

Consultation Booklet

1 June to 13 July 2021



Longfield
Solar Farm

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Introduction

We are consulting between **1 June and 13 July 2021**. We would very much encourage you to read this booklet and then share your views by responding to this consultation.

Thank you for taking the time to read this consultation booklet. It contains the information you need to take part in the statutory public consultation on our proposals for Longfield Solar Farm.

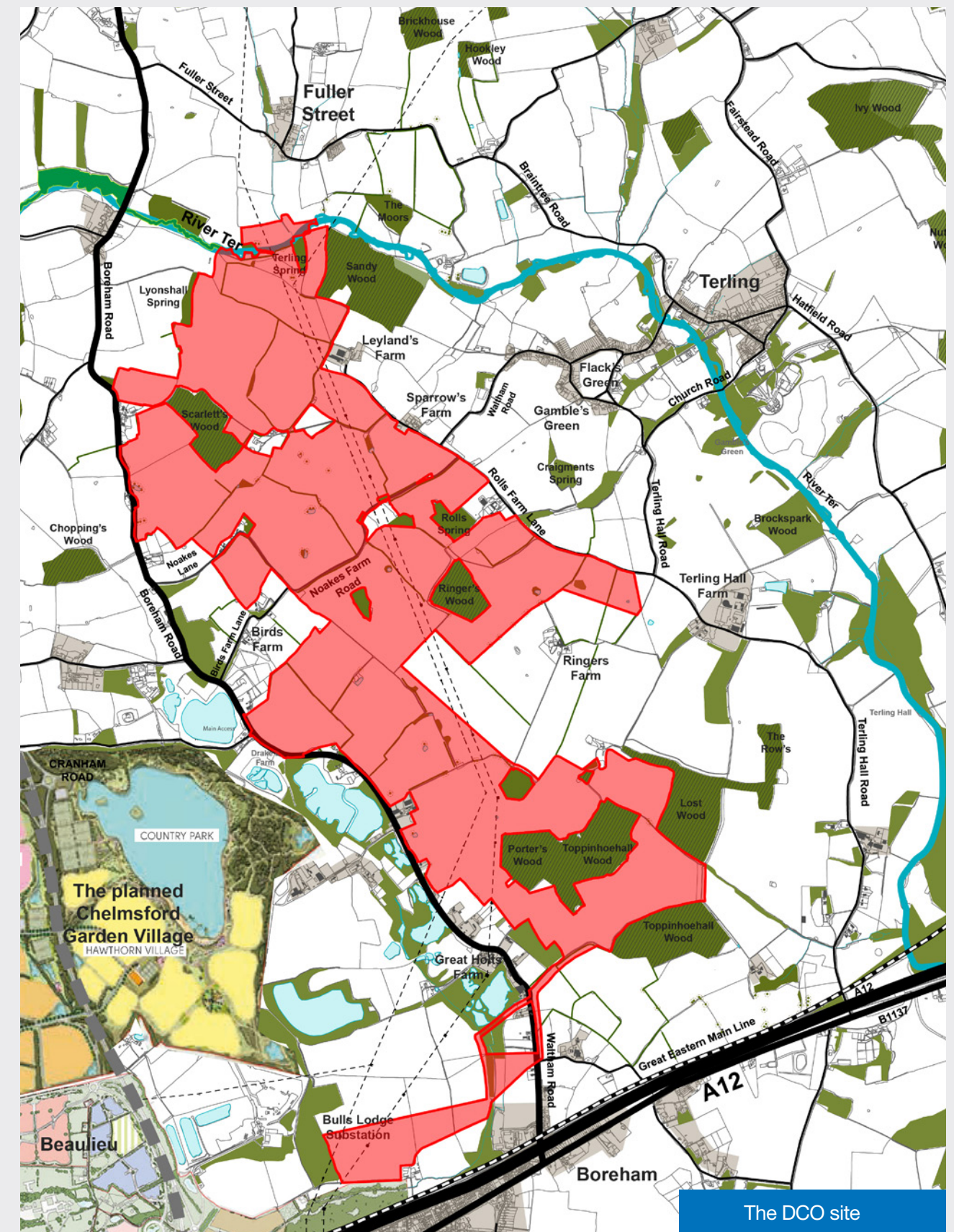
The UK urgently needs to put in place new ways of meeting its needs for energy if it is to achieve the target of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. These proposals for a solar energy farm co-located with battery storage on farmland north east of Chelmsford and north of the A12 between Boreham and Hatfield Peverel would make an important contribution to this goal. Since the previous consultation we held last year, we have refined our proposals, paying attention to all comments made as well as continuing environmental surveys.


We want our proposals to have a positive impact locally – for the community, for the environment and for the economy. This has been an important focus as we develop our plans for Longfield Solar Farm. We are now seeking your views on our updated proposals, as well as the initial results of our environmental impact assessment (EIA).

Longfield Solar Farm is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) requiring a Development Consent Order (DCO). That means we must consult in a certain way set by the Planning Act 2008 – for this reason it is known as a statutory consultation. Further details of the planning process for Longfield Solar Farm are included on page 36 of this booklet.

About Longfield Solar Farm

In this booklet, we set out a summary of our proposals, the way we have refined them since the last consultation, the preliminary results of our environmental impact assessment and how to take part in the consultation.





Our vision for the Longfield Solar Farm is twofold:

It will make a major contribution to the UK's need for renewable energy. We also want it to have a positive impact on the local community and the environment.

Energy generation currently makes up a significant amount of the UK's carbon emissions. The Government is committed to reducing this through a variety of measures including the introduction of new, cleaner methods of electricity generation, including solar power.

This will happen at the same time as older, carbon-intensive methods of energy generation are being phased out. In addition, the ways in which we all use electricity are changing. As we increasingly use electricity to power new modes of transport and industrial activity, it is anticipated that demand for electricity is likely to increase.

Delivering solar energy generation at scale has real benefits for the UK. We believe that Longfield Solar Farm can and should help achieve these national goals whilst delivering real advantages for the local community.

We will therefore carefully consider the local community and environment through our masterplanning process for this project and are committing significant resources over the long term to bring this vision to reality. As part of this, we believe that Longfield Solar Farm can deliver environmental improvements to the local area in terms of both biodiversity and increases to the populations of key local wildlife.

This will be as a result of careful planning based on scientific assessment, the long-term involvement of the local community and the managing of the land in a way that benefits the environment.

We will also create new paths for walking and cycling in the local area, as well as making a direct contribution locally through a Community Fund.

We have already responded to early public engagement by making changes to the design and layout of the scheme before this consultation. We will continue to have regard to comments from the local community received during this consultation as we prepare our DCO application.

Since the last consultation

We held an initial round of non-statutory consultation on our proposals for Longfield Solar Farm from 2 November to 14 December 2020.

