

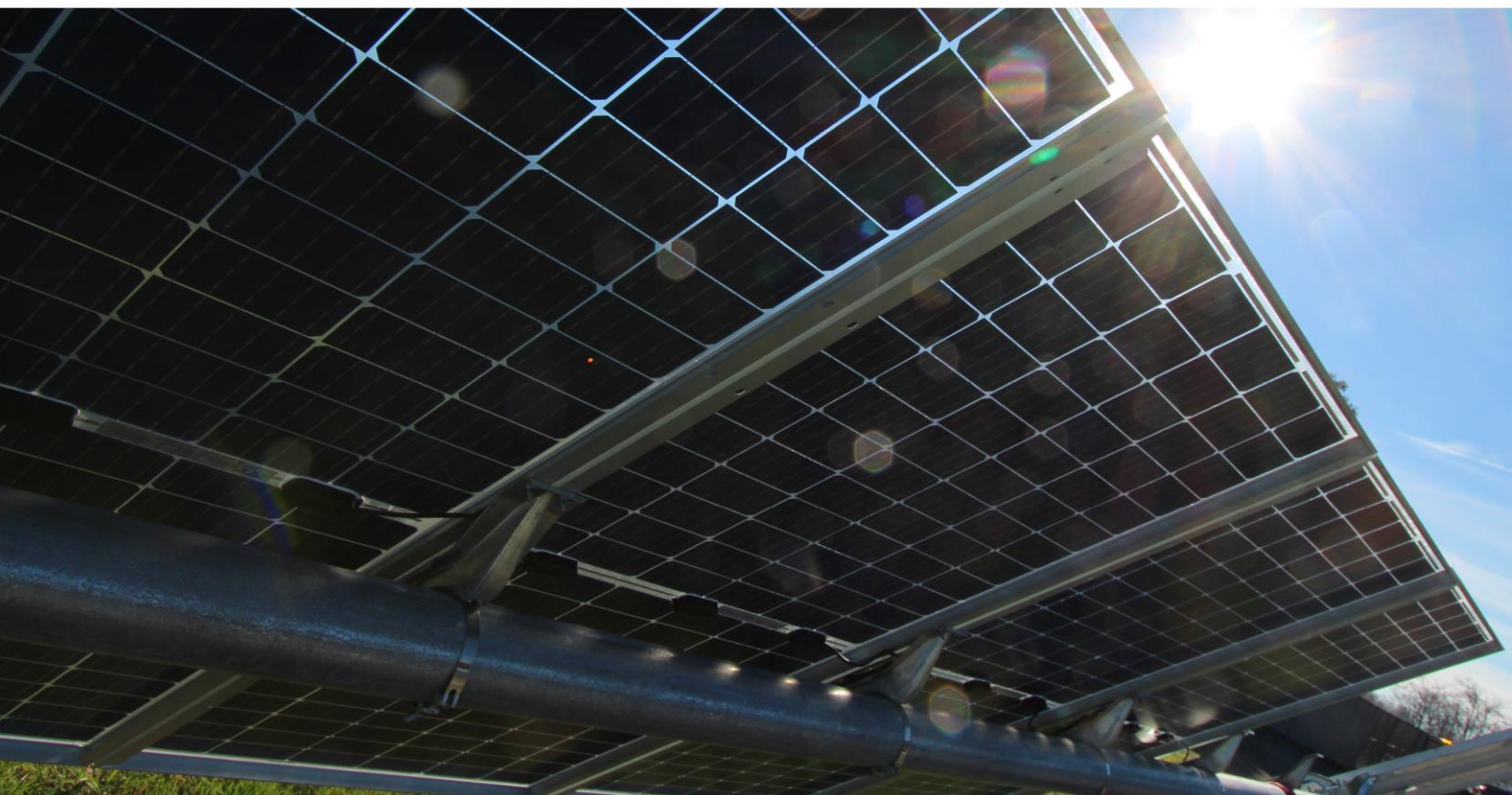


STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

GUNTHORPE ROAD SOLAR FARM AND BATTERY STORAGE FACILITY

**LAND SOUTH OF GUNTHORPE ROAD, WALPOLE MARSH, WISBECH,
NEAR PE14 7JH**

JUNE 2021



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Executive Summary

The Applicant conducted a programme of public consultation and stakeholder engagement with regards to its proposals for a solar farm and battery storage facility (“the Proposed Development”) on land off Gunthorpe Road, Walpole Marsh (The Site). Although we are currently living through a pandemic, the Applicant sought to listen closely to the community, and pro-actively seek their involvement in the development of the proposals. A number of the issues raised by residents informed amendments to the submitted scheme.

The consultation centred around a virtual public exhibition, which was held on Tuesday 25 May 2021, via a webinar. Prior to the virtual public exhibition, the Applicant presented early-stage proposals in the form of a PowerPoint presentation (Appendix 1) to Sutton Bridge Parish Council (March 2021) and Walpole Parish Council (April 2021).

A twelve-page brochure (Appendix 2) for the virtual public consultation event was sent out at the start of May 2021 to approximately 414 residential households and 24 businesses (see Appendix 3 for postal distribution area) inviting them to the virtual public exhibition on Tuesday 25 May 2021.

A nineteen-slide deck presentation (Appendix 4) was presented during the webinar, giving information about the Applicant, the Site and the Concept Design of the project. The Applicant and its development team were panellists of the webinar, helping to explain the design of the site and engage in a Q&A session answering any questions attendees had. Attendees were encouraged to provide their thoughts and opinions through an online survey after the virtual public exhibition, or via submitting the feedback form (Appendix 2) included in the brochure via post or email. Additionally, the development team provided attendees with contact details if they wished to send any follow up questions or feedback. The Applicant also created a project website, which enabled consultees to register for the webinar, contact the project team and get further information about the project.

