

HECKINGTON FEN SOLAR PARK
STATEMENT OF
COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

JUNE 2022





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NOTE: THIS DOCUMENT IS DESIGNED TO BE VIEWED AS A4 DOUBLE SIDED

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

- 1.1.1 Ecotricity (Heck Fen Solar) Limited (“we” or “the Applicant”) is preparing a Development Consent Order (DCO) application under the Planning Act 2008 for a new solar park at Heckington Fen in Lincolnshire (“the Application”).
- 1.1.2 This document is a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) which sets out how we intend to consult people ahead of our application for development consent for the Heckington Fen Solar Park project (hereinafter referred to as the Project).
- 1.1.3 The Project is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and requires consent from the Secretary of State (SoS) for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), via a DCO. Accordingly, this SoCC has been prepared pursuant to section 47(1) of the Planning Act 2008 (the Act) and Regulation 12 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.
- 1.1.4 In developing the SoCC, we consulted with and had regard to comments from the following s43(1) local planning authorities:
- North Kesteven District Council;
 - Boston Borough Council; and
 - Lincolnshire County Council.

1.2 NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

- 1.2.1 As the proposed generation capacity exceeds 50 megawatts (MW), Heckington Fen Solar Park will be classified as an NSIP. The consenting regime for NSIPs comes under the Planning Act 2008 and requires Ecotricity to apply for a DCO.
- 1.2.2 The Applicant intends to submit an application for a DCO under Section 37 of the Act to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS).
- 1.2.3 The Application would be examined by PINS – the independent body responsible for examining NSIPs – who would make a recommendation on the application to the SoS. The SoS makes the final decision on a DCO application.
- 1.2.4 Before submitting an application, the Act requires us to carry out consultation with people living in the vicinity of the land and prescribed stakeholders.
- 1.2.5 Early involvement of communities, local authorities and other stakeholders helps to ensure we identify valuable information about the potential effects of the Project and provides an opportunity for early feedback from stakeholders to help shape the Project’s development.
- 1.2.6 Early involvement also ensures that potential mitigation measures can be considered and, where appropriate, built into our designs before an application for development consent is submitted.

2 ABOUT ECOTRICITY

2.1 THE DEVELOPER

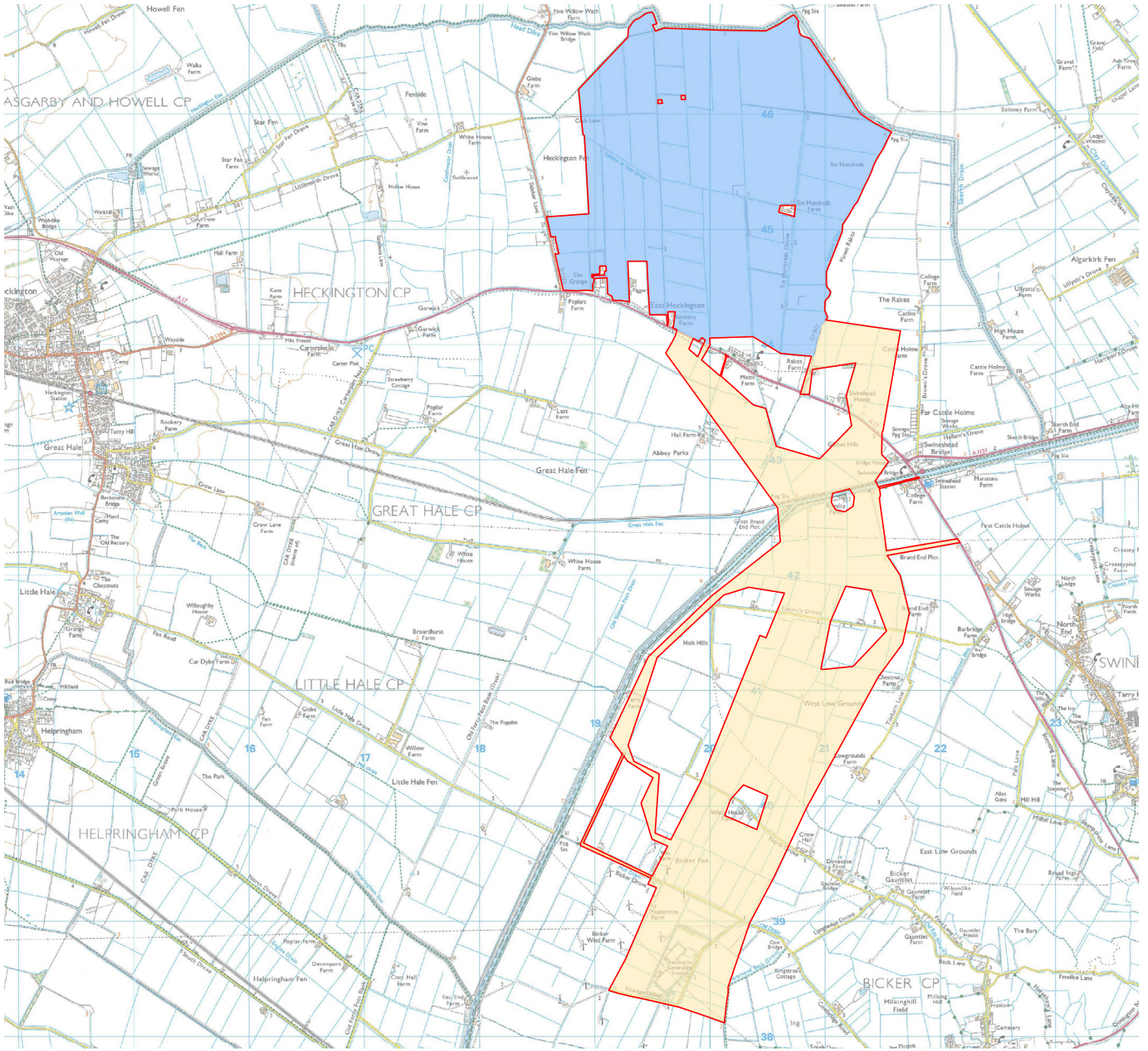
Ecotricity (Heckington Fen Solar) Limited

- 2.1.1 Ecotricity is a green energy company specialising in the development and supply of renewable energy, principally the development of wind and solar, and more recently, green gas. Since 1996 Ecotricity have been building new sources of green energy and now supply nearly 200,000 businesses and homes.
- 2.1.2 Ecotricity are committed to minimising anthropogenic climate change through the development of renewable energy generation, supplanting the nation's reliance on fossil fuels for electricity generation and the release of carbon dioxide (CO₂) to the atmosphere.
- 2.1.3 Ecotricity was the first energy company to offer its customers green electricity, starting with one windmill in Gloucestershire and have continued building new wind and solar parks around Britain since. 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.
- 2.1.4 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 CO₂ into the air. Ecotricity want to stop that by continuing to build wind and solar parks as we grow, as well as exploring other ways of producing electricity sustainably.

