



PINS Document Number:
EN010140/APP/5.2.8.10

Pursuant to:
APFP Regulation 5(2)(q)

**Consultation Report:
Appendix 8.10 - Informal consultation
report**

June 2024



Appendix 8.10 - Informal Consultation Report

Enso Energy - Helios Renewable Energy Project

**Phase 1 Pre-Application Interim
Consultation Report
DCO/EN010140**

August 2022

On behalf of:



Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 2 |
| CONTEXT AND SCOPE OF CONSULTATION | 2 |
| THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT | 2 |
| THE APPLICANT | 2 |
| INFORMAL CONSULTATION..... | 3 |
| 2. CONSULTATION ACTIVITY | 4 |
| SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY | 4 |
| EARLY MEETINGS..... | 4 |
| PROJECT WEBSITE | 5 |
| SOCIAL MEDIA | 6 |
| PROJECT NEWSLETTER | 7 |
| PUBLIC CONSULTATION EXHIBITIONS | 8 |
| VIRTUAL EXHIBITION | 9 |
| 3. FEEDBACK..... | 10 |
| FEEDBACK RESPONSE OVERVIEW..... | 10 |
| ANALYSIS OF FEEDBACK FORMS..... | 11 |
| PHONE MESSAGES, EMAILS AND LETTERS | 18 |
| 4. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES | 20 |

1. INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT AND SCOPE OF CONSULTATION

This consultation report summarises the feedback received during the first phase of informal pre-application consultation undertaken for Helios Renewable Energy Project ('the Proposed Development'). A second, formal, phase of consultation will take place in Autumn 2022, prior to submission of a full DCO application in 2023.

This initial phase of consultation was focused on presenting early information about the proposals based on information currently available as part of the early Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping process. The scope of consultation was to introduce the project and consultation process, and seek feedback on initial issues and considerations to help build a baseline understanding of key local considerations.

THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The Proposed Development comprises the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of a renewable energy generating project on 757.46 hectares ('ha') (c. 1,872 acres) of land located to the west of the village of Camblesforth and to the north of the village of Hirst Courtney in North Yorkshire ('the site'), within the administrative areas of Selby District Council ('SDC') and North Yorkshire County Council ('NYCC').

The site is predominantly comprised of agricultural land used for grazing and arable cropping; residential properties sit adjacent to the north western part of the site. The site is bordered to the northeast by the A1041, to the west by the Selby Branch of the East Coast Mainline railway, and to the south by Hirst Road.

The description of the Proposed Development is as follows:

'The installation of ground mounted solar arrays, energy storage and associated development comprising grid connection infrastructure and other infrastructure integral to the construction, operation, and maintenance of the development for the delivery of over 50 megawatts (MW) of electricity.'

The Proposed Development has an expected energy generating capacity in excess of the threshold for onshore generating stations in England and therefore constitutes a 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project' ('NSIP') under sections 14(1)(a) and 15(1) and (2) of the PA2008. Accordingly, we intend to make an application for a Development Consent Order ('DCO') to authorise the Proposed Development.

The delivery of reliable renewable energy is a high priority for the UK Government. In June 2019, the UK Government formally codified in statute an ambition to reach Net Zero carbon emissions by 2050. The Government's 2022 Energy Security Strategy estimated that by 2035 UK solar will produce 70GW of electricity annually. The Helios Renewable Energy Project hopes to provide a significant contribution towards these targets.

THE APPLICANT

The Applicant for the Proposed Development is Enso Green Holdings D Limited.

Helios Renewable Energy Project Consultation Report – Appendix 8.10

Enso Green Holdings D Limited is 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.

Further details can be found at <https://ensoenergy.co.uk/>.

INFORMAL CONSULTATION

The informal consultation ran from 30th June 2022 until the 28th July 2022. There was a high rate of response to the consultation with feedback being provided via a number of channels.

Feedback responses were received predominantly from residents living in close proximity to the Proposed Development. Feedback detail ranged from specific comments and queries relating to individual respondents’ property or land, through to general comments or queries about the proposals. Key themes in the feedback provided are recorded and reviewed within this document, but include:

- Impact on agricultural land and food security
- Scale of the project and setting
- Traffic and impact on local road network
- Impact on biodiversity and ecology
- Visual and landscape
- Impact on residents and on the value of homes
- Community Benefit and public rights of way
- Other environmental considerations, such as flood risk, glint and glare and noise

The table below summarises top level engagement statistics:

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Number of newsletters issued to closest residents | 4815 |
| Number of public consultation events held | 2 |
| Number of attendees to events | 109 |
| Number of feedback forms returned (total) | 84 |
| <i>Of which:</i> | |
| - <i>Via Freepost comment card:</i> | 41 |
| - <i>Feedback form submitted in person at Camblesforth event:</i> | 14 |
| - <i>Feedback form submitted in person at Carlton event:</i> | 9 |
| - <i>Feedback form received via freepost following events:</i> | 18 |
| - <i>Online feedback forms:</i> | 2 |
| Number of emails, phone calls and letters received | 26 |
| <i>Of which:</i> | |
| - <i>Letters</i> | 4 |
| - <i>Emails</i> | 17 |
| - <i>Phone calls</i> | 5 |
| Number of (not unique) website hits during consultation period | 1,215 |
| Total feedback responses received across all channels | 110 |

2. CONSULTATION ACTIVITY

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY

This informal phase of consultation was launched on 30th June 2022 with the issue of an information newsletter to those living within the vicinity of the Proposed Development. The newsletter contained basic information about the proposals, an invitation to attend the consultation events and directions to the online locations where further information could be found. The newsletters contained a freepost detachable comments card, which contained the same questions as the feedback forms available online and at the consultation events.

Covering letters were issued alongside newsletters to stakeholders and local representatives via post and email so that they arrived in advance of the broader community mailing. The covering letter invited stakeholders to attend a stakeholder preview of the consultation event at the first event at Camblesforth Hall, and provided details of how to contact the project team with any queries, or to arrange a specific meeting.

Prior to the newsletter mailing a number of meetings were held with local stakeholders to introduce the proposals and provide information about some initial queries.

At the same time as the newsletters being issued, the project website was updated with the relevant information about the proposals, plus copies of all consultation materials for download. A full virtual consultation was also made live with digital representation of the consultation events with exhibition banners and information available for viewing online or downloading for viewing offline. The virtual consultation also contained an online version of the feedback form.

In addition to this, other means of advertising the consultation were launched, including requesting that local parish councils share details of the consultation with their networks, and the launch of the project Twitter feed, which posted regular updates about the consultation process and how to find out more information or provide feedback.

Further information on activity undertaken is summarised below.

