

This newsletter provides an update on our proposals for Longfield Solar Farm. We submitted an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) for Longfield Solar Farm to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) on 28 February 2022. This was accepted for Examination on 28 March 2022.

This is an important milestone for the Scheme. Our application has been informed by more than 18 months of engagement, including two rounds of public consultation. We are grateful to everyone who has engaged with us to date.

In this newsletter, we will provide an update on the Scheme that we submitted as part of our application, the planning process going forward and how you can take part.

Solar at scale has an important role to play in the renewable energy mix. However, we understand that host local communities can have understandable concerns about the location, design and operation of projects of this kind. Our team has been sensitive to these concerns throughout the consultation process, and this awareness has been key to the strategic approach that has been taken to the development of the Scheme and its design.

We see ourselves as being a long-term partner of the local community throughout the lifetime of the Scheme. Therefore, we have sought to create a Scheme that our neighbours might appreciate for the benefits it will bring at a local level, whilst delivering on the national need for renewable energy.

We carried out a statutory consultation on our proposals from 1 June to 13 July 2021.

The design of the Scheme has evolved to respond to specific feedback that we received from the statutory consultation. The plan on this page shows the final design masterplan that we submitted as part of our DCO application.



We received more than 250 responses from the local community and are grateful to everyone who responded.

Key issues raised with us included the scale and size of the Scheme, the use of agricultural land, visual impact, concerns about whether the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) would be safe, construction traffic, and questions about how we would decommission the Scheme.

Enhancing the local environment

Enhancing biodiversity and green infrastructure have been key objectives in developing the Scheme. The following features are embedded in our proposals:

8.6km

of new native hedgerows with hedgerow trees

20.6km

of native hedgerow enhancement
- gapping up and infill planting

23.2ha.

of land for natural regeneration

Over **3ha.**

of new native woodland buffer planting measuring 25m wide to form ecological corridors between existing woodlands

A new north/south green route, via a new permissive path

0.6ha.

of native linear tree belts measuring 15m wide (660 trees)

Approximately **3300**

trees in woodland buffer planting

42km

of species rich mown grassland around the perimeter of proposed PV arrays

272ha.

of species rich grassland below new PV arrays

131ha.

of new species rich grassland in open areas

Battery storage

While the risk of fire at the BESS is very low, we have consulted with the Essex Fire and Rescue Service to produce an Outline Battery Safety Management Plan. This details design measures and controls for the BESS to minimise the risk of a fire and includes a framework for responding to an incident.

This is available to view as part of our DCO application.

Decommissioning

Solar farms are temporary by nature. The operational lifetime of Longfield Solar Farm will be approximately 40 years. We have included a Decommissioning Strategy in our DCO application which sets out how Longfield Solar Farm would be decommissioned, and the site returned to its previous condition.

Use of agricultural land

We have reduced the amount of agricultural land included in the site boundary (known as the 'Order limits') since the statutory consultation. The majority of agricultural land within the Order limits is not considered to be 'Best and Most Versatile'.

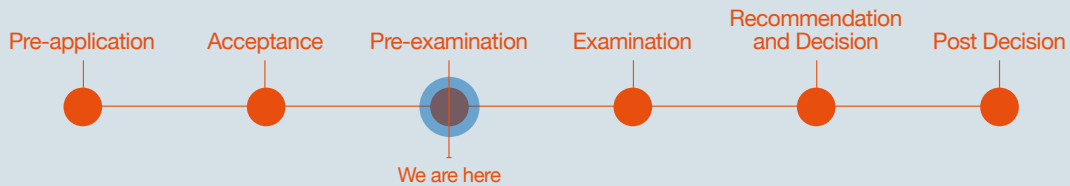
It is also important to note that the Scheme does not represent a permanent loss of agricultural land. We have included an Outline Soil Resource Management Plan as part of our DCO application. This sets out how the soil resource will be managed and maintained over the duration of the Scheme in order that, upon decommissioning, it remains suitable for agricultural use.

Our application contains a range of documents which you may be interested in reading. This includes:

- the **Design Statement**, which sets out how we developed our Scheme
- the **Environmental Statement**, which sets out the results of our EIA and our proposed mitigations
- the **Statement of Need**, which sets out why the Scheme is necessary
- the **Consultation Report**, which sets out how we have had regard to consultation feedback

Next steps

Our DCO application has been accepted for Examination. There are a number of opportunities for you to get involved at this stage.



Before the Examination

Before the Examination takes place, the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) needs to appoint the Examining Authority. This is the inspector, or panel of inspectors, who will carry out the Examination.

There is also an opportunity for members of the public to register to take part in the Examination.

This includes the opportunity to make a written representation, known as a 'Relevant Representation' and to take part in open floor hearings as part of the Examination.

Relevant representations are considered by the Examining Authority in deciding what will be considered at the Examination.

We will shortly be placing notices in local newspapers and around the site of the Scheme explaining how to do this. This is a legal requirement for this stage of the planning process.

We will also make this information available on our website, www.longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk

Our application

Copies of all of our application documents are available on PINS' website. We are also making hard copies of the application available at the following locations:

Boreham Village Hall

(opening times may vary, please contact venue to arrange access)

Monday-Friday: 9am-12pm,
Saturday-Sunday CLOSED

All Saints Church, Terling

Monday-Sunday: 9am-4pm

Hatfield Peverel Library

Monday, Thursday, Friday & Sunday - CLOSED

Tuesday: 2pm-7pm

Wednesday: 9am-1pm

Saturday: 9am-5pm

The Examination

The Examination will take place over a period of six months. It is primarily a written process, which involves the Examining Authority asking participants to submit information in writing.

There will also be a number of hearings on specific issues, as well as open floor hearings which can be attended by members of the public who have registered to take part in the Examination.

The dates and format for these meetings will be set at a Preliminary Meeting prior to the Examination.

Following the Examination, the Examining Authority will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State on whether to grant consent to the application within three months.

The Secretary of State then has a further three months to make their decision.

Find out more

You can find out more by going to our website, www.longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk, calling us on **0800 0194 576** or emailing info@longfieldsolarfarm.co.uk

We are also going to be in the area to meet with residents and answer questions at the following dates and times:

Tuesday 26 April 1:30pm-5:30pm

Boreham Village Hall

Friday 29 April 1:30pm-5:30pm

Leighs Village Hall

Tuesday 3 May 9:30am-1:30pm

Terling Village Hall

We are holding these sessions by appointment. To book to attend a session, please visit our website to complete our registration form or get in touch by phone or email.