



Botley West Solar Farm

Consultation Report

November 2024

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APFP Regulation 5(2)(q); Planning Act 2008; and Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations

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0 Glossary

Table 0.1: Document glossary and list of abbreviations

Term or abbreviation	Definition
CAPs	Community Access Points (identified public venues that agreed to host Project consultation materials)
DCO	Development Consent Order
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
ES	Environmental Statement
NSIP	Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project
NTS	Non-technical summary (of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report)
Project communication channels	The Applicant's range of free-to-use contact channels, which have remained open throughout the consultation period: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freephone number (0808 175 3085); • Freepost address (FREEPOST BWSF); and • Email address (info@botleywest.co.uk).
PRoWs	Public Rights of Way
PVDP	Photovolt Development Partners GmbH
SoCC	Statement of Community Consultation
the 2008 Act	Planning Act 2008
The Applicant	SolarFive Ltd
The Project	Botley West Solar Farm

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Photovolt Development Partners GmbH (PVDP) on behalf of SolarFive Ltd (the Applicant) is proposing a new solar farm, located in the county of Oxfordshire, across an area of approximately 1,418 hectares.
- 1.1.2 The Applicant has endeavoured to undertake an open and meaningful pre-application consultation process with a wide range of consultees. This Consultation Report seeks to evidence the consultation and engagement that has taken place throughout the pre-application period and demonstrate how this has complied with the requirements under the Planning Act 2008 and influenced the final design of Botley West Solar Farm (the Project).
- 1.1.3 The Project is formed of three areas of solar installation (Northern Site, Central Site and Southern Site) with interconnecting cables, which together would generate renewable power through photovoltaic (PV) panels.
- 1.1.4 The Project location extends from an area of land in the north, situated between the A4260 and the Dorn River Valley near Tackley and Wootton (the Northern Site), through a central section, situated broadly between Bladon and Cassington (the Central Site), and connecting to a section further south near to Farmoor Reservoir and north of Cumnor (the Southern Site), where the Project will connect to the National Grid transmission network. The name 'Botley West' is derived from the location of the grid connection point.
- 1.1.5 The Project lies within the administrative areas of Oxfordshire County Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, Cherwell District Council and Vale of White Horse District Council. The majority of the Project lies within West Oxfordshire and overlaps with some of the Oxford Green Belt.
- 1.1.6 The Project Site Location and the Project Boundary Plan (representing the extent of the Order Limits) are shown in Volume 2, Figure 1.1 of the Environmental Statement (ES) **[EN010147/APP/6.4]**.
- 1.1.7 The Project aims to deliver approximately 840MWe of power to the National Electricity Transmission System (NETS), which would provide secure and clean energy of an equivalent level to meet the needs of approximately 330,000 homes.
- 1.1.8 The Project's solar arrays (comprising all the mounting structures, frames and foundations) will be connected by underground electrical cables within each section of the Site, and via underground electric cables to the substation at the grid connection point. The interconnecting cable route

will largely follow the public highway, but some parts will cross land controlled by the Applicant.

- 1.1.9 The Project is described in full in Chapter 6: Project Description of the ES [EN010147/APP/6.3].

1.2 The Applicant’s approach to consultation

- 1.2.1 The Applicant recognises that consultation is a vital stage in the development of proposals. They are committed to providing opportunities for interested parties to learn about their proposals and share their views. The Applicant intends to work collaboratively local people and organisations to deliver the Project sensitively and in cohesion with the local environment.
- 1.2.2 Throughout the consultation process the Applicant has welcomed feedback on the Project proposals from a range of stakeholders, including communities, landowners and occupiers. The outcome of this consultation and engagement is presented in this Consultation Report. The consideration of all feedback received is explained in Chapters 12 and 13 of this report.

1.3 The purpose and structure of this Consultation Report

- 1.3.1 This Consultation Report accompanies the Development Consent Order (DCO) application by the Applicant to the Secretary of State under Section 37 of the Planning Act 2008 (the 2008 Act). The DCO would grant powers to construct, operate and maintain, and decommission the Project.
- 1.3.2 This report has been prepared in accordance with Sections 37(3)(c) and 37(7) of the 2008 Act and details the consultation undertaken under Sections 42, 47,48 and 49 of the 2008 Act, and associated legislation and guidance, including the government’s guidance on the Pre-application stage under Section 50. This includes how consultation responses have informed the Project and been responded to by the Applicant.
- 1.3.3 Table 1.1 presents the structure of this Consultation Report. The document has been structured through consideration of the chronological order of consultation activities and the relevant Sections of the 2008 Act.

Table 1.1: Structure and explanation of Consultation Report sections

Report section	Overview
1. Introduction	Introduces Applicant and Project, provides an overview of the pre-application consultation undertaken, and sets out the structure and information presented in the Consultation Report.

Report section	Overview
2. Legislation, Guidance and Advice	Sets out the requirements of the 2008 Act and accompanying guidance, which the Applicant's consultation has complied with.
3. The introduction of the Project to consultees (August – November 2022)	A summary of how the Applicant introduced the Project to consultees ahead of commencing community consultation
4. Phase one non-statutory community consultation (November – December 2022)	A summary of how the Applicant undertook a non-statutory phase of consultation on early-stage proposals, including the responses received.
5. Consultation Under EIA Regulations	Describes how the Applicant has consulted according to the EIA Regulations.
6. Preparation for Statutory Section 47 Consultation	Sets out how the Applicant prepared for statutory Section 47 consultation including the development and publication of the SoCC.
7. Statutory Consultation Under Section 47 of the 2008 Act <i>(Consultation held between 30th November 2023 – 8th February 2024)</i>	Sets out and describes how the Applicant consulted with the community in accordance with Section 47 of the 2008 Act and the SoCC.
8. Statutory Consultation Under Section 42 of the 2008 Act <i>(Consultation held between 30th November 2023 – 8th February 2024, and subsequent consultation with newly identified Section 44 consultees (October 2024))</i>	Sets out and describes how the Applicant consulted on the PEIR with prescribed consultees and those with an interest in the land in accordance with Section 42 and Section 44 of the 2008 Act.
9. Statutory Consultation Under Section 48 of the 2008 Act <i>(Consultation held between 30th November 2023 – 8th February 2024)</i>	Describes the development and publication of the Section 48 notice and Section 48 consultation.
10. Targeted consultation on a series of proposed boundary changes <i>(Targeted consultation on specific changes across the site held between 14th June 2024 and 28th July 2024)</i>	Describes consultation undertaken on 57 specific proposed changes to the Project boundary.
11. Further targeted consultation on a single proposed boundary change	Describes consultation undertaken on a specific proposed change to the Project boundary.

Report section	Overview
<i>(Targeted consultation focusing on single change in Central Site held between 15th August 2024 and 15th September 2024)</i>	
12. Section 47 Statutory Consultation: Responses Received, Issues Raised and Changes Made	A summary of the responses received to the Section 47 community consultation, presented by theme or EIA topic. The Applicant details how it has had regard to those responses in accordance with Section 49 of the 2008 Act.
13. Section 42 Statutory Consultation: Responses Received, Issues Raised and Changes Made	A summary of the responses received to the Section 42 consultation, divided up by theme or EIA topic. The Applicant details how it has had regard to those responses in accordance with Section 49 of the 2008 Act.
14. Conclusion	The Applicant’s concluding remarks on the pre-application consultation undertaken.

1.4 Pre-application consultation overview

1.4.1 In accordance with Sections 42, 47 and 48 of the 2008 Act, the Applicant undertook pre-application consultation on the Project ahead of submission of the DCO application to the Secretary of State with the following consultees:

- Prescribed bodies (in accordance with Section 42(1)(a));
- Those with an interest in the land (in accordance with Section 42(1)(d) and as set out in Section 44);
- Community and other organisations in the “vicinity” of the Project who may be affected both directly and indirectly by the Project (in accordance with Section 47); and
- Wider communities and organisations (local, national and regional) in order to seek their comments on the Project proposals (in accordance with Section 48).

1.4.2 The Applicant also consulted with local authorities in accordance with Section 42(1)(b) and as set out in Section 43(1) of the 2008 Act. In addition to formally consulting with relevant local authorities under Section 42 of the 2008 Act, the Applicant has undertaken ongoing regular meetings with Oxfordshire County Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, and Cherwell District Council throughout the pre-application phase.

1.4.3 The Applicant has undertaken a series of defined phases of consultation during the pre-application period. This has comprised:

- A non-statutory phase one consultation on early-stage proposals, held for seven weeks between 03 November 2022 and 22 December 2022;
- A statutory phase two consultation on more detailed proposals, including the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), held for ten weeks between 30 November 2023 and 08 February 2024. This phase of community consultation under Section 47 of the 2008 Act was held in parallel with consultation under Sections 42 and 48 of the 2008 Act;
- A targeted consultation with Section 42 consultees and the local community on changes to the proposals, focusing on specific changes that have been made across the site, held for six weeks between 14 June 2024 and 28 July 2024; and
- A further targeted consultation with Section 42 consultees and the local community, focusing on one specific change within the Central Site, held for four weeks from 15 August 2024 to 15 September 2024.

- 1.4.4 Responses to the non-statutory phase one consultation, and how the Applicant has had regard to these comments, are described in Section 4 of this report.
- 1.4.5 Responses to the statutory phase two consultation and subsequent targeted consultations, including how the Applicant has had regard to these comments, are described in Sections 12 and 13, and provided in greater detail in Appendix 5.1.9: Section 47 Applicant Response **[EN010147/APP/5.1.9]** and Appendix 5.1.10: Section 42 Applicant Response **[EN010147/APP/5.1.10]**. It is worth noting that, where pertinent and relevant to specific topics, key comments and responses to these – including how they informed the Environmental Impact Assessment – have also been addressed in specific chapters of the Environmental Statement **[EN010147/APP/6.3]**.
- 1.4.6 Prior to submitting an application for a DCO, the Applicant prepared a written statement in response to the government guidance ‘Planning Act 2008: Pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects’ (April 2024) regarding an early Adequacy of Consultation Milestone. A copy of this written statement is provided in Appendix 5.1.1: Statement of Compliance **[EN010147/APP/5.1.1]**.
- 1.4.7 The Applicant discussed the preparation of this statement with the host local authorities for the Project. These authorities are Oxfordshire County Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, and Cherwell District Council.
- 1.4.8 The Applicant submitted their written statement on the adequacy of consultation undertaken to the Planning Inspectorate on 11 October 2024. This was to give early consideration of the adequacy of consultation undertaken by the Applicant, prior to the acceptance stage of a DCO application.

- 1.4.9 The Applicant notes that, given the timing of the guidance coming into effect relative to the programme for the Project, the written statement was submitted within three months of the intended DCO application submission date. While this period of time is less than suggested within the guidance, the Applicant still considered it useful to prepare and submit this document prior to submission. This approach was discussed with the Planning Inspectorate and is referenced in the Applicant's Programme Document (which was published in July 2024).
- 1.4.10 Table 1.2 summarises, in chronological order, the pre-application stages and consultation activities that have taken place up to the point of the Application submission.

Table 1.2: Pre-application stages and consultation activities undertaken

Date	Consultation undertaken
Q3 2022 – onwards	<p>Project introduction and ongoing engagement and consultation with local authorities and political stakeholders.</p> <p>Prior to the start of non-statutory consultation in Q4 2022, the Applicant commenced early engagement with consultees including Oxfordshire County Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, Cherwell District Council, Oxford City Council and the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership. This engagement was organised to introduce the Project, and engagement with these bodies has been ongoing throughout the pre-application period.</p> <p>The Applicant also commenced engagement with locally elected members and representatives including ward and parish councillors and Members of Parliament (MPs) through briefing meetings. For example, the Applicant introduced the proposals to parish councils and elected ward members by hosting online webinars the day before and on the day of non-statutory consultation commencing, on 2 and 3 November 2022.</p> <p>The Applicant approached MPs on 14 October 2022 to offer a briefing. The team met with Robert Courts, MP for Witney, during a phase of non-statutory consultation on 18 November 2022, and then following this phase of consultation on 27 January 2023, 6 February 2024, and 24 November 2024.</p>
03 November – 22 December 2022	<p>Phase one community consultation (non-statutory)</p> <p>The Applicant held a seven-week community consultation on early-stage proposals for the Project.</p>

	<p>The consultation period was initially scheduled for six weeks, with a seventh week added to allow additional time for communities and stakeholders to provide feedback. This extension was communicated via a consultation postcard that was sent to the Core Consultation Zone of over 22,000 addresses, as well as an email notification to key stakeholders.</p> <p>During this non-statutory consultation period, the Applicant held seven in-person information events and an online webinar. Five information events were organised prior to consultation starting, and two further events in Eynsham and Begbroke were organised during consultation, following further engagement with local stakeholders.</p> <p>The Applicant publicised the events and consultation information by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributing a community consultation leaflet to over 22,000 local homes and business; • Advertising the events across local media; • Distributing posters to identified local information points for them to display; • Providing details of the events on the Project website; and • Contacting identified stakeholders and individuals who had registered to be kept informed.
<p>02 May – 26 May 2023</p>	<p>Feedback sought on early working draft of Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) and list of stakeholders under Section 42 of the 2008 Act</p> <p>The Applicant sought feedback from host local authorities on an early working draft of the SoCC prior to commencing formal consultation on the SoCC later in the year. Feedback was also sought by the Applicant on a draft list of Section 42 statutory consultees.</p> <p>Feedback received was considered by the Applicant in preparing a draft SoCC for formal consultation. The comments received, including the Applicant’s consideration of them, were shared with relevant local authorities alongside the draft SoCC for consultation.</p>
<p>15 June 2023</p>	<p>Scoping Report submitted</p> <p>The Applicant submitted a Scoping Report to the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State on 15 June 2023. Through this report, the Applicant notified the Planning Inspectorate that it intended to provide an Environmental</p>

	Statement (ES) in respect of the Project pursuant to Regulation 8(1)(b) of the EIA Regulations.
4 July 2023	<p>Phase one Consultation Summary Report</p> <p>The Applicant published a Phase One Consultation Summary Report to summarise the feedback received during the phase one consultation and how this feedback was being considered to inform the Project.</p> <p>The Phase One Consultation Summary Report was:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributed to over 22,000 local homes and business in the vicinity of the Project; • Shared by email with stakeholders and individuals who had registered to be kept informed; and • Uploaded to the Project website.
24 July 2023	<p>Scoping Opinion and receipt of Schedule 1</p> <p>A Scoping Opinion was adopted by the Planning Inspectorate (on behalf of the Secretary of State) on 24 July 2023 and included the list of consultation bodies notified by the Planning Inspectorate under Regulation 11(1)(a) of the EIA Regulations.</p>
14 July – 14 August 2023	<p>Consultation on draft Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) with local authorities under Section 47 of the 2008 Act</p> <p>The Applicant consulted with the Section 43(1) local authorities on the draft SoCC between 14 July and 14 August 2023.</p> <p>Feedback received was considered by the Applicant in preparing the final SoCC for publication. The comments received, including the Applicant's consideration of them, were shared with relevant local authorities alongside the final SoCC prior to publication.</p>
16 November 2023	<p>Publication of SoCC in accordance with Section 47 of the 2008 Act</p> <p>The final SoCC was publicised in accordance with Section 47 of the 2008 Act on 16 November 2023.</p>
28 November 2023	<p>Notification to the Planning Inspectorate under Section 46 of the 2008 Act</p>

	<p>The Applicant notified the Secretary of State, via the Planning Inspectorate, in writing under Section 46 of the 2008 Act on 28 November 2023 that it was intending to commence consultation under Section 42 of the 2008 Act on the PEIR commencing on 30 November 2023 and closing on 08 February 2024.</p> <p>The Applicant included the following consultation documents with this notification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a covering letter; • example copies of the Section 42 covering letters (one letter type being for prescribed consultees and the other one to landowners); • A site plan showing the location of the Project; and • A copy of the notice publicising the application under Section 48 of the 2008 Act (including details of the public consultation events and the locations where the consultation documents could be inspected free of charge).
<p>30 November 2023</p>	<p>Publication of Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) (and Non-Technical Summary)</p> <p>The Applicant published a PEIR on 30 November 2023 to be consulted on as part of a statutory Section 42, 47 and 48 consultation with prescribed consultees and the community (phase two consultation), requesting responses by 08 February 2024 (providing a 70-day consultation response period).</p> <p>The Applicant undertook consultation on the PEIR from 30 November 2023 to 08 February 2024. Section 42 consultees were formally notified of the commencement of statutory consultation on or before 30 November by written letter and/or email, depending on the availability of contact details to the Applicant. The deadline for responding to the Section 42 consultation was 08 February 2024 (therefore exceeding the 28-day requirement).</p> <p>The consultation documents provided to Section 42 consultees comprised of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A covering letter, including a link to the consultation materials; • A site plan showing the location of the Project; and • A copy of the notice publicising the application under Section 48 of the 2008 Act (including details of the public consultation events and the locations where the consultation documents could be inspected free of charge).

	<p>The PEIR and PEIR Non-technical Summary (NTS) were made available to the community as part of the phase two Section 47 consultation via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Project website; • In hard copy form at the community information events; and • In hard copy form at the Community Access Point (CAP) sites. <p>Details of how to access the PEIR and PEIR NTS were provided via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Project website; • the community consultation leaflet; and • the Section 48 notice.
<p>30 November 2023 – 08 February 2024</p>	<p>Phase two community consultation (statutory under Section 47 of the 2008 Act)</p> <p>The Applicant held a ten-week community consultation on more detailed proposals for the Project, including the PEIR in accordance with the SoCC.</p> <p>During phase two consultation the Applicant held nine in-person information events and one online webinar.</p> <p>The Applicant publicised the events and consultation information by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributing a community consultation leaflet to over 22,000 local homes and business; • Publishing Section 48 notices in relevant newspapers; • Erecting Section 48 notices around the Project site; • Distributing a press release containing details of the consultation to regional media publications; • Distributing posters to identified local information points for them to display; • Distributing hard copies of consultation documents to five Community Access Point (CAP) sites; • Providing details of the events on the Project website; and • Contacting identified stakeholders and individuals who had registered to be kept informed. <p>The Applicant invited feedback from the community via a paper feedback form, an online feedback form, and feedback to the Project communication channels over a stated 70-day response period.</p>
<p>14 June – 28 July 2024</p>	<p>Targeted consultation on a series of proposed boundary changes</p>

	<p>The Applicant undertook further targeted consultation on specific changes to the project site boundary (Order Limits) following the phase two (Statutory) consultation.</p> <p>The Core Consultation Zone, as set out within the Statement of Community Consultation, was consulted during this consultation as the specific changes were located across the Project area.</p> <p>The Applicant publicised the consultation information and response deadline by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributing a consultation postcard to over 22,000 local homes and business; • Publishing Section 48 notices in two newspapers, The Oxford Times and the Witney Gazette; • Publishing consultation adverts in relevant newspapers; • Distributing a press release containing details of the consultation to regional media publications; • Distributing posters to identified local information points for them to display; • Distributing hard copies of consultation documents to five CAP sites; • Providing the relevant consultation information documents on the Project website; and • Contacting identified stakeholders and individuals who had registered to be kept informed.
<p>15 August –15 September 2024</p>	<p>Further targeted consultation on a single proposed boundary change</p> <p>The Applicant undertook consultation on a further specific proposed change to the project site boundary (Order Limits) following the phase two (Statutory) consultation.</p> <p>This consultation focused on an addition to the Order limit to include land around an established veteran tree, adding necessary flexibility to the existing cable corridor.</p> <p>The Applicant publicised the consultation information and response deadline by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notifying consultees as defined by Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008; • Writing to properties within 500m of the proposed order limit change, consistent with the approach set out in the Applicant’s SoCC; • Publishing Section 48 notices in two newspapers, The Oxford Times and the Witney Gazette;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distributing posters to identified local information points for them to display; • Distributing hard copies of consultation documents to five CAP sites; • Providing the relevant consultation information documents on the Project website; and • Contacting identified stakeholders and individuals who had registered to be kept informed.
<p>01 October 2024 – 30 / 31 October 2024</p>	<p>Section 42 consultation with additional land interests under Section 44 of the 2008 Act</p> <p>The Applicant undertook a refresh of identified land interests as part of preparing the Book of Reference prior to submitting a DCO application.</p> <p>The Applicant identified a further 13 Section 44 consultees. As there was sufficient time ahead of submission, the Applicant consulted with these consultees in relation to the Project and issued consultation materials to those land interests on 01 October 2024. Most of those materials were delivered to consultees by Royal Mail on 02 October 2024 and such consultees were given until 30 October 2024 to provide any consultation responses. However, delivery by Royal Mail failed for three of the consultees. Therefore, the Applicant hand delivered the materials on 03 October 2024 to those three consultees and provided a deadline of 31 October 2024 for responses. This approach ensured that all consultees were allowed the statutory minimum period of 28 days for responses to be provided.</p> <p>A further two land interests were identified shortly before the intended submission of the DCO application, without sufficient time for those land interests to be fully consulted. The Applicant notified these parties on 23 October 2024 and advised of a proportionate opportunity to engage by 31 October 2024.</p>
<p>11 October 2024</p>	<p>Early Adequacy of Consultation Milestone</p> <p>The Applicant submitted a written statement on the pre-application and consultation undertaken to the Planning Inspectorate, consistent with guidance published by the government in April 2024. This was to give early consideration of the adequacy of consultation undertaken by the Applicant, prior to the acceptance stage of a DCO application.</p> <p>In preparing this written statement, the Applicant discussed the adequacy of pre-application consultation undertaken with host local authorities of Oxfordshire County Council, West Oxfordshire</p>

	District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, and Cherwell District Council.
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2 Legislation, guidance and advice

2.1 Consultation Report

- 2.1.1 This Consultation Report is submitted with the Application in accordance with Section 37(3)(c) of the 2008 Act.
- 2.1.2 Relevant responses are defined in Section 49(3) of the 2008 Act as responses received to the consultation under Sections 42, 47 and 48 of the 2008 Act by the deadline published. The Applicant has also taken account of late responses were received after stated deadlines.
- 2.1.3 Pre-application consultation under Section 42 of the 2008 Act has taken place with:
- Prescribed bodies (statutory consultees), being those listed in Schedule 1 of the Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009 ("APFP Regulations") and those specified by the Planning Inspectorate in the list of consultation bodies notified by the Planning Inspectorate under Regulation 11 of the EIA Regulations;
 - Non-statutory bodies treated as prescribed by the Applicant, including local representative groups, initiatives and member organisations;
 - Local authorities, in accordance with Section 42(1)(b) and Section 43(1); and
 - Persons with an interest in land or persons who would or might be eligible to make a relevant claim, in accordance with Section 42(1)(d) and Section 44.
- 2.1.4 Pre-application consultation under Section 47 has taken place with:
- The local community i.e. those living within the vicinity of the Project. Any interested members of the community were welcome to take part in consultation activities. To proactively promote consultation opportunities, the Applicant defined a core consultation zone (as described in Section 7 of this report and shown in Figure 7.1);
 - Local elected representatives including parish councils and members of Oxfordshire County Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, Cherwell District Council, and Vale of White Horse District Council; and
 - MPs for Witney, Oxford West and Abingdon, and Henley.
- 2.1.5 Pre-application consultation has also taken place in accordance with Section 48 of the 2008 Act through publicity of the Project, as described in Section 9 of this report.

2.2 Relevant legislation and guidance

2.2.1 The Applicant has considered and complied with the following legislation and guidance when undertaking the pre-application consultation and when compiling the Consultation Report:

- Planning Act 2008;
- The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations) Regulations 2017;
- The Infrastructure Planning (Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure) Regulations 2009;
- Department for Communities and Local Government Planning Act 2008: Guidance on the pre-application process (2015) ('DCLG guidance');
- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the Preparation and Submission of Application Documents (updated October 2024);
- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice on the Consultation Report (published August 2024);
- Planning Act 2008: Pre-application stage for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects 1 ('the Guidance') (published 30 April 2024); and
- Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: 2024 Pre-application Prospectus ('the Prospectus') (published May 2024).

2.2.2 A table setting out how the Applicant has complied with the relevant legislation and guidance is presented in Appendix 5.1.1: Statement of Compliance [EN010147/APP/5.1.1] of this Consultation Report.

2.3 Planning Act 2008 Section 50: Guidance about pre-application procedure

2.3.1 The Applicant notes that it conducted the majority of its pre-application consultation when the former section 50 guidance "Planning Act 2008: Guidance on the pre-application process" was in force. The Applicant is aware that updated statutory guidance, the "Planning Act 2008: Pre-application stage for Nationally Significant infrastructure Projects," was issued in April 2024 under section 50 of the 2008 Act.

2.3.2 Appendix 5.1.1: Statement of Compliance [EN010147/APP/5.1.1] Report sets out how the Applicant carried out its consultation under the previous section 50 guidance, but also how it has since reviewed the updated section 50 guidance and complied with its requirements as well.

2.3.3 This includes by preparing and issuing a written statement regarding an early Adequacy of Consultation Milestone, for example.

- 2.3.4 Acknowledging that the government’s guidance “Introduction to National Infrastructure Planning Guidance” (April 2024) includes transitional arrangements to provide for where guidance is revised and applicants have (among other stages) commenced their statutory pre-application consultation, the guidance confirms that “It is not the intention for revisions to guidance to compromise the preparation or progress of applications which are already well underway.” The Applicant considers its approach to having regard to the section 50 guidance is demonstrated to be satisfactory and thorough.

3 The introduction of the Project to consultees (August – November 2022)

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 In August 2022 the Applicant communicated their intention to develop proposals for the Project to key stakeholders, and subsequently the local community.
- 3.1.2 This introduction to the Project marked the start of ongoing engagement with Section 42 consultees and the local community leading up to the statutory Section 42, Section 47 and Section 48 consultation on more developed proposals, including the Preliminary Environmental Impact Report (PEIR), which commenced in November 2023.
- 3.1.3 Ongoing non-statutory engagement with consultees has enabled two-way dialogue between the Applicant and consultees on Project updates and allowed the Applicant to continuously consider consultee feedback in the iterative design of the Project.

3.2 Stakeholder introduction to the Project (August 2022)

- 3.2.1 The Applicant contacted officers and political leaders from local authorities based on the administrative boundaries for the proposed Project on 15 August 2022. These local authorities are Oxfordshire County Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, Cherwell District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, and Oxford City Council. The CEO of Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (OxLEP) was also contacted at this time.
- 3.2.2 The purpose of this initial contact was to introduce local authorities and OxLEP to the Project and arrange and hold introductory meetings between themselves and the Applicant. This communication resulted in the following meetings being arranged by the Applicant:
- Meeting with relevant officers from Vale of White Horse District Council on 31 August 2022;
 - Meeting with the leader and one cabinet member for Oxfordshire County Council on 08 September 2022;
 - Meeting with the CEO of OxLEP on 13 September 2022;
 - Meeting with the leader and officers at Cherwell District Council on 23 September 2022;
 - Meeting with officers at West Oxfordshire District Council on 26 September 2022; and
 - Meeting with officers at Oxford City Council on 05 October 2022.
- 3.2.3 The Applicant contacted the MPs for whom the Project would be sited in their constituency by email on 14 October 2022. The MPs for Witney, Oxford West and Abingdon, and Henley were contacted. This

communication introduced the Project to them, the Applicant’s intention to shortly hold a phase of non-statutory community consultation with their constituents, and to invite them to meet with the Applicant to discuss the Project in more detail. Following the communication, a meeting was initially organised between the Applicant and the MP for Witney on 18 November 2022, and subsequently rearranged and held on 27 January 2023.

3.2.4 Ward and District councillors from the Local Authorities, as well as parish councils, were also offered introductory briefing webinars with the Applicant on 02 and 03 November 2022. 16 councillors and parish councillors attended the first webinar on 02 November 2022, and 19 councillors and parish councillors attended the second webinar on 03 November 2022, which coincided with the launch of the non-statutory phase one community consultation on 03 November 2022.

3.2.5 Table 3.1 provides a summary of the early engagement briefing meetings described in Section 4.2 of this Consultation Report.

Table 3.1: Engagement meetings held by the Applicant as a result of pre-consultation outreach

Date	Stakeholder / Organisation	Overview
31 August 2022	<u>Vale of White Horse</u> Suzanne Malcolm – VoWH Deputy Chief Executive Adrian Duffield – VoWH Head of Planning	Presentation from the Applicant to introduce the Project and upcoming public communication, followed by a question and answer discussion with attendees.
8 September 2022	<u>Oxfordshire County Council</u> Cllr Liz Leffman – Leader of Oxfordshire County Council Cllr Peter Sudbury – Cabinet Member for Climate Change Delivery and Environment	
13 September 2022	<u>Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership</u> Nigel Tipple – CEO of OxLEP	
23 September 2022	<u>Cherwell District Council and Planning Officers</u> Cllr Barry Wood - Cherwell Leader Ian Boll – Corporate Director, Communities Alex Chrusciak – Senior Manager, Development Management	

Date	Stakeholder / Organisation	Overview
26 September 2022	<u>West Oxfordshire District Council</u> Giles Hughes - Chief Executive Phil Shaw – Business Manager – Development & Sustainability Janice	
5 October 2022	<u>Oxford City Council</u> Mish Tullar – Head of Corporate Strategy (MT) Paul Spencer – Energy and Carbon Manager (PS) Mai Jarvis – Environment Quality Leader (MJ) Andrew Murdoch – Development Management Service Manager (AM)	
18 November 2022, and subsequently rearranged and held on 27 January 2023.	Robert Courts, MP for Witney	
02 November 2022	Councillor and Parish Council Online webinar (16 attendees)	Presentation from the Applicant on the early-stage Project proposals and upcoming phase one consultation activities, followed by Q&A discussion.
03 November 2022	Councillor and Parish Council Online webinar (19 attendees)	

3.2.6 A Phase One Briefing Pack document was distributed to identified stakeholders electronically on 03 November 2022. The Phase One Briefing Pack introduced the Applicant, the Project and consultation process. It was distributed to representatives to representatives from the stakeholder organisations listed in Table 3.2. A copy of the Phase One Briefing Pack document is provided as Appendix 5.1.2: Phase One Consultation Materials **[EN010147/APP/5.1.2]**.

