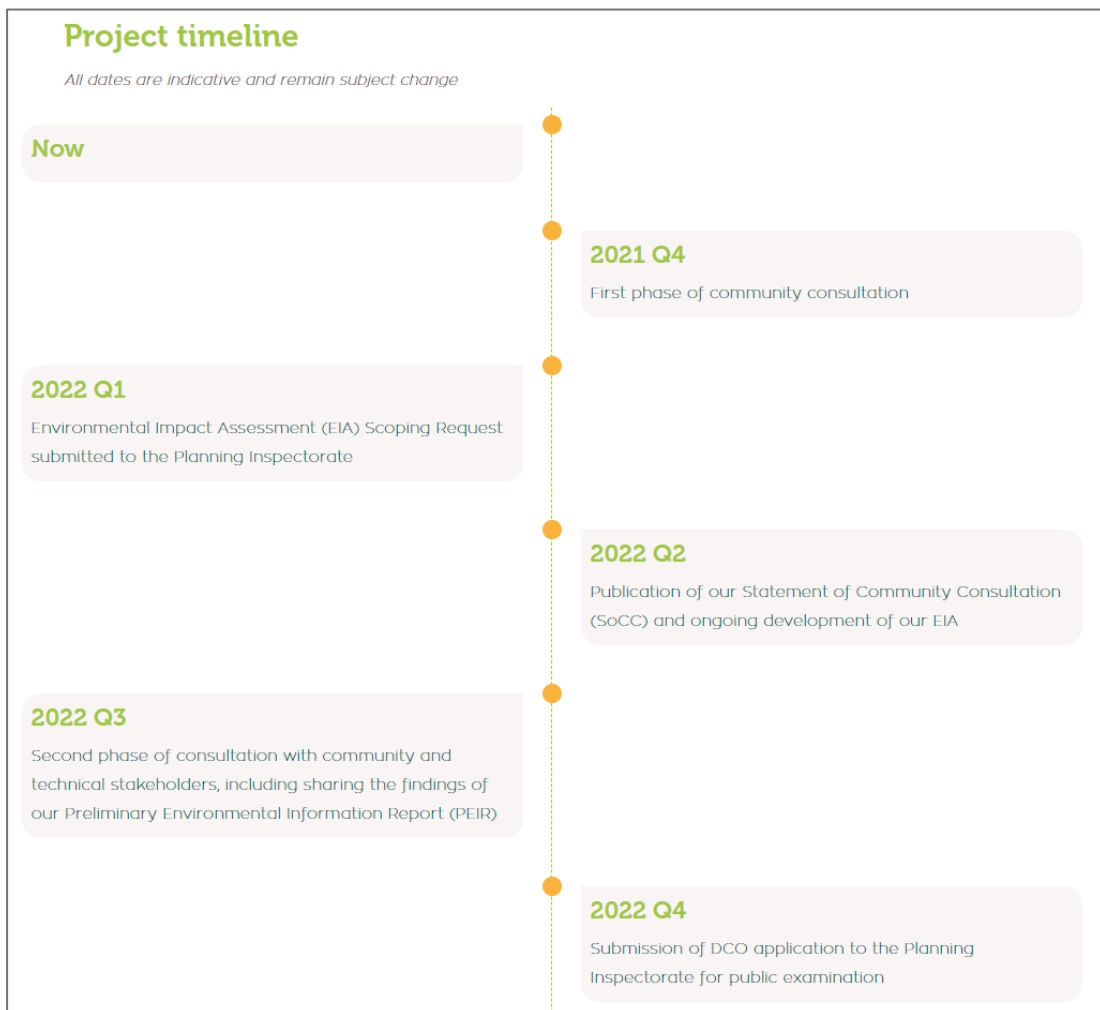


Figure 2: Indicative pre-application consultation timeline.

## What we will we consult on at phase one

The overriding aim of our phase one non-statutory community consultation is to ensure that both community and technical consultees have a chance to understand, comment and inform the development of our proposals while we are still at an early stage.

We are asking for comments at this point of development so we can build a deeper understanding of key community issues and take them into account as the project evolves. This will be part of an ongoing dialogue with communities, during which we will welcome all kinds of feedback.