EARLY MEETINGS

Early meetings were undertaken with several local stakeholders to provide an introduction to the proposals and explain the forthcoming consultation process. Meetings were held with the following stakeholders:

| Stakeholder | Date | Topics discussed |
|---|------------|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Councillor Mike Jordan (NYCC and SDC ward member)• Councillor Charles Richardson (SDC ward member)• Councillor Richard Musgrave (Deputy Leader SDC)• Russel Wagstaff (Hirst Courtney Parish Council) | 30.06.2022 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Principle of development/homes powered/overview of project components/Planning process- Scheme size/constraints- Biodiversity net gain/environmental considerations- Public rights of way- Screening and visual amenity- Flood risk and drainage- Access and cable route corridor- Traffic generation during construction- Community benefit- Noise |

Helios Renewable Energy Project Consultation Report – Appendix 8.10

| | | |
|--|------------|---|
| | | - Local engagement with traveller community |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr Howard Ferguson (on behalf of Nigel Adams MP) | 07.07.2022 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Principle of development/homes powered/overview of project components/Planning process - Biodiversity net gain/environmental considerations - Public rights of way - Screening and visual amenity - Flood risk and drainage - Access and cable route corridor - Traffic generation during construction - Community benefit |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chloe Ellis, Planning Advocate, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust • Ellen Milner- Planning Ecologist, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust • David Powel- Manager of Barlow Common reserve, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust • Jon Parkes- Head of Advocacy, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust • David Craven- Regional Manager (East), Yorkshire Wildlife Trust | 04.08.2022 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Principle of development/homes powered/overview of project components/Planning process - Biodiversity net gain/environmental considerations - Desire to work closely to see biodiversity enhancements (and links with Barlow Common) |

A project presentation was developed for these meetings to explain the Proposed Development and the consultation process. A copy of this presentation can be found on the project website: <https://www.helios-renewable-energy-project.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Presentation-Helios-Renewable-Energy-Project-July-2022.pdf>.

PROJECT WEBSITE

The project website was initially launched in June 2022 following submission of the Scoping request with basic information about the proposals and the forthcoming consultation.

The website was updated upon launch of the Phase 1 informal consultation on 30th June 2022 providing full details of the consultation including all mechanisms for responding, details of the public consultation events, the virtual consultation, contact email address, feedback forms, freepost address and the freephone telephone number. It also contained the following project documents:

- Newsletter
- Project presentation slides
- Concept Masterplan
- Indicative Transport Route Plan
- Feedback form
- Site location map

During the consultation period the website received 1,215 impressions.



Welcome to the Helios Renewable Energy Project

The Helios Renewable Energy Project (HREP) proposals comprise a solar farm, alongside an Energy Storage System (ESS), to help manage and store electricity produced by the solar panels.

The scheme could deliver up to 250 MW of electricity, which is enough clean energy to power approximately 61,950 homes and will assist in tackling the climate emergency and to help the UK Government in meeting its target for net zero emissions by 2050. The proposals also represent a significant opportunity to reduce the UK's reliance on foreign energy supplies.

The proposed site is located to the west of the village of Camblesforth and to the north of the village of Hirst Courtney in North Yorkshire. The development is situated within the administrative areas of Selby District Council and North Yorkshire County Council.

SOCIAL MEDIA

The project social media page was launched on the 1st July 2022 on Twitter. Information was shared on the launch of the informal consultation to include all mechanisms for responding as well as the dates for the public consultation events. Social media posts continued throughout the consultation period to keep members of the public informed and to continue to advertise the consultation.



Helios Renewable Energy Project
@HeliosREProject

We're in Camblesforth Hall today between 2pm and 7pm to talk about the #Helios proposals. Please come along to meet the team and find out more about the #Helios proposals.



3:24 PM · Jul 14, 2022 · Twitter Web App



Helios Renewable Energy Project
@HeliosREProject

We're in Carlton Village Hall today between 12.30pm and 5pm to talk about the #Helios proposals. Please come along to meet the team and find out more about the #Helios proposals.



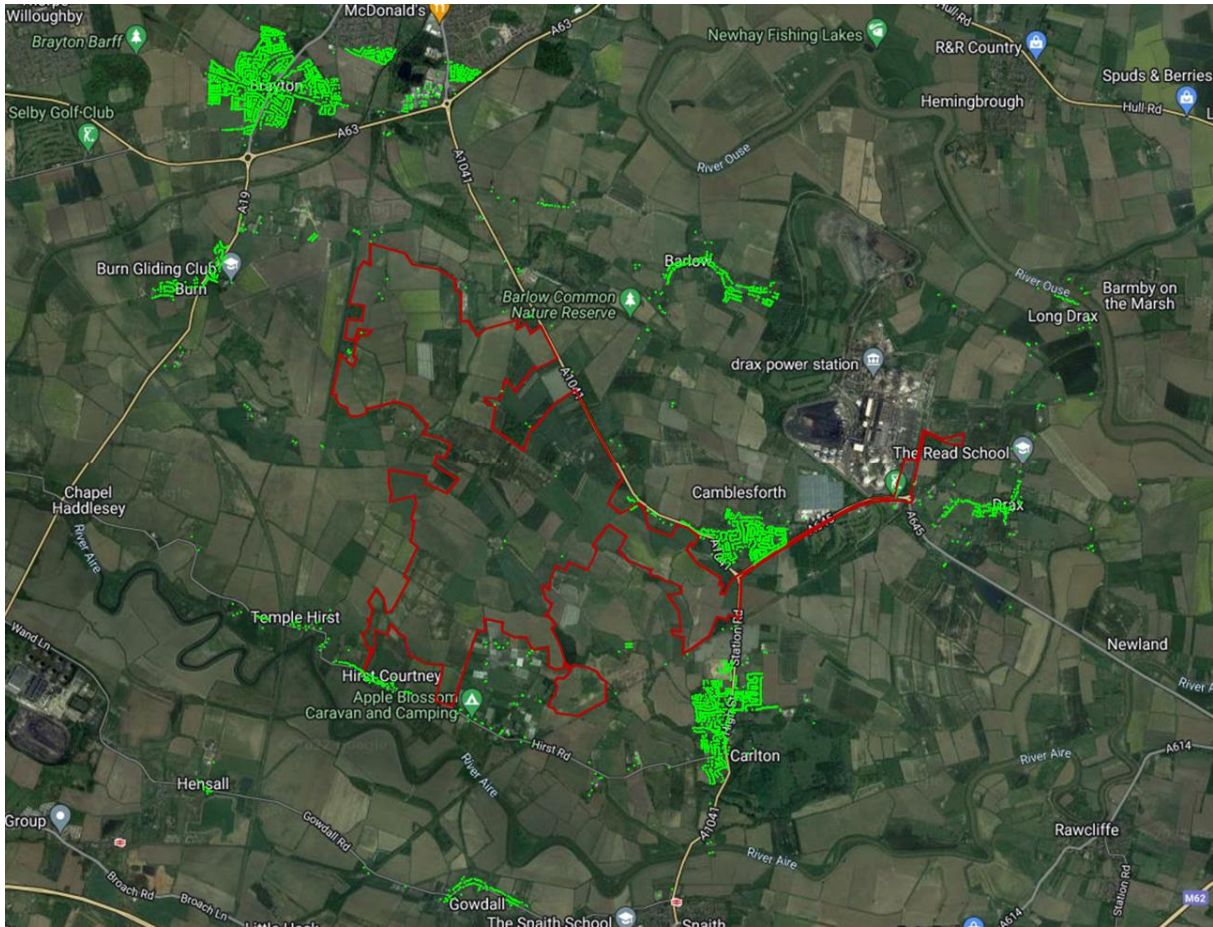
PROJECT NEWSLETTER

A project newsletter announcing the consultation was posted to 4815 surrounding homes on 30 June 2022 (distribution was undertaken by a reputable company with the ability to track data on each delivery).

