



HELIOS RENEWABLE
ENERGY
PROJECT

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APFP Regulation 5(2)(q)

**Consultation Report:
Appendix 11.17 - Statutory
Consultation exhibition boards**

June 2024



Helios Renewable Energy Project Consultation Report – Appendix 11.17

Appendix 11.17 - Statutory Consultation exhibition boards

Welcome to the Helios Statutory Consultation



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

The consultation period runs from 26 October to 7 December 2023.

These exhibition boards provide an overview of our refined proposals, including key themes and topics that are being considered as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process.

Further detailed information on our proposals, as well as digital copies of all consultation materials, can be found at: www.helios-renewable-energy-project.co.uk



Our Proposals

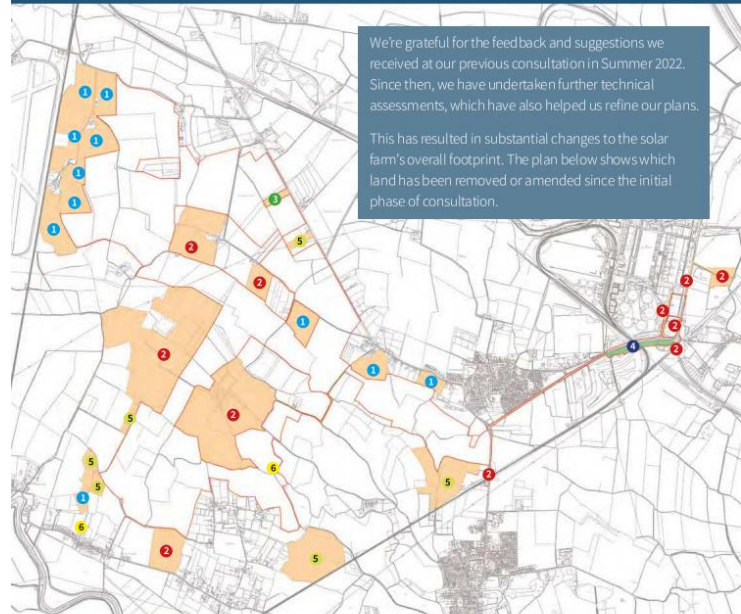


Helios Renewable Energy Project consists of a solar farm with battery energy storage and associated infrastructure.

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



Our latest plans – What’s changed?



We're grateful for the feedback and suggestions we received at our previous consultation in Summer 2022. Since then, we have undertaken further technical assessments, which have also helped us refine our plans.

This has resulted in substantial changes to the solar farm's overall footprint. The plan below shows which land has been removed or amended since the initial phase of consultation.

KEY		Main Reasons:	
Site Boundary	1 Proximity to receptors (e.g. houses).	4 Grid connection corridor.	
Areas Added	2 No longer required.	5 Constrained area for solar panel placement.	
Areas Removed	3 Woodland.	6 Access requirement.	

We'd like your views

We intend to submit a planning application to the Planning Inspectorate in 2024, however, before we do, we want to hear your views on the latest proposals and how the project can provide benefit to local communities.

About us

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

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

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



190MW of clean renewable energy.

Enough to power around 47,500 homes in England each year.

Saving an estimated 36,500 tonnes of CO₂ annually.



Summary of other updates to plans

Inclusion of buffers and offsets from residential houses to minimise impacts.

Reduction in land used from approximately 757ha to approximately 476ha.

Nearly 300ha of new grassland created across the site.

Improvements to hedgerow field margins to help integrate the site within the landscape.

Over 10ha of new broad-leaved woodland to screen the development.

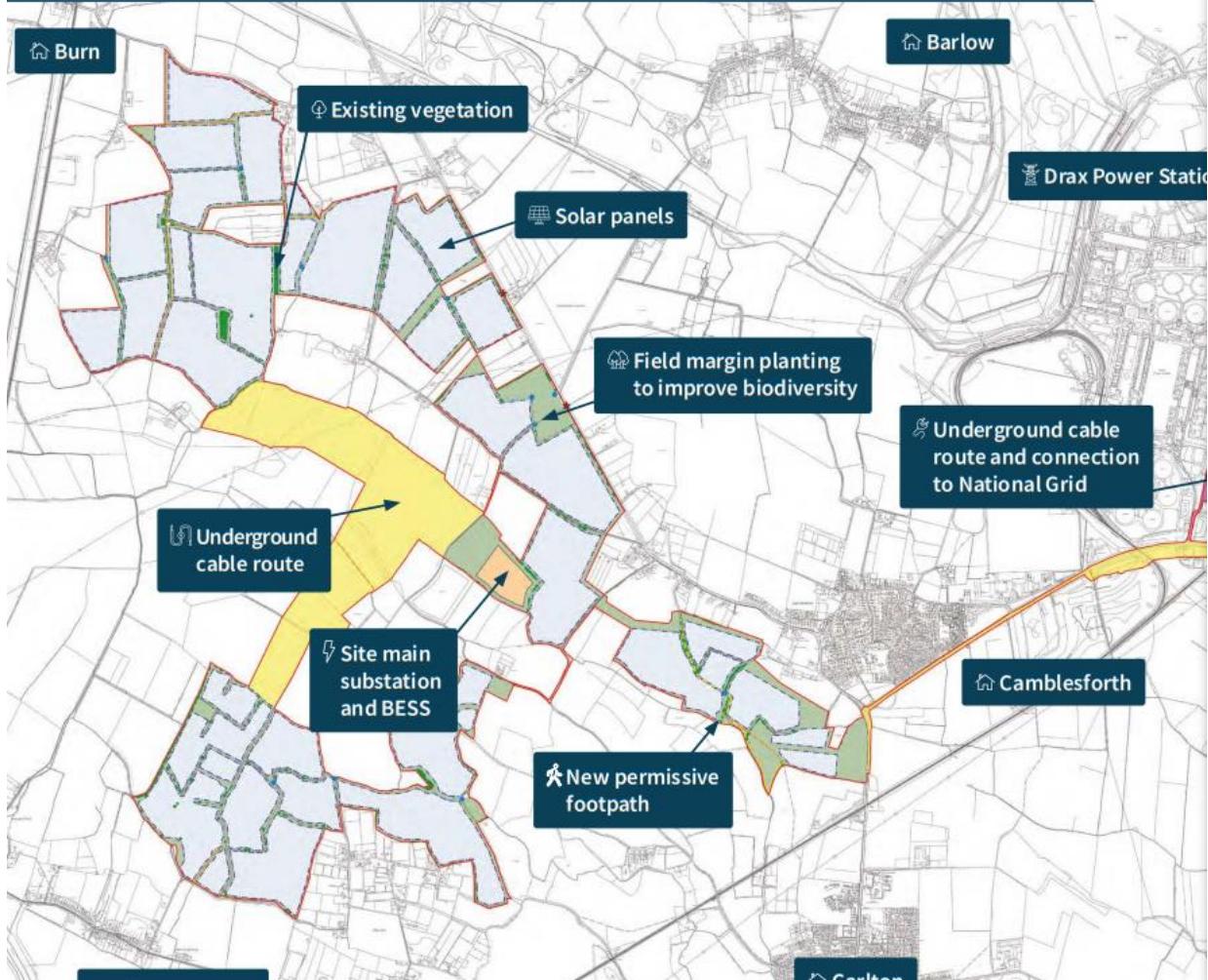
Confirmation of cable route connection corridor via underground cable to minimise disruption.

Enhanced public access to link Camblesforth and Carlton.





Concept Masterplan



KEY

- Site Boundary
- Existing Vegetation
- Public Footpath
- Other Route with Public Access
- Trans Pennine Way
- Permissive Footpath
- Security Fence
- Solar Park Zone
Includes:
- Solar PV Modules
- Inverters/Transformers
- Access Tracks
- Access Gates
- CCTV
- Site Main Substation/Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Compound
- Existing Culvert
- Field Margin Planting
Includes:
- Habitat Enhancement Areas
- Access Track Crossings
- Proposed Site Entrance
- Underground Cable Route



Renewable Energy

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



Planting Proposals

Following a review from our technical team we have identified areas of planting within the scheme which will screen the development, minimise visual impact for the nearest residential properties and reinforce existing vegetation.



