WELCOME Land at New House Farm, Staffordshire

Welcome and thank you for attending our consultation event. BSR Energy (BSR) is pleased to share its emerging proposals for a new solar photovoltaic (PV) development at Land at New House Farm, Upper Cotton. The proposal represents an important opportunity to boost green energy production in the area.

Aerial redline site outline

Why is this needed?

The need to protect the planet from global warming has never been more important, and recent summer temperatures and resulting drought in the UK have reinforced this urgency. At the same time, the soaring cost of living crisis requires alternative energy projects which do not rely on expensive gas, to help reduce consumer bills long term.

Staffordshire Moorlands District Council has declared a Climate Emergency and is committed to making the Staffordshire Moorlands Carbon Neutral by 2030. Its 'Towards Carbon Neutrality 2030: Climate Change Plan', sets out the aims of promoting the use of renewable energy, and having 318MW of renewable energy available in the district by 2030.

BSR is dedicated to being part of the solution and the change towards renewable energy sources in the UK. The impacts of climate change are already evident, with extreme weather events such as record-breaking temperatures, droughts, and unusually heavy rainfall becoming increasingly common. The time to act and mitigate further damage to our planet is now.

Solar energy is an affordable and efficient form of green energy which is an important part of ensuring the energy independence of the United Kingdom and working towards meeting the UK's target of net-zero by 2050.

About BSR

British Solar Renewables (BSR) is a leading renewable energy developer and provider of expert services to the renewable energy industry. We are dedicated to reducing carbon emissions and transitioning towards renewable energy sources.

The company was founded in 2010 and has grown into one of the largest integrated developers of utility-scale solar and storage in the UK with over 700MWp successfully developed and built to date.

Get involved

We value the input of the local community and are eager to understand the community's feedback at an early stage. We want to work with you to ensure we are delivering a project that works for everyone. Your feedback and questions are very welcome, so please speak to a member of our team today or at any point afterwards by phone or email.

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KEY INFORMATION

Why here?

BSR often gets asked regarding its developments ‘Why here?’. The key driver for looking for a suitable location to host a development of this nature is the National Grid.

Firstly, there is a need to identify a part of the Grid that has capacity, which can be challenging given that Grid availability is constantly changing and much of the network is constrained and in desperate need of reinforcement. Then a suitable point of connection to export any generation needs to be identified.

These factors significantly limit the number of options available for energy production as not every area, or brownfield / industrial site has capacity available for energy to be delivered. Once an area has been identified, landowners who have a suitable amount of land for the development are then contacted to gauge interest. BSR also considers a number of other factors, such as Land Grade, Landscape impact, Heritage, Flood Zones, Noise, Transport, and Ecology, amongst others, as part of the site selection process.

A full Site Selection report which details why the site has been chosen will be submitted as part of the Planning Application.

Technical information

The site is currently used for grazing livestock and is made up of lower-quality farmland, classed as Grades 3b, 4 and 5, which are not considered “Best and Most Versatile” land. It also lies within Flood Zone 1, meaning it is at the lowest risk of flooding.

The site covers 42.8 hectares (105.7 acres), but less than half of this area will be used for solar panels and infrastructure. Electricity generated will connect directly into an existing pole already on the site.

We submitted an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) screening request to the Local Planning Authority, who confirmed that the project is classed as an EIA development. This means detailed studies on ecology, landscape, noise, water resources and cultural heritage (including the tramways) will form part of the planning application.

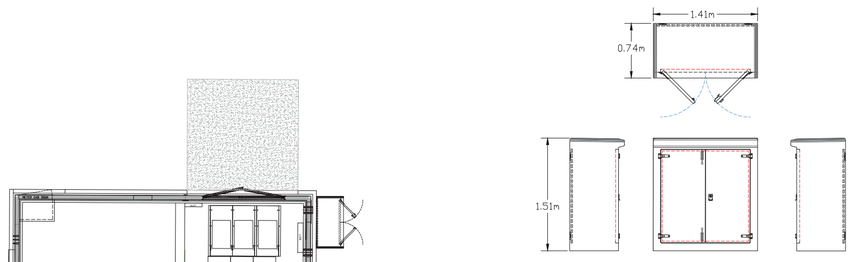
As part of this, we are carrying out a wide range of ecological surveys to understand how wildlife uses the site and how best to protect and enhance it. These surveys cover species such as badgers, bats, otters, fungi, trees and birds, as well as biodiversity net gain calculations. The design of the solar farm also includes new habitats and biodiversity enhancements, ensuring nature is protected and improved alongside the generation of clean energy, in line with BSR’s Nature Protection Pledge.