3 THE PROJECT

3.1 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1.1 The solar park is proposed on arable farmland near Heckington, north of the A17 and to the south east of South Kyme. Environmental assessments are currently being undertaken, so the exact layout is still to be determined.
- 3.1.2 Early results suggest that the c.1,450 acre site could accommodate a solar park of around 500 megawatts (MW) if approved, as well as a corresponding energy storage facility, of some 200-400MW.
- 3.1.3 The solar park would be built on land already approved for the use of renewable energy, following the approval by the Secretary of State in February 2013 for 22 wind turbines. Since then, agreement has not been reached with the Ministry of Defence regarding their radar concerns, which means the wind park has not been built. The solar park and wind turbines would not exist together, therefore should the solar park be approved and constructed; the wind turbines would not be built.
- 3.1.4 The energy from the solar park would pass through new underground cables and connect into the existing Bicker Fen substation. The proposed development therefore includes the energy park, cable route, and extension works at the existing Bicker Fen substation.



RED LINE BOUNDARY



KEY

- Site Boundary
- Energy Park Area
- Grid Connection Routes Area

3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 3.2.1 The Project is an 'environmental impact assessment (EIA) development' under the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017. Therefore, the preliminary environmental information report (PEIR) will be consulted upon as part of the statutory consultation. The full PEIR will be available on the project website and at in-person events (if COVID-19 restrictions allow) during statutory consultation, as well as a non-technical summary of the PEIR. Your views will be sought on the information provided in those documents.

4 CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

4.1 AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND VALUES

- 4.1.1 Ecotricity is committed to engaging and consulting with communities and stakeholders at an early stage of the project, giving people the opportunity to provide feedback and insight at a formative stage ahead of more detailed design work being carried out.
- 4.1.2 Ecotricity want to engage as fully and widely as possible, ensuring we're listening and learning from the people that live in the area, as well as wider stakeholders.
- 4.1.3 Ecotricity is committed to being a good, long term neighbour at Heckington Fen and want to ensure we can build a solar park that benefits the local area.
- 4.1.4 The approach to engagement for Heckington Fen is to carry out two phases of consultation, which started in October 2021 with non-statutory consultation, held between 22nd October 2021 and 17th December 2021. This will be followed by statutory consultation in summer 2022.
- 4.1.5 The approach to both non-statutory and statutory consultation is guided by the requirements of the Planning Act 2008 and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (now Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) Guidance.
- 4.1.6 Ecotricity plans to implement a digital-led approach to consultation to ensure that the project proposals can be viewed online, and feedback can be provided through a dedicated project website. Non-digital methods will also be utilised to provide alternative means for consultees to engage with the project, including providing a hard copy version of all materials on request and enabling consultees to provide feedback verbally and in writing. In-person consultation events are planned to be held in the vicinity of the site during statutory consultation, however Ecotricity will reserve the right to cancel face-to-face engagement in the interests of safety, in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions.

4.2 EARLY ENGAGEMENT AND PREPARATION OF THE SOCC

- 4.2.1 During the non-statutory consultation, Ecotricity sought to identify and understand the views and opinions of all the stakeholders and communities who may be affected by the works. Ecotricity consulted with stakeholders at an early stage to ensure technical advice and local knowledge was considered in the early development of the Project. These stakeholders included local councils, elected representatives, local residents, hard-to-reach groups, and local interest groups.
- 4.2.2 The early engagement newsletter (see Appendix 1) was issued to just under 6000 addresses (see Appendix 2) including all properties within 5km of the proposed solar park site and 2km of the proposed grid connection search area to introduce the project and publicise the first phase of consultation.
- 4.2.3 Our strategy was to go beyond the minimum requirements of the Planning Act 2008 and engage with wider stakeholders, including through social media outreach, to ensure we build the best project possible.
- 4.2.4 Three webinars were held during early engagement to introduce the project and give residents, landowners and wider stakeholders and elected officials the opportunity to meet the project team and ask questions. Please see Table 1 for attendance rates:
- 4.2.5 Attendees at the online events consisted of local residents, landowners and representatives from local parish councils, community groups, local businesses and statutory consultees.

TABLE 1: ATTENDEES AT PHASE ONE ONLINE ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

Date	Registered	Attended
Thursday 4th November 10:00-11:30	11	7
Saturday 13th November 11:00-12:30	20	12
Monday 15th November 18:00-19:30	19	10
Total attended	50	29

4.2.6 In addition to webinar attendance and the feedback given by participants, six feedback forms were completed as part of the early engagement, with 18 enquiries via email and four following the close of consultation. These were submitted by a variety of stakeholders, including local residents, landowners, elected representatives, parish councils, community groups, statutory consultees and renewable energy enthusiasts.

4.2.7 Below we have listed the key themes from the feedback received during non-statutory consultation.

- The potential for the Project to be combined with agricultural use - especially soft fruit
- Changes to the wildlife habitat and potential consequences to the food chain
- Reduction of agricultural land and when arable land would be returned
- Management of the drains to avoid flooding of adjacent land
- The visual impact of the Project and associated infrastructure to the grid, including height of solar panels and how successful proposed screening would be
- Construction traffic routes and site access
- Reinstatement of the land at the end of the project life
- Manufacturing location of panels
- Innovative design opportunities
- Community benefits
- Location of biodiversity areas
- General support for solar and the project

- Requests for more detailed maps
- The use of data collected for previous wind farm application and its connection to the current development.

4.2.8 Local authorities were also provided the opportunity for individual briefings on the phone, in person, or through Microsoft Teams. Briefings were offered to all local parish councils, MPs and elected members within the affected authorities.

5 STATUTORY CONSULTATION

5.1 WHEN WILL THE CONSULTATION TAKE PLACE

5.1.1 The statutory consultation will run for nine weeks, between **30 June and 1 September 2022 (64 days)**. All responses to the consultation must be received by 11:59pm on 1 September 2022.

5.2 WHAT ARE WE CONSULTING ON?

5.2.1 We will be seeking feedback on all aspects of our plans for the solar park. This will involve asking the local community to give us their views about our proposals regarding issues such as, but not limited to:

- The preliminary environmental information report (PEIR) and impact assessment
- Short term and temporary impacts during construction, such as upon wildlife and local residents.
- Long term operational impacts, such as upon wildlife, landscape and views.
- Benefits, such as contributing towards low carbon energy production and providing security of energy supply.
- The parameters of the solar park, known as the Project Envelope - this includes the size, scale and construction methodologies of the project.

5.3 WHO ARE WE CONSULTING?

5.3.1 Anyone who is interested in this project is welcome to take part. Ecotricity welcomes all views and will take them into account before we submit our DCO application.