Table 3.2 Stakeholder organisation distribution list for Phase One Briefing Pack

Category	Stakeholder organisation
Local Authority	Cherwell District Council
	Oxford City Council
	Oxfordshire County Council
	Vale of White Horse District Council
	West Oxfordshire District Council
Parish Council	Begbroke Parish Council
	Bladon Parish Council
	Botley & North Hinksey Parish Council
	Cassington Parish Council
	Cumnor Parish Council
	Eynsham Parish Council
	Freeland Parish Council
	Gosford and Water Eaton Parish Council
	Hanborough Parish Council
	Kidlington Parish Council
	North Leigh Parish Council
	Shipton-on-Cherwell and Thrupp Parish Council
	Stanton Harcourt Parish Council
	Steeple Barton Parish Council
	Tackley Parish Council
	Woodstock Town Council
	Wootton Parish Council
Yarnton Parish Council	
MP	MP for Henley
	MP for Oxford East
	MP for Oxford West and Abingdon
	MP for Wantage
	MP for Witney

4 Phase one non-statutory community consultation (November – December 2022)

4.1 Background

- 4.1.1 Following the introduction to the Project to key local consultees and representatives (as described in Section 4 of this report), the Applicant proactively publicised the proposals to the wider community and invited feedback by undertaking a phase of non-statutory consultation at an early stage of the Project development process.
- 4.1.2 This non-statutory phase one was held for seven weeks between 03 November 2022 and 22 December 2022, preceding the publication of a Statement of Community Consultation and subsequent statutory consultation.
- 4.1.3 The phase one consultation was initially publicised as a six-week consultation period with a stated response deadline of 15 December 2022. During the consultation period, the response deadline was extended by a week to 22 December 2022 to allow more time for anyone interested to provide feedback on the proposals. This extension was publicised by email and by issuing a consultation extension postcard to over 22,000 properties in the vicinity of the Project. A copy of the phase one consultation extension postcard is included in Appendix 5.1.2: Phase One Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.2].
- 4.1.4 The feedback received through early engagement and non-statutory consultation helped to refine the Project proposals and approach to consultation, ahead of publicising the Statement of Community Consultation and undertaking statutory consultation.

4.2 Publicity, information and opportunities to engage during non-statutory phase one community consultation

- 4.2.1 The Applicant established a range of free-to-use communications channels for community enquiries and comments regarding the Project. The Project communication channels include a Freephone number (0808 175 3085), a Freepost address (FREEPOST BWSF) and an email address (info@botleywest.co.uk). They have been operational on Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm, throughout the pre-application period.
- 4.2.2 To publicise the consultation and encourage responses, the Applicant distributed a community consultation leaflet to over 22,000 properties within the vicinity of the Project. These properties were identified by being within a zone defined as a minimum of 2km from the proposed solar panel site areas within the Project, and a minimum of 500m from the cable route search corridors (as presented at the time of consultation). This zone was further extended to include additional properties where proportionate and

reasonable based on existing boundaries in order to avoid inappropriate ‘severance’ of communities. The leaflet was printed distributed to arrive at properties on or before 03 November 2022.

- 4.2.3 The Phase one community consultation leaflet presented information on the Project at an early stage in the design process and publicised how to find out more information and respond to the consultation.
- 4.2.4 A copy of the phase one community consultation leaflet is included in Appendix 5.1.2: Phase One Consultation Materials **[EN010147/APP/5.1.2]**.
- 4.2.5 Information regarding the Project was published on the Applicant’s dedicated Project website (www.botleywest.co.uk) on 03 November 2022. This included details of the Project and phase one consultation through text, images and documents to view and download from an online document library.
- 4.2.6 The Project website has remained live and accessible from this date and continues to be updated with relevant information as appropriate.
- 4.2.7 Information regarding the Project, phase one consultation opportunities, and the availability of the Project website and Project communications channels was publicised through the issue of a media release to identified regional and industry publications. The release was issued to the publications listed in Table 4.1, alongside plans showing the Project site location and indicative early-stage design.

Table 4.1: Phase one consultation media distribution list

Category	Publication
Regional	Banbury Guardian
	BBC
	Oxford Mail
	Oxford Times
	Oxfordshire Guardian
	Oxfordshire Live
	The Herald Series
	The Oxford Magazine
	This is Oxfordshire
	Witney Gazette
Trade	1 st Security News
	Bloomberg
	Business Green
	Carbon Brief
	Carbon Capture Journal
	Carbon Pulse
Clean Energy Pipeline	

Category	Publication
	Climate Home News
	Current News
	Energy CIO Insights
	Energy Engineering
	Energy Live News
	Energy Voice
	Environment Journal
	Good Energy
	Inspiratia
	Power & Energy Solutions
	Planning Magazine
	Power Engineering International
	PV Magazine
	Recharge
	Refinitiv
	Renewables & Environment
	Renewables Now
	reNEWS
	The Energyst
	World of Renewables
	Solar Power Portal UK

- 4.2.8 Subsequent coverage included articles in the BBC (03 November 2022) and Oxford Mail (03 November 2022 and 05 November 2022).
- 4.2.9 In addition to the media release, the Applicant placed advertisements in four local newspapers – the Oxford Times on 03 November 2022, the Witney Gazette and Herald Series on 09 November 2022, and the Banbury Guardian on 10 November 2022 – to publicise the Project and phase one consultation opportunities. A copy of this newspaper advert is provided in Appendix 5.1.2: Phase One Consultation Materials **[EN010147/APP/5.1.2]**.
- 4.2.10 A phase one community consultation feedback form was published to encourage responses. The form was available online, by request to the Project communications channels, and to complete or take away from the Applicant’s series of information events. The feedback form could be submitted to the Applicant by a Freepost address (FREEPOST BWSF), by email, or by attending an in-person information event. The same questions could also be responded to online via an online feedback form linked to the Project website. A copy of this feedback form is provided in Appendix 5.1.2: Phase One Community Consultation Materials **[EN010147/APP/5.1.2]**.
- 4.2.11 Consultation materials were uploaded to the document library section of the Project website. The following documents were uploaded on the first day of the consultation period (03 November 2022):

- Phase One Community Consultation Leaflet;
- Phase One Feedback Form;
- Phase One Consultation Concept Plan;
- Phase One Site Location Plan;
- Phase One information event boards; and
- Phase One information event maps.

4.2.12 The following documents were uploaded to the website on 22 November 2022:

- Phase One Updated Site Location Plan with field numbers;
- Phase One Preliminary Masterplan Overview;
- Phase One Ecology Constraints Map;
- Phase One Greenbelt and Boundaries Constraints Map;
- Phase One Heritage Constraints Map;
- Phase One Hydrology Constraints Map; and
- Phase One Landscape Constraints Map.

4.2.13 Copies of these materials are provided in Appendix 5.1.2: Phase One Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.2].

4.2.14 During the Phase one consultation period, the Applicant held seven in-person events and one online public information event for members of the local community to attend. These events provided an opportunity to discuss the Project with the Applicant and members of their team. Large scale maps and a series of information boards were displayed at the events. Copies of the consultation leaflet and feedback were available in hard copy to view and take away. Details of these events are provided in Table 4.2 below.

4.2.15 The events at Eynsham Village Hall and Begbroke Village Hall were additional events that were organised during the consultation period as a result of engagement with members of the public and local stakeholders.

Table 4.2 Phase one community consultation information events

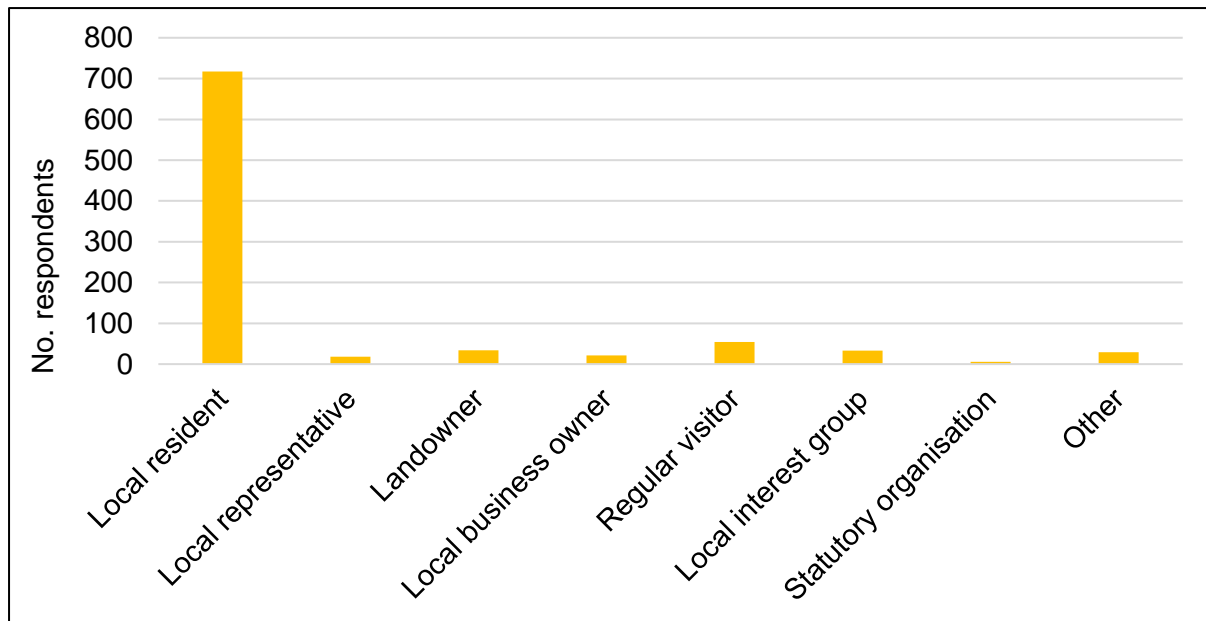
Venue	Date and time	No. attendees
Woodstock Community Centre, 32 New Road, OX20 1PB	19 November 2022, 11am – 4pm	117
Hanborough Pavilion & Village Hall Roosevelt Road, OX29 8JG	23 November 2022, 12.30pm – 4.30pm	112
Cassington Village Hall The Green, OX29 4AX	25 November 2022, 1pm – 6pm	132
Tackley Village Hall Medcroft Road, OX5 3AH	26 November 2022, 11am – 3pm	40

Venue	Date and time	No. attendees
St Leonards Church Hall Thames Street, OX29 4HF	28 November 2022, 5pm – 7.30pm	54
Cumnor Village Hall Leys Road, OX2 9QF	30 November 2022, 1.30pm – 5.30pm	83
Begbroke Village Hall Begbroke Lane, OX5 1RN	1 December 2022, 5pm – 7.30pm	25
Zoom (online webinar)	5 December 2022, 5.30pm – 7pm	56
Total attendees		619

4.3 Phase one consultation feedback

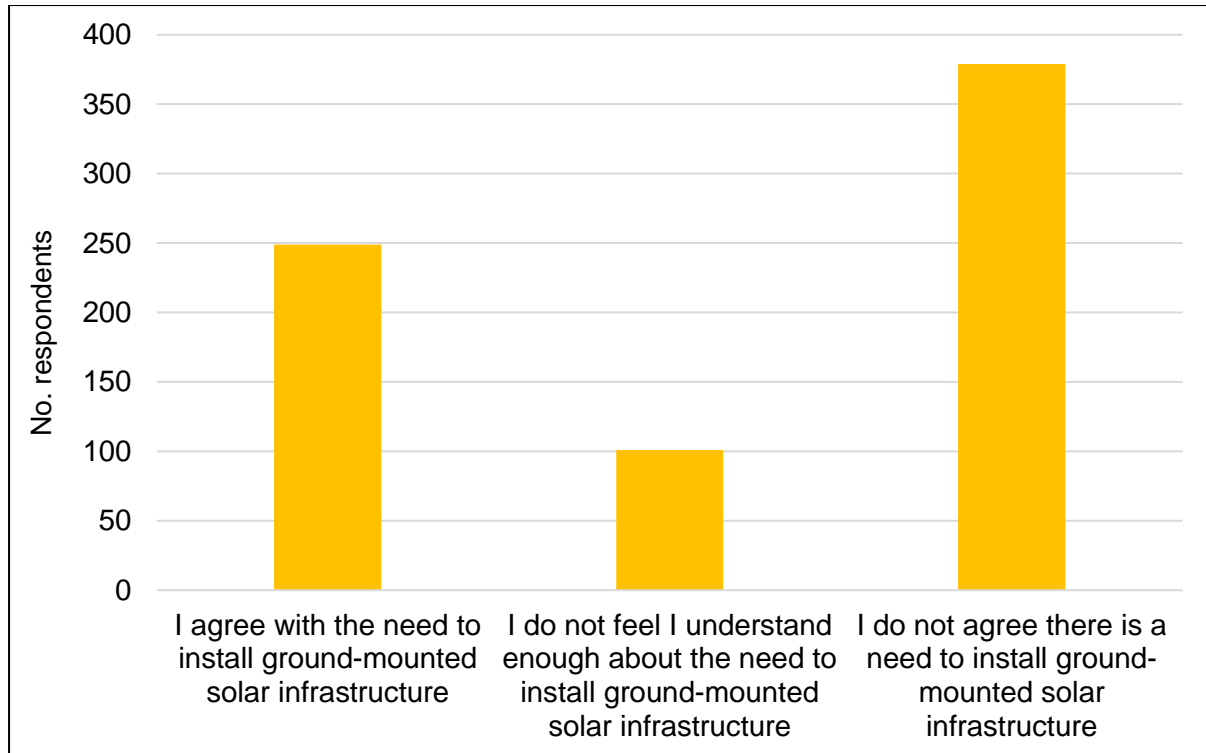
- 4.3.1 The Applicant invited feedback to be submitted in writing or online via the free-to-use Project communications channels.
- 4.3.2 In total, the Applicant received 1,083 submissions of feedback in response to the phase one community consultation. This included 767 feedback form submissions (paper forms and online submissions) and 303 submissions of feedback via the project’s communication channels (email and Freepost). 13 submissions were also received and accepted following the end of the consultation period.
- 4.3.3 The phase one feedback form (both the online version and paper copy) included a combination of closed and open-ended questions to encourage responses regarding the respondent’s interest in the Project, the early-stage proposals, potential opportunities to explore, and the consultation process. The following figures (4.1 – 4.10) present the results of the closed questions from the 767 stakeholders who submitted the phase one feedback form.
- 4.3.4 A significant majority of respondents identified as being a local resident, as shown in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 How would you describe your interest in Botley West Solar Farm?



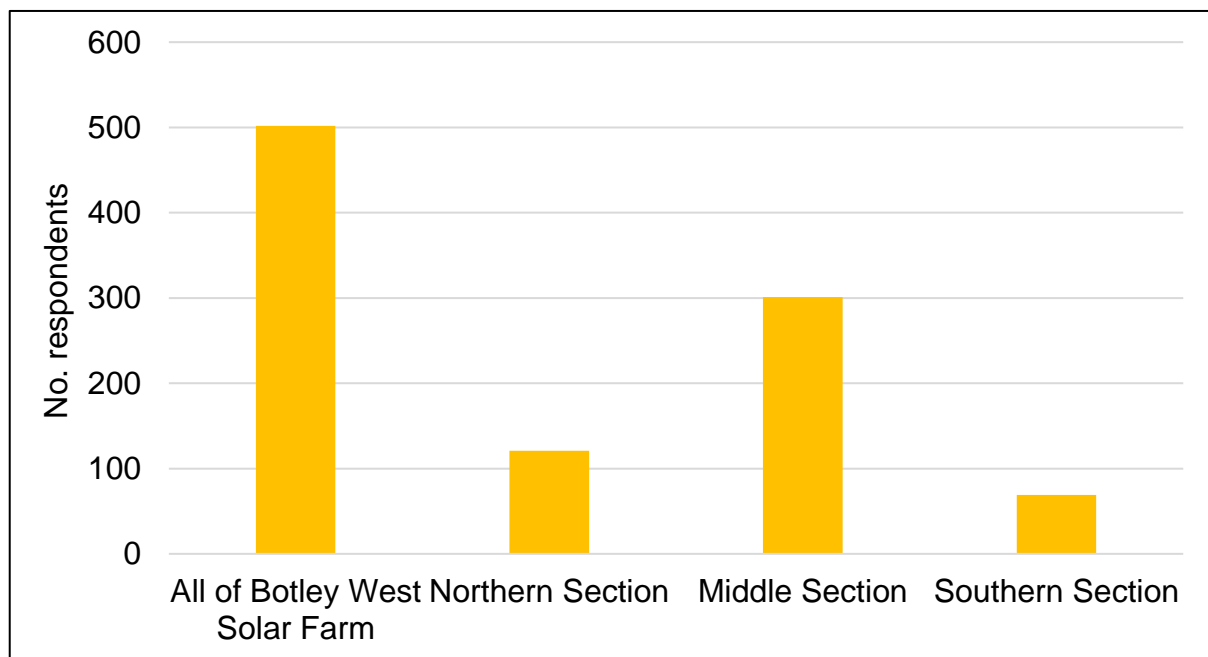
4.3.5 When asked about the principle of ground-mounted solar, 34% agreed with the need to install ground-mounted solar, 52% did not agree, and 14% felt that they did not understand enough about the need to install ground-mounted solar infrastructure, as shown in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2: In principle, what is your view of installing ground-mounted solar infrastructure in the UK?



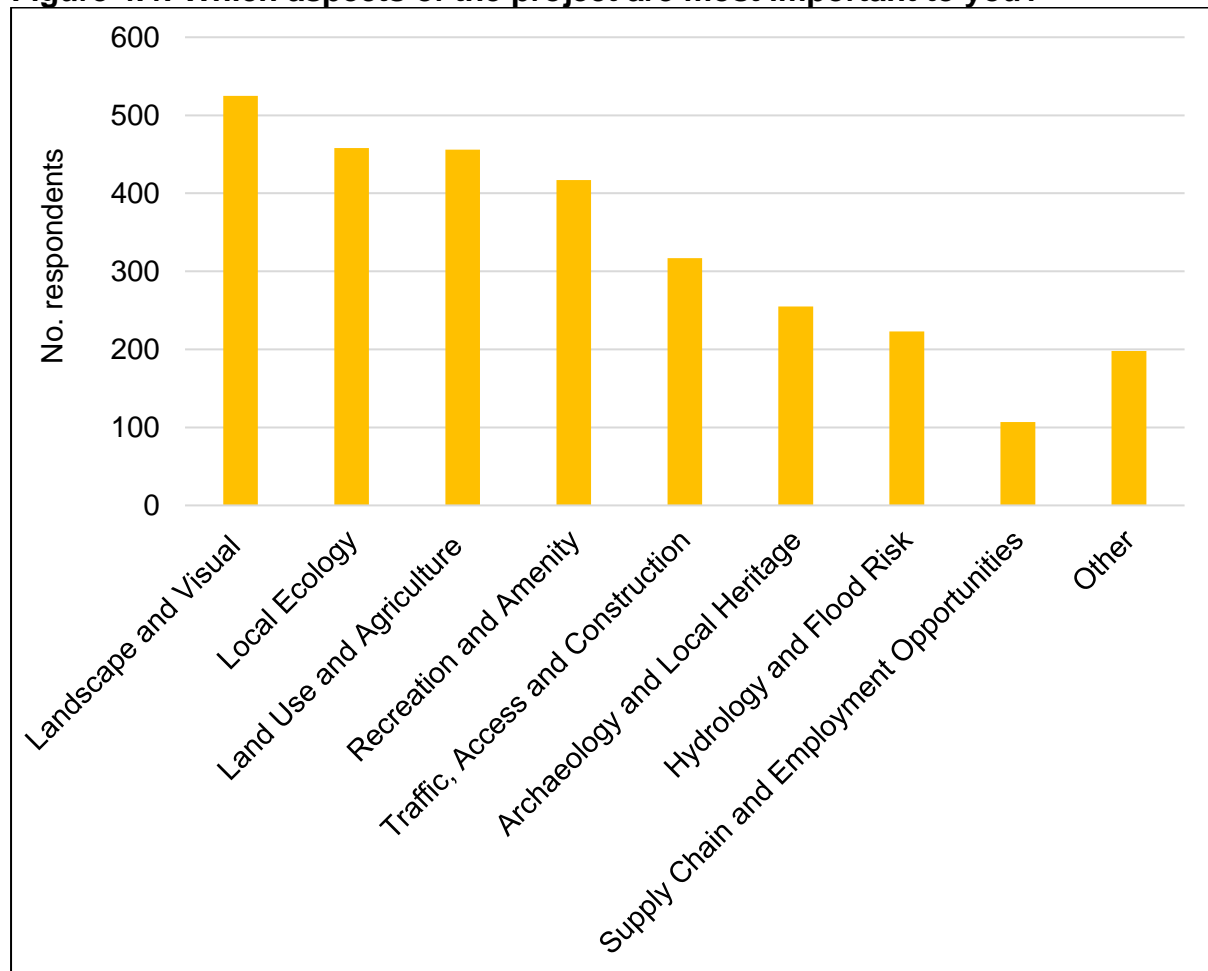
- 4.3.6 The feedback form acknowledged that the Project involves three main areas of land, which were labelled as 'North', 'Middle', and 'South' and pictured on the form, and that respondents may be interested in a specific area of the Project.
- 4.3.7 Respondents were asked to confirm which area of the Project their feedback applied to. 51% of respondents confirmed their feedback applied to all of the Project. The middle site area was the most common specific site area commented on, with 30% of respondents confirming this. The results to this question are presented in Figure 4.3. Please note that respondents could select multiple options in response to this question.

Figure 4.3: Please confirm the area(s) of our proposals to which your feedback applies



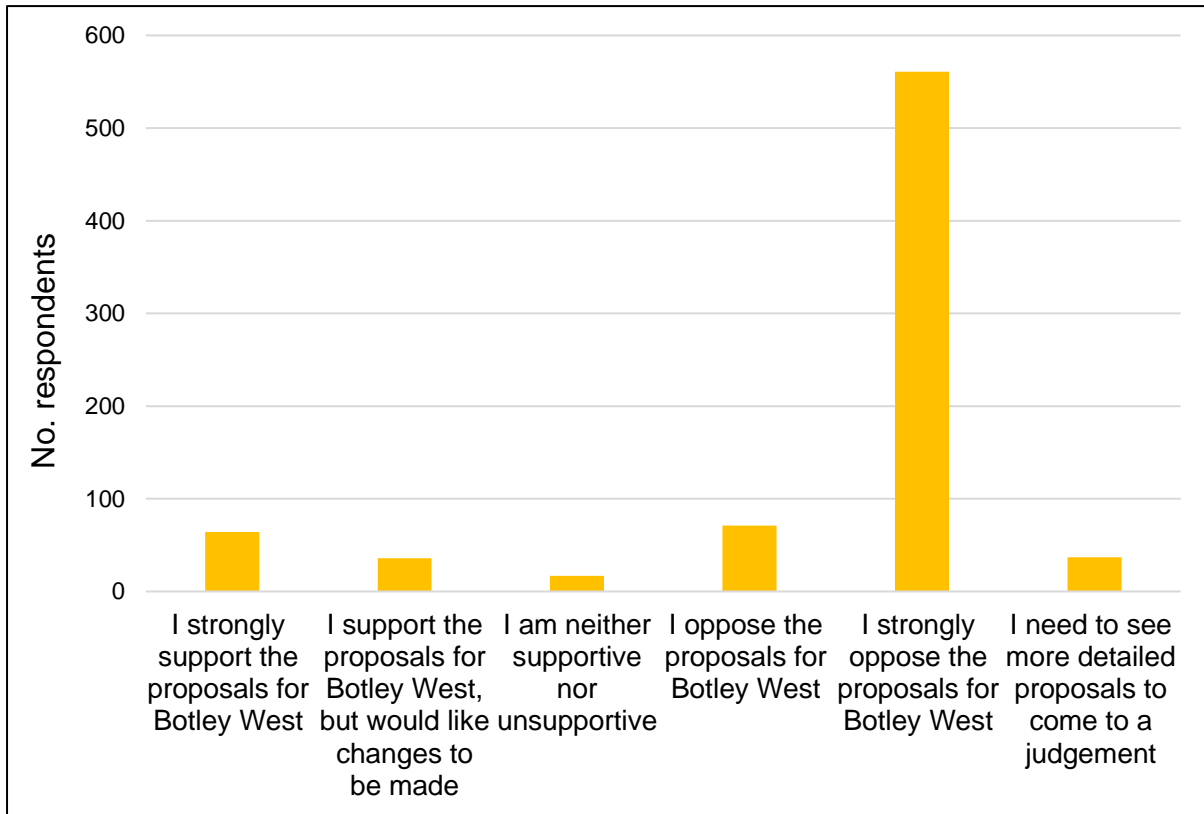
- 4.3.8 Respondents had the opportunity to indicate which aspects of the project they considered to be most important. The response options were aligned with environmental topic areas.
- 4.3.9 Landscape and visual, 'Local ecology and biodiversity', and 'Land use and agriculture' were cited by respondents as being the most important issues to consider, as shown in Figure 4.4. Respondents could select more than one field on this question.

Figure 4.4: Which aspects of the project are most important to you?



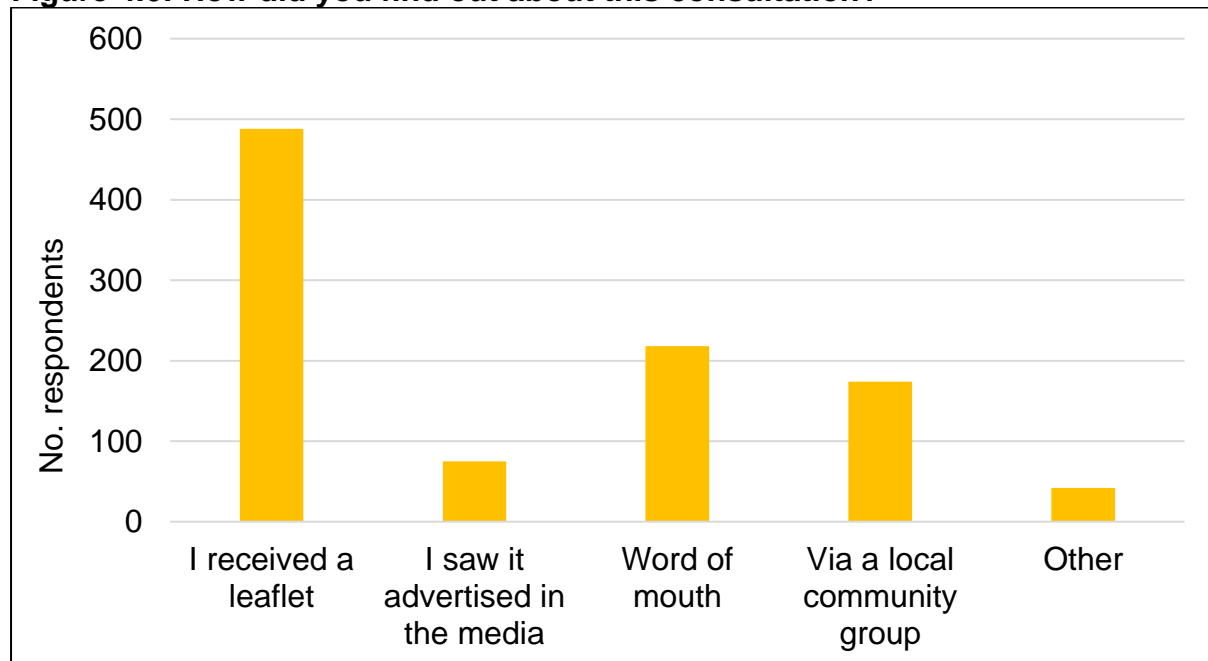
4.3.10 Overall, 13% of respondents indicated levels of support for the proposals, while 80% indicated opposition and 7% were neutral, as shown in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5: Based on our early-phase proposals, what are your views on Botley West Solar Farm?



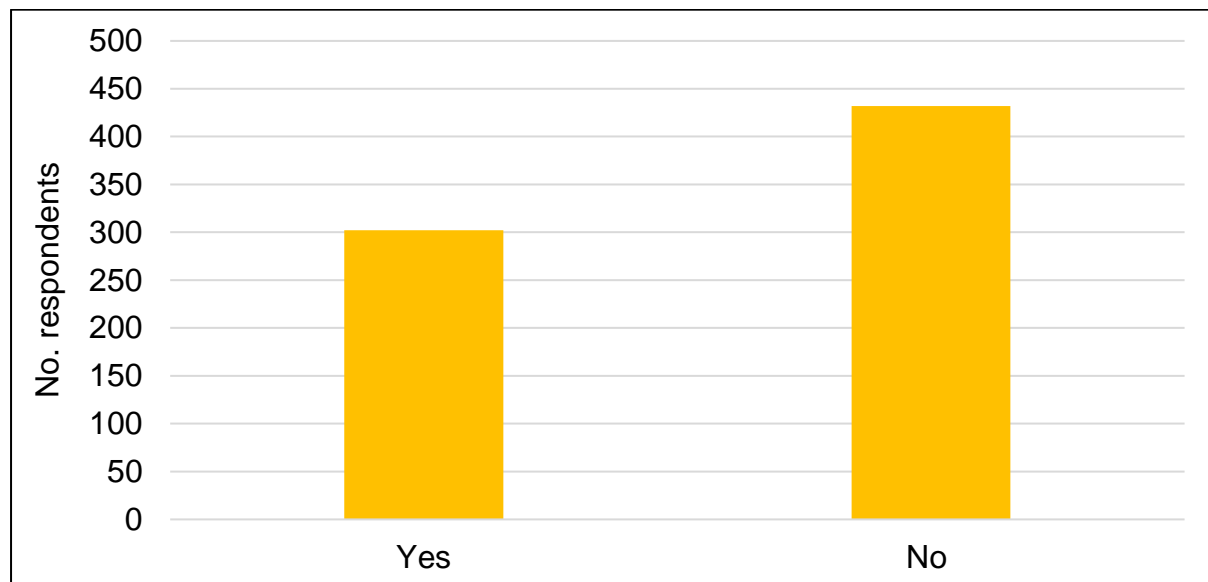
4.3.11 The majority of respondents indicated that they found out about the consultation by receiving a consultation leaflet, as shown in Figure 4.6.