We are grateful to everyone who took part in the consultation. We received more than 240 responses overall. Common themes raised in responses included:

- > Support for the principle of new solar energy generation
- > Concern about the overall scale of development and potential loss of agricultural land
- > A preference for the grid connection option close to Bulls Lodge substation
- > Concern about HGV accesses from Boreham Road and Waltham Road
- > A desire for all cables associated with the scheme to be buried underground
- > Requests for more information about landscape and visual impact, ecology and local job creation

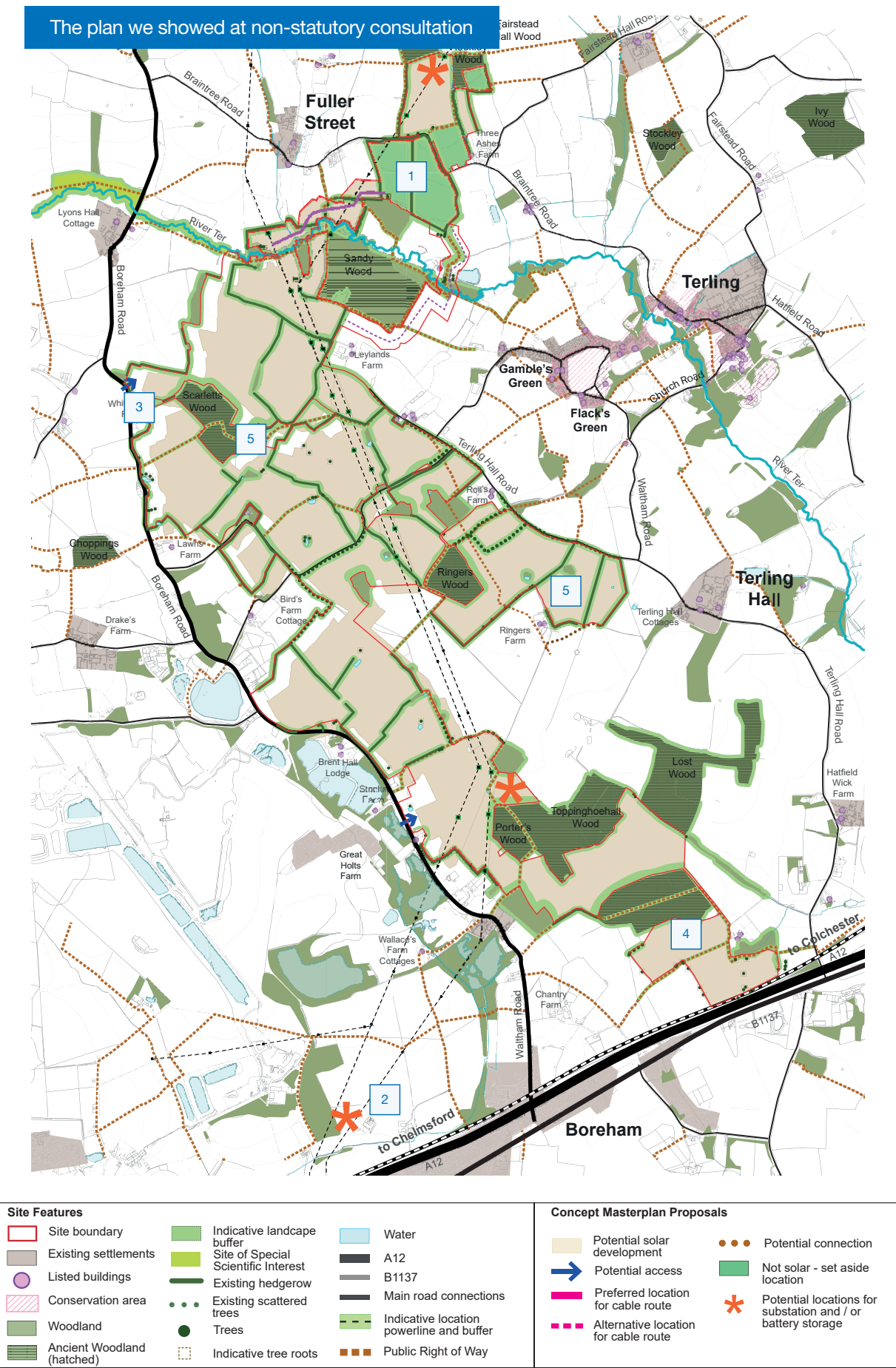
Since the last consultation, we have refined our proposals, paying attention to all comments made through the non-statutory consultation, as well as continuing environmental surveys. These have included surveys into the quality of the agricultural land, views in and around the site and ecology.

We also received confirmation from National Grid that it was no longer considering connecting Longfield Solar Farm to the national electricity transmission system at the northernmost option included in the last stage of consultation.

We have therefore:

- 1 Reduced the site area considerably, including removing development north of the River Ter
- 2 Confirmed the location of the grid connection at Bulls Lodge substation
- 3 Removed the HGV accesses to the site from Boreham Road and Waltham Road from the scheme
- 4 Refined our proposals to reduce the use of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land
- 5 Moved development away from specific views

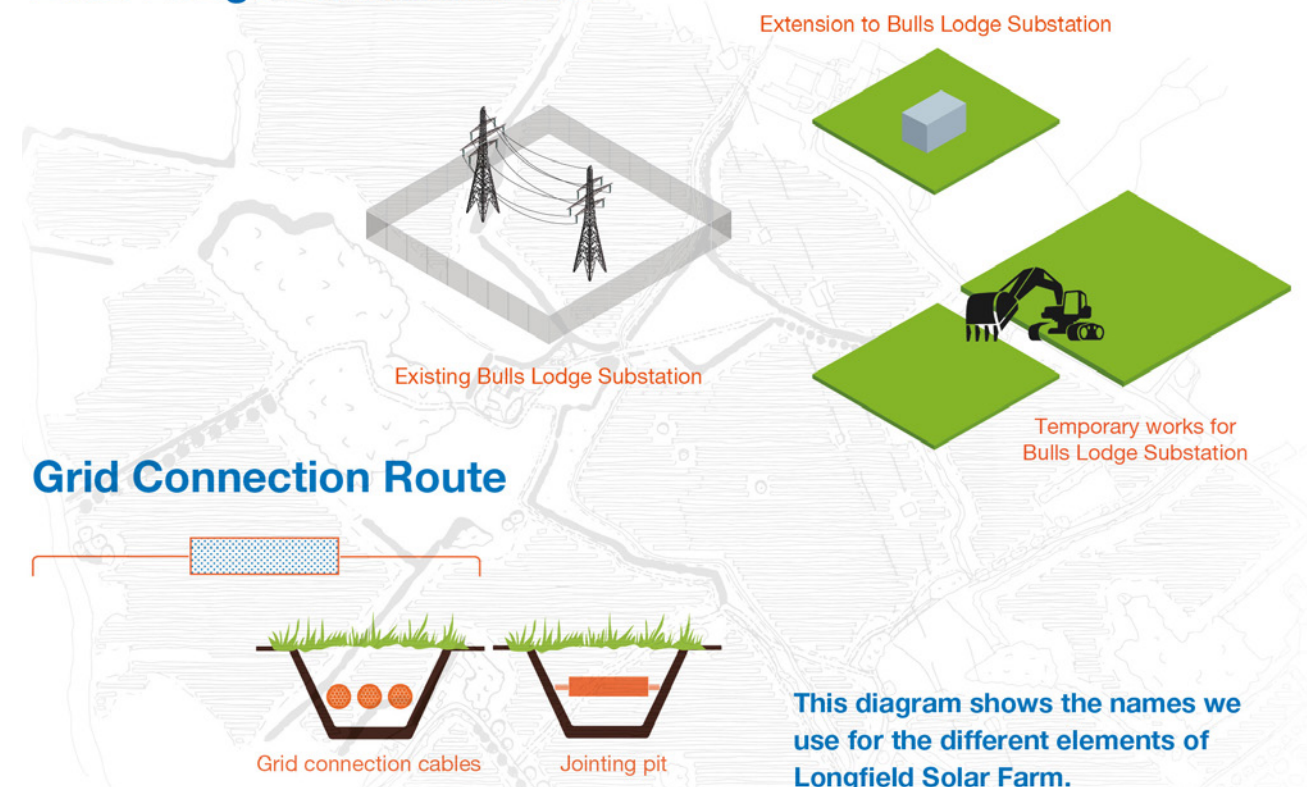
Overall, we believe these changes significantly reduce the visual impact of the scheme. The plan opposite shows the emerging masterplan we published as part of our non-statutory consultation and where we have made changes since.



