

Land North of South Lynch Farm

Welcome

Welcome to the Land North of South Lynch Farm solar development community consultation event.

Novus and Innova are proposing a solar farm development on land north of South Lynch Farm. This site has been selected and designed via a detailed assessment process. Once connected to the local electricity grid, this solar farm would export up to 20MWp (Megawatts) of renewable energy.

This will offset the annual energy needs of approximately 4,722 homes in Winchester City Councils authority area and save around 4,054 tonnes of CO₂.

An important part of the development process is to engage with the local community and so this event provides the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on the proposals.

We look forward to discussing the proposals with you.



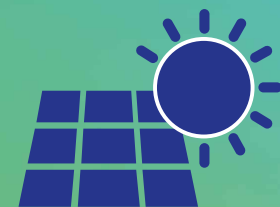
4,054

TONNES CO₂
SAVED ANNUALLY



4,722

HOMES
EQUIVALENT



20

MW_p OF
ENERGY

About Novus and Innova

Novus Renewable Services Limited is a leading independent renewable energy consultancy who have been active in the development of solar projects since 2010. Our mission is to support the delivery of utility scale renewable energy projects using multi-technologies fit for the transition to Net Zero.

Our in-house team or renewable energy industry experts and trusted consultants have extensive experience delivering and operating renewable energy projects across the United Kingdom.

We are working in partnership with Innova Group who will build, own, and ultimately operate the solar farm proposed at Land north of South Lynch Farm.

Land North of South Lynch Farm

Need for Renewable Energy Developments

There is widespread awareness of the need to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and transition to renewable energy sources to address climate change and reduce the cost of energy.

The United Kingdom is the first major economy to pass a Net Zero emissions law, requiring nationwide greenhouse gas emissions to reach Net Zero by 2050, with a target to decarbonise the electricity grid by 2035. For this to be achieved an extra three gigawatts of solar derived energy will be required. An important step in achieving net-zero is the rapid decarbonisation of the UK electricity network, as this will enable the decarbonisation of other sectors, such as heat and transport. To achieve a low carbon energy network the UK Government has a target of 50GW of offshore wind by 2030 and the UK energy minister wants to increase solar generation from 14GW to 50GW and onshore wind from 15GW to 30GW, all by 2030.

At a local level, Winchester City Council has declared a Climate Emergency in June 2019 and is committed to becoming a carbon neutral local authority by 2024 and is aiming for the wider district to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Solar farms like the one proposed at South Lynch Farm will play a key role in reaching these committed targets and addressing the Climate Emergency and energy security in the UK.

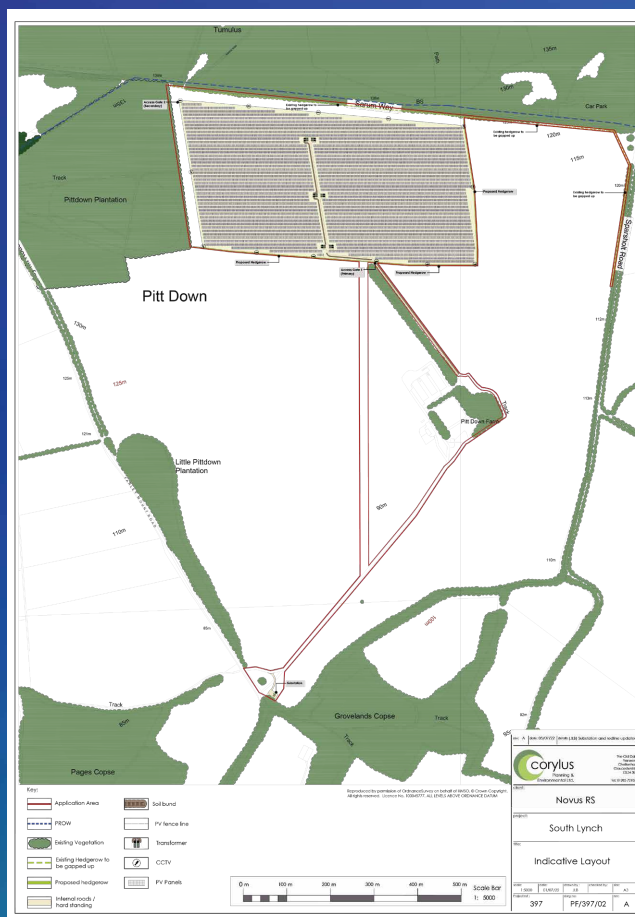


Land North of South Lynch Farm

The Proposal

We are proposing a solar farm on land north of South Lynch Farm, approximately 3.5 kilometres north of Hursley village.