Figure 4.6: How did you find out about this consultation?



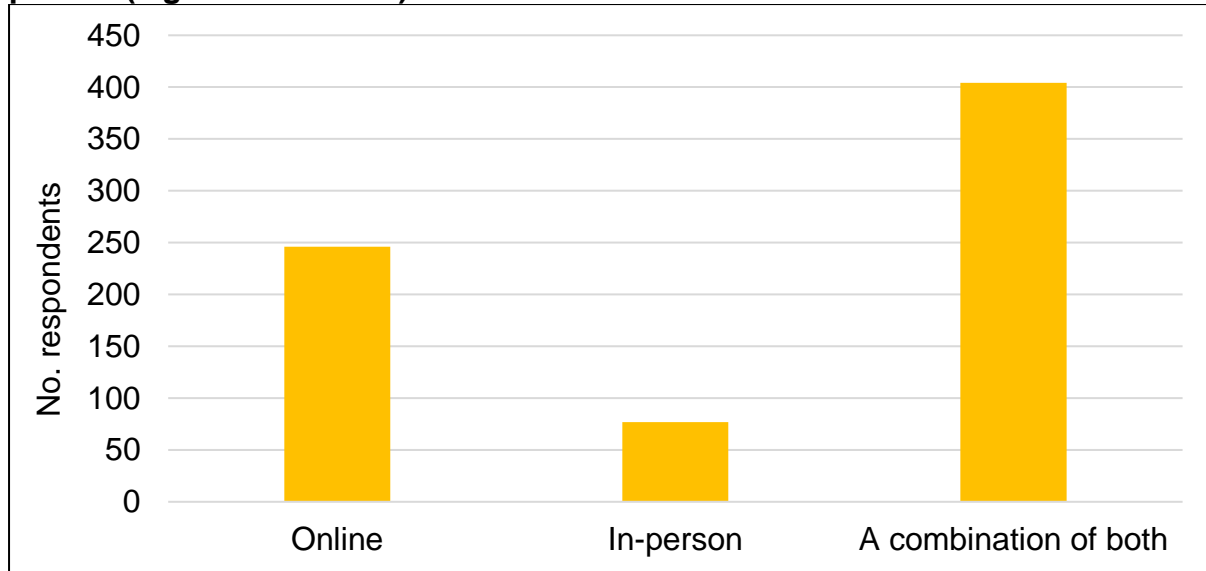
4.3.12 The majority of respondents indicated that they hadn't attended any of the Applicant's information events at the time of providing feedback, as shown in Figure 4.7

Figure 4.7: Have you attended one of our information events?



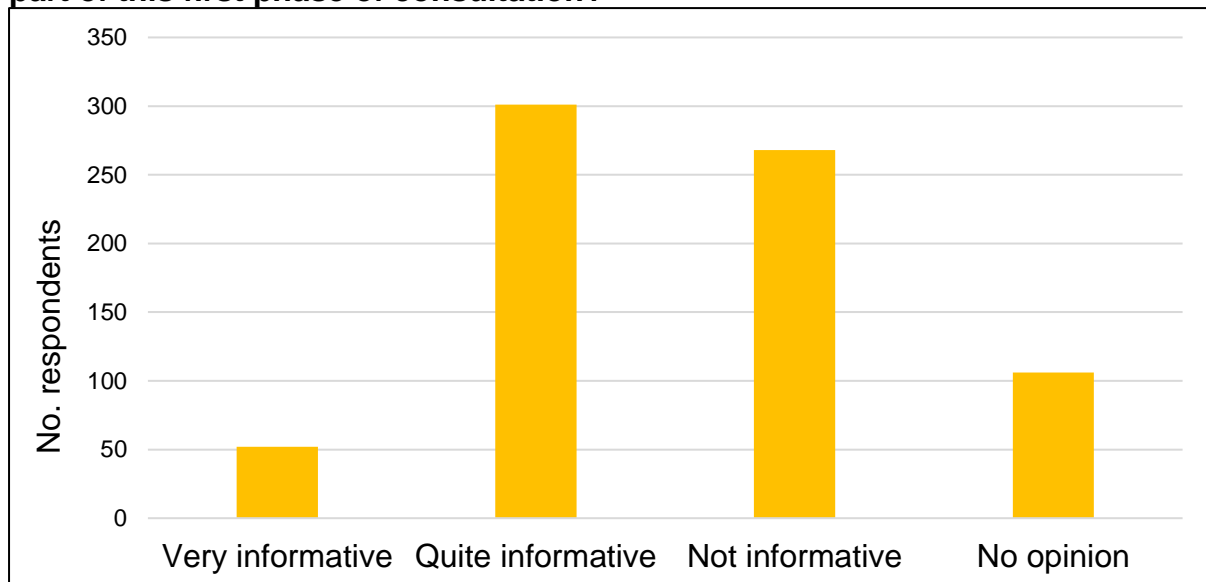
4.3.13 Respondents were asked to indicate a preference for viewing information online or in-person. The majority of respondents indicated a preference for a combination of both, as shown in Figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8: Do you prefer to view information online (e.g. our website) or in person (e.g. at our events)?



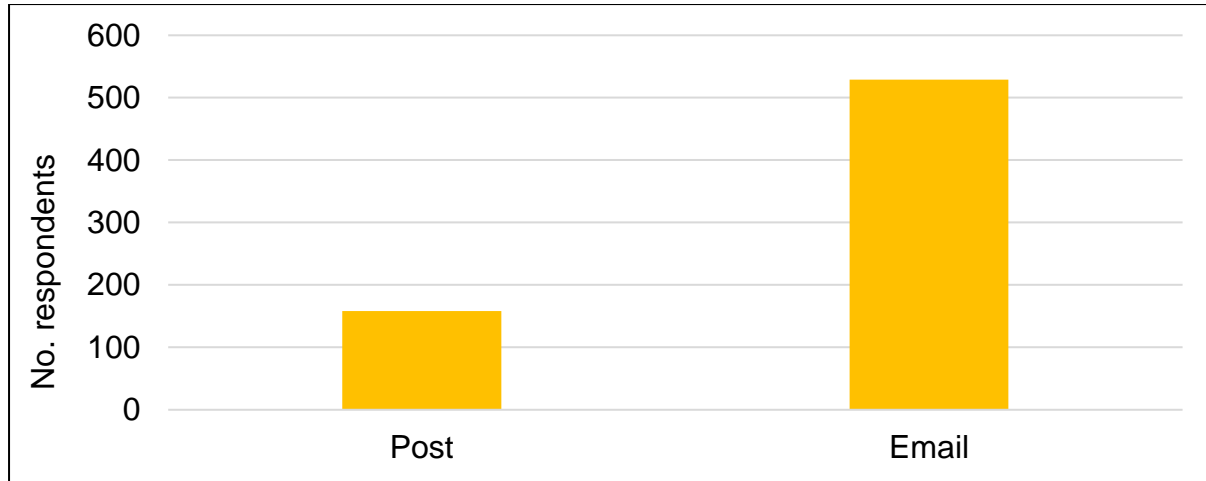
4.3.14 353 respondents indicated that they had found the consultation materials to be quite or very informative, with 268 respondents indicative they had not found the materials to be informative. 106 respondents indicated that they had no opinion, as shown in Figure 4.9.

Figure 4.9: How informative have you found the materials we have shared as part of this first phase of consultation?



4.3.15 Respondents had the opportunity to register to be kept updated. 158 respondents indicated they would like to be kept updated by post and 529 by email, as shown in Figure 4.10.

Figure 4.10: Would you like us to keep you updated?



4.3.16 The Applicant recognises the importance of understanding the context and explanation that accompany these statistics. The Applicant considered qualitative analysis of the written feedback received.

4.3.17 A summary of these comments is presented in Table 4.3. The Applicant response provided is contemporary for this stage in the pre-application process (i.e. before commencing statutory consultation in November 2023), to show how this feedback was considered at the time.

Table 4.3: Phase one non-statutory consultation key comments and Applicant responses

Phase one consultation feedback	Applicant response
<p>Respondents expressed concern about the visual impact of the solar farm across the site and how it could affect the landscape and character of the area. Respondents expressed concern that the project will industrialise the landscape.</p> <p>Respondents commented that the scale is inappropriate, with many noting that it could become the second biggest solar farm in</p>	<p>The Applicant recognises the concern of local residents regarding the landscape and visual impact of the project. This is being carefully considered as the project progresses, and ongoing assessments will allow the Applicant to understand how to further mitigate potential landscape and/or visual impacts. This includes a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) to be undertaken across the site. The Applicant notes they will be sharing emerging plans for further feedback during a phase two consultation.</p>

Phase one consultation feedback	Applicant response
<p>Europe. The size of the middle site area was mentioned in particular.</p> <p>Respondents expressed concern about the current buffer zones and the proximity to villages and residential properties.</p> <p>Respondents commented that the project poses a potential safety risk to Oxford Airport.</p>	<p>The Applicant recognises that the aerial plans of the Project, which were shared during the phase one consultation, show the full scale of the project from a bird's eye view. At phase two consultation, the Applicant will be able to publish visualisations which give a better impression of how the project may be seen at eye-level from agreed local viewpoints.</p> <p>The Applicant's landscaping team is considering feedback alongside the visual profile of panels, gently undulating topography and existing landscape structure to sensitively design the Project to integrate into the landscape as effectively as possible. Planting to further screen the panels is also being considered.</p> <p>The Applicant appreciates the feedback regarding the location of panels in proximity to residential properties. Updated Project designs will now include a minimum 25 metre buffer zone with some areas in excess of 25 metres adjacent to settlements, increasing the buffer to further mitigate visual impacts.</p> <p>The Applicant is continuing to engage with Oxford Airport. Updated plans for the Project will include removing an area originally planned for solar array development to allow Oxford Airport to increase the amount of landing lights. The Project will be developed so that it will not pose a safety risk to Oxford Airport.</p> <p>There are no plans for permanent lighting to be included as part of the proposals, so there should be no night-time visual impacts associated with the Project. The Applicant anticipates that only motion sensor security lighting around sensitive equipment will be installed.</p>

Phase one consultation feedback	Applicant response
<p>Respondents expressed concern about potential damage to local ecology and wildlife, and scepticism regarding the potential for solar farms to support an increase in biodiversity.</p> <p>This included comments regarding a perceived loss of habitat, safety, species levels and the impact of physical barriers such as fencing. Various local species were mentioned such as deer, swans and skylarks.</p> <p>Respondents commented that panels will block sunlight hitting the ground which will impact the ground underneath, in terms of plant growth and soil quality.</p>	<p>The Applicant is developing proposals for the Project so that it delivers an overall net gain in biodiversity. The Applicant will set out a calculation for how this will be achieved in the DCO application for the Project.</p> <p>As part of the EIA process, the Applicant is conducting a number of surveys analysing a variety of ecological and biodiversity impacts across the site – both positive and negative. This will inform the appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures required to boost biodiversity. The emerging results of this work will be shared as part of the phase two consultation.</p> <p>We are in discussion with Blenheim Estate regarding the organisation becoming the long-term environmental steward and manager of the land throughout the Project’s lifespan, ensuring that ecological and biodiversity gains are properly secured and achieved.</p> <p>The design of the Project includes gaps between the rows of panels, as well as gaps at intervals within the rows of panels. This ensures that light will hit the ground underneath, encouraging plants such as wildflowers to grow. Furthermore, taking fields out of intensive agriculture allows the ground to rest, meaning that the soil underneath panels is more likely to be healthier at the end of the Project’s operation than at the start.</p>
<p>Respondents expressed concern that the proposals will affect archaeology and local heritage.</p>	<p>The Applicant understands the concerns raised regarding the impact to archaeology and local heritage. Ongoing environmental assessments include geophysical and archaeological surveys, as well as site visits to mitigate against potential impacts on archaeology.</p>

Phase one consultation feedback	Applicant response
	<p>The design of the Project is being refined to ensure that panels are kept out of conservation areas and away from listed buildings and scheduled monuments.</p> <p>In developing the proposals, the Applicant has also worked to refine the cable route. Between the northern, middle and southern sections, the cable route will avoid any known potentially sensitive areas of archaeological or cultural significance. The Applicant intends for the Project to be delivered sensitively, which the refined cable route helps to achieve.</p>
<p>Respondents have expressed concern that construction will increase the level of traffic, congestion, and pollution on roads across the project area.</p> <p>There are comments that the roads around the villages are unsuitable and too narrow for construction traffic, such as the A4095 through Bladon. Some respondents have requested information on how the impacts of construction will be mitigated.</p> <p>Respondents commented there is already bad congestion and traffic in the area and that the project will increase this. Some requested that the traffic from other projects is considered alongside this project.</p>	<p>The Applicant recognises concerns around the impact of traffic during construction, and is undertaking traffic and transport assessments to better understand current traffic levels and the potential impacts of the Project to inform appropriate mitigation. The Applicant is in dialogue with Oxfordshire County Council Highways on these matters and will continue to work with the authority throughout the duration of the project.</p> <p>The DCO application for the Project will include a Construction Traffic Management Plan, detailing the findings of the Applicant's assessments and how traffic will be managed during the construction period. Cumulative impacts of traffic will be considered and addressed as part of the environmental assessment.</p> <p>The Applicant wants to ensure that construction is carried out sensitively with minimal impact on the surrounding area.</p>
<p>Respondents expressed concern about a loss of agricultural land and crops. There was also concern about the loss of Green Belt land.</p>	<p>The Applicant recognises the importance of food security in the UK and is developing Project proposals with this in mind. This will be considered in the planning application alongside the UK's energy needs and policy.</p>

Phase one consultation feedback	Applicant response
<p>Respondents expressed concern that the solar farm threatens food security and the aim for self-sufficiency and would mean more carbon output in terms of imported food.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes that the four supportive landowners won't be ceasing food production, if they are currently farming, and revenue from the rent will help them to diversify and improve the operation of their farms.</p> <p>The Project presents an opportunity to improve the condition of agricultural land and soil quality by temporarily taking the land out of intensive agricultural use for a period of time. Although we have strong local knowledge of the quality of the land within the site boundary, the Applicant is undertaking comprehensive land classification surveys across the site to fully understand the quality and grading of the land.</p> <p>There will also be opportunities for continued agricultural use across the site area during the operation of the Project. This could include the grazing of sheep or areas of horticulture. The Applicant will continue to explore these opportunities through working with local stakeholders.</p>
<p>Respondents commented that the whole site area is prone to flooding. Some specific areas mentioned were the Evenlode Valley, Lower Road, Cassington, Bladon, and Farmoor Reservoir.</p> <p>Respondents expressed concern about the project increasing flood risk to the area. This includes panels run-off and inability for water to drain under the panels.</p>	<p>Well-designed solar farms do not cause an increase in the risk of flooding. The Applicant's focus is on ensuring the Project is designed well to respond sensitively to the local environment. The Applicant is carrying out a comprehensive flood risk and ground conditions assessment which will detail the mitigation measures taken to reduce any adverse effects on flooding and ground conditions, including any additional drainage needed.</p> <p>The Applicant does not anticipate the solar arrays to have an adverse effect on flood risk, due to the minimal surface area required to construct the supporting structures for the PV panels.</p>

Phase one consultation feedback	Applicant response
<p>Respondents expressed concern about a potential reduction in access to areas for recreation and public amenity.</p> <p>Respondents expressed concern about the impact to existing footpaths and Public Rights of Way. There was particular concern that members of the public wouldn't want to walk through paths with solar panels on either side.</p> <p>Respondents requested improved and new access routes for walking, running, cycling and motorised use. There was also a request for recreational facilities such as wildlife walks, birdwatching, visitor centres, and fitness equipment.</p>	<p>In refining the Project design, the Applicant is looking at ways to improve recreation and amenity in the area and mitigate against potential impacts. Within the Project design, there are new permissive paths proposed which will increase access across the site for local communities, and the Applicant is working to understand where further footpaths and routes can be added. The Applicant is working closely with Blenheim Estate to align the project with its existing connectivity and active travel improvements planned for the local area.</p> <p>The Applicant intends to retain all existing Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) throughout the Project area. The Applicant will be undertaking a recreation and amenity assessment that will consider the impact on PRoWs within and near the site. Alongside this, The Applicant is looking at ways the Project can improve the PRoWs in the area, including through a proposal to add a cycle track from Bladon to Begbroke across the site.</p>
<p>Respondents have commented that other technologies should be used instead of ground-mounted solar such as offshore and onshore wind, nuclear, tidal, and hydroelectric.</p> <p>Respondents also commented that solar panels should be placed in alternative locations. This included rooftops, brownfield sites, car parks and reservoirs. Some commented that solar farms should be sited out of Oxfordshire.</p>	<p>The Applicant is supportive of all renewable energy technologies that help meet the government's targets to decarbonise the UK's electricity system. Solar power is one of the most affordable forms of electricity in the UK and is quick to construct relative to other low carbon technologies, meaning that it is key in the transition away from fossil fuels. The Applicant will be including an assessment of how alternatives have been considered in our DCO application.</p> <p>The Applicant understands concerns regarding the location of the solar farm and is supportive of solar energy generation being installed on rooftops and other sites. The Applicant has considered other areas of potential development, including brownfield</p>

Phase one consultation feedback	Applicant response
	<p>sites, however these have not been viable due to existing development constraints, land ownership issues, or grid capacity issues. This will be reflected within the alternatives section of the Applicant’s Environmental Statement.</p>
<p>Respondents expressed concern that the project could have an impact on local people, including current and potential future residents. This included concerns regarding quality of life and the value of properties. There was also concern that various potential visual and heritage impacts to the area would reduce tourism which could in turn impact local businesses.</p> <p>Respondents commented that there are no benefits to local communities, with some requests that they receive energy directly and at cheaper rates.</p>	<p>The Applicant is considering all suggestions that are made to them regarding potential community benefits. The Applicant is already working with a number of local groups to explore benefits to the area, including engaging with local agricultural organisations about using areas of the site to enable community food production.</p> <p>The Applicant has received valuable feedback about providing power from the project to the local community, and has been engaging with community energy groups across the local area on the potential for providing power at wholesale cost.</p> <p>As the Project progresses, the Applicant will continue to meet with local groups to discuss community benefits, which will form part of the phase two community consultation. This will provide communities and consultees to provide further suggestions</p>

4.4 Ongoing engagement and interim reporting

- 4.4.1 The Applicant’s Project communications channels remained open following the close of the phase one consultation period. Through these channels, the Applicant continued to receive and respond to enquiries regarding the Project.
- 4.4.2 The Project website continued to be available for any interested parties to access Project information, including responses to Frequently Asked Questions responding to topics and themes raised through phase one consultation.
- 4.4.3 Following the review and consideration of feedback received, the Applicant prepared a phase one consultation summary report to share

details of the level engagement, themes of responses received, and updates regarding the Applicant's consideration of feedback and next steps for the Project.

- 4.4.4 The phase one consultation summary report was circulated to key stakeholders on 30 June 2023. It was circulated to those who had registered to be kept informed, the Stop Botley West campaign group, and other identified organisations on 04 July 2023. The document provided an overview of the feedback that the Applicant had received.
- 4.4.5 The phase one consultation summary report was published on the Project website and issued to over 22,000 properties within the vicinity of the Project, to help consultees understand how their feedback was being considered. A copy of the phase one consultation summary report is provided as Appendix 5.1.3: Phase One Consultation Summary Report **[EN010147/APP/5.1.3]**.
- 4.4.6 The phase one consultation summary report was also shared with elected representatives alongside the offer of a meeting to discuss its contents.

5 Consultation under EIA regulations

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is the process under which a development proposal is assessed for its likely significant environmental impacts before an application for consent is considered. The submission of the findings of the EIA in an Environmental Statement (ES) allows the body deciding the application to fully understand the environmental impact of a proposal when it makes its decision.

5.2 EIA scoping phase

5.2.1 The Applicant submitted a Scoping Request for the Project to the Secretary of State on 15 June 2023, and in this request notified the Secretary of State in accordance with Regulation 8(1)(b) of the EIA Regulations that the Applicant would provide an ES in respect of the Project.

5.2.2 The Planning Inspectorate, on behalf of the Secretary of State, consulted with the relevant competent authorities and key statutory stakeholders to seek comments on the scope of the proposed EIA. A Scoping Opinion was adopted by the Planning Inspectorate, on behalf of the Secretary of State, on 24 July 2023.

5.2.3 Appended to the Scoping Opinion, the Planning Inspectorate provided an updated list of consultation bodies notified by the Planning Inspectorate under Regulation 11(1)(a) and (1)(c) of the EIA Regulations.

5.2.4 The responses received to the Scoping Opinion and how the Applicant has responded are detailed in each chapter of the Environmental Statement [EN010147/APP/6.3].

5.3 Pre-application consultation under the EIA Regulations

5.3.1 In accordance with Regulation 13 of the EIA Regulations, a copy of the notice under Section 48(1) of the 2008 Act was sent to consultation bodies and other persons notified to the Applicant under Regulation 11(1)(c) of the EIA Regulations on 30 November 2023. The consultation documents provided to all consultation bodies and other persons notified to the Applicant under Regulation 11(1)(c) of the EIA Regulations are comprised of:

- A covering letter (provided in Appendix 5.1.6: Section 42 Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.6]), which publicised the consultation opportunities, including an offer of a USB device containing the full PEIR and associated consultation documents, as well as a link to where these documents were available on the Project website;

- A site plan showing the location of the Project (provided in Appendix 5.1.6: Section 42 Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.6]); and
- A hard copy of the notice publicised in accordance with Section 48 of the 2008 Act (including details of the public consultation events and the locations where the consultation documents could be inspected free of charge) (provided in Appendix 5.1.7: Section 48 Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.7]).

5.3.2 In addition, both the PEIR and non-technical summary (NTS), which included a summary of EIA matters, were available to all attendees at the phase two (statutory) consultation information events, on the Project website, and at the designated Community Access Point sites as detailed in the SoCC.

5.4 Non-statutory engagement for EIA

- 5.4.1 Prior to and following the pre-application consultation under Regulation 13 of the EIA Regulations (as described in Section 5.2 of this report), a series of discussions and meetings were held with technical consultees regarding the Project as part of the Applicant's ongoing engagement.
- 5.4.2 Ongoing non-statutory engagement with technical consultees enabled a continuous two-way dialogue between the Applicant and consultees on Project updates and enabled the Applicant to continuously consider consultee feedback in the iterative design of the Project proposals.
- 5.4.3 Following the adoption of the Scoping Opinion on 24 July 2023, the Applicant continued engagement with several technical consultees to discuss the opinion, the surveys and assessments undertaken as part of the EIA and Project design ahead of the publication of PEIR.
- 5.4.4 Relevant chapters of the Environmental Statement [EN010147/APP/6.3] include a section on consultation, which details the engagement and meetings held stakeholders and consultees throughout the pre-application and EIA phase of the Project.

6 Preparation for statutory consultation

6.1 Statutory requirements and guidance

- 6.1.1 Section 47(1) of the 2008 Act requires the Applicant to prepare a statement setting out how it proposes to consult on the proposed application with people living in the ‘vicinity’ of the land to which the Project relates.
- 6.1.2 Section 47(2) requires that the Applicant must consult relevant local authorities on the content of this statement, known as the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC).
- 6.1.3 In accordance with Section 47(3) of the 2008 Act, the deadline given for receipt of local authority responses to consultation on the content of the SoCC should be no less than the end of a 28-day period (commencing on the day after the day on which the local authority received the request for comments).
- 6.1.4 In developing the SoCC, regard must be had to the EIA Regulations and relevant guidance relating to pre-application procedure. Regulation 12 of the EIA Regulations stipulates that the SoCC must set out whether the proposal is EIA development and, if so, how the Applicant intends to publicise and consult on its PEIR.
- 6.1.5 The PEIR was published as part of the formal Section 42 consultation, which took place in parallel to the phase two community consultation (statutory consultation under Section 47 of the 2008 Act) between 30 November 2023 and 08 February 2024.
- 6.1.6 Details of the requirements regarding the SoCC from the legislation and guidance and how the Project complied with these requirements are set out in the Statement of Compliance, provided as Appendix 5.1.1: Statement of Compliance [EN010147/APP/5.1.1].

6.2 Development of Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC)

- 6.2.1 Section 47(2) of the 2008 Act states that before preparing the SoCC, the Applicant must consult each local authority that is within Section 43(1) in regard to the content of the SoCC. At the time of preparing the SoCC the relevant authorities within Section 43(1) were:
- Oxfordshire County Council;
 - West Oxfordshire District Council;
 - Cherwell District Council; and
 - Vale of White Horse District Council.

6.3 Consultation on an early working draft of the SoCC

- 6.3.1 In May 2023, the Applicant sought feedback from the host authorities on an early working draft of the SoCC prior to commencing formal consultation on the draft SoCC. This was to provide an additional opportunity to inform the content of the SoCC. At this time, feedback was also sought by the Applicant on a draft list of prescribed and non-prescribed consultees.
- 6.3.2 The Applicant shared an early working draft of the SoCC on 02 May 2023 by email, alongside a database of organisations and contact details for prescribed Section 42 consultees, and non-prescribed consultees including gateway organisations representing potentially seldom heard groups and other community and interest groups.
- 6.3.3 A copy of the early working draft SoCC and accompanying stakeholder contact list is provided as Appendix 5.1.4: Early working draft SoCC **[EN010147/APP/5.1.4]**.
- 6.3.4 In a covering email, the Applicant requested for comments on the early working draft SoCC to be provided by 26 May 2023.
- 6.3.5 West Oxfordshire District Council, Cherwell District Council, and Vale of White Horse District Council provided comments on the early working draft SoCC. Oxfordshire County Council confirmed they had no further comments to submit.
- 6.3.6 The feedback submitted to the early working draft SoCC, and how this was considered by the Applicant when updating the draft SoCC for formal consultation, is described in Table 6.1, Table 6.2 and Table 6.3.
- 6.3.7 The Applicant's response to this feedback was provided to the relevant local authorities on 14 July 2023, alongside an updated draft SoCC. This was to explain how feedback received had been considered in updating the contents of the draft SoCC.

Table 6.1: Applicant consideration of feedback received to the early working draft SoCC from Vale of White Horse District Council (Comments provided 25 May 2023)

Comment	Applicant response (as provided to host authority)
<p>Section 7. How will we consult: Suggestion for venues in the Vale: Botley - Seacourt Hall, 3 Church way, Botley, OX2 9TH</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>As the events during the first phase of consultation were well attended, we intend to facilitate 9 events covering locations across the project's site and an online community webinar. The intention is to use the same event venues as the first phase of consultation, with Kidlington to replace Begbroke and for Bladon to be added. Also, following your feedback we intend to hold an event at Seacourt Hall in Botley.</p>
<p>Section 8. Community access points: Suggests Parish council notice boards could be used as Local Information Points.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>As seen within the first phase of consultation, the Applicant will send a PDF copy of an information poster to parish councils, publicising the second phase of consultation and our upcoming information events. Parish councils will also be asked whether they would like hard copies of the information poster to be posted to them so that they can display the poster at any appropriate locations, which could include notice boards.</p>

Table 6.2: Applicant consideration of feedback received to the early working draft SoCC from West Oxfordshire District Council (comments provided 26 May 2023).