All homes within a base 2 kilometre radius, with extensions in certain areas deemed to have a greater potential to see the solar farm received the project newsletter inviting them to have their say on the proposals. A map of the distribution area can be seen below. Copies of the

Helios Renewable Energy Project Consultation Report – Appendix 8.10

newsletter are available to download from the documents page of the Project Website
<https://www.helios-renewable-energy-project.co.uk/project-documents/>



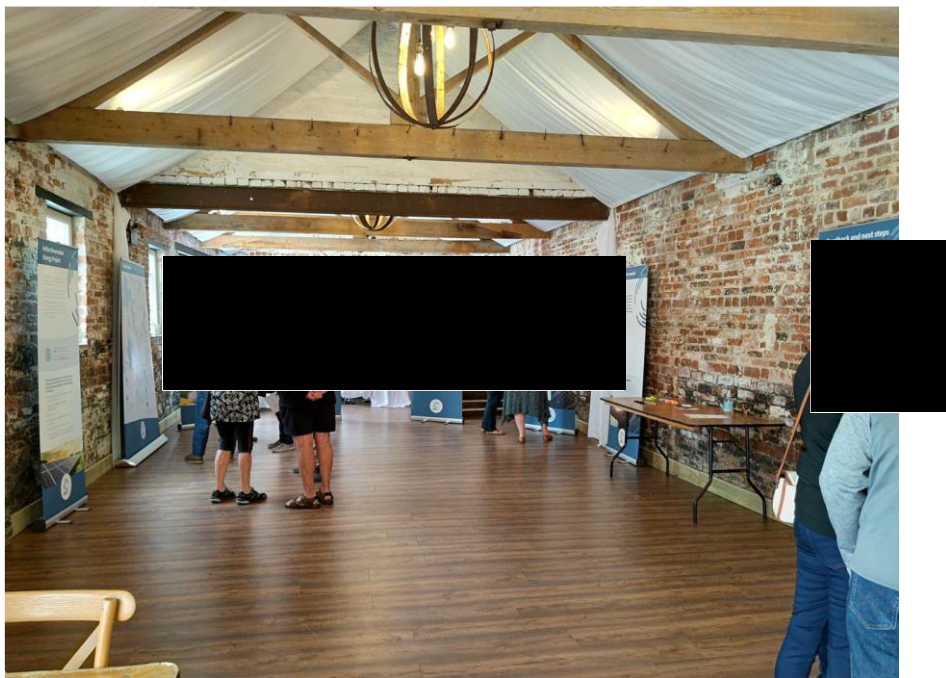
The project newsletter included detail on:

- A project overview
- About the developer
- How to get involved with the pre-application public consultation
- Detail of the public consultation events
- Project timeline
- Concept Masterplan
- Online virtual exhibition
- Benefits of the Project
- How to keep in touch



PUBLIC CONSULTATION EXHIBITIONS

The venues for the public consultation exhibitions were carefully considered, accounting for proximity to the proposed development and factors such as space and availability. Public transport and adequate parking space were also considered, as was the suitability for disabled visitors.



The consultation events took place at the following times, dates and locations:

- **Camblesforth Hall**, Brigg Lane, Camblesforth, Selby, YO8 8HJ – Thursday 14th July 2022, 2pm to 7pm
- **Carlton Village Hall**, Church Lane, Carlton, DN14 9PB – Friday 15th July 2022, 12.30pm to 5pm

The exhibitions were promoted through the project website, via the social media posts, project newsletter and letters issued to stakeholders.

Helios Renewable Energy Project Consultation Report – Appendix 8.10

Consultees were able to view and read all of the consultation materials including the exhibition boards, project documentation, and site map, with the option to complete the feedback form on site or to send via freepost.

In attendance at the public consultation exhibitions were representatives from Enso Energy and Thirty4/7 Communications.

Total attendance across the two days of the exhibitions was 109 visitors.

| Location | Camblesforth Hall | Carlton Village Hall |
|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Number in attendance | 64 | 45 |

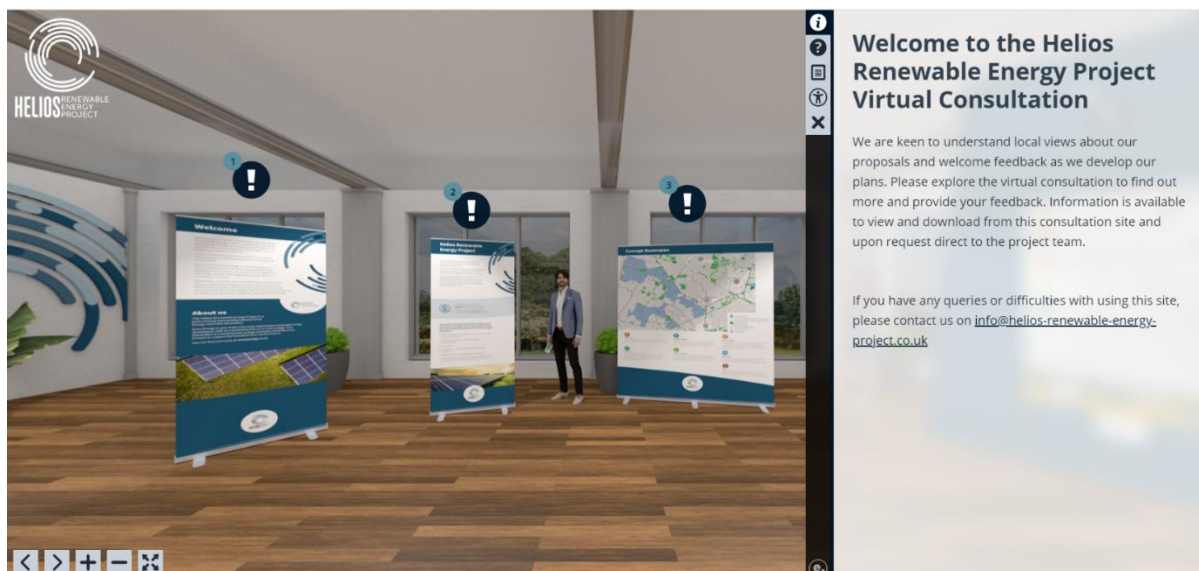
In addition to local residents and landowners, a number of local councillors and council officials attended the public exhibition events, including:

- Cllr Lisa Quinn, Selby District Council Planning Committee;
- Cllr Neal Yates, Chair of Camblesforth Parish Council;
- Cllr Mike Jordan, ward member for Camblesforth & Carlton at North Yorkshire County Council;
- Richard Beason, Economy and Infrastructure Manager at Selby District Council.

VIRTUAL EXHIBITION

The virtual exhibition was available via the Project website throughout the public consultation ensuring the consultation materials exhibited at the face-to-face public consultation exhibitions were also available to those unable to attend in person.

Visitors were able to view and read all the consultation materials, including the exhibition boards and project documentation, before completing the feedback form. There was also a 'contact us' option providing details of how to get in touch with the project team.



