

Land at Leamington Road, Princethorpe (Ash Tree Solar Park)

Statement of Community Involvement

December 2023 (updated April 2024)

Prepared by PLMR for BSR Energy (BSR)

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1. Executive Summary

- PLMR has been appointed by BSR Energy (BSR) to undertake a programme of community engagement to support its planning application for its Land at Leamington Road, Princethorpe site, and to produce this Statement of Community Involvement.
- The main period of community consultation took place between the 26 June and the 16 July 2023.
- Ahead of the launch of the public consultation period, all of the relevant members at Rugby Borough Council, Warwickshire County Council, Princethorpe Parish Council, along with representatives from neighbouring Warwick District Council, Stretton-on-Dunsmore Parish Council, Frankton Parish Council, and Eathorpe, Hunningham, Offchurch & Wappenbury Joint Parish Council, as well as other key stakeholders, such as the neighbouring Princethorpe College and hotel under development, were made aware of the emerging proposals and were offered the opportunity to meet with the project team to discuss the plans in more detail.
- The consultation was advertised through the distribution of a leaflet to 1,250 addresses surrounding the site, 65 letters to immediate neighbouring residents and businesses, and a press release issued to local media, which advertised the in-person consultation event.
- A project-specific website, dedicated project free-to-call telephone line and project-specific email address were also provided.
- The in-person consultation event was held on Tuesday 4 July 2023, between 3pm and 7pm at Eathorpe Village Hall, Fosse Way, Eathorpe, Leamington Spa, CV33 9DF. In total, 40 people attended the event and spoke to members of the project team in attendance.
- During the public consultation, residents were encouraged to complete a consultation survey. This survey sought residents' general views on the climate emergency, the cost-of-living crisis, and biodiversity. They were also invited to share their thoughts more specifically on the proposals regarding landscaping and biodiversity, construction, transport movements, and any other feedback they wished to share.
- All the materials provided at the public consultation event were shared on the BSR Ash Tree website along with the consultation survey to ensure those who did not attend the in-person event were able to access all the information. A total of 20 residents gave feedback during the consultation period.
- The feedback provided during the consultation included:
 - Fully supportive of the proposals
 - Questions around the PROW and if this will be staying open
 - Concerns over visual impact and the additional planting proposed, particularly to assist with views to the south
 - Concerns over the impact on the two schools
 - Concerns over impact on rush hour traffic during construction period
 - Concerns over the impact on the neighbouring hotel currently under construction

- Questions and concerns relating to the ongoing operation of the site
 - Comments against the landowner
 - Concerns that there will be no benefit to the community
 - Better suited elsewhere
 - Concerns over impact on existing flooding issues
 - Nuclear power is better alternative to solar
 - Accusations of white washing / green washing
 - Glint and glare concerns
 - Impact on nearby heritage assets
 - Concerns over security cameras
- The project team will continue to engage with those residents that signed up to be kept up to date, Rugby Borough Council, Warwickshire County Council, Princethorpe Parish Council, and other key stakeholders as the application progresses through the planning process.

2. Context

BSR Energy (BSR) is bringing forward proposals for a new solar development on Land at Leamington Road. The site measures 22.42 hectares in size and is located southwest of the village of Princethorpe in the Rugby district of Warwickshire. The proposals represent an opportunity to boost green energy generation in the local area.

Solar development is a cleaner and cheaper alternative to fossil fuels, helping to support our energy independence, something highlighted within the Government's recent Energy Security Strategy, which calls for a five-fold increase in solar energy by 2035. The proposals for Land at Leamington Road (Ash Tree Solar Park) seek to:

- Allow for a significant opportunity for green energy production in Rugby
- 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, as solar farms take up less than 5% of the land. This allows for plants to continue to grow and animals to still pass through the site
- Provide a minimum increase of 60% in Biodiversity Net Gain, which exceeds the 10% target outlined in the Environment Act 2021
- Improvements in the condition of existing habitats and creation of new habitats to enhance biodiversity on site
- Secure the future of a local family farm, supporting ongoing agriculture in the area
- Allow the land to be returned to agricultural use following decommissioning with an operational lifespan of 40 years

The nearby area is rural, and the site is predominantly surrounded by open fields. The main village centre of Princethorpe is nearby, along with a scattering of agricultural buildings. The site is well located for a solar park development, given its discreet location and southerly tilt to the land.

3. Principles of engagement

The purpose of this section of the Statement of Community Involvement is to highlight the objectives of public engagement, methodology, strategy, and the principal guidelines that PLMR, on behalf of BSR, has followed as part of its community consultation programme.

The objectives of the process have been to inform members of the local community on BSR's proposals and to seek their views on the proposed solar development being brought forward for Land at Leamington Road (Ash Tree), Princethorpe, ahead of submitting a planning application to Rugby Borough Council (RBC).

There are a series of planning policies and guides at the national and local level which stress the need for applicants to engage with the local community when bringing forward proposals of this nature.

3.1 National Level

The Localism Act 2011 emphasises the need for pre-application engagement and actively encourages both Local Authorities and applicants to take these principles into account. The Act enshrines in law a community right to consultation; it includes the "requirement to carry out pre-application consultation" and also requires a "duty to take account of response to consultation."

Meanwhile, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which came into force in March 2012, strengthens the need for front-loaded community engagement, and is based on the principle that consultation should not be a reactive process, but rather it should enable the local community to say what sort of place they want to live in at a stage when this can make a difference. Such involvement leads to outcomes that better reflect the views and meet the needs of the wider, diversified community. The NPPF was revised in February 2019, building upon these core themes of community engagement, and then further revised in July 2021 and again in September 2023 which resulted in a number of changes including strengthening sustainability and biodiversity commitments and measures to improve design quality through the ambition of 'beauty' in planning – where local communities and developers are encouraged to work together to design and build beautiful places.

Alongside this, in August 2020, the Government launched a White Paper, 'Planning for the Future', which outlined a range of reforms, including the digitisation of the planning process. It states that engagement with local communities should move predominantly online, with digital resources such as maps and data making the planning process more accessible to the public.

3.2 Local Level

Rugby Borough Council (RBC) adopted its latest Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in September 2020. The document sets out how and when the Council will involve local communities in the planning system, together with a description of the types of involvement that will be used. The document includes community engagement in both Plan Making and consultation on planning applications.

Sections 2.1.3, and 2.5.1 of RBC's SCI on pages 5 and 11, state:

2.1.3 – The NPPF promotes a plan-led system, and re-iterates the duty to co-operate on planning issues that cross administrative boundaries, particularly those related to the strategic priorities, including the homes and jobs needed in the area. The NPPF sets out that local planning authorities should approach taking decisions on planning applications in a positive way to help the deliver sustainable development, should look for solutions rather than problems, and should work proactively with applicants to secure development that improves the economic, environmental, and social conditions of an area.”

“2.5.1. Aside from any statutory consultation required by law, the nature and extent of consultation and who is involved will depend on the subject matter of the document being prepared. In identifying who should be consulted, it is necessary to consider:

- The need to reach a cross-section of the community in relation to social and economic status, age, disability, gender, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race and ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, sex reassignment, sexual orientation, and literacy.*
- The roles of consultees: are they enablers, partners, funders, decision makers?*
- How much time people have to contribute to the process.*
- The nature of consultees: are they professionals, inexperienced, individuals, or representatives of a group?*
- What sector a consultee falls within: public, private, voluntary or community?*
- Whether consultees are directly or indirectly affected.”*

3.3 Conclusion

With all of the above taken into account, planning policy and guidance at the national and local level indicates that the consultation process should be based on the following principles when it comes to pre-application engagement:

- Access to information should be open and without qualification
- Communities should be enabled by informing and educating
- Participation should be sought and encouraged
- There should be front-loaded involvement
- The process should be transparent and conveyed in plain-English
- Messages should be consistent
- There should be feedback and an intent to take account of responses

The principles outlined above should be adhered to, whilst acknowledging the fact that there can often be barriers to providing a comprehensive and wide-reaching consultation process, including:

- The complexity of many issues, including the developing nature of proposals at the pre-application stage
- Difficulties in identifying and reaching different groups within a community
- The language of planning can be complex and disengaging to a lay member of the public

PLMR on behalf of BSR has sought to adhere to these principles of engagement throughout its consultation on the proposed solar development for Land at Leamington Road (Ash Tree Solar Park).

4. Stakeholder Engagement

Consultation on the proposed solar development on Land at Leamington Road, Princethorpe took place between 26 June and 16 July 2023. As part of this, the project team engaged with the following:

- Dunsmore ward members at Rugby Borough Council
- The Leader, Deputy Leader, Leader of the Labour Group, and the Mayor at Rugby Borough Council
- The neighbouring ward representatives for Radford Semele at Warwick District Council
- The Leader, Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Climate Change at Warwick District Council
- Division Member for Leam Valley at Warwickshire County Council
- Neighbouring Division Member for Cubbington and Leek Wootton at Warwickshire County Council
- Leader, and Cabinet Member for Environment, Climate, and Culture at Warwickshire County Council
- Princethorpe Parish Council
- Eathorpe, Hunningham, Offchurch, & Wappenbury Joint Parish Council
- Stretton-on-Dunsmore Parish Council
- Frankton Parish Council
- Statutory consultees, including; technical consultees from Warwickshire County Council and Natural England
- 1,250 neighbouring residents and businesses, including a separate letter to the 65 immediate neighbours inviting them to a separate meeting and letters to immediate neighbours Princethorpe College and the Woodhouse Hotel & Spa – the hotel development currently under construction.

The following sub-sections provide an overview of the engagement with each of the stakeholders who responded to our approaches. A sample copy of the letter issued to political members can be viewed at Appendix A. A sample copy of the letter issued to neighbouring residents can be viewed at Appendix B. A sample copy of the letter issued to Princethorpe College, and the Woodhouse Hotel and Spa can be viewed at Appendices C and D, respectively.

4.1 Warwick District Council

Following the issue of the letter to the aforementioned members at Warwick District Council on 8 June 2023, one response was received from the Cabinet Member for Climate Change at Warwick District Council. The member noted that whilst it was good to see solar energy proposals coming forward in the area, the Council would not wish to be engaged in any discussions at this stage, and as such will not be looking to meet with the project team.

4.2 Warwickshire County Council

Following the issue of our letter to relevant Warwickshire County Council members on 8 June 2023, a response was received from the neighbouring Division member for Cubbington and Leek Wootton. The response acknowledged our outreach but noted that whilst the proposal does not fall within their division, they would await the Planning Application to comment. As such, they were not interested in meeting with us. The email also noted that they had sent our approach across to Warwickshire County Council Planning.

4.3 Princethorpe Parish Council

Following the issue of our letter to Princethorpe Parish Council on 16 June 2023, a response was received, and a site visit was organised for Tuesday 4 July. Attending the site visit was the Parish Clerk and two members of the Parish Council. An overview of the discussion is provided below.

- Does BSR lease or buy the land? – it was confirmed that BSR leases the land for the life of the development – 40 years.
- How often are sites actually reverted back to agricultural use at the end of the 40 years? – it was discussed that solar is a relatively new technology and as such, BSR does not have any sites that have come to the end of the 40 years. However, as the planning consent is time restricted, so they would need to revert the land back to an agricultural use or reapply for planning consent.
- Members questioned the impact the cameras would have on the PRow – would they capture dog walkers? It was responded that cameras are fixed and do not move around and would be focused on the area covering the fence line around the site. As such, these would not pick up anything further afield.
- How tall will the fence be? Was answered that this would be 2.2m.
- The camera poles would be 4.5m in height, which members noted was ‘large’.
- Members asked if there will be an ecological assessment, as the proposals would negatively impact on animals’ right to roam – it was confirmed a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal had been carried out which had identified further surveys required, which were being undertaken at the time. It is now known that the proposed Solar development will not lead to the loss of any important habitats and will indeed result in a positive net gain for the Ecology on and around the site.
- Members noted that although small mammals will be able to still get across the site, it will be a hindrance to deer, of which there are some in this area.
- Members asked how Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is measured – BSR confirmed that the increase is based on the increase in the quality and quantity of habitats and flora / fauna across the site. Requirement for 10% minimum – BSR aims for a minimum increase of 60%.
- Members asked why this site, and how are sites identified by BSR? – based on where there is capacity in the grid and then where there is a viable point of connection. So, a hotspot is identified which has adequate export capacity in the grid and then a radius is implemented to see which sites could be considered suitable for Solar development. Brownfield and low Agricultural Land Classification sites are BSR’s preference and would be prioritised, but brownfield land in particular is difficult to come by in many locations that hit both the hotspot and radius points.
- The Clerk noted that Solar is known as being an “eye sore” and a “blot on the landscape” – how will BSR help the local community. BSR noted its community fund, which would be managed by BizGive and the introduction of appropriate landscaping will seek to reduce the visual impact of the development.
- It was noted that the initial reaction from the community is that this will be an “eye sore” – can be seen from the Fosse Way and the footpath from Princethorpe to Eathorpe.
- Concerns were raised relating to the recyclability of the panels.
- When will the consultation run until? – PLMR confirmed that the official period is until 16 July, but feedback received after this date until submission of the planning application is still captured and considered.
- When would construction start? – there is a grid connection delay due to upgrade works required by National Grid. Currently this is 2033 although we believe this likely to be brought forward.
- Members were interested to know if the community fund amount will inflate over the next 10 years, given inflation? BSR committed to respond on this point.

- Concerns were raised over construction traffic. Members noted that quarry traffic uses Leamington Road. Also noted that construction traffic will need to take account of school traffic.
- Members asked if the road will change? BSR confirmed that the access is proposed off Leamington Road and there are no road changes required. There may be a need for temporary traffic management measures during the construction phase, which would be identified in the Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP).
- Members asked about glint and glare – a Glint & Glare Assessment was being undertaken at the time of the meeting. This confirms that the proposed development will not give rise to any excessive or harmful glint or glare.
- Members asked about green coloured panels to try and make it blend in. BSR noted that as far as they are aware the panels required don't come in green.
- Members asked if the landowner continues to have any responsibility for the land. BSR noted that they would not.
- It was then asked what the lifecycle of the panels is and if there would ever be a need to replace the whole site. BSR confirmed that the panels have a 25 year warranty and that the replacement of these is generally as and when they are required, not as a whole site at once.
- Does BSR carry out carbon footprint analysis? It typically takes sites 6 years to earn back carbon savings.
- Concerns over lobby groups and attracting unwanted attention for the village.
- Questions relating to the distribution of the power generated and if this would go to the local community. BSR confirmed the power goes back into the National Grid.
- What would the solar development be like to work with? Will it be noisy? BSR noted that this would not generate a lot of noise. Some elements will provide a low level 'hum' but not enough that you would hear it from outside of the development, would need to be right next to it to hear it. A noise survey has been undertaken as part of the planning application.
- Clarification was sought by members on how likely BSR is to make amends to the proposals throughout the planning process. BSR noted that should any updates be made, these would be shared as the proposals progress.
- Is the size fixed? Could this grow over the next 40 years? BSR noted that the site can't flex. Grid connection amount is fixed, so there is no scope for the size of the development to grow – if anything, likely to get smaller as technology becomes more efficient over time.
- Does pumping more energy in here make it harder for residents applying for more capacity? Should if anything makes this easier, not harder.