5.3.2 Under section 47 of the Act, Ecotricity has a duty to consult people living in the vicinity of the land, i.e. the local community. Working with North Kesteven District Council, Boston Borough Council and Lincolnshire County Council, we have developed a core consultation zone for the distribution of our consultation materials, as shown in Appendix 2, comprising 5,685 addresses. Ecotricity will also be consulting the following groups (see Appendix 3 for more details):

- Local residents and businesses in the vicinity of the project
- Landowners with interest in the project
- Parish councils
- Community groups, voluntary organisations, faith communities
- Environmental groups in vicinity of project location
- Schools and colleges in vicinity of project location
- Seldom heard groups
- Statutory consultees
- Non statutory consultees
- Members of Parliament and local government.

5.4 HOW ARE WE CONSULTING

- 5.4.1 Ecotricity will undertake a digital-led consultation, to ensure the consultation is inclusive and accessible for all stakeholder audiences. This approach also ensures that the consultation is able to go ahead and is not affected by any potential future restrictions and Government health guidance relating to COVID-19.
- 5.4.2 In addition to making information available online, Ecotricity will host a series of online consultation webinars to provide a platform for people to speak with members of the Project team to help inform their consultation response.
- 5.4.3 Alongside the digital-first approach to consultation, non-digital methods of consultation will also be used to provide alternative means for consultees to engage with the Project. We will continue to use non-digital methods where practicable to do so in line with government health guidance relating to COVID-19.
- 5.4.4 In-person consultation events are planned to be held in the vicinity of the site during statutory consultation, however Ecotricity will reserve the right to cancel face-to-face engagement in the interests of safety, in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions. Any face-to-face events may be re-arranged to webinars should that be necessary.
- 5.4.5 A proposed schedule for all engagement methods, is set out in Table 2 overleaf.

TABLE 2: ENGAGEMENT METHODS

Method	Detail
Consultation events	<p>We are holding a series of face-to-face consultation events at suitable, publicly accessible venues located within the core and wider consultation zones. Events will be held in line with Government guidelines surrounding COVID-19 and we reserve the right to cancel the events should this guidance change.</p> <p>Our consultation events are planned as follows:</p> <p>Heckington Village Hall – Thursday 7 July 2022, 13:00-20:00 9-11 High St, Heckington, Sleaford NG34 9RA</p> <p>Bicker Village Hall – Friday 8 July 2022, 12:30-20:30 Cemetery Road, Bicker, Lincolnshire PE20 3BT</p> <p>Heckington Show – Saturday 30 and Sunday 31 July 2022, 9:00-17:00 each day Hall Grounds, Heckington, Sleaford NG34 9JF</p>
Public information points	<p>Statutory consultation booklets and feedback forms will be available to pick up at public information points.</p> <p>Current proposed venues are:</p> <p>North Kesteven District Council, Kesteven Street, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 7EF (Opening hours: Mon – Wed 9:00 – 17:00 by appointment due to COVID-19 restrictions)</p> <p>Lincolnshire County Council, County Offices, Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YL (Opening hours: Mon – Thurs 8:30 – 17:00, Fri 8:30 – 16:30)</p> <p>Boston Borough Council, Municipal Buildings, West Street, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE21 8QR (Opening hours: Mon – Thurs 8:45 – 17:15, Fri 8:45 – 16:45)</p> <p>Heckington Community Hub, Council Chambers, St Andrew’s Street, Heckington, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 9RE (Opening hours: Mon – Sat 10:00 – 12:00)</p> <p>Boston Library, County Hall, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE21 6DY (Opening hours: Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri 09:00 – 17:00 Thurs 9:00 – 18:00, Sat 9:00– 16:00)</p> <p>Sleaford Library, 13 - 16 Market Place, Sleaford NG34 7SR (Opening hours: Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri 9:00 – 17:00; Thurs 9:00 – 18:00, Sat 9:00 – 13:00)</p> <p>We will check, by telephone, on a weekly basis that consultation documentation remains at the information points throughout the consultation period.</p>
Live question and answer (Q&A) webinars	<p>We will hold a series of Q&A webinar sessions throughout the consultation period, which can be accessed via an online platform. Attendees will be able to type questions to be answered by members of the Project team throughout the session.</p> <p>Tuesday 5 July 2022 – 12.00-13:30</p> <p>Saturday 23 July 2022 - 11:00-12:30</p> <p>Wednesday 3 August 2022 – 19:00-20:30</p>
Video/telephone call	<p>Members of the public will be able to request a call back from a member of the Project team (subject to availability) on 0800 151 0784 or heckingtonfensolar@ecotricity.co.uk.</p>

Method	Detail
Project website	All consultation documents will be published on the dedicated Project website: https://www.ecotricity.co.uk/our-green-energy/heckington-fen-solar-park This includes the consultation leaflet, statutory consultation booklet and feedback form, along with the PEIR and non-technical summary. Consultation activities, including consultation events, Q&A webinars, and webinars, will be publicised on the website. The website will meet standards in terms of accessibility and usability, allowing people to submit their comments online via a feedback form.
Statutory consultation booklet	A non-technical document for the statutory consultation will be made available during the consultation. This booklet will set out the Project information and will be made available on the Project website
Community consultation leaflet	Local residents within the core consultation zone will be notified of the start of the consultation through a consultation leaflet, inviting them to get involved in the consultation. The leaflet will also be issued to section 42 consultees and wider consultees via email or post and will be available on the Project website during the consultation period. The leaflet will set out the Project information, details about the consultation and how to provide feedback, along with a list of engagement activities throughout the consultation period.
Feedback form	We will provide a feedback form for anyone wishing to respond to the statutory consultation. The feedback form will be available online, via the Project website, or in hard copy at the consultation events and public information points. Copies can also be provided on request and will be returnable free of charge using a Freepost address: FREEPOST ECOTRICITY SOLAR PARK

5.4.6 All statutory consultation documents will be available online, on the Project website, and available in hard copy at no extra charge (except the PEIR, a hard copy of which can be requested for a charge of £0.35 per page to cover printing and posting costs). Upon request, all documents will be available in alternative accessible formats, such as braille, speaking text and alternative languages.