Comment	Applicant response (as provided to host authority)
<p>Section 4. Our public consultation process: Were there not lessons to be learned about the promotion of the events that could improve outreach for the formal stage?</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Overall, the first phase of consultation was successful in the level of feedback and engagement that we received, so therefore one lesson is to repeat a lot of these methods for Phase Two. This includes having a comprehensive series of events, both an online and paper feedback form, and publicising the consultation widely in newspapers and at local information points.</p> <p>In terms of activities to be built on from the first phase of consultation, the consultation period will be extended to a minimum of eight weeks, an additional event will be ran in Bladon as requested by a number of stakeholders, and envelopes used to mail out consultation materials at the start of consultation will include a project logo to make the materials more identifiable.</p>

<p>Section 4. (Cont.): Suggests providing a link to the 2008 Planning Act.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The text has been amended to include a link to the Planning Inspectorate's website containing the 2008 Planning Act. This included at the bottom of section 4: Our Public Consultation Process</p> <p>Updated SoCC Text: Guidance on the DCO process can be found on the Planning Inspectorate's website at: https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice</p>
<p>Section 4. (Cont.): Suggests a diagrammatic format for how members of the public can submit to be relevant representatives.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>If the project is accepted, the Applicant will be required to promote the opportunities / process to become an Interested Party in line with Section 56 of the Planning Act 2008.</p>
<p>Section 4. (Cont.): Suggests adding to the text 'a minimum' to the length of consultation.</p>	<p>A text amendment has been made in the SoCC to say "no less than".</p> <p>Updated SoCC text: A statutory Phase Two community consultation, lasting no less than eight weeks, in Autumn 2023.</p>
<p>Section 4. (Cont.): Suggests adding to the text "Further consultation as necessary to ensure that all issues are addressed before making the DCO application".</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Ensuring 'all issues are addressed' could be interpreted as subjective, and therefore we have not incorporated this wording into the SoCC in order to minimise confusion. However, we have drafted the consultation to allow us to identify issues raised by stakeholders, and these will have to be considered and ultimately responded to in our Consultation Report. Should any changes be made that require further consultation, this would be carried out in line with the principles set out in this SoCC.</p> <p>Updated SoCC Text: This SoCC relates to the delivery of the Phase Two consultation. If there are any subsequent consultations following Phase Two that may be triggered by events such as a material change to the red line boundary, they will follow the methods of consultation as set out in this document.</p>

<p>Section 6. Who will we consult: Added: 'The pre application consultation is the best time to influence the Botley West project, whether you agree with it, disagree with it or believe it can be improved.'</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The text regarding the examination phase of the project has now been moved to a new section titled 'Examination' at the bottom of the section, and the headings set out the chronology of the consultation and DCO process. As this document focuses on the second phase of consultation for the project, our focus within the document wants to be on the pre-application phase of the project, rather than on the examination phase. This is to minimise confusion for stakeholders to ensure that any feedback is made during this phase, rather than people waiting until the examination phase to submit their feedback.</p> <p>Furthermore, within the 'Consultation reporting' subsection of Section 4: Our public consultation process, text has been amended to reflect that all feedback made during the consultation has been recorded and the Applicant has had regard to it within the DCO Application.</p> <p>Updated SoCC Text: Responds to the feedback we have received, including explaining how we have had regard to all feedback relevant to the project and how it has influenced our proposals.</p>
<p>Section 6. (Cont.): Added: 'The public can provide a summary of their views about the Botley West application to the Planning Inspectorate at the pre-examination stage.'</p> <p>By submitting a 'Relevant Representation', a member of the public will become an Interested Party and will be able to participate in meetings relating to the examination of the proposals.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The text regarding the examination phase of the project has now been moved to a new section titled 'Examination' at the bottom of the section, and the headings set out the chronology of the consultation and DCO process. As this document focuses on the second phase of consultation for the project, our focus within the document wants to be on the pre-application phase of the project, rather than on the examination phase. This is to minimise confusion for stakeholders to ensure that any feedback is made during this phase, rather than people waiting until the examination phase to submit their feedback.</p>
<p>Section 7. How will we consult: Focus should be on evening meetings with</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>When arranging the events for Phase Two, it is the intention to arrange meetings across the variety of days and times,</p>

<p>as many Saturday meetings as possible to maximise community engagement.</p>	<p>including weekends and evenings. The final event details will be within our published Statement of Community Consultation.</p>
<p>Section 7. (Cont.): Suggestion for venues in West Oxfordshire:</p> <p>Bladon - Bladon Methodist Church, 28 Park Street, Bladon. OX20 1RW</p> <p>Cassington - Cassington Village Hall, The Green, Cassington. OX29 4AX</p> <p>Eynsham - Eynsham Village Hall, 46 Back Lane, Eynsham. OX29 4QW</p> <p>Hanborough - Hanborough Pavilion, Roosevelt Road, Long Hanborough. OX29 8JG</p> <p>Tackley - Tackley Memorial Hall, Medcroft Road, Tackley. OX5 3AH</p> <p>Woodstock - Woodstock Community Centre, 32 New Road, Woodstock. OX20 1PB</p> <p>Wootton - Wootton Village Hall, Church Street, Wootton. OX20 1DZ</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>As the events during the first phase of consultation were well attended and covered location across the project's site, is the intention to use the same event venues as the first phase of consultation, with the inclusion of events in Bladon, Botley and Kidlington. The venues suggested in Woodstock, Hanborough, Eynsham, Tackley and Cassington are the same venues used at the first phase of consultation.</p> <p>The second phase of consultation will include an event in Bladon. Bladon Methodist Church will be considered as a potential location, however, Bladon C of E Primary School is also being considered as a venue for an event.</p> <p>The current event plan does not include an event in Wootton. Due to its proximity to other venues such as Woodstock and the number of events proposed, the Applicant believes that the current event offering is proportionate.</p> <p>Updated SoCC: Table of events included within the SoCC.</p>

<p>Section 7. (Cont.): Potential for specialist officers such as OCC highways officers to attend the consultation events.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Prior to the second phase of consultation, briefings will be offered to officers and elected members. During these briefings, we will provide information on upcoming information events, and encourage any stakeholders interested to attend these events.</p> <p>Those attending on behalf of the Applicant will also include specialists on various environmental topics for members of the community and stakeholders to speak to and ask questions.</p>
<p>Section 7. (Cont.): Which Parish Councils would appreciate a briefing session? Do we need to sound them out?</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Those parish councils that were notified and offered a briefing ahead of the first phase of consultation will be offered a briefing ahead of the second phase of consultation, and the Applicant will consider individual briefings for parish councils who would like a further briefing on the upcoming consultation. The parish councils notified included all parish councils that overlap with the consultation zone.</p>
<p>Section 7. (Cont.): Notes that communities to the north of the core consultation zone in proximity to the Bartons might have appreciated a leaflet during phase one consultation.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The Applicant believes that the current core consultation zone that reaches over 22,000 properties is appropriate for a project of this size. However, during phase two consultation materials will be emailed to those who have registered to be on the 'keep informed' list.</p>
<p>Section 7. (Cont.): Check how we advertise the Local Plan consultation – press notices – Which publications.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>We would be grateful for any detail in how West Oxfordshire's Local Plan consultation was publicised to see if any methods could be replicated within this project's SoCC?</p>
<p>Section 8. Community access points: Asks about a Cassington Access Point.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Following your feedback regarding CAP site locations, Eynsham Library will be added as a CAP site. Due to Cassington's proximity to Eynsham, the Applicant believes that the updated list of CAP sites is appropriate for this area of the project.</p>
<p>Section 8. (Cont.):</p>	<p>Noted.</p>

Asks about a Hanborough Access Point	Following your feedback regarding CAP site locations, Eynsham Library will be added as a CAP site. Due to Hanborough's proximity to Woodstock, Eynsham and Witney, the Applicant believes that the updated list of CAP sites is appropriate for this area of the project.
Section 8. (Cont.): Suggestions of a further access point: Eynsham Library, 30 Mill Street, Eynsham, OX29 4JS	Noted. Eynsham Library will be contacted about becoming a Community Access Point. The venue has now been added to the list of CAP sites in the SoCC. Updated SoCC: Eynsham Library has been added to the table showing the CAP site details.
Section 8. (Cont.): Suggestion of a further access point: North Leigh Library, Memorial Hall, Park Road, North Leigh. OX29 6SA	Noted. Following your feedback regarding CAP site locations, Eynsham Library will be added as a CAP site. Due to North Leigh's proximity to both Eynsham and Witney, the Applicant believes that the updated list of CAP sites is appropriate for this area of the project.

Table 6.3: Applicant consideration of feedback received to the early working draft SoCC from Cherwell District Council (comments provided 30 May 2023).

Comment	Applicant response (as provided to host authority)
Section 7. How will we consult: Suggestion for venues in Cherwell: Begbroke - Begbroke Village Hall, 3 Begbroke Lane, Begbroke, Oxford, OX5 1RN. Kidlington - Exeter Hall, Oxford Road, Kidlington, OX5 1AB Yarnton - The Paddocks, Yarnton, Kidlington, OX5 1TE.	Noted. As the events during the first phase of consultation were well attended, we intend to facilitate nine events covering locations across the project's site and an online community webinar. It is the intention to use the same event venues as the first phase of consultation, with the inclusion of a venue in Bladon and Botley. However, in contrast to phase one consultation instead of holding an event in Begbroke we will instead hold one in Kidlington, a location in close proximity to both Begbroke and Yarnton. The details of these events will be included within the published SoCC and any written materials that are distributed to our consultation zone. Updated SoCC: Table of events included within the SoCC
Section 8. Community access points:	Noted. Due to Begbroke's proximity to Kidlington, the Applicant believes that Kidlington Library provides an accessible

<p>Asks about a Begbroke Access Point</p>	<p>venue for residents of Begbroke to access hard copy materials for the project. Furthermore, our CAP sites require consistent opening hours throughout the week to ensure that members of the community are able to access materials easily.</p> <p>However, the Applicant would be grateful on any detail on whether there any publicly accessible venues that are available to host materials within Begbroke that would be more appropriate than Kidlington Library?</p>
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6.4 Consultation on draft SoCC and responses

- 6.4.1 The Applicant formally provided a draft SoCC to host authorities for consultation on 14 July 2023. This was provided alongside a document containing Tables 6.1 to 7.3 (explaining how the draft SoCC had been updated in response to comments from host authorities on the working draft SoCC) and a covering email and letter to explain the purpose of the draft SoCC, the response process and deadline for comments.
- 6.4.2 Copies of the draft SoCC, accompanying consultation letter, and feedback response tables are provided in Appendix 5.1.4: Statement of Community Consultation Materials **[EN010147/APP/5.1.4]**.
- 6.4.3 The Applicant stated a response deadline of 14 August 2023. This provided a consultation period of 30 days, therefore exceeding the requirement set in Section 47(3) to provide a period of 28 days.
- 6.4.4 West Oxfordshire District Council, Cherwell District Council, and Vale of White Horse District Council provided comments in response to consultation on the draft SoCC. Oxfordshire County Council confirmed they had no further comments to submit.
- 6.4.5 The responses received from host authorities to this consultation on the draft SoCC were considered by the Applicant when finalising the SoCC prior to publication.
- 6.4.6 A copy of the final SoCC, alongside a table explaining how comments received had been considered by the Applicant when finalising the SoCC, were shared with each host authority on 09 November 2023, prior to publication of the SoCC on 16 November 2023.
- 6.4.7 The feedback submitted to the consultation on the draft SoCC, and how this was considered by the Applicant, is described in Table 6.4, Table 6.5 and Table 6.6.

Table 6.4: Applicant consideration of feedback received to the draft SoCC from Vale of White Horse District Council (comments provided 08 August 2023).

Comment	Applicant Response
<p>Section 4. Our public consultation process: Phase One Consultation: Incorrect date, should be 2022</p>	<p>Noted. This text amendment has been made in the SoCC.</p>
<p>Section 4. (Con.): Phase One Consultation: Suggest adding more information: How many properties were included in the consultation zone and what proportion of the total did these 22,000 properties represent.</p>	<p>Noted. The Core Consultation Zone (CCZ) which has been designed based on a principle of extending 2km from the site and 500m from the cable route, and further refined where appropriate, includes approximately 22,000 properties. Ahead of each mail out, the list of addresses is updated from the Royal Mail database. Section 6 of the SoCC provides further detail on the CCZ.</p>
<p>Section 4. (Con.): Phase One Consultation: Suggest adding more information: How were the in-person events advertised.</p>	<p>Noted. The SoCC provides the opportunity for the methodology for future consultation to be set out. Section 7 provides more detail on the publicity methods that the Applicant intends to use for advertising the events. This will include press releases and adverts in local and regional newspapers, consultation materials at community access points and materials emailed to parish councils to enable them to promote consultation also. In addition to the SoCC, further information and evidence of how the consultations were publicised will be provided in the Consultation Summary Report (CSR) and the final Consultation Report.</p>
<p>Section 4. (Con.): Examination Process: Provide information on how members of the public can register as interested party and submit their views once the DCO application is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. Where will this information</p>	<p>Noted. Within the 'Examination' section of the SoCC (under Section 4 - page 12), we highlight that there will be the opportunity to register as an Interested Party and submit a Relevant Representation. Additionally, a link</p>

Comment	Applicant Response
<p>be provided to members of the public? Will this be included in the comment form for Phase Two? Will the consultation report inform readers of this opportunity?</p>	<p>is provided to the Planning Inspectorate's website with more information on the examination process. As this document focusses on the second phase of consultation for the project, our focus within the SoCC document is the pre-application phase of the project, rather than on the examination phase. This is to minimise confusion for members of the community and to ensure that any feedback is made during this phase, rather than waiting until the examination phase to submit comments.</p> <p>As part of the planning process, there are prescribed ways in which the Applicant and the Planning Inspectorate will publicise, at the appropriate time, the opportunity for interested parties to register and attend hearings. This in line with Section 56 of the Planning Act 2008. The publicising of the examination will be through notices, letters and via both the project and Planning Inspectorate websites. Further information about how interested parties are able to get involved in the examination process can be found in the 'Participating in the process' section of the National Infrastructure Planning website [link provided].</p>
<p>Section 6. Who will we consult: Other interested stakeholders: Suggest that the consultation, the events, and the availability of informative consultation materials be also advertised on social media within the Core Consultation Zone (CCZ), and on social media and with the use of posters in areas outside the CCZ.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The Applicant does not intend to establish a standalone social media profile for Botley West during the pre-application stage but will ensure that organisations with an existing social media presence are notified (such as Parish Councils) and that information is provided to them in a format that can be shared through their social media channels. For example, Section 5 of the SoCC notes how information will be provided to parish councils to allow them to publicise consultation activities, such as community consultation events and ways to provide feedback, through their existing social media channels.</p>

Comment	Applicant Response
	<p>The Applicant notes that the Core Consultation Zone has been identified to capture likely interested communities in the vicinity of the project area, however we will provide information beyond this area on request. Additionally, publicity adverts will be placed in newspapers that circulate beyond the Core Consultation Zone.</p>
<p>Section 6. (Cont.): Other interested stakeholders: It is not clear how members of the public living outside the CCZ can register an interest and be added to the register of interested individuals. Where will this information be made available?</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The applicant has added to section 6 of the SoCC that those within or outside of the Core Consultation Zone are still able to engage with the project. Interested parties will be able to get in contact via our communication channels, engage with the statutory pre-application community consultation, and submit feedback.</p> <p>Since the launch of the pre-application phase during Phase One consultation held in late 2022, any interested parties have been able to register to be kept informed by contacting the communication team through a range of free-to-use communications channels and confirming they would like to receive updates when completing the phase one consultation feedback form. These opportunities to register for updates will continue throughout the pre-application phase.</p>
<p>Section 7: How Will We Consult? Meetings and events: Suggest asking parish councils to include publicity of the consultation in their local newsletters/magazines.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Building on the approach taken to publicise the first phase of non-statutory consultation held last year, the Applicant will notify parish councils of consultation opportunities and this information will be provided to them in a format that allows them to share this through their existing channels. Therefore, they will be able to publicise our statutory pre-application community consultation and our upcoming information events. Parish councils will also be asked whether they would like hard copies of the information poster to be posted to them so that they can</p>

Comment	Applicant Response
	display the poster at any appropriate locations, which could include notice boards.
<p>Section 7. (Cont.): Meetings and events: Suggest making meetings and briefing sessions with local parish councils essential and not just optional.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes that parish councils play an important role in the planning process, in particular as statutory consultees under the Planning Act 2008.</p> <p>Similar to the first phase of non-statutory consultation, we are committing to continue notifying statutory parish councils of consultation opportunities and inviting their feedback. Ahead of statutory pre-application community consultation, this will include arranging a briefing webinar for parish councils.</p> <p>The Applicant will also offer to further meet with relevant parish councils, however, as any subsequent meetings would be beyond our sole control, we do not intend to update the SoCC wording to describe them as essential.</p>
<p>Section 7. (Cont.): Meetings and events: Suggest noting rail strikes as a potential impact of in-person events and that events may be moved to ensure they'll be accessible via public transport. Similarly, awareness of any post strikes so that mailed materials arrive in a timely manner.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>As well as ensuring that all venues will be accessible via public transport, as all within a 10-minute walk or 0.5 miles of a bus stop, external factors such as rail strikes will be considered at the time of booking venues.</p> <p>Additionally, the length of the consultation period and the number of information events have been designed to be relatively extensive compared to statutory requirements and existing precedent, providing enhanced accessibility for those interested in attending.</p>
<p>Section 7. (Cont.): Literature: Suggest that feedback forms be posted or emailed to those on the register of interested individuals.</p>	<p>Noted and agreed.</p> <p>All parties that have registered to be kept informed will be notified via email of Phase Two Consultation and will be provided with consultation materials.</p>

Comment	Applicant Response
<p>Section 7. (Cont.): Literature: Will the leaflets include a QR code to materials online?</p>	<p>Noted and agreed.</p> <p>A QR code linking to the project website was provided during the Phase One events. This will also be provided during Phase Two in both the consultation materials and at the events.</p>
<p>Section 7. (Cont.): Literature: Suggest that the feedback form and consultation material be available in alternative formats and that this is clearly communicated on the leaflet/posters/local media adverts and other promotional material.</p>	<p>Noted and agreed.</p> <p>Feedback forms and consultation materials will be available via a range of channels. It will be uploaded in various forms online and also be available at the information events. Upon request the feedback form will be available for different accessibility needs.</p>
<p>Section 7. (Cont.): Advertising and Local Notices: Suggest advertising Phase Two consultation with posters to hang on village notice boards.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>As undertaken during the non-statutory phase one consultation, the Applicant will send a PDF copy of an information poster to parish councils, publicising the statutory pre-application community consultation and our upcoming information events. Parish councils will also be asked whether they would like hard copies of the information poster to be posted to them so that they can display the poster at any appropriate locations, which could include notice boards.</p> <p>Additionally, a poster advertising statutory pre-application community consultation will be sent to Local Information Points (LIPs).</p> <p>Page 18 of the SoCC provides further information as to how the statutory pre-application community consultation will be advertised.</p>
<p>Section 7. (Cont.): Advertising and Local Notices: Will the web address for the consultation be included in local press adverts?</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The project website will be included within the local press adverts.</p>

Comment	Applicant Response
<p>Section 7. (Cont.): Advertising and Local Notices: Suggest consideration of paid social media advertising targeting specific geographical groups (i.e. CCZ) and seldom heard or under-represented groups.</p>	<p>Noted and agreed to paid social media advertising.</p> <p>The Applicant has engaged with local newspapers and will be carrying out paid social media and online advertising.</p> <p>Section 6 (page 12) of the draft SoCC sets out the Applicants approach to engaging a wide section of the community, including individuals or groups that may otherwise be seldom heard. This includes identifying and contacting representatives of local seldom heard groups and inform them of the consultation to see if they need any further assistance to enable their participation.</p>
<p>Section 8: Community Access Points: Suggest finding a few more CAPs in other village locations. Currently there are no CAPs in Begbroke, Tackley, Hanborough, Cassington, Bladon and Cumnor.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Due to the proximity of these locations to the other CAP sites and as there are no suitable venues in these villages, in terms of opening times and public access, the Applicant believes that the list of CAP sites is appropriate for this area of the project.</p> <p>The closest CAP sites to the villages identified are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begbroke – Kidlington • Tackley – Woodstock • Hanborough – Woodstock and Eynsham • Cassington – Eynsham • Bladon – Woodstock • Cumnor – Botley

Table 6.5: Applicant consideration of feedback received to the draft SoCC West Oxfordshire District Council (comments received 14 August 2023)

Comment	Applicant response (as provided to host authority)
<p>Section 6: Who Will We Consult? WODC agrees with the suggested list of stakeholders to be consulted on the proposals and recognise that the list is not exhaustive. We would suggest engaging directly with the Distribution Network Operators with responsibility for managing the power distribution</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The Scottish and Southern Energy Networks (SSEN) are included in the S42 list as Statutory Undertakers and will therefore be formally consulted during our upcoming phase two consultation.</p>

Comment	Applicant response (as provided to host authority)
<p>system in the area, which in the case of West Oxfordshire is Scottish and Southern Energy Networks (SSEN).</p>	
<p>Section 7: How Will We Consult? Meetings and events: WODC welcomes the opportunity for meetings and events, for stakeholders to engage directly with the applicants and their representatives during the phase 2 consultation.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>Section 7. (Cont.): Meetings and events: The suggested venues and number of events within West Oxfordshire are considered to be satisfactory, but the timing of events should be organised to enable as many stakeholders to attend as possible.</p>	<p>Noted. The Applicant will arrange the event schedule to cover a range of times considering different working hours, school hours, and occur both on weekdays and weekends. This will be to accommodate different schedules and increase accessibility.</p>
<p>Section 7. (Cont.): Meetings and events: It is noted that of the four weekday events proposed in West Oxfordshire, only two of these extend beyond 5pm. WODC considers that evening events are preferable, to enable the working population to attend in person at the end of the working day. It is recognised that a balance needs to be struck between daytime and evening events, to enable a broad cross section of the affected communities to attend however, extending events at Hanborough and Cassington until at least 7pm will be beneficial to the working population in those communities.</p>	<p>Noted. The Applicant has arranged an event schedule that covers a wide range of timings, both in the daytime and the evening. Due to venue availability, the event in Hanborough could not be extended until 7pm. However, events are lasting until 7.30pm to accommodate for the working population. The event schedule is listed on page 15 of the SoCC.</p>
<p>Section 7. (Cont.): Meetings and events: Two community webinars are proposed during the stage 2 consultation. Feedback during the stage 1 consultation indicated that</p>	<p>Noted. The Applicant hosts community webinars through Zoom, a widely used and well-recognised platform, with a professional</p>

Comment	Applicant response (as provided to host authority)
<p>that there have been issues with stakeholders accessing previous webinars due to capacity constraints.</p>	<p>account including a capacity constraint well in excess of the number of registrants during phase one consultation.</p> <p>The Applicant did not receive any comments that anyone was unable to access the community webinar during non-statutory phase one consultation and were pleased to see 56 people attend. However, the Applicant appreciates attendees may have different experiences of joining webinars and would encourage anyone to contact us via our communication lines if any support is required to access the webinars during statutory pre-application community consultation. This offer of support is detailed in the consultation materials.</p> <p>To ensure that different accessibility needs are met, in-person events are provided in addition to the webinars.</p>
<p>Section 7. (Cont.): Literature: Consultation leaflets will be posted to all properties in the Core Consultation Zone at the start of the Phase 2 consultation. Leaflets should be posted with sufficient time, prior to the start of the consultation period, to provide communities with adequate time to familiarise themselves with timing and location of events and where to access consultation materials.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Consultation materials will be posted ahead of the start of the consultation period, and anticipated delivery times will be factored in to when materials are posted. The length of the consultation period has been planned to be well in excess of the statutory minimum to ensure sufficient time for local residents to access and engage with consultation materials.</p> <p>The Applicant notes that properties received the phase one community consultation leaflet the day before the start of the phase one consultation period. This was over two weeks before the first event. The SoCC (containing details of community consultation events) will be made available two weeks in advance of the pre-application community consultation commencing, three weeks before the first event in Bladon. The SoCC will be accessible at the CAP sites, on the project's website, and emailed to key stakeholders and the keep informed list.</p>

Comment	Applicant response (as provided to host authority)
<p>Section 7. (Cont.): Literature: Feedback forms will be available via a range of channels. Online forms should be made available in a range of formats such as Word and PDF and should meet accessibility standards, to enable stakeholders to respond easily.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>Feedback forms will be available via a range of channels. They will be uploaded to the project website as an online form, an interactive PDF, and as a PDF to print. Printed copies of the feedback form will also be available at the information events. Upon request the feedback form will be available for different accessibility needs. Feedback forms or alternative forms of written feedback can be returned either via the freepost (FREEPOST BWSF) or by email (info@botleywest.co.uk).</p>
<p>Section 7. (Cont.): Advertising and local notices: In addition to the channels and venues listed, it is recommended that the site promoters advertise all meetings, webinars, online feedback options and access points across social media platforms, including Facebook, X, Nextdoor, and Instagram.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The Applicant does not intend to establish a standalone social media profile for Botley West during the pre-application stage, but the Applicant will ensure that they notify organisations with an existing social media presence (such as Parish Councils) and that information is provided to them in a format that can be shared through their social media channels. For example, Section 5 of the SoCC notes how information will be provided to parish councils to allow them to publicise consultation opportunities through their existing social media channels.</p> <p>The Applicant also has a project website that is updated, when appropriate, with the relevant information and any key new queries that are raised are added to the project FAQs. As this webpage is familiar to the community, the Applicant feels that this is best location for project information.</p> <p>The Applicant notes that the Core Consultation Zone has been identified to capture likely interested communities in the vicinity of the project area, however the Applicant will provide information beyond this area on request. Additionally, publicity adverts will be placed in newspapers that</p>

Comment	Applicant response (as provided to host authority)
	circulate beyond the Core Consultation Zone.
<p>Section 8: Community Access Points Suggested CAP Site: North Leigh Library.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The Applicant is grateful for this suggestion. However, due to the proximity of this location to the CAP site in Witney (which has a wider variety of opening hours), the Applicant considers the proposed list of CAP sites to be appropriate for this area of the project.</p>

Table 6.6: Applicant consideration of feedback received to the draft SoCC from Cherwell District Council (comments provided 14 August 2023).

Comment	Applicant Response (as provided to host authority)
<p>Section 6: Who Will We Consult? Other interested stakeholders: CDC are not aware of any community groups within our district who may be affected by the development but who have not already been identified as consultees.</p>	Noted.
<p>Section 7: How Will We Consult? Meetings and events: It is noted that no additional venues with[in] Cherwell District are proposed to be utilised for public events in the draft SoCC and that only Kidlington is intended to be used in the second round. Whilst there is no objection to the use of Kidlington it is still considered that this should be in addition to separate events held at the village halls of Yarnton and Begbroke.</p>	<p>Noted and agreed.</p> <p>The Applicant acknowledges communities from across the project area will likely be interested in attending an information event during the consultation period and is therefore working to hold a series of events across a range of venues and times.</p> <p>The Applicant is proposing nine in person events across the project area, accompanied by one online webinar. In addition to this, all event materials will be available to access from the project website and questions or comments can be submitted directly to the project team through the dedicated project communications channels (freephone, freepost and email).</p> <p>During statutory consultation, the Applicant will now hold an event in Begbroke.</p>

	<p>Venues in Kidlington were contacted for availability but have not been selected due to availability. Begbroke Village Hall is closer in proximity to the project area and is an appropriate venue in terms of accessibility. The event in Begbroke will be held into the evening, allowing for those who work during the day to attend. Begbroke is also in close proximity to Kidlington and Yarnton, and an event is also being held in Cassington, another venue in close proximity to Yarnton.</p>
<p>Section 7. (Cont.): Advertising and local notices: In addition to local press adverts or statutory notices being placed in the Oxford Times, the Banbury Guardian, the Herald Series and the Witney Gazette, CDC recommends that the Bicester Advertiser would also be an appropriate publication which covers an area equally close to the site as the Banbury Guardian.</p>	<p>Noted. Local press advertisement of statutory pre-application community consultation will also be included in the Bicester Advertiser.</p>
<p>Section 8: Community Access Points: CDC notes that Kidlington Library will serve as a Community Access Point. CDC is not aware of any other suitable, publicly accessible venues within the district (with consistent opening hours throughout the week) that are available to host materials.</p>	<p>Noted.</p>
<p>Section 8. (Cont.): Suggested CAP sites: Oxfordshire County Council Home Library Service could be provided with a number of hard copies of the documents for those who are housebound and unable to access the internet. Contact: homelibraryservice@oxfordshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Noted. An enquiry was made with the Oxfordshire County Council Home Library Service about providing them with some statutory pre-application community consultation materials. The service stated that due to capacity constraints they would be unable to facilitate this request.</p>
<p>Section 8. (Cont.): Suggested CAP sites: Parish Councils (e.g. Begbroke, Shipton-on-Cherwell and Thrupp, Tackley, Hanborough, Cassington, Bladon and Cumnor) could</p>	<p>Noted. Due to the proximity of the locations of these Parish Councils to other proposed CAP sites, the Applicant considers the list</p>

<p>be offered hard copies of the documents for local, public viewing.</p>	<p>of CAP sites to be appropriate for this area of the project. The closest CAP sites to the locations identified are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begbroke – Kidlington • Tackley – Woodstock • Hanborough – Woodstock and Eynsham • Cassington – Eynsham • Bladon – Woodstock • Cumnor – Botley • Shipton-on Cherwell and Thrupp – Woodstock and Kidlington <p>In addition to this, and consistent with the first phase of consultation, the Applicant will notify parish councils of consultation activities, such as community consultation events and ways to provide feedback, and will be provided with consultation and publicity materials in hard copy upon request. As noted in the SoCC, a reasonable charge may be required for provision of the PEIR.</p>
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6.5 Publication of the SoCC

- 6.5.1 The final SoCC was publicised in accordance with Section 47(6) of the 2008 Act on 16 November 2023.
- 6.5.2 The SoCC was uploaded to the document library on the Applicant’s Project website and made available to view and collect from the public venues (Community Access Points) listed in the document and accompanying notice. Evidence of the SoCC being hosted on the Project website is provided in Appendix 5.1.4: Statement of Community Consultation Materials **[EN010147/APP/5.1.4]**.
- 6.5.3 Notices were published in the Witney Gazette on 15 November 2023 and the Oxford Times on 16 November 2023 to publicise the SoCC and its availability. Copies of these notices are provided in Appendix 5.1.4: Statement of Community Consultation Materials **[EN010147/APP/5.1.4]**.
- 6.5.4 The publication of the SoCC was also communicated through emailing identified key stakeholders and any party that had registered to be kept informed of project updates.

6.6 Statement of compliance with SoCC

- 6.6.1 The Applicant undertook consultation consistent with the commitments established in the published SoCC, in accordance with Section 47(7) of the 2008 Act.
- 6.6.2 Table 6.7 describes how the Applicant has complied with commitments set out within the published SoCC.

Table 6.7: SoCC commitments and Applicant compliance

Section	Commitment	Compliance
4. Our Public Consultation Process	This SoCC relates to the delivery of the Phase Two consultation. If there are any subsequent consultations (including any targeted consultations) following Phase Two that may be triggered by events such as a material change to the red line boundary, or as a result of feedback from the Phase Two consultation, they will be undertaken in a manner that is consistent with the principles and methods set out in this SoCC to the extent they are relevant to the subsequent consultation.	<p>The Applicant has undertaken a further two rounds of targeted consultation following the phase two statutory consultation described in the SoCC.</p> <p>The approach to defining a core consultation zone, as set out in Section 6 of the SoCC, was applied to each of these subsequent phases of targeted consultation to determine properties to receive written notification of the consultations.</p> <p>The Applicant updated the dedicated Project website to communicate information and receive feedback during each phase of consultation.</p> <p>The Applicant's range of free-to-use communications lines remained open throughout each phase of consultation to provide information and receive feedback.</p>
	[Phase Two consultation:] We will consult on our developed proposals using the results from the ongoing environmental and technical surveys that have been carried out to date. This information will be published in our Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR).	The Applicant published a PEIR on 30 November 2023 to be consulted on as part of a statutory Section 42, 47 and 48 consultation with prescribed consultees and the community (phase two consultation), requesting responses by 08 February 2024 (providing a 70-day consultation response period).