The Solar Farm Site



Bulls Lodge Substation Site



We have refined our design significantly since the last round of consultation and can now present more detailed information on each of the key components of Longfield Solar Farm.

The plans on the following pages are all indicative and intended to show our current thinking on the design and layout of the scheme for the purposes of statutory public consultation. Following this consultation, we will have due regard to all of the comments we receive and where appropriate update our proposals. Unlike a conventional power station, the environmental impacts of a solar farm are not a direct result of the amount of electricity it can generate. For this reason, we are not proposing that the Longfield Solar Farm is restricted by imposing a limit on how much electricity it can generate.

Instead we will be seeking a DCO that would restrict the aspects of the solar farm which have potential environmental impacts – such as the height of the solar panels, dimensions of infrastructure such as the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and where solar panels would be located within the site. These are known as the ‘design parameters’.

This approach also ensures Longfield Solar Farm will be able to generate electricity as efficiently as possible, using technology which is constantly improving and may allow greater amounts of electricity to be generated in future within the existing design parameters.

You can find out more about the design parameters in Chapter 2 of the Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI) Report published as part of this consultation.

Our proposals

We are proposing a new solar energy farm, co-located with battery storage, to help meet the country’s need for low carbon energy. It is located on approximately 459ha of land and, based on today’s technology, would be able to generate around 350MWp of electricity. Of this, 432ha will be used for the Solar Farm site. This includes all of the infrastructure required to generate and store solar energy. It will include a Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Array Works Area (292ha), a Landscape Works Area (129ha), an Ancillary Works Area (6ha) and the BESS Compound Area (5ha). This means that approximately 60% of the land involved is likely to be used for PV arrays - solar panels.

The diagram above shows the different elements included in each of these areas.

19ha will be used for the Bulls Lodge Substation Site Area and 8ha for the Grid Connection Route. These will include the infrastructure required to connect Longfield Solar Farm to the National Grid.



Key

Secondary Road	SSSI	Substation	Solar Panels	Existing Track
Site Boundary	Hedgerow	Substation Extension	Low Density Area	Proposed Footpath
Local Road	Tree and Buffer	Substation Cable Route	Fence	Proposed Track
Urban Area	Bypass	Powerline	Exclusion Area	
Existing Building	Railway Line	Pylon	Public Right of Way	
Listed Building	Woodland	PV Field	Essex Way	
Primary Road	Ancient Woodland			

PV arrays

Electricity will be generated using PV panels across Longfield Solar Farm. We have carefully considered the results of technical surveys into views in and around the site, ecology and the quality of agricultural land when making decisions about the design of the solar PV panels. In the interests of making the solar farm highly efficient, the PV panels will have a maximum height of 3 metres and face south. They will be fixed on support struts driven into the ground. We have looked to preserve existing field patterns and boundaries, as well as existing trees, in developing the layout of the panels.



The panels will be supported by a series of solar stations. These are used to take the electricity from the panels and send it onwards to the Longfield substation and will be located throughout Longfield Solar Farm. The solar stations will comprise:

- > **Inverters:** these container-like structures convert the direct current (DC) electricity collected by the solar PV panels into alternating current (AC). This needs to happen to ensure that the electricity generated can be exported to the national electricity transmission system. The maximum height of these will be 3.5 metres.
- > **Transformers:** these units control the voltage of the electricity generated across the site before it reaches the substation. The maximum height of these will be 3.5 metres.
- > **Switchgear:** a combination of electrical disconnect switches, fuses or circuit breakers used to control, protect and isolate electrical equipment. The maximum height of these will be 3.5 metres.

The transformers, inverters and switchgears will either be standalone or housed together within containers.

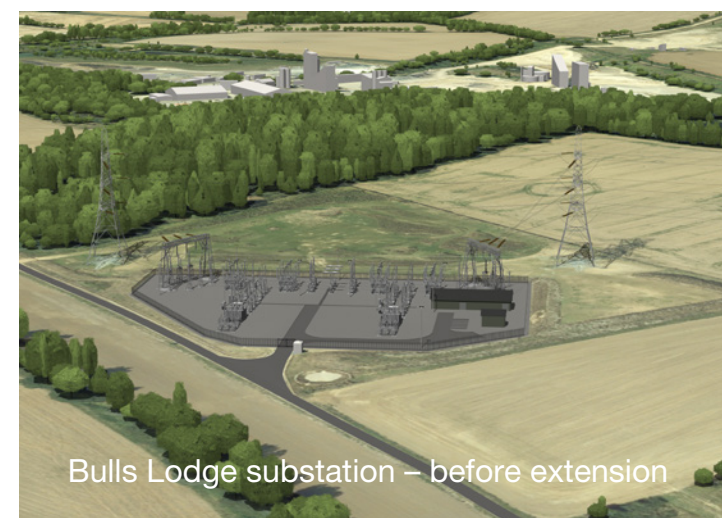
Grid connection

Longfield Solar Farm will need a substation to connect to the National Grid. At the last consultation, we presented three options for where this could be located: one in the north, near Three Ashes, one close to the middle of the site, near Toppinghoehall Wood, and one by the Bulls Lodge National Grid substation.

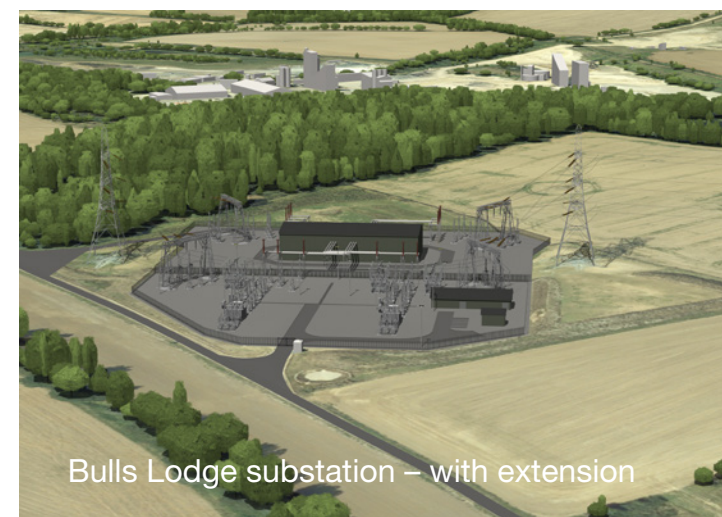
Following discussions with National Grid we can confirm that the connection point will be at Bulls Lodge. This will involve an extension to the existing substation. The indicative appearance of the substation before and after extension is shown on this page.

There will also be another, on-site, substation, which we are calling the Longfield substation. This is needed to take electricity from the PV panels and BESS up to the right voltage to be sent onwards to the main connection point at Bulls Lodge substation. The Longfield substation will be a maximum of 13 metres tall at its highest point. It will be located close to Toppinghoehall Wood.

Both substations will be connected to the wider site by underground cables. These will be buried to a maximum depth of 2 metres.



Bulls Lodge substation – before extension



Bulls Lodge substation – with extension

Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)

We also presented three options for the location of the BESS at the last consultation. We are now proposing to locate the BESS close to the Longfield substation near Toppinghoehall Wood. This part of the site is well screened and closer to the A12, a railway line and the Longfield substation.

The BESS will comprise batteries used to store electricity and will be located as part of a compound with switchgear and a control room. We expect that the batteries will be housed in containers with a maximum height of 4.5 metres. The BESS will also include an integral fire safety management system. We are consulting with the relevant local fire and public health authorities about how this should be designed and implemented to ensure that it is appropriate for the site.

Public access

We see the proposals for Longfield Solar Farm as an opportunity to substantially improve access for people walking, cycling and riding locally. Our draft masterplan includes a network of permissive paths, which will connect into the wider network of public rights of way during the lifetime of the scheme.