3. FEEDBACK

FEEDBACK RESPONSE OVERVIEW

There was a high rate of response throughout the consultation period indicating a general high level of interest and willingness to engage with the proposals from the local community. In total **110** responses containing feedback were received during the consultation period.

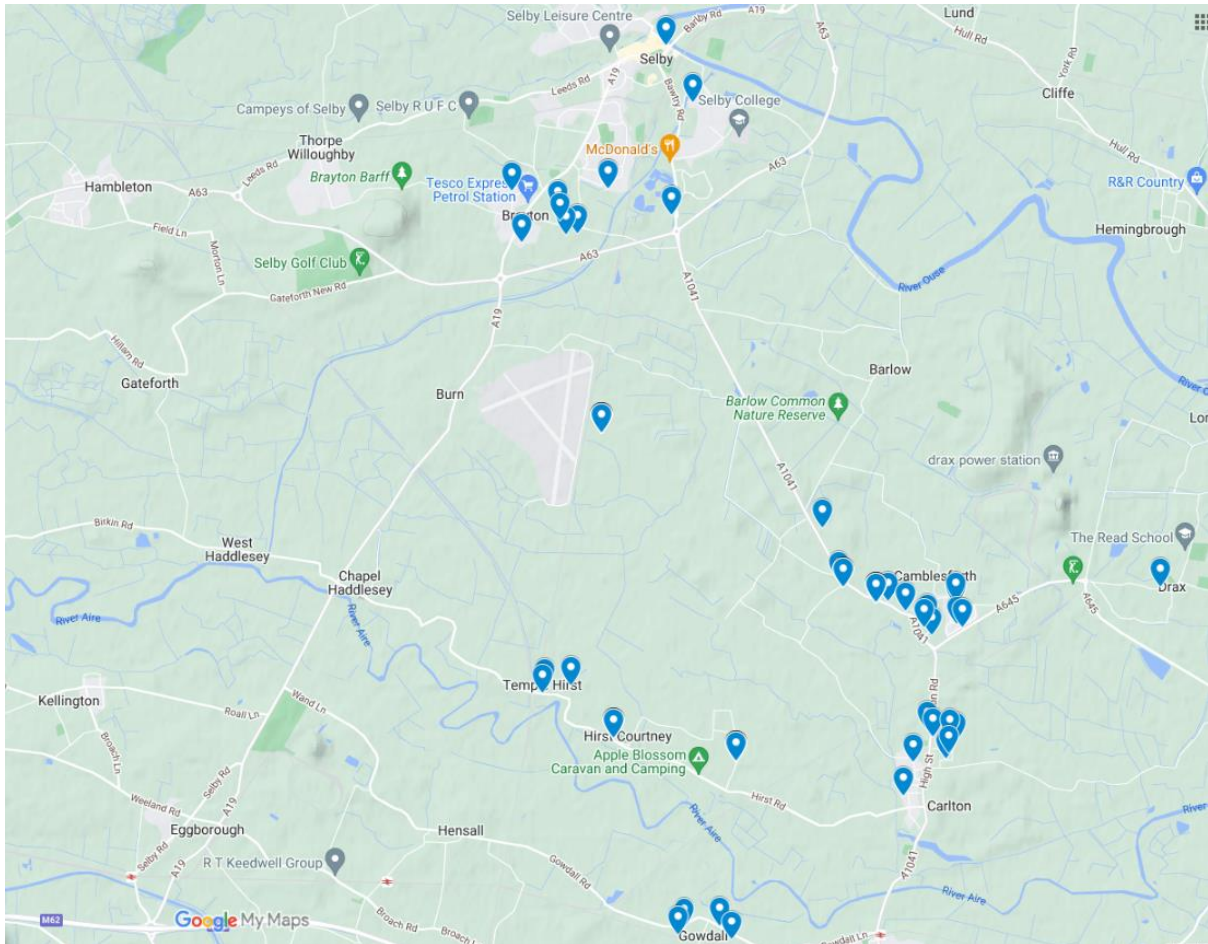
The table below summarises the top-level statistics of the feedback received and interactions throughout the consultation period between 30th June and 28th July 2022.

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Number of newsletters issued to closest residents | 4815 |
| Number of public consultation events held | 2 |
| - Number of attendees to events | 109 |
| Number of feedback forms returned (total) | 84 |
| <i>Of which:</i> | |
| - <i>Via Freepost comment card:</i> | 41 |
| - <i>Feedback form submitted in person at Camblesforth event:</i> | 14 |
| - <i>Feedback form submitted in person at Carlton event:</i> | 9 |
| - <i>Feedback form received via freepost following events:</i> | 18 |
| - <i>Online feedback forms:</i> | 2 |
| Number of emails, phone calls and letters received | 26 |
| <i>Of which:</i> | |
| - <i>Letters</i> | 4 |
| - <i>Emails</i> | 17 |
| <i>Phone calls</i> | 5 |
| Number of (not unique) website hits during consultation period | 1,215 |

As indicated in the table above, feedback was submitted via several channels. The feedback form available at consultation events, online, and the freepost comment card on the newsletter all contained the same questions to make analysis of feedback easier to collate. All hard copy feedback forms contained the relevant information to be able to submit them via freepost, so some forms were completed and posted back directly from the newsletter mailing, some were returned at the consultation events, and some were posted following the events.

In addition to the feedback forms, responses and information was provided via post, email and freephone. A summary analysis of the feedback provided via these means is contained within this report.

Summary analysis of the feedback received and geographic location of respondents shows that generally, those living within the vicinity of the site were the most engaged, as is typical with proposed developments of this nature. The below map shows where respondents live in relation to the proposed site (note, not all respondents provided their postcode details alongside their feedback).



ANALYSIS OF FEEDBACK FORMS

A standard feedback form was used to collate information and the views of consultees who engaged in the consultation. A copy of the feedback form can be viewed on the project website: <https://www.helios-renewable-energy-project.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/22-22686-Helios-Renewable-Energy-Consultation-Feedback-Form-A4-V1.pdf>

The feedback forms were designed to gather thoughts, opinions and local insight on the early proposals.

There were an array of opinions expressing support in principle, concern in principle, and undecided toward the proposals.

Positive feedback noted the possible improvements to biodiversity and landscaping, the potential for public rights of way to be expanded, and the prospect of a reduction in energy bills as a result of the development. There was also some support for the Proposed Development as a means of reaching Net Zero and protecting the planet.

Concerns were raised regarding the impact on agricultural farming and food security, as well as the size and location of the Proposed Development. Similarly, the impact on traffic and the ability of local residents to access their homes and go to work was raised as a concern. Some respondents also felt that the development would detrimentally impact local biodiversity whilst others expressed a fear that the value of their homes would be affected.

All feedback received has been useful in identifying key areas of concern for local communities around the site and will help to develop the proposals as they are refined.