Of the 10 local residents that completed a feedback form or the online survey, 3 were in favour of the proposal, 6 objected to it and one person was unsure.

Key matters raised during pre-application consultation included:

1. The volume of solar farms proposed locally
2. Construction Traffic
3. Visual Impact
4. Biodiversity

In response to a number of the issues raised during the public consultation process the design of the scheme has been amended as follows:

1. Additional landscaping included to the site’s western boundary;
2. Comprehensive assessments made on cumulative impacts of the Proposed Development and other nearby permitted and operational Solar Farms within the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment;
3. Detailed Construction Traffic Management Plan prepared and accompanying the application;
4. Fully detailed scheme of landscaping and a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan accompanies the application.

1. Introduction

The Applicant conducted a programme of public consultation and stakeholder engagement with regards to the Proposed Development. This project would generate the equivalent electricity demand of many thousands of homes each year of the proposed 35 years of operational life, while also providing significant carbon dioxide savings when compared to generation of electricity by non-renewable sources. The proposals include battery storage which will allow energy to be stored on site at times when grid-demand is lower and exported at times of higher demand to ensure no energy is 'lost' and help balance the National Grid.

This document provides an overview of the consultation programme, the feedback received together with an explanation as to how that feedback led to changes to the scheme design.

2. Approach to Consultation

Enso Energy strongly believes that now, more than ever, it is vital that local communities are able to see and shape planning applications that may have an impact on them. ‘Front-loading’ public engagement in this way helps ensure the proposals are as informed as possible by the local community and other stakeholders prior to the submission of the planning application to the relevant Local Planning Authorities. This approach recognises that all parties benefit from a communications programme that ensures all of those people with a potential interest in a development are fully informed of the proposals and have had the opportunity to input early on. The Applicant is supportive of and fully committed to meaningful pre-application consultation.

We are currently living through a pandemic, the likes of which the country has not experienced in living memory. The Application and the development team agree with the recent guidance issued by the UK’s Government’s Chief Planner, which emphasised that planning applications that positively impact the country and local communities must continue to come forward.

To help inform as many residents as possible during these unusual times, we decided to extend the size of the distribution area that would usually receive a public exhibition invitation leaflet. Furthermore, instead of a leaflet we created a more extensive brochure that was sent by post to residents and local businesses, this replicated the materials local residents would expect to see at a traditional public exhibition, including site maps and concept designs. The brochure also included a feedback form which could be submitted via email or freepost.

To replace a traditional face-to-face public exhibition, we hosted a virtual webinar. The brochure invited local residents to attend the webinar and Q&A session event. The webinar had a thirty-minute presentation by the Applicant, which was followed by an extensive Q&A session where residents were able to ask questions about the proposals. A recording of the webinar was hosted on the dedicated public consultation website (<https://ensoenergy.co.uk/enso-projects/gunthorpe-road/>).

3. Scheme Overview

The Site comprises an area of land totalling approximately 73 ha connected via an underground cable route to the Point of Connection at Walpole Substation (see Figure 1). The Site is mainly rural in character with some localised intrusion of man-made features, such as electricity pylons which intersect the land. The Site is currently accessed via an existing access from Gunthorpe Road.



Figure 1: Site Location Plan

4. The Consultation

4.1 Consultation Aims

The aims of the consultation were as follows:

- To work with local stakeholders and residents from the outset and see how we could improve the proposals by taking onboard their suggestions.
- To raise awareness of the proposals within the local community and to gain their valuable insight based on their local knowledge.
- To gain a firm understanding of the key issues affecting the local community.
- To ensure the local community had the opportunity to give feedback on the proposals, especially during the on-going pandemic.

4.2 Consultation Overview

In March and April 2021, members of the development team met virtually with Sutton Bridge Parish Council and Walpole Parish Council. The development team presented identical early-stage proposals (Appendix 1) to both Parish Council's via Zoom.

A twelve-page brochure (Appendix 2) for the virtual public consultation event was sent out at the start of February 2021 to approximately 414 residential households and 24 businesses (see Appendix 3 for postal distribution area) inviting them to a virtual public exhibition on Tuesday 25 May 2021. The Applicant held the virtual public exhibition, where a Concept Design of the proposed scheme was available for local residents to provide feedback on.

A website for the project (Appendix 5) was also created which can be accessed at the following address: <https://ensoenergy.co.uk/enso-projects/gunthorpe-road/>. The website provides visitors with an overview of the proposals, a recording of the virtual public exhibition as well the opportunity to get in contact with the development team or leave feedback.

4.3 Briefing Walpole Parish Council and Long Sutton Parish Council

Members of the development team virtually met with Sutton Bridge Parish Council on 30 March 2021 and Walpole Parish Council on 8 April 2021. Both Parish Councils were provided with the public consultation brochure and the timings of the public consultation webinar prior to the literature being distributed to the public.

4.4 Briefing political stakeholders

Our site ward councillors in West Norfolk Borough Council for Walsoken, West Walton and Walpole ward (Cllr Julian Kirk and Cllr Richard Blunt) were provided with the consultation material and offered virtual briefings. In addition, our site ward councillors in South Holland Borough Council for Sutton Bridge ward (Cllr Michael Booth and Cllr Brewis) were also provided with the consultation material and offered virtual briefings.

4.5 The virtual public exhibition

A virtual public exhibition was held on Tuesday 25 May via a Zoom webinar, 6 local residents attended the virtual event and two members of the development team were panellists for the session. A nineteen-slide deck presentation (Appendix 4) was presented during the virtual public exhibition,

Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm and Battery Storage

Statement of Community Involvement

giving information about the Applicant, the Site and the Concept Design of the project. The Applicant and its development team were panellists of the virtual public exhibition, helping to explain the design of the Proposed Development as well as engage in a Q&A session answering any questions attendees had.