Section	Commitment	Compliance
<p>5. What Will We Consult On?</p>	<p>The aim of our pre-application public consultations is to ensure that both community and technical consultees have a chance to understand and influence our proposals.</p> <p>At each phase of consultation, we will be seeking feedback to help refine our proposals. This will include producing plans and documents to understand and explore potential issues such as, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary impacts during construction. • Operational impacts. • Benefits, such as the opportunity for biodiversity and recreational improvements. <p>The description and proposed layout of the development of Botley West, will be set out in the consultation materials.</p>	<p>The Applicant held consultation with community and technical consultees in parallel under Sections 42, 47 and 48 of the 2008 Act.</p> <p>A suite of consultation materials was published on 30 November 2023 to provide information on the topics referred to in the SoCC. This involved publishing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a PEIR; • an accompanying Non-Technical Summary; • a Community Consultation Leaflet; • Site Location Plan; • Concept Plan; • Illustrative Masterplan; • Event Displays; and • A Feedback Form to encourage responses.
<p>6. Who Will We Consult?</p>	<p>We will consult anybody who is interested in taking part in the consultation.</p> <p>We will proactively contact individuals, groups and organisations within the CCZ (Core Consultation Zone). The properties within the CCZ will receive communications such as consultation leaflets from us</p>	<p>The Applicant accepted all feedback submitted in response to consultation. Opportunities to provide feedback were publicised through a range of methods including national and local media.</p> <p>The Applicant issued a Community Consultation Leaflet to all properties (over 22,500) within the defined Core Consultation Zone) to publicise and encourage responses to the phase two consultation.</p> <p>Similarly, the Applicant issued a Consultation Postcard to all</p>

Section	Commitment	Compliance
	in the post (as set out in section 7	properties within the Core Consultation Zone to publicise and encourage responses to the subsequent targeted consultation on a series of proposed boundary changes.
	Information events will be held at locations within the Core Consultation Zone.	During the phase two consultation, the Applicant hosted nine in-person public information events at locations within and across the defined Core Consultation Zone.
	Relevant organisations, such as parish councils and community groups, will be notified of consultation opportunities	The Applicant maintained a register of prescribed and non-prescribed consultees and has notified them at the commencements of each phase of consultation.
	We recognise that there may be some interested individuals or parties who are not within the Core Consultation Zone. We are committed to ensuring that these interested parties still have an opportunity to view our proposals and have their say.	<p>The Applicant has publicised consultation opportunities to communities beyond the Core Consultation Zone by advertising in local media and maintaining a register of interested individuals.</p> <p>The Applicant published all consultation materials on the dedicated Project website to view online, as available on request via the Applicant's free-to-use communications channels (Freephone, Freepost, and email) and collect from advertised Community Access Points.</p>
	<p>We will design the consultation and prepare the materials so that they are accessible and clear. Additionally, we will also carry out the activities below:</p> <p>1. Work with the host local authorities to identify a range of other groups and individuals, including representatives of local seldom heard groups and inform them of the</p>	<p>The Applicant maintained a contact list of organisations representing community members and groups that may be seldom heard or less likely to take part in consultation. Comments and additions to an identified list were invited from host authorities as part of the SoCC development process. These organisations have been contacted throughout the pre-application process, including ahead of phases of consultation, to publicise</p>

Section	Commitment	Compliance
	<p>consultation and to see if they need any further assistance to enable their participation and the individuals and groups that they represent.</p> <p>2. Display the project contact information prominently on all materials to enable individuals to contact them with any questions or requests.</p> <p>3. Ensure that the consultation leaflet can be made available in alternative forms on request.</p>	<p>opportunities to take part and invited suggestions for any further measures of increase accessibility.</p> <p>Public consultation materials, such as the Community Consultation Leaflet and Project website, clearly signposted to the Applicant's free-to-use communications channels. They also encouraged anyone who might require consultation materials in alternative formats to contact the team to request this.</p>
	<p>Where possible we will aim to hold events at venues that are accessible and can be reached by public as well as private transport. For anyone with specific additional requirements please contact us our communications channels listed in this document.</p>	<p>The Applicant held public information events at venues across the Core Consultation Zone, to increase the proximity to various communities.</p> <p>Venues were identified based on the Applicant's research and assessment of suitability and informed by feedback from host authorities. An online information event was held in addition to the in-person events to increase accessibility.</p> <p>The Applicant welcomed over 1,000 attendees to their series of information events during their phase two consultation.</p>
	<p>You can get in touch with us at any stage of the development process. Our contact details can be found in Section 12 of this SoCC.</p>	<p>The Applicant publicised their range of free-to-use communications channels ahead of their non-statutory consultation commencing in November 2022.</p> <p>These channels include a Freephone information line, Freepost address and email address, and have remained open throughout the pre-application phase.</p>

Section	Commitment	Compliance
<p>7. How Will We Consult?</p>	<p>Our statutory Phase Two consultation is planned to take place from 30 November 2023 until 8 February 2024.</p> <p>In-person information events will be held at locations across the Core Consultation Zone.</p> <p>They will be advertised in consultation leaflets, across local media, at local information points and at Community Access Points (CAP) sites.</p> <p>We will hold at least seven in-person information events during our Phase Two consultation. Considering the feedback received during the first phase of consultation, we are committing to an extensive programme of events, including an event in Bladon. These events will be held on different days of the week including weekends, with varied hours to accommodate different availability within the community.</p>	<p>The Applicant undertook a ten-week community consultation on more detailed proposals for the Project between 30 November 2023 and 8 February 2024.</p> <p>The Applicant held the following events during their phase two consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bladon Methodist Church (Friday 8th December 2023, 3pm - 7:30pm) - Woodstock Community Centre (Saturday 9th December 2023, 11am - 3pm) - Begbroke Village Hall (Tuesday 12th December 2023, 3pm - 7:30pm) - Hanborough Pavilion & Village Hall (Wednesday 13th December 2023, 1pm - 5pm) - Cassington Village Hall (Friday 12th January 2024, 3pm - 7:30pm) - Woodstock Community Centre (Saturday 13th January 2024, 11am - 3pm) - Cumnor Village Hall (Wednesday 17th January 2024, 3pm - 7:30pm) - Seacourt Hal (Thursday 18th January 2024, 1pm - 5pm) - Eynsham Village Hall (Friday 19th January 2024, 2pm - 6pm) - Community Webinar – Zoom (Tuesday 23rd January 2024, 5.30pm - 7pm) <p>These event details were published on the Applicant’s dedicated project website, Community Consultation Leaflet, Section 47 and Section 48 notices published in local and national media, press release, and posters at local information points.</p>

Section	Commitment	Compliance
	<p>Members of the Botley West project team will be at these events to answer questions and discuss the proposals in more detail. Project materials setting out the developed proposals will be displayed and available to take away.</p>	<p>The events were attended by a range of relevant colleagues from the Applicant's Project team.</p> <p>Attendees were able to take away copies of the Community Consultation Leaflet, Feedback Form, Concept Plan and Site Location Plan.</p>
	<p>A webinar will be held for any member of the public to join via telephone and internet. Participants will be invited to submit questions. Members of the Botley West Solar Farm project team will then respond to the questions on the webinar.</p>	<p>The Applicant hosted a Community Webinar on Zoom on Tuesday 23rd January 2024, 5.30pm - 7pm. This involved a presentation delivered by the Applicant followed by a questions and answer session.</p>
	<p>We have noted the feedback received during the first phase of consultation regarding requests for more materials for the second phase of consultation. The text below details the increased number of materials that will be available at the second phase of consultation.</p>	<p>The Applicant posted a Consultation leaflet to all properties within the defined Core Consultation Zone ahead of Phase Two consultation. These leaflets were also available online, to collect from Community Access Points, and to take away from information events. The Applicant also offered to post leaflets by request to the Project Communications Channels.</p> <p>The Applicant published a Feedback Form to encourage community members to respond to the consultation. These were available online and in hard copy at Community Access Points, information events, and by request. Feedback Forms could be returned free of charge using the Project Freepost address.</p> <p>The Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) and Non-Technical Summary (NTS) were made available to read online, in hard copy at Community Access Points, information events, and</p>

Section	Commitment	Compliance
	<p>Our communications lines are open throughout the entire pre-application stage. Outside of consultation period, through these channels you will be able to speak to a member of our consultation team to ask questions. You can provide written feedback during the consultation period in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By submitting an online feedback form through the project website • By completing a paper copy feedback form, which can be submitted at an in-person event or returned via the project freepost address • By emailing: info@botleywest.co.uk • By writing, free of charge, to: FREEPOST BWSF <p>A dedicated project website is live and will be updated at the start of the second phase of consultation for you to find out more information and to provide your feedback through an online feedback form.</p> <p>Consultation material will be presented digitally, providing information consistent with that available at information events and Community Access Points through hard copy materials.</p>	<p>available by request for a reasonable charge.</p> <p>You can get in touch with us at any stage of the development process. Our contact details can be found in Section 12 of this SoCC. The Applicant publicised their range of free-to-use communications channels ahead of their non-statutory consultation commencing in November 2022.</p> <p>These channels include a Freephone information line, Freepost address and email address, and have remained open throughout the pre-application phase.</p> <p>The Applicant has updated the dedicated Project website at every stage of consultation. All consultation materials remain available to view and download from the online Document Library.</p>

Section	Commitment	Compliance
	<p>Local press adverts or statutory notices will be placed in suitable local publications such as the Oxford Times, the Banbury Guardian, the Herald Series, the Bicester Advertiser and the Witney Gazette to inform local communities of the forthcoming Phase Two consultation. Adverts will include contact information and consultation event dates, times and locations.</p>	<p>The Applicant has placed adverts and notices in the publications listed in the SoCC.</p> <p>Adverts and notices have clearly included contact details and response deadlines.</p>
	<p>Local information points such as village halls, places of worship, shops and civic buildings will be provided with posters containing consultation information. Parish councils will be provided with digital materials to enable them to advertise and promote the consultation via their own websites, social media and online community forums. Requests for hard copy materials will also be considered.</p>	<p>The Applicant has issued display posters publicising consultation opportunities to identified public venues ahead of each phase of consultation.</p> <p>This information has been communicated by email to community organisations at the start of each phase of consultation, for sharing with members and followers.</p>

7 Statutory consultation under Section 47 of the 2008 Act

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 In continuation from Section 6 of this report, this section sets out the consultation activities undertaken by the Applicant with the people living in the vicinity of the land ('the community') to which the Project relates under Section 47 of the 2008 Act.
- 7.1.2 As required under Section 47(7) of the 2008 Act, the Applicant carried out statutory consultation in accordance with the proposals set out in the SoCC. A summary of how the Applicant complied with Section 47(7) of the 2008 Act through commitments placed in the SoCC is detailed in Table 6.7. This section sets out the Section 47 statutory consultation undertaken in line with the commitments set out in the SoCC.
- 7.1.3 Phase two (statutory Section 47) community consultation commenced on 30 November 2023 in parallel to the start of Section 42 consultation and Section 48 consultation. The Applicant held nine phase two public in-person information events and one online community event between 08 December 2023 and 23 January 2024.
- 7.1.4 The Applicant purposely carried out the Section 42 consultation and phase two Section 47 consultation in parallel to enable consultation on the PEIR with Section 42 consultees and the community. A consultation period of 70 days was provided for responses to the PEIR and phase two consultation information.
- 7.1.5 The ten-week consultation period exceeded the minimum eight-week consultation period originally suggested in the draft SoCC. The Applicant increased the consultation period to account for the festive period overlapping with the consultation period. Accordingly, no public information events were held 10 days prior to Christmas Day or 10 days following New Year's Day. The period of 10 weeks was considered sufficient time to engage with the consultation materials provided.
- 7.1.6 Regulation 12 of the EIA Regulations states that under Section 47 of the 2008 Act, the SoCC needs to state whether the proposal is EIA development and how preliminary environmental information will be consulted on. The PEIR and a PEIR NTS were made available for community consultees to comment on as part of the phase two Section 47 consultation.

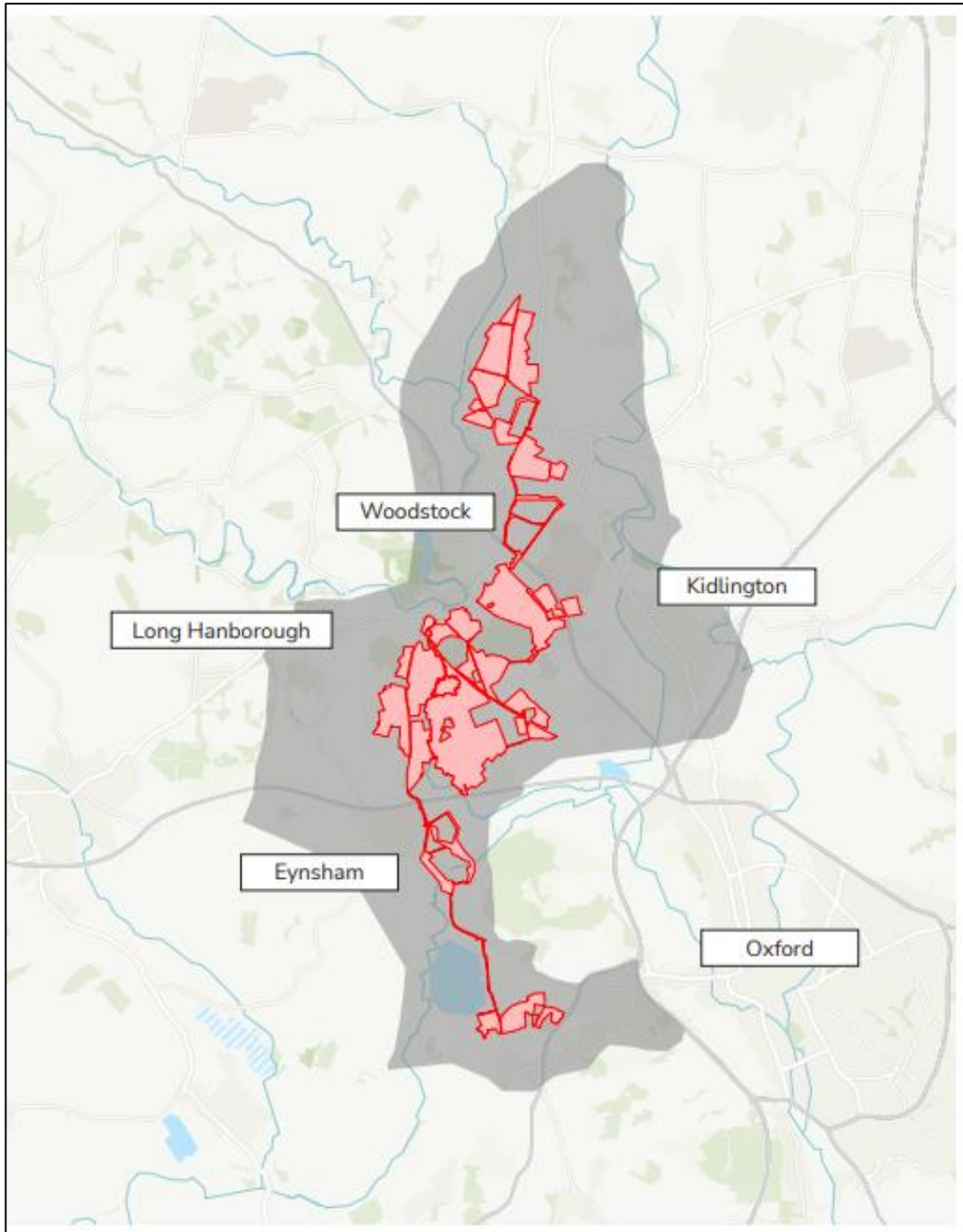
7.2 Section 47 community consultation area

- 7.2.1 Section 47(1) of the 2008 Act requires the Applicant to prepare a statement setting out how it proposes to consult on the proposed

application with people living in 'vicinity' of the land to which the Project relates.

7.2.2 A core consultation zone was identified for the Project and described in the draft SoCC for the local authorities to comment on. The core consultation zone, as presented in the SoCC, is included as Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1: Botley West Solar Farm core consultation zone, as presented in SoCC.



- 7.2.3 The core consultation zone for the Project was identified by the following methodology:
- An initial distance of 2km from the edge of the proposed solar development areas, and 500m from the proposed cable route, has been considered and refined dependent on how the core consultation zone interacts and bisects property interests.
 - The core consultation zone extends beyond 2km in certain areas, for instance to incorporate the entire village of Kidlington so as to not bisect the village. It has been reduced in other areas where there are no property interests within a 2km distance from the boundary of the Project.
- 7.2.4 Throughout the core consultation area, which included over 23,000 local homes and business properties at the time of phase two consultation, the following consultation activities took place:
- Direct mailings of phase one and phase two community consultation leaflets, the phase one consultation extension postcard, and the phase one consultation summary report;
 - Hosting a series of in-person community information events across a range of dates, times and venues;
 - Displaying hard copy Project information, including the PEIR and PEIR NTS, across five Community Access Points (CAPs);
 - Issuing posters to 28 identified local information points to publicise consultation opportunities; and
 - Placing site notices across the Project area to publicise the Project and consultation opportunities.
- 7.2.5 The Applicant recognises that individuals or parties outside of the core consultation zone may still have an interest in the Project. The Applicant therefore accepted feedback from any interested parties outside of the core consultation zone.
- 7.2.6 In addition to the targeted activities within the core consultation zone, to further publicise consultation opportunities the Applicant also:
- Displayed consultation notices in regional and national newspapers;
 - Displayed consultation adverts in regional newspapers;
 - Issued a press release publishing the consultation opportunities to regional and trade press;
 - Hosted Project information and all consultation materials on the Project website; and
 - Issued Project updates to a register of email addresses for individuals who had registered to be kept informed.

7.3 Undertaking consultation under Section 47 of the 2008 Act

7.3.1 Statutory consultation under Section 47 of the 2008 Act was undertaken as a specific phase of consultation between 30 November 2023 and 08 February 2024 inclusive (allowing 70 days). While this was the first phase of statutory consultation, it was the second phase of community consultation, following on from the phase one (non-statutory consultation) undertaken in November-December 2022.

7.3.2 The Applicant undertook the following consultation activities as set out in the SoCC:

- Holding nine in-person public information events during the phase two statutory consultation period;
- Holding one online webinar for any member of the public to join via internet connection or telephone;
- Offering briefing sessions to local authorities, MPs and parish councils;
- Posting community consultation leaflets to all properties within the core consultation zone to publicise the phase two consultation and share relevant information. Community consultation leaflets were also available at the five Community Access Point venues identified in the SoCC, public events, the Project website, and by request through the Project communications channels;
- Hosting feedback forms at CAPs, public events, the Project website, and by request. Completed feedback forms could be returned by Freepost, at in-person public events, online, and by email;
- Placing Section 48 notices in local and national newspaper publications;
- Hosting free-to-use Project communication channels (email, Freephone, digital engagement platform, and Freepost) to receive feedback and enquiries throughout the pre-application period;
- Issuing posters publicising consultation opportunities to 28 identified local information points to be displayed across the core consultation zone;
- Hosting hard-copy Project information, including the PEIR and PEIR NTS, at Community Access Points across the core consultation zone. These were publicised through the SoCC, community consultation leaflet, Project website, and Section 48 notices;
- Publishing consultation materials and inviting feedback through the Project website; and
- Consulting with identified organisations representing potentially seldom heard groups, who were notified of the proposals, consultation activities, and feedback opportunities.

7.4 Community Access Points (CAPs)

7.4.1 The Applicant identified and liaised with five publicly accessible venues across the core consultation zone to act as Community Access Points (CAPs). The details of these CAPs were presented in the draft SoCC for consultation with local planning authorities.

7.4.2 The five CAPs are presented in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Community Access Points (CAPs)

Venue	Opening Hours
Woodstock Library Fletchers House, Park St, Woodstock OX20 1SN	Tues – Fri: 10am - 1pm, 2pm - 5pm Sat: 10am - 12.30pm, 1pm - 4.30pm Sun: 2pm - 5pm Mon: Closed
West Oxfordshire District Council Town Centre Shop 3 Welch Way, Witney, OX28 6JH	Mon – Fri: 9am - 5pm Sat & Sun: Closed
Kidlington Library 23 Oxford Rd, Kidlington, OX5 2BP	Mon & Thurs: 9.30am - 5pm Tues & Fri: 9.30am - 7pm Wed: 9.30am - 1pm Sat: 9am - 4.30pm Sun: Closed
Botley Library 5a Church Way, Botley, Oxford OX2 9TH	Mon, Tues & Thurs: 9.30am - 5.30pm Fri: 9.30am - 7pm Sat: 9.30am - 1pm Weds & Sun: Closed
Eynsham Library 30 Mill Street, Eynsham, OX29 4JS	Mon: 9:30am-1pm and 2pm and 5pm Wed & Thurs: 1pm-5pm Friday: 1-7pm Sat: 9:30-1pm

7.4.3 The following hard copy Project information was available to access at CAPs during the phase two (statutory) consultation:

- Project PEIR;
- Project PEIR NTS;
- SoCC (included in Appendix 5.1.4: Statement of Community Consultation Materials **[EN010147/APP/5.1.4]**);
- Phase Two Community Consultation Leaflet (included in Appendix 5.1.5: Phase Two Consultation Materials **[EN010147/APP/5.1.5]**); and
- Phase Two Community Consultation Feedback Form (included in Appendix 5.1.5: Phase Two Consultation Materials **[EN010147/APP/5.1.5]**).

7.5 Stakeholder briefing meetings and engagement

- 7.5.1 In addition to formal Section 42 notifications, as described in Section 8 of this report, local authorities, councillors, MPs, parish councils and identified community organisations were notified by email at the start of the statutory consultation period on 30 November 2023.
- 7.5.2 Prior to this, these stakeholders, as well as campaign group Stop Botley West, were emailed and invited to be briefed by the project team on the updated proposals for phase two ahead of the statutory second phase of community consultation. The emails were sent to the stakeholders on 10 November 2023.
- 7.5.3 Table 7.2 sets out the eight meetings that were organised as a result of the email invites. Three of the eight meetings were held during the statutory consultation period.

Table 7.2: Key stakeholder meetings associated with the phase two (statutory) consultation period

Stakeholder organisation	Date	Notes
Sustainable Woodstock	Friday 17 November 2023	Briefing to provide an update on the proposals with key stakeholders and discussion on consultation methods for phase two consultation.
Robert Courts MP for Witney	Friday 24 November 2023	
Andrew Prosser (WODC)	Monday 27 November 2023	
Vale of White Horse	Wednesday 29 November 2023	
Oxfordshire County Council	Thursday 30 November 2023	
Oxford City Council	Friday 1 December 2023	
OxLEP	Tuesday 19 December 2023	
Stop Botley West	Friday 19 January 2024	

7.6 Section 47 public information events

- 7.6.1 During the statutory consultation period, the Applicant held a series of public information events, both in-person and online. These events took place during the consultation period across a range of times, days and venues between the period of between 08 December 2023 and 23 January 2024.
- 7.6.2 To account for the festive period, these events were scheduled to take place at least ten days prior to Christmas Day, and ten days after New Year's Day, while still allowing interested members of the public sufficient notice to attend and review the consultation material, as well as time following the events to consider any information ahead of the response deadline of 08 February 2024.

7.6.3 The details of these events, including the attendance numbers recorded by the Applicant, are presented in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3: Public information events held during statutory Section 47 consultation

Venue	Date & Time	No. attendees
Bladon Methodist Church 28 Park Street, Bladon, OX20 1RW	Friday 08 December 2023 3pm-7:30pm	69
Woodstock Community Centre 32 New Road, OX20 1PB	Saturday 09 December 2023 11am-3pm	63
Begbroke Village Hall 3 Begbroke Lane, Kidlington, OX5 1RN	Tuesday 12 December 2023 3pm-7:30pm	54
Hanborough Pavilion & Village Hall Roosevelt Road, OX29 8JG	Wednesday 13 December 2023 1pm-5pm	90
Cassington Village Hall The Green, OX29 4AX	Friday 12 January 2024 3pm-7:30pm	169
Woodstock Community Centre 32 New Road, OX20 1PB	Saturday 13 January 2024 11am-3pm	191
Cumnor Village Hall Leys Road, OX2 9QF	Wednesday 17 January 2024 3pm-7:30pm	145
Seacourt Hall 3 Church Way, Botley, OX2 9TH	Thursday 18 January 2024 1pm-5pm	49
Eynsham Village Hall 46 Back Lane, Eynsham, OX29 4QW	Friday 19 January 2024 2pm-6pm	163
Community Webinar via Zoom	Tuesday 23 January 2024 5.30pm-7pm	44
Total attendees		1,037

7.6.4 The following Project information was available at the public information events:

- Phase Two Community Consultation Leaflet (included in Appendix 5.1.5: Phase Two Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.5]);
- Phase Two community Consultation Feedback Form (included in Appendix 5.1.5: Phase Two Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.5]);
- Phase Two information display boards (included in Appendix 5.1.5: Phase Two Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.5]);
- Project PEIR and associated appendices; and
- Project PEIR NTS.

7.6.5 Representatives from the Applicant team across the relevant disciplines were present to discuss the Project with members of the local community attending the events.

Figure 7.2: Photographs of materials available at public information events during the statutory Section 47 consultation period.









7.7 Project website

7.7.1 The Applicant updated the Project website at the start of the statutory Section 47 consultation period to host relevant information and materials.

7.7.2 The following materials were free to view and download from the Project website:

- SoCC (included in Appendix 5.1.4: Statement of Community Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.4]);
- Phase Two Community Consultation Leaflet (included in Appendix 5.1.5: Phase Two Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.5]);
- Phase Two Feedback Form (included in Appendix 5.1.5: Phase Two Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.5]);
- Site Location Plan (included in (included in Appendix 5.1.5: Phase Two Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.5]);
- Concept Plans (included in Appendix 5.1.5: Phase Two Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.5]);
- Illustrative Masterplan (included in Appendix 5.1.5: Phase Two Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.5]);
- Visualisations (included in Appendix 5.1.5: Phase Two Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.5]);
- Phase Two event display boards (included in Appendix 5.1.5: Phase Two Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.5]);
- Section 47 notice (included in Appendix 5.1.4: Statement of Community Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.4]);
- Section 48 notice (included in Appendix 5.1.7: Section 48 Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.7]);
- Project PEIR chapters, figures and appendices;

7.8 Consultation publicity

7.8.1 The consultation opportunities, including public information events, Project website, Project communications channels, CAPs, and response deadline were publicised in the following ways:

- A Phase Two Community Consultation Leaflet, which was issued to all properties within the core consultation zone, available at CAPs, and available on the Project website (a copy of the Phase Two Community Consultation Leaflet is provided in Appendix 5.1.5: Phase Two Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.5]);
- Posters publicising the consultation opportunities were issued to 28 local information points to display across the consultation area (a copy of the poster is provided in Appendix 5.1.5: Phase Two Community Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.5]);
- Section 48 notices were placed in regional newspapers on successive weeks and in national newspapers, as listed in Table 9.1. A copy of

the Section 48 notice is provided in Appendix 5.1.7: Section 48 Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.7]);

- Section 48 notices were also erected around the Project area (see Appendix 5.1.7: Section 48 Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.7] for display locations);
- The Project website, which was updated to publicise the consultation opportunities and make available consultation materials, including the Section 48 notice and Phase Two Community Consultation Leaflet; and
- A press release was issued to the regional and trade media. (A copy of the press release and publications issued to is included in Appendix 5.1.5: Phase Two Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.5]).

7.9 Consultation response

7.9.1 The Applicant received 1,022 feedback responses to the Section 47 statutory consultation. All comments were taken into consideration by the Applicant. The comments received are summarised in Section 12 of this report and presented in detail in Appendix 5.1.9: Section 47 Applicant Response [EN010147/APP/5.1.9], together with how the Applicant has had regard to the feedback when finalising the DCO application.

7.10 Statement of compliance with consultation under Section 47 of the 2008 Act

7.10.1 In summary, the Applicant fully complied with Section 47 of the 2008 Act through the following activities:

- The Applicant consulted on the SoCC with all relevant local authorities as defined within Section 43(1) of the 2008 Act, giving them each at least 28 days to respond (as described in Section 6 of this report);
- The Applicant advertised the SoCC in the publications described in paragraph 7.5.3;
- The Applicant commenced statutory consultation with the community through the publication of its SoCC on 15 November 2023 and in accordance with the SoCC (see Table 6.7. in this report);
- The Applicant consulted with the community i.e. those persons defined under Section 47 of the 2008 Act as living in the vicinity of the land where the Project is, by reference to a core consultation zone;
- The Applicant notified and offered briefing meetings to elected representatives and key stakeholders;
- The Applicant welcomed 1,037 members of the public across a series of ten public information events, held in-person and online;
- The Applicant purposely ran the phase two Section 47 consultation in parallel to Section 42 consultation to invite responses from the community to the PEIR and PEIR NTS; and
- A total response period of 70 days was provided for the statutory Section 47 consultation, in excess of the minimum period of 28 days.

- These principles were also applied to further consultation not specified in the SoCC, namely the targeted consultation on specific changes across the site between 14 June and 28 July 2024, and the targeted consultation on a single change in the Central Site between 15 August and 15 September 2024. Detail of this further consultation is provided in Section 10 and Section 11 of this report.

8 Statutory consultation under Section 42 of the 2008 Act

8.1 Introduction

8.1.1 This section of the Consultation Report details the statutory consultation under Section 42 of the 2008 Act ('Section 42 consultation') and provides an overview of the consultation activities that took place during the statutory consultation period commencing 30 November 2023 and closing on 08 February 2024.

8.2 Statutory requirements and guidance

8.2.1 Section 42 of the 2008 Act requires that the Applicant must consult the following groups of stakeholders about the proposed Application:

- Such persons as may be prescribed;
- Each local authority that is within Section 43; and
- Each person who is within one or more of the categories set out in Section 44.

8.2.2 In relation to section 42(1)(a), the Applicant consulted all persons listed as a prescribed consultee notified by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State under Regulation 11(1)(a) and (c) of the EIA Regulations. These persons are referred to in this Consultation Report as the 'Section 42 consultees' and listed in Appendix 5.1.6 Section 42 Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.6].