**Helios Renewable Energy Project
 Consultation Report – Appendix 8.10**

Feedback forms were received via three channels – at events, via freepost and online:

| Virtual Exhibition Feedback Forms | Exhibition Feedback Forms | Postal Feedback Forms |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2 | 23 | 59 |

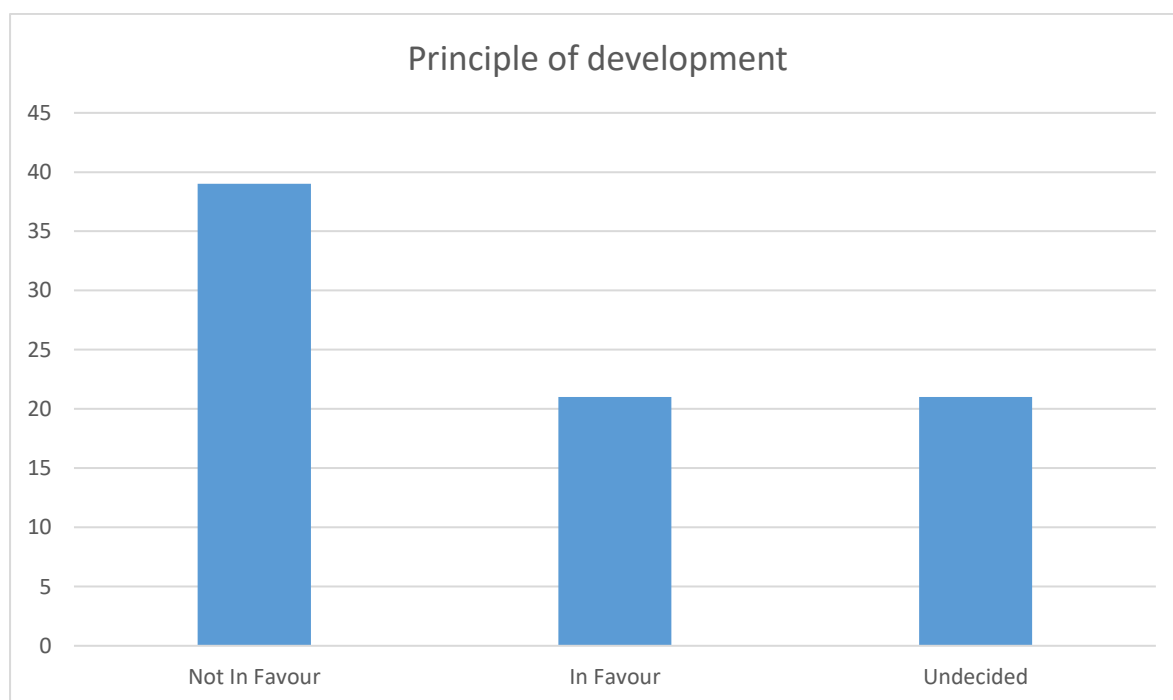
This breakdown demonstrates the various ways through which feedback was collated from respondents. The virtual exhibition form proved effective as consultees who were unable to attend the exhibition events in person were able to provide their feedback on the proposals digitally.

Consultees who were unable to complete the feedback form at the consultation event were able to take the form away and return via freepost.

The feedback received from all feedback forms has been collated, analysed and summarised in the following pages. Each question from the feedback form has been dealt with separately and both qualitative and quantitative feedback has been assessed below.

The full content of each feedback response can be found in the accompanying **Feedback Database**, which contains the raw data from all responses received.

Question 1: What are your early thoughts on the principle of developing Helios Renewable Energy Project in this location?



This question was a tick box with some space for comment. The above graph demonstrates that feedback on public support for the Proposed Development was mixed with approximately half of respondents who completed the feedback forms expressing their opposition to the development. Conversely, 21 consultees who completed the feedback forms registered their support, with the same number noting that they were undecided on their opinion at this stage.

For those not in favour, a major point of contention was the use of greenfield agricultural land for the solar farm, with a general view that food security was more important than climate considerations.

Similarly, many of those opposed felt that the site itself was too large, with a sense of overdevelopment particularly given the close proximity to residential settlements. Those opposed to the development also emphasised that the project should be situated on brownfield land.

A small number of respondents felt that solar was an inappropriate technology for ground-mounted deployment and that other forms of low carbon technology, such as tidal or offshore wind, could be used instead. Similarly, some noted that solar panels should be restricted to rooftop deployment.

Overall, many respondents made reference to the area's status as a rural economy with scenic views and rolling greenery; some noted that they had specifically bought their homes because of the scenery around them. As a result, these respondents felt that a large solar farm would be inappropriate on greenfield land and would do irreparable damage to the local economy and broader community.

For those in favour of the Proposed Development, key considerations included care for and improvement to biodiversity and ecology, potential improvements to landscaping and public rights of way, as well as a sense of wider responsibility to tackle climate change and contribute toward the decarbonisation of the economy.

Many proponents of the Proposed Development noted that the scheme could help create interconnected green corridors for walkers and wildlife which would be mutually beneficial. Nevertheless, supporters of the Proposed Development did register some concerns, including the use of arable land and traffic management during construction. Supporters also asked that the project team continues to engage collaboratively with residents to ensure that the final design was agreed in collaboration with local communities.

For those 'undecided' on the proposals, many emphasised that more information and detail would be needed to form an opinion. Many of those 'undecided' respondents noted their concern that construction would disrupt local transport and could impact on their day-to-day activities, including driving to work.

Others stressed that they lived in close proximity to the site boundary and worried that the development would be too large and intrusive, with a detrimental impact on house prices. Reassurances were sought on the space between exterior fencing and neighbouring properties.

Some undecided respondents referenced the loss of agricultural land; two registered their relief that the development would not be bricks and mortar nor a wind farm but noted that the scale proposed seemed too extensive.