5.4.7 The following documents will be available as part of the consultation:

TABLE 3: CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS

Document	Detail
Statutory consultation booklet	<p>A non-technical document for the statutory consultation will be made available during the consultation. This document will provide a summary of the Project including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the background to the Project. • information about potential benefits and impacts of the proposed Project. • how we propose to mitigate any significant effects; and signposts for readers to more detailed information reports and how to provide feedback on the Project. <p>This document will be available online and in hard copy on request, at public information points and at face-to-face events.</p>
Community consultation leaflet	<p>Local residents within the core consultation zone will be notified of the start of the consultation through a consultation leaflet, inviting them to get involved in the consultation.</p> <p>The leaflet will also be issued to section 42 consultees and wider consultees via email or post and will be available on the Project website during the consultation period. The leaflet will set out the Project information, details about the consultation and how to provide feedback, along with a list of engagement activities throughout the consultation period. This document will be available online and in hard copy on request, at public information points and at face-to-face events.</p>
Feedback form	<p>The feedback form will be available online for people to provide their feedback on specific aspects of the Project.</p> <p>It will also be available in hard copy at information points, on request and at face-to-face consultation events, and is returnable free of charge via our Freepost address:</p> <p>FREEPOST ECOTRICITY SOLAR PARK</p>
Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR)	<p>The PEIR will contain a description of the Project, and a preliminary assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of the Project based on the initial information available at that time. It will also set out how we propose to reduce these effects and how we propose to maximise the benefits of the Project.</p> <p>A non-technical summary (“NTS”) of the PEIR will also be made available. The PEIR and NTS will be available on the Project website. Copies of the NTS will be available to the public at the consultation events for people to take away (subject to availability). The PEIR will not be available at information points.</p> <p>Note that the PEIR (excluding the NTS) will not be available to take away, but a hard copy can be requested for a charge of £0.35 per page to cover printing and posting costs.</p>
Project maps	<p>A series of maps and plans showing the extent of the Project will be made available online and in hard copy at the consultation events for people to view during the consultation period. The maps will not be available at information points.</p>
A notice of consultation	<p>We will publish a notice with details of the consultation and provide it to statutory consultees as required.</p>
Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC)	<p>This SoCC document will be made available online as part of the consultation and in hard copy on request. It will also be available in hard copy at information points and at face-to-face consultation events.</p>

- 5.4.8 Consultation documents (except the PEIR), as set out in Table 3, will be made available at the consultation events, public information points and on the website, as listed in Table 2.
- 5.4.9 Following the launch of the statutory consultation, people will be able to request hard copies of all consultation documents. All consultation documents will be made available, on request, free of charge with the exception of the PEIR. A hard copy of the PEIR can be requested for a charge of £0.35 per page to cover printing and posting costs.
- 5.4.10 Upon request, all documents will be available in alternative accessible formats, such as braille, large print, speaking text and alternative languages.

TABLE 4: METHODS TO MAKE CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE

Method	Detail
Project Website	All consultation documents will be published on the dedicated Project website: https://www.ecotricity.co.uk/our-green-energy/heckington-fen-solar-park
Deposit locations	All consultation documents will be hosted on the Project website throughout the consultation period. We will also ask the following local authorities to provide a link to all the consultation documents on their website: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Kesteven District Council • Boston Borough Council • Lincolnshire County Council
Public information points	Statutory consultation booklets and feedback forms will be available to pick up at public information points for the duration of the consultation. <p>Current proposed venues are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Kesteven District Council, Kesteven Street, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 7EF (Mon – Wed 9:00 – 17:00 by appointment due to COVID-19 restrictions) • Lincolnshire County Council, County Offices, Newland, Lincoln LN1 1YL (Opening hours: Mon – Thurs 8:30 – 17:00, Fri 8:30 – 16:30) • Boston Borough Council, Municipal Buildings, West Street, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE21 8QR (Opening hours: Mon – Thurs 8:45 – 17:15, Fri 8:45 – 16:45) • Heckington Community Hub, Council Chambers, St Andrew’s Street, Heckington, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 9RE (Opening hours: Mon – Sat 10:00 – 12:00) • Boston Library, County Hall, Boston, Lincolnshire, PE21 6DY (Opening hours: Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri 9:00 – 17:00, Thurs 9:00 – 18:00, Sat 9:00 – 16:00) • Sleaford Library, 13 -- 16 Market Place, Sleaford NG34 7SR (Opening hours: Mon, Tues, Wed, Fri 9:00 – 17:00; Thurs 9:00 – 18:00, Sat 9:00 – 13:00) <p>We will check, by telephone, on a weekly basis that consultation documentation remains at the information points throughout the consultation period.</p>
Hard copy requests	Following the launch of the statutory consultation, people will be able to request hard copies of all consultation documents. All consultation documents will be made available, on request, free of charge with the exception of the PEIR. A hard copy of the PEIR can be requested for a charge of £0.35 per page to cover printing and posting costs. <p>Upon request, all documents will be available in alternative accessible formats, such as braille, speaking text and alternative languages.</p>

Method	Detail
Consultation events	<p>All consultation documents will be available to view at face-to-face consultation events.</p> <p>The face-to-face events are proposed to take place at the following locations, but may have to be moved/cancelled as a result of unforeseen circumstances or because of COVID-19 Government guidance and regulations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heckington Village Hall – Thursday 7 July 2022, 13:00-20:00 9-11 High St, Heckington, Sleaford NG34 9RA • Bicker Village Hall – Friday 8 July 2022, 12:30-20:30 Cemetery Road Bicker Lincolnshire PE20 3BT • Heckington Show – Saturday 30 and Sunday 31 July 2022, 9:00-17:00 each day Hall Grounds, Heckington, Sleaford NG34 9JF

5.5 PROMOTING THE CONSULTATION

- 5.5.1 All residents, local businesses and community organisations within the core consultation zone will be notified of the start of the consultation through a consultation newsletter. A map showing the core consultation zone (just under 6,000 addresses) can be found in Appendix 2.
- 5.5.2 A range of methods will be utilised to promote the consultation, as set out in Table 5:

TABLE 5: METHODS TO PUBLICISE THE CONSULTATION

Method	Detail
Press releases	<p>Press releases publicising the upcoming consultation and how the community and wider stakeholders can get involved will be issued ahead of the consultation. The distribution list will include the following publications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heckington Living • BBC Radio Lincolnshire • Lincs 102.2FM • BBC Look North • ITV News Calendar • Lincolnshire Free Press • Lincolnshire Live which includes: Boston Target, Sleaford Target & Spalding Target • Lincolnshire World, the collective website which includes the Sleaford Standard, Boston Standard & Spalding Standard • The Lincolnite (online only) • Spalding Today • Local Lincs Magazine
Newspaper advertisements	<p>Two rounds of newspaper advertisements will be undertaken before and during the consultation. Advertisements will provide details of the consultation, where more information can be found, how to respond, and the dates of the engagement activities. Advertisements will be placed in both print and digital publications (where applicable) to ensure wider coverage within and beyond the core and wider consultation zones. The publications could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lincolnshire Live • Lincolnshire World • The Lincolnite • Spalding Today

Method	Detail
Emails and letters	<p>We will send either emails or hard copy letters about the consultation and how to get involved to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • host constituency and neighbouring constituency area MPs; • elected representatives at North Kesteven District Council, Boston Borough Council and Lincolnshire County Council • host parish councils; • neighbouring local authorities; and • neighbouring parish councils.
Statutory notices	<p>Statutory notices to publicise the consultation and the SoCC will be published as follows, in accordance with Section 48 of the Planning Act 2008:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • publicising the consultation – once in a national newspaper and the London Gazette and twice (across two successive weeks) in local circulating newspapers; and • publicising the SoCC – once in local circulating newspaper(s).
Information posters	<p>Posters including details of the consultation, how to access Project information, and how to get involved, will be displayed at well-used public locations (this could include parish notice boards, local shops and village halls) within the core and wider consultation zone, subject to permission.</p>
Social media	<p>We will promote the consultation on Ecotricity's Twitter and Facebook accounts. Consultation feedback will not be accepted through social media channels.</p>

5.5.3 Any activity(ies) that cannot be undertaken due to circumstances beyond our control, where possible, will be substituted with similar activity(ies) and advertised in local newspapers (via press release) circulating in the vicinity of the Project. Any activity changes will also be published on the Project website and on Ecotricity's Twitter and Facebook accounts.