Attendees were encouraged to provide their thoughts and opinions through an online survey after the virtual public exhibition, or via submitted the feedback form included in the brochure via post or email. Additionally, the development team provided attendees with contact details if they wished to send any follow up questions or feedback.

A recording of the webinar was hosted on the dedicated public consultation website, which can be viewed at any time.

Figure 2 below shows the Concept Design presented at the exhibition on which feedback was sought.



Figure 2: Concept Design Presented at the Virtual Public Exhibition and included in the Brochure

5. Consultation Feedback

5.1 Verbal Feedback / Questions

The virtual public exhibition webinar also included a live Q&A session, this lasted for approximately two hours. The most frequent issues that were raised by the webinar attendees regarded landscape and visual impact and construction traffic.

Other topics raised by attendees included specific questions site access, construction traffic routing and loss of agricultural land.

5.2 Feedback forms and online questionnaire

The development team received 10 completed feedback forms via post, and 1 completed online questionnaire. The results are presented below.

The brochure feedback form and post webinar survey included identical questions, two multiple choice tick box questions, and a space for additional comments allowing respondents an 'open space' in which they could provide any comments and views they sought to make on the proposal.

Question one: Has this local resident brochure / webinar been helpful in understanding our proposal?

YES	NO	NOT SURE
9	1	1

The results of question one reflects the effectiveness of the local resident brochure and webinar, demonstrating how attendees felt engaged and informed.

Question two: With regards to the proposals you have read/heard about, are you:

IN FAVOUR	IN OBJECTION	OF NO OPINION
3	6	1

Question three: Additional comments

All 10 feedback forms (and the completed online questionnaire) that were received contained additional comments. Appendix 6 contains those comments in full, in addition to the Applicant's response.

The comments covered the following topics:

- Visual impact;
- Volume of solar applications in local area;
- Construction traffic and current road infrastructure;
- Biodiversity;
- Loss of agricultural land.

5.3 Summary of Feedback

Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm and Battery Storage

Statement of Community Involvement

The consultation programme successfully engaged residents that live in close proximity to the proposed development site, nearly all those that completed a feedback form felt that the brochure and/or webinar had been ‘helpful’.

Overall, the consultation feedback received via the submitted feedback forms and online survey was opposed to the scheme. Of the 10 local residents that completed a feedback form or online survey, 3 (27%) were in favour of the proposal, 6 (63%) were in objection and one person was of no opinion (9%). The most frequently cited issues were visual impact and construction traffic.

5.4 Feedback received from engagement with Walpole Parish Council and Long Sutton Parish Council

Feedback received from our meetings with Long Sutton Parish Council, and Walpole Parish Council focussed on the following themes:

- The volume of solar development locally [the Applicant explained how this was a consideration for the planning application]
- The decommissioning process [the Applicant provided detail as to how the decommissioning bond would work in practice]
- Sheep grazing around panels [the Applicant provided further detail as to the interaction between sheep and panels]
- The location of the site [the Applicant provided the precise location of the site and detail which fields were in which Parish]
- Community Benefit [the Applicant provided further information as to how this was intended to be realised]

5.5 How Feedback Influenced the Scheme Design

In response to a number of the issues raised during the public consultation process the design of the scheme has been amended as follows:

1. Additional landscaping included to the site’s western boundary;
2. Comprehensive assessments made on cumulative impacts of the Proposed Development and other nearby permitted and operational Solar Farms within the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment;
3. Detailed Construction Traffic Management Plan prepared and accompanying the application;
4. Fully detailed scheme of landscaping and a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan accompanies the application.

6. Conclusion

The Applicant undertook a comprehensive programme of public consultation, which successfully engaged residents and their representatives. The consultation identified and successfully engaged with residents and key community and political stakeholders and the feedback received has influenced the final scheme design.

7. Appendices

- Appendix 1: Parish Council PowerPoint Presentation
- Appendix 2: Local Resident Brochure
- Appendix 3: Local Residents' Brochure Distribution Area
- Appendix 4: Webinar PowerPoint Presentation
- Appendix 5: Website Home Page
- Appendix 6: Comments received via feedback form question 3 and the Applicant's response.

Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm and Battery Storage

Statement of Community Involvement

Appendix 1: Parish Council PowerPoint Presentation



enso energy

Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm

Sutton Bridge Parish Council Meeting
30 March 2021

What we will cover tonight

- Who we are
- Our proposals for Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm
- Planning timeline
- Community engagement timeline
- Any questions

Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm
Sutton Bridge Parish Council Meeting: 30 March 2021

enso energy

Introducing Enso Energy

- Enso Energy is one of the UK's most experienced renewable energy developers, with a strong focus on solar energy.
- Our expert team is honest, considerate and diligent and our ambition is to use the latest solar technology to make a positive impact on the country and the communities where we work.
- As a team, we have extensive solar development experience.
- We have recently received planning permission for a similar scheme, in close proximity (Walpole Bank solar farm)



Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm
Sutton Bridge Parish Council Meeting: 30 March 2021

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Location of Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm



Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm
Sutton Bridge Parish Council Meeting: 30 March 2021

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Why here?

- Grid Connection - available capacity and proximity to the point of connection reduces transmission losses and avoids additional off-site construction impacts.
- Planning Considerations - Landscape and Visual, Heritage, Transport, Flood Risk, Biodiversity, Agricultural Land and Amenity.
- Land Availability & Quality - Ownership, Current Use, & Productive Value.
- Infrastructure for Construction - Good connectivity and accessibility.



Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm
Sutton Bridge Parish Council Meeting: 30 March 2021

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Why solar?

- It will assist SHDC and the BC of King's Lynn & West Norfolk to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with local, national and international targets.
- Contribute towards the security of energy supply in SHDC and the BC of King's Lynn & West Norfolk through the provision of locally produced, low cost renewable energy supply.
- Efficient technology choice that utilises bifacial modules generating approximately 4% higher energy yield than mono-facial modules.
- Allows for co-location of battery storage.
- Significantly enhanced biodiversity with options to reconnect wildlife corridors through additional planting on site.
- No statutory landscape, heritage or ecological designations on site.
- Potential for continued agricultural use of land through low intensity sheep grazing.
- Temporary use (15 years) that is easily reversed, allowing soil quality to improve ahead of return to sole agricultural use.



Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm
Sutton Bridge Parish Council Meeting: 30 March 2021

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Biodiversity improvements

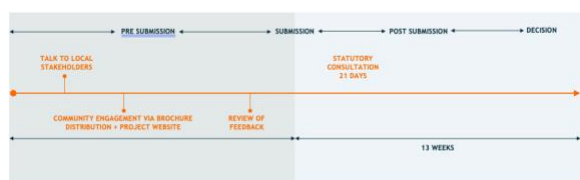
- Opportunity to keep the land pesticide and chemical free - enables species to thrive and improves soil quality.
- Biodiversity opportunities include:
 - Additional planting to enhance habitat corridors
 - Year-round vegetated ground provides both habitat and foraging opportunities
 - Wildflower planting encourages pollinators and other insects
- Compared to intensive farming practices a solar farm brings multi-functional benefits of energy production alongside net environmental gain for habitats and species.



Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm
Sutton Bridge Parish Council Meeting: 30 March 2021

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Community Engagement Timeline



Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm
Sutton Bridge Parish Council Meeting: 30 March 2021

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Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm and Battery Storage

Statement of Community Involvement

Design and Planning Process

Three stage iterative design process

Stage 1

Concept Scheme Design

- Preliminary environmental studies e.g. landscape, visual, heritage, ecology, traffic, flood risk etc.
- Submit EIA Screening Opinion
- Community Consultation

Stage 2

Assessment Scheme Design (95% Fixed)

- Prepare environmental impact assessment studies and planning application
- Review of feedback

Stage 3

Planning Application Scheme Design (100% Fixed)

- Submit Planning Application

Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm
Sutton Bridge Parish Council Meeting: 30 March 2021



Land Use

- A solar farm is part of a temporary diversification strategy. It will NOT change the land classification from agricultural Greenfield to commercial/Industrial/Brownfield.
- Land that has been intensively farmed can benefit from resting the soil. Areas left fallow for 'Greening' can have other knock-on benefits for wider environmental quality that benefits rural amenity and the rural economy.
- A solar farm does not inhibit continued co-located agricultural use like grazing.
- The solar farm will make an important contribution to achieving legally binding national targets to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and local climate and ecological targets by 2030.

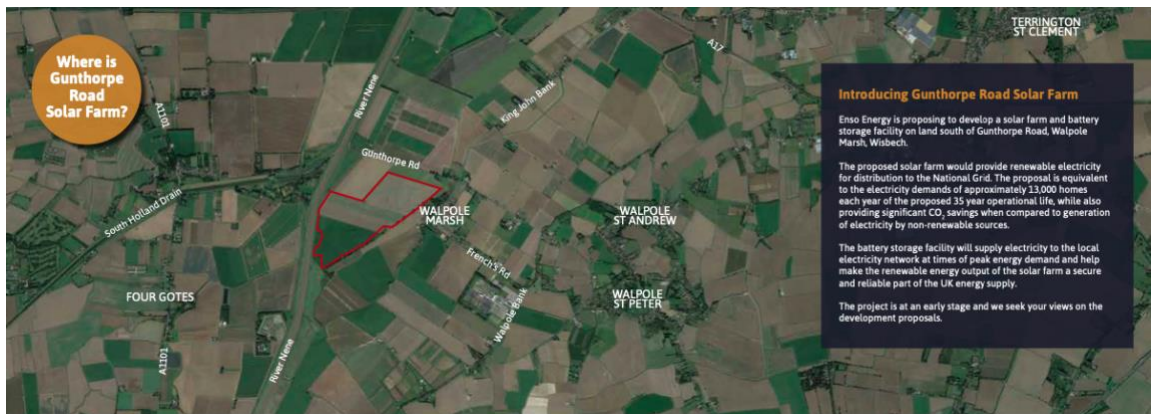
Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm
Sutton Bridge Parish Council Meeting: 30 March 2021



Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm and Battery Storage

Statement of Community Involvement

Appendix 2: Local Resident Brochure



The site

The Site is located off Gunthorpe Road, Walpole Marsh, comprising approximately 73 hectares of land. While there are no statutory landscape, heritage or ecological designations on site, as part of our site surveys and further assessments we will be considering these matters carefully in developing our proposals alongside the feedback received.

Access to the site will be using existing field access off Gunthorpe Road.

Evolving concept design of Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm

The benefits

- It will assist South Holland District Council and the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with national and international targets and the declared Climate Emergency.
- The project will support the UK's urgent need to transition to a low carbon future, producing significant amounts of renewable energy.
- This is a temporary development and at the end of the solar farm's life (35 years) all equipment can be easily dismantled, removed from site and largely recycled. A solar farm allows agricultural land to rest for the period of operation and the land use is reversed back to agriculture at the end of the project life.
- A scheme of landscape and ecological improvements will be prepared, ensuring the project provides a biodiversity net gain.
- A solar farm gives land the opportunity for multiple uses. In addition to renewable energy production, solar farms can continue to be grazed by sheep and support biodiversity with wildflowers sown around the site.
- We anticipate that construction will be complete in approximately 7 months.
- The proposed solar farm will not require Government subsidy.