Princethorpe Parish Council then placed the proposals on the Agenda for its Thursday 13 July 2023 meeting. All Parish Councillors were in attendance with eight members of the public present.

The following was raised in the meeting:

- Councillors questioned why local residents in Eathorpe and Stretton-on-Dunsmore villages have not been consulted by BSR. They said it was "weird" that the consultation event was held in Eathorpe village hall, but no residents were made aware of this taking place. It was also questioned if Princethorpe College had been consulted on the plan, particularly given that the College had been removed from a visual representation of the scheme in one of the graphics.
- It was queried why the solar development will not be operational until 2033. There was then speculation that BSR will do as little as possible to maintain planning permission if approved, before building out the development years later. It was clarified that any planning permission would have a five-year life span by the Clerk.

- It was argued that the proposal threatens conservation areas near Princethorpe College, as well as the views from neighbouring fields. The Chair said that, from a personal point of view, this was a common walk for him, and he is concerned about the visual impact. Councillors also voiced concerns that allowing this solar farm could pave the way for further farms in adjoining fields.
- Councillors questioned the merits of solar panels and the wider electrification agenda, arguing that the current targets are not achievable. The Councillor noted that he has two electric vehicles and appreciates the energy needs to come from somewhere, but argued that the small scale of the farm and its visual harms mean that this is not a suitable proposal.
- Councillors questioned why this particular field has been chosen by BSR. A Councillor noted that BSR had told him that this is because it is in a suitable location to “plug into” the national grid.
- Councillors argued that there will be no real benefit to the Parish or its residents – aside from the landowner. However, the Clerk highlighted that £33,600 will be provided to the village from BSR if the application is approved.
- The discussion then moved to what these funds could be used for, given that there are limited issues in the Parish which require more funding. The Chair argued that there will be no genuine benefit for the Parish. A Councillor said that the Parish does have a longstanding ambition to create a Community Hub, but that this would require significantly more funds that BSR would not be willing to provide.
- It was then questioned how these funds would be issued, and who would be responsible for deploying them. Will they be completely under the control of the Parish, and when will they be released?
- Eathorpe’s Council was due to discuss the application on 18th July. It was agreed that Princethorpe Parish Council would consult with Eathorpe and Stretton-On-Dunsmore Councils to understand their views on the proposals, before making a formal representation.
- Councillors also discussed arranging a ballot in the village so they can accurately gauge the views of the community. Agreeing the logistics of how to run this (online/physical) will be done after the meeting.

4.4 Stretton-on-Dunsmore Parish Council

Following the issue of our letter to Stretton-on-Dunsmore Parish Council via email on 16 June 2023, we received a response that the proposals would be added to the agenda for its meeting on Monday 14 July 2023. There were 4 members of the public in attendance at this meeting and no comments were raised by members or the public at the meeting.

4.5 Eathorpe, Hunningham, Offchurch & Wappenbury Joint Parish Council

Following the issue of our letter to Eathorpe, Hunningham, Offchurch & Wappenbury Joint Parish Council via email on 16 June 2023, we received a response that the proposals would be added to the agenda for its meeting on Tuesday 18 July 2023. There were no members of the public in attendance at the meeting and

the Council decided to defer any comment on the proposal until after the Planning Application has been submitted.

4.6 Princethorpe College

Following the issue of our letter to Princethorpe College via email on 21 June 2023, the College contacted us to arrange a meeting to discuss the proposals. A meeting was held with the College on Tuesday 4 July 2023 with the Foundation Principal; Foundation Bursar; and Assistant Head (Development).

The following points were raised in the meeting with them:

- PRoW are not currently very well kept.
- Questions regarding grazing on site and if this would continue.
- Discussion around the biodiversity and the measures that BSR is taking to provide a minimum 60% increase.
- Bridge over the stream is dodgy.
- Queries were raised regarding electricity adjustments associated with the development.
- Questions regarding the access to the site and construction traffic route, noting that the current entrance is tight for access for large vehicles and near to a blind bend. Questions were also asked around the management of the construction process.
- The College also raised queries with regards to rush hour traffic associated with local schools. It was noted that the local road network is particularly busy with school traffic between the hours of 8am – 9:15am and 3:30pm and 5pm.
- The College appreciated that this was an ideal site for panels given its natural slope.
- The College asked a number of technical questions in relation to the nationality of panels, Electromagnetic Compatibility, Smart panels and questions around the minimum size for viability.
- Queries in relation to the likely timescales and how the delayed connection date would affect the planning consent.
- The College asked if there were opportunities to connect an 'off taker'? BSR noted that the neighbouring Hotel / Princethorpe College are the only two buildings where this could be looked into, but that this is very complicated to set up and there is lots of legal work involved.
- Princethorpe College stated that they are largely supportive of PV – and they want to move towards net zero for the planet.
- They asked what the lifetime of the panels is and if they tilt or are fixed. BSR noted that they are fixed at an angle, and are expected to last 20-30 years, but are replaced as and when needed over the lifetime of the solar development.
- The College envisaged that the cameras may be a point of objection for the community, but noted that they had no objections to this from the College's point of view. BSR confirmed that these would be focussed into the site and along the boundaries only.
- Queries relating to the development layout, specifically the location of the transformers.

- The College was keen to understand if there would be opportunities for student visits if the development goes ahead? It was confirmed that this could be looked into if / when the development comes forward.
- They noted that the College's Planet Princethorpe group would likely be interested in this. BSR confirmed that it would be happy to engage this group should planning consent be granted.

4.7 Woodhouse Hotel and Spa

Following engagement with Princethorpe College, we asked if they would be able to share the contact details for the Woodhouse Hotel and Spa, which is under construction and directly neighbours the site.

A letter was sent via email to the Project Manager on 26 June 2023 regarding the proposals and offering the opportunity to meet with the project team. A response was received thanking us for the outreach and information and stating that they would be in touch should they wish to meet with us. No further correspondence has been received.

4.8 Technical Consultees

In parallel to the Pre-Application Enquiry to Rugby Borough Council, BSR has also taken advantage of the opportunity to consult with the following groups:

- The Lead Local Flood Authority for its comments regarding the Flood Risk Assessment;
- Local Wildlife Records office – for information for the preparation of the Ecology Reporting; and
- Historic England for information regarding heritage and archaeology in the area.

Details of each enquiry and the formal responses are outlined in further detail in the Planning, Design & Access Statement, which accompanies this Planning Application to Rugby Borough Council.

5. Community Consultation

Following the Covid-19 pandemic there is now a renewed expectation for materials to also be made available online, and as such a hybrid approach to community consultation was carried out.

Consultation was carried out between 26 June and the 16 July 2023 and was advertised in the local community through a community mailing and letters to immediate neighbours. All communications linked the community through to a dedicated consultation website, where more details on the proposals were available, as well as details on how to submit feedback, and a survey. All communications included details of the in-person consultation event.

A summary of this activity is covered in this section of the report.

5.1 Community Mailing

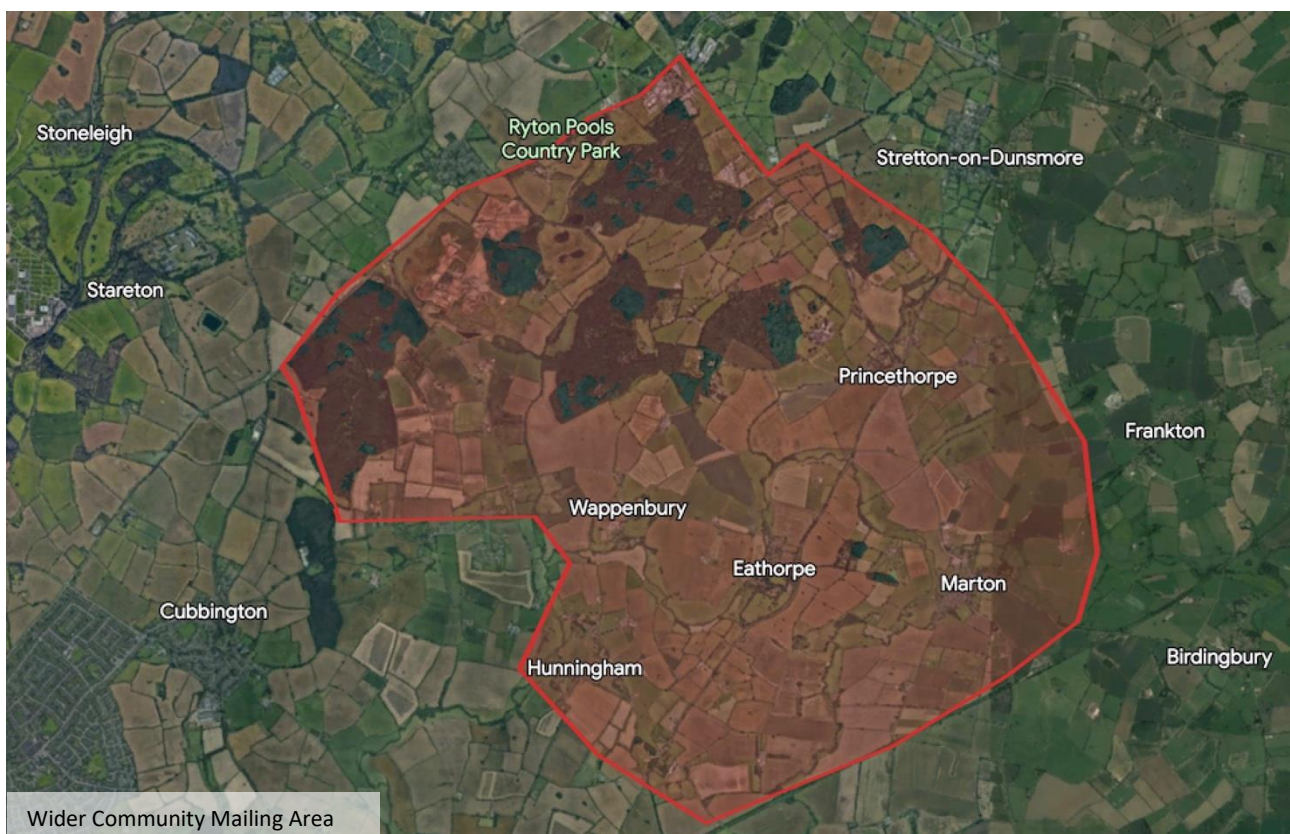
A letter was issued to 65 immediate neighbours via Royal Mail First Class post on 22 June 2023 offering them the opportunity to attend a virtual webinar meeting to discuss the proposals on Thursday 29 June from 18:30 – 19:30 on Microsoft Teams. The mailing area for this letter is outlined below. A copy of this letter can be viewed at Appendix B.

Two households registered to attend the Immediate Neighbour Webinar. As a result, the meeting was held as a roundtable discussion as opposed to a ‘town hall’ format. The points raised by the four residents in attendance were as follows:

- Queries around what the land classifications mean
- Concerns that local farms would overlook the site, so may have concerns
- Questions around Biodiversity Net Gain and how this is achieved
- Issues of flooding on Long Road
- Concerns over visual impact and proposed planting
- Concerns over impact of construction traffic – particularly in relation to the schools on Leamington Road – would speed limit be lowered – additional risk with extra mud on the road
- Where is the site connection and when will the site be live?
- Comments centred around a need to ‘get used’ to solar farms in the area given the need for renewable energy
- Questions around ongoing operation of the site
- Questions on glint and glare
- Would be great to see information boards along the PRoW
- Engagement with schools is a must
- Whilst some attendees were close to the site, they acknowledged a need to ‘sacrifice for the environment’
- Supportive of the principal of solar development here – ‘sensible enough to know we need long term solutions to climate change’



A leaflet was issued via 2nd Class post on Monday 26 June 2023 to 1,250 residential and business addresses in the local area. The mailing area is outlined below. This area was selected to consult those residents and businesses that are more likely to have a vested interest in the proposals. A copy of this leaflet can be viewed at Appendix E.



Recipients of both the immediate neighbour letter and wider community mailing were encouraged to attend an in-person consultation event on Tuesday 4 July 2023 at Eathorpe Village Hall, and to provide their feedback using the online survey. It was also communicated that all of the information available digitally was available

in hard copy, and accessible formats on request, to ensure full inclusivity. A copy of the survey can be viewed at Appendix F.

5.2 Website

A dedicated project website (www.bsr-ashtree.co.uk) was created ahead of the consultation and included relevant information on the proposals, information on the construction and operation, the exhibition boards, details of how to submit feedback as part of this consultation, a survey, FAQ, and contact information for the project team.

Three people submitted feedback via the online form that was available on the website and has been considered in our analysis in *Section 6.0 Consultation Responses*.

For full inclusivity, all of the information on the website was available in a hard copy format to be posted on request.

Screenshots of the website can be viewed in Appendix G.

5.3 Local Media

A press release was issued to the Rugby Observer, Leamington Observer, Coventry Live, and Warwickshire World to promote the consultation and the in-person event to try and boost engagement and attendance at the event. However, the consultation was not featured. An example of the press release issued can be viewed at Appendix H.

5.4 In-person consultation event

An in-person consultation event was held on Tuesday 4 July 2023. The event was held from 15:00 – 19:00. Ten exhibition boards were displayed at the event covering the following topics:

- Welcome
- The Proposals
- Benefits / Needs Case
- Landscape
- Viewpoint 1
- Viewpoint 3
- Viewpoint 11
- Biodiversity
- Construction
- Have your say

A copy of the exhibition boards can be viewed at Appendix I.

The event was held at Eathorpe Village Hall, as this appeared to be the most appropriate venue, being in close proximity to the site. The event was held between 15:00 and 19:00 to ensure that as many residents as possible had an opportunity to review the materials and speak to the project team.

All of the materials provided at the in-person event were also available online and in hard copy, and accessible formats on request.

The event was attended by 40 residents. This represents a turnout rate of 3.2% of those who had been notified directly through the community mailing. Whilst there was clearly some interest from the local community in the proposals, the turnout rate is still relatively low and could reflect a number of factors, namely that people were able to view the information online, an acceptance of the need for green energy in the area, or little to no interest in the proposals.

Attendees at the event were encouraged to complete the online survey to save paper, so very few forms were completed at the event. Six hard copy feedback forms were posted into the feedback box at the event. A full summary of the feedback received, both online and at the physical event is outlined within the next section of this report, *Section 6.0 Consultation Responses*.

The following areas of interest were raised by residents at the events:

- Fully supportive of the proposals
- Questions around the PRoW and if this will be staying open
- Questions around the additional planting proposed and specific question on additional planting to assist with views to the south
- Question on the height of the panels from sea level
- Comments that the viewpoints need to be taken in winter, which BSR's are
- Concerns over visual impact
- Concerns over the impact on the two schools
- Would be helpful to put a stick man next to the panel picture for context
- Mounting system drawing not to scale and misleading
- Traffic is bad from 7am - 9am and Friday afternoon from 12:30
- There was a delay to the letter arriving – problems with Royal Mail
- Has the hotel been taken into consideration?
- Will there be staff on site?
- Concerns that the proposals would impact on house value
- Comments against the landowner
- Will happen with no benefit to the community – there won't be any cheaper electricity as a result
- Why is this near a village? - it would be better off elsewhere
- Current hedge is not very high
- There are existing flooding issues in village – this needs to be accounted for
- Staggered junction on Oxford Road is dangerous
- Nuclear power is better alternative to solar
- The development will ruin their view
- This is a prime example of white washing / green washing
- Glint and glare a concern for surrounding houses and roads
- Hunningham Hill has a hill site heritage asset that will be affected by this development
- Security cameras are a concern to nearby neighbours – concerns over invasion of privacy within own land / property

5.5 Project email address and phonenumber

A dedicated project email address and freephone project line were provided as part of the consultation to allow stakeholders to contact the project team. The project line and email address could be used by residents to request information by post, ask questions, or provide their feedback.