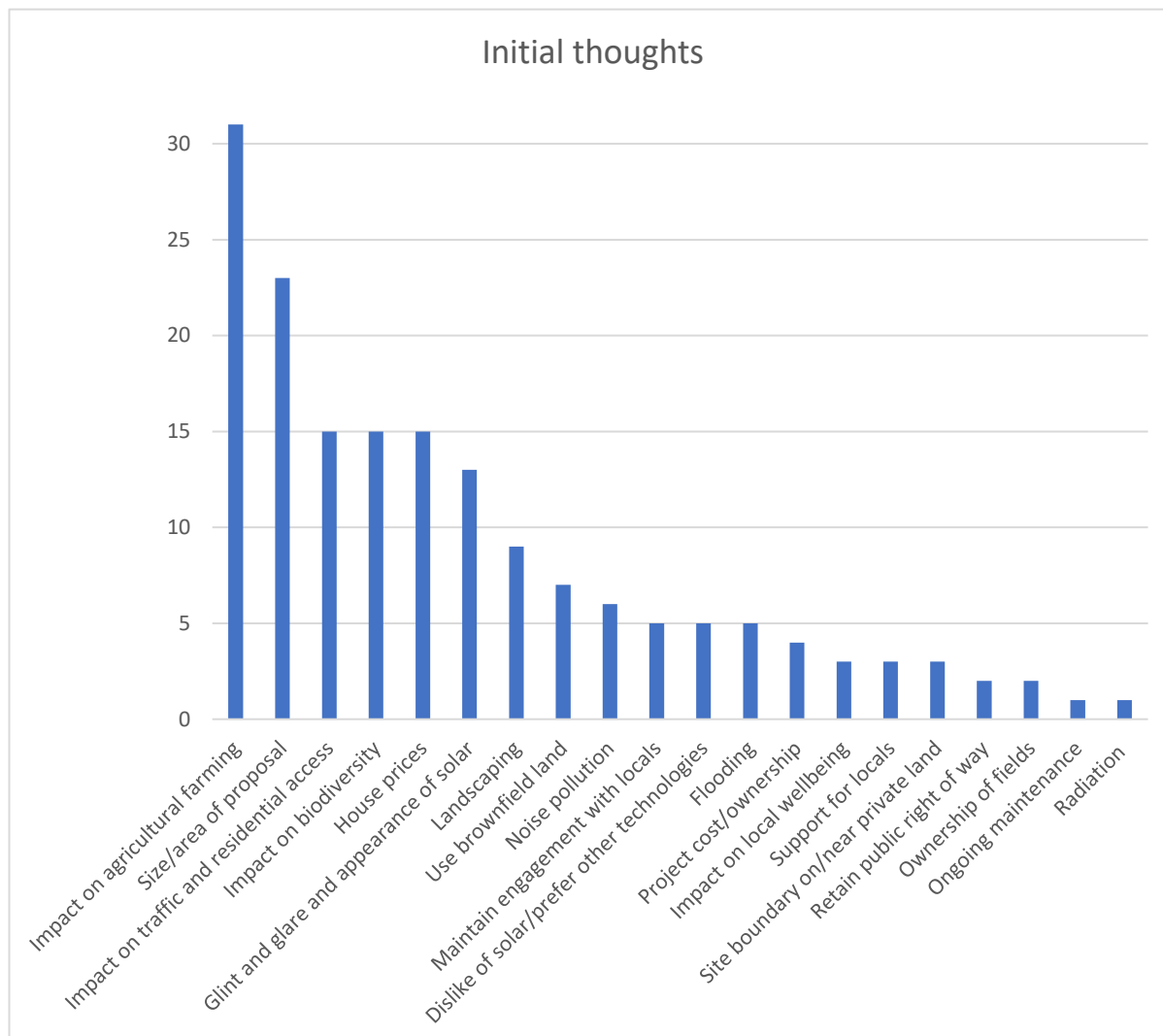
One respondent also raised concern over the impact on habitats during cable laying and questioned how sustainable solar panels are and whether they could be recycled.

One respondent raised the issue of flooding and noted their lack of confidence in the Environment Agency's modelling, with the area previously used as a floodplain 'to protect Leeds'; a second respondent also raised the issue of flooding and asked whether mitigations would be provided to deal with water-runoff from the panels.

Helios Renewable Energy Project Consultation Report – Appendix 8.10

Overall, many of the ‘undecided’ respondents noted that until more detailed information was forthcoming, they would not be able to come to a conclusion.

Question 2: Please let us know any initial thoughts about the proposed site, the local environment, access considerations or other technical points that you feel we should be taking into account as we develop the proposals.



This question was open ended and provided space for respondents to write their general thoughts and feedback.

Agricultural farming and the impact of deploying a large-scale solar farm on arable land was the concern most referenced by respondents, with over a third of respondents registering concern. Residents expressed their concern that productive agricultural land would be taken out of use, with many citing food security for a growing population as a significant concern; one response noted that development on agricultural land would undermine the UK’s ambition to become a self-sufficient country. Many respondents also referenced the Russian-Ukraine War and its impact on global food prices, with one arguing that the development would be a ‘tragedy’ given the potential for a worldwide shortage of grain; the same respondent argued that more arable crops were required, as opposed to the grazing of cattle for meat.

Another respondent stated that the reason for greenfield development was that the project would be more expensive and thereby more profitable. Similarly, one respondent asked whether the land being used would be purchased or rented from current owners.

Overall, opponents of situating the solar farm on agricultural land argued that industrial wasteland and brownfield sites would be far more appropriate, with a general discomfort toward losing such a large amount of farming land given the rural nature of the local economy.

The second most referenced concern by respondents was the size of the development and the area in which the Proposed Development would be built, with many finding it inappropriate for a large-scale solar farm to be situated so close to residential properties. Overall, about a quarter of respondents registered their concern on this issue, with many stating their belief that the value of their homes would be depleted if the Proposed Development was to be constructed; in fact, about a fifth referenced decreased housing value as a significant concern alone. Respondents frequently noted how the site area was 'very large', 'intrusive', 'vast', and 'detrimental to the environment.', with one household stating that they were 'shocked' by the size of the development. Many respondents noted concern over cumulative impact of several developments in the local area, and used the word 'surrounded' to describe their sentiment, with a view that overdevelopment would spoil the attraction of living in and around Camblesforth. For those opposed to development on greenfield land, there was a consensus that during the forty-year lifetime of the project, the surrounding area would decline, with the loss of rural industries and a steep decline in housing prices.

Visual impact, including concerns over glint and glare and the requirement for adequate landscaping formed the basis of a high number of responses recorded on the feedback forms. General comments and concerns related to the type and scale of landscaping and screening required to address visual impact concerns. Some respondents noted concern at too many tall trees screening the site, with others noting a preference for tall hedgerows and screening vegetation.

On the other hand, some respondents considered the scale of the proposals beneficial. One respondent noted that they were initially sceptical of the proposal, but that they had now come to support it on the basis that wildlife would have plenty of space and no interference from the public. Another echoed this view by writing that if a shield of trees surrounded the site, then the 'shock' of a 'sea of solar panels' would be adequately mitigated against, particularly given the contribution made toward improving the health of the planet.