Getting to Net Zero

The UK Government was the first national government in the world to declare a Climate Emergency in May 2019 and has set a legally binding target of Net Zero emissions by 2050 (relative to 1990 levels). At local levels, many councils, have made their own similar declarations.

Renewables now account for approximately 38% of UK electricity generation proving they are a very viable alternative to fossil fuels. However, to achieve our targets and tackle Climate Change we urgently require a rapid increase in the further deployment of renewables, including solar.



Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm and Battery Storage

Statement of Community Involvement

Our approach to consultation during the Coronavirus crisis

Enso Energy believes that it is vital that local communities are able to see and shape planning applications that may have an impact on them.

We therefore invite you to provide feedback on our draft proposals in the following ways:

- 1 Fill in the feedback form that accompanies this public consultation brochure.**
Please read through this brochure and provide feedback to us by way of the free post feedback form.
- 2 Attend our public consultation webinar and Q&A session on Tuesday 25 May 2021 at 18:00**
You are invited to attend our online public consultation webinar and Q&A session event. The webinar will include a short presentation by the project team where they will outline the draft proposals. During the Q&A session which will follow the webinar you'll have the opportunity to ask any questions you may have about the draft proposals with members of the project team.
You can register to attend our online public consultation event by visiting our website www.ensoenergy.co.uk/enso-projects/gunthorpe-road/ and completing the webinar registration form. You will then receive an email with details on how to join the public consultation webinar.
- 3 Visit the dedicated public consultation website: www.ensoenergy.co.uk/enso-projects/gunthorpe-road/**
We have set up a dedicated public consultation website, where you can find further information about our draft proposals and provide feedback.



About us

We are one of the UK's leading developers of renewable energy projects.

Our ambition is to use the latest solar technology to make a positive impact on our country and the communities we work with. We are firm advocates for renewable, low carbon, efficient, secure and sustainable energy that can be generated, stored and utilised locally.

Our approach to subsidy-free renewable energy is assisting the country's move towards a more secure renewable energy supply and accelerating progress to net zero.

Have your say

This brochure forms part of our pre-planning application process. We are asking for your opinion on a proposed solar farm and battery storage facility on land off Gunthorpe Road, Walpole Marsh, Wisbech.

Please take your time to consider the information within this brochure, and don't hesitate to contact a member of our team should you have any questions.

We would be grateful if you could answer the feedback form and let us have your contact details for the purpose of informing the project design and our planning application. Feedback received will be included within a Statement of Community Involvement which will accompany the application.

For further information, please do not hesitate to email consultation@ensoenergy.co.uk.



Register for updates

Please visit <https://www.ensoenergy.co.uk/enso-projects/gunthorpe-road/> where information about our proposals will be updated.

020 7499 2842
consultation@ensoenergy.co.uk
www.ensoenergy.co.uk

Should you require this document in large print, audio or braille then please contact us at the details provided.



Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm

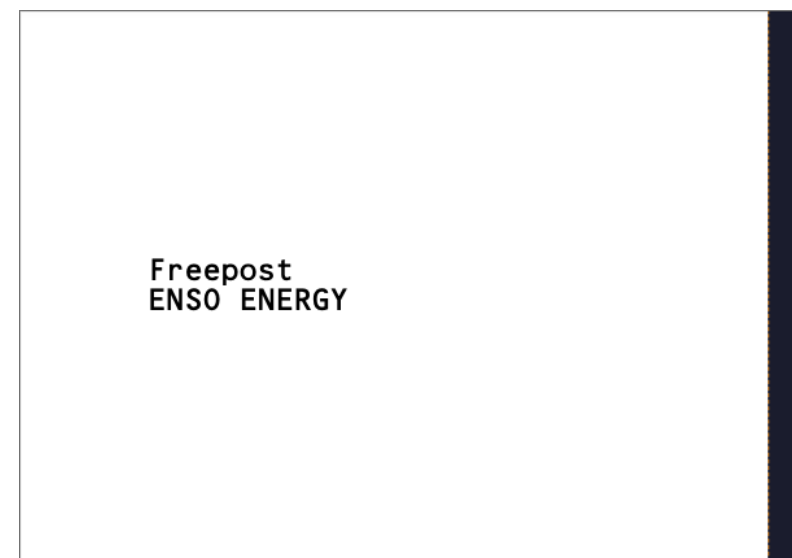
Feedback form

To return your completed feedback form please tear it from the brochure and pop it in the post by **May 31 2021**. Alternatively, you can return your form via email to consultation@ensoenergy.co.uk