In terms of heritage, assessments show the proposals will have only minimal impact on Grade II Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments within 1 km of the site.

Finally, a detailed Landscape Masterplan and Arboriculture Planning Statement will be submitted with the planning application to show how the project has been designed to fit sensitively within its surroundings.

DNO HV Compound Elevation Views

Meter Cabinet Detail - 1:50 at A3



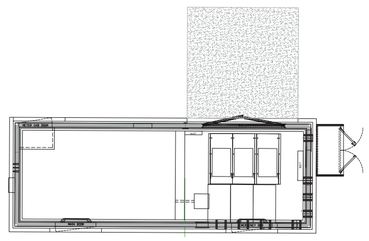
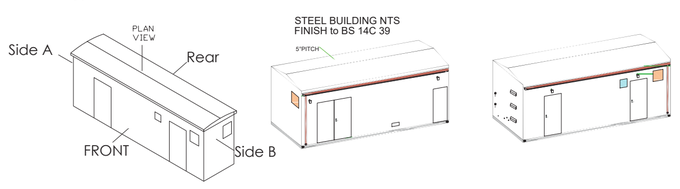
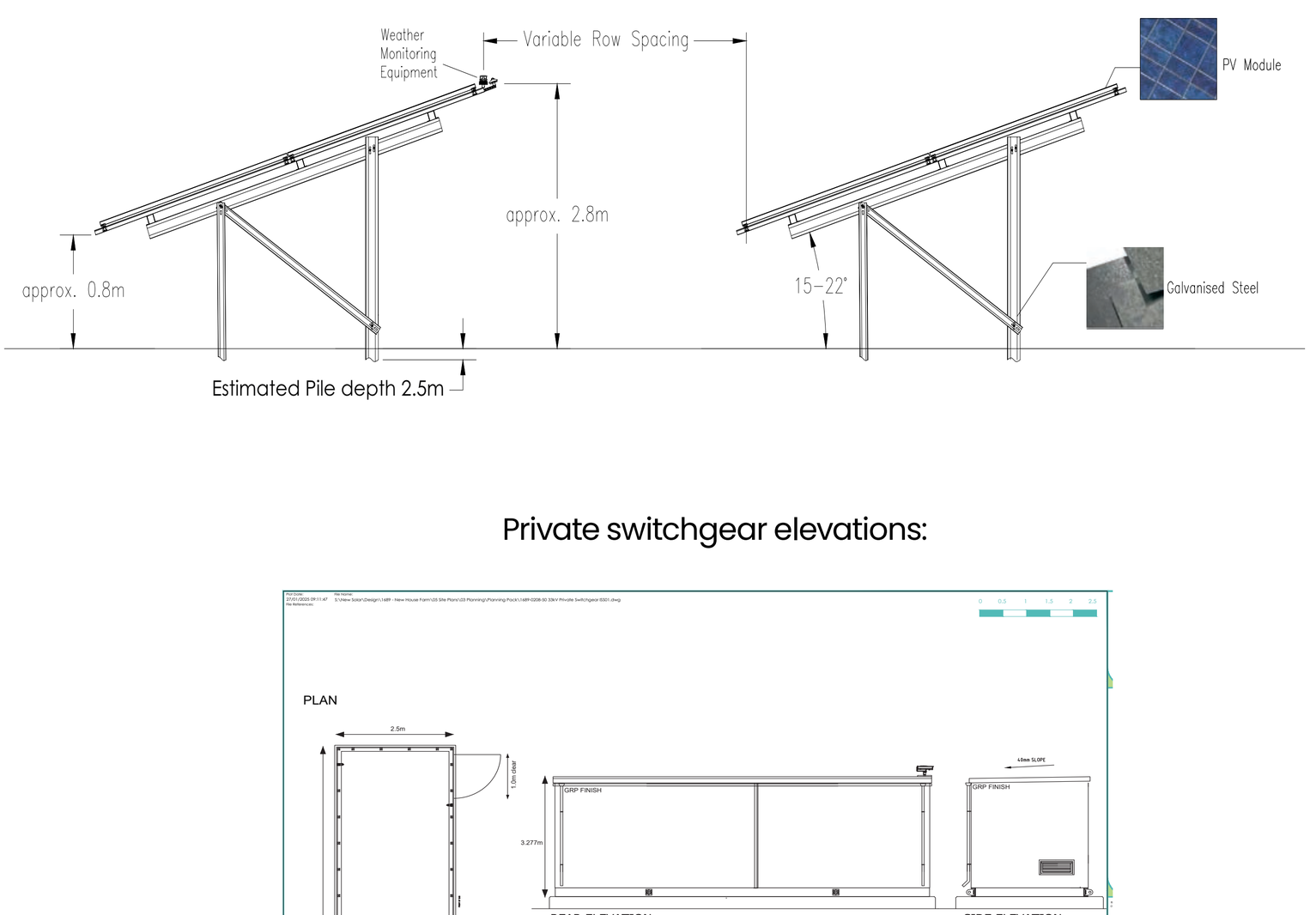