Six emails were sent to the info@BSR-ashtree.co.uk email address throughout the consultation period. All feedback received has been taken into consideration as part of our analysis in *Section 6.0 Consultation Responses*.

Two phone calls were received to the freephone project telephone line requesting a link for the neighbour webinar.

6. Consultation Responses

6.1 Feedback forms

Throughout the consultation period, people were invited to submit their feedback on the proposals via an online consultation feedback survey. Hard copy forms were available at the in-person consultation event on Tuesday 4 July 2023 and on request. A copy of this survey is available at Appendix F.

This section of the report provides a detailed overview to the response received throughout the consultation. All of the responses received have been carefully considered by the project team ahead of the submission of the planning application.

In total, 20 survey responses were received to the consultation, representing a 1.6% response rate when considered against those who were directly engaged through our leaflet mailing. An overview of the feedback is outlined below, broken down into quantitative and qualitative feedback.

6.1.1 Quantitative data

The quantitative data received as part of the consultation was helpful in providing an overview of the attitude towards the Climate Emergency, Net Zero, cost-of-living, land use, and Biodiversity Net Gain.

As Figure 1 shows, 85% of respondents stated that they either 'agree' or 'somewhat agree' that we need to take steps to tackle the Climate Emergency.

A similarly high 75% of respondents stated that they 'agree' or 'somewhat agree' that building new solar developments will contribute to reducing carbon emissions and reach the goal set by the Government of being Net Zero by 2050. This is shown at Figure 2.

Figure 1: To what extent do you agree that we need to take steps to tackle the Climate Emergency?

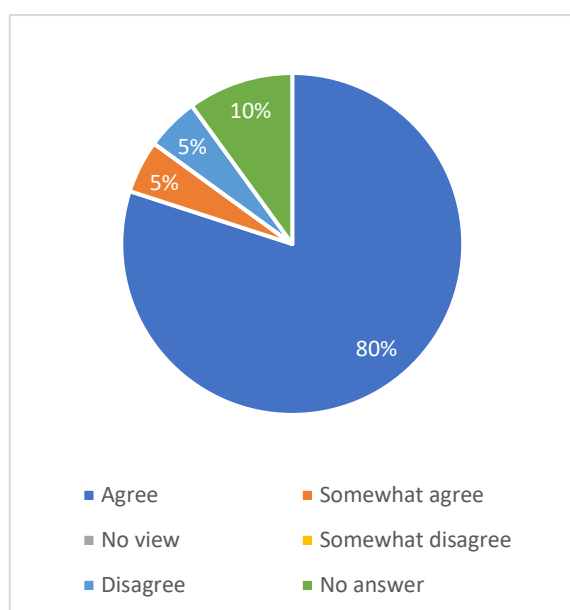
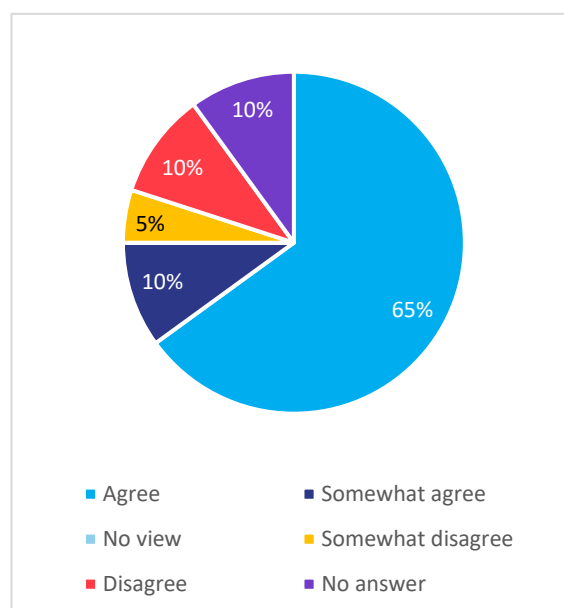


Figure 2: To what extent do you believe that building new solar developments will contribute to reducing carbon emissions and reach the goal set by the Government of being net zero by 2050?



As can be seen from Figure 3, overall, most respondents were in agreement that new solar developments will assist with the current cost-of-living crisis, with 70% stating they 'agree' or 'somewhat agree' that these new developments will help to provide additional energy security for the UK and reduce the cost of household and business energy bills.

Figure 3: To what extent do you agree that building new solar developments will assist with the current cost-of-living crisis, by helping to provide additional energy security for the UK and reducing the cost of household and business energy bills?

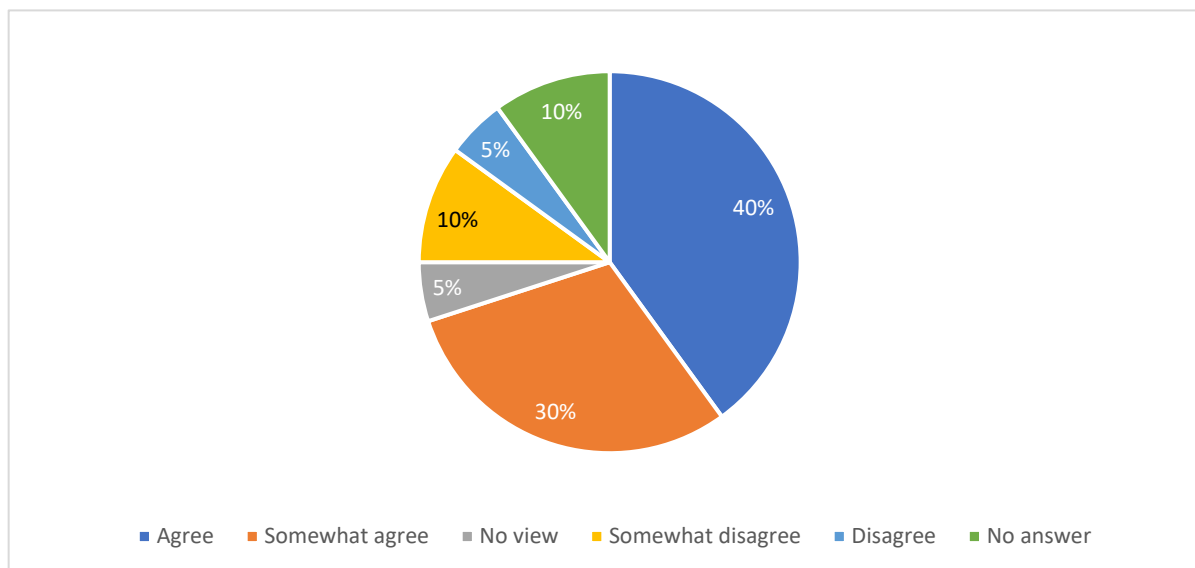


Figure 4 shows the response to the question relating to Biodiversity Net Gain. The proposals providing a minimum 60% Biodiversity Net Gain on site was considered to be of importance to respondents, with 75% considering it either '1' (very important) or '2' (important).

Figure 5 shows the response received to our question relating to the site being returned to agricultural use. Returning the land to agricultural use following any solar development being decommissioned, was considered '1' (very important) or '2' (important) to 50% of respondents.

Figure 4: On a scale of 1 - 5 how important is it that the proposals provide a minimum 60% biodiversity net gain on the site?

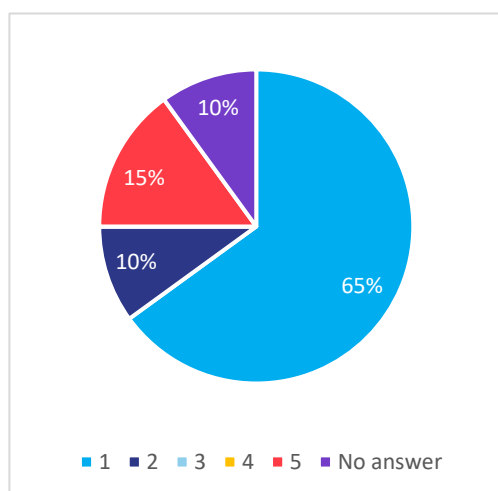
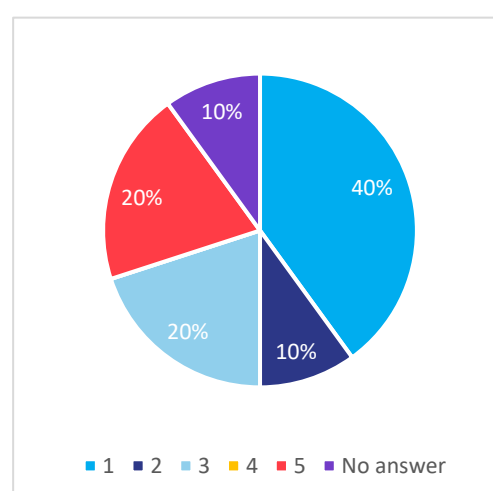
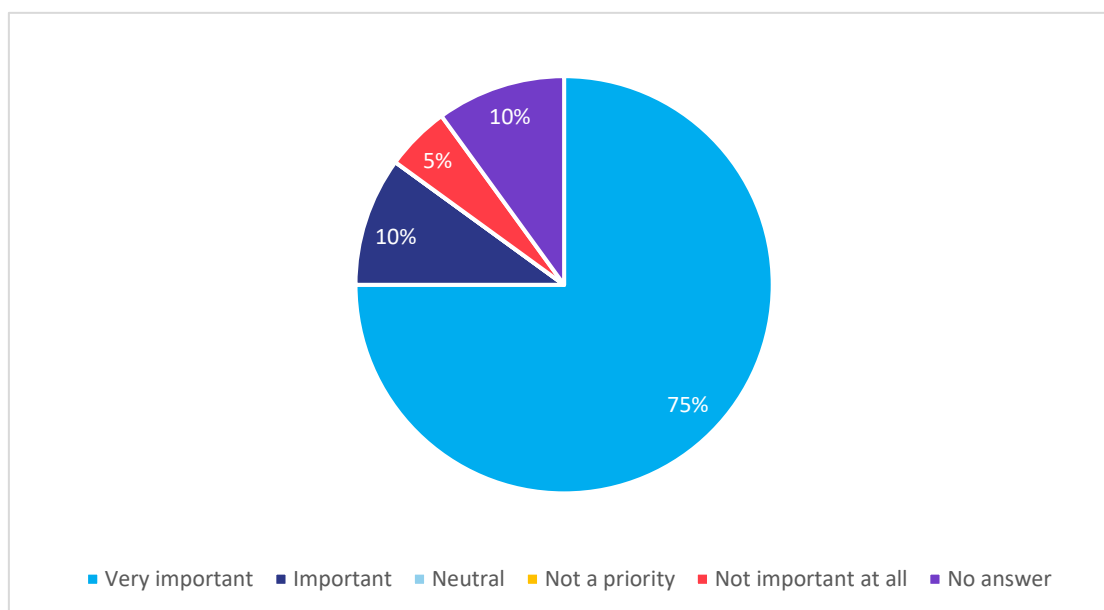


Figure 5: On a scale of 1 - 5 how important is it to you that the site is returned to agricultural use following any solar development being decommissioned?



85% of respondents stated that it was ‘important’ or ‘very important’ for them that new developments make provision for improvement and creation of habitats, through infill planting, species rich grassland and native hedgerows. This is shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Sustainability and biodiversity (for example, maintaining habitats and helping to create new habitats) are becoming increasingly important given the climate emergency. How important is it to you that new development makes provision for improvement and creation of habitats, through infill planting, species-rich grassland and native hedgerows?



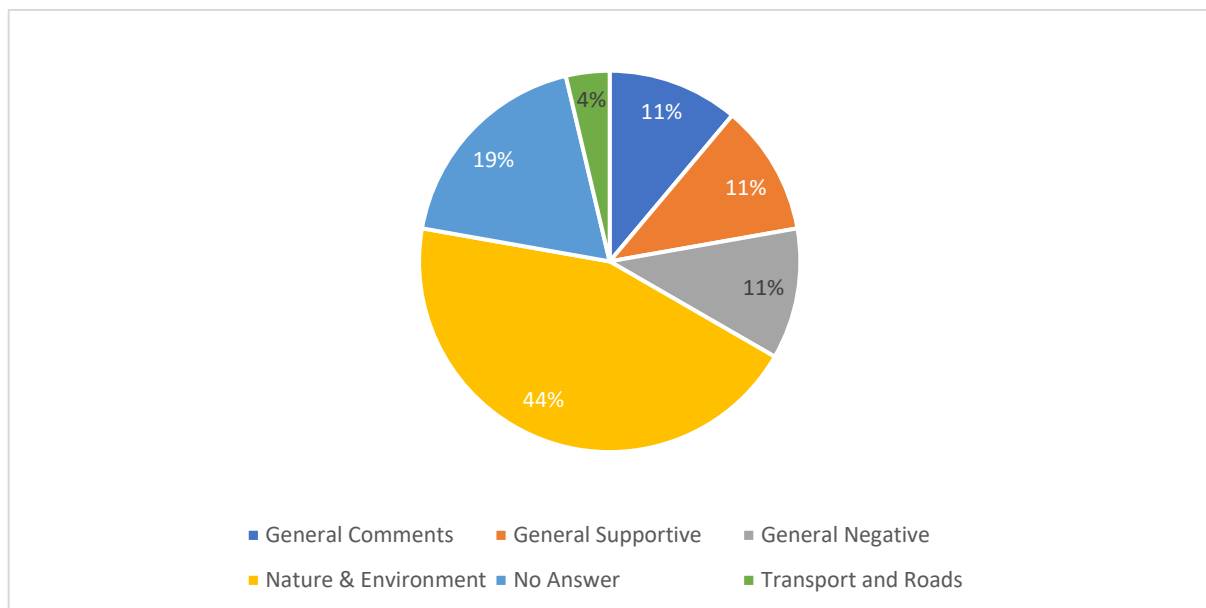
6.1.2 Qualitative feedback

There were a wide range of responses to the qualitative questions at the end of the survey, which asked if there were any other comments that respondents would like to make on the proposals around two core themes: landscaping and biodiversity; and transport movements throughout construction, with one final question seeking any other feedback from respondents. These themes were identified to guide feedback, as the project team was conscious that these were likely to be contentious areas. As is to be expected when receiving feedback, the responses were mixed, and comments did not always keep to the designated theme of the question. Most responses were constructive and offered suggestions for how to improve the scheme. This included a variety of comments in support of the proposals. A breakdown of the feedback received from the three qualitative questions is below.

6.1.2.1 Following a review of the information available, do you have any thoughts that you would like to share regarding the landscaping and biodiversity of the site?

When asked to share their thoughts regarding landscaping and biodiversity, 19% chose not to answer. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the most commonly occurring theme from those respondents that did provide their feedback was comments around nature and environment (44%), with general comments; general supportive comments; and general negative comments all forming 11% of the total comments each. These figures are illustrated in the pie chart below.