This will include the potential to link to new paths through the planned Chelmsford Garden Village and country park – helping to improve access to the wider countryside.

Land use

Since the non-statutory consultation, we have refined our proposals to reduce the use of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land. Overall, we have reduced the amount of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land that we are proposing to use by up to 60%.



Environmental impact assessment

We are committed to making the local environment appreciably better than before Longfield Solar Farm was built and operated. That means going beyond simply mitigating any impacts from development to proactively investing in the pursuit of positive change.

We believe this scheme represents an excellent opportunity to improve the local ecological conditions because the land will be managed with the twin goals of generating clean, renewable energy and creating better habitats for wildlife.

Our investment in this process is long term because the site will be operated and managed by the proposers in close association with the supportive landowner, who has a long-term interest in the land and the local community.

The process

Longfield Solar Farm is EIA development for the purposes of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. We are required to carry out an EIA of our proposals as part of the planning process. The preliminary outputs from this assessment have informed the site design and content of this consultation.

As part of the EIA design process, we formally 'scoped' our approach with the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) on behalf of the Secretary of State. On 3 December 2020, we received its formal Scoping Opinion. This confirmed the scope of work that should be included in our EIA and that should be reported in the comprehensive Environmental Statement that will accompany our DCO application when submitted to the Secretary of State.

In addition to this, we have considered the feedback we received through the non-statutory consultation and have continued to engage with local authorities and other regulatory bodies, such as Historic England and the Environment Agency, on our approach to the EIA.

We are now sharing the preliminary results of our assessment as part of this consultation. This booklet summarises our findings in areas such as ecology, landscape and visual impacts that were raised during the last consultation and where significant effects are expected. The results are presented in a document called the PEI Report. You can view the PEI Report on our website (longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk/downloads). There is also a non-technical summary of the PEI Report available to view.

Following this statutory consultation, we will have regard to all feedback received and will finalise the Environmental Statement. This will be submitted in support of our DCO application and will set out the final outcomes of our assessment, as well as details of any proposed mitigation.

The topics in our EIA include:

- > Climate change
- > Cultural heritage
- > Ecology
- > Flood risk, drainage and surface water
- > Landscape and visual impact assessment
- > Noise and vibration
- > Socio-economic and land use
- > Transport and access
- > Air quality
- > Land quality
- > Glint and glare
- > Ground conditions
- > Human health
- > Major accidents and disasters
- > Telecommunications
- > Television reception

Summary of effects

In some cases, we have identified potentially significant impacts as part of our EIA. Where this is the case, we are proposing mitigation measures.

In our DCO application, we will set out more detail on the need for the scheme and the benefits it provides in meeting the UK’s urgent need for low carbon energy.

Our application will also set out how we believe we have achieved an appropriate balance between meeting that need and managing potential adverse effects in terms of landscape, cultural heritage and loss of agricultural land.

Climate change	<p>Effects</p> <p>We have identified a significant beneficial impact on climate change through the provision of renewable energy.</p>	<p>Mitigation</p> <p>No mitigation is required.</p>
Cultural heritage	<p>Effects</p> <p>We have identified potential impacts on the settings of a number of heritage assets near the site during the construction period. These include Ringers Farmhouse, Little Russells, Sparrows Farmhouse, the Barn of Noake’s Farm, Little Holts and the Church of St Mary the Virgin.</p>	<p>Mitigation</p> <p>We are consulting with Historic England and relevant local authority officers and will propose an appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy as part of our Environmental Statement. We are also proposing considerable new areas of tree planting and hedgerows to reduce long-distance views into the site. This will reduce impacts on the setting of heritage features.</p>

Landscape and visual impact	<p>Effects</p> <p>We have identified potential impacts on views into the site from a number of points during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases.</p>	<p>Mitigation</p> <p>We are providing significant mitigation of potential visual impacts as part of the scheme - this is referred to as ‘embedded’ mitigation. It includes the introduction of 3.55ha of new tree belts and woodland, 4000 specimen trees in hedgerows, filling in the gaps of 21km of existing hedgerows and 2km of new hedgerows.</p>
Socioeconomics and land use	<p>Effects</p> <p>We have identified a potentially beneficial impact on the local economy through employment creation and spending in the construction phase. Our EIA also considers the potential loss of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land. Currently, this is expected to have a significant adverse impact.</p>	<p>Mitigation</p> <p>We have sought to reduce the use of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land through our proposals.</p>

Other topics

Our EIA has identified no significant negative impacts once mitigation has been applied in the following areas:

- > Air quality
- > Ecology
- > Glint and glare
- > Ground conditions
- > Human health and wellbeing
- > Major accidents and disasters
- > Noise and vibration
- > Telecommunications
- > Television reception and utilities
- > Transport and access
- > Waste
- > Water environment

Landscape and views

Sensitivity to the local landscape is an essential part of our masterplan for Longfield Solar Farm. The design we are presenting as part of this consultation is informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) carried out as part of our EIA.

Understanding the landscape

Our design process began by surveying the character of the existing landscape. This informed a baseline that we could use to understand what impacts Longfield Solar Farm might have on landscape and views.

We then looked at what could be visible from a number of important points in the landscape. We identified the points that we needed to assess views from in cooperation with local authorities and other stakeholders.

They include homes and businesses near the site, roads and public rights of way and the South Suffolk and North Essex Clayland National Character Area.

Our design

We have refined the proposed layout for Longfield Solar Farm significantly since the last round of consultation, responding to the work we have done to understand the local landscape.

For example, we have located larger elements of Longfield Solar Farm, such as the battery storage and Longfield substation, towards the south. This part of the site is closer to the A12 and a railway line and is already well screened by woodland.

We have also removed land parcels from the most northern and southern parts of the site, as well as excluding small fields. This will mean we avoid negative impacts on the landscape in sensitive areas like the River Ter Valley.

Where the site is visible from homes, roads or public rights of way, we have sought to set development back from lines of sight or screen it. This includes setting back development from Boreham Road to improve existing hedgerows.

We have also reduced the number and height of panels closest to homes to allow for more screening. This will involve extensive tree planting. We have carefully considered what type of screening is most appropriate in each part of the site – in open parts of the site, we have avoided tall screening to allow views to remain open.