8.2.3 In addition to the prescribed consultees identified by the Planning Inspectorate, the Applicant included a further 69 non-prescribed organisations to be consulted as Section 42 consultees (see Appendix 5.1.6: Section 42 Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.6], which details those prescribed and non-prescribed consultees). All of these Section 42 consultees were issued the same Project information and were included in the same way in the Section 42 consultation as the Section 42 consultees identified by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State. Project information was issued to Section 42 consultees in writing by post and/or email, depending on contact details available to the Applicant.

8.2.4 In relation to Section 42(1)(b), the local authorities under the definitions set out in Section 43 of the 2008 Act were consulted. Table 8.1 includes a list of relevant local authorities and their classification, as defined by the 2008 Act.

8.2.5 For the purposes of Section 42(1)(d), a person is within Section 44 of the 2008 Act if the Applicant, after making diligent inquiry, knows that the person is an owner, lessee, tenant or occupier of the land; is interested in

the land or has power to sell and convey the land; or is entitled to make a relevant claim if the order sought by the proposed application were to be made and fully implemented.

- 8.2.6 The relevant persons defined under Section 44 of the 2008 Act were consulted as part of the Section 42 consultation between 30 November 2023 and 08 February 2024. The list of land interests consulted is provided in Appendix 5.1.6: Section 42 Consultation Materials **[EN010147/APP/5.1.6]**.
- 8.2.7 Section 45(1) of the 2008 Act states that the Applicant, when consulting a stakeholder under Section 42, must provide notification of the deadline for responses to the consultation. Section 45(2) states that such a deadline must not be less than 28 days. The Applicant provided Section 42 consultees a period of 70 days (from 30 November 2023 to 08 February 2024) for consultation responses. This deadline for responses was communicated in a Section 42 covering letter, which is provided in Appendix 5.1.6: Section 42 Consultation Materials **[EN010147/APP/5.1.6]**.
- 8.2.8 Section 42 consultees and relevant Section 44 consultees were also notified by letter of the targeted consultations on specific changes across the site in June - July 2024 and August - September 2024 (as described in sections 10.3 and 11.2 of this report). In both instances, a response deadline exceeding the minimum of 28 days was provided. Copies of the relevant Section 42 cover letters are included within Appendix 5.1.8: Targeted Consultation Materials **[EN010147/APP/5.1.8]**.

8.3 Preliminary environmental information

- 8.3.1 The PEIR and PEIR NTS were produced as part of the statutory consultation documents for the Section 42 consultation with the Section 42 consultees (and also made available for the parallel phase two Section 47 statutory consultation).
- 8.3.2 The PEIR comprised of the information specified in Regulation 12(2) of the EIA Regulations which has been compiled by the Applicant and is reasonably required for consultation bodies to develop an informed view of the likely significant environmental effects of the Project.
- 8.3.3 A PEIR NTS was also produced, recognising that some Section 42 consultees may wish to view a more concise and less-detailed document.

8.4 Identifying Section 42 consultees

- 8.4.1 The Applicant consulted all statutory bodies listed by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State under Regulation 11(1)(a) and (c) of the EIA Regulations in the Scoping Opinion dated 24 July 2023 to be prescribed Section 42 consultees.

- 8.4.2 In addition, the Applicant also treated 69 non-prescribed bodies as Section 42 consultees. These bodies included representatives of Seldom Heard Groups, a list of which were presented to local planning authorities through consultation on the draft SoCC.
- 8.4.3 Appendix 5.1.6: Section 42 Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.6] includes a list of the Section 42 consultees for the Project.
- 8.4.4 The Applicant notified Section 42 consultees of the statutory consultation by issuing the following package of correspondence by post on 29 November 2023:
- A Section 42 covering letter, including a link to the consultation materials and an offer to provide materials free-of-charge on USB by request;
 - A site plan showing the location of the Project; and
 - A copy of the notice publicising the application under Section 48 of the 2008 Act (including details of the public consultation events and the locations where the consultation documents could be inspected free of charge).
- 8.4.5 The Applicant also contacted Section 42 stakeholders by email on 30 November 2023, where contact details were available.

8.5 Identifying Section 43 consultees

- 8.5.1 Section 42(1)(b) of the 2008 Act places a duty for the Applicant to consult each local authority that is within Section 43.
- 8.5.2 Section 43 defines what a local authority is for the purposes of section 42 i.e. any local authority in whose area proposed development would be sited and neighbouring authorities sharing a boundary.
- 8.5.3 Local Authorities are classified by the 2008 Act as “A”, “B”, “C”, or “D” depending on if the development is sited in their area (“B” and “C”) or not (“A” and “D”), and depending on the tier of the local authority.
- 8.5.4 The Applicant identified and consulted with local authorities identified in accordance with Section 43 of the 2008 Act. These local authorities are listed in Table 8.1, and referred to in this Consultation Report as ‘Section 43 consultees’.

Table 8.1: Relevant local authorities under Section 43 of the 2008 Act

Local authority	Classification under Section 43
West Oxfordshire District Council	B
Cherwell District Council	B
Vale of White Horse District Council	B

Local authority	Classification under Section 43
Oxfordshire County Council	C
Oxford City Council	A
Cotswold District Council	A
Stratford on Avon District Council	A
South Oxfordshire District Council	A
Swindon Borough Council	A & D
West Berkshire Council	A & D
Gloucestershire County Council	A & D
Warwickshire County Council	A & D
West 5ptonshire Council	A & D
Buckinghamshire Council	A & D
Wiltshire Council	A & D
Reading Borough Council	D
Wokingham Council	D

8.5.5 The Applicant notified Section 43 consultees of the statutory consultation by issuing the following package of correspondence on 29 November 2023 in writing by post:

- A Section 42 covering letter, including a link to the consultation materials and an offer to provide materials free-of-charge on USB by request (provided in Appendix 5.1.6: Section 42 Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.6]);
- A site plan showing the location of the Project (provided in Appendix 5.1.6: Section 42 Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.6]); and
- A copy of the notice publicising the application under Section 48 of the 2008 Act (including details of the public consultation events and the locations where the consultation documents could be inspected free of charge) (provided in Appendix 5.1.7: Section 48 Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.7]).

8.6 Identifying Section 44 consultees

8.6.1 Section 42(1)(d) of the 2008 Act places a duty for the Applicant to consult each person who is within one or more of the categories set out in Section 44.

8.6.2 The Applicant sought to identify the section 42(1)(d) consultees by undertaking diligent inquiry before the statutory consultation commenced. This included reviewing publicly available data (for example at the Land Registry), sending out Land Interest Questionnaires, undertaking site visits and erecting site notices.

8.6.3 The Applicant notified 230 identified Section 44 consultees by letter on 28 November 2023 and by email on 29 November 2023, ahead of the statutory consultation period commencing on 30 November 2023. These

consultees were informed of a response deadline of 08 February 2024, exceeding the statutory requirement of 28 days.

- 8.6.4 The Applicant notified a further 17 Section 44 consultees following the start of the phase two statutory consultation period (30 November 2023). Each consultee was notified by letter and provided with a response deadline of at least 28 days.
- 8.6.5 The Applicant notified 220 Section 44 consultees of the first targeted consultation on specific changes across the site between June and July 2024. 219 parties were notified on 13 June 2024 and an additional party was notified on 19 June 2024. All Section 44 consultees were informed of a response deadline of 28 July 2024, in excess of 28-day statutory minimum.
- 8.6.6 The Applicant notified four Section 44 consultees of the further targeted consultation on a single change in the Central Site Area between August and September 2024. The consultees were written to on 14 August 2024 and provided a response deadline of 15 September, exceeding the 28-day statutory minimum.
- 8.6.7 Prior to submitting a DCO application, when preparing the Book of Reference **[EN010147/APP/4.3]** the Applicant undertook a refresh of identified land interests. Consequently, the Applicant identified a further 13 Section 44 consultees. As there was sufficient time ahead of submission, the Applicant consulted with these consultees in relation to the Project and issued consultation materials to those land interests on 01 October 2024. Most of those materials were delivered to consultees by Royal Mail on 02 October 2024 and such consultees were given until 30 October 2024 to provide any consultation responses. However, delivery by Royal Mail failed for three of the consultees. Therefore, the Applicant hand delivered the materials on 03 October 2024 to those three consultees and provided a deadline of 31 October 2024 for responses. This approach ensured that all consultees were allowed the statutory minimum period of 28 days for responses to be provided.
- 8.6.8 The Applicant notes that the list of persons with an interest in land is subject to change over time, for example as a result of changes in land ownership. A further two land interests were identified shortly before the intended submission of the DCO application. The Applicant notified these parties on 23 October 2024 and advised of a proportionate opportunity to engage by 31 October 2024. This allowed the minimum time needed prior to submission to allow any consultee responses to be incorporated as part of the application. The Applicant also sought to be proactive and helpful by setting out in the communications to those two land interests how they can, if they so wish, engage with the process if the application is accepted for examination. This approach is consistent with the guidance issued under Section 50 of the 2008 Act:

Planning Act 2008: Pre-application stage for Nationally Significant
infrastructure Projects (April 2024).

- 8.6.9 The list of all land interests consulted is presented in Appendix 5.1.6: Section 42 Consultation Materials **[EN010147/APP/5.1.6]** (hereafter referred to in this Consultation Report as ‘Section 44 consultees’). This appendix details the date on which they were notified of consultation and the deadline provided to them for responding.
- 8.6.10 All persons listed in the Book of Reference **[EN010147/APP/4.3]**, which is up to date at the time of submitting the application for a DCO, were consulted under section 42(1)(d), apart from the two recently identified parties that have instead been provided with a proportionate opportunity to engage.
- 8.6.11 Where owners, lessees, tenants or occupiers were unknown, the Applicant placed notices detailing the consultation at the relevant locations around the Project site area.
- 8.6.12 An example of the notice and a map showing the locations where the notices were placed is included in Appendix 5.1.7: Section 48 Materials **[EN010147/APP/5.1.7]**. During the consultation period, the signs were checked on a weekly basis, with photographs taken on each visit. If a notice was damaged or missing it was replaced during these visits.
- 8.6.13 The Applicant informed the Section 44 consultees of the consultation opportunities by issuing the following package of correspondence by post:
- A Section 44 covering letter, including a link to the consultation materials on the Project website and an offer to provide materials free-of-charge on USB by request. An example covering letter is provided as Appendix 5.1.6: Section 42 Consultation Materials **[EN010147/APP/5.1.6]**;
 - A site plan showing the location of the Project (provided as Appendix 5.1.6: Section 42 Consultation Materials **[EN010147/APP/5.1.6]**); and
 - A copy of the notice publicising the application under Section 48 of the 2008 Act (including details of the public consultation events and the locations where the consultation documents could be inspected free of charge) (provided as Appendix 5.1.7: Section 48 Consultation Materials **[EN010147/APP/5.1.7]**).
- 8.6.14 The Applicant identified three responses received from Section 44 consultees to the Section 42 consultation. These are detailed in Appendix 5.1.6: Section 42 Applicant Response **[EN010147/APP/5.1.6]** and summarised in Section 13.
- 8.6.15 The Applicant also notes that many Section 44 consultees would also have been notified of the Section 47 consultation, as described in Section 7 of this report, and may have therefore chosen to provide their responses

to the Section 47 consultation without indicating they were also a Section 44 consultee. In these cases, their feedback will have been captured as Section 47 feedback and presented in Section 12 and Appendix 5.1.9: Section 47 Applicant Response [EN010147/APP/5.1.9].

8.7 Duty to notify the planning inspectorate of the proposed application under Section 46 of the 2008 Act

8.7.1 Prior to commencing Section 42 consultation, the Applicant notified the Secretary of State of its intention to submit an application for development consent for the Project under Section 46 of the 2008 Act. The notification was sent to the Planning Inspectorate electronically on 28 November 2023, including the following attachments:

- A Section 46 covering letter, including a link to the consultation materials on the Project website and an offer to provide materials free-of-charge on USB by request (included in Appendix 5.1.6: Section 42 Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.6]);
- Example copies of the Section 42 covering letters (one letter type being for Section 42 consultees and the other one for Section 44 consultees) (included in Appendix 5.1.6: Section 42 Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.6]);
- A site plan showing the location of the Project (included in Appendix 5.1.6: Section 42 Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.6]); and
- A copy of the notice publicising the application under Section 48 of the 2008 Act (including details of the public consultation events and the locations where the consultation documents could be inspected free of charge) (included in Appendix 5.1.7: Section 48 Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.7]).

8.7.2 The Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State acknowledged receipt of the notification on 29 November 2024. A copy of this acknowledgement is included in Appendix 5.1.6: Section 42 Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.6].

8.8 Undertaking Section 42 consultation

8.8.1 In summary, Section 42 consultees (including those defined under Section 43 and Section 44) were notified of the commencement of the Section 42 consultation in writing on or before 30 November 2023. The following documents were provided to Section 42 consultees:

- a relevant covering letter, explaining why the consultee had been contacted and including a link to the consultation materials on the Project website and an offer to provide materials free-of-charge on USB by request (included in Appendix 5.1.6: Section 42 Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.6]);
- A site plan showing the location of the Project (included in Appendix 5.1.6: Section 42 Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.6]); and
- A copy of the notice publicising the application under Section 48 of the 2008 Act (including details of the public consultation events and the locations where the consultation documents could be inspected free of charge) (included in Appendix 5.1.7: Section 48 Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.7]).

8.8.2 The PEIR formed part of the Section 42 consultation document under Section 45(3) of the 2008 Act. Section 42 consultees were also directed towards the Section 47 community consultation materials, as described in Section 8 of this report.

8.8.3 With the Section 42 consultation period commencing on 30 November 2023 and ending on 08 February 2024, this provided a response period of 70 days (therefore exceeding the minimum 28-day statutory period set out in Section 45(2) of the 2008 Act).

8.8.4 In total 82 responses were received from Section 42 consultees to the Section 42 consultation. This includes 39 responses during the second phase of consultation, 28 during the first targeted consultation, and 15 during the second phase of targeted consultation. An overview of the Section 42 feedback and Applicant's response is provided in Section 13, with a more detailed record of Section 42 feedback provided as Appendix 5.1.10: Section 42 Applicant Response [EN010147/APP/5.1.10].

8.9 Statement of compliance with formal consultation under Section 42

8.9.1 In summary, the Applicant fully complied with Sections 42, 44, 45 and 46 of the 2008 Act by undertaking the following activity:

- The Applicant consulted with such persons as may be prescribed (Sections 42(1)(a) – (d)) and relevant to the Project, including landowners under Section 44;

- A number of additional non-prescribed consultees were scoped in as Section 42 consultees;
- Notification of the Project under Section 46 was provided to the Secretary of State on 28 November 2023, before the start of the consultation period; and
- The total response periods provided for each part of the Section 42 consultation each exceeded the statutory period of 28 days.

9 Statutory consultation under Section 48 of the 2008 Act

9.1 Introduction

9.1.1 This section details how the Applicant has complied with Section 48 of the 2008 Act (duty to publicise).

9.2 Statutory requirements and guidance

9.2.1 Section 48 of the 2008 Act requires the Applicant to publicise the proposed Application in the prescribed manner. A deadline for receipt of comments to the publicity must also be provided.

9.2.2 Regulation 4 of the APFP Regulations sets out what the publicity under Section 48 of the 2008 Act should entail, which essentially is the publication of a notice in given publications, with requirements on the contents of such notice. Specifically, Regulation 4 requires an applicant to publish the notice for two successive weeks in one or more local newspapers, once in a national newspaper, and once in the London Gazette.

9.2.3 Paragraph 41 of the DCLG Guidance notes that publicity under Section 48 is an integral part of the community consultation process and where possible the advertisements in local newspapers should coincide with the beginning of consultation with communities under Section 47. The Applicant complied with this guidance.

9.2.4 For the Project, Section 48 publicity took place in parallel with the phase two (statutory under Section 47) community consultation, Section 42 consultation, and publication of the PEIR. The parallel consultation process provided the same response times for the Section 42, 47 and 48 consultations.

9.2.5 Evidence of compliance with the relevant legislation is provided in Appendix 5.1.1: Statement of Compliance [EN010147/APP/5.1.1].

9.3 Publication of notice

9.3.1 The Section 48 notice (included in Appendix 5.1.7: Section 48 Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.7]) publicising the Project and advertising the intention to apply for a DCO was placed in the publications listed in Table 9.1.

9.3.2 All consultees identified under Section 42 of the 2008 Act were provide with a copy of the Section 48 notice as required by Regulation 11 of the EIA Regulations and described in Section 9.

9.3.3 Copies of the notices as placed in the newspapers are provided in Appendix 5.1.7: Section 48 Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.7].

Table 9.1: Publication schedule of Section 48 notice

Publication	First Insertion	Second Insertion
The Guardian	29 November 2023	
London Gazette	27 November 2023	
The Oxford Times	23 November 2023	30 November 2023
The Witney Gazette	22 November 2023	29 November 2023

9.3.4 The Section 48 notice contained the required information under Regulation 4(4) of the APFP Regulations.

9.3.5 The Applicant erected Section 48 notices around the Project area. The notice and map of locations for the notices are shown in Appendix 5.1.7: Section 48 Consultation Materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.7]). The Applicant checked the locations of the Section 48 notices weekly during the consultation period, replacing any that had been removed or damaged.

9.4 Statement of compliance with formal consultation under Section 48

9.4.1 In summary, the Applicant fully complied with Section 48 of the 2008 Act by undertaking the following activities:

- The Applicant publicised the Project in appropriate newspapers in the prescribed manner, as listed in Table 9.1;
- The Applicant held the Section 48 consultation in parallel with the Section 42 consultation and Section 47 consultation, notifying consultees of the PEIR and where the consultation documents could be reviewed; and
- The Applicant placed Section 48 notices around the Project site area.

10 Targeted consultation on a series of proposed boundary changes

10.1 Introduction

- 10.1.1 Following the close of the phase two (statutory) consultation, the Applicant continued to refine the proposals for the Project in preparation for submitting a DCO application. This refinement was informed by further design work and due diligence, consideration of consultee feedback, and responding to the results and data from environmental assessments.
- 10.1.2 This resulted in a series of specific amendments to the proposed Project site boundary (indicative order limits) – both increases and decreases – compared to the Project boundary presented in the PEIR and for phase two consultation.
- 10.1.3 The Applicant undertook further statutory consultation targeted on these specific changes to ensure communities and consultees had an opportunity to comment on the full proposed Project boundary prior to a DCO application being submitted.

10.2 Preparing for further targeted consultation

- 10.2.1 The Applicant prepared a strategy for undertaking this phase of targeted consultation. This strategy was informed by the relevant legislation and guidance, as described in Section 2 of this report and further detailed in Appendix 5.1.1: Statement of Compliance **[EN010147/APP/5.1.1]**.
- 10.2.2 The Applicant discussed this strategy with the host local authorities of Oxfordshire County Council, West Oxfordshire District Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, and Cherwell District Council, prior to sharing a document describing the Applicant's approach to targeted consultation for further review and comment on 08 May 2024. A copy of this document is included in Appendix 5.1.8: Targeted consultation materials **[EN010147/APP/5.1.8]**.
- 10.2.3 The Applicant received comments in response to this strategy from Cherwell District Council (on 20 May 2024), Vale of White Horse District Council (20 May 2024), West Oxfordshire District Council (21 May 2024), and Oxfordshire County Council (on 22 May 2024).
- 10.2.4 The comments received and the Applicant's consideration of these comments is described in Table 10.1.

Table 10.1: Applicant consideration of feedback to their proposed approach to targeted consultation.

Local Authority	Comment	Applicant response
Cherwell District Council	<p>Consultees will want to know that their earlier comments have been/will be addressed. If this is not part of the re-consultation, they are more likely to repeat their concerns for this round.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes this and will prepare a Consultation Report to be submitted as part of an application for a Development Consent Order. This Consultation Report will describe the Applicant's consideration of feedback received.</p> <p>Prior to or alongside this, the Applicant will look to publish a summary of the updated Project proposals, including an explanation of how feedback has been considered.</p>
	<p>It is also possible that changes to the red line may trigger new 'in principle' concerns and these should not be discounted.</p>	<p>The Applicant will review all feedback received to the targeted consultation.</p>
	<p>[Regarding Project communications channels:] Evening and/or weekend options should be provided too to make it accessible for those who work full time.</p>	<p>In response to this feedback, the Project Freephone information line will be open between 9am – 7pm from Monday to Wednesday, and 9am – 5pm on Thursdays and Fridays during this phase of targeted consultation. The Applicant is extending the window that the phonenumber is open to allow stakeholders an extended opportunity to speak to the Project team outside of ordinary working hours. A voicemail service will operate outside of these hours.</p>
	<p>In light of comments being made by Stop Botley West, it is also recommended that another full round of statutory consultation should be carried out when more</p>	<p>In preparing the Consultation Report, the Applicant will be considering and evidencing how pre-application consultation undertaken on the Project has complied with relevant</p>

Local Authority	Comment	Applicant response
	<p>detailed, revised proposals are available. Although it's appreciated that the Adequacy of Consultation will be formally considered at the time of submission, potentially there could be some legitimate remaining concerns regarding the AoC if more detailed proposals are not provided for public comment within the pre-application phase. Therefore, you may want to reconsider the need for this 'interim' or targeted consultation and instead focus on carrying out another full statutory consultation prior to submission which should also seek to address publicly raised concerns about the adequacy of time allowed for responses and the accessibility of the Phase 2 consultation.</p>	<p>requirements and legislation, and the commitments and principles established in the Applicant's SoCC.</p> <p>The Applicant will continue to consider any updates to the Project design prior to submission of a DCO application, and further consultation may be undertaken as necessary.</p> <p>The Applicant notes that the prescribed Examination process will provide an opportunity for further review and comment on the Project.</p>
<p>Vale of White Horse District Council</p>	<p>Whilst you are not inviting comments on the principle of the scheme, changes to the red line boundary could affect principle.</p> <p>I note dedicated communication channels are only open 9-5 on weekdays. You need to have one evening a week open later.</p>	<p>Noted. The Applicant will review all feedback received to the targeted consultation.</p> <p>In response to this feedback, the Project Freephone information line will be open between 9am – 7pm from Monday to Wednesday, and 9am – 5pm on Thursdays and Fridays during this phase of targeted consultation. The Applicant is extending the window that the phonenumber is open to allow stakeholders an extended opportunity to speak to the Project team outside of ordinary working hours. A voicemail</p>

Local Authority	Comment	Applicant response
		service will operate outside of these hours.
	I consider in person workshop events need to be held.	The Applicant has considered holding a further round of in-person events in support of this phase of consultation. Given the nature and level of information being consulted on at this stage, the Applicant is not proposing to host a further series of in-person events and intends to encourage engagement directly with the Applicant's team through the range of free-to-use Project communications channels.
	There is no reference of social media / online advertisement of the consultation.	The Applicant intends to publicise consultation opportunities consistent with the approach established in the SoCC, utilising a combination of online and paper methods. This will involve written notification to properties within the defined core consultation zone, placing notices and issuing a press release to local publications, issuing posters to identified local venues, arranging for materials to be available to collect from Community Access Points, emailing any parties that had registered to be kept informed, and updating the dedicated Project website.
	Overall, I consider more consultation on the detail of the proposal would be beneficial, including outlining mitigation and how you have responded to comments already received in refining the proposal.	The Applicant notes this and will prepare a Consultation Report to be submitted as part of an application for a Development Consent Order. This Consultation Report will describe the Applicant's consideration of feedback received.

Local Authority	Comment	Applicant response
	<p>You also need to address the concerns raised with earlier consultation as summarised by the Stop Botley West group who have publicly stated:</p> <p><i>There is widespread dissatisfaction in the affected communities with the way the proposal has been presented for the Phase 2 Community Consultation. The consultation documents did not provide sufficient information to allow proper consideration. The information was not made available in an accessible way. It was not easily interpretable and insufficient time was allowed to consider the proposal and respond.</i></p>	<p>Prior to or alongside this, the Applicant will look to publish a summary of the updated Project proposals, including an explanation of how feedback has been considered.</p> <p>The Applicant will continue to consider any updates to the Project design prior to submission of a DCO application, and further consultation may be undertaken as necessary.</p> <p>The Applicant notes that the prescribed Examination process will provide an opportunity for further review and comment on the Project.</p> <p>In preparing the Consultation Report, the Applicant will be considering and evidencing how pre-application consultation undertaken on the Project has complied with relevant requirements and legislation, and the commitments and principles established in the Applicant's SoCC.</p>

Local Authority	Comment	Applicant response
	<p>To that end, a full re-consultation should be undertaken.</p>	
<p>West Oxfordshire District Council</p>	<p>We understand that the next phase of consultation will focus on specific changes to the redline boundary for the project and that you will not be inviting comments on the principle of the project or matters that have already been consulted on. Our response to the first statutory consultation reflected that there were gaps in the information provided in the PEIR, including details of measures to mitigate the impact of development.</p> <p>WODC consider that further detailed consultation on some matters may therefore be beneficial, particularly if there have been any changes to the design and scale of the scheme resulting from the phase 1 statutory consultation.</p> <p>You have indicated that feedback received through consultation is informing the refinement of plans for Botley West. Including a narrative as to how such feedback has influenced proposals at the next stage of consultation will help to reassure stakeholders that their comments have been taken on board and possibly deter stakeholders from making representations that are not relevant to the focused consultation.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes this and will prepare a Consultation Report to be submitted as part of an application for a Development Consent Order. This Consultation Report will describe the Applicant's consideration of feedback received.</p> <p>Prior to or alongside this, the Applicant will look to publish a summary of the updated Project proposals, including an explanation of how feedback has been considered.</p> <p>The Applicant will continue to consider any updates to the Project design prior to submission of a DCO application, and further consultation may be undertaken as necessary.</p> <p>The Applicant notes that the prescribed Examination process will provide an opportunity for further review and comment on the Project.</p> <p>The Applicant will review all feedback received to the targeted consultation.</p>

Local Authority	Comment	Applicant response
	<p>We understand that the information presented through the first statutory consultation was intended to be preliminary, but we would welcome further opportunities to respond to proposals if they have been developed further since February 2024.</p>	
	<p>Further statutory consultation is to be undertaken in a proportionate manner consistent with the principles and methods set out in the Statement of Community Consultation. WODC welcomes this approach as previously agreed, but wish to ensure that all stakeholders are provided sufficient access to the project team during convenient hours. It should be recognised that not all stakeholders have the ability to engage during weekdays 9am – 5pm. Some provision should be made for stakeholders to speak to the project team outside of these hours and at weekends. We understand that some stakeholders have questioned the adequacy of consultation undertaken to date and this is partially due to the accessibility and timing of public information events.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>In response to this feedback, the Project Freephone information line will be open between 9am – 7pm from Monday to Wednesday, and 9am – 5pm on Thursdays and Fridays during this phase of targeted consultation. The Applicant is extending the window that the phonenumber is open to allow stakeholders an extended opportunity to speak to the Project team outside of ordinary working hours. A voicemail service will operate outside of these hours.</p> <p>In preparing the Consultation Report, the Applicant will be considering and evidencing how pre-application consultation undertaken on the Project has complied with relevant requirements and legislation, and the commitments and principles established in the Applicant’s SoCC.</p>
<p>Oxfordshire County Council</p>	<p>As discussed, when we met 07/05/24, the inclusion of a narrative on how previous consultation feedback is being considered and is</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>The Applicant will consider how to address this in the targeted consultation materials and will</p>

Local Authority	Comment	Applicant response
	<p>influencing the proposals would be welcomed to help demonstrate and reassure communities and consultees that their comments are being taken into account.</p>	<p>look to publish a summary of the updated Project proposals, including an explanation of how feedback has been considered.</p>
	<p>As flagged by the district councils, it should be recognised that not all stakeholders have the ability to engage during weekdays 9am – 5pm and some provision should be made for stakeholders to speak to the project team outside of these hours and at weekends. Further in person workshop events should also be undertaken. The concerns of the Stop Botley West group about the Phase 2 consultation should also be considered.</p>	<p>Noted.</p> <p>In response to this feedback, the Project Freephone information line will be open between 9am – 7pm from Monday to Wednesday, and 9am – 5pm on Thursdays and Fridays during this phase of targeted consultation. The Applicant is extending the window that the phonenumber is open to allow stakeholders an extended opportunity to speak to the Project team outside of ordinary working hours. A voicemail service will operate outside of these hours.</p> <p>In preparing the Consultation Report, the Applicant will be considering and evidencing how pre-application consultation undertaken on the Project has complied with relevant requirements and legislation, and the commitments and principles established in the Applicant’s SoCC.</p>
	<p>Rather than going out to consultation in June on the red line changes, OCC are of the view that it would be preferable to engage with the councils’ technical experts (via the PPA process) and continue to refine the proposals before undertaking</p>	<p>Rather than going out to consultation in June on the red line changes, OCC are of the view that it would be preferable to engage with the councils’ technical experts (via the PPA process) and continue to refine the proposals before undertaking a comprehensive</p>

Local Authority	Comment	Applicant response
	a comprehensive full consultation to provide additional detail and set out in full the changes that have been made to the proposals as a result of feedback from the Stage 2 consultation.	full consultation to provide additional detail and set out in full the changes that have been made to the proposals as a result of feedback from the Stage 2 consultation.

10.3 Targeted consultation period (14 June 2024 – 18 July 2024)

- 10.3.1 The Applicant carried out a defined phase of additional targeted consultation between 14 June 2024 and 28 July 2024. This consultation focused on 57 proposed specific changes to the Project site boundary. These specific changes primarily resulted in small increases in land area, but also decreases to the site in some areas.
- 10.3.2 The Applicant published a Targeted Consultation Information Change Note to provide details of the consultation and to present each specific change to the proposed Project boundary. This included a description of each proposed change and confirmation of any potential changes to the environmental effects presented within the PEIR. A copy of the Targeted Consultation Information Change Note is included as Appendix 5.1.8: Targeted consultation materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.8].
- 10.3.3 The Applicant publicised the consultation information and response deadline by:
- Distributing a consultation postcard to over 23,000 local home and business properties within the core consultation zone (as defined in Section 7.2 of this report);
 - Publishing Section 48 notices in the Oxford Times (on 20 June 2024) and the Witney Gazette (on 19 June 2024); two local newspapers,
 - Publishing consultation adverts in Oxford Times (on 13 June 2024), in Witney Gazette (on 12 June 2024), Oxford Herald Series (on 12 June 2024), Bicester Advertiser (on 13 June 2024) and Banbury Guardian (on 20 June 2024);
 - Distributing a press release containing details of the consultation to regional media publications;
 - Distributing posters to identified local information points for them to display;
 - Distributing hard copies of consultation documents to five CAP sites;
 - Providing the relevant consultation information documents – including the Targeted Consultation Information Change Note and an accompanying Site Location and Order Limits Plan – on the Project website; and

- Contacting identified stakeholders and individuals who had registered to be kept informed.
- 10.3.4 Copies of the consultation materials listed above in paragraph 10.10.6 are provided in Appendix 5.1.8: Targeted consultation materials **[EN010147/APP/5.1.8]**.
- 10.3.5 The Applicant recorded 243 submissions of feedback from community organisations, residents and interested parties considered as Section 47 feedback to the targeted consultation. The Applicant has considered these representations alongside all other section 47 feedback received. A summary of section 47 feedback is provided in Section 12 of this report and presented in more detail alongside the Applicant's consideration of feedback received in Appendix 5.1.9: Section 47 Applicant Response **[EN010147/APP/5.1.9]**.
- 10.3.6 The Applicant recorded 26 submissions of feedback from section 42 consultees to the targeted consultation. The Applicant has considered these representations alongside all other section 42 feedback received. A summary of section 42 feedback is provided in Section 13 of this report and presented in more detail alongside the Applicant's consideration of feedback received in Appendix 5.1.10: Section 42 Applicant Response **[EN010147/APP/5.1.10]**.

11 Further targeted consultation on a single proposed boundary change

11.1 Introduction

11.1.1 The Applicant undertook a further, final round of statutory pre-application consultation on a single proposed change to the Project boundary between 15 August 2024 and 15 September 2024.

11.1.2 The consultation was targeted on a single specific change to the proposed Project boundary within the central site area, located on the southern edge of Bladon Heath, south of Bladon and west of Begbroke. The proposed change to the Project boundary was to include land around an established veteran tree, adding necessary flexibility to the existing cable corridor.

11.2 Targeted consultation period (15 August 2024 – 15 September 2024)

11.2.1 The Applicant published an Information Change Note to provide details of the consultation and proposed change to the Project boundary. A copy of this document is included in Appendix 5.1.8: Targeted consultation materials [EN010147/APP/5.1.8].

11.2.2 The Applicant publicised the consultation information and response deadline by:

- Notifying consultees as defined by Section 42 of the Planning Act 2008;
- Writing to properties within 500m of the proposed Project boundary change, consistent with the approach set out in the Applicant's SoCC. This included a single residential property;
- Publishing Section 48 notices in The Oxford Times on 15 August 2024 and the Witney Gazette on 14 August 2024;
- Publishing consultation adverts in Herald Series (on 14 August 2024), in Bicester Advertiser (on 15 August 2024) and in Banbury Guardian (on 15 August 2024).
- Distributing posters to identified local information points for them to display;
- Distributing hard copies of consultation documents to five CAP sites;
- Providing the relevant consultation information documents – including an Information Change Note and Site Location and Order Limits Plan – on the Project website;
- and Contacting identified stakeholders and individuals who had registered to be kept informed.

- 11.2.3 Copies of the consultation materials listed above in paragraph 11.2.2 are provided in Appendix 5.1.8: Targeted consultation materials **[EN010147/APP/5.1.8]**.
- 11.2.4 The Applicant recorded 35 pieces of feedback from community organisations, residents and interested parties considered as Section 47 feedback to the targeted consultation. The Applicant has considered these representations alongside all other section 47 feedback received. A summary of section 47 feedback is provided in Section 12 of this report and presented in more detail alongside the Applicant's consideration of feedback received in Appendix 5.1.9: Section 47 Applicant Response **[EN010147/APP/5.1.9]**.
- 11.2.5 The Applicant recorded 15 submissions of feedback from section 42 consultees to the targeted consultation. The Applicant has considered these representations alongside all other section 42 feedback received. A summary of section 42 feedback is provided in Section 13 of this report and presented in more detail alongside the Applicant's consideration of feedback received in Appendix 5.1.10: Section 42 Applicant Response **[EN010147/APP/5.1.10]**.

12 Section 47 statutory consultation: responses received, issues raised and changes made

12.1 Overview

- 12.1.1 The phase two community consultation was statutory under Section 47 of the 2008 Planning Act.
- 12.1.2 This consultation was held over a ten-week period, between Wednesday 30 November 2023 and Wednesday 08 February 2024.
- 12.1.3 The Applicant invited written feedback to be submitted online via the free-to-use Project communications channels.
- 12.1.4 During the phase two consultation, the Applicant received 1,022 pieces of feedback. This included 555 digital feedback forms and 305 hard copy feedback forms, and 162 written responses received by email or Freepost.
- 12.1.5 The phase two feedback form (both the paper copy and digital version) included a mix of closed and open-ended questions to encourage responses regarding the respondent's interest in the Project, the proposals, community benefits, and the consultation process.
- 12.1.6 Responses provided through the feedback form (online and paper) therefore included responses to closed (multiple choice) questions and open-ended responses.
- 12.1.7 The quantitative data from the closed questions is presented in Section 10.2 of this report. The qualitative data from the open-ended responses has been considered alongside written feedback received through email and Freepost and is summarised in Table 12.2 and presented in full in Appendix 5.1.9: Section 47 Applicant Response **[EN010145/APP/5.1.9]**, along with the Applicant's response to this feedback.

12.2 Quantitative analysis of responses received

- 12.2.1 Table 12.1 presents a summary of the quantitative data gathered by the Applicant through their feedback form. The results are presented visually in Figures 10.1 to 10.4.

Table 12.1: Summary of quantitative data from phase two consultation

Question number	Feedback question	Analysis of response data
1.	How would you describe your interest in Botley West Solar Farm?	<p>1,014 responses were received on this question. As one respondent could submit multiple answers, the number of responses exceeded the number of respondents.</p> <p>The vast majority (94%) described their interest as being a local resident.</p> <p>Other respondents identified as being regular visitors (7%), members of a local interest group (4%), landowners (3%), local representatives (2%), local business owners (2%), or 'other' (5%).</p> <p>These results are presented in Figure 10.1.</p>
2.	As a principle do you agree there is a need to install solar infrastructure?	<p>809 respondents answered this question.</p> <p>56% of respondents indicated they agreed that there is a need to install solar infrastructure.</p> <p>33% of respondents indicated they did not agree that there is a need to install solar infrastructure.</p> <p>10% of respondents indicated that they did not feel that they understand enough about the need to install solar infrastructure.</p> <p>These results are presented in Figure 10.2.</p>
3.	What are your views on Botley West Solar Farm?	<p>845 respondents completed this question.</p> <p>76% of respondents indicated that they do not support the proposals.</p> <p>13% of respondents indicated that they would like changes to be made to support the proposals.</p> <p>10% of respondents indicated that they support the proposals.</p> <p>Less than 0.5% of respondents did not have an opinion.</p>

		The results of this question are presented in Figure 10.3.
4.	Which aspects of the project are most important to you?	<p>Respondents were able to select multiple topics to this question.</p> <p>Landscape and visual was the most selected topic. 73% of respondents indicated that it was an aspect most important to them.</p> <p>This was followed by local ecology (70%) and land use and agriculture (63%).</p> <p>Traffic and transport (50%) and recreation and amenity (50%) were next, followed by climate change and energy need (45%), hydrology and flood risk (34%), cultural heritage (34%), glint and glare (30%), archaeology (22%), and socioeconomics (15%). 24% of respondents also selected that they were interested in other topics.</p> <p>The results of this question are presented in Figure 10.4.</p>

Figure 10.1: How would you describe your interest in Botley West Solar Farm?

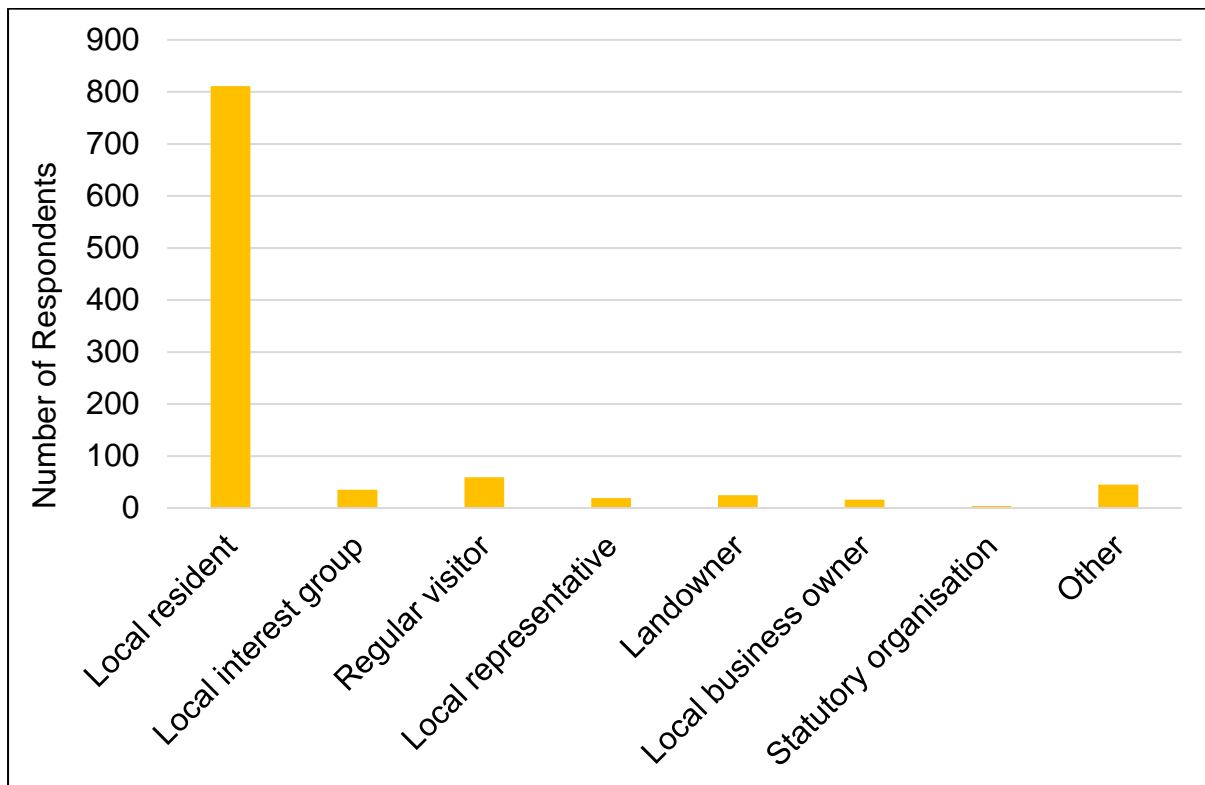


Figure 10.2: As a principle do you agree there is a need to install solar infrastructure?

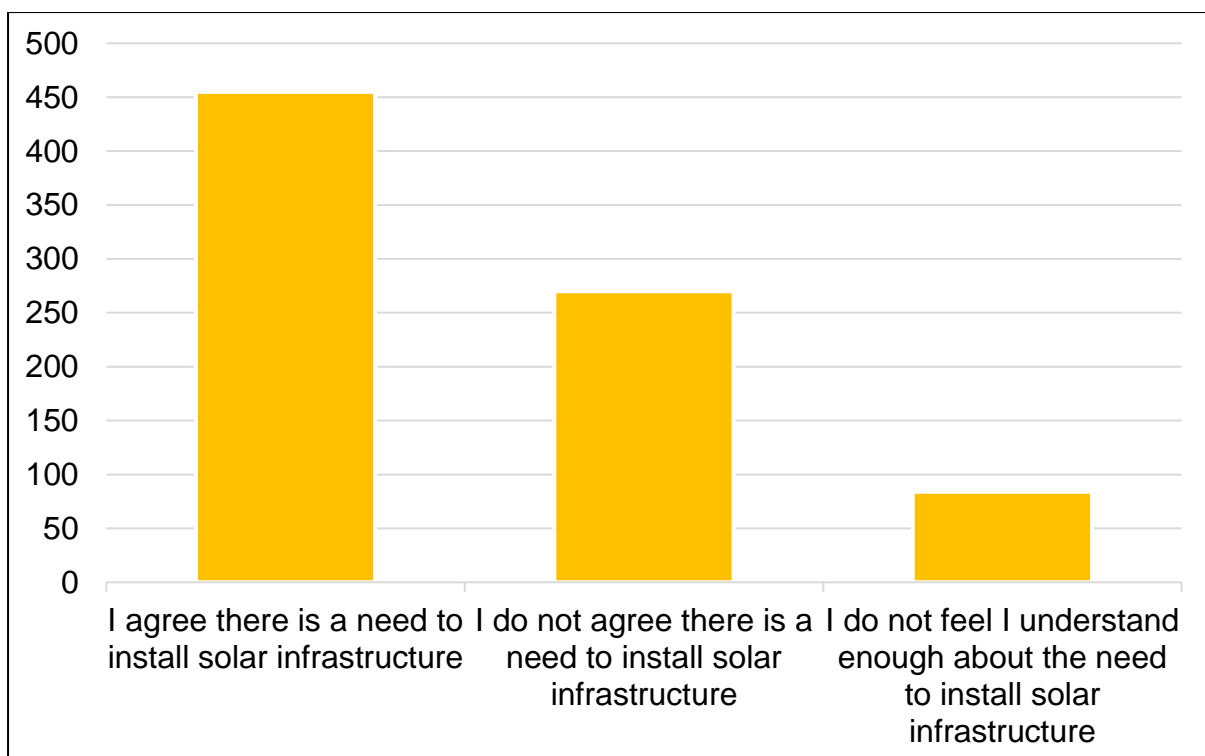


Figure 10.3: What are your views on Botley West Solar Farm?

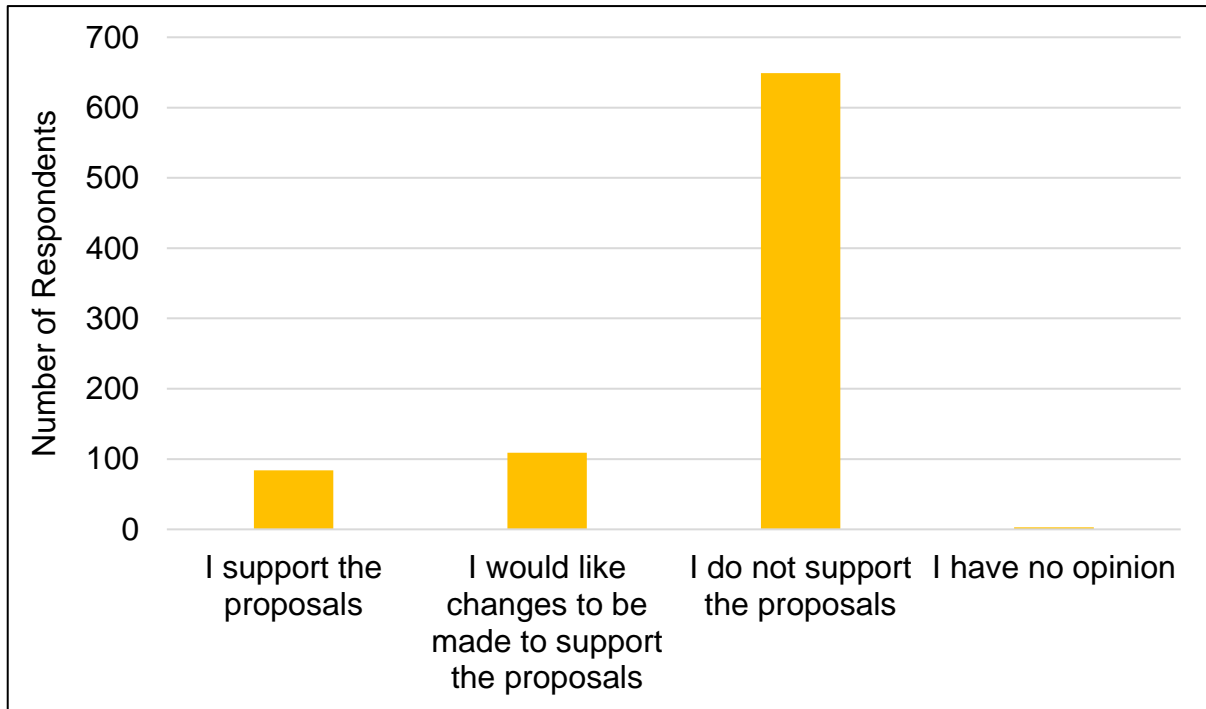
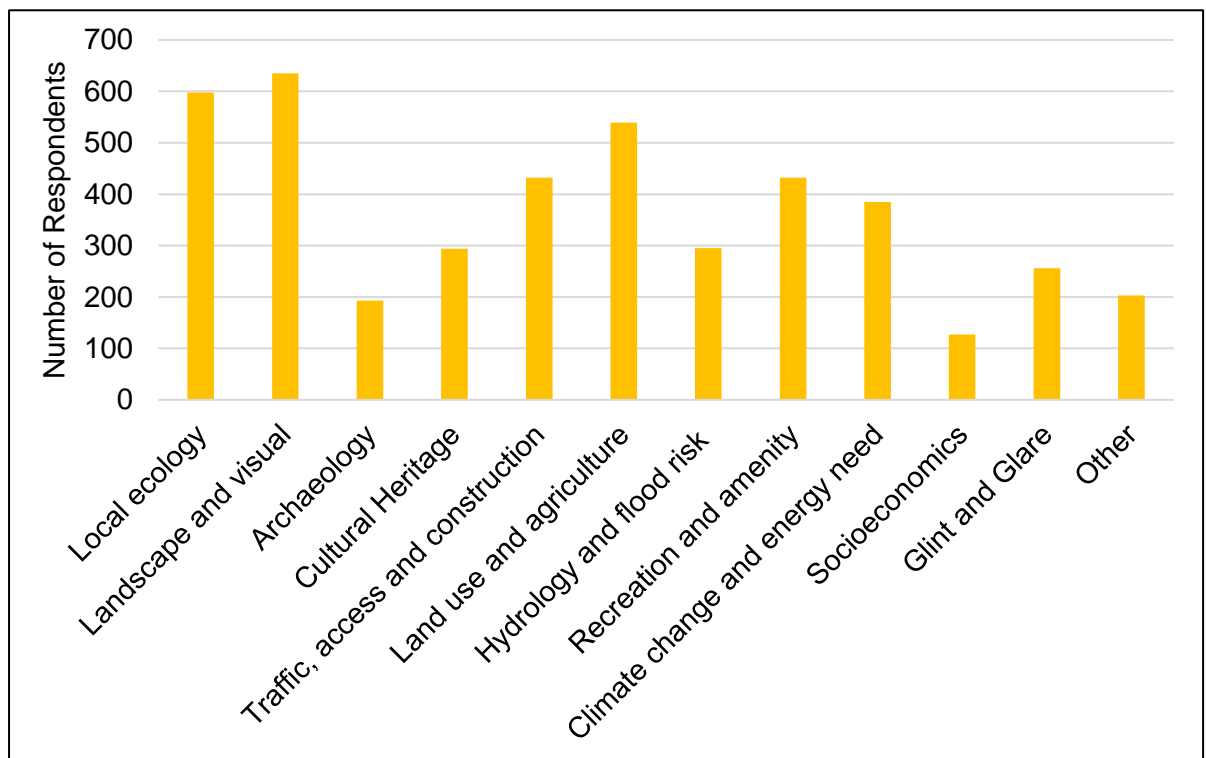


Figure 10.4: Which aspects of the project are most important to you?



12.3 Qualitative analysis of responses received

- 12.3.1 Table 12.2 presents a summary of the qualitative data from the written responses received by the Applicant to their statutory consultation. This includes the phase two consultation and the two targeted consultations that were subsequently carried out, between June and July 2024, and August and September 2024.
- 12.3.2 Table 12.2 includes a summary of how the Applicant has considered this feedback in developing the Project, consistent with Section 49 of the 2008 Act.
- 12.3.3 A detailed record of all comments received and the Applicant's response to these comments is provided as Appendix 5.1.9: Section 47 Applicant Response [EN010147/APP/5.1.9].

Table 12.2: Summary of qualitative Section 47 feedback to statutory consultation, including how the Applicant has considered this feedback.

Feedback comments	Applicant response
<p>Use of agricultural land</p> <p>Respondents commented on the Project's use of agricultural land, with expressions that this was inappropriate and concern that it could impact the UK's food security.</p> <p>Comments submitted regarding the proportion of land within the Project site considered to be Best and Most Versatile (BMV).</p>	<p>The Applicant recognises the importance of agricultural land and appreciates the feedback received on this topic.</p> <p>This has been given consideration throughout the Applicant's site selection and environmental impact assessment processes.</p> <p>The Site Selection and Alternatives are considered within ES Volume 1, Chapter 5: Alternatives Considered [EN010147/APP/6.3].</p> <p>The assessment of the effects of the Project on agricultural land are presented in Chapter 17 (Agricultural Land Use and Public Rights of Way) of the Environmental Statement [EN010147/APP/6.3].</p> <p>Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land comprises Grades 1, 2 and Subgrade 3a of the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food 1988 ALC System.</p> <p>The results of the Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey show that 36% of the land within the Project comprises best and most versatile land, with the majority comprising lower quality Subgrade 3b land.</p>

Feedback comments	Applicant response
	<p>The proposal includes the retention of agricultural use of the land within the area of the solar panel infrastructure throughout much of the site, using conservation grazing as outlined in the Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan [EN010147/APP/7.6.3].</p> <p>Up to 30 hectares are also being offered to local food growing groups.</p> <p>A total of only 5.5ha of agricultural land would be permanently lost as a result of the Project where the substations and PCS units would be located.</p>
<p>Consideration of alternatives</p> <p>Respondents have suggested that solar should be placed on rooftops, brownfield sites, old aerodromes, educational sites, existing warehouses, offshore, car parks, and new build properties in the area.</p>	<p>The Applicant recognises respondents' requests for solar to be sited on alternative locations. The Applicant is supportive of such sites and locations being explored for the installation of solar arrays.</p> <p>The Applicant's consideration of potential alternatives is described in Chapter 5 (Site Selection and Alternatives) of the Environmental Statement [EN010147/APP/6.3].</p> <p>The need case for the Project, as a utility-scale ground mounted solar array, and the overall planning balance of benefits and harm are set out in the Planning Supporting Statement [EN010147/APP/7.1].</p> <p>The development pressures in the region are also a driver for renewable energy generation to meet existing and future needs. The Applicant notes that solar panels on roofs are an important contributor, as recognised in the Government's British Energy Strategy, but will not in their own right provide sufficient energy generation, even if they can be connected to the grid or provide a local 'private wire' connection to a local off-taker.</p> <p>The target for solar ground-mounted energy will continue to be a significant part of the renewable development mix in order to meet targets.</p>

Feedback comments	Applicant response
<p>Size and Scale</p> <p>Respondents have commented on the size and scale of the project, with many respondents expressing their concern.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes this comment.</p> <p>The Applicant has a connection agreement with National Grid to export 840MW to the Grid, and the Project is seeking to fulfil this connection in line with government policy that considers solar to be a ‘critical national priority’.</p> <p>The case for need, including the scale of the proposal to meet energy demands, is presented within Planning Supporting Statement (PSS) [EN010147/APP/7.1].</p> <p>The Site Selection and Alternatives are considered within ES Volume 1, Chapter 5: Alternatives Considered [EN010147/APP/6.3]. The landscape and visual effects are assessed and reported in Chapter 8 of the ES [EN010147/APP/6.3].</p> <p>A summary of the effects is contained in Tables 8.24 and 8.25 of that chapter.</p> <p>On balance, it is considered that the quality and character of the landscape and visual resources would largely be maintained and would have the capacity to accommodate the Project without significant effects beyond those identified at a very local level or where it would be difficult to entirely mitigate visual effects.</p> <p>In addition, proposed planting would have a longer term benefit reinforcing the landscape character of the local landscape.</p>
<p>Buffer zones</p> <p>Respondents have commented on the size of buffer zones, requesting an increase in offsets from properties, public rights of way and from ecological features.</p>	<p>The approach to mitigation is presented within the Chapter 9 (Ecology and Nature Conservation) of the Environmental Statement [EN010147/APP/6.3].</p> <p>A minimum 25m buffer from residential properties is in place and a minimum 15m from ancient woodland in accordance with guidance and 5m from existing hedgerows.</p> <p>Footpaths and Green Ways have been considered specifically as part of the ongoing iterative design process.</p>

Feedback comments	Applicant response
	<p>A minimum 5m offset from PRoW has been adopted, and in some cases up to 9m for PRoW corridors has been utilised.</p>
<p>Panel height</p> <p>Respondents have requested more detail on the height of the panels, with some respondents expressed concern that the visual impact of the panels will be too difficult to screen.</p>	<p>The Applicant has reviewed the height of panels.</p> <p>The maximum height of panels has been reduced to 2.2m on the high edge (2.3m on sloping ground) and 0.8m on the lower edge. This is set out in Table 6.3 of Chapter 6 (Project Description) of the Environmental Statement at Table 6.3 [EN010147/APP/6.3].</p> <p>This has been assessed in Chapter 8 (Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment) of the Environmental Statement [EN010147/APP/6.3], which includes photomontages of the proposed development. These are provided in Figures 8.248 to 8.317 of Volume 2 of the Environmental Statement [EN010147/APP/6.4].</p>
<p>Decommissioning and consideration of the Project as temporary</p> <p>Respondents express concern regarding the future of the Project and how it will be decommissioned.</p> <p>Respondents expressed concerned that the land will not be returned to its original state following the end of the operation of the solar farm.</p>	<p>The Applicant recognises the concern around the decommissioning stage of the project.</p> <p>The Applicant notes that the consent being sought is temporary and will require all panels, cables (other than those beneath highways, rivers and railway) and all associated equipment to be removed at the end of the term of the consent.</p> <p>The application is supported by an Outline Decommissioning Plan [EN010147/APP/7.6.4]. This will provide the means by which the detail can be agreed and secured.</p> <p>The Project, whilst for a lengthy period of time, is not permanent, and so does not fall within the definition of 'Previously Developed Land' in terms of the Glossary at Annex 2 to the NPPF.</p> <p>The DCO Consent will be bound by Requirements, including in relation to</p>

Feedback comments	Applicant response
	decommissioning requiring that the land returns to its prior use at end of project life.
<p>Heritage</p> <p>Respondents have commented about the potential impact of the Project on the cultural and heritage legacy of the area, in particular with regard to the Project site's proximity to Blenheim Palace as well as other historical sites.</p> <p>For example, respondents also expressed concern that the Project will cause damage to the listed archeological site at Sansom's Platt.</p>	<p>The Applicant recognises the concern around the potential impact to local heritage sites, particularly with the site's proximity to the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site and Sansom's Platt Scheduled Monument, and has sought to address this in the Environmental Statement.</p> <p>A detailed assessment of likely impacts and effects on heritage assets as a result of change within their setting is presented as Volume 3, Appendix 7.5: Settings Assessment of the Environmental Statement [EN010147/APP/6.5].</p> <p>An updated assessment of likely impacts and effects on the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site, including whether changes to increase buffers or remove components of the Project, is presented as Volume 3, Appendix 7.4: Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site - Heritage Impact Assessment of the ES [EN010147/APP/6.5].</p> <p>This has been informed by feedback received at the PEIR stage and continuing discussions with Historic England, with particular regard to the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage Site (WHS).</p> <p>The updated assessment of likely impacts and effects on heritage assets, including the Scheduled Monument at Sansom's Platt, is presented in Sections 7.9 and 7.10 of Volume 1, Chapter 7 of the Environmental Statement [EN010147/APP/6.3].</p> <p>Following on from detailed geophysical survey and evaluation, additional areas of solar installation have been omitted from the design, at Sansom's Platt and in numerous other locations across the Project. The strategic approach to archaeological trial trenching has been agreed with the County Archaeologist,</p>

Feedback comments	Applicant response
	<p>and the application is supported by an outline Written Scheme of Investigation for the continued management and monitoring of the work [EN010147/APP/7.6.5].</p>
<p>Hedgerows</p> <p>Respondents have commented on the project's impact to hedgerows, with respondents concerned that hedgerow will be removed as a result of the project.</p> <p>Respondents have commented that they would like new hedgerow to be planted, as well as hedgerow planted to reinforce current hedgerow.</p>	<p>The Applicant recognises these comments and is seeking to plant and/or reinforce over 45km of hedgerow across the site.</p> <p>Hedgerows will be for the most part retained and protected by 5m buffers in accordance with the approach to mitigation presented in Volume 1 Chapter 9 of the ES [EN010147/APP/6.3].</p> <p>The total hedgerow removal across the Project site as a whole is 666m in 72 locations. This is out of a total resource of over 70km. However, there is still proposed to be 26.5km of new hedgerow planting, and 22km of hedgerow reinforcement / gapping up.</p> <p>The Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (oLEMP) [EN010147/APP/7.6.3] includes a range of habitat creation such as at least 26.5km of new species rich hedgerow and at least 22km of existing hedgerow to be enhanced through additional planting.</p>
<p>Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and recreational access</p> <p>Respondents commented on the potential impact of the Project, both in terms of existing routes and potential new access.</p> <p>Respondents queried the desirability of this routes for users in relation to proposed solar arrays.</p>	<p>The assessment of the effects of the Project on Public Rights of Way is set out in Chapter 17 (Agricultural Land Use and Public Rights of Way) [EN010147/APP/6.3].</p> <p>A Public Rights of Way Management Strategy forms part of an outline Code of Construction Practice [EN010147/APP/7.6.1] that has been prepared as part of the Applicant's DCO application.</p> <p>The effects of the Project upon the desire for users to use the network of paths and bridleways, and their overall recreational experience, is assessed in Chapter 16 Human Health [EN010147/APP/6.3].</p>