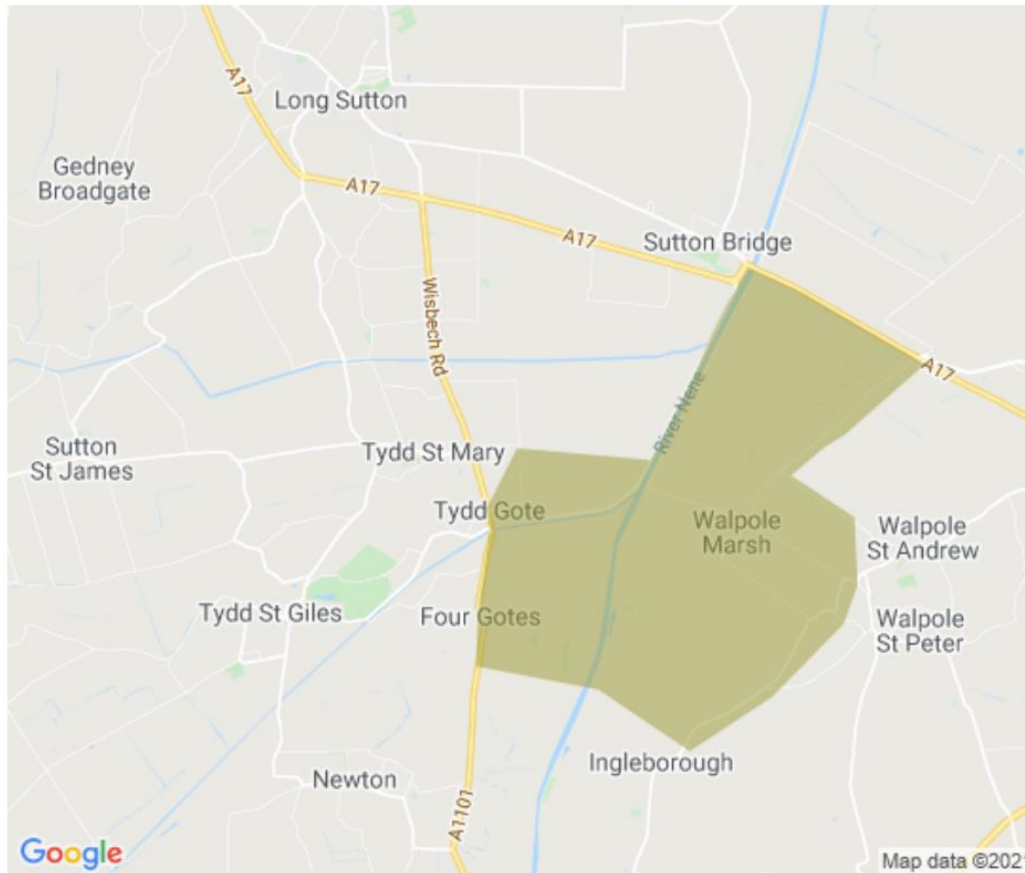
Title: _____ Name: _____
Address: _____ Postcode: _____
Email: _____ Telephone: _____

1. Has this local resident brochure been helpful in understanding our proposal? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure
2. With regards to the proposals you have read about within this brochure, are you:
☐ In favour ☐ In objection ☐ Of no opinion
3. Please use this space to provide any comments on the proposal. We would welcome your feedback on all aspects of the emerging design shown in the brochure.

Please provide your contact details if you wish to get a response. Any information provided will only be used for the purpose of the planning application to the Local Planning Authority and will not be disclosed with any third parties. Your contact details will not be listed on the planning application documentation.



Appendix 3: Local Resident Brochure Distribution Area Distribution Area



Distribution area based up an approximate 1.75k buffer zone from the site boundary to reflect any potential visual impact. This area encompassed 414 residential addresses and 24 businesses.

Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm and Battery Storage

Statement of Community Involvement

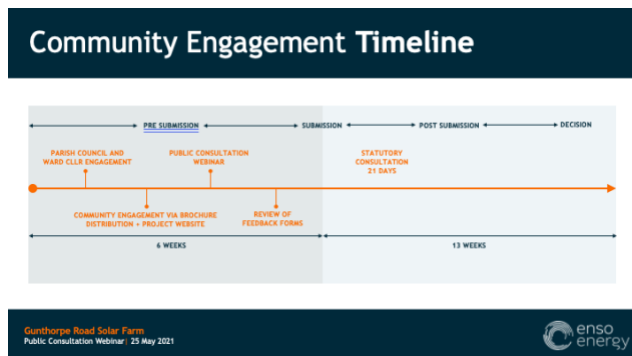
Appendix 4: Webinar PowerPoint Presentation



Introduction

- The presentation team this evening includes Peter Elms (Alpaca Communications) and Owen Horrell (Enso Energy)
- The Q&A function is available for you to ask questions, if you hover your mouse at the top or the bottom of your page
- We will do our best to answer as many questions as we can at the end of our presentation during the Q&A session
- When invited to ask your question you will be prompted to unmute your microphone
- The webinar is being recorded and will be uploaded to our project website www.ensoenergy.co.uk/projects/gunthorpe-road
- You'll have a better view of the presentation if you minimise the speakers box
- Internet connection - thank you in advance for your patience

Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm
Public Consultation Webinar | 25 May 2021



Introducing Enso Energy

- We are one of the UK's leading developers of renewable energy projects.
- Our ambition is to use the latest solar technology to make a positive impact on our country and the communities we work with. We are firm advocates for renewable, low carbon, efficient, secure and sustainable energy that can be generated, stored and utilised locally.
- This project is a joint venture between Enso Energy and Cero Generation (a new European solar energy company, launched by Macquarie's Green Investment Group (GIG)).
- Cero has an 8 GW solar development portfolio, one of the largest in Europe. Stretching across 150 projects in six markets, it includes both utility scale and on-site developments, as well as integrated energy storage solutions.
- We have recently received planning consent for two similar schemes, in South Glouc and West Norfolk.



Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm
Consultation Webinar | 25 May 2021

Why here?

- Grid Connection - Capacity and proximity to the site reduces transmission losses and avoids on/off-site construction impacts.
- Planning Considerations - Conservation Areas, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Ecological/Environmental Protection Designations
- Community Engagement - Opportunity to work with local people
- Land Availability & Quality - Ownership, Current Use, & Productive Value
- Infrastructure for Construction - Good connectivity and accessibility



Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm
Public Consultation Webinar | 25 May 2021

Key Benefits

- Assisting South Holland District Council and the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with local, national and international targets and the declared Climate Emergency.
- This project would generate the equivalent electricity demand of around 13,000 homes each year, while also providing significant carbon dioxide savings when compared to generation of electricity by non-renewable sources.
- Making an important contribution to achieving legally binding national targets to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050.
- Contributing to the UK's urgent need to transition to a low carbon future.
- Payment of business rates once operational.
- Providing a 35-year period in which the intensively farmed land can "rest" while the on-site boundary vegetation is improved and maintained in accordance with a site-specific management plan.



Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm
Public Consultation Webinar | 25 May 2021

Project updates

Recently we submitted letters requesting an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion from both Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council and South Holland District Council. These have both been considered and it has been confirmed an Environment Statement is not required.

Nevertheless, we are in the process of preparing a suite of environmental reports and assessments which are informing our considerations and will be submitted as part of the planning application. These include assessments of:

- Biodiversity and Ecology;
- Landscape and Visual Impact;
- Heritage and Archaeology;
- Traffic and Transport; and
- Other topics including noise, glint and glare and flood risk are also in preparation.

We will use these site assessments, alongside the local community feedback, to inform our final scheme design.



Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm
Public Consultation Webinar | 25 May 2021

Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm and Battery Storage

Statement of Community Involvement

Elements of a Solar Farm



Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm
Public Consultation Webinar / 25 May 2021



Land Use



- A solar farm is part of a temporary diversification strategy. It will NOT change the land classification from agricultural Greenfield to commercial/Industrial Brownfield.
- Land that has been intensively farmed can benefit from resting and rejuvenating the soil. Areas left fallow for 'Greening' can have other knock-on benefits for wider environmental quality that benefits rural amenity and the rural economy.
- A solar farm does not inhibit continued co-located agricultural use like grazing.

Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm
Public Consultation Webinar / 25 May 2021



Design and Planning Process

Three stage iterative design process

Stage 1 Concept Scheme Design

- Preliminary planning and environmental studies e.g. visual, ecology, traffic, flood risk etc.
- Submit EIA Screening Opinion: SH Ref PE-00119-21
- Community Consultation (including webinar)

Stage 2 Assessment Scheme Design (95% Fixed)

- Prepare environmental impact assessment studies and planning application

Stage 3 Planning Application Scheme Design (100% Fixed)

- Submit Planning Application

Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm
Public Consultation Webinar / 25 May 2021



Biodiversity improvements

- Opportunity to keep the land pesticide and chemical free - enables species to thrive and improves soil quality
- Biodiversity opportunities include:
 - Nesting in new hedgerows and ground nesting in long grasses
 - Year-round vegetated ground provides habitat and foraging grounds
 - Wildflower planting encourages pollinators and other insects
 - Solar arrays provide cover from exposure to the elements and from aerial predators.
- Compared to intensive arable farming a solar farm brings multi-functional benefits of energy production alongside NET environmental gain for habitats and species.



Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm
Public Consultation Webinar / 25 May 2021



Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm
Public Consultation Webinar / 25 May 2021



Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm
Public Consultation Webinar / 25 May 2021



Planning Timetable



Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm
Public Consultation Webinar / 25 May 2021



Landscape and ecological enhancement plan



Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm
Public Consultation Webinar / 25 May 2021



Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm and Battery Storage

Statement of Community Involvement

Community Benefit

- We welcome your insight as to how local people may be able to benefit further from our proposals
- We have already begun discussions with local representatives as to what form this might take
- We have a preference for projects that would provide a 'green', long-term benefit for the community



Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm
Public Consultation Webinar: 25 May 2021



Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm and Battery Storage

Statement of Community Involvement

Appendix 5: Website Home Page

[Discover more](#) [Why solar?](#) [Proposed Projects](#) [News and views](#) [Careers](#) [Contact](#)

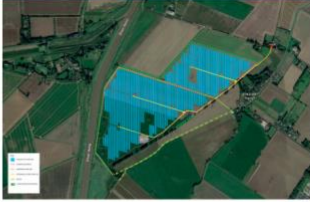
Projects > Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm

Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm

We are proposing to develop a solar farm, and battery storage, on land off Gunthorpe Road, Walpole Marsh.

We are in the early stages of developing our proposals at Gunthorpe Road, Walpole Marsh.

The proposed solar farm would provide renewable electricity for distribution to the National Grid. As a guide, this project would generate the equivalent electricity demand of around 13,000 homes each year of the proposed 35 years of operational life, while also providing significant carbon dioxide savings when compared to generation of electricity by non-renewable sources. The proposals include battery storage which will allow energy to be stored on site at times when grid-demand is lower and exported at times of higher demand to ensure no energy is 'lost' and help balance the National Grid.



[+ Read More](#)

The Site and Proposal

The Site is located on land off Gunthorpe Road, Walpole Marsh, comprising approximately 73 hectares of land. While there are no statutory landscape, heritage or ecological designations on site, as part of our site surveys and further assessments we will be considering these matters carefully in developing our proposals for consultation.

The development forms a temporary (35 year) use of farmland that is easily reversed at the end of the operational life. A scheme of landscape and ecological improvements will be prepared to support the application, ensuring the project provides a biodiversity net gain.

Access to the site will be using existing field access off Gunthorpe Road with construction expected to take 7 months.

The Benefits

The wider benefits of the development proposed, in addition to the contribution towards the security of energy supplies, are:

- Assisting South Holland District Council and the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with local, national and international targets and the declared Climate Emergency.
- Making an important contribution to achieving legally binding national targets to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050.
- Contributing to the UK's urgent need to transition to a low carbon future.
- Payment of business rates once operational.
- Providing a 35-year period in which the intensively farmed land can 'rest' while the onsite boundary vegetation is improved and maintained in accordance with a site-specific management plan.