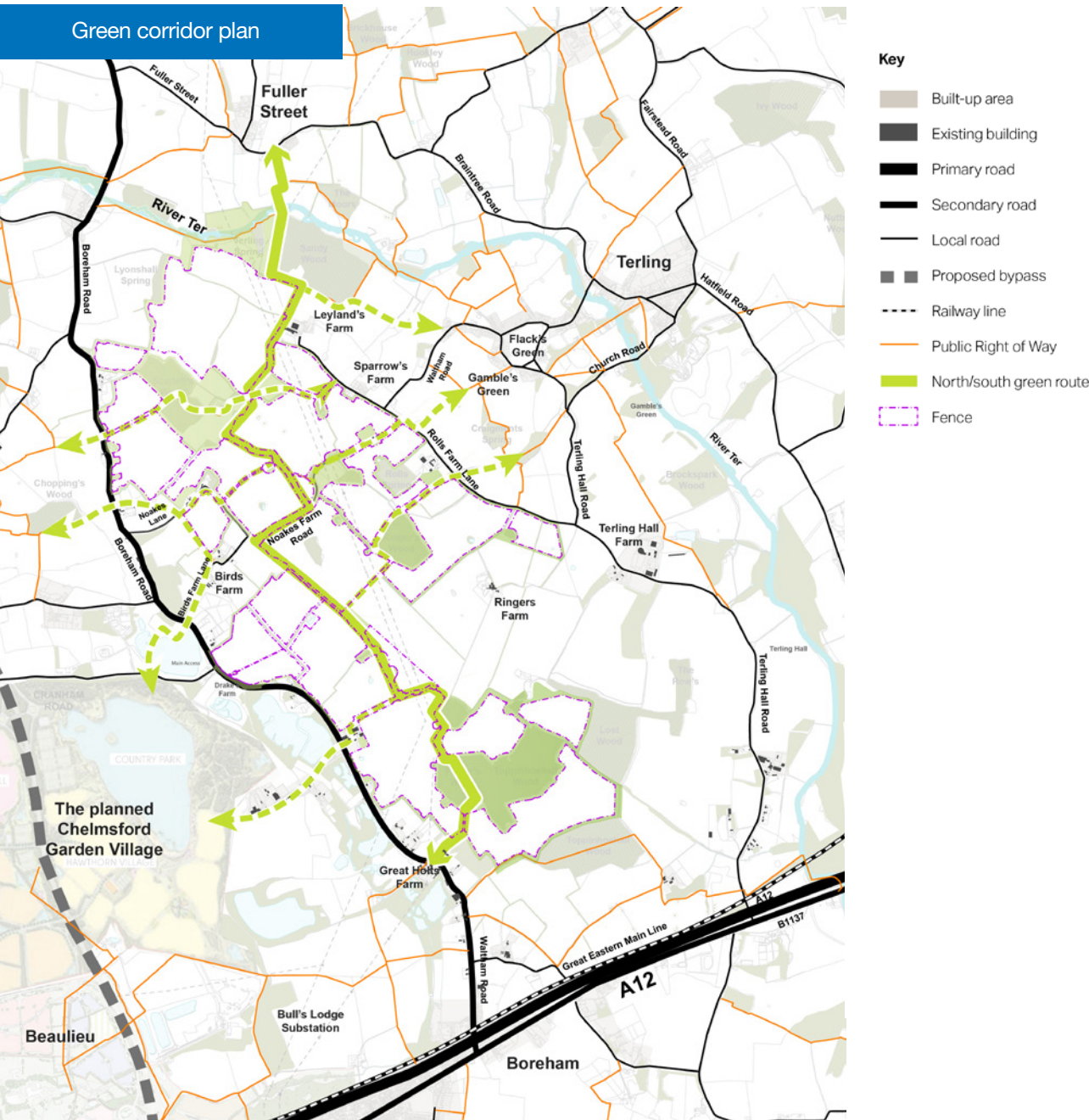
The approach we have taken to the landscape will help us improve the environment and ways of getting around the area. Corridors for wildlife and new permissive paths are embedded into the design. This includes a new north-south green route and east-west green links via new permissive paths.

These link a series of focal points at areas of particular natural interest, such as Sandy Wood, the River Ter Valley, Scarletts Farm Wood and Toppinghoehall Wood. The images on the following pages provide more detail on how we will approach these areas.

Effects

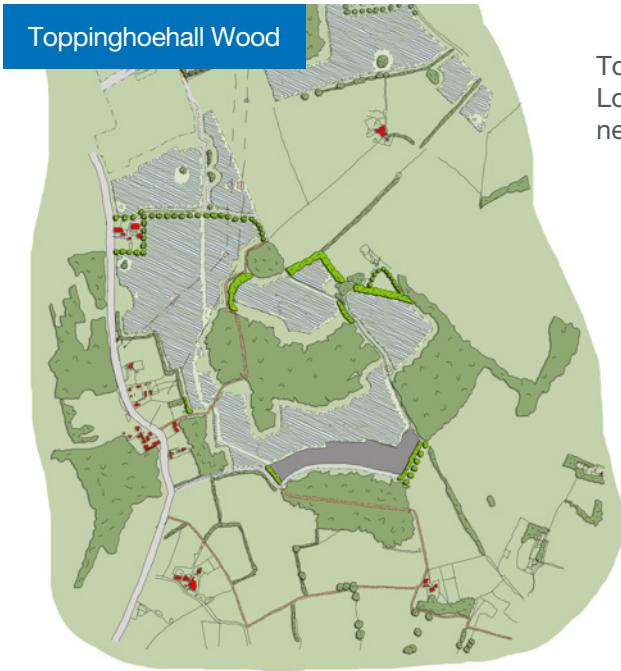
Overall, we believe that the careful siting of Longfield Solar Farm within the landscape, as well as conservation of landscape, ecological and archaeological features across the site and creation of new planting and vegetation for screening, avoids and mitigates potential negative impacts on landscape and views to a significant degree.

However, we do expect there to be some temporary impacts while we are building Longfield Solar Farm. We will seek to mitigate this by phasing the delivery of the battery storage units. We will deliver the central battery storage units first because their location is best screened. We will deliver the battery storage units at the edge of rows in a second phase, once new planting is better established.



Our approach to landscape

The sketches on these pages provide an indication of our approach to landscaping in different parts of the site.



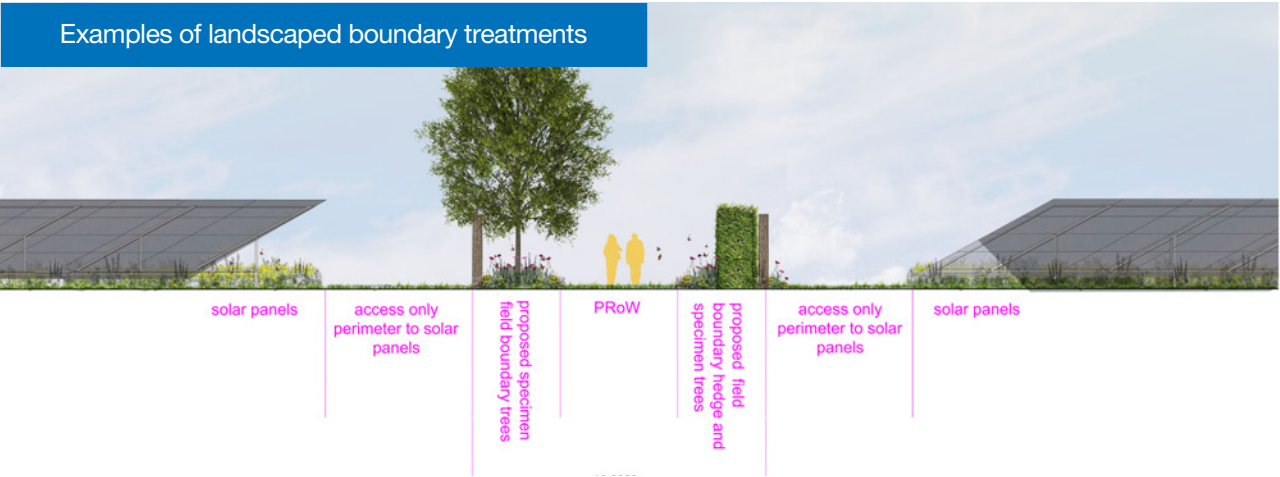
Toppinghoehall Wood will screen the BESS and Longfield substation. We will reinforce this with a new native woodland buffer of at least 25 metres.



We will create a 20 metre wide woodland buffer here to allow for natural woodland regeneration. We will also connect a new pedestrian link to the existing public right of way next to Sandy Wood, meaning there will be uninterrupted north-south access through the site.



We will protect Ringers Wood with a 20 metre wide woodland buffer zone. We will also restore ponds and improve habitats for birds here.



We will set aside land here to protect the setting of the Grade II listed Scarletts Farm. We will also put in place a new pedestrian route running north of Noakes Lane, connecting to the existing public right of way through Scarletts Wood.



Ecology and biodiversity

We have assessed potential impacts from Longfield Solar Farm on ecology and biodiversity as part of our EIA. But we want to do more than simply mitigate impacts – we want to improve the outlook for wildlife across the site.

