ecotricity

Heckington Fen Solar Park

Affordable Green Energy for Lincolnshire

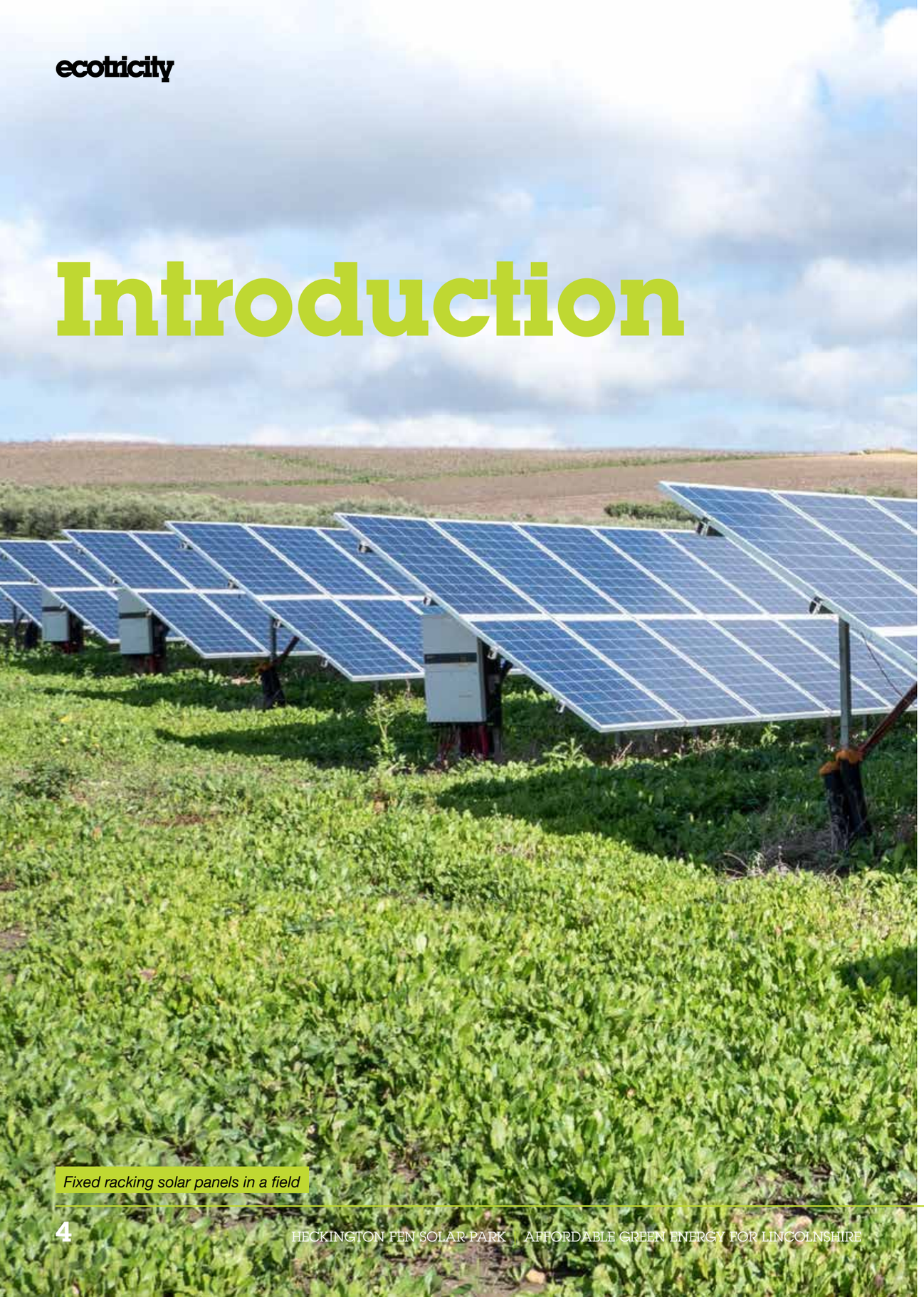
Consultation Booklet

30 June to 1 September 2022

Rows of fixed racking solar panels in a field

Contents

Introduction



Fixed racking solar panels in a field

Introduction

We're consulting on our proposed solar park between 30 June and 1 September 2022.

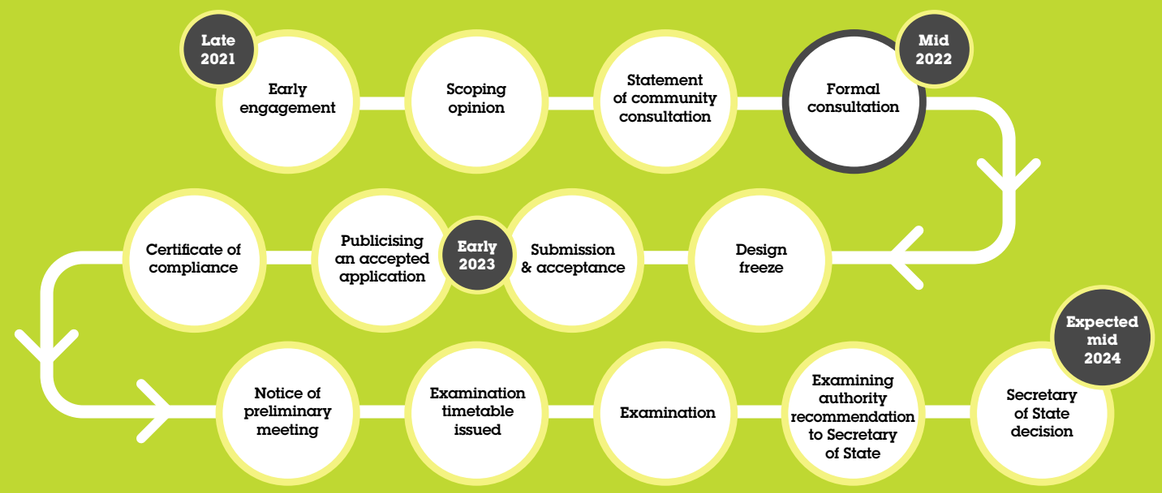
This booklet tells you what you need to know to take part in the consultation.

Please share your views with us – so we can develop the proposals with you in mind.

Email: **heckingtonfensolar@ecotricity.co.uk**

Freephone: **0800 151 0784**

Post: **FREEPOST ECOTRICITY SOLAR PARK**



Need for the Project

With the potential to generate enough affordable green electricity to power over 100,000 homes, Heckington Fen Solar Park will play an important part in preventing the worst effects of climate change, while helping to support the UK's future energy security. Find out how the numbers are calculated on our project website.

As we get more light in the summer and more wind in the winter, solar can help the UK to balance its electricity supply across the seasons. It's a key part of the Government's strategy for fulfilling ambitious net zero commitments.

Our project will clean up our air – it will remove more than 75,000 tonnes of harmful CO_2 emissions per year. The same as taking 30,000 cars off the road.

How will we deliver it?