Community Benefits

We believe that it's right that the community closest to a solar farm is able to benefit from it. In addition we believe that the community itself is best placed to say what the community benefit should be. If you have an idea for a sustainable community based scheme or project, then please do let us know by getting in contact with us via the form at the bottom of this page.

12,995

homes powered per year (equivalent)

 [Download Our Brochure](#)
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 [Site Location](#)

 [Further Information](#)

 [Consultation Webinar](#)

[+ Getting to Net Zero](#)

[+ Our Vision](#)

June 2021

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Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm and Battery Storage

Statement of Community Involvement

Register your views

If you would like to register your support for Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm, please fill in your details in the form or

t: 020 7499 2842

e: consultation@ensoenergy.co.uk

Please provide your contact details if you wish to get a response. Any information provided will only be used for the purpose of the planning application to the Local Planning Authority and will not be disclosed with any third parties. Your contact details will not be listed on the planning application documentation.

Name (required)

Email (required)

Telephone (optional)

What is your connection to Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm? (required)

- ☐ local resident ☐ local business
☐ representative of a local group or organisation

Postcode (optional)

Message

Appendix 6: Comments received via feedback form question 3 and Applicant's response

COMMENTS RECEIVED	APPLICANT'S RESPONSE
I have concerns over the amount of solar farms in the area and the proposed amount of traffic on the road network.	We have carefully considered the number of solar farms being proposed locally. Whilst there are other solar developments approved in the area, it is considered there are no significant cumulative adverse effects. As part of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment a cumulative assessment has been undertaken considering existing and/or other committed development.
Every business such as yours is exploiting areas with few residents to raise an objection. Here there are already many pylons, the National Grid, the power station and now two solar farms planned. Our second objection is more general, "agricultural land" is being used for other purposes. In the future there should be plenty of electricity - but will we have sufficient crops for our future food supply. To obtain even more food from abroad will place us in a very vulnerable position.	We have carefully considered the number of solar farms being proposed locally. Whilst there are other solar developments approved in the area, it is considered there are no significant cumulative adverse effects. As part of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment a cumulative assessment has been undertaken considering existing and/or other committed development. It is generally accepted that electricity demand is expected to increase in the coming years. For example, banning the sale of combustion engine vehicles by 2030 will increase the number of electric vehicles requiring electricity to charge. Proposal such as this Solar Farm will be necessary to ensure that increased demand for electricity within the UK over the next 35 years (the proposed lifetime of the Solar Farm) is generated by renewable sources. There is a balance to be struck. The agricultural land use will change from arable crops to harvesting of sunlight and potentially low intensity sheep grazing. This will be temporary and fully reversible. The accompanying ALC report explains how a Solar Farm will allow the soil to rest and its quality improve.

Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm and Battery Storage
Statement of Community Involvement

I object because the site access is right outside our property. We are very upset after living here for thirty years. Also, I think fields should have crops in not an eyesore like this.	The Applicant has carefully considered access points for the proposed scheme. A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) has been prepared and submitted with the planning application and will be implemented during the construction phase. The aim of the CTMP is to reduce the effect of the construction phase on the highway network.
I am for solar energy, but not here. This is fertile land. I am concerned about the visual impact for my home and glint and glare. Concerns regarding construction vehicle routing. The energy will not go into local homes.	The Applicant has carefully considered potential visual impact. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Glint and Glare Study and CTMP have been undertaken.
Why keep dumping all this on Walpole Marsh? We have a power station - ever expanding substation - 1 solar farm - now two more. Outrageous. Devaluing our property. And ruining our lifestyle. Myself and many others do not have the internet but we oppose this completely.	We have carefully considered the number of solar farms being proposed locally. Whilst there are other solar developments approved in the area, it is considered there are no significant cumulative adverse effects. As part of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment a cumulative assessment has been undertaken considering existing and/or other committed development.
I love walking in the open views, they will be lost with the solar panels. We already have a proposed site on the other side, we do not need another, which means people walking on the footpath will lose the openness of the countryside. Also the noise and disruption on an already small narrow route road will be made worse. I will fear to walk my dogs out and the construction going on will mean nowhere to walk. Why does everyone want to stick things on Walpole Marsh, we are a small place and value our open freedom.	We have carefully considered the number of solar farms being proposed locally. Whilst there are other solar developments approved in the area, it is considered there are no significant cumulative adverse effects. As part of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment a cumulative assessment has been undertaken considering existing and/or other committed development. A Noise Impact Assessment accompanies the planning application having undertaken detailed modelling based on background noise monitoring undertaken on site. No PRow are to be closed as a result of the construction process.

Gunthorpe Road Solar Farm and Battery Storage
Statement of Community Involvement

I'm in favour of renewables including solar. I am concerned however that 73 hectares of glass will be extremely ugly and possibly produce glare to the village. If the development were screened that would remove any objection I might have.	The Applicant has carefully considered potential visual impact. A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Glint and Glare Study and CTMP have been undertaken.
Looks okay hopefully a benefit to wildlife	Significant biodiversity improvements are a key benefit of the proposed Solar Farm.
Surprisingly good habitat for wildlife. Songbirds get a bit of increased protection from increased numbers of raptors. Create good environment and wildlife will flourish. Working well in Sutton St James.	Significant biodiversity improvements are a key benefit of the proposed Solar Farm.
To really help the environment we need to scrap HS2	N/A
I've waited for the webinar before airing my objection, I don't feel there is enough positives for the community to outweigh the fact that most residents feel as though we've had our fair share of such schemes.	We have carefully considered the number of solar farms being proposed locally. Whilst there are other solar developments approved in the area, it is considered there are no significant cumulative adverse effects. As part of a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment a cumulative assessment has been undertaken considering existing and/or other committed development.