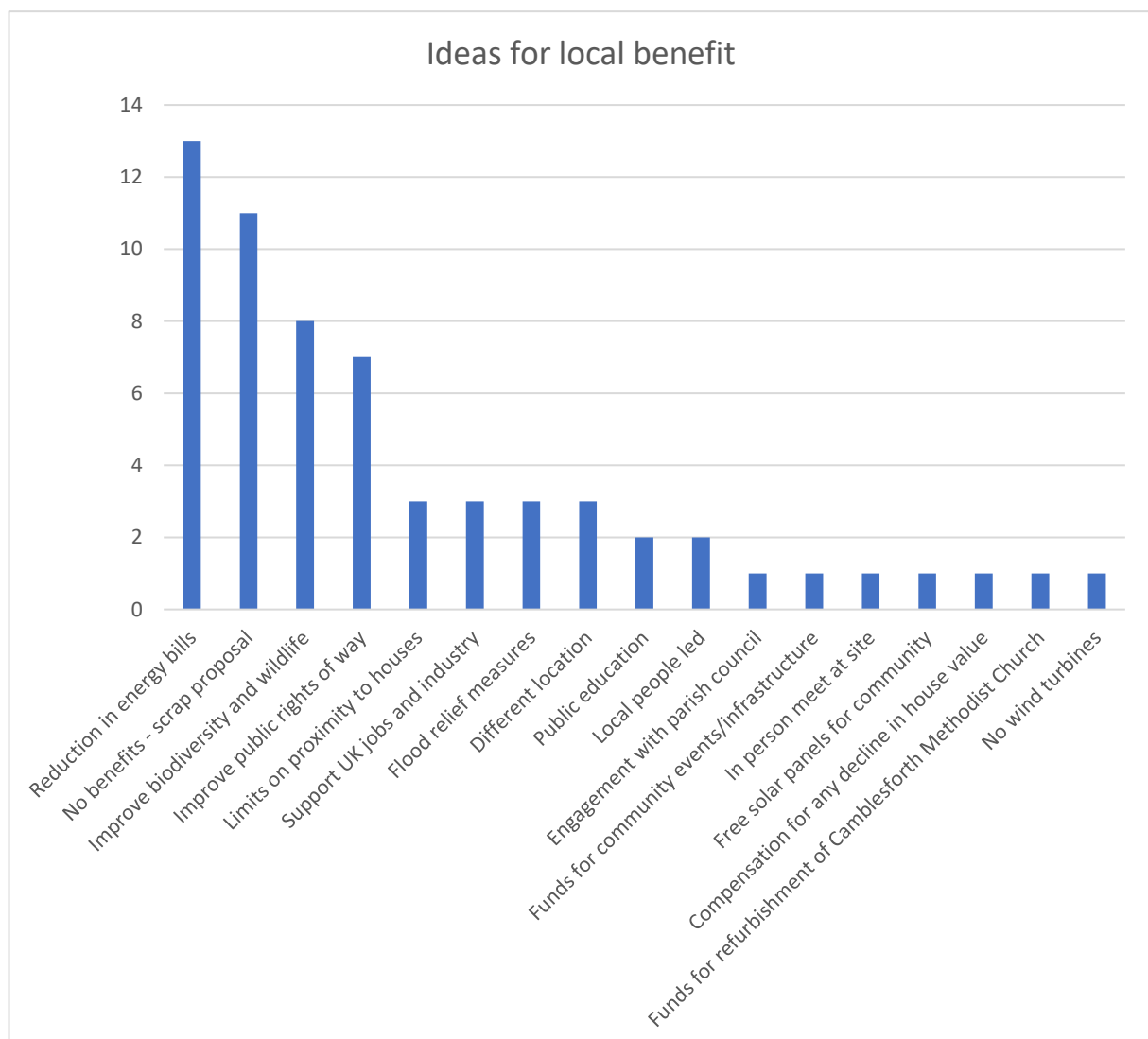
Another key consideration noted by respondents related to the impact on traffic and residential access to and from local housing would be a serious concern during the construction period. Collectively, respondents mentioned the increased volume of traffic and the types of vehicles on small country roads as key issues to be ameliorated. Two respondents argued that, at present, the frequency of HGV traffic on Camblesforth roads made the prospect of further traffic concerning, particularly given the nature of the local road network. This theme was carried by another respondent who observed that village roads, particularly Main Road and Old Lane, would not be wide enough or stable enough to carry large machinery. Four respondents referenced the A1041 as a major concern; already said to be a dangerous road with frequent accidents, locals felt that the addition of construction traffic would make the situation worse and potentially lead to fatalities. The impact on people's ability to go to work was also mentioned as a problem, with one nurse stating that they would need to use the road network to attend night shifts.

Helios Renewable Energy Project Consultation Report – Appendix 8.10

Biodiversity impacts were also referenced on many completed forms. Whilst some noted the potential benefits to local biodiversity, the majority of respondents were sceptical and registered concern over the impact of the Proposed Development on local habitats and wildlife.

In addition to the above noted general comments, concerns and queries, numerous respondents used the feedback forms as an opportunity to make comments and provide feedback related specifically to their own property or land if they lived close to the Proposed Development. Comments related to a range of issues, but largely focused on visual impact from specific locations or properties, access arrangements and concerns over noise or flooding.

Question 3: We'd like to understand where we may be able to bring local benefit to the communities around the site. Please let us know if you had any thoughts or suggestions on this.



This question was open ended and provided space for respondents to write their general thoughts and feedback.

Helios Renewable Energy Project Consultation Report – Appendix 8.10

This question was not answered by all respondents, however a number of useful points, suggestions and feedback were noted and recorded on feedback forms.

As can be seen on the graph above, the primary benefit which respondents requested was that of a reduction in energy bills for local residents.

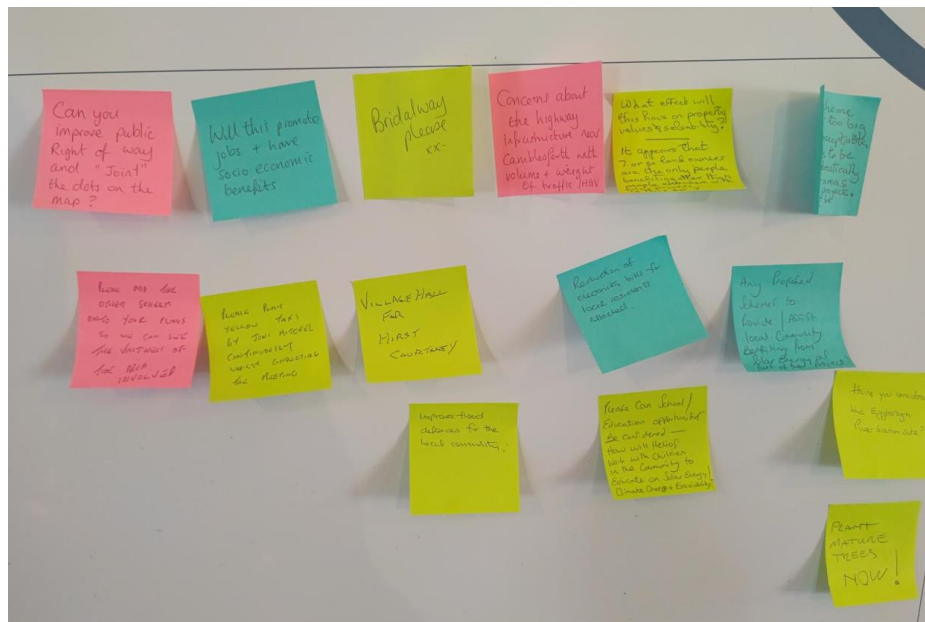
Secondly, a general comment relating to the principle of development and the consideration that no public benefit could be ascertained was noted by several respondents.

Other popular suggestions include the improvement of local biodiversity and improvements to wildlife and habitats; and the request to improve public rights of way and connectivity between the villages and Selby.

Other suggestions included flood relief measures, education opportunities, financial compensation, and the opportunity to support UK jobs and the economy.

Whilst not included directly on the feedback forms, one of the consultation boards at the in-person events also requested comments on how the local community could see some local benefit as a result of the proposals. These comments were recorded on post-it notes and attached to the consultation banner. Suggestions included:

- Considering school or education opportunities – working with children and the community to educate on solar energy, climate change and biodiversity
- Planting mature trees in advance of the construction
- Including a bridleway
- Providing a village hall for Hirst Courtney
- Promote jobs and socio-economic benefits
- Improve public rights of way connectivity in the area
- Improve flood defences for the local community
- Local resident compensation (such as discounted energy bills)



PHONE MESSAGES, EMAILS AND LETTERS

In addition to the feedback forms, responses and information was provided via post, email and freephone. A summary overview of the feedback provided via these means is set out below.