We build projects that local people can be proud of. We've been working with communities for more than twenty years to ensure our renewable energy projects benefit them environmentally, socially and economically.

Your views can influence our proposals and help us achieve the park's full potential – for your community, nature conservation, and our planet.

We reached out to your community last year to make sure you could provide comments on our proposals at an early stage of the Project's development.

We developed our site plans based on your community's views, issues, concerns, and various conversations.

Only now are we formally required to consult on them, as required by the Planning Act 2008.

Our team previously consulted on plans to build 22 wind turbines on this land and received planning permission in 2013. However, they were unable to satisfy the Ministry of Defence's radar concerns. Therefore, we are now consulting on our new proposals for Heckington Fen Solar Park.

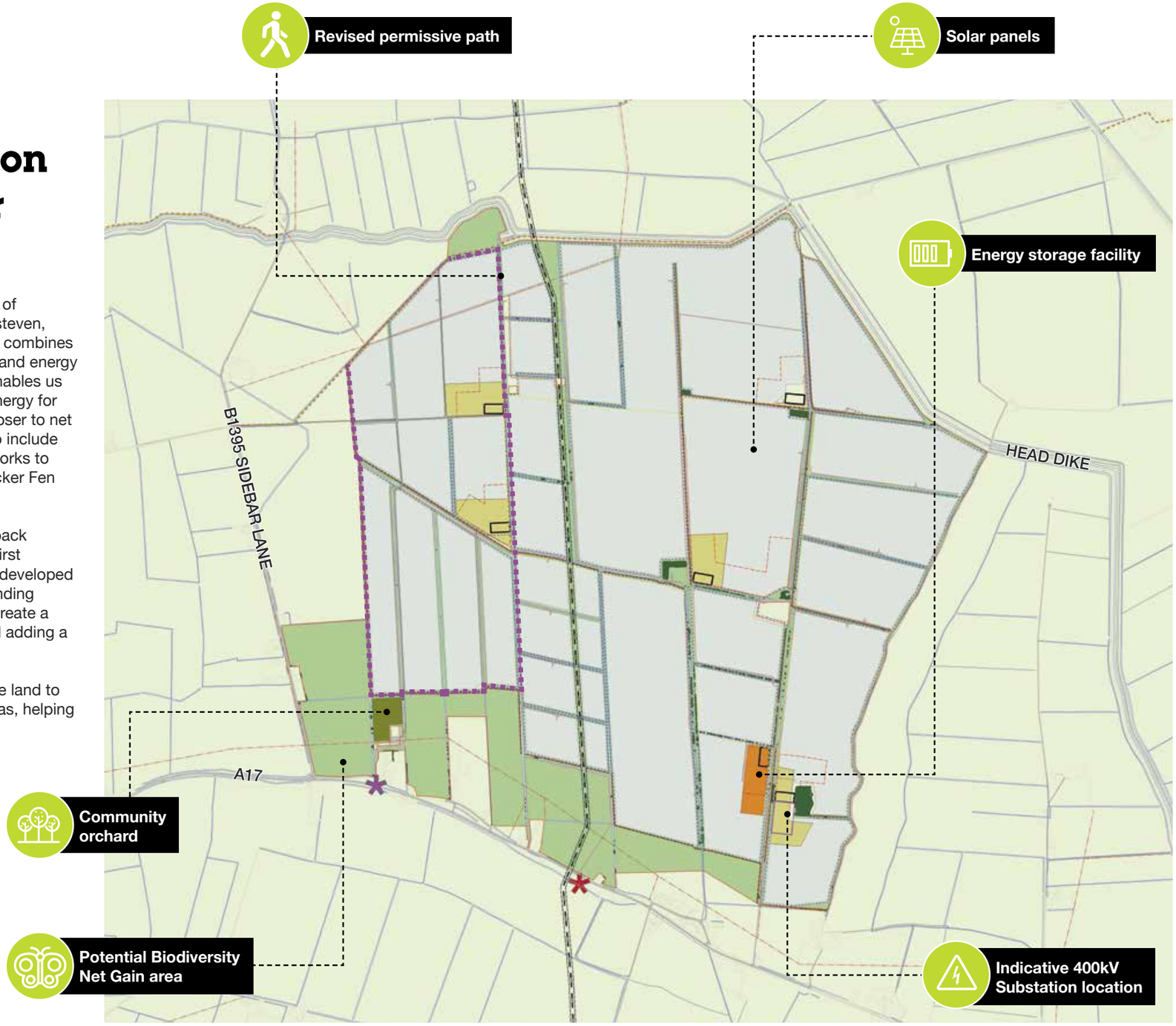
We need you to make your voices heard to help us deliver the best possible project.

What is Heckington Fen Solar Park?

Located near the village of Heckington in North Kesteven, Lincolnshire, our project combines a large-scale solar park and energy storage facility, which enables us to store excess green energy for later use – moving us closer to net zero. The proposals also include a grid connection and works to extend National Grid Bicker Fen Substation.

In response to the feedback we received during the first consultation period, we developed a new Site Layout, extending our permissive path to create a longer circular route and adding a community orchard.

We will set the rest of the land to biodiversity net gain areas, helping pollinators to flourish.



KEY

- Site Boundary
- Security Fence
- Proposed Site Entrance
- Temporary Access
- Primary Access Track
- Existing Road/Track
- Solar Development Area
- Public Right of Way
- Proposed Permissive Footpath
- Potential Biodiversity Net Gain (112.15ha)
- Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
- New Hedgerow (10.19km)
- Enhanced Hedgerow (1.98km)
- Community Orchard
- Ditch
- Gas Pipeline
- 11kV Overhead Line
- Construction Compound
- Primary Energy Storage
- Indicative 400kV Substation Location
- Indicative 132kV Substation Locations
- 132kV Substation and Energy Storage Zone
- Indicative 132kV Overhead Cable Route

ecotricity

Who is Ecotricity?

Founded by Dale Vince OBE in 1995, Ecotricity became the world's first green electricity company the following year, kick-starting the global green electricity movement.

Ecotricity is a green energy company specialising in the development and supply of renewable energy, principally the development of wind and solar power and, more recently, green gas. Since 1996 Ecotricity has been building new sources of green energy and now supply around 200,000 businesses and homes.

Ecotricity is committed to minimising climate change through the development of renewable energy generation. This helps reduce the nation's reliance on fossil fuels for electricity generation and minimise the release of carbon dioxide (CO_2) into the atmosphere.

Ecotricity was the first energy company to offer its customers green electricity, starting with one windmill in Gloucestershire and continuing to build new projects around Britain. Whenever a home or business switches to Ecotricity for their electricity, they stop using fossil fuel to power their home and start using green energy.

Other energy companies have followed this lead, and today around 33% of the energy used in the UK comes from green sources. But there's still a long way to go, and there are still fossil fuel power stations across the country, coughing CO_2 into the air. Ecotricity want to stop that by continuing to build wind and solar parks and exploring other ways of sustainably producing electricity.