Biodiversity

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

The proposed creation of diverse grasslands, tree planting and hedgerow planting will create new habitat opportunities for breeding, foraging and overwintering as well as refuge, for a range of species including birds, bats, amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates. These interventions will have the additional benefit of improving biological connectivity throughout the site. We have committed to delivering a significant Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), ensuring that the Proposed Development will deliver a substantial ecological benefit.



Soils

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



Public Access

The scheme will be designed around existing public rights of way which will remain accessible during construction and operation.

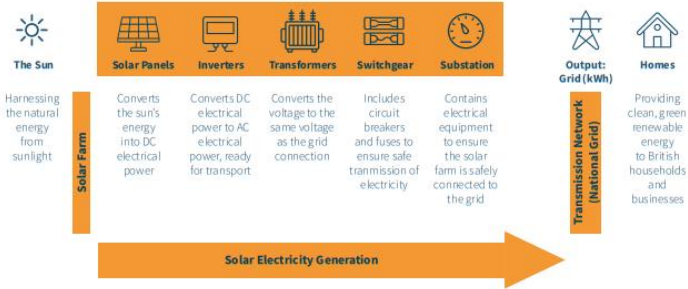
We have also identified opportunities to improve connectivity in the local area through the inclusion of a permissive footpath to link Camblesforth and Carlton.



Key Components

How a solar farm works

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



Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)

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

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



On-site substation

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



Why Solar?

Net Zero: The proposals will deliver an export capacity of 190MW of renewable energy and will support the UK's legally binding commitment to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050 under the Climate Change Act (2008). Solar is one of the cheapest and most effective renewable energy technologies and has a crucial role to play in the transition to a low carbon future.

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

Land Use: A solar farm provides an opportunity for multiple land uses; in addition to producing renewable energy, the site can continue to be grazed by sheep, supporting biodiversity and farming alongside clean energy generation.

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

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



Biodiversity

Biodiversity enhancements have been central to our thinking during the development of the proposals. A well-designed solar farm provides many opportunities for local ecological and biodiversity improvements. The project would represent a 40-year period in which the intensively farmed land can 'rest' while the boundary vegetation is improved and maintained to improve biodiversity. In addition, the following biodiversity benefits are being considered:

- Opportunities to create diverse grasslands, tree planting and hedgerow planting will deliver a quantifiable Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).
- Installation of features to promote wildlife habitation such as bird boxes and bat roost boxes.
- Year-round vegetated ground providing both habitat and foraging opportunities.
- Keeping the land pesticide and chemical free, improving soil quality and enabling species to thrive, particularly invertebrates.



The Planning Process



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

What is an NSIP?

NSIPs are major infrastructure projects such as new harbours, roads, power generating stations (such as larger scale solar farms) and electricity transmission lines, which require a type of consent known as 'development consent' under procedures governed by the Planning Act 2008. Development consent, where granted, is made in the form of a Development Consent Order (DCO).

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

Further information on the process can be found on the Planning Inspectorate website: infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk

Timeline



Technical Assessments and Surveys



Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

A full EIA has been undertaken to identify and assess potential environmental effects of building this project. This is an important process, which is developed and assessed in close consultation with relevant statutory bodies (such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, and local authority planning specialists) to ensure all potential effects are identified and that they are removed or reduced to an acceptable level.

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

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

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

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

The PEIR Chapters include:

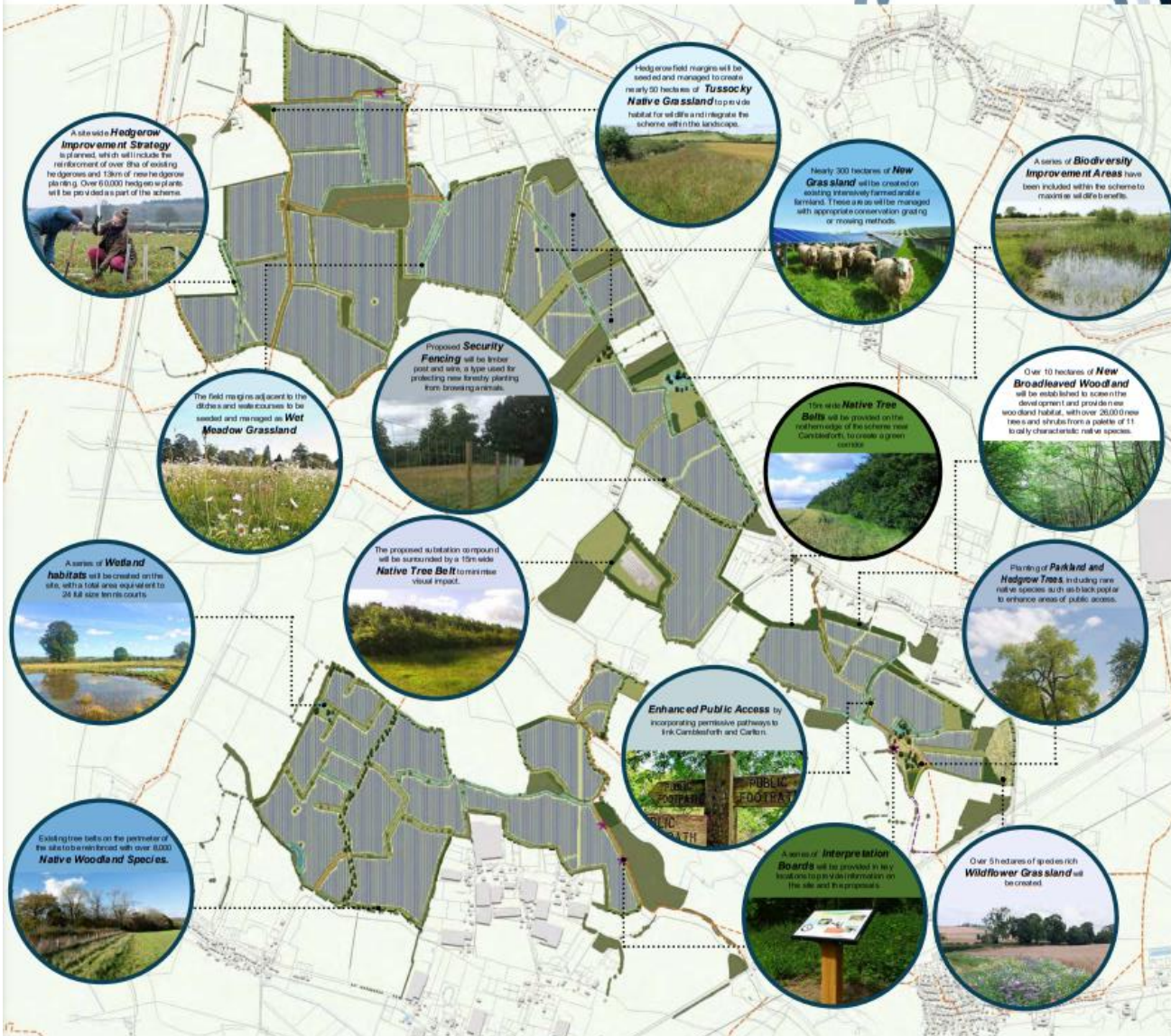
- Chapter 1 – Introduction
- Chapter 2 – EIA Methodology
- Chapter 3 – Site & Development Description
- Chapter 4 – Alternatives & Design Evolution
- Chapter 5 – Construction & Decommissioning Methodology & Phasing
- Chapter 6 – Cultural Heritage
- Chapter 7 – Landscape & Views
- Chapter 8 – Biodiversity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



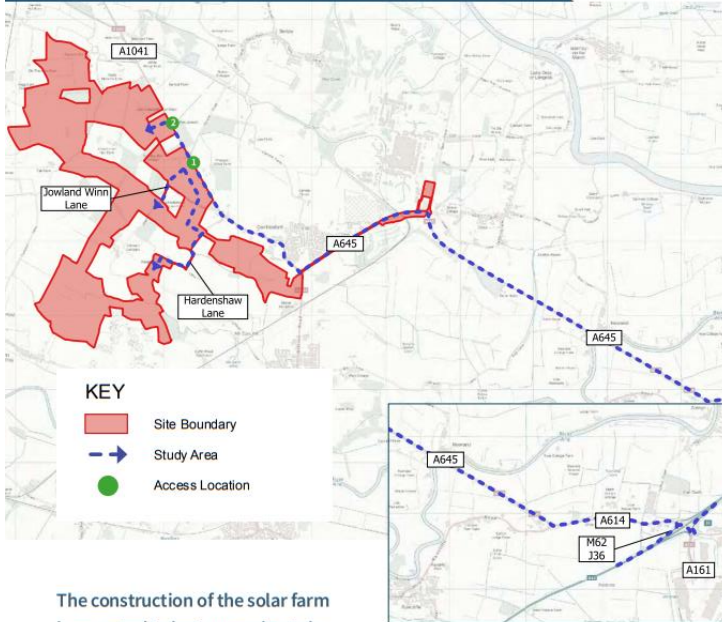


Landscape Strategy Plan

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



Construction and Decommissioning



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

As can be seen on the above plan, the proposed construction routes approach from the south and north using Junction 36 of the M62, via the A465 and the A1041. The anticipated average number of deliveries would be 20-30 per day across the 12 month construction period. The suitability of these routes will be confirmed by detailed onsite assessment and traffic surveys and agreed with North Yorkshire Council and National Highways.

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

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

Decommissioning

The project lifetime is 40 years, meaning that we would be looking at decommissioning the site in the 2060s. As part of the decommissioning phase, all solar panels, BESS compound and other infrastructure will be removed for recycling or disposal. Whilst the exact details of the process will be agreed closer to the time, the decommissioning activity will likely mirror the construction process in duration and activity. A separate Decommissioning Traffic Management Plan (DTMP) will be developed and agreed with the Local Authority for this final phase.



Community Benefit



In addition, local benefits include:

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

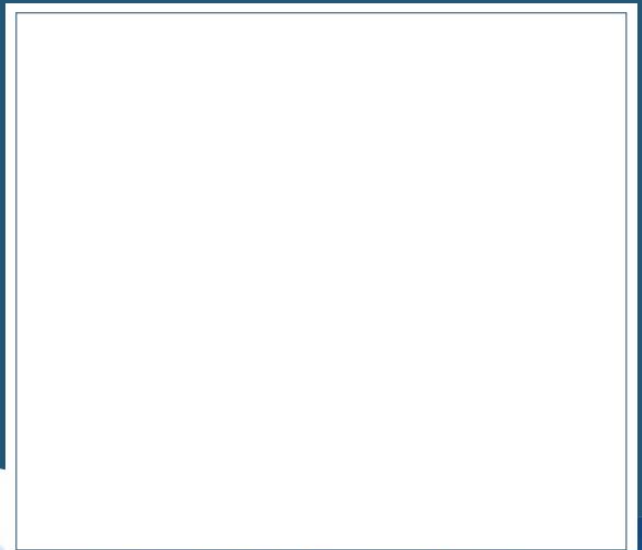
Biodiversity enhancements including reinforcement of existing hedgerows and the planting of new hedgerows, native grasses and wildflowers within, and adjacent to, the solar farm itself.

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

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

We believe that it is right that the community closest to a solar farm is able to benefit from it. We also believe that the community itself is best placed to say what community benefits should be delivered.

If you have any thoughts on how this scheme could provide local community benefit, please share your ideas with us on the feedback form. Alternatively, feel free to take a post-it note and place thoughts on this board.



Feedback and Next Steps



How to have your say?

Statutory Consultation

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



**The deadline date for comments
is 11.59pm on 7 December 2023**

Let us know your views


We are keen to understand the views of the local community and encourage you to provide your thoughts and feedback on the proposals.

Any responses or representations in respect of the Project can be made via the feedback form (available at events, on the project website and upon request) or in writing via:

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

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

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

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

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



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