Phone messages

The freephone telephone line received 5 telephone calls during the consultation period. Four phone calls were from local residents, whilst the last was from a local councillor. All were generally supportive of the scheme in principle, but two felt that their concerns needed to be addressed before they could confidently support the proposal. Two were local landowners in proximity to the site who wished to offer land for the Proposed Development.

| In Favour | Undecided | Not In Favour |
|-----------|-----------|---------------|
| 1 | 4 | 0 |

Queries, comments and feedback raised included:

- Comprehensive information provided in all areas bar agricultural land – noted it will be a key consideration for the local authority. Concerns relating to loss of agricultural land for food production and preference for brownfield sites
- Large scale area for proposed site. General consensus that it is too large for the area.
- Total cost of the Proposed Development and queries around its economics
- Solar panels – how large individual panels are, and whether they will be mounted vertically or horizontally. Concern at visual impact from surrounding areas and required screening.
- Requested information or offered details about land requirements (local landowners near to the site)
- Consultation process and planning route queries

Where appropriate and possible, queries were responded to directly on the phone call, and feedback noted and passed to the project team.

Emails

A total of 17 emails were received via the info@helios-renewable-energy-project.co.uk email address during the period of the first phase of consultation. Emails covered a range of queries, topics and issues, including:

- General feedback on the proposals in opposition to the principle of the Proposed Development
- Queries and comments relating to the consultation process and how to be involved/arranging attendance at events and meetings
- Liaison with Parish Councils to discuss attendance at meetings and providing information
- Comments and queries relating to the use of agricultural land
- Concern at impact to property prices and general effects on the local area in socio-economic terms
- Concern at traffic impacts and access to properties/the general area during construction
- Noise issues related to the solar panels moving and also during construction
- Queries relating to flood risk and drainage
- Concern at impact to wildlife and biodiversity
- Concern at fire risk (recent hot weather and the panels exacerbating heat locally) and security (both concerns relating to attracting criminal interest for the equipment in

Helios Renewable Energy Project Consultation Report – Appendix 8.10

close proximity to houses, or providing easy access to local properties by creating pathways).

- Community benefit and local compensation
- Concern at magnetic fields and health risks of living close to solar panels
- Suggestions including the benefits of planting wildflower meadows across the site

The content of all emails can be found in full alongside all feedback in the accompanying feedback database.

Letters

In addition to the formal feedback forms, four letters were also received during the course of the consultation, either via freepost or submitted at consultation events. These generally contained detailed information specific to the respondents' property or land, or a topic they felt was particularly important. The four letters received contained the following information:

| | |
|----------|---|
| Letter 1 | Specific comments and detailed feedback relating to properties lying along Hagg Bush Lane. Given the proximity of the houses here and the potential visual impact, there are numerous comments and suggestions, including hand drawn maps and photographs to show how the development could be most appropriately adjusted to reduce impact to these properties. |
| Letter 2 | Specific comments relating to the respondent's house and potential impacts on outlook and visual amenity. Issues relating to traffic on local roads and the concerns over cumulative impacts of development in relation to the Lanpro Services solar farm located north of Camblesforth. Size of the development was noted as a concern and the request to pull back the panels from local housing. |
| Letter 3 | Specific comments and issues relating to the potential impacts/improvements to local public rights of way as a community benefit. |
| Letter 4 | General concerns raised relating to loss of agricultural land, efficiency of solar panels, concern at electromagnetic wave radiation, impacts to local habitats, flooding and community benefit. |

The content of all letters can be found in full alongside all feedback in the accompanying feedback database.

4. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

Whilst a full assessment of each issue raised will be undertaken for the Statutory Consultation phase, a summary of the key recurring issues has been provided below. It is worth noting that a high proportion of feedback forms provided generic statements on issues, support or opposition. Equally, several responses were tailored to the specific respondent's house or land, and so raised specific points of relevance to just one or a couple of residents.

Further detail can be found in the specific questions tables in this document, and in the feedback database, which contains all comments made.

There were a high number of respondents stating that they support the principle of utilising renewable energy to help combat the climate crisis, however several noted that they did not support the use of solar energy generation in this location.

Aside from general support or opposition to the principle of the development, key themes and issues raised through the feedback included:

Impact on agricultural land – Food security: One of the most commonly noted themes throughout all feedback provided was related to the loss of high-quality agricultural land and the subsequent impact on the region/country's ability to achieve its food security ambitions. The Ukraine War was noted a number of times as a reason why agricultural land of this nature should be protected.

There was a general consensus that brownfield land should be prioritised and that the scale of this proposals (see below) on agricultural land, and the cumulative impacts of this alongside other planned and consented developments in the local area meant that the impact on food security was unsustainable.

Scale of the project and setting: As referenced in relation to the impact on agricultural land, several respondents also made comment about the scale of the proposals being too large for the local area. The geographic spread of the development across land in this location was felt to be too great. General comments made statements relating to the impact a scheme of this size would have on the local area, affecting visual amenity, house prices, traffic and the local environment. The cumulative impact of this development alongside other local existing industrial activity (such as Drax Power Station), consented and planned renewable schemes in close proximity, and other development such as housing was noted by various respondents concerned over the scale of the scheme in the context of its setting.

Traffic and impact on local road network: Numerous comments and concerns were noted in relation to the potential impact of the Proposed Development on the local road network. Existing traffic routes were deemed to be inadequate and residents living close to the site raised concerns about additional large vehicle traffic on the existing road network.

Impact on biodiversity and ecology: Whilst several respondents noted the positive effects on biodiversity the proposals could have, numerous comments and concerns were raised in relation to the potential impacts to local wildlife and the impact of the 'loss' of green fields on local habitats. Erecting fencing and materials across the area was noted as a concern for wildlife on the site

Visual and landscape: One of the most common 'general' comments made by respondents related to the visual impact these proposals could have on the local area. The transition from green fields to areas covered in solar panels was a concern for many respondents,

especially in a landscape that had previously been industrial, but was now changing as coal mining and the larger power stations were disappearing.

Concerns and discussion around the visual impact on specific properties and proximity to local housing was regularly noted. Suggestions or concerns about the use of screening to 'hide' the development was also commented on. Numerous respondents felt that it was not possible to address the visual impact concerns due to the scale of the development.

Other specific concerns relating to visual amenity focused on the potential for glint and glare to affect local properties or passers-by.

Impact on residents and on the value of homes: Linked to the above points, respondents highlighted concerns over the impacts of traffic, loss of visual amenity, impact to agricultural economy and activity and various other factors such as noise and construction impacts as reasons why they believed that house prices would be affected.

A high proportion of respondents that raised concerns about this point live close to the proposed site and made comments relating directly to their own property or land.

Community Benefit: Whilst several respondents noted that they did not feel that any community benefit could be achieved from this development, various suggestions and feedback was provided. One of the most common themes in this respect was the potential for the development to make improvements to the local public rights of way through and around the site. Several specific comments on walking/cycling routes that could be improved were made and a general consensus was that if non-motorised links between villages and to and from Selby could be improved, it would be seen as a local benefit.

Other popular requests for community benefit included a reduction in energy bills, supporting local jobs and the economy, engagement with local organisations to make improvements and education opportunities.

Other environmental considerations: A range of other specific points, comments, queries and feedback included environmental concerns and issues relating to flood risk and drainage, noise, pollution and health considerations (such as radiation or impacts to wellbeing through proximity to the scheme). These were either general comments or queries, or very specific to the respondent's own property.