> "The proposed solar park at Heckington Fen is an exciting opportunity to fight the climate emergency."

Dale Vince
Founder of Ecotricity

Our Vision for Heckington Fen

Our Solar Park will contribute towards the UK's ambition to achieve net zero by:

- Generating enough affordable green electricity to power over 100,000 homes – reducing our dependence on imported fossil fuels
- Storing energy – providing additional flexibility to support the growth of renewable energy
- Removing more than 75,000 tonnes of harmful CO_2 emissions per year

Heckington Fen will support the local economy by:

- Creating jobs and supply chain opportunities
- Giving farmers an additional source of income, protecting the agricultural industry for future generations
- Adding business rates of over £1m per year to North Kesteven District Council

The Project will enhance the local environment. We will:

- Create additional wildlife habitat
- Plant and manage new hedgerows
- Reinforce boundary planting
- Establish habitat corridors, helping birds thrive
- Offer a new permissive path over 4 kilometres that links to the existing footpath in the area

We need you to have your say to deliver these benefits – for Lincolnshire and the UK.

How to have your say

You can take part in the consultation in the following ways:

Attend a public exhibition

Come and meet the project team at one of our face-to-face exhibitions in July.

- **Heckington Village Hall**
  9-11 High St, Heckington NG34 9RA
  13:00 – 20:00, Thursday 7 July 2022
- **Bicker Village Hall**
  Cemetery Road, Bicker PE20 3BT
  12:30 – 20:30, Friday 8 July 2022
- **Heckington Show Hall Grounds**
  Heckington, Sleaford NG34 9JF
  09:00 – 17:00, Saturday 30 and Sunday 31 July 2022

Attend a webinar

Register to join one of our online webinars on our **project website**, via email, or over the phone.

- **Online**
  Tuesday 5 July 2022 – 12.00-13:30
- **Online**
  Saturday 23 July 2022 - 11:00-12:30
- **Online**
  Wednesday 3 August 2022 – 19:00-20:30

Website: **https://www.ecotricity.co.uk/our-green-energy/heckington-fen-solar-park**

Email: **heckingtonfensolar@ecotricity.co.uk**

Freephone: **0800 151 0784**

Complete a feedback form

Find this at **https://www.ecotricity.co.uk/our-green-energy/heckington-fen-solar-park** or complete a paper copy

To receive a paper copy, please get in touch via email, over the phone, or by post.

Email: **heckingtonfensolar@ecotricity.co.uk**

Freephone: **0800 151 0784**

Post: **FREEPOST ECOTRICITY SOLAR PARK**

The deadline for comments is 23:59 on 1 September 2022.

> We want to thank all of those who took part in our first consultations on the solar park – we're grateful for the generally positive feedback we've received to date, and look forward to continuing our conversations with the local community as our plans progress.

Dale Vince
Founder of Ecotricity

Alternatively, you can collect a paper copy of the feedback form at our consultation events or from the following public information points:

North Kesteven District Council
Kesteven Street, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 7EF
Opening hours:
09:00 – 17:00 Monday to Wednesday by appointment (01529 414155)

Lincolnshire County Council
County Offices, Newland, Lincoln, LN1 1YL
Opening hours:
08:30 – 17:00 Monday to Thursday
08:30 – 16:30 Friday

Boston Borough Council
Municipal Buildings, West Street, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE21 8QR
Opening hours:
08:45 – 17:15 Monday to Thursday
08:45 – 16:45 Friday

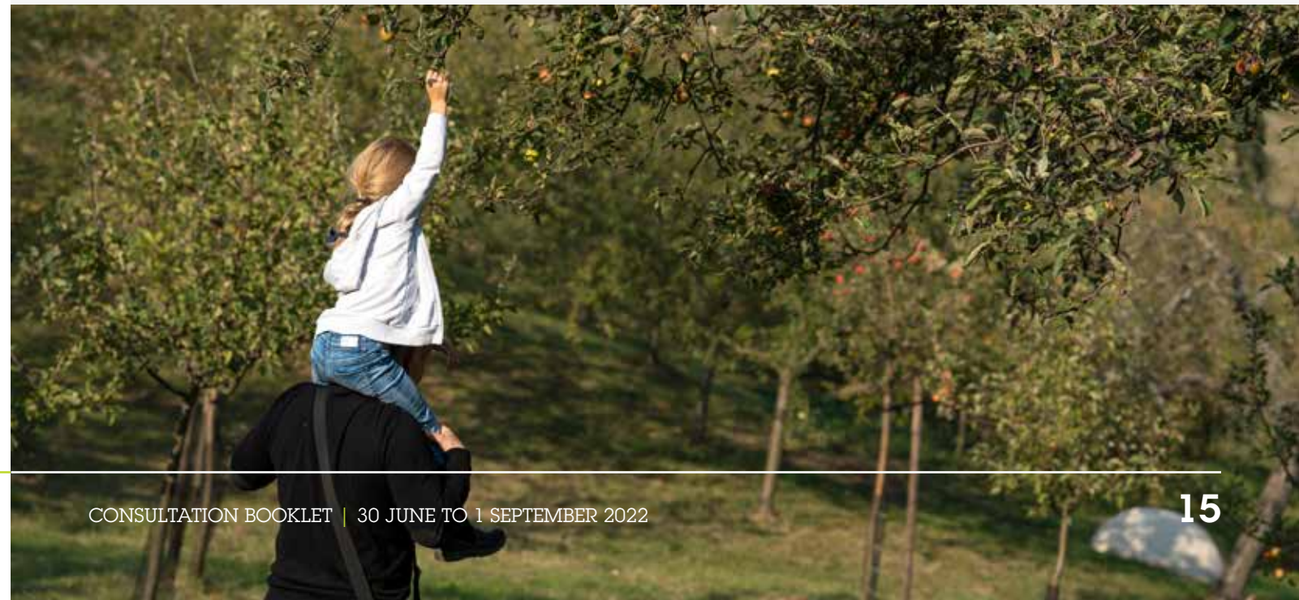
Heckington Community Hub
Council Chambers, St Andrew's Street, Heckington, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 9RE
Opening hours:
10:00 – 12:00 Monday to Saturday

Boston Library
County Hall, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE21 6DY
Opening hours:
09:00 – 17:00 Monday to Wednesday
09:00 – 18:00 Thursday
09:00 – 17:00 Friday
09:00 – 16:00 Saturday

Sleaford Library
13 – 16 Market Place, Sleaford NG34 7SR
Opening hours:
09:00 – 17:00 Monday to Wednesday
09:00 – 18:00 Thursday
09:00 – 17:00 Friday
09:00 – 13:00 Saturday

You can send these forms via email (heckingtonfensolar@ecotricity.co.uk) or by post (to Freepost ECOTRICITY SOLAR PARK).

Our team will consider all feedback and use it to develop the proposals, ensuring we have due regard to the issues and concerns that you raise.