5.6 WIDER ENGAGEMENT

- 5.6.1 Ongoing engagement with relevant stakeholders will be undertaken ahead of the launch of the consultation, including local authorities, MPs, the Environment Agency, Natural England, and Historic England (where possible) and with local interest groups, residents, and landowners who get in touch.
- 5.6.2 All relevant local and parish councillors, elected members for county, district and borough; and MPs will be contacted at the launch of the consultation and will be kept informed about the Project. They will also be encouraged to share information about the consultation with members of their constituency / local community.

5.7 HARD TO REACH GROUPS

- 5.7.1 We want to ensure that all our engagement and consultation is inclusive, and we want to reach those who otherwise may not engage with us. Hard-to-reach groups are defined as being inaccessible to most traditional and conventional methods of consultation for any reason. To ensure that 'hard to reach' groups are encouraged to get involved in the consultation, the materials will be prepared to be accessible and clear.
- 5.7.2 A list of organisations representing hard-to-reach and local interest groups can be found in Appendix 3 and this consists of groups which have been outlined in Table 6. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

TABLE 6: HARD TO REACH GROUP ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

Hard to reach group	Consultation Response
The elderly	<p>Directly mailing the consultation leaflet to all stakeholders within the core consultation zone and providing details of how to access paper copies of other Project documents and provide feedback by post.</p> <p>Options to engage through conventional communications channels including the freepost and the freephone information line.</p> <p>Providing important information in both digital and non-digital formats and providing alternate formats such as dementia friendly, Braille and large print (upon request).</p> <p>Engagement with community groups serving that demographic.</p> <p>Providing paper copies of materials at information point locations along with contact details for the Project team, who will be able to provide further assistance and send information to those who are unable to access the material online.</p> <p>Advertising the availability of telephone call backs for stakeholders with further questions or who would like to discuss the Project further with the Project team.</p> <p>Face-to-face events at several locations, with members of the team available to assist with completing feedback responses.</p>
People with visual impairments	<p>Providing important information in both digital and non-digital formats and providing alternate formats such as dementia friendly, braille and large print (upon request).</p> <p>Option to enlarge text on Project website.</p> <p>Providing telephone call backs for stakeholders with further questions or those who would like to discuss the Project further with the Project team.</p> <p>Face-to-face events at several locations, with members of the team available to assist with completing feedback responses.</p>
People with deafness or hard of hearing	<p>Directly mailing the consultation leaflet to all stakeholders within the core consultation zone and provide details of how to access paper copies of other Project documents and provide feedback by post.</p> <p>Online engagement through the consultation website and webinars to negate the need for travel.</p> <p>Providing important information in both digital and non-digital formats and providing alternate formats such as dementia friendly, Braille and large print (upon request).</p> <p>Providing British Sign Language signing at webinars, on request.</p> <p>Advertising the availability of telephone call backs for stakeholders with further questions or who would like to discuss the Project further with the Project team.</p>
Geographically isolated individuals or communities	<p>Directly mailing the consultation leaflet to all stakeholders within the core consultation zone and provide details of how to access paper copies of other Project documents and provide feedback by post.</p> <p>Advertising the availability of telephone call backs for stakeholders with further questions or who would like to discuss the Project further with the Project team.</p>
15-19 age group	<p>Online engagement.</p> <p>Social media advertisement to encourage engagement with the Project.</p>

5.7.3 The following enquiry channels will be available throughout the consultation for members of the public and other stakeholders to ask questions, request further information or request printed copies of consultation materials and documents.

TABLE 7: CONTACT METHODS

Method	Contact details	Hours of operation
Online	https://www.ecotricity.co.uk/our-green-energy/heckington-fen-solar-park	24 hour.
Telephone	0800 151 0784	9:00–17:30 weekdays with an answerphone facility to take messages outside these hours. Alternative times can be arranged for those who work during these hours, we ask that a message is left with a convenient time to call back so a member of the team can arrange this.
Email	heckingtonfensolar@ecotricity.co.uk	24 hour (emails will be monitored between 9:00–17:30 weekdays and responded).
Post	Freepost ECOTRICITY SOLAR PARK	24 hour.

6 RESPONDING TO THE CONSULTATION

6.1 HOW TO RESPOND TO THE CONSULTATION

6.1.1 Between Thursday 30 June and Thursday 1 September 2022, people will be able

to submit their feedback relating to the Project. A consultation feedback form will be produced to help participants provide comments on the project design. All responses must be received by **23:59 on Thursday 1 September 2022**. Responses received after that date may not be considered.

6.1.2 Consultation responses can be made in the following ways:

- Completing the feedback form on the project webpage at <https://www.ecotricity.co.uk/our-green-energy/heckington-fen-solar-park>
- Attending a consultation event where you can meet the Project team and complete a paper copy, or take a feedback form and freepost envelope away to complete and send to us.
- Picking up a hard copy feedback form and freepost envelope at one of our deposit locations, detailed in Table 4
- Requesting a hard copy of the feedback form via telephone on 0800 151 0784 and sending it to us using the Freepost address below.
- Emailing heckingtonfensolar@ecotricity.co.uk
- Writing to us at: Freepost ECOTRICITY SOLAR PARK

6.2 HOW WE WILL USE CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

6.2.1 We will have regard to all comments received during the consultation, as well as ongoing engagement with communities and stakeholders.

6.2.2 All feedback is important to us and will help influence our designs for the solar park.

6.2.3 The feedback will be reviewed and analysed to understand key themes from stakeholders.

6.2.4 A Consultation Report will be produced as part of our application for development consent. The Consultation Report will set out how the feedback from the consultation has shaped and influenced the final proposals. All responses submitted during the statutory consultation will be responded to within the Consultation Report. Any responses that are published within the Consultation Report will have all personal details redacted.

6.3 FURTHER CONSULTATION

6.3.1 If, following the statutory consultation, we consider it is necessary to undertake further targeted or supplementary consultation, this would be undertaken, so far as relevant and proportionate, in accordance with the principles and methods set out in this SoCC.

6.4 OTHER CONSULTATIONS IN THE AREA

6.4.1 We will work closely with other organisations (such as the local planning authorities) who are developing proposals in the area to ensure that the scope and context of the Project is clear in relation to the other consultations. This could include:

- Having headline information about the other consultations at our events.
- Seeking to avoid holding events or running advertisements and press releases at the same time as other consultations, where practical.
- Ensuring that any responses submitted to our statutory consultation that are intended for another consultation are passed on to the relevant community relations or consultation team.