The site has been carefully selected and the design informed by a detailed assessment process. This has considered grid availability, solar irradiance, heritage and archaeology, landscape and visual amenity, ecology, environmental designations, access, and agricultural land quality.



We have recently submitted a pre-application advice request to Winchester City Council and the response will further inform the forthcoming planning application.

If approved, the development would be constructed over a period of approximately four months. The solar farm would then be operational for a period of 40 years, needing only occasional maintenance. At the end of this period the development would be decommissioned, and the land restored to the previous condition.

Land North of South Lynch Farm

The Proposed Equipment

Solar Array

The solar array is proposed to consist of ground-mounted solar photovoltaic panels covering approximately 58 acres with a generating capacity of up to 20MWp. This will offset the annual energy needs of approximately 4,722 homes in Winchester City Councils authority area and save around 4,054 tonnes of CO₂.

Frames, Panels and Inverters

The solar panels will be installed in frames that are approximately three metres tall at the rear, and around one metre tall on their front, and fixed to the ground. The solar panels generate Direct Current (DC) electricity, which is converted to electricity with Alternating Current (AC) for export into the local grid by inverters. Inverter units will be mounted on the rear of the solar panels at intervals.

Buildings

Approximately six transformer units will be required to step the voltage up to a suitable export level. These will be located within the centre of the solar farm, close to the internal access track.

A customer substation building will be located close to the solar panels and is required to export the energy from the transformers in a single cable to a substation operated by the District Network Operator (DNO).

The DNO substation building will be located at the southern end of the existing South Lynch Farm access track and is required to meter the production of energy and export it directly to the local grid via nearby existing overhead lines.

All electrical cabling to the substation will be underground and the substation buildings will have a green finish to coordinate with the surroundings.

Access Tracks

The existing South Lynch Farm access track from Farley Mount Road will be utilised, with a construction compound located close to the farm buildings. A new access track will be established along a field margin to connect the solar farm to the existing track. This access track will measure approximately four metres wide and will likely comprise crushed stone over a geo-textile membrane, with no concrete required.

Security

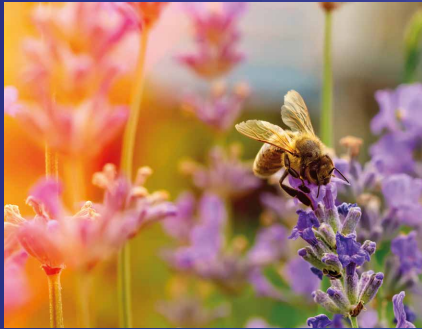
A fence will be installed around the perimeter of the development at a height of approximately two metres, consisting of wooden posts supporting traditional wire stock fencing.



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Ecology

The solar array is positioned in the northwest area of a large field associated with South Lynch Farm.



The solar array is enclosed by a mature tree belt along Sarum Road to the north and the Pitt Down Plantation to the west. Other smaller areas of the site comprise field margin along the proposed access track, as well as existing farm track and grass marginal land further south.

Hedgerows and trees provide important nesting and foraging habitats for a range of wildlife, including hazel dormouse known from records in the wider area. These habitats would be retained and protected from disturbance during construction and operational period. Enhanced hedgerow planting is proposed which would benefit dormouse. This will comprise of gapping-up of the boundary tree belts and hedgerows, as well as creating new hedgerow to the south and east. Bird surveys have already been undertaken and this planting would also provide enhancements for birds.

Within and around the solar array, a new grassland will be created and maintained to increase floristic diversity. This will help to increase pollen and nectar availability, and in turn enhance the area for bees, butterflies and other insects. This will also be suitable for sheep grazing.

Novus and Innova is committed to achieving a Biodiversity Net Gain score which exceeds the level expected set out in the Environment Act 2021 (above the required 10%).