Figure 8:



Examples of comments received in this section of the feedback form include:

Nature & Environment

- “Removing the biodiversity to allow construction of the proposed site and then reintroducing the biodiversity has been proved to be ineffective. The proposed site needs to be developed in such a way that has minimal impact on the current site and the current soils and biodiversity maintained and improved during this process”.
- “Please don't let biodiversity become a blocker for fixing the climate crisis”.
- “The land is currently agricultural which has minimal biodiversity as it is, so I am very in favour of the development”.
- “Steps should be taken both on the site and on adjacent fields to install fencing on the Fosse Way which will prevent small animals leaving the fields round about in an attempt to cross the Fosse. The same steps should be taken on the Leamington Road.”

General Comments

- “Would be concerned if it closed off any existing public footpaths. Only concerned on direct benefit Princethorpe will get. Just like HS2 the village seems to take the weight of the disruption/damage with very little or no direct benefits. A great example is why the consultation was held in Eathorpe rather than one of the schools in the village. Again, money going out of the village. Would be great for the village if they can invest in road improvements at the Fosse/Rugby Rd/Oxford Rd junction before work commences”.

General Supportive

- “We feel the site is well planned and desperately needed”.

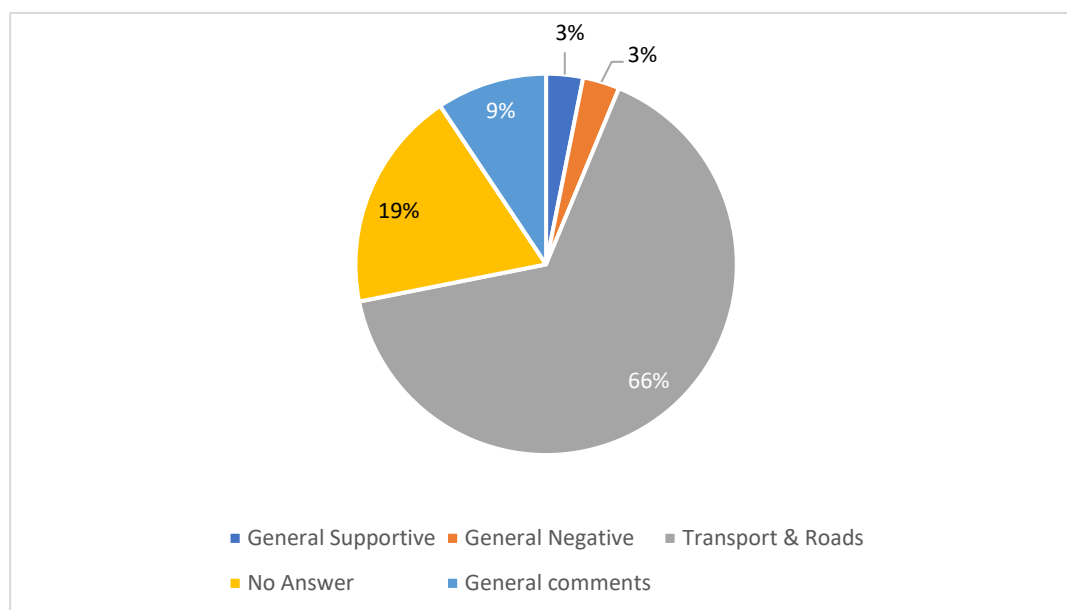
General Negative

- “Greenfield land should NOT be used for new solar installations. Warehouse/industrial building roofs, brownfield sites should be used instead”.
- “It’s too close to my property and the village we know we need this but not so close”.

6.1.2.2 Following a review of the information available, do you have any thoughts that you would like to share regarding transport movements throughout construction or any other transport-related queries?

When asked to share their thoughts regarding transport movements throughout construction or any other transport-related queries, 19% chose not to answer. Again, unsurprisingly the most occurring theme was transports & roads (66%), followed by general comments (9%). These figures are illustrated in the pie chart below.

Figure 9:



Examples of comments received in this section of the feedback form include:

Transport & Roads

- “Installing new roads to access the construction site should not be allowed due to the damage done during this process. Current roads must be improved and or maintained to enable this to happen with a daily limit to the amount of construction traffic allowed on the roads to minimize disruption to residents”.

- “I would suggest that during school drop off and pick up times for both Princethorpe College and Princethorpe Primary school there should be no movement of any construction vehicle to or from the site”.
- “The speed limit through Princethorpe is already quick and I am concerned more traffic will make the village even more congested than it already is.”
- “We are not concerned with the transport movements as we feel the solar site is for the betterment of all and not just a few like HS2”

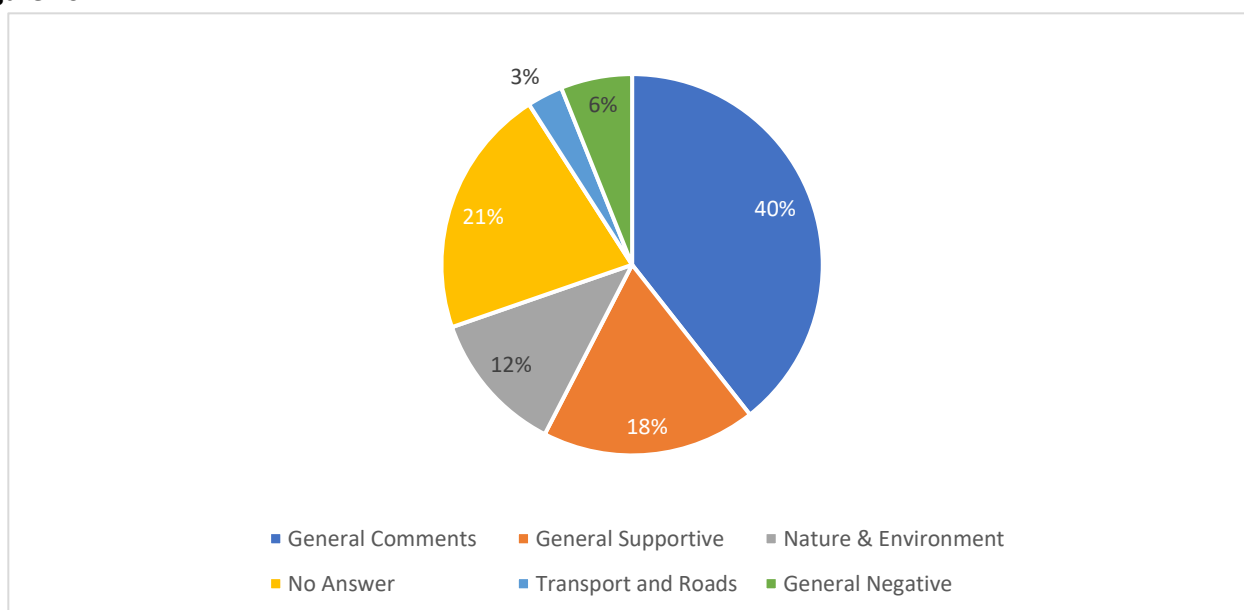
General comments

- “I would like to know how the community fund money will be used, and who will benefit from it? - which parish council will get this fund?”

6.1.2.3 Please provide any further comments

When asked to share any further comments, 21% chose not to answer. The three themes that were the most recurring from those respondents that did provide their feedback were general comments (40%), general supportive comments (18%), and nature and environment (12%). These figures are illustrated in the pie chart below.

Figure 10:



Examples of comments received in this section of the feedback form include:

General Comments

- “Solar power has proved not to be a long-term solution to climate change due to the panels breaking down after 25ish years and this contributing to landfill due to the parts being non-recyclable”.
- “Can Princethorpe residents have priority access to reduced electricity rates for having this disruption in our countryside”.

- “Will the people living in the area actually benefit from its installation”.
- “When the panels have reached the end of their life why cannot they be replaced by new one's? Batteries should be added at the earliest opportunity to maximise the benefits of the site”.

General Supportive Comments

- “Build it build it build It”.
- “We would have liked to see the site go live prior to 2033. That is 10 years away and we need action on lowering CO2 now. It is terrible that the grid is not prepared to accept the clean energy created by solar today as we have known about the need for clean energy for decades”.
- “Overall, I am in favour of the development. We need to do all we can to reduce the impact carbon emissions have on the environment, and solar panels are a good example of how we can start to tackle the issue”.
- “Very good idea, look forward to seeing it completed”.

Nature & Environment

- “Pointless blot on the landscape that has no use during the winter”.
- “Does 'biodiversity net gain' refer to number and range of different plant species even if there is truly one example of each OR does it relate to plants and animals and does it mean quantity ie. number of plants, hedgehogs etc? If it happens who will be responsible for and ensure infill planting, introduction of rich grassland and improvement of native hedgerows? Who will maintain vegetation growth so it doesn't obscure all or part of the panels?”

6.2 Email and phone responses

Six emails were sent to the info@BSR-ashtree.co.uk email address throughout the consultation period. These emails raised the following points:

- Requests for a webinar link.
- Concerns that the proposals will be taking up valuable agricultural land.
- Concerns for the visual impact of the proposals.
- A statement that the government has said that by 2030 offshore wind will supply enough electricity to supply every home in the U.K. and therefore questions the justification for the need of a solar farm on fertile agricultural land.
- Impact on the local agricultural economy.
- Concerns around traffic and disruption from the installation along with a query on how long the installation will take.

Two phone calls were received to the freephone project telephone line, both were requesting a link for the neighbour webinar.

7. Summary and response to feedback

The low response rate to the consultation (1.28%) could indicate that there is a limited interest in the proposals from the local community which may indicate that a relatively small number of people feel that they would be directly impacted by the proposals, perhaps owing to its discreet location.

The feedback received was balanced, with a number of people noting support for the project or providing suggestions for additional mitigation. Concerns raised throughout the consultation mainly centred around the impact of the proposed development on the visual landscape, the impact on and suitability of the local road network for construction traffic, and the belief that the land should remain in agricultural use. Some other feedback was received outside of these core themes, which has been outlined below.

7.1 Visual impacts to local landscape

Drawing on the feedback relating to the perceived adverse visual impact of the proposal, further investigations have taken place to establish where additional planting can be incorporated. This has resulted in additional screening being implemented. For further information on this matter, please refer to the Landscape & Visual Appraisal (LVA) and Landscape Masterplan, which outline in detail the full scheme of mitigation being introduced to the final layout plan for this Planning Application.

7.2 Impact on and suitability of the local road network

Feedback during the public consultation revealed concerns regarding the capacity of the local highway network to withstand the proposed construction traffic, and the perceived impact of large vehicles on the safety of existing users (whether they be travelling via private motor vehicle, bicycle or on foot). BSR is committed to ensuring a safe and efficient build-out of the proposal, and has carefully tailored the construction traffic route to limit the level of disruption caused to local residents. Furthermore, BSR has drawn on this particular feedback to ensure the appropriate measures are in place along Leamington Road to alleviate any local concerns regarding capacity and safety during the construction-phase of the proposal. For further information in relation to transport and access, please refer to the Transport Statement and Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), which have been submitted with this Planning Application. It is also confirmed that BSR will work with the Highway Authority to ensure that the construction traffic route is the safest with regards to Highway Safety.

7.3 The land should remain in agricultural use

There is a delicate balancing act between (A) taking effective action against climate change, (B) establishing a secure, independent energy source in the UK, and (C) ensuring that the UK's food security is not impacted.

The proposed infrastructure would have an operational lifespan of 40 years, and following decommission, the land can be efficiently reverted to agricultural use.

By supporting renewable energy schemes, such as this, we are taking an important step forward in the fight against climate change and will be helping to contribute towards a secure and stable supply of electricity for the United Kingdom. It should also be noted that the proposed Solar development will not result in the net

loss of the agricultural land on which the Solar panels will be placed. The land can continue to be used for the grazing of agricultural livestock.

7.4 Impact on wildlife and mammals wishing to cross the site

Throughout the lifespan of the solar development, there is a significant opportunity for biodiversity to continue and thrive on the site. This is because solar developments take up less than 5% of the land, which will allow for plants to continue to grow and animals to still pass through the site.

As part of the proposals, BSR has committed to providing Biodiversity Net Gain Figures of 123.48% for habitat and 35.13% for hedgerow units for the site, which not only meets, but far exceeds the minimum 10% target outlined by the Government in the Environment Act 2021. As part of this, existing habitats on site will be retained and managed, to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on the existing condition of the habitat over the lifespan of the development.

The gap for PRow will allow for larger mammals to cross across the site, such as deer. Mammal gaps will allow for smaller mammals to still cross across the whole site.

7.5 Community Benefit Fund

If the proposals were to be granted planning permission, BSR would establish a community benefit fund offering up to £33,600 in grants to support local projects and benefit the local community. BSR is in the process of setting up an agreement with a specialist fund management platform that will manage the fund.

This process provides greater control and power as to where funds are distributed. This project is also subject to local business rates which will generate significant income. Over its lifecycle, this project will generate approximately £3million of business rates, which will help fund local services and be paid directly to Rugby Borough Council. In the meeting held between the project team and Princethorpe Parish Council on 4 July 2023, the Parish Council were keen to know if it could apply. BSR confirmed that the Parish Council would be encouraged to do so and would be the ideal applicant for grants from the fund.

Should planning permission be granted, BSR is open to further discussions on the management and distribution of the Community Benefit Fund with Princethorpe Parish Council and other stakeholders, such as the neighbouring Parish Councils.

7.6 Wider sustainability of the solar development

In discussions with Princethorpe Parish Council and the community at the drop in event, a number of concerns were raised regarding the wider impact of the proposals. These mainly centred on whether the solar panels could be recycled at the end of their useful life.

BSR confirmed that there are a number of research projects currently ongoing which are looking into this, given that solar developments are still relatively new and there is not yet a widespread need for this. BSR has looked into this further and can confirm that it has a membership with an organisation called PV Cycle, which collects old solar components from BSR and fully recycles these. Not only this, but the method that is used, guarantees a true zero waste solution, with all raw materials recirculated into further production.

7.7 Engagement with the local schools

During our consultation, Princethorpe Parish Council and members of the community suggested that both Princethorpe College and Our Lady's Catholic Primary School be consulted on the proposals, given the impact that construction traffic may have on school 'rush hour' traffic. Given that Princethorpe College is almost immediately opposite the site, a separate letter was issued to them on 21 June 2023 inviting them to meet with us. A separate meeting was then held with the College on Tuesday 4 July. A summary of this meeting is included in *Section 4 Stakeholder Engagement*.

Both Princethorpe College and Our Lady's Catholic Primary School were included in our wider community mailing, issued on 26 June 2023. A separate letter inviting Our Lady's Catholic Primary School to meet with the project team was then issued via email on 29 September 2023, once schools had settled back into the Autumn Term, following the school summer holidays. No response has yet been received to this outreach.

BSR will continue to engage with both schools as the proposals progress and the offer of a meeting to discuss the proposals remains open.

7.8 Flooding concerns

Concerns were raised in relation to the proposals exacerbating current flooding issues in the local area. A Flood Risk Assessment has been undertaken by an independent consultant, which concludes that the site is in Flood Zone 1, and at the lowest risk of flooding from all sources, with the chance of flooding being less than 1 in 1000 in any one year. There is a small area where Flood Zone 3 slightly encroaches the site to the east, but no development will take place in this area.