APPENDIX 1:

**PHASE ONE
NEWSLETTER**

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Phase one newsletter



Introduction to Heckington Fen Solar Park

We have identified an area in Heckington Fen, North Kesteven as a potential site for a new solar park. Our proposal is still at an early stage of development and we want to engage with local residents as we begin to develop our plans. The project could generate enough electricity to power over 100,000 homes and save an estimated 77,500 tonnes of carbon dioxide per annum.

This newsletter contains information about our proposals at Heckington Fen, who we are and what happens next, as well as several FAQs. We will continue to keep you updated as we progress our plans, and all the information on how we will engage and consult with you is detailed below.

About the site

Ecotricity are looking at the potential for a solar park on farm land near Heckington, north of the A17 and to the south east of South Kyme. We are currently conducting environmental assessments, so the exact layout is still to be determined. Early results suggest that the 1,450 acre site could accommodate a solar park of up to 500 megawatts (MW) if approved, as well as a corresponding energy storage facility.

The solar park would be built on land already approved for the use of renewable energy, following the approval by the Secretary of State in February 2013 for 22 wind turbines. Since then, we have been unable to reach agreement with the Ministry of Defence regarding their radar concerns, which means we have not been able to start building the wind park.



About our proposed solar park

Proposed solar park capacity
Up to 500MW direct current (DC) installed with an export capacity of 400MW alternating current (AC)

Maximum height of panels
Up to 4.5m

Estimated green electricity generated (per year)
385 million units (kWh)

Estimated equivalent homes powered (per year)
UK homes: 102,250

Estimated tonnes of CO2 saved (per year)
77,500



Map indicating outline boundary of site and proposed area for a grid connection to Slicker Fen Substation

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital map data © Crown copyright 2016. All rights reserved. Licence number 010001903. Full details on the calculations are available on the project website.



▶ What happens next?

As the proposed generation capacity exceeds 50 megawatts (MW), the solar park will be classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP).

The consenting regime for NSIPs comes under the Planning Act 2008 and requires us to apply for a Development Consent Order (DCO). The DCO application will be examined by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) – the independent body responsible for examining NSIPs – who will make a recommendation on the application to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). The Secretary of State will make the final decision on the DCO application.

We expect to submit the full application to PINS in January 2023, with the site 'scoped' for environmental purposes with the Secretary of State in early 2022. This process will formally consult the local planning authority as well as other statutory bodies to decide what environmental studies to include in the application.

This newsletter marks the start of our commitment to keep the local community informed about this exciting project. You can ask us questions and give us your views at any time and we will be holding two stages of consultation.

The first, which will take place between now and Christmas 2021 will allow us to introduce our early plans for the solar park to local residents and stakeholders to get your input as we progress our designs. During this time we will be holding a series of online engagement events in November where you will be able to hear from members of the project team, ask questions and provide your views.

In early 2022 we will continue to develop our plans, using the feedback from the first stage of consultation to help evolve our designs. We will then carry out statutory consultation in early summer 2022 where we will seek views on the evolved designs, along with the results of our preliminary environmental assessments. Timings for this stage of consultation will be announced at a later date.

Following submission, a decision by the Government could be made by mid-2024.

Ongoing engagement



Frequently asked questions

What are the benefits to solar?



Solar parks are quick to build and can be removed easily too



Solar is viable subsidy free, and at little to no cost to the consumer



Solar is one of the cheapest forms of electricity generation worldwide



Solar is one of the most established renewable electricity technologies in the UK



Solar is a key part of the Government's strategy for low cost decarbonisation of the energy sector



About Ecotricity

Since our inception 25 years ago, Ecotricity has been involved in pioneering energy projects across the UK. We operate a unique model, using our customers' bills to fund new sources of green energy, including wind, solar, battery storage and green gas in the form of anaerobic digestion.

We supply homes and businesses with green electricity and green gas. But we work differently from other energy companies because we're 'not-for-dividend' and have no outside shareholders. It's all part of our mission to change the way energy is made in Britain, and we're the only energy company partnered with RSPB among many other good causes.



Who are you consulting?

We want to introduce our proposals at an early stage in the design and planning process which is why we are engaging with residents and stakeholders at this stage. We are also engaging with planning officers at North Kesteven, Boston Borough and South Holland councils as well as briefing parish councils, local district and county councillors and MPs.

We will also be engaging with Lincolnshire County Council as a joint planning body and the Local Highway Authority. As part of our ongoing engagement we will also be speaking with local and regional community and environmental groups and organisations.



Have your say

Our first stage of engagement with local residents and stakeholders is running from now until 17 December 2021.

In light of potential Covid restrictions, we are intending to carry out online events during this stage, with the potential for physical events during the statutory consultation, or before if possible.

We are planning to hold a series of online events between now and 17 December and encourage you to join us to find out more about our proposals, including:

- An introduction to the proposed solar park at Heckington Fen
- An opportunity to meet the project team
- An opportunity to provide your views and feed into our early proposal

The dates and times for the online presentations are:

Thursday 4th November	10:00-11:30
Saturday 13th November	11:00-12:30
Monday 15th November	18:00-19:30

To register for one of our online presentations please email heckingtonfensolar@ecotricity.co.uk and we will send you a link. Alternatively you can register via the project website.



How will wildlife benefit?

The plans will create additional wildlife habitat with new hedges planted throughout the site, and the land beneath and around the panels being managed as grassland, a vital habitat for numerous species and wildlife. Wildlife benefits is one of the areas we're keen to get your views on.



What are we proposing?

The Heckington Fen Solar Park would comprise solar panels, either fixed or ones that track the sun across the sky. Other equipment, some under and some above ground, would be needed. Full details of our proposals will be shared over the coming months as the design evolves, and we will be giving residents and stakeholders the opportunity to have your say.



What about the wind turbines?

The climate crisis needs fighting now, so we're keen to use Heckington Fen as soon as possible to create clean, renewable energy which contributes towards the UK's net zero targets. We want to make clear that if the solar park is approved and constructed, we will not build the wind turbines.



What environmental work will be done?

Before submitting an application, we will continue our comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) which considers topics such as landscape, flood risk/hydrology, archaeology, wildlife and bird studies, cultural heritage, noise and transport/construction, glint/glare and agricultural land amongst other things. We already have a wealth of information on the site from the previous wind park application, but we are doing more assessments to make sure we go forward with the best scheme.

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



How will local residents benefit?

The construction of a solar park at Heckington Fen will support jobs via the supply chain as well as more local jobs opportunities during the construction period. There are currently a small team who farm the site throughout the year in rotation with other farms in the wider ownership, so these jobs will not be lost. Other benefits could include training opportunities during construction.



Why make energy from the sun?

Solar power with energy storage is the perfect complement to Britain's huge wind power resource. On average, we get more light in the summer and more wind in the winter, so it balances out across the seasons. The energy storage means excess solar energy not exported to the grid can be captured and exported later when the demand is higher. This solar park will be an important step forward in moving the UK away from fossil fuels and help to fight the climate crisis, as well as providing long-term energy security for Britain. The UK has ambitious climate change targets to achieve net zero by 2050, going further than the previous target of 80% reduction from the 1990 baseline as set out in the Climate Change Act 2008. In his party conference speech in early October, the prime minister confirmed plans to eliminate fossil fuels from UK electricity generation by 2035.

Getting in touch

Further information and details of the site's progress are available at: www.ecotricity.co.uk/our-green-energy/heckington-fen-solar-park

We want to make it as easy as possible for you to provide feedback on our proposals. There is an online feedback form on our project website and we would appreciate you taking the time to provide your comments there. If you would like a hard copy please let us know using the details below:

If you have any questions please email us at: heckingtonfensolar@ecotricity.co.uk

Or call us on our dedicated phone line: 0800 151 0784

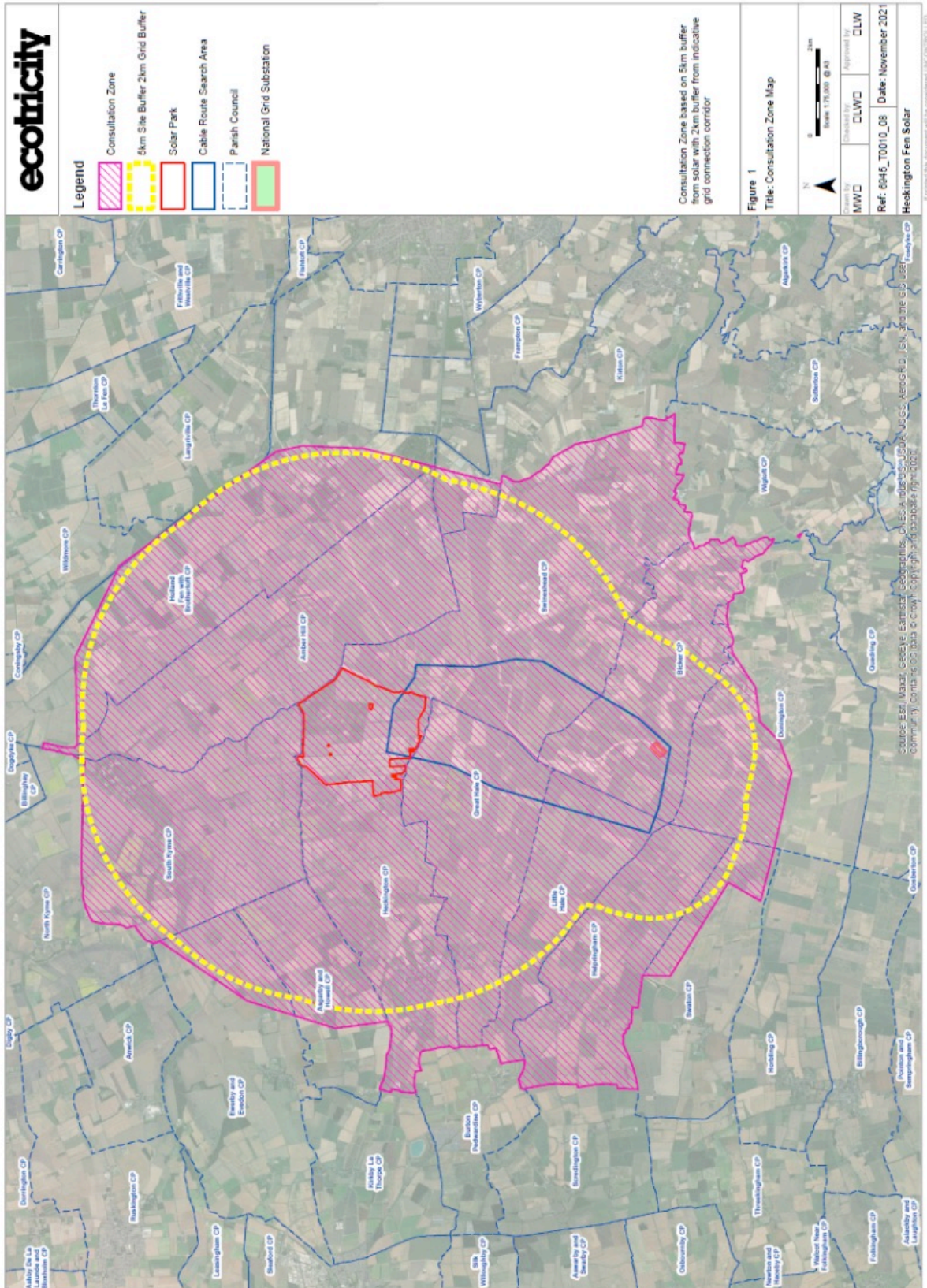
Or write to us at:
Freepost ECOTRICITY SOLAR PARK



APPENDIX 2:

CONSULTATION MAILING ZONE

Appendix 2: Consultation mailing zone





APPENDIX 3:

CONSULTATION LIST

Appendix 3: Consultation list

Health and Safety Executive	Public Health England and UKHSA
NHS England	NHS England Leicestershire and Lincolnshire Area Team
NHS Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group	East Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust
Natural England	Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd
Historic England	Historical Railways Estate - Highways England
Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue	NATS En-Route (NERL) Safeguarding
Lincolnshire Police Executive Office	Royal Mail Group
Heckington Parish Council	Anglian Water
Great Hale Parish Council	Cadent Gas Limited
Little Hale Parish Council	Eastern Power Networks PLC
Bicker Parish Council	Eclipse Power Network Limited
Swineshead Parish Council	Energy Assets Networks Limited and Energy Assets Pipelines Limited
Amber Hill Parish Council	Energetics Gas Limited and Energetics Electricity Limited
South Kyme Parish Council	ES Pipelines Ltd
Helpringham Parish Council	ESP Networks Ltd, ESP Pipelines Ltd, ESP Electricity Limited and ESP Connections Ltd
Donington Parish Council	ESP Utilities Group Ltd - Customer Services
Holland Fen with Brothertoft Parish Council	Forbury Assets Ltd (FAL) (SSE Enterprise)
Kirton Parish Council	Fulcrum Electricity Assets Limited and Fulcrum Pipelines Limited
Asgarby and Howell Parish Council	GTC Pipelines Limited
Ewerby and Evedon Parish Council	Harlaxton Gas Networks Limited and Harlaxton Energy Networks Limited
Swaton Parish Council	Independent Pipelines Limited and Independent Power Networks Limited
Wigtoft Parish Council	Indigo Pipelines Limited and Indigo Power Limited
Kirkby La Thorpe Parish Council	Last Mile Gas Ltd and Last Mile Electricity Ltd
Burton Pedwardine and Burton Gorse Parish Council	Leep Gas Networks Limited and Leep Electricity Networks Limited
The Environment Agency	Murphy Gas Networks Limited and Murphy Power Distribution Limited
AONB Conservation Board	National Grid Gas PLC, National Grid Electricity System Operator Limited, National Grid Viking Link Limited and National Grid Electricity Transmission PLC