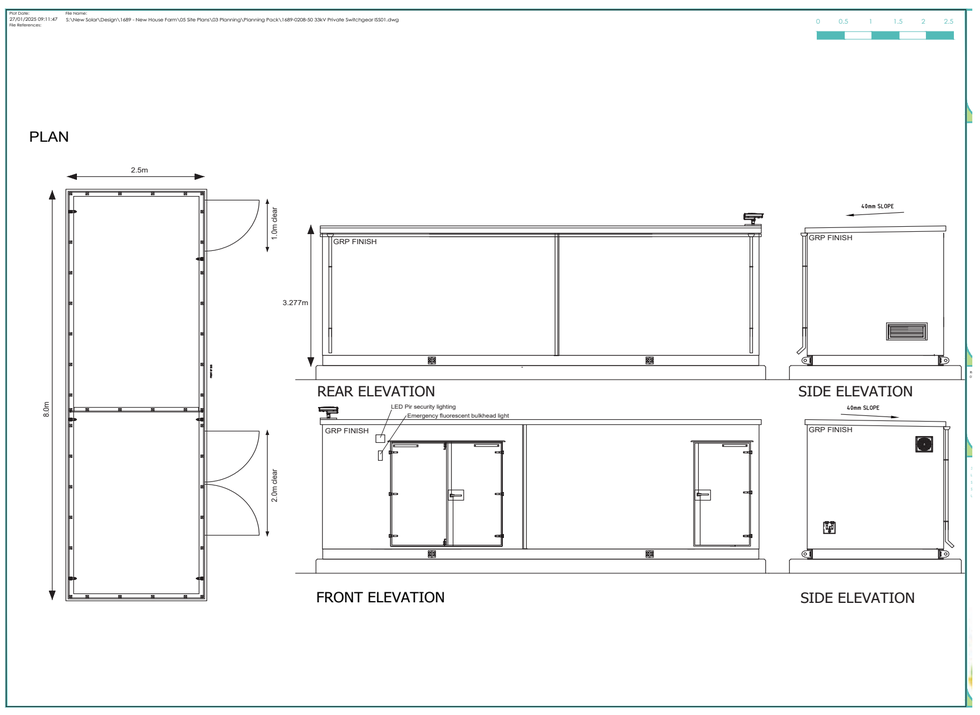
Illustration of Wall Views - NTS



Solar Panel dimensions



Private switchgear elevations:



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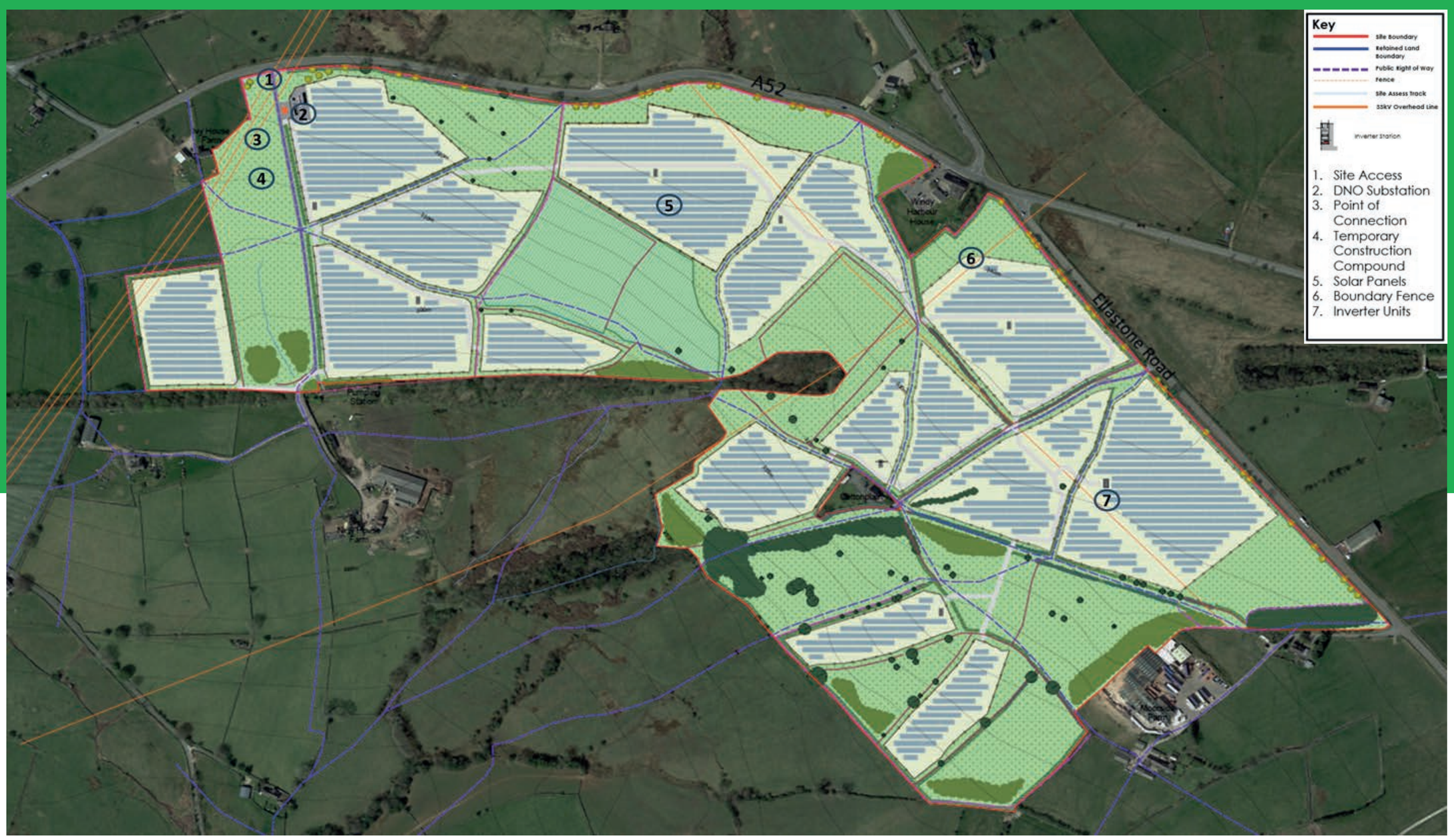
THE PROPOSAL

The below site layout plan indicates the proposed location for the solar panels on site, as well as areas reserved for screening and biodiversity & ecological enhancements. The solar panels and associated infrastructure will only occupy 47.6% of the red line boundary.



BSR's proposal for Land at New House Farm would deliver the following:

- A solar development with a total export capacity of up to 18MW. This is the equivalent energy production to powering 4,949 homes and will provide a reduction of 4,384 tonnes of CO2 per year being emitted into the atmosphere
- An important part of ensuring the energy independence of the United Kingdom and working towards fulfilling the Government's net zero targets by 2050
- A Biodiversity Net Gain of at least 60%, exceeding the minimum 10% required by the government
- A temporary development, with a lifespan of 40 years, allowing the site to be returned to agricultural use after decommissioning with no detrimental impact on the quality of the land
- A connection to the grid via existing poles on-site

Public Rights of Way

There are a number of Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) that run through the site, many of which may be temporarily rerouted or closed only during the construction period for Health and Safety reasons. There is a proposed management plan to maintain these PRoWs at their current width with 1m buffer on each side and vegetation within this buffer kept at a maximum height of 5m.

Where the footpath passes alongside existing hedgerows and tree clumps, branches will be trimmed either side of the path to ensure the pathway remains clear and accessible. Once operational, all PRoWs will remain accessible and safe and vegetation management and trimming ensures clear passage alongside solar arrays or natural features.

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BENEFITS

Community benefit

As part of the proposal, BSR Energy will establish a Community Benefit Fund, which would directly support local projects and benefit the local community.

We are keen to hear thoughts on how the fund could be best used to support the community and would welcome your feedback. Ideas can be provided as part of our feedback survey – please scan the QR code to access or fill in a paper form, available here today.

The key benefits of our proposal include:

- Allowing for a significant opportunity for green energy production in Staffordshire to help meet key Net Zero targets
- Ensure a secure and stable supply of electricity to help meet the Government's target of Net Zero by 2050
- Support existing biodiversity to thrive on the site. Improvements in the condition of existing habitats and creation of new habitats to enhance biodiversity
- Provide at least a minimum increase of 60% in Biodiversity Net Gain, exceeding the 10% target outlined in the Environment Act 2021
- Allow the land to be returned to agricultural use following decommissioning with an operational lifespan of 40 years
- Create a guaranteed stable income for the local farmer who owns the land, supporting the farm's wider activities for the next 40 years

Our Nature Protection Pledge

British Solar Renewables' Nature Protection Pledge means that BSR will, on all sites:

- Manage the land in an environmentally sensitive way tailored to the specific landscape and its species.
- Encourage a mosaic of habitats on our sites, optimising them for biodiversity.
- Use buffers to protect high-biodiversity areas, such as ancient woodlands, tree roots, ponds, and wetlands.
- Create gaps in fences to promote wildlife corridors for small and medium mammals
- Undertake soil type tests and plant appropriate wildflowers and grasses. Use locally sourced wildflower seeds where possible and plant seeds of nectar rich species to encourage pollinators.
- Protect ancient and veteran trees, plant only UK grown native species and enhance native hedgerows to create green corridors for wildlife.
- Only use de-ionised water to clean panels.
- Collaborate with local biodiversity action/ wildlife groups and organisations such as the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, to enhance and protect local species.
- Monitor the biodiversity on the site through annual surveys
- Approach end of life decommissioning in a way that benefits the environment, soil structure and biodiversity.
- Display site credentials and biodiversity information for the solar park for visitors and communities.

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BIODIVERSITY

- The use of the land for a solar development provides a significant opportunity for diversity to continue on the site. Solar panels only disturb around 5% of the ground, allowing for plants to continue to grow and animals to still graze the land.
- BSR Energy always seeks to achieve the highest possible Biodiversity Net Gain on its project sites, and commits to over 60% on all sites, with some forecast to achieve over 200%.
- Existing habitats on site will be retained and managed where possible, to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on the existing condition of the habitat over the lifespan of the development. The development will improve the condition of existing habitats and create new habitats to enhance biodiversity on site. It's likely that this will include:
  - Creation of new native hedgerows where required;
  - Infill hedgerow planting where gaps occur in the existing vegetation, for betterment of the existing landscape;
  - Creation of species rich grassland across the entire site, including rough grassland along the bases of existing vegetation;
  - Tree planting, where required, to mitigate views and strengthen the landscape.

There will be a Landscape Environment Management Plan (LEMP) which outlines how we will implement biodiversity enhancements on the site, as part of our planning application.

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CONSTRUCTION

Throughout the construction and operational phases of the proposed solar development on Land at New House Farm, BSR Energy is committed to ensuring that the impact to the local road network, and the local community, is kept to a minimum.

The construction phase is expected to take approximately 12 months. The highest volume of HGV movements is expected to take place in the first month, with an average of six two-way journeys per day. In the later stages of construction, we expect there to be two HGV trips per day. Transport surveys are currently underway and will help shape the construction traffic strategy.

There will be a Construction Traffic Management Plan in place throughout, to minimise any disruption to the surrounding area.

The site will be accessed using the existing farm track off the A52, to the north of the site, with construction traffic approaching from the east or west along the A52.

We do not expect there to be any road closures needed during construction, but should this be necessary we would seek the required permissions and notify all local residents ahead of time.

If planning permission is granted, construction is expected to start on site in November 2032. This date is based on availability of a connection to the National Grid. However, National Grid is currently exploring options to increase grid capacity, as this is desperately needed if the country is to meet key Net Zero targets. As such, an updated connection date may be provided, which would mean the construction date would change.

This shows the proposed construction route along the A52

Operation

Once the site is operational, it is anticipated that there will only be low levels of traffic accessing the site for maintenance purposes. It is therefore expected that the largest volume of traffic will be associated with the construction phase of the project.

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HAVE YOUR SAY

Our consultation period is running until Friday 17 October 2025, and we want to hear from the local community as we develop our proposal for Land at New House Farm to ensure we understand any concerns.

There are a number of ways you will be able to provide feedback:

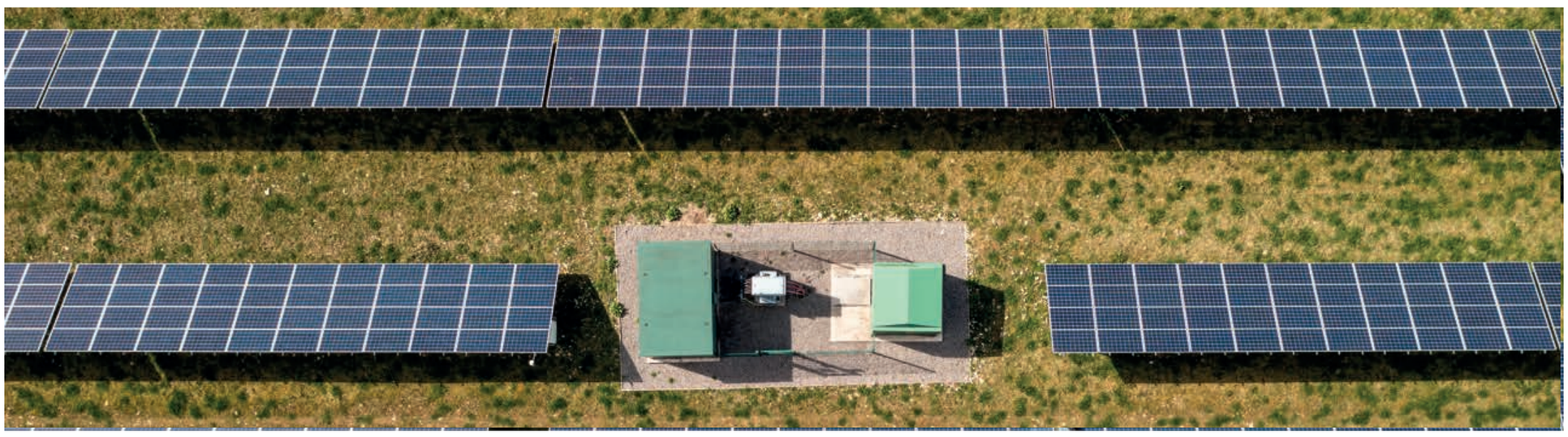
- **Fill out our questionnaire, available on paper here today, or via the QR code**
- **Call us on 0800 208 4711 (freephone)**
- **Email us at info@BSRnewhousefarm.co.uk**
- **Visit our website**

  www.BSRnewhousefarm.co.uk

If you, or anyone you know, would benefit from hard copy information or accessible formats, these are available on request by using the details listed above or by speaking to a member of the team at the event today.

Next Steps

Following the close of the consultation period, we will review the feedback received. This feedback analysis will then be used to inform the final design of the scheme for planning submission to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.



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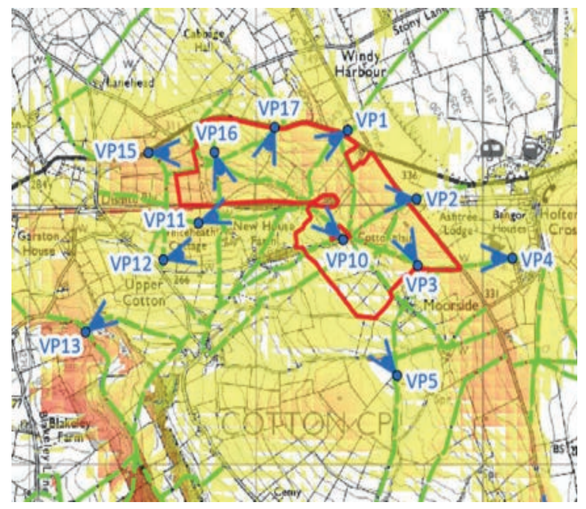
WINTER VIEWPOINT 1



The proposed layout of the solar park has been designed to minimise visual impact, by leaving over 50% of the total site free of solar panels, and stepping back the panels in places where they would otherwise be visible from the road.

A full Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment will be prepared as part of our planning application.

Below you can see a series of viewpoints of the site, and what they will look like one year after development, and after seven years when screening has fully grown in.

Now

Year 1

Year 7–15

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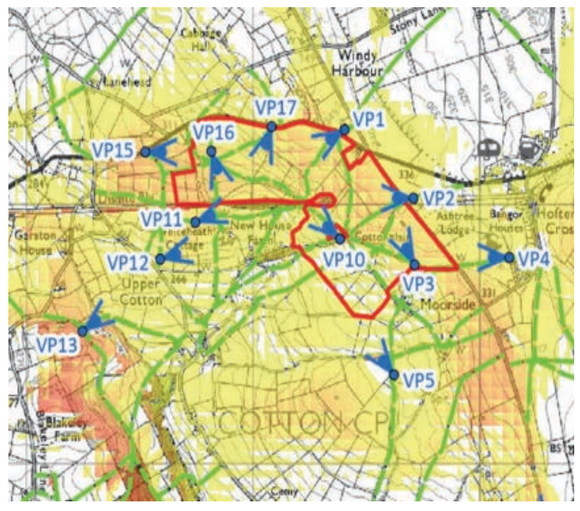
WINTER VIEWPOINT 5



Now

Year 1

Year 7–15

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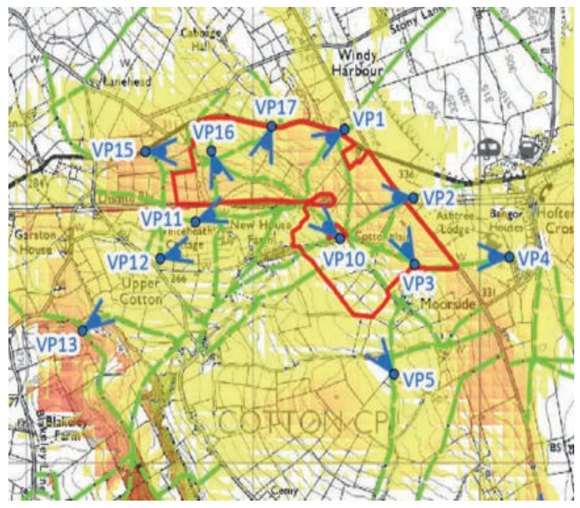
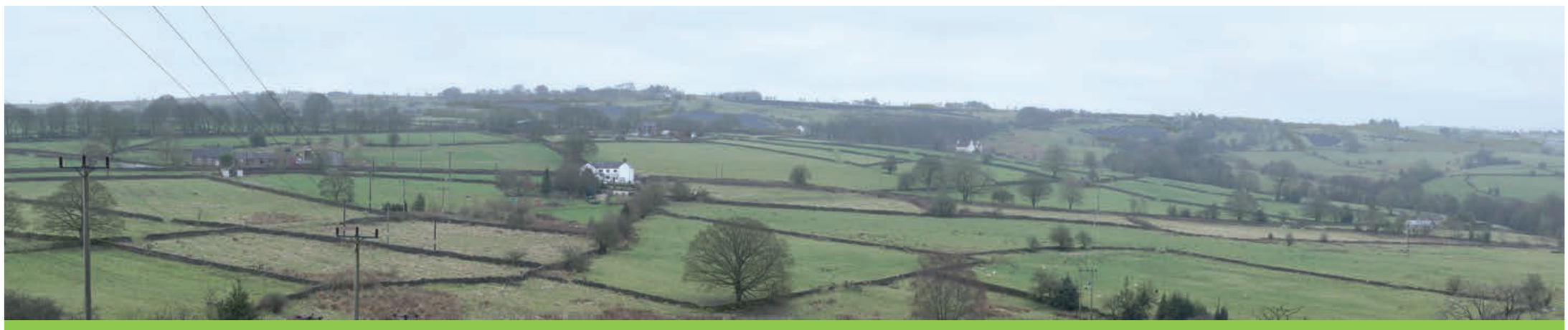
WINTER VIEWPOINT 13



Now

Year 1



Year 7–15

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