Understanding the context

Our EIA has considered impacts on species and habitats that are important at a local, national and international level.

There are six statutory sites for nature conservation in the area we assessed. These are designated for biodiversity reasons. The closest, the River Ter SSSI, is located immediately adjacent to the site. There are also 31 non-statutory sites designated for nature conservation within 2km of Longfield Solar Farm. These sites have been designated as local wildlife sites (LoWS) for their biodiversity value at a local level and are known to support a wide variety of protected and ecologically important species and habitats. We also assessed for species on the site including fish, breeding birds, wintering birds, bats, reptiles, badger, otter, other mammals and some rare species of plants.



Effects

We will put in place measures that will lead to a net gain in biodiversity across the site. We will prepare a Biodiversity Net Gain report as part of the Environmental Statement. The DCO application will also include an Outline Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP). This will set out how we will protect and manage landscape and ecology and inform more detailed plans in the future.

There are some potential temporary impacts during construction that we will need to mitigate, such as those from site clearance. A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be included in the DCO application to explain how these will be managed. This is included in draft as part of the PEI Report.

We want to do more than simply mitigate our impacts. We are therefore exploring opportunities to include enhancements with our proposals.

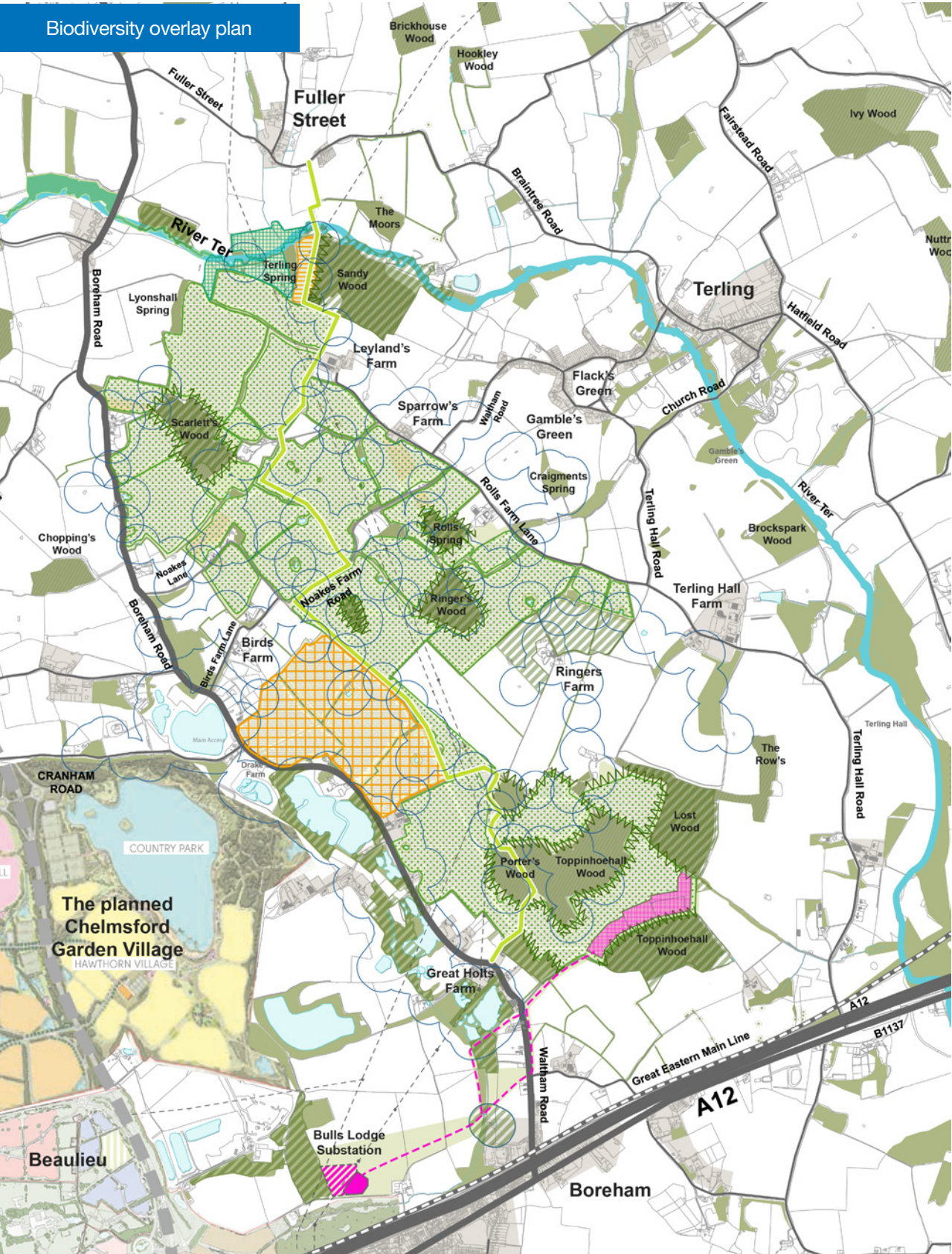
Enhancements

Our proposals for Longfield Solar Farm are set out in their current form in this booklet and more fully in the PEI Report - in particular Chapter 2 “The Scheme”. The environmental assessment we have undertaken to date is based on this. As part of the preliminary environmental work we have done, we have identified the measures necessary to mitigate any significant adverse impacts where possible.

Through our assessment of current environmental characteristics of the site, we have also identified opportunities to improve biodiversity voluntarily, by way of a series of enhancements. These enhancement measures are not required to mitigate any significant adverse impacts of the scheme – the steps we need to take to do that have already been identified and form part of the scheme. Some of the land identified for these enhancements is outside of the DCO Site and their impacts have not therefore been assessed as part of the PEI Report.

However, we are considering providing enhancements which would allow us to go above and beyond simply mitigating potential impacts. We have not yet finalised our plans for these measures. We would therefore welcome your views.





Species rich grassland

In these areas, we could create a biodiverse meadow rich in invertebrates by seeding the grassland beneath PV panels and around heritage assets. These areas would be grazed by sheep to keep competitive grasses under control and allow wildflowers to thrive. The insects attracted to the wildflowers will support birds such as turtle dove and yellowhammer nesting in the restored hedgerows. Away from the PV panels, we will manage field margins to increase biodiversity. Restoring farmland to grassland would also help restore soil health and absorb carbon.

Enhanced waterscape

The network of drainage ponds and ditches that exist across the site are currently in a poor state and the River Ter is currently failing on phosphate levels. The water quality is poor owing to overshadowing and agricultural run-off.

We could enhance these by removing vegetation, desilting and putting in place more appropriate planting. This would help stop agricultural run-off into the water. We would also create a network of ponds throughout the site to create corridors for wildlife.

Rewilding scrub

Other than some low intensity grazing for conservation purposes, we could avoid intervening in this area to allow it to become wild again. This will create a range of grassland and scrub habitats, supporting reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates. The scrub would provide habitat that could be used by nightingales and other woodland edge species.

Floodplain grassland and conservation grazing

We could relax management along the floodplain, creating wet grassland. In the higher areas above the flood zone, this would provide invertebrate-rich habitat for nesting skylark. This area would be rich in plants like angelica that thrive in moist soils within floodplain habitats. This is another area where enhancements would also absorb carbon.

Pollination and wildflower greenway

This could be an attractive nature path extending north to south through Longfield Solar Farm. We could plant wildflower seed mixtures designed specifically for wild pollinating insects along the greenway. This would be an attractive feature for people walking along the path while also supporting pollinators.

The Biodiversity Trial Area

This is a proposal for an exciting learning zone made up of four fields. This visionary space could be used to trial simple conservation intervention aimed at improving the understanding of biodiversity and natural capital benefits alongside solar farms. Outcomes from the trials would help to inform land management across new solar farms.