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency	Quadrant Pipelines Limited
The Marine Management Organisation	Squire Energy Limited
Civil Aviation Authority	The Electricity Network Company Limited
Department for Transport / Grant Shapps MP	UK Power Distribution Limited
Office of Rail and Road	Utility Assets Limited
Lincolnshire County Council – Highways Team	Vattenfall Networks Limited
National Highways / Highways England	Scotland Gas Networks PLC and Southern Gas Networks PLC (SGN)
Homes England	Wales & West Utilities Ltd
The Coal Authority	Western Power Distribution (East Midlands) plc
Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board	The Crown Estate
Witham First Internal Drainage Board	Witham Third Internal Drainage Board
Witham Fourth Internal Drainage Board	Welland and Deepings Internal Drainage Board
The Canal and River Trust	Forestry Commission
Trinity House	Office for Nuclear Regulation
Lincolnshire Resilience Forum	Ministry of Defence
Greater Lincolnshire LEP	Lincolnshire County Council
Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE)	City of Lincoln Council
The Council for British Archaeology	North Kesteven District Council
Society For Lincolnshire History & Archaeology	Boston Borough Council
National Trust	East Lindsey District Council
RSPB	North Northamptonshire Council
Woodland Trust	West Lindsey District Council
The British Horse Society	Newark & Sherwood District Council
The Ramblers Association	South Kesteven District Council
The National Federation of Farmers (NFU) - Lincolnshire advisor	South Holland District Council
Friends of the Earth	Norfolk County Council
Sleaford Climate Action Network	Cambridgeshire County Council
Green Party Lincolnshire	City of Peterborough Council
	Rutland County Council
MP for Sleaford and North Hykeham	Leicestershire County Council
MP for Boston and Skegness	Nottinghamshire County Council
MP for South Holland and The Deepings	North Lincolnshire Council
MP for Grantham and Stamford	North East Lincolnshire Council

Rainbow Stars	Lincolnshire Young Voices
Dementia Café Sleaford	Kisimul - Suillean House
Swineshead Bowling Club	Heckington Rural Ward Councillor x 2
Novuss Pool-Table Games	Osournby Ward Councillor
Young Dons Football Club	Kirkby La Thorpe and South Kyme Ward Councillor
Sleaford Town Sports Association	Swineshead and Holland Fen Ward Councillor x 2
Sleaford Striders Athletic Club	Five Villages Ward Councillor x 2
Heckington and District Bowls Club	Donington, Quadring and Gosberton Ward Councillor x 3
Heckington Pavilion and Playing Fields	Planning Committee Chairman LCC
Sustrans	Heckington LCC Ward Councillor
Community Lincs	Heckington Show
Bicker United Charity	Royal Navy Association
Heckington Relief in Need Charity	The Salvation Army
Great Hale Relief in Need Charity	The Ruby Hunt Centre
Lifegivers Trust UK	Voluntary Centre Services
Age Concern UK	Heckington Fen Wind Turbine Action Group
Bicker Allotment Society	Bicker Ladies
Bicker and District Garden Club	Bicker Women's Institute
Bicker Bowls Club	Swineshead History Group
Bicker Trust	Heckington and Helpringham Group of Parishes
Heritage Lincolnshire	Sleaford Islamic Centre
Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust	Young Lincolnshire
Buglife	Lincolnshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services
Improving Donington's Environment for All	Sleaford Children's & Youth Centre
Build-a-Future Independent School	Swineshead St Mary's Church of England Primary School
Bicker Preparatory School & Early Years	Helpringham Primary School

Donington Cowley Endowed Primary School	Heckington St Andrew's Church of England Primary School
The Thomas Cowley High School	Heckington Pre-School
Quadring Cowley & Brown's Primary School	Swineshead Pre-School Centre
The Rebecca Dear School of Dance	
Helpringham Memorial / Village Hall	Jamie Forever 12 (Heckington based charity)
St John the Baptist Church, Great Hale	Great Hale and Little Hale Burial Board Trust
The Pavillion and Playing field, Heckington	Hale Magna Village Hall
Heckington Methodist Church	Helpringham Playing Field
Great Hale Methodist Church	Swaton Community Trust
Heckington Gardening Club	Swaton Village Show
Yoga group, Heckington	South Kyme Coronation Hall
Great Hale Magna Art group	Dickinson Charity (based in South Kyme)
Trees for Heckington group	South Kyme Golf Club
Heckington living magazine	Howell St Oswalds Church
Heckington Windmill Trust	Howell Manor (for events)
Heckington Almshouse Charity	Heckington Community Living Radio
Heckington Pre-school playgroup Charity	Heckington Village Hall
Heckington Community Swimming Pool	Community Spirit Heckington (Good Neighbour Scheme)
Heckington and District Young Farmers Club	Great Hale Village Natters



APPENDIX 4:

JANUARY 2022 POSTCARD UPDATE

Appendix 4: January 2022 Postcard Update



Hello,

Ecotricity unveiled plans for a new solar park at Heckington Fen last year (2021), which if built, could power more than 100,000 homes with renewable energy and save over 75,000 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent emissions every year.

Following a first phase of informal consultation, including three online public events, further details of the site layout have been released. The plan shows where the solar panels and energy storage equipment could be located and identifies areas set aside for potential environmental enhancements, including a community orchard, walking route and wildlife and habitat improvements. You can see the plan on our project website ecotricity.co.uk/our-green-energy/heckington-fen-solar-park or contact us below for more details.

Two options for the cable to connect the project to the electricity network are being explored – either east or west of the South Forty Foot Drain to Bicker Fen substation. Environmental studies are still taking place on site and we continue to engage with stakeholders to refine our plans.

Alongside that, we are also using the feedback you've given us in our recent consultation to make sure that our proposals respond to the issues and concerns you've raised. A further stage of consultation on the latest plans for the site is planned in summer 2022, where you and other stakeholders will have another opportunity to provide your views ahead of an application being submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in early 2023.

If you have any questions, please contact us at:

Email: heckingtonfensolar@ecotricity.co.uk

Freephone: 0800 151 0784

Freepost: Freepost ECOTRICITY SOLAR PARK

Thank you to all those who have inputted to our plans so far.

If undelivered please return to
Ecotricity, Lion House, Stroud, GL5 3BY

Information correct at time of printing. Image used is indicative, size and height to be determined.

ecotricity



DESIGN



ENVIRONMENT



PLANNING



ECONOMICS



HERITAGE



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