Our proposals

Overview

The Project is made up of a number of different components, the main part being the solar park itself – shown on the map on pages 8-9. Below we provide further detail on the key components within the site, as well as the national grid connection and associated works at Bicker Fen Substation.

A number of factors have contributed to the current layout of the solar panels. These include ensuring solar panels and associated equipment is set back from neighbouring properties and existing watercourses and utilities, feedback from the early phase of engagement and through consultation with the landowner, drainage board and known utility asset owners.

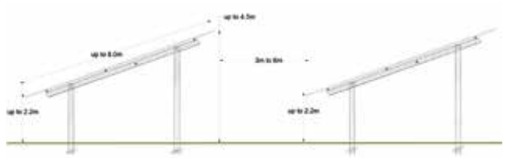
Solar panels convert light into direct current (DC) electricity through a process known as the photovoltaic effect. Photovoltaic cells are predominately made up of glass and aluminium, and two layers of a semi-conducting material, typically silicon. When light hits the silicon molecules in both layers, the electrons start to move. The metallic strips along the panels collect the electrons. The electricity is converted from DC to alternating current (AC) by inverters.

Solar PV panels

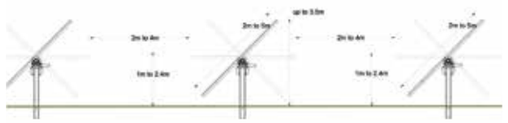
Individual modules/panels are typically 2-2.5 metres long and 1-1.5 metres wide and consist of a series of poly-crystalline cells which make up each panel. The module frame is typically built from anodised aluminium. Several panels can be installed in either the landscape or portrait orientation on the racking.

The number of modules required will be dependent upon the final design layout and the type of panels used. Currently, two panel options are being considered:

1. Fixed racking - panels fixed in one position (facing south)
2. Solar trackers - panels that rotate to track the sun throughout the day.



Indicative fixed mounting system option



Indicative tracking mounting system option

Each row of panels will be mounted on a rack supported by steel poles driven into the ground. Various mounting structures are available however, driven poles are currently expected to be the most likely foundation solution. Between each row of panels there could be an average separation distance of approximately 3.5 metres to maximise generation and allow sufficient access for maintenance, however other distances have been considered e.g. 3-6 metres for fixed panels, and 2-4 metres for trackers.

The assessments within the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) have assumed that the panel modules are mounted on structures with a clearance of a maximum of 2.2 metres and an upper height of a maximum of 4.5 metres. This upper height is subject to ongoing modelling for flood heights on the Site and may be reduced. Typical panels will be situated at least 1 metre off the ground. The trackers would pivot them, meaning they may come within 0.1 metres of the ground.

Inverters, Transformers and Switchgear

Inverters

Inverters are required to convert direct current (DC) electricity generated by the solar panels into alternating current (AC) which allows the electricity to be exported to the national grid. Inverters are sized to deal with the level of voltage which is created by the rows of panels.

Based on the current layout we have anticipated a maximum of 127 inverters will be distributed throughout the site. The unit itself tends to be containerised with associated control and switchgear equipment within a 13 metres x 4 metres x 4 metres container.

Transformers

Transformers are required to control the voltage of the electricity generated across the energy park and efficiently transmit the power to the development substation. A main 400kV step-down transformer will be required at the main on-site substation and, in order to connect the inverters throughout the site, up to six distribution step down transformers may be installed. For distribution power transformers, the dimensions will be approximately 10 metres x 10 metres x 10 metres. For sub-distribution power transformers, the dimensions will be approximately 7 metres x 4 metres x 4 metres.

Switchgear

Switchgear is required to control, protect and isolate electrical equipment. It is composed of electrical disconnect switches, fuses or circuit breakers. Switchgear is proposed across the site, likely within the compounds for the 132kV substations. The maximum dimensions are proposed to be 15 metres x 10 metres x 5 metres.

Energy Storage

An energy storage facility will form part of the proposed development. The primary energy storage area is proposed to be located in the south-eastern section of the site, either in a series of individual containers or housed within a larger building(s). It is estimated at this time that the storage capacity of this site would be approximately 200-400MW. Further areas of land for energy storage are being assessed within other parts of the Site. Each of these areas are near to a substation location. A maximum of 2.8 hectares is set aside for this element with the energy storage units having a maximum height of 6 metres.

The final design for the energy storage system has not yet been finalised, but will likely include batteries, inverters and system controllers. Any system installed will be strenuously tested during the factory and pre-commissioning testing regime before being given the final sign off to energise.

Onsite cabling

Our current proposals contain options for a mixture of below ground and above ground cabling for the solar park. Any above ground cabling will be attached to poles which would traverse the site. The maximum height of these poles could be 30 metres.

As the design of the Site develops further it will be determined if any above ground cabling is required. All below ground cabling will be laid into trenches and then the soil will be re-laid. The process will follow a soil management plan to ensure that the soil structure and quality are not degraded as part of the construction process.

The cabling will transfer the energy from the solar panels to the nearest of the onsite distribution substations. Energy from these substations will be taken to the 400kV substation before leaving the Site to enter the grid at the National Grid Electricity Transmission 400kV Bicker Fen substation.

Onsite substations

Our current design includes up to six onsite substations and one 400kV substation within the Site. This is a design difference from the information presented within previous consultation which indicated a single substation area on the Site. Since then, further design work has taken place and has determined that a series of substations may be required. These substations will have dimensions of around 80 metres x 40 metres x 10 metres. The main 400kV substation could be 135 metres x 90 metres with some of the equipment being a maximum height of 15 metres.

The main 400kV substation will include a control building which will include office space and welfare facilities as well as operational monitoring and maintenance equipment. The dimensions of this control building are dependent on further assessment work. A worst-case scenario is expected to be approximately 20 metres x 10 metres x 3 metres.

Customer Switchgear

Switchgear is proposed around the site, likely within a control building alongside the substations and energy storage.