We encourage local communities to give their views about how the projects may affect them or their local area. For example, we will be seeking feedback to help develop our proposals regarding issues such as, but not limited to:

- Broad project boundary and site areas,
- Corridors or areas of search for the infrastructure required to connect the panels (i.e. underground cables.)
- The criteria local communities consider to be most important in refining the design of the scheme.
- Ideas or themes for landscape/ environmental mitigation, enhancement, and wider community benefits.
- Our approach to consultation.

## Who we will we consult at phase one

Our phase one consultation will be open to all interested parties. A key audience will be local communities. They will be engaged through a:

- **A core consultation area**, which extends by a minimum distance of 2 km from the site boundaries, and 1 km from cable route search corridors. The zone has been extended further where proportionate and reasonable based on existing boundaries, and in order to avoid inappropriate 'severance' of communities. This ensures individuals and stakeholders within the vicinity of the proposed infrastructure are directly notified of the projects and their opportunities to have their say. Properties within the core consultation zone will directly receive communications such as leaflets and newsletters from us in the post. Our proposed core consultation area is presented as Figure 3.
- **A wider consultation area**, as we recognise that there may be some interested individuals or parties who are not within the core consultation area. We are committed to ensuring that these interested parties still have an opportunity to view our proposals and have their say. We will notify communities within the wider consultation area by advertising in local media. Consultation materials will be published online and available to view and collect via our contact details. Feedback will be accepted from any interested parties.

As well as the community consultation, we are also keen to discuss our proposals with a range of statutory and non-statutory consultees, including:

- Owners, tenants, and occupiers in the vicinity of our project search areas.
- MPs, local authorities, and parish councils (please see Appendix 1 for more detail)



- Statutory stakeholders, such as Natural England, the Environment Agency, and Historic England.
- Local interest and community groups. We welcome LPA feedback on who these organisations should be.

## Hard to reach groups

We have developed our consultation to be accessible to all groups in the community by presenting information using a combination of hard copy, in-person, and digital formats. We are also hosting different formats of free-to-use communications channels, including email, phone, and post.

We recognise that some individuals or groups may have difficulties taking part in consultation processes for a range of reasons. We will contact organisations representing potential hard to reach groups in the consultation area. These organisations will be contacted at the start of each consultation phase to ensure that our approach best meets the needs of its members.