Feedback comments	Applicant response
	<p>The impacts of the proposal upon Tourism are also assessed in Chapter 15 Socioeconomics [EN010147/APP/6.3].</p> <p>All three of these Chapters have drawn upon information from footpath user surveys that were undertaken in the summer of 2024.</p> <p>Details of typical footpaths and cycle paths, and how they will mature over time are provided in Appendix 7.6.3.2 of the oLEMP [EN010147/APP/7.6.3].</p> <p>The overall harm and benefits of the Project are considered in the planning balance set out in the Planning Supporting Statement [EN010147/APP/7.1].</p> <p>This is supported by the contribution of the Project in securing new recreational routes, including permissive paths, cycleways and Green Ways, to mitigate potential adverse effects on public health associated with changes in the use of the PRoW network.</p> <p>The opportunity for other active travel routes and suggested cycle paths has been identified elsewhere within the Project, between Bladon and Campsfield and Wootton and Sansom's Farm, and the Applicant has been in liaison with OCC's highways, PRoW and Public Health teams to develop illustrative sections for routes – which can be seen in Figure 7.6.3.2 [EN010147/APP/7.6.3]</p>
<p>Ecology</p> <p>Respondents commented on the potential impact of the Project on local ecology and the Applicant's aspiration deliver a 70% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).</p>	<p>The Applicant intends for the Project to achieve a gain of at least 70% Habitat BNG. Full details of the gain are set out in Appendix 9.13 of the Environmental Statement [EN010147/APP/6.5].</p> <p>The Defra Statutory BNG Metric has been used to demonstrate net gain.</p> <p>The proposals are also supported by an Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan [EN010147/APP/7.6.3].</p>

Feedback comments	Applicant response
	<p>The Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan [EN010147/APP/7.6.3] will act as a mechanism to record and monitor ecological data on created, or evolving, habitats during the operation of the Project.</p>
<p>Removal of Long Mead Meadow</p> <p>Respondents expressed concern regarding the potential for the Project cable route to interact with Long Mead Wildlife Site.</p>	<p>Long Mead Meadow has been removed from within the Project site with the proposed Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) now to the north of the Swinford Crossing in order to ensure no impacts to the Local Wildlife Site.</p> <p>This is stated in Chapter 9 (Ecology) of the Environmental Statement [EN010147/APP/6.3], and Figure 5.5 [EN010147/APP/6.4].</p>
<p>Flood risk / run off (Stop Botley West Response)</p> <p>Respondents have commented on the potential flood risk impact of the Project.</p> <p>Respondents have commented that the Project could increase flood risk and potentially impact nearby homes.</p>	<p>The potential impact to runoff is considered in Volume 1 Chapter 10 Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010147/APP/6.3].</p> <p>The chapter concludes that during construction, operation and decommissioning the impact would be negligible in consideration of the set-out mitigation measures.</p> <p>An Outline Code of Construction Practice (oCoCP) [EN010147/APP/7.6.1] has been prepared to be secured as DCO requirement. A detailed CoCP would be developed in line with the oCoCP and agreed with relevant stakeholders. This will include measures to manage potential risk of pollution and any contamination sources found during construction.</p> <p>An outline Operational Management Plan (oOMP) is also provided as part of application for development consent [EN010147/APP/7.6.2]. Detailed OMP's would be developed in line with the oOMP and agreed with relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>An outline Decommissioning Plan is provided as part of application for development consent [EN010147/APP/7.6.4]. A detailed Decommissioning Plan would be developed in</p>

Feedback comments	Applicant response
	line with the Outline Decommissioning Plan and agreed with relevant stakeholders.
<p>Noise</p> <p>Respondents submitted feedback expressing concern regarding potential noise impacts from the construction, operation and decommissioning of the Project.</p>	<p>The Applicant has undertaken a full noise impact assessment in accordance with all relevant technical and planning guidance, with noise mitigation measures suggested where they are required. The assessment can be found in Chapter 13 of the Environmental Statement [EN010147/APP/6.3], with additional information provided in ES Volume 2 (Figures) [EN010147/APP/6.4], and ES Volume 3 (Appendices) [EN010147/APP/6.5].</p> <p>This assessment has identified that the development will not cause any significant adverse effects on noise sensitive receptors.</p> <p>During the construction phase, noise will be controlled and limited by the Outline Code of Construction Practice [EN010147/APP/7.6.1] (CoCP). This code of practice will ensure that no resident experiences a significant adverse effect. The CoCP includes construction phase noise limits, and construction times.</p> <p>Noise from the operational phase will be controlled and limited by the Outline Operational Management Plan (OMP) [EN010147/APP/7.6.5]. This operational management plan will ensure that no resident experiences a significant adverse effect.</p>
<p>Adequacy of consultation</p> <p>Respondents have commented on the adequacy of consultation undertaken by the Applicant, with many stating that the consultation activities carried out by the Applicant have not been adequate.</p> <p>Concerns have been raised around the timing of consultation crossing the festive period, as well as the consultation materials produced.</p>	<p>Appendix 5.1.1 to the Consultation Report [EN010147/APP/5.1.1] describes how the Applicant's consultation has complied with relevant legislation and associated guidance.</p> <p>The Applicant undertook its consultation in compliance with commitments made in its published Statement of Community Consultation, which in turn was informed through consultation with relevant local authorities. This is described in Section 6 (Preparation for Statutory Consultation) of this Consultation Report [EN010147/APP/5.1].</p>

Feedback comments	Applicant response
	<p>A consultation period of 70 days was provided for responses to the PEIR and phase two consultation information, exceeding the statutory requirement of 28 days.</p> <p>To support responses to the consultation, the Applicant published a range of consultation materials including a Community Consultation Leaflet summarising the proposals, a Non-Technical Summary of the PEIR, held a series of in-person and online information events where the proposals could be discussed with members of the Applicant’s Project Team, and hosted free-to-use Project communications channels for enquiries.</p> <p>This included notifying over 23,000 properties within the vicinity of the Project, which were identified within a defined Core Consultation Zone presented in the SoCC. In addition to this, the Applicant made all consultation materials available online, at CAP sites, at public information events and by request to the Project communication channels. Consultation opportunities and materials were further publicised by local media advertising, statutory notices, and maintaining a register of interested individuals.</p> <p>The Applicant recorded over 1,000 attendees across the series of public information events held during their phase two (statutory) consultation, which attracted over 1,000 submissions of feedback.</p> <p>The Applicant is grateful to everyone who has taken time to engage with the Project to date.</p>
<p>Community Benefit</p> <p>Respondents have commented on the project’s community benefit package, including the £50,000 per annum fund, as well as the offer of reduced bills for those who live close to the project area.</p>	<p>The Applicant notes that a community benefit fund is not a requirement but is an optional benefit to be provided by the Applicant. The size of the fund has increased from £50,000 per year, offered at the statutory phase of consultation, to £200,000 per year.</p> <p>The Applicant proposes to deliver the community benefits via a Community Benefits</p>

Feedback comments	Applicant response
<p>Respondents have requested that the size of the fund should be increased.</p>	<p>Package. This will be agreed outside the scope of the DCO application, with the relevant local authorities (see Planning Supporting Statement e.g. at paragraphs 3.5.24 and 8.4.71) [EN010147/APP/7.1].</p> <p>The Environmental statement has therefore not attached any significance to this fund when assessing the impact of the development given that the beneficial impacts associated with the community benefit fund are not yet fully known and thus cannot be committed to as part of the DCO.</p> <p>Nevertheless, as described in Table 6.2 of the Project Description, Chapter 6 of the ES [EN010147/APP/6.3] in terms of changes to the Project since the PEIR, the Applicant is introducing a mechanism whereby electricity energy costs will be reduced in the region. The Applicant is also increasing its annual contribution to a Community Benefit Fund from £50,000 to £200,000 per annum.</p> <p>Once operational the Project will set up a Community Fund which will receive £200,000 from SolarFive Ltd every year. That is the equivalent of approximately £7,500,000 over the lifetime of the Project (expected to be approximately 37.5 years).</p> <p>The Applicant anticipates the Community Fund would be administered by a body comprising representatives from PVDP, the Blenheim Estate and local community leaders. It is expected that grants will be made to local causes and organisations. The Community Fund will be delivered as part of a Community Benefits Package agreed outside the scope of the DCO application, with relevant local authorities.</p> <p>In addition to this, the Applicant is actively exploring opportunities for the Project to directly reduce the energy bills of residents living in the vicinity of the project. For example, a potential mechanism could be to establish a</p>

Feedback comments	Applicant response
	<p>retail electricity supply company to sell the Project's output to consumers. All power would be from renewable sources, and those living within the vicinity of the Project would pay a reduced rate for electricity. This is referenced in Table 15.25 of Chapter 15 of the Environmental Statement [EN010147/APP/6.3].</p>
<p>Education and youth</p> <p>Respondents suggested a series of education and youth initiatives for the Applicant to consider supporting.</p>	<p>The Applicant is grateful for the suggestions of how the Project and the Applicant's proposed community benefit fund could support young people and the local community through learning opportunities.</p> <p>The Applicant notes that several of the suggested initiatives could be eligible for community funding.</p> <p>There is land onsite allocated for a school visits centre and the Outline Skills Supply Chain and Employment Plan details how the Applicant will work with schools to promote STEM [EN010147/APP/6.5].</p>
<p>Carbon payback</p> <p>The Applicant notes feedback supporting the Project on grounds of its contribution of renewable electricity.</p> <p>The Applicant acknowledges other respondents queried the period of time it would take for the Project to be considered carbon neutral.</p>	<p>Chapter 14 (Climate Change) of the Environmental Statement [EN010147/APP/6.3], considers the lifetime Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions resulting from the Project.</p> <p>The chapter concludes that despite the GHG emissions resulting from the construction-stage of the Project, the magnitude of avoided emissions resulting from the operational and decommissioning stages of the development allows the Project to enable avoided emissions from year 6 of operation (carbon payback period).</p> <p>Over the lifetime of the Project, it would result in 5,545,595 tCO₂e of avoided emissions (under the current grid average scenario).</p>

13 Section 42 statutory consultation: responses received, issues raised and changes made

13.1 Overview

13.1.1 Across the Section 42 consultation undertaken – as described in Section 8, Section 10 and Section 11 of this report – the Applicant received responses from 47 Section 42 consultees.

13.1.2 A detailed record of all comments received from Section 42 consultees, and the Applicant’s response to all of these comments, is provided as Appendix 5.1.10: Section 42 Applicant Response **[EN010145/APP/5.1.10]**.

13.1.3 Table 13.1 presents a summary of this feedback.

Table 13.1: Summary of Section 42 consultation feedback, including how the Applicant has considered this feedback.

Feedback comments	Applicant response
<p>Use of agricultural land</p> <p>Consultees commented on the suitability of using agricultural land and the potential impact of the Project on soil quality.</p> <p>Responses included comments on the use of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land.</p>	<p>The Applicant acknowledges the feedback on this topic and appreciates the importance of agricultural land, including best and most versatile soils.</p> <p>Justification for the location of the Project, including the design and environmental constraints considered is provided in ES Volume 1, Chapter 5: Alternatives Considered [EN010147/APP/6.3].</p> <p>Soil surveys have been undertaken to identify the quality of agricultural land within the Project site, which are reported in ES Volume 3, Appendix 17.1: Soil survey auger boring and soil pit information [EN010147/APP/6.5].</p> <p>The potential impacts of the Project with respect to agricultural land, including the temporary and permanent loss of best and most versatile land and disruption to farm holdings are identified and assessed in Volume 3, Chapter 17: Agricultural Land Use and Public Rights of Way [EN010147/APP/6.3]. No significant residual effects on Agricultural Land Use and Public Rights of Way are predicted during construction, operation and decommissioning of the Project. The Environmental Statement does however report significant cumulative effects during construction.</p>

Feedback comments	Applicant response
	<p>Measures adopted as part of the Project to mitigate potential impacts on agricultural land are set out in Volume 3, Chapter 17: Agricultural Land Use and Public Rights of Way [EN010147/APP/6.3]. This includes the preparation of a Soil Management Plan in general accordance with the Outline Soil Management Plan [EN010147/APP/7.6], which has been submitted with the Development Consent Order (DCO) application.</p> <p>The measures to be implemented as part of the Soil Management Plan seek to minimise impacts on soil health and protect and maintain soil quality during construction of the Project.</p>
<p>Biodiversity Net Gain</p> <p>Consultees provided comments on the Applicant's ambition to achieve a 70% biodiversity net gain, and commented on how this could be secured.</p>	<p>Full details of the proposed 70% gain are set out in Appendix 9.13 [EN010147/APP/6.5].</p> <p>The Defra Statutory BNG Metric has been used to demonstrate net gain.</p> <p>The proposals are also supported by an Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan [EN010147/APP/7.6.3].</p> <p>The Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan [EN010147/APP/7.6.3] will act as a mechanism to record and monitor ecological data on created, or evolving, habitats during the operation of the Project. The requirement for a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (to be substantially in accordance with the outline LEMP) is secured through Requirement 6 of Schedule 2 of the draft DCO [EN010147/APP/3.1].</p>
<p>Use of fencing</p> <p>Consultees comments on the potential impact of fencing on wildlife and biodiversity.</p> <p>Related feedback was also received on the potential visual impact of fencing.</p>	<p>Deer fencing is proposed as part of the Project for the solar arrays to be stock proof and generally secure from intruders.</p> <p>The deer fencing would be large gauge wire, mounted on timber posts – so intervisibility will not be greatly reduced. Rather, it is the proposed use of hedgerows and additional hedge and tree planting that is being used to filter views of the Project.</p>

Feedback comments	Applicant response
	<p>All deer fencing will be designed to be permeable to smaller mammals such as badger and fox to ensure permeability of the Project site for these species will be retained.</p> <p>As deer are wide-ranging in their habits and movements, it is not considered that changes in deer movements brought about by perimeter fencing.</p> <p>Deer are not of conservation concern and therefore do not require assessment. All deer fencing will be designed to be permeable to smaller mammals such as badger and fox to ensure permeability of the Project site for these species will be retained.</p> <p>The draft DCO [EN010147/APP/3.1] also includes Requirement 8 (Fencing and other means of enclosure) which requires approval of the relevant planning authority, ensuring appropriate controls are secured in relation to fencing.</p>
<p>Hedgerows</p> <p>Consultees commented on the Project in relation to hedgerow, both existing and proposed.</p> <p>Feedback on hedgerows related to ecology and screening potential visual impact.</p>	<p>The details of the proposed mitigation planting, including proposed hedgerow heights, for the Project are set out in the outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan [EN010147/APP/7.6.3], and in the Landscape, Ecology and Amenities Plan [EN010147/ALL/7.3.3].</p> <p>These details will be further developed in detailed management plans.</p> <p>Early planting, in advance of the Project being consented, may be feasible, but the Applicant has not committed to this currently.</p> <p>All hedgerows will have minimum of 5m buffer. This distance of buffer is considered the minimum distance sufficient to ensure impacts to such features are avoided.</p> <p>During Project design, subsequent to the submission of the PEIR, the need to remove small lengths of hedgerow to facilitate access was identified, in particular for visibility splays for site</p>

Feedback comments	Applicant response
	<p>access, and in some locations for open trenches where the use of HDD would be unsuitable. Paragraph 6.4.20 in Volume 1, Chapter 6 Project Description [EN010147/APP.6.3] explains the approach in detail.</p> <p>A crossing schedule had been produced detailing planned crossing point by location, method and if applicable length of hedgerow lost [EN010147/APP/7.3.9].</p> <p>The total length of hedgerow to be removed is circa 622 m across 75 locations. Details are provided in Schedule 12 of the draft DCO [EN010147/APP/3.1] and the Hedgerow Removal Plans [EN010147/APP/2.10].</p> <p>However, there is still proposed to be 26.5km of new species rich hedgerow planting, and 22km of hedgerow reinforcement / gapping up, that will increase the habitat available.</p>
<p>Public Rights of Way</p> <p>Consultees commented on the potential impact of the Project on Public Rights of Way (PRoW).</p>	<p>The Applicant appreciates the importance of Public Rights of Way.</p> <p>The impacts of the Project with respect to the recreational resource of public footpaths and bridleways, are identified and assessed in Volume 3, Chapter 17: Agricultural Land Use and Public Rights of Way [EN010147/APP/6.3].</p> <p>Measures adopted as part of the Project to mitigate impacts on Public Rights of Way are provided in Volume 3, Chapter 17: Agricultural Land Use and Public Rights of Way [EN010147/APP/6.3].</p> <p>This includes preparation of PRoW Management Strategy in general accordance with the Outline PRoW Management Strategy [EN010147/APP/7.6] submitted with the application for development consent. This is secured by Requirement 11 (Code of construction practice) of the draft DCO [EN010147/APP/3.1], as the PRoW Management Strategy is an appendix to that outline Code of Construction Practice.</p>

Feedback comments	Applicant response
	<p>Hedgerows and trees will be incorporated to either side of PRow routes (trees to one side only in some places to avoid shadowing of panels). Details of typical sections of footpath and cycle path routes, with hedgerow planting, are illustrated in Figure 7.6.3.2 [EN010147/APP/7.6.3]</p> <p>The measures to be implemented as part of the PRow Management Strategy seek to minimise impacts on public footpaths, bridleways and other promoted routes (e.g., NCRs, Long Distance Footpaths) during construction of the Project.</p>
<p>Flood risk</p> <p>Consultees cited existing flood risk and commented on the potential impact of the Project on this.</p>	<p>A full comprehensive literature review has been provided in Volume 3, Appendix 10.2 Conceptual Drainage Strategy [EN010147/APP/6.5].</p> <p>In line with the wider Project, a Surface Water Drainage Strategy for the Project has been prepared and details how runoff will be managed throughout the Project, this is included in Volume 3, Appendix 10.2 Conceptual Drainage Strategy [EN010147/APP/6.5]. This is secured by Requirement 9 (Surface and foul water drainage) of the draft DCO [EN010147/APP/3.1]</p> <p>Compared to agricultural (arable and livestock) use, solar PV modules are likely to create an overall betterment in surface water drainage than a continuation of the existing use.</p> <p>The primary reason for this is the significant advantage from full year-round organically managed vegetated ground cover within solar PV module.</p> <p>A second environmental benefit of solar PV modules is soil quality improvement from cessation of intensive arable use and organic management of the land. It is expected that soil health will be improved through the Project.</p> <p>As part of the Project, solar arrays are to be each placed with a 1.5m to 3m gap to provide adequate spacing to prevent the concentration of surface water dripping from the solar arrays. Vegetation will be placed beneath the panels to allow for infiltration at the lowest leading edge of panels.</p>

Feedback comments	Applicant response
	<p>These measures ensure there is no significant increase in runoff or gully erosion.</p> <p>The Flood Risk Assessment concludes that as a result of the solar Project there is no increase flood risk on-site and off-site in line with the National Planning Policy Framework and National Policy Statement [EN010147/APP/6.5].</p> <p>In addition, betterment measures, to provide surface water attenuation in relation to existing surface water flooding issues that affect Cassington, have been incorporated into the Project design.</p>
<p>Water quality</p> <p>Consultees commented on the potential impact of the Project on water quality.</p>	<p>The impact of deterioration of water quality within Main Rivers and ordinary watercourses is discussed within Section 10.6 of ES Volume 1 Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010147/APP/6.3] and considers the construction, operation and maintenance and decommissioning phases.</p> <p>This includes pollutants that could mobilise as a result of ground disturbance / earthworks and also as a result of spillage of stored materials. This includes fine particulate materials (e.g. silts and clays), cement, oil and chemicals (from plant machinery and processes and spillage), and other wastes such as wood, plastics, sewage and rubble.</p> <p>Information regarding water quality is also included within formal Water Framework Directive Assessment details are provided within Volume 3, Appendix 10.5: Water Framework Directive Assessment [EN010147/APP/6.5].</p> <p>The impact of construction, operation and decommissioning of the Project on 'The impact of deterioration of water quality within surface and ground waterbody receptors' and 'increased flooding arising from additional surface water runoff' is considered within is discussed within Section 10.9 of ES Volume 1 Hydrology and Flood Risk [EN010147/APP/6.3].</p> <p>The impact of pollution throughout construction will be managed through a Code of Construction Practice (CoCP) to be agreed with relevant</p>

Feedback comments	Applicant response
	<p>stakeholders. An Outline COCP [EN010147/APP/7.6.1]. has been prepared as part of the DCO and is secured by Requirement 11 (Code of construction practice) of the draft DCO [EN010147/APP/3.1]. The Outline COCP includes measures to manage pollution and contamination risk to water receptors during construction.</p> <p>Compared to agricultural (arable and livestock) use, solar PV modules are likely to create an overall betterment in surface water drainage than a continuation of the existing use.</p>
<p>Cable routes and water courses</p> <p>Consultees commented on the installation of cables, including potential interfaces with water courses and wildlife.</p>	<p>The Applicant has introduced a minimum 10m buffer to all watercourses, adhering to Local Authority requirement and in compliance with Environment Agency minimum requirements.</p> <p>Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) will be used to lay underground cables under watercourses from outside of these buffers.</p> <p>A construction method statement for watercourse crossings that will include a bentonite breakout plan is provided in the Outline Code of Construction Practice [EN010147/APP/7.6.1].</p>
<p>Cable route and Long Mead Meadow</p> <p>Consultees commented on the potential impact of the Project cable route on Long Mead and Swinford Meadow Local Wildlife Sites.</p>	<p>Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) will be used to lay underground cables under watercourses and priority habitats, including the Thames and associated floodplain meadow.</p> <p>Long Mead Meadow has been removed from within the Project site with the proposed HDD now to the north east of the Swinford Crossing in order to ensure no impacts to the LWS.</p> <p>Impacts are assessed and mitigation outlined in Chapter 9 (Ecology and Nature Conservation) of the Environmental Statement [EN010147/APP/6.3].</p>
<p>Archaeology</p> <p>Consultees commented on the potential for the Project to impact archaeological sites.</p>	<p>The updated assessment of likely impacts and effects on heritage assets is presented in Sections 7.9 and 7.10 of Chapter 7 (Historic Environment) of the Environmental Statement [EN010147/APP/6.3].</p>

Feedback comments	Applicant response
	<p>A total of 43 areas containing significant archaeological remains have been identified within the Project site.</p> <p>These have been removed from the developable land and will be retained as managed grassland.</p> <p>No significant buried archaeological remains would be impacted during construction of the Project.</p>
<p>Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site</p> <p>Consultees commented on the potential impact of the Project on the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site.</p>	<p>The updated assessment of likely impacts and effects on heritage assets is presented in Sections 7.9 and 7.10 of Volume 1, Chapter 7: Historic Environment of the ES [EN010147/APP/6.3].</p> <p>A detailed assessment of likely impacts and effects on heritage assets as a result of change within their setting is presented in Volume 3, Appendix 7.5: Settings Assessment of the Environmental Statement [EN010147/APP/6.5].</p> <p>A detailed assessment of the likely impacts and effects on the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site is presented in Volume 3, Appendix 7.4: Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site - Heritage Impact Assessment [EN010147/APP/6.5].</p> <p>The Heritage Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the Blenheim Palace World Heritage Site, in accordance with the appropriate guidance produced on behalf of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).</p> <p>The Heritage Impact Assessment identified that the construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of the Project would result in a minor negative impact on one of the seven defined attributes which contribute towards the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the WHS.</p> <p>On this basis, the magnitude of impact on the significance of the WHS is predicted to be negligible adverse. This impact would be time-limited and fully reversible.</p> <p>As part of the Applicant's ongoing engagement with Historic England, a number of additional</p>

Feedback comments	Applicant response
	<p>Representative Viewpoints and visualisations are to be completed to specifically look at potential effects on the Blenheim World Heritage Site.</p>
<p>Conservation areas</p> <p>Consultees commented on the potential impact of the Project on existing Conservation Areas in the vicinity.</p>	<p>A detailed assessment of likely impacts and effects on heritage assets as a result of change within their setting is presented in Volume 3, Appendix 7.5: Settings Assessment of the ES [EN010147/APP/6.5].</p> <p>This includes assessment of the likely impacts and effects on Conservation Areas. From initial principles adopted prior to the first phase of consultation, no development is proposed within Conservation Areas.</p>
<p>Cotswolds National Landscape</p> <p>Consultees commented on the potential impact of the Project on the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).</p>	<p>The Applicant has carefully considered the need to have regard to the statutory purposes of the designation and has applied the effects mitigation hierarchy to firstly avoid impacts on any National Landscapes (formerly AONBs) through location and design of the Project.</p> <p>The Project is outside of the Cotswolds National Landscape (AONB).</p> <p>The Zone of Theoretical Visibility, as shown in Figures 8.9 to 8.11 of Volume 2 of the Environmental Statement [EN010147/APP/6.4] indicates that there would be limited potential intervisibility to a very small part of the National Landscape to the northwest of Bladon, near Coombe.</p> <p>It is therefore considered that there would be no direct or indirect significant landscape or visual effects upon the Cotswolds National Landscape in Landscape and Visual terms.</p> <p>No specific Representative Viewpoints were chosen within the small part of the Cotswolds National Landscape, for the reasons set out above.</p>
<p>Project lifetime</p> <p>Consultees commented on the proposed lifetime of the Project, with comments that it should be shorter and</p>	<p>The consent sought for the Project is time-limited and covers the periods of construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning.</p> <p>UK government policy is that time-limited consents, where granted, should be described as temporary</p>

Feedback comments	Applicant response
<p>comments that it should be longer.</p> <p>It was also queried whether the Project should be considered 'temporary'.</p>	<p>regardless of the duration of the consent (e.g. National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3), paragraph 2.10.66). There is also recent solar DCO precedent for Projects of up to 60-years, including Gate Burton Energy Park Order 2024; Mallard Pass Solar Farm Order 2024 and Cottam Solar Project Order 2024.</p> <p>Notwithstanding this point, the assessment of likely impacts and effects presented in Sections 7.9 and 7.10 of Volume 1, Chapter 7: Historic Environment of the ES [EN010147/APP/6.3] uses the terms 'short-term', 'medium-term', 'long-term' and 'permanent' to describe the duration of impacts, and not the use the term 'temporary'.</p> <p>Following correspondence with the Environment Agency, it was confirmed that a 42-year lifetime is appropriate as under the auspices of this DCO proposal the site is seeking approval for a 42-year period during which time the solar farm will be constructed, operated and decommissioned.</p>
<p>Green Belt</p> <p>Consultees commented on the Project being cited in Green Belt and queried the appropriateness of this.</p>	<p>Planning Policy is considered within Planning Supporting Statement (PSS), including Green Belt Case, which sets out the Very Special Circumstances in Appendix 8 [EN010147/APP/7.1].</p>
<p>Assessment of potential cumulative impacts</p> <p>Consultees cited proposed developments in the vicinity of the Project, and sought reassurance that appropriate consideration had been given to potential cumulative impacts.</p>	<p>An updated review of relevant cumulative schemes has been completed prior to submission of the Environmental Statement, and is presented in Chapter 20 (Cumulative Effects & Interrelationships) [EN010147/APP/6.3] and includes associated Figures at Appendix 20.1 [EN010147/APP/6.5].</p>
<p>Associated community benefits</p> <p>Consultees commented on the potential community benefit associated with the Project, including the value of a fund and opportunities to</p>	<p>The Applicant notes that a community benefit fund is not a requirement or something that is considered as part of the planning balance, but is an optional benefit that can be provided by the Applicant.</p> <p>The Environmental Statement [EN010147/APP/6.3] and the overall planning</p>

Feedback comments	Applicant response
<p>discount local electricity prices.</p>	<p>balance in the Planning Supporting Statement [EN010147/APP/7.1] has therefore not attached any weight to this fund when assessing the impact of the development.</p> <p>Nevertheless, as described in Table 6.2 of the Project Description, Chapter 6 of the ES [EN010147/APP/6.3] in terms of changes to the Project since the PEIR, the Applicant is introducing a mechanism whereby electricity energy costs will be reduced in the region. The Applicant is also increasing its annual contribution to a Community Benefit Fund from £50,000 to £200,000 per annum.</p> <p>The Applicant is actively exploring opportunities for the Project to directly reduce the energy bills of residents living in the vicinity of the project. For example, a potential mechanism could be to establish a retail electricity supply company to the Project's output to consumers. All power would be from renewable sources, and those living within the vicinity of the project the solar arrays would pay a reduced rate for electricity. See Chapter 15 of the ES [EN010147/APP/6.3] (Table 15.25).</p>

14 Conclusion

14.1 Concluding remarks

- 14.1.1 The Applicant has undertaken a comprehensive pre-application consultation on the Project.
- 14.1.2 This consultation has been informed by and complied with the requirements of the 2008 Act, and associated guidance and legislation.
- 14.1.3 The Applicant's strategy of coordinating consultation activities across the Project has resulted in a high level of engagement and consultation responses.
- 14.1.4 The Applicant's strategy of undertaking an iterative consultation process has allowed for feedback to inform the development of the Project in a timely manner, including reporting back to consultees at an interim stage.
- 14.1.5 The Applicant has actively sought and taken due regard to feedback provided by stakeholders on its approach to community consultation and has made changes where possible as documented in this Consultation Report.
- 14.1.6 Consultation responses to each stage of consultation have been carefully documented and considered as part of the iterative development of the Project, with stakeholders playing a key role in the design of the proposals.
- 14.1.7 The Applicant's strategy of coordinating the phase two consultation to be statutory under Section 42, Section 47, and Section 48 in parallel allowed for meaningful engagement and consideration of feedback on the PEIR.
- 14.1.8 The Applicant has sought to address comments, concerns and issues raised in the final Project design where possible and has responded to comments raised in the Consultation Report.
- 14.1.9 As well as preparing the Consultation Report, the Applicant has set out how it has complied with guidance and advice on consultation in the Section 55 checklist [EN010147/APP/1.1.1] that is also part of the DCO application documents.
- 14.1.10 The Applicant is grateful to all parties who have engaged in the pre-application consultation.