Assessments are ongoing and these will inform any final designs, however the site will secure ecological enhancements ensuring a net gain in biodiversity across the site with the following measures likely to be included:



Seeding of a suitable grassland sward for sheep grazing.



Placing appropriate bird and bat boxes at suitable locations, within the woodlands surrounding the proposal.



Additional planting on boundaries.



Inclusion of bug hotels and bee hives where appropriate, on-site.

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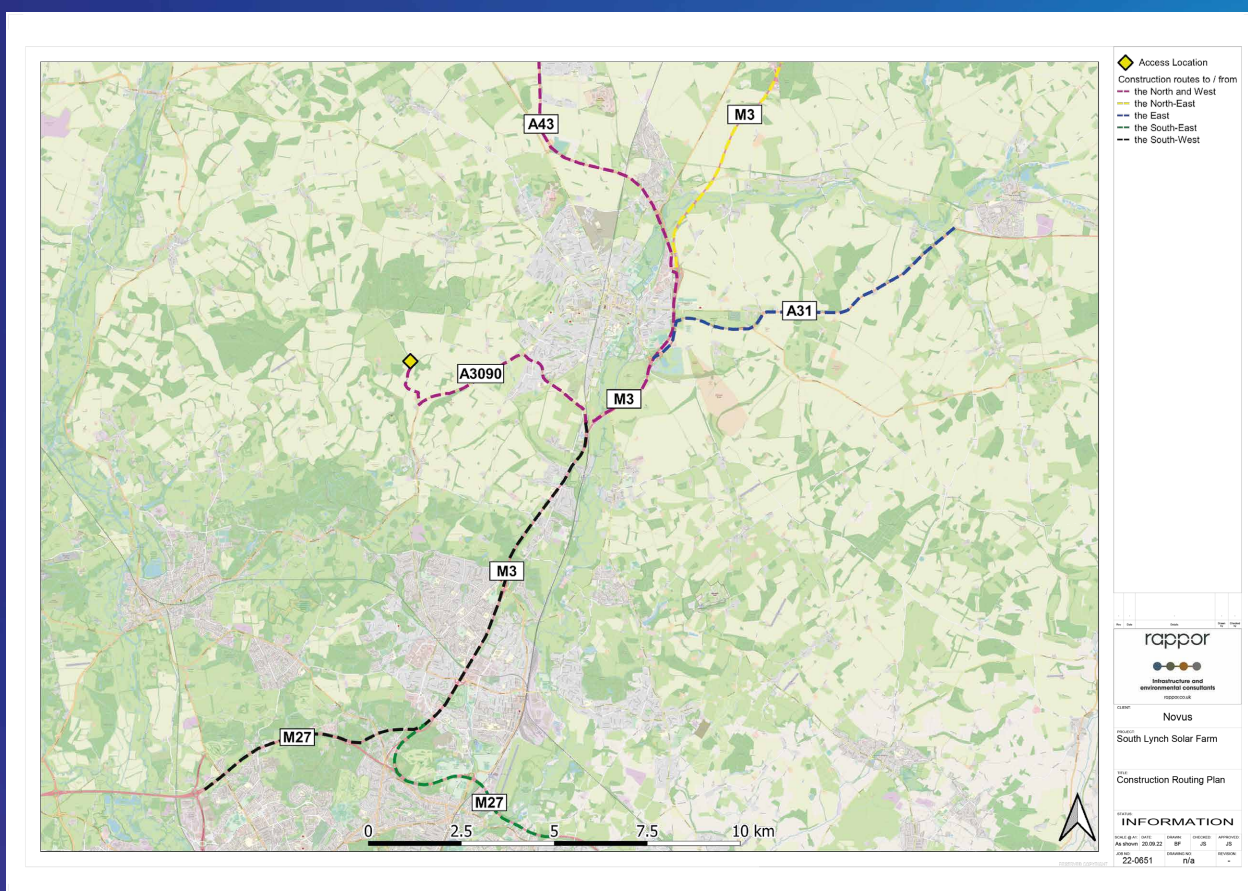
Transport

The below figure illustrates the proposed construction traffic routes, which we welcome feedback on the most suitable route.