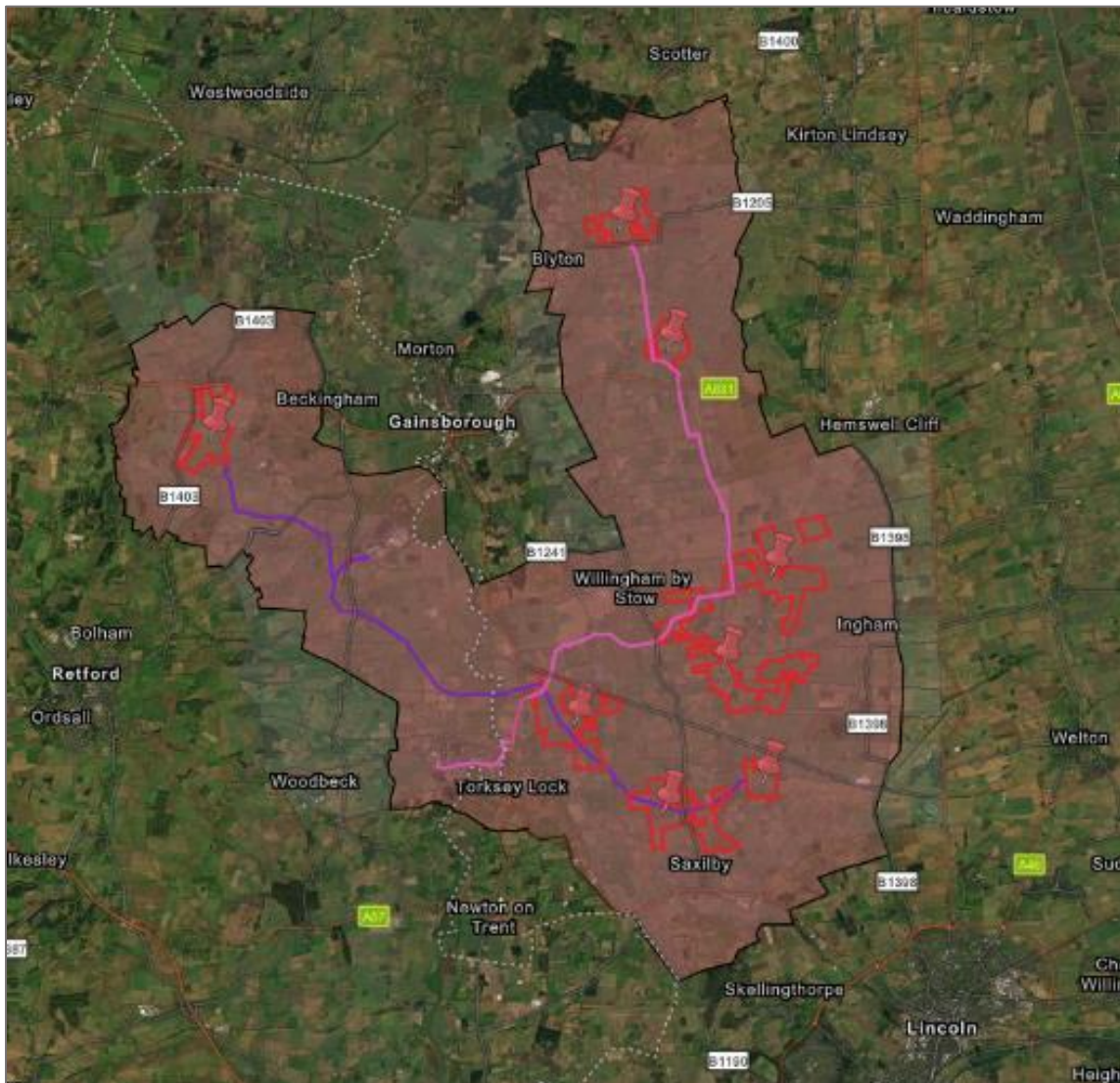


Figure 3: Indicative core consultation area, including approximately 9,000 properties. Please note, this will be updated in line with refined project boundary presented for consultation.



## How we will we consult at phase one

Our consultation activities include a range of methods to encourage our consultation to be accessed by all members of the community. This has proven especially important over the last 18 months due to restrictions on meeting in person owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. We continue to monitor these restrictions and will adapt our approach accordingly.

Our consultation methods can be considered under the following four key themes.

### **Direct**

- **Consultation leaflets** issued to properties within core consultation zone.
- **Notifications** to those who have requested to be kept informed.

### **On Demand**

- Free-to-use dedicated **communications channels**, including phonenumber, email address, and FREEPOST
- **Community Access Points** to host documents.
- **Project websites**, including a **digital engagement platform**, to be an accessible location for project information and an online option to submit feedback.

### **Face-to-face**

- **Community events** held locally
- **Meetings** with near neighbours, key stakeholders, and representatives of hard-to-reach groups.

### **Digital substitutes (if required)**

- Community webinars
- Virtual exhibition

### **Media & publicity**

- **Advertisements** in local press to promote consultation activities.

## Direct communication

**Consultation leaflets** and **feedback forms** will be issued to properties within the core consultation zone. These materials will set out information on the proposals and opportunities for local residents to have their say. They will be posted to local communities for the start of the consultation period.

Copies of all our consultation materials can be requested in hard copy form where not already provided. The materials can also be requested in alternative formats such as large print, audio, or braille formats.

**Notifications** will also be issued to identified stakeholders and groups. This will include anyone who has registered to be kept informed via our website, elected representatives, and identified community groups. Please see Appendix 1 for more detail on councillors and parish councils that will be notified.

## On demand communication

Free-to-use communication channels have been established for both the Cottam Solar Project and West Burton Solar Project.

A Freephone information line is available for stakeholders and the community to call to ask questions and provide feedback: (open 09:00 – 17:00, Monday – Friday)

A project email address is open for questions and comments.

A freepost address is also open for letters and feedback forms to be sent (no stamp required).

## Cottam Solar Project

**Freephone:** 0808 169 1848

**Email:** [info@cottamsolar.co.uk](mailto:info@cottamsolar.co.uk)

**Freepost:** CAWB Solar Projects

## West Burton Solar Project

**Freephone:** 0808 169 1858

**Email:** [info@westburtonsolar.co.uk](mailto:info@westburtonsolar.co.uk)

**Freepost:** CAWB Solar Projects

## Consultation website

Dedicated websites have also been established for each project ( [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] ) and have been live since September 2021. The websites contain project information and contact details for people to find out more.

Consultation material will be added to the website at the start of the consultation period, including digital copies of the consultation leaflet and feedback form, as well as dedicated digital consultation platform.

## Community Access Points

Consultation materials (leaflets and feedback forms) will also be available from identified Community Access Points. These will be publicly accessible buildings, such as Local Authority and Parish Council facilities.

## Face-to-face communication

We plan to hold in-person information events offering people the opportunity to discuss our proposals directly with members of the project team.

We intend to hold five consultation events covering a range of different days and times to accommodate different working patterns.

We are currently contacting venues to confirm the location, dates, and times of these events. Our proposed locations are set out in the table below.

These events will adhere to Government guidance on Covid-19 restrictions at the time. In the event in person events were not permitted, alternative online interactive events would be held.

Each event will include information on both projects and all sites, but we have tried to locate them across different project areas for the convenience of local community members.

<b>Project area</b>	<b>Communities (nearest)</b>	<b>Proposed Venue (depending on availability)</b>
Cottam 1	Willingham by Stow, Ingham, Cammeringham, Coates, Sturton by Stow	Willingham Village Hall
Cottam 2 and Cottam 3	Blyton, Corringham	Blyton Memorial Hall
West Burton 1 and West Burton 2	Saxilby	Saxilby Village Hall
West Burton 3	Marton, Gate Burton	Marton & Gate Burton Village Hall
West Burton 4	Gringley on the Hill, Clayworth	Gringley on the Hill Community Centre
All	All	Webinar

We will also host a webinar for any member of the public to join via telephone or internet. A brief presentation on the proposals will be delivered by members of the project team, followed by a question-and-answer session. Participants will be invited to submit written questions and will also get the opportunity to ask questions directly via audio. Members of the project team will then respond to the questions on the webinar.

## Meetings

The team continues to be open to requests to attend meetings with stakeholder groups and parish councils, and will manage these throughout the consultation period.

## Media and publicity

We will place adverts in the local media publications to publicise the consultation and opportunities for local communities to have their say, including the details of in-person events.

We intend to advertise in the Lincolnshire Echo and Retford Times.

We will further publicise the consultation through directly notifying stakeholders groups and individuals who have registered to be kept informed of the proposals.

Our consultation leaflet, issued to all properties within the core consultation zone, will also publicise the consultation information.

## Appendix 1: Identified County Councillors, District Councillors, and Parish Councils

County	County Division	County Councillor	District	Ward	Ward Councillor	Parish Council
Lincolnshire	Gainsborough Rural South	Councillor Richard David Butroid	West Lindsey	Lea	Councillor Mrs Jessie Milne	Upton
						Kexby
						Knaith
				Scampton	Councillor Roger Patterson	Fillingham
						Ingham
						Cammeringham
						Brattleby
						Scamton
						Willingham
				Stow	Councillor Mrs Tracey Coulson	Stow
						Sturton by Stow
						Marton and Gate Burton
	Torksey	Councillor Jane Ellis	Torksey			
			Fenton			
			Saxilby with Ingleby			
Nettleham and Saxilby	Councillor Mrs Jacqueline Brockway	West Lindsey	Saxilby	Councillor Mrs Jackie Brockway Councillor David Cotton	Saxilby with Ingleby	
Scotter Rural	Councillor Clio Lyndon Perraton-Williams	West Lindsey	Hemswell	Councillor Paul Howitt-Cowan	Corringham	
					Glentworth	
					Hemswell	
			Scotter and Blyton	Councillor Liz Clews Councillor Mrs Lesley Rollings Councillor Mrs Mandy Snee	Laughton	
					Blyton	
					Northorpe	
Scotton						

County	County Division	County Councillor	District	Ward	Ward Councillor	Parish Council
Nottinghamshire	Misterton	Councillor Tracey Taylor	Bassetlaw	Beckingham	Councillor Joan Mary Sanger MBE	Walkeringham
			Bassetlaw	Clayworth		Councillor Ben Sofflet
			Bassetlaw	Everton	Councillor Mark Watson	Clayworth
	Tuxford	Councillor John Ogle	Bassetlaw	Rampton	Councillor Anthony Coultate	Hayton
						Gringley on the Hill
						Rampton and Woodbeck
						Treswell with Cottam
						South Leverton
	North and South Wheatley					
North Leverton & Hablesthorpe						
Sturton le Steeple						