7.9 Glint and Glare

Solar panels by their very nature are designed to absorb light, rather than to reflect it. As such, it is expected that glint and glare related issues will be negligible. A full Glint and Glare Assessment has been undertaken as part of the planning application, which has fully assessed these issues, particularly in relation to any likely impacts on flight paths. This report has found that the proposed solar development on Land at Leamington Road will have no significant impacts on roads and dwellings or aviation activity.

7.10 Delayed connection date

Whilst there is a delayed connection date to 2033 on the site as a result of grid capacity constraints, BSR has chosen to bring forward a planning application now given the focus on increasing grid capacity in the industry.

Grid connection delays are being experienced across the country and highlight the pressing need to increase capacity. This is a wider industry issue which is a high priority for power networks, as these increases are essential for meeting Net Zero targets. As such, it is hoped that as capacity is increased, connection dates will start to be brought forward. BSR is therefore seeking planning permission on an extended five-year term, in the hope that this will then be expedited as capacity becomes available.

8. Conclusion

Throughout the community consultation programme, the aim has been to inform members of the local community, members of Rugby Borough Council (RBC) and neighbouring Warwick District Council (WDC), and other key stakeholders, of BSR's proposed solar development for Land at Leamington Road, Princethorpe prior to the submission of a planning application to RBC.

The project team is confident that it has conducted a thorough community consultation programme in support of a planning application for the proposed solar development on Land at Leamington Road, Princethorpe.

Feedback has been properly recorded in this Statement of Community Involvement and responded to appropriately.

The project team has sought to address the concerns raised by stakeholders. The proposals directly respond to the need for green energy production in Rugby. The site is located in a discreet location and every effort has been made to ensure that the proposals are sufficiently screened to further address any visual impacts.

The project team will continue to engage with the local community and other key stakeholders throughout the remaining stages of the planning process.

ENDS

9. Appendices

Appendix A – Sample copy of the letter issued to political members



BSR Energy Limited
35 and 35a The Maltings
Lower Charlton Trading Estate
Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 5QE
E: info@bsrenergy.com
T: +44 (0)1458 224 900

8 June 2023

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Councillor Roberts,

Land at Leamington Road, Princethorpe - solar development proposals

I am writing to you as a representative of both Dunsmore at Rugby Borough Council and Dunsmore & Leam Valley at Warwickshire County Council, regarding BSR Energy's (BSR) emerging proposals for a new solar development on Land at Leamington Road, Princethorpe, which falls within both your ward and division. The proposals, which are still at an early stage, seek to provide a 16.8MW solar energy development, which would power the equivalent of 4,201 homes a year and provide a reduction of 3,721 tonnes of CO₂ per year. Please find enclosed with this letter a site location plan to help with identifying the proposed location of the development.

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.

Solar development is a cleaner and cheaper alternative to fossil fuels, helping to boost our energy independence, something highlighted within the Government's Energy Security Strategy, which calls for a five-fold increase in solar energy by 2035.

Our proposals for Land at Leamington Road seek to:

- Allow for a significant opportunity for green energy production in Princethorpe.
- 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, as solar farms take up less than 5% of the land. This allows for plants to continue to grow and animals to still pass through the site.
- Provide a minimum increase of 60% in biodiversity net gain, which exceeds the 10% target outlined in the Environment Act 2021.
- Improvements in the condition of existing habitats and creation of new habitats to enhance biodiversity on site.
- Allow the land to be returned to agricultural use following decommissioning with an operational lifespan of 40 years.

Given your position at the Councils and likely interest in this important proposal, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the proposals. We have also written in similar terms to the following Rugby Borough and Warwickshire County Councillors:

Rugby Borough Council:

- Councillor Keeling – Dunsmore.
- Councillor D. Roberts – Dunsmore.
- Councillor Poole – Leader of the Council.
- Councillor Picker – Deputy Leader of the Council.
- Councillor O'Rourke – Mayor.

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BSR Energy Limited | Company number 10435323

Registered address: 35 and 35a The Maltings, Lower Charlton Trading Estate, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 5QE





- Councillor Moran – Leader of the Labour Group.

Warwickshire County Council:

- Councillor Seccombe – Leader of Warwickshire County Council.
- Councillor Redford – Cubbington and Leek Wooton.

Should you feel that there are others at the Councils who would be interested in the proposals, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Our public consultation is currently scheduled to run from Monday 26 June to Sunday 16 July 2023. The consultation will provide the opportunity for the wider community to comment on the proposals. Prior to launching the public consultation, we will be outreaching to our closest neighbours and relevant community groups to brief them in advance.

To launch public consultation, it is intended to issue a leaflet to the households surrounding the site area, inviting residents to view information on our website, and provide feedback using our online feedback form, project specific freephone line, and project specific email address. Hard copy information and accessible versions will be made available on request.

It is also intended that we will publicise the consultation through social media advertising. All materials will invite residents to attend our public consultation drop-in session. The consultation event will provide residents the opportunity to speak with a member of the project team, and review information on the proposals.

I hope that this letter is helpful. Should you have any questions or wish to set up a meeting with a member of the project team at a time and place of your convenience, please do not hesitate to contact Lauren Whipp, or Martha Kool from PLMR, our stakeholder engagement consultants, at [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,
Sarah Hymas

Project Manager
BSR Energy

ENDS

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Appendix B – Sample copy of the letter issued to neighbouring residents



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35 and 35a The Maltings
Lower Charlton Trading Estate
Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 5QE
E: info@bsrenergy.com
T: +44 (0)1458 224 900

21 June 2023

The resident
<insert address>

Dear resident,

Land at Leamington Road, solar development proposals

I am writing to you as one of the neighbours closest to the site to share with you information regarding BSR Energy's emerging proposals for solar development on Land at Leamington Road, Princethorpe. The proposals, which are still at an early stage, seek to provide a 16.8MW solar energy development, which would power the equivalent of 4,201 homes a year and provide a reduction of 3,721 tonnes of CO₂ per year. Please find on the reverse a site location plan to help with identifying the proposed location of the development.

The need to protect the planet from global warming has never been more important, and the recent summer temperatures and 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.

Solar development is a cleaner and cheaper alternative to fossil fuels, helping to boost our energy independence, something highlighted within the Government's Energy Security Strategy, which calls for a five-fold increase in solar energy by 2035.

Our proposals for Land at Leamington Road seek to:

- Allow for a **significant opportunity for green energy** production in Rugby.
- 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, as solar farms take up less than 5% of the land. This allows for plants to continue to grow and animals to still pass through the site.
- Provide a **minimum increase of 60% in biodiversity net gain**, which exceeds the 10% target outlined in the Environment Act 2021.
- **Improvements in the condition of existing habitats** and creation of new habitats to enhance biodiversity on site.
- **Allow the land to be returned to agricultural use** following decommissioning with an operational lifespan of 40 years.

Ahead of us launching our wider public consultation activities, we would welcome the opportunity to speak with our closest neighbours, as we appreciate that you will be the most affected by the proposals. As a result, you are likely to have specific queries on the development and its impact on you. As such, we are hosting an immediate neighbour webinar event on Thursday 29 June 2023 from 6:30pm – 7:30pm. Should you be interested in

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BSR Energy Limited | Company number 10435323

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attending this webinar event, please do register your attendance to receive an access link by emailing info@BSR-ashtree.com or calling freephone 0800 058 4272.

Our public consultation is scheduled to run from **Monday 26 June 2023 to Sunday 16 July 2023**. The consultation will provide the opportunity for the community to comment on the proposals. As part of our consultation, we will be holding a public consultation drop-in session on **Tuesday 4th July 2023 between 3pm and 7pm** at Eathorpe Village Hall, Eathorpe, Leamington Spa, CV33 9DE.

For further information on the proposals, please visit www.BSR-ashtree.co.uk.

I hope that this letter is helpful. Should you have any questions please do not hesitate to get in touch with us by email at info@BSR-ashtree.com or by calling freephone 0800 058 4272.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Hymas

Senior Project Manager
BSR Energy

ENDS



+44 (0)1458 224 900 | info@bsrenergy.com | www.britishrenewables.com
BSR Energy Limited | Company number 10435323
Registered address: 35 and 35a The Mallings, Lower Charlton Trading Estate, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 5QE



Appendix C – Sample copy of letter issued to Princethorpe College



BSR Energy Limited
35 and 35a The Maltings
Lower Charlton Trading Estate
Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 5QE
E: info@bsrenergy.com
T: +44 (0)1458 224 900

21 June 2023

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Mr Hesler

Land at Leamington Road, solar development proposals

I am writing to you as the Foundation Principle at Princethorpe College, and as one of the neighbours closest to the site to share with you information regarding BSR Energy's emerging proposals for solar development on Land at Leamington Road, Princethorpe. The proposals, which are still at an early stage, seek to provide a 16.8MW solar energy development, which would power the equivalent of 4,201 homes a year and provide a reduction of 3,721 tonnes of CO₂ per year. Please find enclosed with this letter a site location plan to help with identifying the proposed location of the development.

The need to protect the planet from global warming has never been more important, and the recent summer temperatures and 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.

Solar development is a cleaner and cheaper alternative to fossil fuels, helping to boost our energy independence, something highlighted within the Government's Energy Security Strategy, which calls for a five-fold increase in solar energy by 2035.

Our proposals for Land at Leamington Road seek to:

- Allow for a **significant opportunity for green energy** production in Rugby.
- 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, as solar farms take up less than 5% of the land. This allows for plants to continue to grow and animals to still pass through the site.
- Provide a **minimum increase of 60% in biodiversity net gain**, which exceeds the 10% target outlined in the Environment Act 2021.
- **Improvements in the condition of existing habitats** and creation of new habitats to enhance biodiversity on site.
- **Allow the land to be returned to agricultural use** following decommissioning with an operational lifespan of 40 years.

Given Princethorpe College's long history, we thought you would be interested in knowing that a detailed Heritage Assessment has been undertaken. This assessment has identified that the site cannot be seen from any heritage asset and only the top of the tower of the Grade II* Listed church at Princethorpe College can be seen from parts of the site. Overall, the proposed solar development will not affect how any heritage asset in the surrounding area would be experienced or viewed and thereby it is concluded that there will be no harm to their heritage significance.

+44 (0)1458 224 900 | info@bsrenergy.com | www.bsfreshnewcoales.com
BSR Energy Limited | Company number 10435323
Registered address: 35 and 35a The Maltings, Lower Charlton Trading Estate, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 5QE





Our public consultation is scheduled to run from **Monday 26 June 2023 to Sunday 16 July 2023**. The consultation will provide the opportunity for the community to comment on the proposals. As part of our consultation, we will be holding a public consultation drop-in session on **Tuesday 4th July 2023 between 3pm and 7pm** at Eathorpe Village Hall, Eathorpe, Leamington Spa, CV33 9DE.

Ahead of us launching our wider public consultation activities, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with you, at a time and place of your convenience. As we appreciate that as one of our closest neighbours, you are likely to be interested in the proposals and have specific queries on the development and its impact on you.

For further information on the proposals, please visit www.BSR-qstree.co.uk.

I hope that this letter is helpful. Should you have any questions or wish to set up a meeting with members of the project team at a time and place of your convenience, please do not hesitate to contact Lauren Whipp, or Martha Kool from PLMR, our stakeholder engagement consultants, at [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Hymas

Senior Project Manager
BSR Energy

Copied to:

- Headmaster of Princethorpe College - Grove du Toit
- Foundation Bursar - Eddie Tolcher

ENDS

+44 (0)1458 224 900 | info@bsrenergy.com | www.britishrenewables.com

BSR Energy Limited | Company number 10435323

Registered address: 35 and 35a The Mallings, Lower Charlton Trading Estate, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 5QE



Appendix D - Sample copy of letter issued to Woodhouse Hotel and Spa



BSR Energy Limited
35 and 35a The Maltings
Lower Charlton Trading Estate
Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 5QE
E: info@bsrenergy.com
T: +44 (0)1458 224 900

26 June 2023

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Mr Taylor

Land at Leamington Road, solar development proposals

I am writing to you as the Project Manager for The Woodhouse Hotel and Spa development, and as one of the neighbours closest to the site to share with you information regarding BSR Energy's emerging proposals for solar development on Land at Leamington Road, Princethorpe. The proposals, which are still at an early stage, seek to provide a 16.8MW solar energy development, which would power the equivalent of 4,201 homes a year and provide a reduction of 3,721 tonnes of CO₂ per year. Please find enclosed with this letter a site location plan to help with identifying the proposed location of the development.

The need to protect the planet from global warming has never been more important, and the recent summer temperatures and 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.

Solar development is a cleaner and cheaper alternative to fossil fuels, helping to boost our energy independence, something highlighted within the Government's Energy Security Strategy, which calls for a five-fold increase in solar energy by 2035.

Our proposals for Land at Leamington Road seek to:

- Allow for a significant opportunity for green energy production in Rugby.
- 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, as solar farms take up less than 5% of the land. This allows for plants to continue to grow and animals to still pass through the site.
- Provide a minimum increase of 60% in biodiversity net gain, which exceeds the 10% target outlined in the Environment Act 2021.
- Improvements in the condition of existing habitats and creation of new habitats to enhance biodiversity on site.
- Allow the land to be returned to agricultural use following decommissioning with an operational lifespan of 40 years.

Our public consultation is scheduled to run until Sunday 16 July 2023. The consultation will provide the opportunity for the community to comment on the proposals. As part of our consultation, we will be holding a public consultation drop-in session on Tuesday 4th July 2023 between 3pm and 7pm at Eathorpe Village Hall, Eathorpe, Leamington Spa, CV33 9DE.

Given your proximity to the site and likely interest in the proposals, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with you, at a time and place of your convenience. As we appreciate

+44 (0)1458 224 900 | info@bsrenergy.com | www.britishrenewables.com
BSR Energy Limited | Company number 10435323
Registered address: 35 and 35a The Maltings, Lower Charlton Trading Estate, Shepton Mallet, Somerset, BA4 5QE





that as one of our closest neighbours, you are likely to have specific queries on the development and its impact on you.

For further information on the proposals, please visit www.BSR-ashtree.co.uk.

I hope that this letter is helpful. Should you have any questions or wish to set up a meeting with members of the project team at a time and place of your convenience, please do not hesitate to contact Lauren Whipp, or Martha Kool from PLMR, our stakeholder engagement consultants, at [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Hymas

Senior Project Manager
BSR Energy

ENDS



Appendix E – Community leaflet

Have your say on proposals for solar development on Land at Leamington Road.



BSR Energy (BSR) is bringing forward proposals for solar development on Land at Leamington Road, Princethorpe. The proposals, which are still at an early stage, seek to provide a 16.8MW solar energy development, which would power the equivalent of 4,201 homes a year and provide a reduction of 3,721 tonnes of CO2 per year.



The need to protect the planet from global warming has never been more important, and the recent summer temperatures and 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.

Solar development is a cleaner and cheaper alternative to fossil fuels, helping to boost our energy independence, something highlighted within the Government's Energy Security Strategy, which calls for a five-fold increase in solar energy by 2035.

The proposals for Land at Leamington Road seek to:

- Allow for a **significant opportunity for green energy** production in Rugby.
- 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, as the solar panels will only disturb around 5% of the ground. This allows for plants to continue to grow and animals to still pass through the site.
- Provide a **minimum increase of 60% in biodiversity net gain**, which exceeds the 10% target outlined in the Environment Act 2021.
- **Improvements in the condition of existing habitats** and creation of new habitats to enhance biodiversity on site.
- **Allow the land to be returned to agricultural use** following decommissioning with an operational lifespan of 40 years.

Information on how to have your say on the proposals and to speak with members of the project team can be found on the reverse.

BSR is committed to speaking with the community at the earliest possible opportunity to allow us to fully consider the feedback received from those that know the area best.



Our consultation is taking place until **Sunday 16 July** and we want to hear from you. For more information and to have your say:

Visit www.BSR-ashtree.co.uk
Email info@BSR-ashtree.co.uk
Phone **0800 058 4272 (freephone)**



Come and see us in person

An in-person consultation event will also be taking place as follows:

Tuesday 4th July 2023

3pm until 7pm

**Eathorpe Village Hall, Eathorpe,
Leamington Spa, CV33 9DE**

This event will provide an opportunity for you to speak with a member of the project team, review the early-stage proposals, and provide your feedback. All of the information available to view at the in-person consultation events will also be available on the project website

www.BSR-ashtree.co.uk



The project team can be reached on **08000584272 (freephone)** or info@BSR-ashtree.co.uk should you have any questions or wish to request hard copy materials and/or accessible formats.

Appendix F – Consultation survey



BSR Ash Tree Solar Development on Land at Leamington Road, Princethorpe Consultation Feedback Survey

1. To what extent do you agree that we need to take steps to tackle the Climate Emergency?

- ☐ Agree
☐ Somewhat agree
☐ No view
☐ Somewhat disagree
☐ Disagree

2. To what extent do you believe that building new solar developments will contribute to reducing carbon emissions and reach the goal set by the Government of being net zero by 2050?

- ☐ Agree
☐ Somewhat agree
☐ No view
☐ Somewhat disagree
☐ Disagree

3. To what extent do you agree that building new solar developments will assist with the current cost-of-living crisis, by helping to provide additional energy security for the UK, and reducing the cost of household and business energy bills.

- ☐ Agree
☐ Somewhat agree
☐ No view
☐ Somewhat disagree
☐ Disagree

Get in touch

Phone: 0800 058 4272 (freephone)

Email: info@bsr-ashtree.co.uk

Website: www.bsr-ashtree.co.uk

Post: Land at Leamington Road, c/o PLMR Built Environment, Church House, 28 Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BL

3

8. Following a review of the information available, do you have any thoughts that you would like to share regarding transport movements throughout construction or any other transport related queries?

9. Please provide any further comments in the box below.

About You:

Name: _____

Email: _____

Postcode: _____

Get in touch

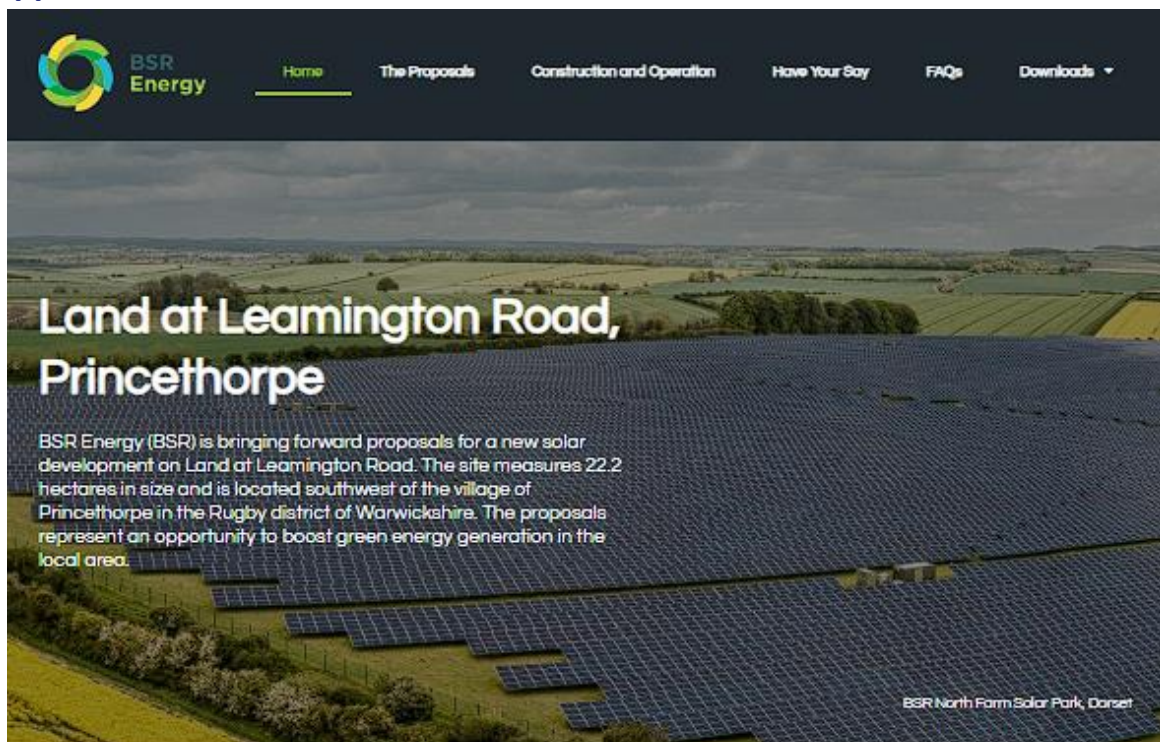
Phone: 0800 058 4272 (freephone)

Email: info@bsr-ashtree.co.uk

Website: www.bsr-ashtree.co.uk

Post: Land at Leamington Road, c/o PLMR Built Environment, Church House, 29 Great Smith Street,
London, SW1P 3BL

Appendix G – Screenshots of the consultation website



We are in the midst of a climate emergency. The most recent report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change outlines that immediate action must be taken to avoid irreparable climate breakdown. Solar energy plays an important role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating climate change, whilst also improving air quality and reducing water use during energy production.

While the UK faces a cost-of-living crisis and high levels of fuel poverty due to soaring gas and electricity prices, renewable energy continues to get cheaper each year, with solar power the cheapest of all.

Rugby Borough Council also declared a climate emergency in 2019, and launched a Climate Change Strategy in November 2022 which commits to net zero by 2030.

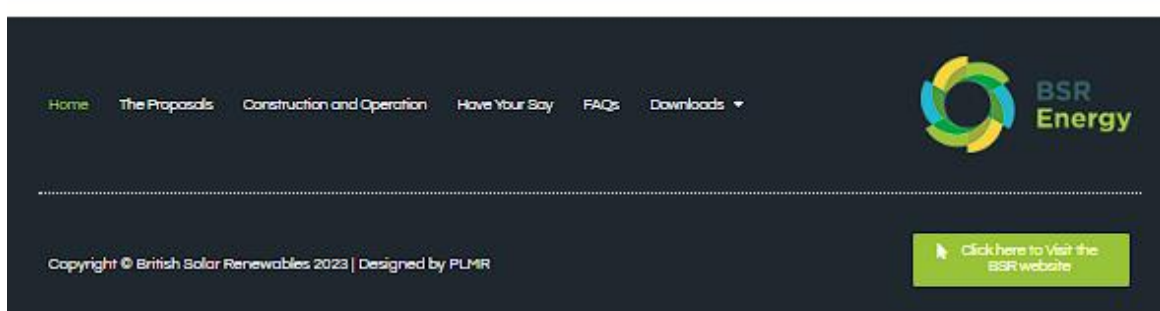


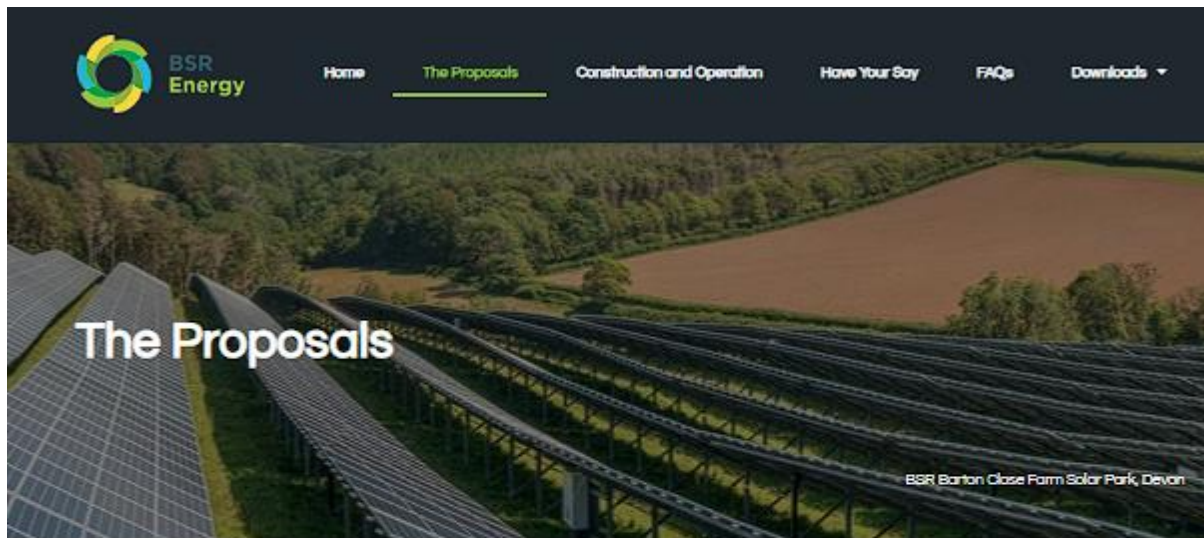
Aerial red line site outline plan

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 record-breaking temperatures and drought declarations becoming increasingly common. The time to act and mitigate further damage to our planet is now.

BSR's proposed solar development on land at Leamington Road would have an export capacity of up to 16.8MW, which could power the equivalent of 4,201 homes every year, delivering clean energy into the grid through an on site point of connection.

We value the input of the local community and are eager to hear any concerns at this early stage of the proposal's development. Further information on how you can get involved in our consultation, or get in touch with the project team can be found [here](#).





BSR's proposals for Land at Leamington Road would deliver the following:

- A solar development with a total export capacity of up to 16.8MW. This is the equivalent energy production to powering 4,201 homes every year and would result in the reduction of 3,721 tonnes of CO2 per year being emitted into the atmosphere.
- A significant opportunity for biodiversity 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 pass through the site.
- At least a minimum of 60% increase in Biodiversity Net Gain, meeting and far exceeding the 10% target as outlined in the Environment Act 2021.
- The retention and management of existing habitats on site, to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on the existing condition of the habitat over the lifespan of the development. This would include the retention of existing trees and hedgerows, and the replanting of any removed hedgerows with native species and the installation of bat and bird boxes across the site.
- The improvement of the condition of existing habitats and creation of new habitats to enhance biodiversity on site. It's likely that this will include:

1. The creation of new native hedgerows where required;
2. Infill hedgerow planting where gaps occur in the existing vegetation, for betterment of the existing landscape and along the Public Right of Way (PROW); and
3. New grassland and wildflower planting which will also enrich the area by the stream which runs along the eastern boundary



The above site layout plan indicates the proposed location for the solar panels, underground cable connection route, and substation location.

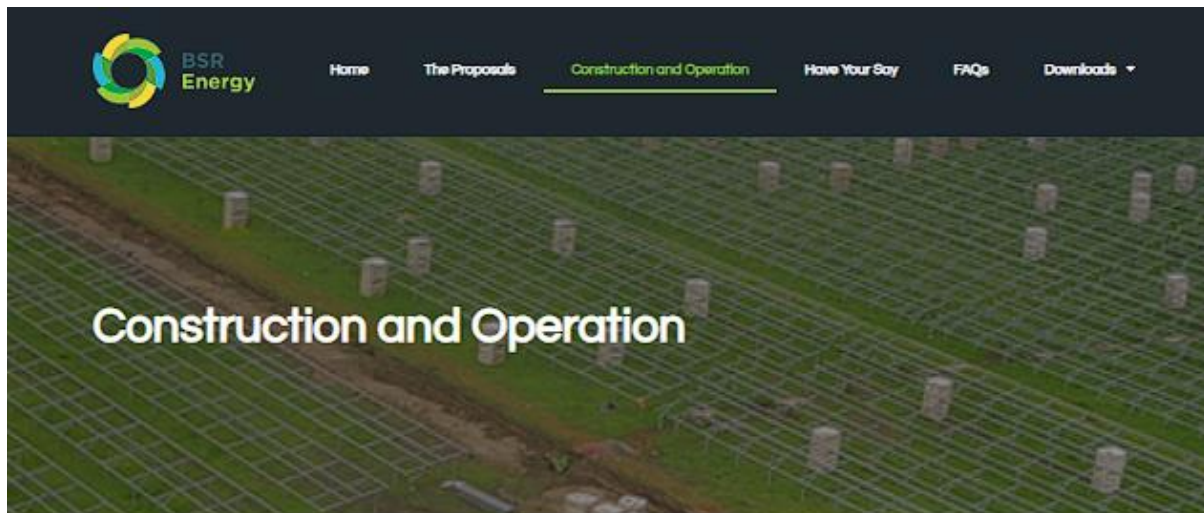
- A layout designed to minimise and mitigate any limited impact it may have on the character of the area, including the nearby Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Wappenbury Wood and Old Nun Wood. Solar developments are generally unobstructive to views as they do not require height, and BSR makes every effort to use trees and planting to screen its projects.
- The development will have an expected operational lifespan of 40 years, after which the land can be easily returned to agricultural use.
- 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 fulfilling the Government's net zero targets by 2050.

BSR selects sites for solar development based on where there is a viable grid connection nearby, as this can often be a factor which makes many sites unviable for solar development. BSR would always seek to select land of a low agricultural grade near to these connections, where these are available. The Land at Leamington road is understood to be Grade 3, meaning it is only Moderate – Good. An assessment has recently been undertaken to confirm the land grade. The development of solar in this location will also allow the local farmer the opportunity for a guaranteed, stable income, compared to farming the land, supporting the farms wider activities.

Heritage assessment

A detailed Heritage Assessment has been undertaken. This assessment has identified that the site cannot be seen from any heritage asset and only the top of the tower of the Grade II* Listed church at Princethorpe College can be seen from parts of the site. Overall, the proposed solar development will not affect how any heritage asset in the surrounding area would be experienced or viewed and thereby it is concluded that there will be no harm to their heritage significance.





Throughout the construction and operational phases of the proposed solar development on Land at Leamington Road, 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 6 months, during which a Construction Management Plan will be in place, to ensure minimal disruption to the surrounding area.

Due to the rural location of the site, it is expected that there will be minimal noise disruption to the wider area surrounding the site throughout construction, although we appreciate some of our closest neighbours are likely to have specific concerns relating to the construction noise and impact. We would encourage these neighbours to get in touch with the project team with regard to these specific concerns. Details on how to get in touch can be found [here](#).

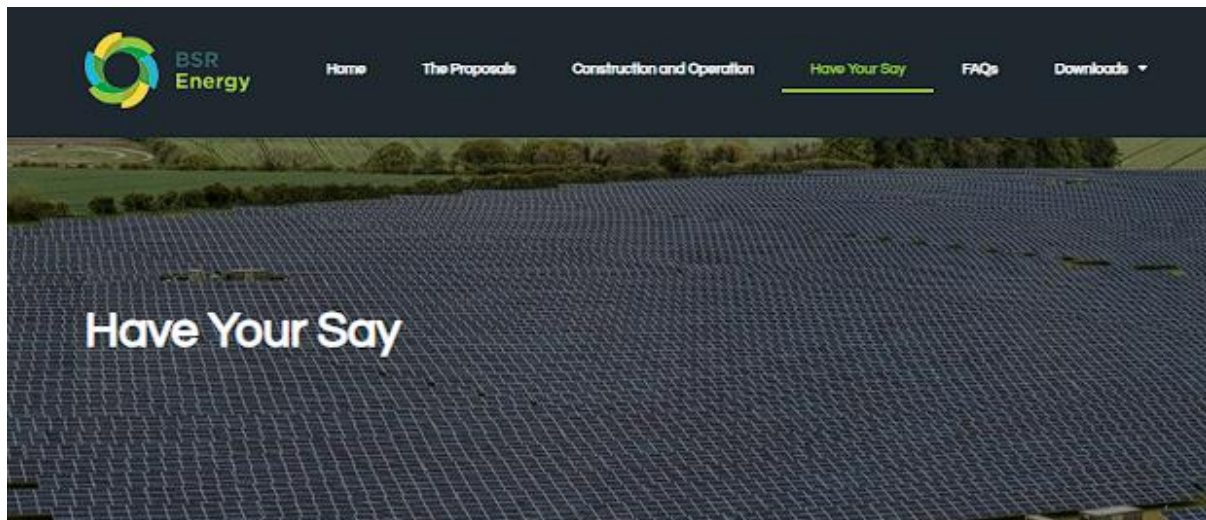
Once the site is operational, it is anticipated that there will only be low levels of traffic accessing the site for maintenance purposes. It is therefore expected that the largest volume of traffic will be associated with the construction phase of the project.



Construction Route Map

The agreed connection date for the solar development to the grid is 2033. Whilst this is not unusual given the current grid capacity challenges, it is hoped that with the improvement in technology and solutions to solve this wider issue, the connection date can be moved forward. As such, BSR is committed to ensuring that consented sites are in the pipeline and ready to be taken live, to assist with net zero goals.





Our consultation period ran from 26th June to 16th July and provided the local community the opportunity to provide feedback as we develop our proposal for Land at Leamington Road to ensure we understand any concerns.

Thank you to all of those that provided feedback. This is now being compiled and will be carefully considered by the project team as the project moves towards submitting the planning application to Rugby Borough Council.

The community can continue to get in touch with the project team in the following ways:

- Call us on 0800 058 4272 (freephone)
- Email us at info@bsr-ashtree.co.uk
- Fill out the 'Contact Us' form below.



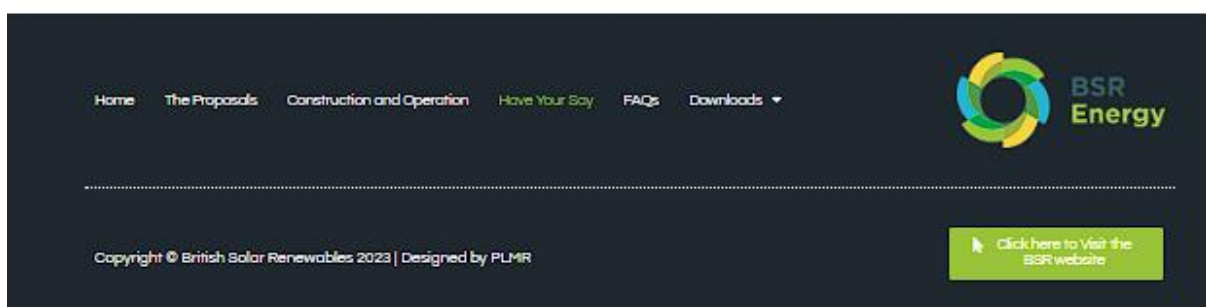
Contact Form

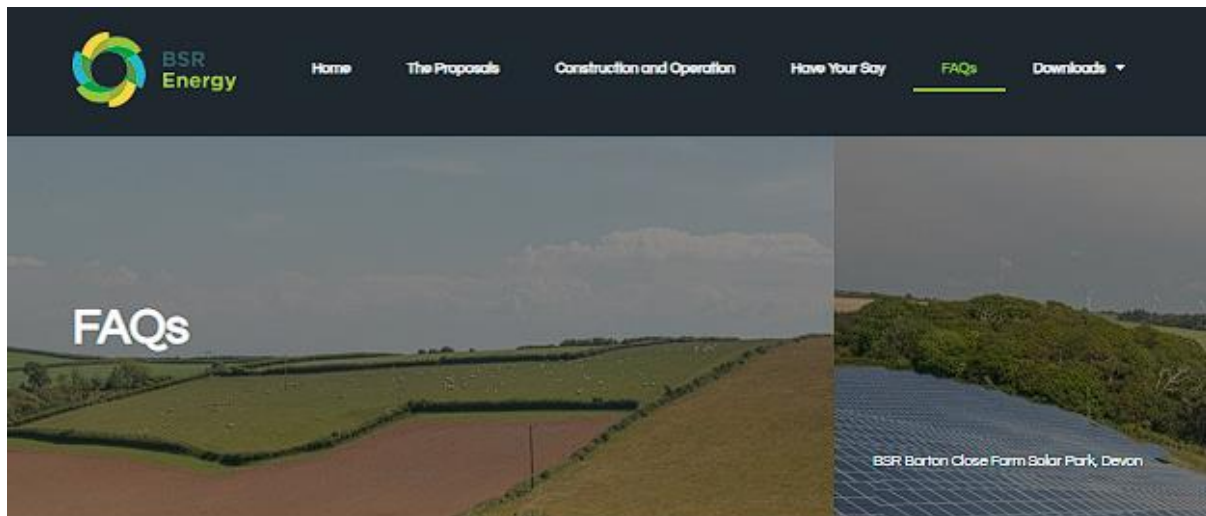
Name

Email

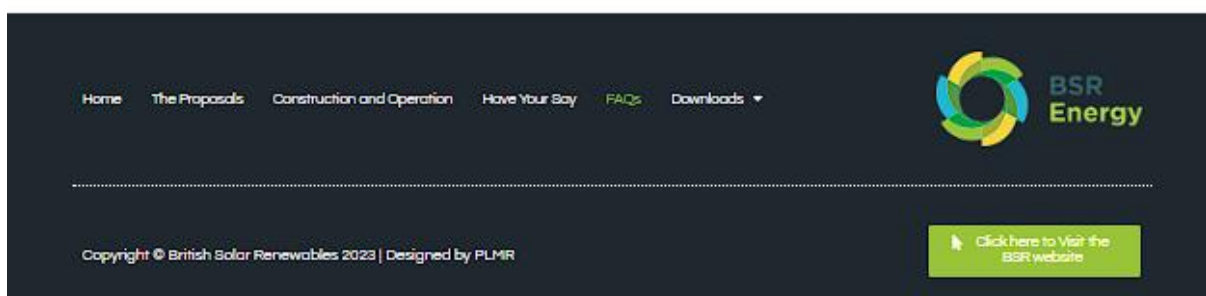
Message

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.





- ▶ [Where is the site?](#)
- ▶ [Why is the solar farm needed?](#)
- ▶ [What are the benefits of the proposal?](#)
- ▶ [How will the land be used once the solar development reaches the end of its operational lifespan?](#)
- ▶ [Will this impact biodiversity on the site?](#)
- ▶ [The information provided states that the proposals would deliver 49.99 MW of green energy, how many solar panels will be on the site to generate this level of power and what size are these?](#)
- ▶ [Land is needed in the UK for food production. There are already a large number of solar developments coming forward in the area, why is this needed as well?](#)
- ▶ [How can I take part in the consultation?](#)
- ▶ [How can I get in contact?](#)



Appendix H – Press release



PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Have your say on BSR's proposals for a new solar energy development in Rugby



Site location plan

30 June 2023

BSR Energy (BSR) is bringing forward proposals for a new solar development on Land at Leamington Road, Princethorpe and is currently undertaking a public consultation to understand the community's views on the proposals. The public consultation, which is running until Sunday 16 July includes an in-person drop-in event at Eathorpe Village Hall on Tuesday 4 July, between 3pm and 7pm.

The proposals represent an exciting opportunity to boost green energy generation in Rugby. BSR wants to hear from the local community at an early stage to understand their views and concerns. The in-person drop-in event will provide the opportunity for the community to review the proposals in detail and speak to members of the BSR Energy team.

The proposed solar development will have an export capacity of up to 16.8MW. This is the equivalent energy production to powering 4,201 homes every year and would result in the reduction of 3,721 tonnes of CO₂ per year being emitted into the atmosphere.

BSR Energy's proposals for Land at Leamington Road would:

- Allow for a significant opportunity for **green energy production in Rugby**, which is in support of the Council's Local Plan.
- Ensure a secure and stable supply of electricity to **help meet the Government's target of net zero by 2050**.
- Generate enough renewable, clean energy to **power up to 4,201 households**.
- **Prevent 3,721 tonnes of CO₂ each year being emitted into the atmosphere.**



- **Support existing biodiversity to thrive on the site**, as solar farms take up less than 5% of the land. This allows for plants to continue to grow and animals to still pass through the site.
- **Provide a minimum increase of 60% in Biodiversity Net Gain**, which exceeds the 10% target outlined in the Environment Act 2021.
- **Provide improvements in the condition of existing habitats and creation of new habitats to enhance biodiversity on site.**
- **Provide a Community Benefit Fund**, offering £2,000 per MW installed, therefore up to £33,600 in grants available to directly support local projects and benefit the local community.
- **Allow the land to be returned to agricultural use following decommissioning with an operational lifespan of 40 years.**

Sarah Hymas, Senior Project Manager at BSR, said:

"We are incredibly excited to be coming forward with this proposal. We are witnessing first-hand the impact of climate change and living through an incredibly difficult cost-of-living crisis driven largely by the cost of energy. This proposal will bring a great opportunity for the local community to generate clean, green, and affordable energy for the UK."

"Rugby Borough Council has declared a climate emergency, and we must act now to secure the energy independence of the United Kingdom in a green and affordable way. Solar power offers the best way forward to increase the local energy production capacity in the country and we look forward to working with the local community as we move forward with our proposals."

For more information or to have your say as part of the ongoing public consultation, please visit www.bsr-ashtree.co.uk, email info@bsr-ashtree.co.uk, call 0800 058 4272 (freephone), or visit the project team in person on Tuesday 4 July, between 3pm and 7pm at Eathorpe Village Hall, Eathorpe, Leamington Spa, CV33 9DE.

ENDS

Contact

Lauren Whipp
PLMR
07415 878 077
Lauren.whipp@plmr.co.uk

Notes to editors

British Solar Renewables is the largest privately-owned, integrated solar developer in the UK. We develop (BSR Energy), build (BSR EPC) and manage (BSR O&M) utility-scale solar and storage projects across the UK and internationally.

With over a decade's experience, we've successfully developed nearly 1GW of solar PV and Energy Storage plants. All of our projects are self-originated, which ensures the connections with the



communities that we work in starts right at the beginning of the development journey and is able to continue through the life cycle of the plant.

BSR combines the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions with sympathetically derived schemes to minimise the impact on local communities and the environment while creating rich ecosystems and protected havens for wildlife.

Multi-media

A number of high-res images of existing BSR solar developments are available on request. Please review the website www.bsr-ashtree.co.uk for available imagery.

Appendix I – Exhibition boards



Rugby Borough Council declared a climate change emergency in 2019, announcing its aim to be a carbon neutral Council by 2030 and its commitment to support the local community to reduce the impact of climate change across the district. Proposals such as this one are important to help achieve net zero aims and ensure that not only Rugby, but that the United Kingdom as a whole, is able to reduce its dependence on carbon dioxide emitting fossil fuels. Although these challenges are exacerbated by lengthy connection dates and UK grid capacity challenges.

Last summer saw the UK experience first-hand the impact of climate change, with record breaking heatwaves, temperatures, and droughts right across the country. It is expected that these previously once in a generation phenomenon will become more regular and continue to get worse. Through initiatives such as the proposed solar development at Land at Leamington Road, we can reduce our carbon emissions and reach the goal set by the Government of being net zero by 2050.

The cost-of-living crisis that the UK is currently experiencing is being predominantly driven by the rapidly increasing cost of energy. This is in part due to the rising costs of imported fuel and gas that the UK relies on. By establishing clean and reliable local energy production sites, such as this solar development, we can ensure that there is energy security within the UK and help to reduce the cost of household and business energy bills.

We want to work with you as the local community to ensure we are delivering a project that works for everyone. Your feedback and questions are very welcome, so please feel free to speak to a member of our team today or at any point after the meeting by phone or email.



Visit www.BSR-ashtree.co.uk
Email info@BSR-ashtree.co.uk
Phone 0800 058 4272 (freephone)



THE PROPOSALS

BSR Energy's proposals for Land at Leamington Road would deliver the following:

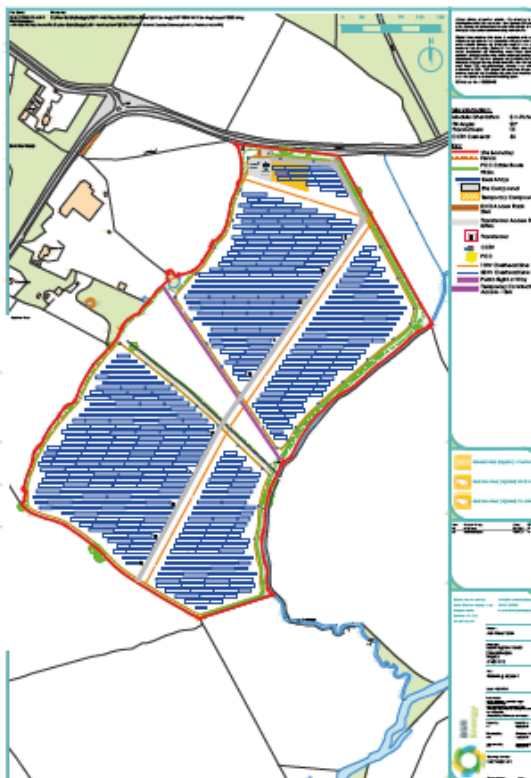
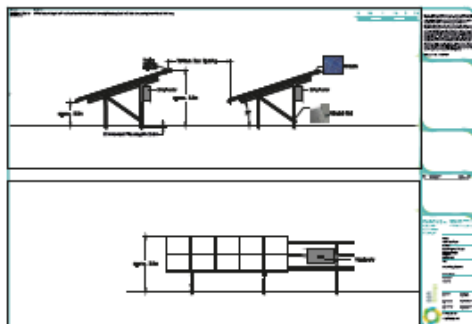
1. A solar development with a total export capacity of up to 16.8 MW. This is the equivalent energy production to powering 4,201 homes every year, resulting in the reduction of 3,721 tonnes of CO2 per year being emitted into the atmosphere.
2. A minimum of 60% increase in biodiversity net gain for the site, this not only meets but far exceeds the minimum 10% target outlined by the government in the Environment Act 2021.
3. Improvements to the condition of existing habitats, as well as facilitating the creation of new habitats.
4. The proposed solar development is temporary with an operational lifespan of 40 years, meaning that following the decommissioning the land can be fully reinstated for agricultural use.
5. Throughout the lifespan of the solar development, there is a significant opportunity for biodiversity to continue and thrive on the site. This is because solar farms take up less than 5% of the land, which will allow for plants to continue to grow and animals to still pass through the site.
6. A detailed Heritage Assessment has been undertaken. This has identified that the site cannot be seen from any heritage asset and only the top of the tower of the Grade II Listed church at Princethorpe can be seen from parts of the site. The assessment concluded that there will be no harm to the heritage significance of any nearby heritage assets.
7. The site falls predominantly within Flood Zone 1 – this means that it has a 1:1000 year chance of flooding, so is very unlikely.
8. The site is likely to fall predominantly within Agricultural Land Classification 3b. This is Moderate quality agricultural land. The full classification report is still being undertaken so a full conclusion is yet to be drawn, but the site does not look likely at this stage to be predominantly best and most versatile agricultural land.

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 Government set target of net zero by 2050, as well as the COP26 targets for keeping global temperature rise below 1.5°C.

The site layout plan (right) indicates the proposed location for the solar panels, underground cable connection route, and substation location.

As the proposals are still being developed the exact number of panels is currently unknown. From similar developments that BSR has brought forward, it is likely that 25,500 Photovoltaic (Solar) panels will be required to generate 16.8MW of power.

The image below shows the proposed heights of the panels.

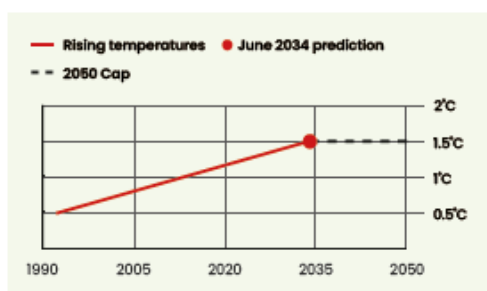


Visit www.BSR-ashtree.co.uk
Email info@BSR-ashtree.co.uk
Phone 0800 058 4272 (freephone)



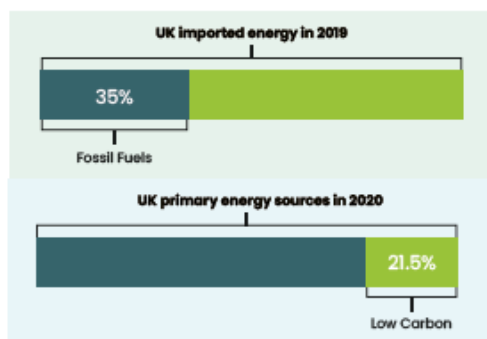
BENEFITS/NEEDS CASE

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. Solar energy will also help to work towards meeting the government set target of net zero by 2050 as well as the COP26 targets for keeping the global temperature rise below 1.5°C.



Source: cdi.climate.copernicus.eu

In addition to needing to take action against climate change, energy security is a significant pinch point in the current cost-of-living crisis we are seeing. The creation of renewable and local energy sources will be vital in bringing down energy costs and ensuring the UK's energy independence.



Source: UK Energy In Brief 2020. Dept for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

By supporting renewable energy schemes, such as the development on Land at Leamington Road, we are taking an important step to ensuring a secure and stable supply of electricity for the United Kingdom going forward.

The key benefits of our proposal include:

- Allowing for a significant opportunity for **green energy production in Rugby**, which is in support of the Council's Local Plan.
- Ensure a secure and stable supply of electricity to **help meet the Government's target of net zero by 2050**.
- Generating enough renewable, clean energy to **power up to 4,201 households**.
- **Preventing 3,721 tonnes of CO2** each year being emitted into the atmosphere.
- **Support existing biodiversity to thrive** on the site, as solar farms take up less than 5% of the land. This allows for plants to continue to grow and animals to still pass through the site.
- Provide a **minimum increase of 60% in Biodiversity Net Gain**, which exceeds the 10% target outlined in the Environment Act 2021.
- Improvements in the condition of existing habitats and creation of new habitats to enhance biodiversity on site.
- A Community Benefit Fund, offering £2,000 per MW installed, therefore up to £33,600 in grants available to directly support local projects and benefit the local community. Further information is provided below.
- Allow the land to be returned to agricultural use following decommissioning with an operational lifespan of 40 years.

Community Benefit

A community benefit fund will be provided offering up to £33,600 in grants to support local projects and benefit the local community.

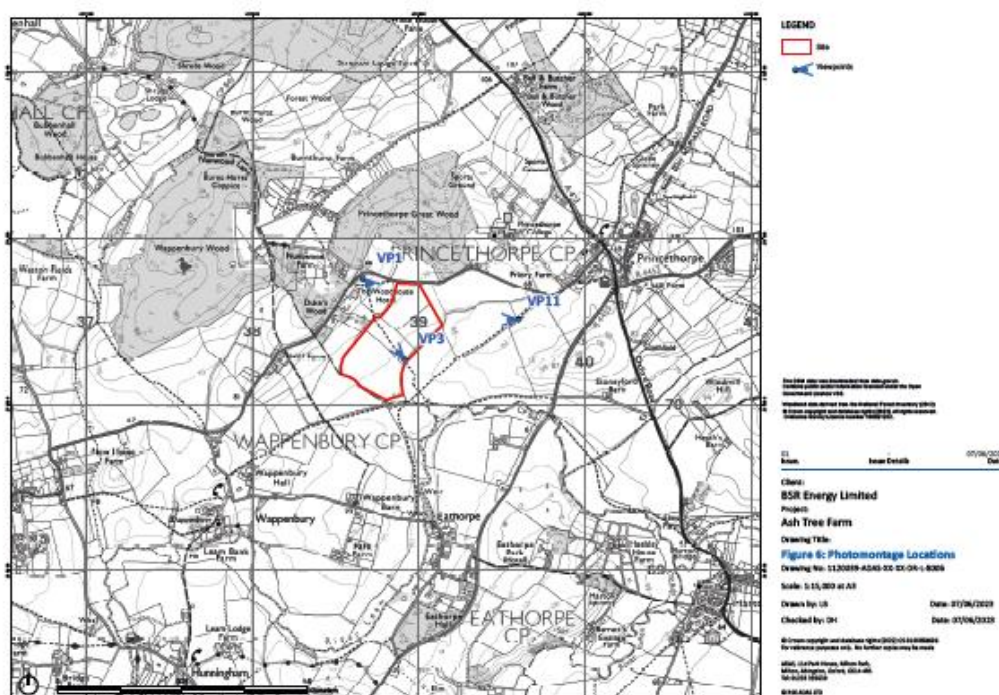
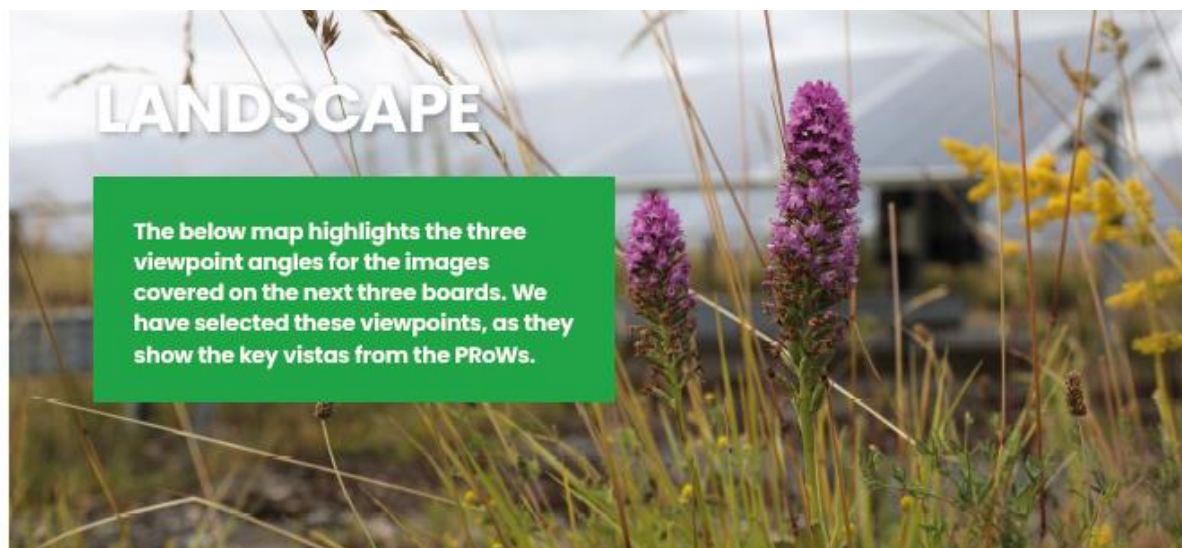
BSR is in the process of setting up an agreement with BizGive, a specialist fund management platform that will manage the fund and allows for grants from the fund to be applied for via its website. This process provides greater control and power as to where funds are distributed.

This project is also subject to local business rates which will generate significant income. Over its lifecycle, this project will generate approximately **£3million of business rates**, which will help fund local services.



Visit www.BSR-ashtree.co.uk
Email info@BSR-ashtree.co.uk
Phone 0800 058 4272 (freephone)





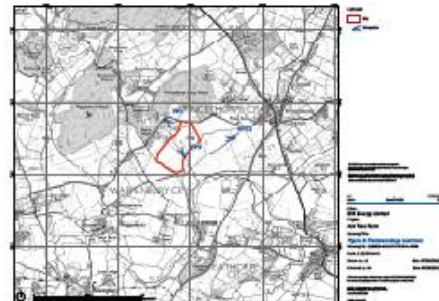
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VIEWPOINT 1 IMAGES



Year 0



Year 1



Year 15

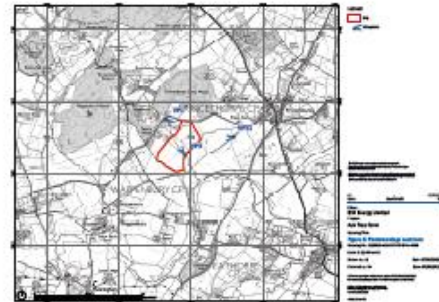


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VIEWPOINT 3 IMAGES



Year 0



Year 1



Year 15

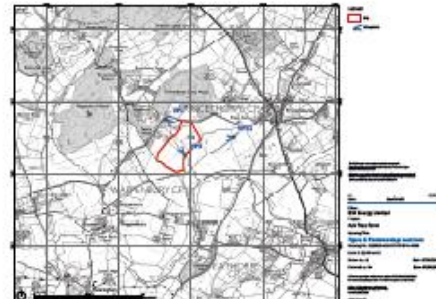


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VIEWPOINT 11 IMAGES



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BIODIVERSITY

In addition to the benefits that a new solar development at Land at Leamington Road could bring to the local community and the climate change fight, there will also be a significant boost to biodiversity on the site.



The proposals will deliver the following biodiversity benefits:

- The proposed solar development's operational lifespan would be 40 years, meaning that, following the decommissioning, the land can be returned to agricultural use.
- Throughout the lifespan of the solar development, there is a significant opportunity for biodiversity to continue and thrive on the site. This is because solar panels only disturb approximately 5% of the ground they sit above, which allows for plants to continue to grow and animals to still pass throughout the site.
- At least a minimum of 60% increase in biodiversity net gain for the site, this not only meets but far exceeds the minimum 10% target outlined by the government in the Environment Act 2021. As part of this, existing habitats on site will be retained and managed, to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on the existing condition of the habitat over the lifespan of the development.
- Improvements to the condition of existing habitats, as well as facilitating the creation of new habitats. This could include:
 1. The creation of new native hedgerows where required;
 2. Infill hedgerow planting where gaps occur in the existing vegetation, for betterment of the existing landscape;
 3. Replanting of removed hedgerows due to works with native species;
 4. The addition of bird and bat boxes across the site;
 5. Grazing meadow mix introduced across the site;
 6. Species rich grassland on all borders outside fence line apart from east border;
 7. Pond edge mixture on east border which will enrich the area by the stream;
 8. New proposed trees along north border, north eastern border, and southern border; and
 9. New hedgerow to the north of the public footpath.

As these benefits demonstrate, the scheme will strengthen the Green Infrastructure of the area with new hedgerow and hedgerow tree planting, enhanced existing hedgerows and new tree planting, contributing to the wooded character in the north. New grassland and wildflower planting aims to support biodiversity on site and enrich the area by the stream along the eastern boundary.

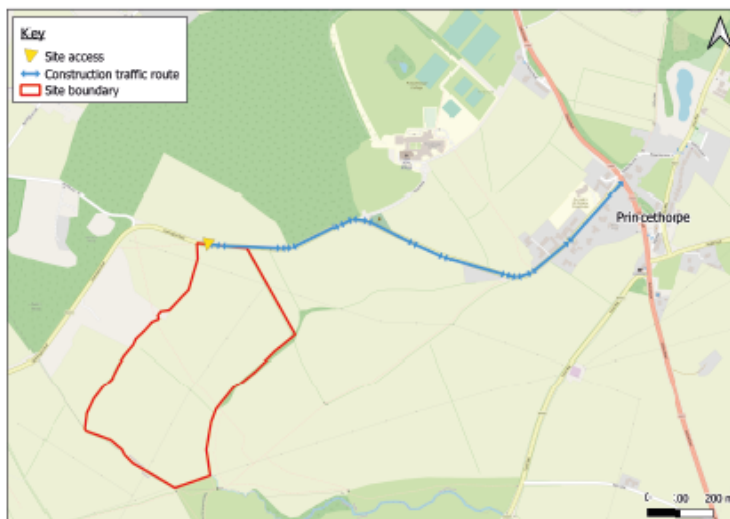


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CONSTRUCTION



Throughout construction we will ensure that disruption to the local area and community is kept to a minimum.

Throughout construction the site will be accessed off Leamington Road, with a compound being constructed at the existing access to the site.

Construction is expected to take approximately 6 months, within this time the peak traffic movements in and around the site will be during months 1 – 4. During the peak of the construction period, there are expected to be approximately 5 two-way HGV movements a day as a worst case scenario.

The site will be accessed off Leamington Road and construction traffic would travel along Leamington Road (B4453) and onto Oxford Road (A423).

Existing Public Rights of Way (PROW) will be maintained to ensure that as far as possible throughout construction, there is safe passage for those accessing these.

Overall, our proposed solar development is not expected to result in any significant impacts to the site and surrounding area, and any required mitigations are being carefully considered.

OPERATION

Throughout the operation of the solar development, the site will be accessed from the existing point of agricultural access to the field from Leamington Road, where a small compound will be set up to service the development.

This is situated in the north western corner of the proposed solar development. The site's access will be maintained for the lifespan of the solar development.

Access to the site will be required regularly for maintenance and repairs, however the impact of this on local traffic and the local road network is not expected to be significant. This is typically two or three visits per month in a 4x4 style vehicle.

Similarly, as throughout the construction process, we will be maintaining all existing PROWs within and around the proposed site. We will be implementing screening mitigations where required along these PROWs to ensure the proposed solar development does not cause any negative impact.



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There are a number of ways that you can provide your feedback, as follows:

- Fill out our questionnaire available to fill in at today's event, or on our website
- Call us on **0800 058 4272 (freephone)**
- Email us on **info@BSR-ashtree.co.uk**
- Fill out the Contact Us form on our website **www.BSR-ashtree.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.



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