It is currently proposed that all construction traffic should route via Junction 11 of the M3, the main reason being that traffic routing to the site from the north of the proposed access would otherwise be required to traverse several country lanes, including junctions that should be avoided by larger construction vehicles. By routing all traffic via the M3, we minimise the amount of narrow country roads required to access the site and therefore remove the potential for construction vehicles to conflict with background traffic.

From Junction 11, it is proposed that construction traffic routes to the site via Badger Farm Road, the A3090 and Sparsholt Road, before arriving at the South Lynch Farm access on Farley Mount Road.

The planning application will be supported by a Construction Traffic Management Plan that will include a range of measures to reduce the effect of construction vehicles on the local highway network.



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Site Specific Surveys

Archaeology & Heritage

There are no listed buildings or scheduled monuments located within the site or adjacent to the site boundaries.

There are heritage assets within the surrounding area and due to the known Roman road to the immediate north of the site (Sarum Road), early stage archaeological assessments have been undertaken in a wider survey area within the landholding.

These found features of archaeological interest in the north east area of the field. Based on these results, the layout and design of the proposed development has been reduced and focused on the area shown in this consultation, avoiding the areas thought to hold greatest potential for buried archaeology.

The panels will be placed onto a steel structure which is piled into the ground to an approximate depth of 1m, at intervals across the Site. The amount of actual ground infiltration from the steel structure is a small percentage (around 1%) of the amount of land covered by the solar panels. Due to the removal of agricultural activities (i.e. soil cultivation, ploughing, etc.) for the proposed 40 year lifetime of the solar farm, it is considered that the solar panels will not result in significant harm to any archaeological features that may be present. Prior to construction further archaeological investigation will be undertaken, in consultation with the County Archaeology department.

These assessments and surveys will be submitted as part of the planning application which will be publicly available on Winchester City Council's website as soon as the application is validated.

Agricultural Land

The site is classed as Grade 3 agricultural land according to the Natural England Agricultural Land Classification maps. A site-specific Agricultural Land Classification surveys is currently being undertaken and will form part of the planning application.



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Site Specific Surveys

Hydrology

The site lies in the headwaters of a tributary of the Monk's Brook and the underlying geology is chalk that gives rise to thin but permeable soils. The site is also located within Flood Zone 1, the area with the lowest risk of flooding. We are currently undertaking a Flood Risk Assessment which will accompany the planning application.

Where necessary, we will provide onsite drainage mitigation measures to ensure there is no increased risk of flooding both on-site and off-site due to the proposed development. These will be provided within a surface water management plan, which will review the potential impact of the development on runoff and provide measures by which the impacts can be mitigated. Due to the topography of the site, it is expected that shallow berms or embankments within the solar array will be implemented to intercept any surface water flow paths. These will help to attenuate any runoff and inhibit any erosion.

The proposals will also lead to the creation of some impermeable surfaces, such as those associated with the transformers and the substation. Runoff from these surfaces will be directed towards the gravelled areas adjacent to the infrastructure as shown the below figure. In effect, the gravel behaves like a soakaway with a nominal depth of around 0.3 m. The suitability of these gravelled areas has been confirmed by on-site testing of the soils.

Arboriculture

We have undertaken an Arboricultural Impact Assessment and associated tree survey which has identified the root protection areas of trees close to the red line boundary. There are no trees within the proposed development, and the proposed access tracks and equipment will seek to avoid root protection areas on the edges of the site



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Landscape and Visual

We are currently undertaking a full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which will accompany the planning application.

We have provided proposed viewpoints to Winchester City Council who are considering these and will confirm if additional viewpoints are required for form part of the LVIA.

The proposal is located within a gently rolling landscape, with a number of woodlands and copse's characterising the area around the site. The majority of site is enclosed within the landscape by trees along Sarum Road, and Crab Wood to the north and Pitt Down plantation to the immediate west. These woodlands substantively screen the majority of the proposal from the wider landscape and viewpoints to the north and the west.