Woodland restoration zone

There is an opportunity to improve biodiversity in the woodlands within and near the site. These are a mix of younger plantation and ancient woodland. Working with the landowner, we could restore the woodland with traditional woodland management practices, such as coppicing. Ending the management of the woodland edges would help create a more varied set of habitats, potentially attracting birds like nightingales, willow warblers and garden warblers.

We could also establish regenerated woodland belts and restore hedgerows to connect the ancient woodland currently isolated within the arable land. This would allow bats, birds and butterflies to move effectively through the wooded landscape.

Construction

If the scheme were to receive consent, we anticipate that the total construction period would take approximately three years to complete. This includes around a year getting the site ready for development and two years building the scheme itself.

We will work to a series of well-established principles in building Longfield Solar Farm. Where possible, we will look to use existing infrastructure to access the site, minimise use of new materials on-site, phase construction and use a single site entrance to reduce impacts on the wider road network.

Before we begin construction, we will establish the site entrance, internal roads for getting around the site, construction compounds and security fencing. This will help us reduce the impact of our work on the wider area.

We would likely use the following techniques while building the scheme:

- > **PV arrays:** the mounting structures for the PV panels will be pushed into the ground. Some localised trenching would be required to install the necessary cabling and solar stations, which will be on small foundations
- > **BESS:** the construction of the BESS would require us to dig foundations and install the required cabling and equipment to allow the batteries to export and import electricity to and from the National Grid
- > **Cabling:** we will bury the cables underground. We will install the cables by digging a trench, laying the cables in sections and covering them again
- > **Substations:** As with the BESS, building the substations will involve digging foundations and installing the required cabling and equipment

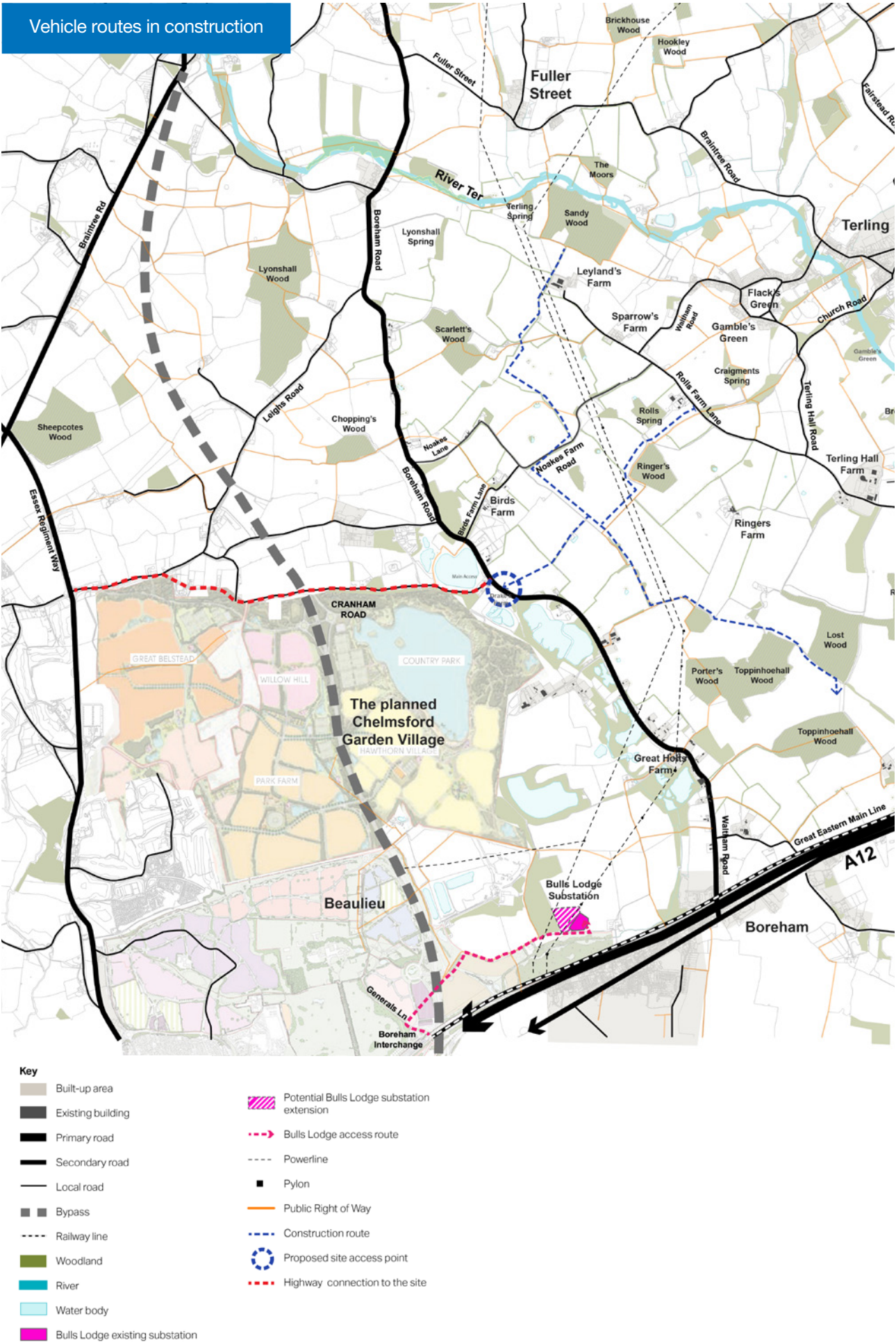
Construction management

We anticipate that working hours onsite will run from 7am to 7pm. Working days will be Monday to Saturday. The number of staff on site at any one point will vary during construction – at the busiest periods 25 HGVs and 600 staff per day would be expected on site.

There will be vehicles travelling to and from the site while we are building the scheme. These will access the site using a single entrance at the location shown on the plan. The numbers of vehicles accessing the site will vary from day to day.

We will build Longfield Solar Farm in phases. This means that we will not be working across the whole site for the entire construction period - we will work in one area and then move on to the next.

In particular, we may deliver different parts of the BESS at different phases. The first part, on either side of the Longfield substation, would be delivered during the first and second years of construction. The second part, to the north east of the substation, would be delivered later, after screening planting has matured.



Key measures

We recognise the potential impact of construction on our neighbours and will put in place a plan designed to ensure potential impacts are managed and properly communicated. To aid this, we will include a draft Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) with our DCO application.

These will set out the principles, controls, and measures we will use to manage and mitigate potential environmental impacts during construction.

Measures we will put in place during construction include:

- > Restricting HGV movements to the A130, Wheelers Hill and Cranham Road
- > Restricting HGV movements during certain times of the day, such as between 8am-9am and 5pm-6pm
- > Implementing a delivery management system for HGV deliveries from the start of the construction period
- > Recording the journeys of all HGVs travelling to and from the site to ensure they use agreed routes
- > Implementing temporary traffic management on Waltham Road during the period when the grid connection cables are installed
- > Encouraging local construction staff to share cars, to reduce single occupancy car trips
- > Implementing a shuttlebus service to transfer non-local staff to and from local worker accommodation
- > Providing on-site car and cycle parking
- > Off-site highway improvements at Cranham Road are likely to be needed, which could involve small scale road widening to accommodate construction traffic

Operations

EDF Renewables is committed to operating Longfield Solar Farm in the long term.

While the scheme is operational, activity across the site would be minimal and largely restricted to monitoring, maintenance and the management of the visual and ecological mitigation features.

Decommissioning

Solar farms typically have a design lifespan of 40 years. Longfield Solar Farm has been designed so that once it has reached the end of its lifespan it can be dismantled. A decommissioning plan will be prepared.