Fencing, Security and Lighting

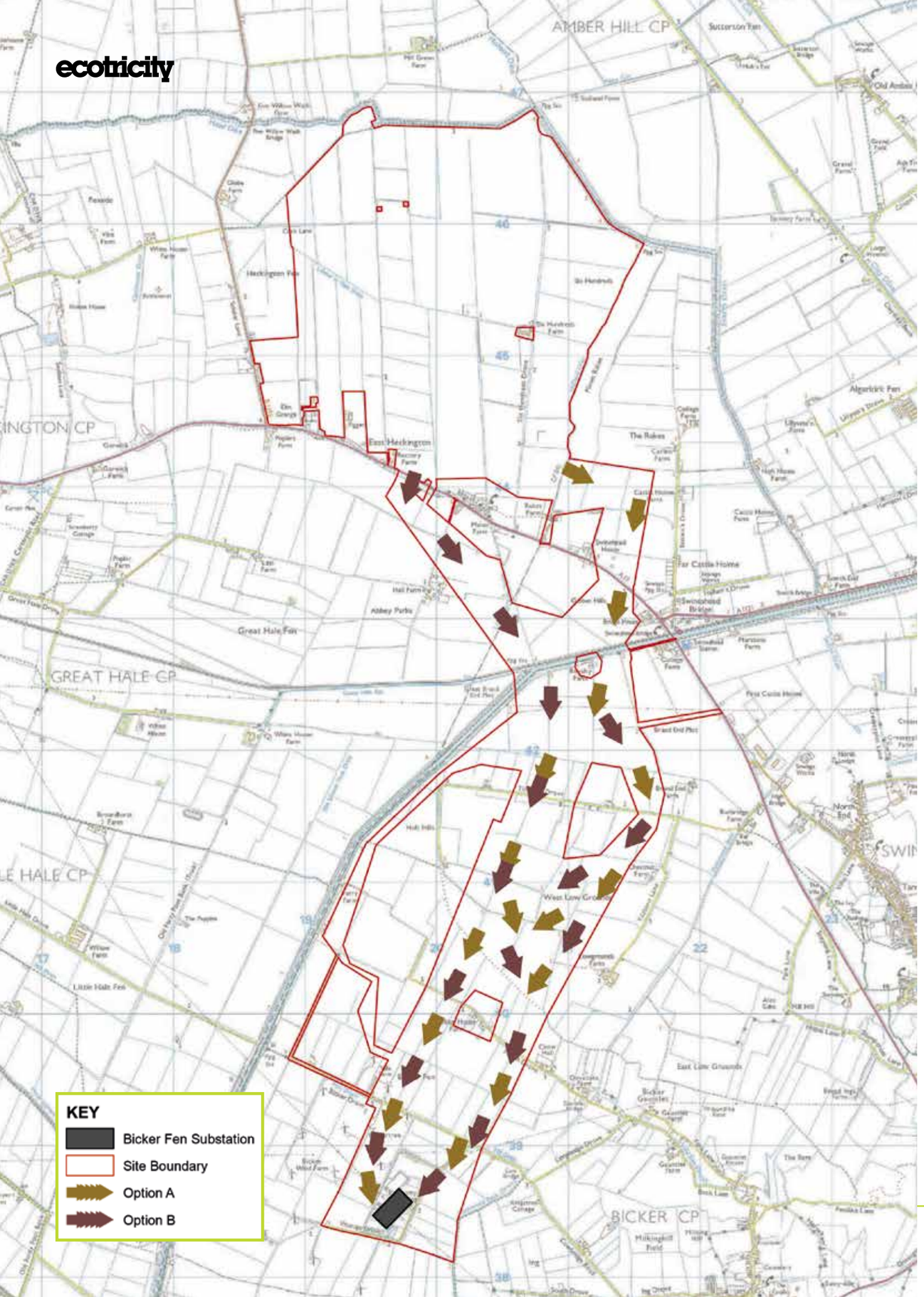
A fence will enclose the operational areas of the Site. The fence is likely to be a metal mesh fence of approximately 3 metres in height. A pole mounted closed circuit television (CCTV) system will be installed around the perimeter of the Site, and will face towards the Energy Park and away from any land outside of the Site. These cameras will be mounted on poles of 3.5 metres height located within the perimeter fence.

It is likely that lighting on sensors will be installed around the energy storage area and potentially at any other pieces of critical infrastructure for security purposes. No areas of the development are proposed to be continuously lit during operation. Security cameras typically use infrared lighting.

Site Access and Access Tracks

Currently there are a number of proposed access points into the Site from the A17. It is proposed to use the existing access point near Elm Grange for the very initial stages of construction. The initial phase of construction will include the construction of a new point of access onto the Site from the A17, which will take approximately eight weeks to construct. This new access point was previously approved for the wind farm application and will require the creation of a new T-junction.

Once on site the access track will continue northwards and from this point minor internal access tracks will connect the rest of the site.



Offsite cabling

The proposed connection point is the National Grid Bicker Fen Substation. This is an existing 400kV substation that is located approximately 5.5 kilometres south of the Site as the crow flies. The exact route for the cable route to connect the solar park to this substation is still being determined, but we have designed the following two indicative route options:

Option A: Eastern Route
Option B: 50-50 Route

These names are derived from their position in relation to the South Forty Foot Drain (one of the main features the cable route would pass).

The Eastern Route (Option A) would leave the Solar Park on the eastern boundary of the Site, cross the Viking Link and Triton Knoll connections, cross the A17, and head south towards Bicker Fen Substation. Once this route option passes south of the Forty Foot Drain, the cables could be located anywhere within the red line boundary. The Option A arrows on the map (left) are indicative of where the cables could be positioned.

The 50-50 Route (Option B – named as it covers elements of The Eastern Route, and a now discounted Western Route) would leave the Solar Park at the site entrance, on the eastern side of a high-pressure gas pipe, and head south towards Bicker Fen Substation. Similar to Option A, once this route option passes south of the Forty Foot Drain, the cables could be located anywhere within the red line boundary. The Option B arrows on the map (left) are indicative of where the cables could be positioned.

Option A is the shortest route option and would be the easiest for our construction vehicles to access. Although it would require more drilled sections than Option B, these sections would be shorter (in terms of distance).

Option B is slightly closer to properties near the site entrance and its drilled sections would be longer (in terms of distance) but there would be less of them.

All the new offsite cabling will be laid underground. At certain points along the route, it will be necessary to drill under ‘obstacles’ such as roads, watercourses and utilities.

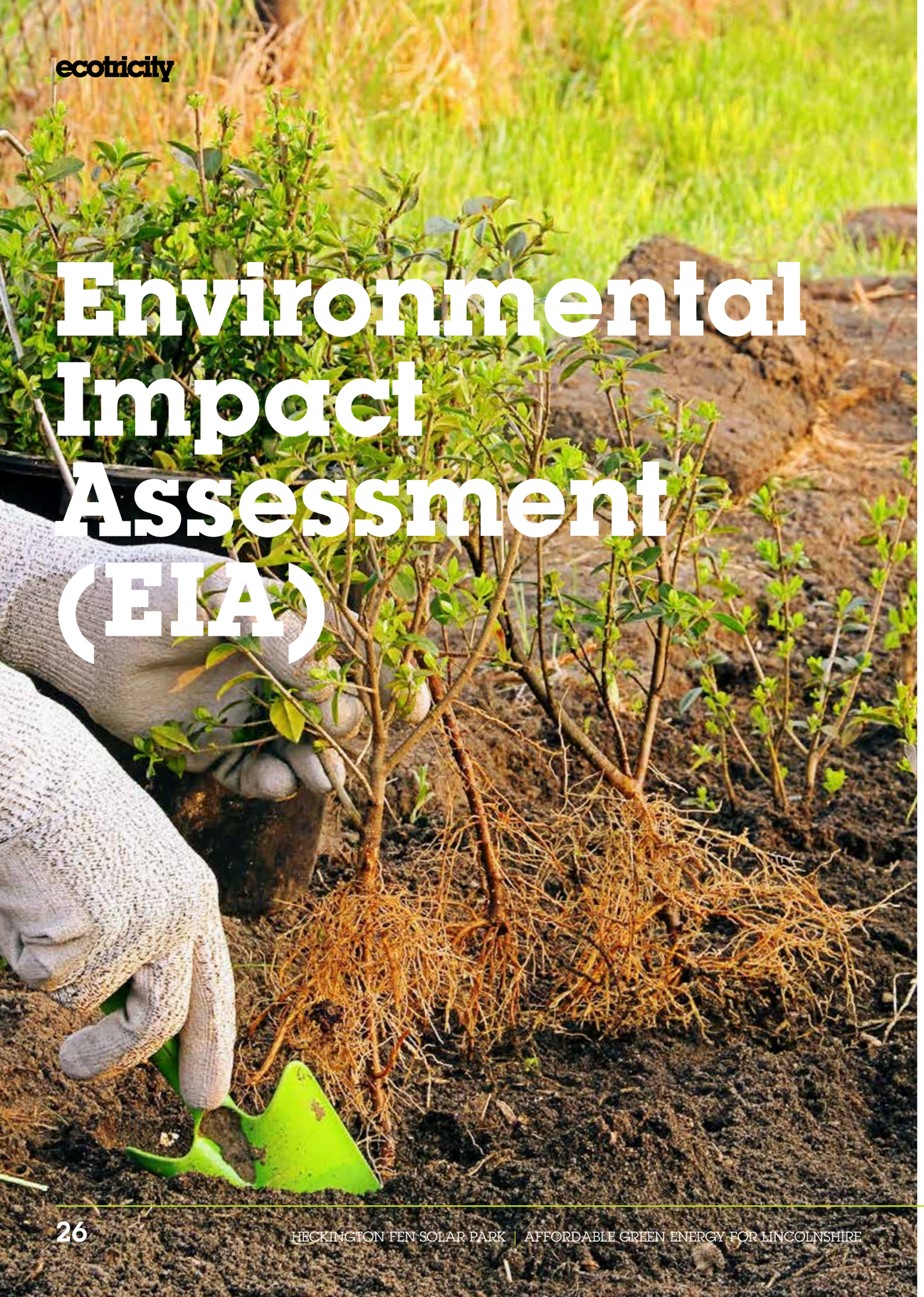
There will be no new above ground power lines for the offsite cabling.

Bicker Fen Substation Works

The electricity generated is expected to be exported via a connection from the Site to the existing National Grid Bicker Fen Substation.

This will require an extension to the existing structures at Bicker Fen Substation. The location of this extension has not yet been confirmed by National Grid, however ongoing discussions indicate the likely location of the extension will be on land to the immediate south-west of the existing substation. This area of land is currently an area of rough grassland bounded by woodland. The area of land required for this extension is approximately 145 metres x 45 metres.

This extension will include new equipment which will look similar to the units already installed at the Bicker Fen Substation, and will likely be approximately 55 metres x 30 metres. It is expected that the maximum height of this new unit will be 15 metres, which is similar to the units already installed at Bicker Fen. A perimeter road is proposed within the wider design area which will be approximately 4.5 metres wide.



Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

Overview of EIA process

EIA is a process to identify the potential effects that a proposed development may have on the environment, people and local communities. This process involves consultation with affected communities and other stakeholders to ensure that the EIA has identified the relevant effects of the Project. These effects can be positive or negative.

Through the design evolution process, we are working to reduce the negative effects of the Project and provide enhancements where possible.

What information are we providing for this consultation?

The preliminary EIA findings for Heckington Fen Solar Park are reported within the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR). The PEIR has been prepared for the purposes of statutory consultation.

It helps members of the public, consultation bodies and other stakeholders to develop an informed view of the likely significant effects of the Project, as identified at this stage, and comment on particular areas of interest.

This consultation is taking place before we finalise our design as part of our application for development consent. Alongside this application, we will provide a full Environmental Statement, which will report the outcome of the EIA process.

How can I access this information?

The full suite of PEIR documentation can be found on our website. To allow you to read information on impacts and topic areas that are important to you, we have divided the PEIR into the following topic areas:

- Chapter 1 Introduction
- Chapter 2 EIA Assessment Methodology
- Chapter 3 Site Description, Site Selection and Iterative Design
- Chapter 4 Proposed Development
- Chapter 5 Planning Policy
- Chapter 6 Landscape and Visual
- Chapter 7 Residential Amenity
- Chapter 8 Ecology and Ornithology
- Chapter 9 Hydrology, Hydrogeology, Flood Risk and Drainage
- Chapter 10 Cultural Heritage
- Chapter 11 Socio-economic
- Chapter 12 Noise and Vibration
- Chapter 13 Climate Change
- Chapter 14 Transport and Access
- Chapter 15 Air Quality
- Chapter 16 Land Use and Agriculture
- Chapter 17 Glint and Glare
- Chapter 18 Miscellaneous Issues
- Chapter 19 Summary
- Chapter 20 Glossary

The PEIR contains a series of appendices and technical plans, which can also be accessed on our website or viewed in person at one of our consultation events.

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

Summary of effects

As part of the EIA process we have identified areas where there are potentially significant impacts. Where these have been identified to be adverse significant impacts, we set out proposed mitigation measures. These are summarised in the table below.

Area of assessment	Effects	Proposed mitigation
Landscape and visual impact	We have identified potential impacts on a number of viewpoints looking into the proposed site	We are proposing a range of measures, including: • Significant hedgerow planting • Designing the site to be less visible from certain locations • Additional landscaping and planting around the perimeter of the site
Land use and agriculture	Potential loss of agricultural land from cumulative solar farms	Determining if land is classed as Best and Most Versatile and allowing agricultural activities to continue on land for operational lifetime of solar schemes
Climate change	The climate change impacts of the proposed development would have a significant beneficial impact through the production of green energy for the UK	No mitigation needed
Socio-economic	The proposed development will generate a beneficial impact through the creation of local job opportunities and investment in the local economy over the lifetime of the Project	No mitigation needed

Prior to the implementation of the proposed mitigation measures, significant effects are not anticipated in relation to the following topics and these are therefore not discussed further in this chapter:

- Hydrology, Hydrogeology and Flood Risk and Drainage
- Cultural Heritage
- Air quality

In the next section, we set some of the findings from key areas of our assessments.

ecotricity

Landscape and Visual

The potential landscape and visual impacts have been considered as part of our EIA in Chapter 6 of the PEIR. The assessments we've carried out are based on the maximum parameters of the current site layout and proposed equipment, including solar panels, substation, overhead power cables and fencing as described above. Some elements of the proposal are not yet known and will be finalised for the Environmental Statement which will be submitted as part of our planning application.

During the construction and operational phases of the Project we have identified the potential for effects to those with a view of the proposed solar park site and Bicker Fen Substation. To ensure we mitigate any impacts as much as possible, we have developed the design of the site to reduce the area of land where solar panels will be located. This has been done to provide greater separation from nearby residential and commercial properties.

We have also considered existing landscape elements of the site when looking to locate certain features within the solar park. This includes the current location for the proposed 400kV substation which is currently in the south east corner of the solar park site to maximise visual screening provided by the existing blocks of woodland and tree lines.

Our design also ensures watercourses and proposed new vegetation can be accessed for maintenance when required. Existing hedgerows and lines of trees within the solar park would be protected and enhanced using appropriate species. New hedgerows would be established along the southern and western edges of the solar panels, and within the site.

As part of the solar park, a new community orchard is being proposed in the south western corner of the site. This would be located immediately to the north of the new school at Elm Grange. The orchard would be available for use by the new school at Elm Grange, parish councils and community groups by arrangement. The access arrangements are still being determined.

Ecotricity acknowledges that the proposed solar park will have visual impacts due to the nature of the proposals. We have, however, sought to limit any significant impacts through our proposed vegetation planting and screening, as well as designing the site to reduce impacts where possible.

Land use and agriculture

The potential land use and agricultural impacts have been considered as part of our EIA in Chapter 16 of the PEIR. We have looked at impacts during construction, operation and decommissioning.

The solar park and associated equipment will cover approximately 586 hectares (approximately 1450 acres). This area includes the solar panels, energy storage, biodiversity net gain areas and all associated infrastructure. The cable route is expected to be 7 - 8 kilometres long depending on the final route taken.

During construction, there will likely be impacts to areas required for access and areas where equipment will be located. Through careful design, any impacts will be minimised where possible. There will be normal ongoing agricultural grazing land uses and agricultural management of the grassland beneath the solar panels and the areas used for biodiversity net gain during operation.

These assessments through the PEIR have identified that there are no significant adverse effects on agricultural land quality that cannot be mitigated. Through a combination of careful mitigation, management and good practice measures, which would be implemented through the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), the agricultural land quality will not be significantly adversely affected. In addition, with careful planning and practice any localised effects on farm businesses can be avoided or mitigated, and measures will be secured within the CEMP.

Noise and vibration

The potential noise and vibration impacts have been considered as part of our EIA in Chapter 12 of the PEIR. We have looked at impacts during construction, operation and decommissioning. This includes noise associated with construction traffic as well as noise associated with the day to day operations of the solar park.

We have identified that noise and vibration from construction activities may be heard or felt at times, but with the proposed mitigation in place the effects are likely to be classed as not significant or negligible. This mitigation includes working within fixed day time hours, including some restrictions on weekend working, as well as following good practice construction methods. Similarly, noise and vibration from traffic during construction is likely to have little or no effect.

During construction, we have identified potential significant noise effects if we needed to carry out construction of our cable trench to Bicker Fen through the night. If night time work was required we propose to manage any impacts through localised screening, as well engaging directly with any local residents likely to be affected.

Any noise associated with the operation of the proposed development would be managed through careful design to minimise impact on nearby residents, along with screening and vegetation planting to reduce noise impacts.

Transport and access

The potential transport and access impacts have been considered as part of our EIA in Chapter 14 of the PEIR. We have looked at impacts during construction, operation and decommissioning.

Access to the solar park during the construction and operational phases is proposed via the A17 to the south of the site (see map on page 8). Whilst the proposed access is under construction, a temporary construction access will be provided via an existing junction with the A17, approximately 600 metres southeast of B1395 Sidebar Lane junction.

The cable route will be accessed using existing junctions with the A17. At this stage, the exact point of access to the proposed connection point at Bicker Fen Substation is not confirmed. However, it is anticipated that access to the north of the railway line will be served via Parks Farm, if this route is progressed. The preferred access option to the south of the railway is via the existing Triton Knoll or National Grid access points at the A17 and the A52 Bicker Road respectively. However, the assessments have also considered access to the proposed connection point via Royalty Lane. Where possible, any access and routing options would seek to avoid Bicker village.

For traffic movements associated with the solar park, we are assuming an 18 month construction period and a six day working week.

During this time we predict around nine HGV deliveries per day on average (or up to 18 two way movements per day). This could be higher or lower at times depending on the stage of construction. In addition to the HGV movements, there will also be a small number of construction movements associated with smaller vehicles such as the collection of skips for waste management, the transport of construction workers and sub-contractors.

Once operational, it is anticipated that there will be around one to two visits to the solar park per day for equipment maintenance, cleaning, and tending to the sheep and biodiversity areas.

A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) will be implemented during the construction phase of the Project. A draft version of the CTMP has been prepared as part of the PEIR and is available on the project website or on request. The aim of the CTMP is to minimise the impact of the construction phase on local residents, businesses and the highway network. Construction traffic movements will be kept to agreed working hours where practicable and designed to minimise disruption to the highway network and local residents (including during the night-time).

Ecology and Ornithology

The potential ecology and ornithology impacts associated with Heckington Fen Solar Park have been considered as part of our EIA in Chapter 8 of the PEIR. The proposed development will be situated within an intensively farmed landscape.

We will produce an Outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (OCEMP) along with our DCO application, which will ensure there is no damage to any hedgerows, woodland or watercourses during construction. The implementation of this OCEMP will ensure there is no significant disturbance or risk of injury or death of breeding farmland birds, disturbance to wintering wetland birds, badgers or brown hares.

The proposed design will also ensure all panels and equipment will be set back from all watercourses by a minimum of 8 metres, this will help ensure protection of animals, including water vole if they re-colonise the site.

We are also proposing a significant amount of biodiversity enhancements are part of the design which is predicted to amount to over 200% net gain on the existing site. This includes:

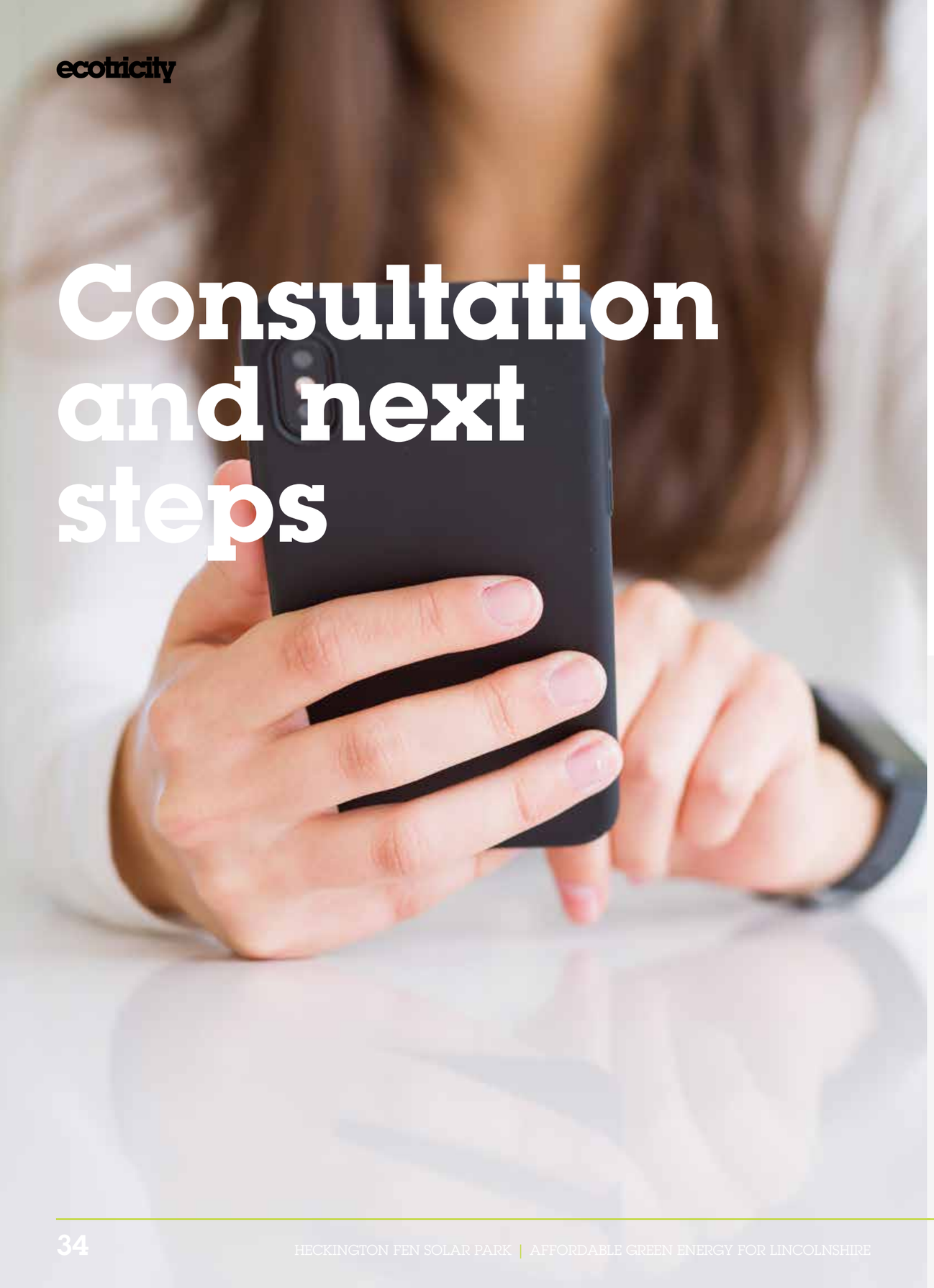
- Converting 440 hectares (1,087 acres) of intensive arable farmland beneath the solar panels to low intensity sheep pasture.
- creation of 96 hectares (237 acres) of new grasslands
- a further 46 hectares (113 acres) of species rich grassland within the energy park will be managed to maximise the nature conservation value
- 1.8 hectares (4.4 acres) of community orchard which is managed specifically for nature conservation

Socio-economic

The potential socio-economic impacts associated with the proposed development have been considered as part of our EIA in Chapter 11 of the PEIR.

Our assessments indicates that the Project could deliver over 60 temporary jobs during the 18 month construction phase as well as wider investment in the local economy.

During operation, the Project could create an additional 13 full-time jobs for North Kesteven as well as tens of millions of pounds of investment in the local economy, including over £1m per year for North Kesteven in business rates for the 40 year lifespan of the Project.



Consultation and next steps

Overview of consultation

We're consulting on our proposed solar park and energy storage facility from 30 June to 1 September 2022.

We first consulted local residents and stakeholders between 22 October and 17 December 2021. We're now formally consulting you on the proposed application for the solar park, which includes the new site layout, that has been developed in response to the feedback we received during the first consultation period.

But the exact detailed design has not been determined yet: we need your feedback to help us achieve the site's full potential.

This round of consultation gives you another (formal) opportunity to provide your views before we submit our application to the Planning Inspectorate next year.

After this consultation round, we will consider all your comments and use them to develop our proposals, ensuring we have due regard to the issues and concerns raised.

How to provide feedback

We want to hear your views on our proposals. Your feedback is important to us and can help to shape our final designs.

So, we want to make it as easy as possible for you to provide feedback.

There is an online version of the feedback form on our project website (https://www.ecotricity.co.uk/our-green-energy/heckington-fen-solar-park) and we would appreciate you taking the time to provide your comments there.

The deadline for comments is 23:59 on 1 September 2022.

If you would like a hard copy of this form, please let us know using the details below.

heckingtonfensolar@ecotricity.co.uk

0800 151 0784

FREEPOST ECOTRICITY SOLAR PARK

Consenting timeline

As the proposed generation capacity exceeds 50 megawatts (MW), Heckington Fen Solar Park will be classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). The consenting regime for NSIPs comes under the Planning Act 2008 (the Act) and requires Ecotricity to apply for a Development Consent Order (DCO).

Ecotricity (Heck Fen Solar) Limited (the Applicant) intends to submit an application for a DCO under Section 37 of the Act to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS).

The Application would be examined by PINS – the independent body responsible for examining NSIPs – who would make a recommendation on the application to the Secretary of State (SoS). The SoS makes the final decision on a DCO application.

Before submitting the DCO application, the Act requires us to carry out consultation with people living in the vicinity of the land and prescribed stakeholders.

Early involvement of communities, local authorities and other stakeholders helps to ensure we listen to your views and identify valuable information about the potential effects of the Project. It further provides an opportunity for early feedback from stakeholders to help shape the Project's development.

Early involvement also ensures that potential mitigation measures can be considered and, where appropriate, built into our designs before we submit an application for development consent.

You can find out more about the DCO process at https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/

PINS has also published guidance on the process for members of the public, which can be viewed online at https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/

Community benefits

Community Benefit is not a planning consideration. However in addition to the new permissive path, community orchard and biodiversity enhancement, a community benefit fund is being explored and could be provided as part of our development.

Any community benefit fund would need to be in line with our mission to end the use of fossil fuels and tackling the climate crisis. This focuses on three key areas of the economy that generate the most carbon emissions: energy, transport and food.

ecotricity

ecotricity

Where to find out more

You can find further information and details of the site's progress at **www.ecotricity.co.uk/our-green-energy/heckington-fen-solar-park**

Please scan the QR code to be directed to our website, where you can find a handy video explaining the site layout.

The Planning Inspectorate's advice notes can be accessed free of charge electronically at the National Infrastructure Planning Portal (under Heckington Fen Solar Park, s51 advice): **https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/east-midlands/heckington-fen-solar-park/**

Contact details

If you'd like to talk to us about Heckington Fen Solar Park or view a hard copy of any of our materials, please let us know using the following details:

heckingtonfensolar@ecotricity.co.uk

0800 151 0784

FREEPOST ECOTRICITY SOLAR PARK

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information here is accurate at the time of going to print. If you do not wish to be contacted in relation to Heckington Fen Solar Park, please email our team on **heckingtonfensolar@ecotricity.co.uk**

Images used in this document are indicative.

ecotricity

ecotricity