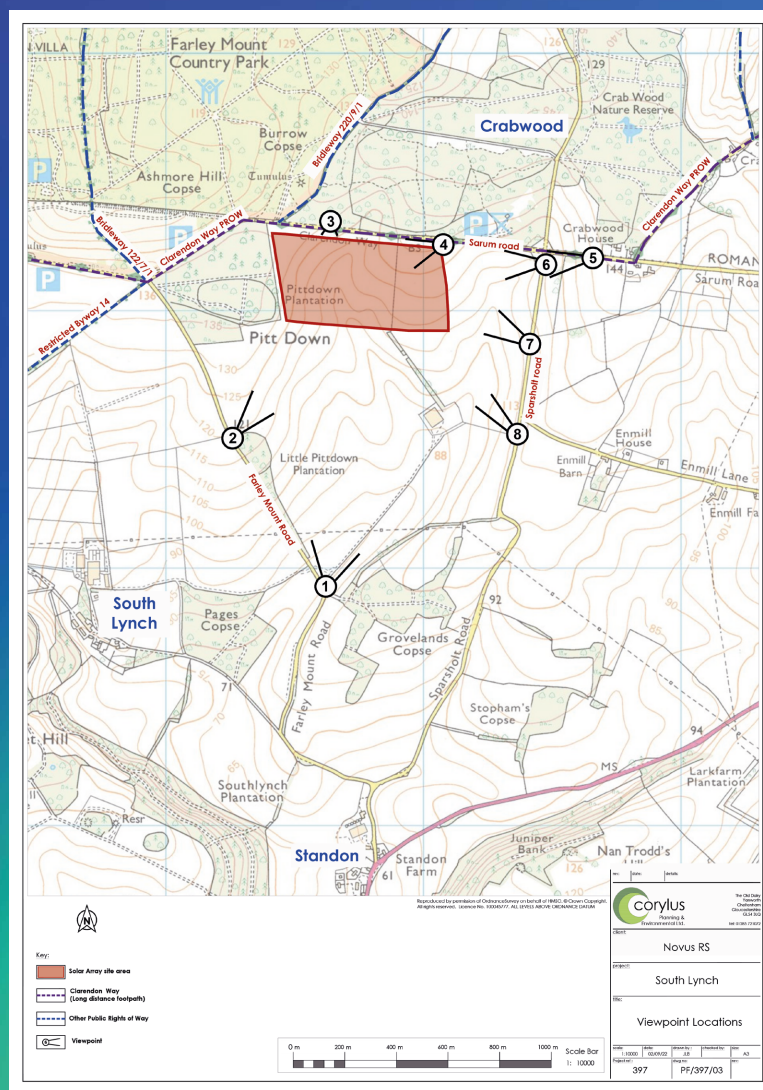
The proposal is located mainly within the northwest section of a large open field, immediately south of Sarum Road. The slope falls away to the south, with an undulating topography running east to west, allowing a more open aspect to the south and east. However, existing hedgerows and woodlands help to visually enclose the proposed site from the wider landscape.

Crab Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located to the north of the site. Crab Wood and the Farley Mount Country Park have a number of car parks and provide public access to a number of footpaths, mainly extending to the north, into the wood and park. A public footpath, the Clarendon Way, follows the alignment of Sarum Road and the southern edge of Crab wood; these visual receptors will have some limited filtered views of the proposals.

Overall, it is considered that a carefully designed landscape plan will help visually mitigate the proposed solar array. New planting is proposed on the east and south boundaries and gapping up of the existing hedgerow will help visually integrate the proposals into the landscape.

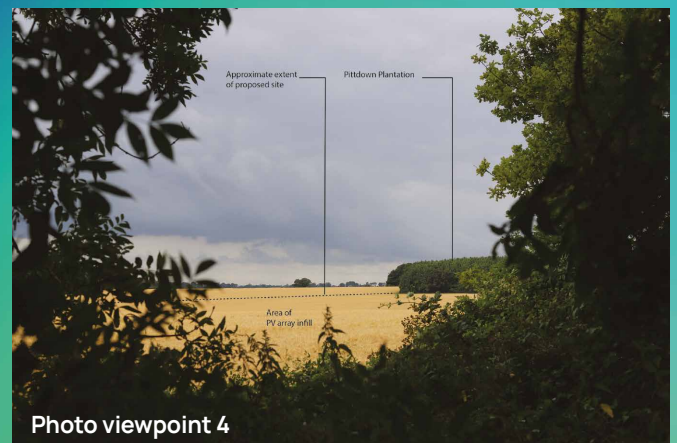
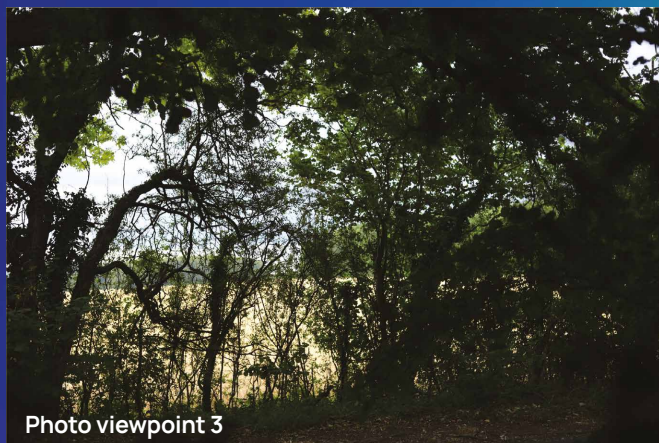
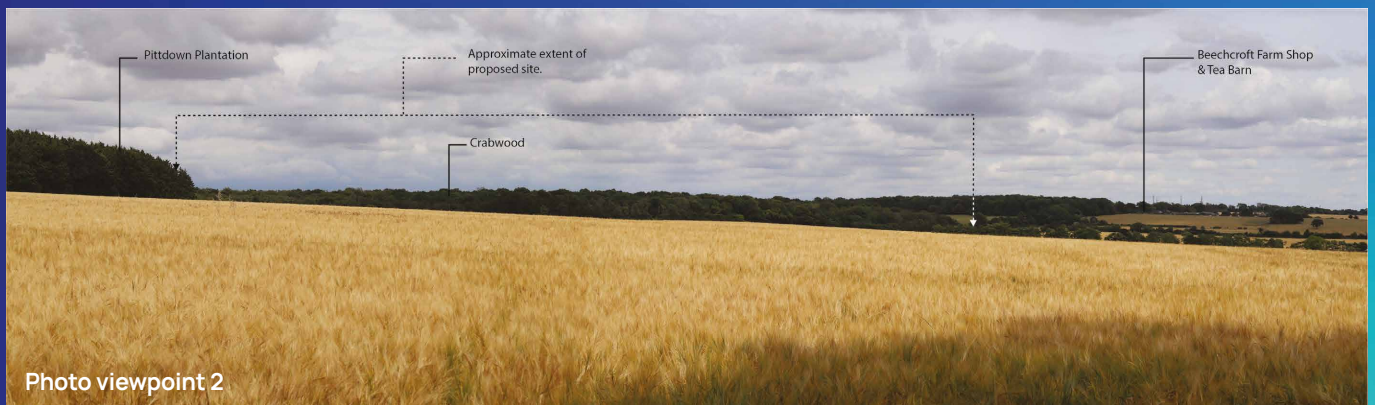
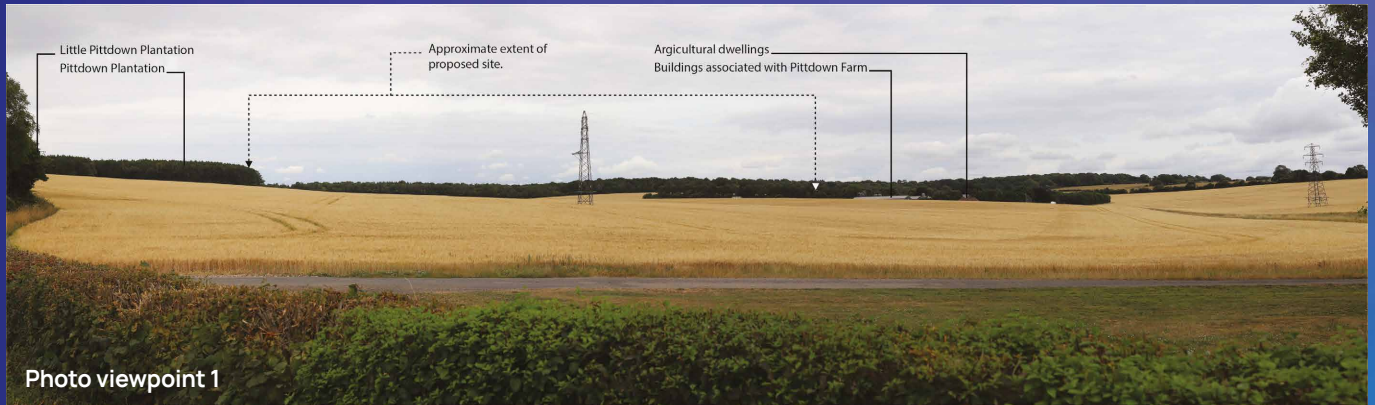
The below provides a selection of viewpoints surrounding the site which include labels for the approximate extent of the proposed development boundary.

Viewpoint locations plan



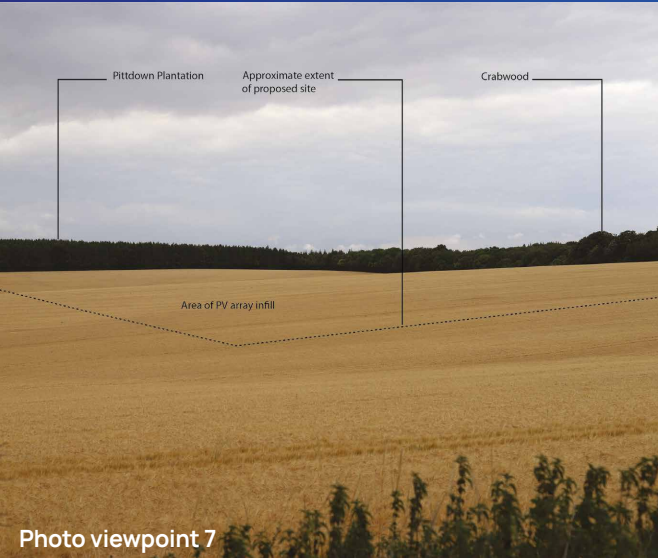
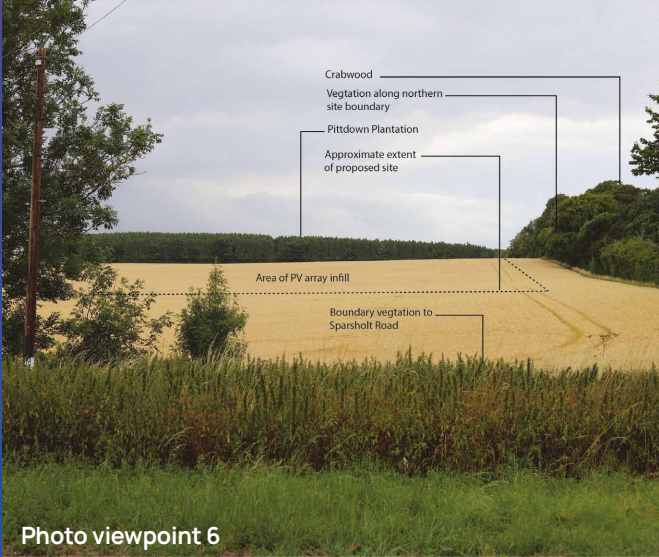
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Landscape and Visual



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Enhancements and Benefits

OUR COMMUNITY PROMISE

Every year the 20MWp project will contribute



£250

To the local community

£100

Charitable donation

per MWp installed

Our Community Promise

We believe it is important that local communities share in the benefit our project brings. For all our solar projects we offer a community benefit fund, which can be used to support local projects. We work with our host communities to agree the best way to provide and administer this fund. Every year the 20MWp South Lynch Solar farm will contribute £250 per MWp to the community benefit fund plus a further £100 per MWp charitable donation for the entire 40-year lifetime.

Boosting Biodiversity

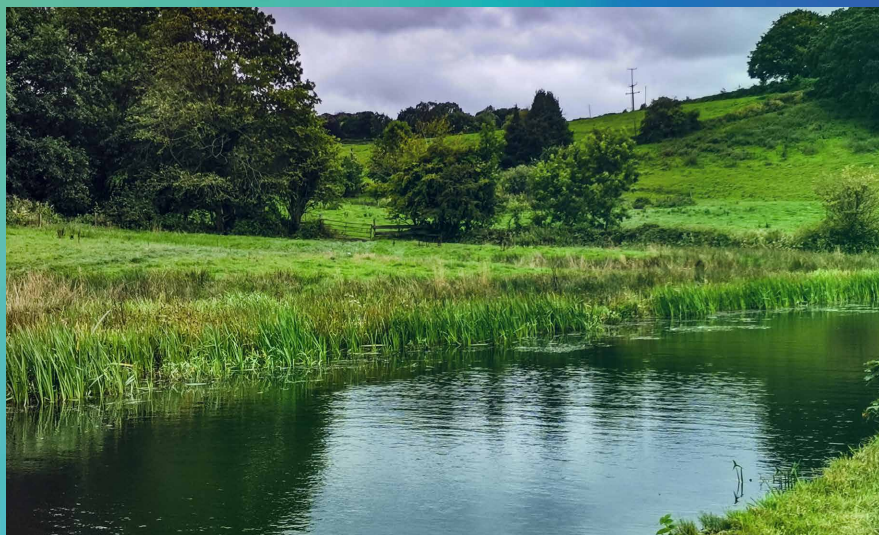
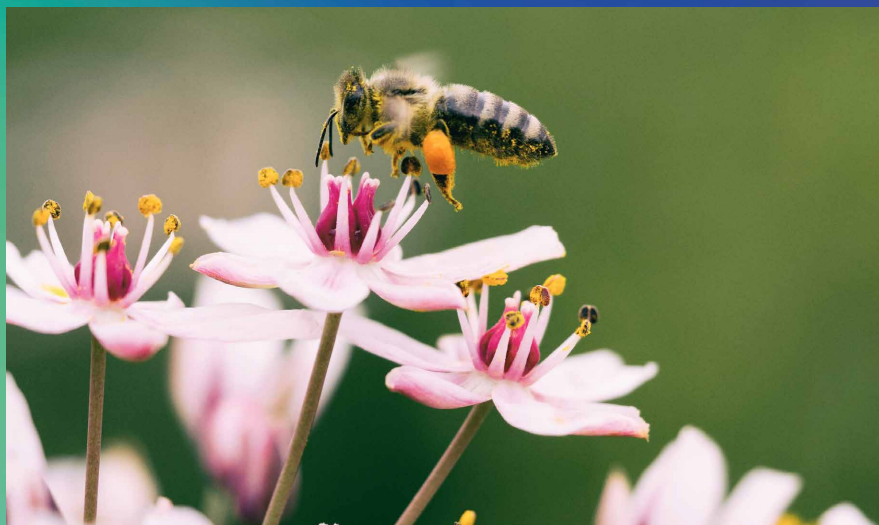
A bespoke Biodiversity Management Strategy is being prepared that ensures existing and new habitats are enhanced or created to benefit local wildlife. The South Lynch solar farm's landscape planting, seeding and habitat creation plans will focus on native species. These initiatives will contribute to securing long term biodiversity net gain across the site.

Green Spaces

The solar farm has been designed to leave green spaces around the site boundaries and between the rows of panels to avoid shading and maximise electricity generation. This will leave the significant proportion of the development area as uncovered grassland.

Sensitive Design

The iterative design process has informed the layout which includes a buffer from the tree lined boundaries and removal of panels from the areas of archaeological interest.



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Next Steps

Pre-application and community consultation

We are currently undertaking pre-application discussions with Winchester City Council. We will consolidate both the feedback from this consultation event and from the Council. This will help us refine our plans ahead of the submission of our planning application and ensure we have taken everything into account.

Current



Ongoing



Environmental Surveys

We are finalising our site-specific assessments and design of the proposed solar farm, including ecology, landscape and transport.

Planning Application Submission

The planning application is expected to be submitted to Winchester City Council in November 2022. As part of the planning process, Winchester City Council will invite comments from the public and from a range of statutory consultees. The application documents will be available to view on the Council's website.

Winter 2022



2023 /2024



Construction and Operation

The construction period is expected to take place in 2023/2024. This will take approximately four months and planting will be implemented in the first planting season following the construction activities.