Jobs and skills

Longfield Solar Farm will create jobs and skills, as well as creating wider economic benefits. We are committed to ensuring that these advantages are felt in the local community. To this end, we are already consulting with local businesses, business organisations and skills providers such as schools and colleges to assess how the local community might benefit from employment opportunities at key stages of the project's development. Overall, we expect to create 375 new jobs in the construction phase and 8 permanent roles once Longfield Solar Farm is operational. We also expect local expenditure as a result of the scheme to help create the equivalent of 188 new jobs. Whilst the majority of the manufacturing process of the panels, batteries and related components is currently located overseas, where possible, we will source materials from the UK and encourage domestic suppliers.

Health and safety

We recognise that there is interest in how health and safety will be managed at Longfield Solar Farm. Nothing is more important to us than the health and safety of our neighbours and our staff.

We are already engaging with the Health and Safety Executive and the Essex Fire and Rescue Service on the design of Longfield Solar Farm. This is to ensure that the management of health and safety is built into Longfield Solar Farm from the start.

We will put in place appropriate training and codes of conduct for all staff working at the site. This will include an induction covering health and safety and how to behave on site, which all staff must complete before beginning work.

Community engagement

The companies behind Longfield Solar Farm have a proud history of investing in the communities in which they work and establishing community benefits for the duration of a project's operating life. One of the project partners, EDF Renewables, expects to continue to own and operate Longfield Solar Farm. This means it can make a long-term commitment to the local community. The community can expect that its views will be taken seriously at every stage of the lifetime of the project. We will establish a community liaison group (CLG) that will enable local community representatives to have a formal channel for monitoring and influencing developments at the site.

In recognition of the important role Longfield Solar Farm will play locally, we have also established a sponsorship fund open to applications from community projects or groups in the parishes of Terling and Fairstead, Hatfield Peverel, Boreham, Great and Little Leighs and Little Waltham.

It is managed on our behalf by the Essex Community Foundation and is currently in place until the DCO application for Longfield Solar Farm is decided.

For more information and to apply for funding, please see the Essex Community Foundation's website:
essexcommunityfoundation.org.uk/

If a DCO is granted, we plan to put in place a fund which will be related in size to the energy output of the PV panels. Currently, we expect there to be around £64,000 per year available as part of the fund. This could equate to £2,560,000 over the expected lifetime of the scheme.



The planning process

Longfield Solar Farm is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) because its generating capacity would be more than 50MW.

NSIPs are major developments which require development consent to be granted by the relevant Secretary of State through a Development Consent Order (DCO). This is a process established by the Planning Act 2008. The diagram on this page explains each stage of the process and where you can get involved.

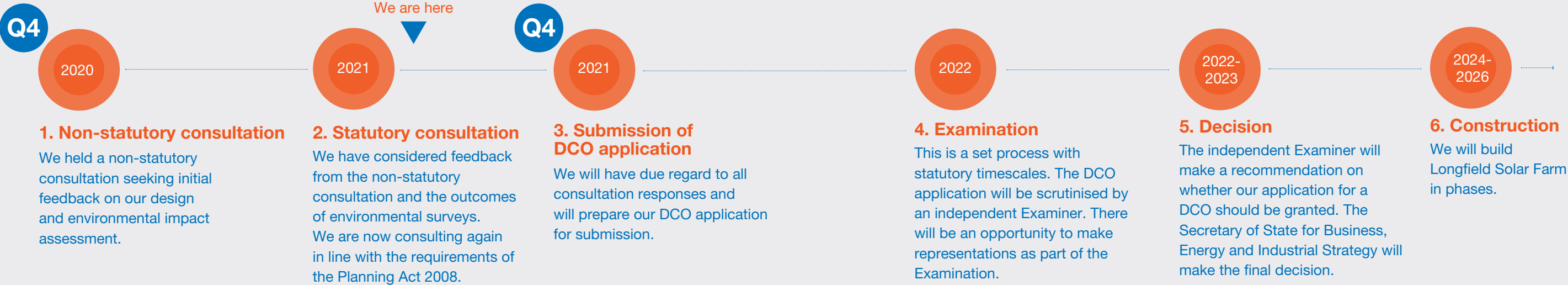
Unlike local planning permissions, which are considered by local authorities, DCO applications are made to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). PINS administers the application process on behalf of the Secretary of State. In this case, the relevant Government Department is the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

The Planning Act 2008 requires consultation with the local community before we submit our DCO application. We are carrying out this consultation in line with this requirement – it is therefore referred to as ‘statutory consultation’. Following the consultation, we will have due regard to all comments received and prepare our DCO application for submission to PINS.

You can find out more about the DCO process at PINS’ website:
<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>
PINS has also published guidance on the process for members of the public.
This can be viewed online at: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Advice-note-8.0.pdf>



Indicative Project Timeline



Public consultation

This second round of consultation on the project is statutory and is taking place between 1 June and 13 July 2021. We want as many people to take part in the consultation as possible.

While there has been some relaxation of social distancing requirements by the Government, we still face restrictions on meeting residents in-person. We are therefore making available a range of ways to find out more and respond to the consultation.

We have developed the consultation programme considering best practice guidance and advice from Essex County Council, Chelmsford City Council and Braintree District Council.

We will carefully consider all of the comments we receive as part of the consultation and set out how we have had regard to them in a Consultation Report. This will form part of our DCO application.

You can find out more by:

1. Viewing a virtual exhibition and consultation documents on our website:
<http://www.longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk/downloads>

Subject to Government guidance on COVID 19, we also hope to make the consultation documents available to view at following locations in the local area:

Hatfield Peverel Library, The St, Hatfield Peverel, Chelmsford CM3 2DP

Witham Library, 18 Newland St, Witham CM8 2AQ

Chelmsford Library, Chelmsford County Hall, Market Rd, Chelmsford CM1 1QH

Please check our website or contact us for the latest information before making plans to visit one of these locations.

2. Registering to take part in an online webinar. These are due to take place at 2pm on Saturday 5 June 2021 and 7pm on Thursday 10 June 2021 and will offer the opportunity to ask questions about the proposals. You can register for the webinar on our website or using the contact details below.
3. Booking an appointment to talk with members of our technical and design teams about the proposals by telephone using the contact details below.
4. Contacting us on **0808 168 7925** or info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk

Consultation Questions

We are seeking your views on the following questions as part of the consultation:

1. Do you have any comments on our proposals for the solar energy generation element of the scheme?
2. Do you have any comments on our proposals for the battery storage element of the scheme?
3. Do you have any comments on our proposals for connecting to the national electricity system, including laying cables underground and extending Bulls Lodge National Grid Substation?
4. Do you have any comments on the potential environmental impacts and our proposals for enhancements and mitigation during:
 - a) The construction of Longfield Solar Farm?
 - b) The operation of Longfield Solar Farm?
 - c) The decommissioning of Longfield Solar Farm?
5. Do you have any comments on the contribution that the scheme will make to the local community?
6. Do you have any comments on the potential biodiversity enhancements set out on page 28 of the Consultation Booklet?
7. Do you have any further comments?

Respond

We welcome feedback on our proposals for Longfield Solar Farm.

Anyone can share their views by:

- > Completing a consultation questionnaire online at **longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk/public-consultation**
- > Returning a questionnaire to Longfield Solar Farm consultation, FREEPOST reference RTRB-LUJJ-AGBY, c/o SECNewgate UK, Sky Light City Tower, 50 Basinghall Street, London, EC2V 5DE or info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk
- > Submitting their comments by email to info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk or in writing to the above Freepost address.

Please note, responses must be received by the consultation deadline of 11.59pm on 13 July 2021.

Contact us

Phone: 0808 168 7925

Email: info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk

longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk