

Land at Baker's Road, Belchamp St Paul

Statement of Community Involvement

February 2023

Prepared by PLMR for BSR Energy (BSR)

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1. Executive Summary

- PLMR was appointed by BSR Energy (BSR) to undertake a programme of community engagement to support its planning application for the Land at Baker's Road, Knowl Green site, and to produce this Statement of Community Involvement.
- The main period of community consultation took place between the 26 September and the 16 October 2022.
- Ahead of the launch of the public consultation period, all of the relevant members at Braintree District Council, Essex County Council, Belchamp St Paul Parish Council, and Clare Town Council, as well as other key stakeholders, such as relevant local community groups, 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 2,250 addresses surrounding the site, 150 letters to immediate neighbouring residents and businesses, social media adverts on Facebook and Instagram, a press release issued to local media, and posters issued to Clare Town Council and Belchamp St Paul Parish Council to display, 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 11 October 2022, between 4pm and 8pm at the Clare Old School Community Centre, Clare, Sudbury, CO10 8PX. In total, 38 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 Knowl Green 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 27 residents gave feedback during this first consultation period.
- A further round of engagement was held between the 24 October and the 11 November 2022. This was due to an administrative error, which meant that a number of households intended to be included within the initial leaflet drop, did not receive their leaflet. To allow as many residents and businesses to feedback as possible, the decision was taken to reopen the consultation for a further two-week period and to issue information about the consultation to 300 additional addresses.
- An additional 5 people provided feedback following the reopening of the consultation between the 24 October and the 11 November, taking the total number of local people responding to the consultation to 32.
- The feedback provided during the consultation included:
 - Comments expressing support for the proposals
 - Comments noting that all new buildings should have solar panels
 - Comments that the land should remain in agricultural use
 - Concerns over the visual impacts of the proposals
 - Concerns over the size of the roads, being too narrow and single laned
 - Concerns over damage to the roads during construction

- Objections to the proposals as a whole
 - Concerns over the survey
 - Comments against the landowner
 - Praise for the project team
- The project team will continue to engage with those residents that signed up to be kept up to date, Braintree District Council, Essex County Council, Belchamp St Paul Parish Council, and other key stakeholders as the application progresses through the planning process.

2. Context

BSR Energy (BSR) is bringing forward an application for a proposed 49.99MW solar development on Land at Baker's Road, Belchamp St Paul. The 52.88-hectare site is located 1km northwest of Belchamp St Paul village in Essex. The proposals represent an opportunity to boost renewable energy production in Braintree.

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 Baker's Road seek to:

- Allow for a significant opportunity for green energy production in Braintree
- 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 Belchamp St Paul is nearby, along with a scattering of agricultural buildings. The site is well located for a solar park development, given its discreet location.

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 Baker's Road, Belchamp St. Paul, ahead of submitting a planning application to Braintree District Council (BDC).

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 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

Braintree District Council (BDC) adopted its latest Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) in February 2021. 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 8.7, 8.10 and 8.11 of BDC's SCI on page 25, under the heading "Pre-Application Process", states:

"8.7 The NPPF highlights the importance of pre-application engagement and states that a Local Planning Authority should encourage Applicants to engage in pre-application discussions prior to submitting a formal application for consideration."

"8.10 It is recognised that the level of engagement needs to be proportionate to the nature and scale of a proposed development. The more complex or contentious the proposal, the broader the range of consultation methods should be, to allow as many people as possible to engage with the process."

"8.11 Applications for new residential or commercial development should be subject to wider community engagement. The scale of this engagement would be relative to the proposed development. The list below is not exhaustive, but

outlines some of the consultation measures which should be considered by applicants to ensure meaningful engagement with the local community is undertaken:

- *Consultation with the Parish / Town Council*
- *Consultation with the Neighbourhood Plan Group (if applicable)*
- *Leaflet mail drop to adjoining properties outlining the proposed development and how residents can submit feedback*
- *Publicise proposals via a website and/or through the local press, social media and flyers and provide a mechanism for residents to be able to submit feedback*
- *Public meeting/local exhibition in an accessible venue (accessible for disabled persons and for all members of the community) within the locality of the proposed development, for residents to view the proposals, ask questions and submit feedback*
- *Workshops with different groups (local residents and interest groups) to discuss proposals."*

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 Baker's Road.

4. Stakeholder Engagement

Consultation on the proposed solar development on Land at Baker's Road, Belchamp St. Paul took place in earnest between 26 September and 16 October 2022 and reopened 24 October to 11 November 2022. As part of this, the project team engaged with the following:

- The Stour Valley North ward member at Braintree District Council
- Relevant members of Braintree District Council
- Relevant members of Essex County Council
- Belchamp St Paul Parish Council
- Clare Town Council
- Statutory consultees, including; technical consultees from Essex County Council and Natural England
- Local groups, including; Eco Essex, Essex Climate Action Commission, Essex is Green, Essex Wildlife Trust and Place Based Climate Action Network.
- 2550 neighbouring residents and businesses, including a separate letter to the 150 immediate neighbours inviting them to a separate meeting

The following sub-sections provide an overview of the engagement with each of these stakeholder groups. Please note that following the initial consultation materials being shared with political stakeholders, further contact was made in light of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's passing and the national mourning period to inform them that the public consultation had been delayed until 26 September. A sample of the email that was issued can be viewed at Appendix G.

4.1 Stour Valley North ward member

A letter was issued to the ward member for Stour Valley North, the ward within which the site sits, Councillor Iona Parker, on 31 August 2022. The letter advised of the proposals coming forward and the pre-application consultation. The letter was issued via email and offered a meeting to discuss the proposals, outlined the details of the in-person consultation event, and invited her to attend a political stakeholder preview event. A sample copy of this letter can be viewed at Appendix A.

A follow up phone call was made, a voicemail message was left, and an email was sent to Councillor Parker to follow up on our letter on 2 September 2022. This process was repeated on 7 September 2022. A reply was received from Councillor Parker on 12 September 2022 in which she stated she was not able to attend the proposed meeting and requested that the notification leaflet be sent to households in Tilbury Juxta Clare and Little Yeldham. A reply was issued to Councillor Parker on 13 September confirming the inclusion of these areas in our public consultation.

4.2 Other political stakeholders at Braintree District Council

A letter was also issued to a number of other relevant members of Braintree District Council, including the Leader, and Deputy Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment, and Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure on 31 August 2022. The letter advised of the proposals coming forward and the pre-application consultation. The letter was issued via email and offered a meeting to discuss the proposals, outlined the details of the in-person consultation event, and invited them to attend a political stakeholder preview event. A sample copy of this letter can be viewed at Appendix B.

A follow up phone call was made, a voicemail message was left, and an email was sent to each of the above-mentioned members of Braintree District Council to follow up on our letter on 2 September 2022. This process was repeated on 7 September 2022.

A reply was received from the Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure, Councillor Spray, on 31 September 2022, confirming that she had reviewed the information, however, was unable to attend the meeting offered. She confirmed that she would attend the consultation event to look at the proposals.

A follow-up email was received from Councillor Spray on 12 October 2022, noting she was unable to make it to the consultation event the previous evening but that she would look out for further information coming forward but would not make any comment prior to the application going to the Planning Committee.

4.3 Essex County Council

A letter was issued to the relevant members of Essex County Council, including the member for Hedingham ward, within which the site sits, the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, and the Cabinet Member for Economic Renewal, Infrastructure, and Planning on 31 August 2022. The letter advised of the proposals coming forward and the pre-application consultation. The letter was issued via email and offered a meeting to discuss the proposals, should they wish, and outlined the details of the in-person consultation event, inviting them to the political stakeholder preview event. A sample copy of this letter can be viewed at Appendix C.

A follow-up phone call was made, a voicemail message was left, and an email was sent to each of the above-mentioned members of Essex County Council to follow up on our letter on 2 September 2022. This process was repeated on 7 September 2022.

On 7 September, the Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor McKinlay confirmed that she was unable to attend the meeting.

On 16 September the Division member for Hedingham, Deputy to the Leader, and ECC Climate Czar, Councillor Schwier emailed to enquire if the information was in the public domain as he wished to share it with his division Parish Councils. He also confirmed that he hoped to attend the public consultation event and questioned if details had been sent to ECC Planning for information and comment.

On 21 September an email reply was sent to Councillor Schwier confirming that on 26 September the information would all be in the public domain and offering to draft a letter outlining the proposals and the public consultation for him to forward to his division Parish Councils. It was also confirmed that high-level engagement had occurred with ECC officers and formal consultation will occur once the application is submitted.

4.4 Belchamp St Paul Parish Council

On 17 August 2022, an email was sent to the Clerk of Belchamp St Paul Parish Council to offer to present to the members of the Parish Council as part of their scheduled meeting on 6 September. On 18 August 2022, the Parish Council confirmed their interest in meeting with the team to hear about the proposals. It was agreed that the meeting would take place at 7pm on 6 September prior to the Parish Council's Meeting that evening. It was requested that details of the proposals be sent ahead of the meeting to allow Councillors to review them. This information was shared via email to the Parish Clerk on 31 August, which included a letter outlining the plans and a site location plan. A sample of this letter can be viewed at Appendix D.

At the meeting with the Town Council, the following points were raised:

- Roads are narrow and windy – construction traffic routes need to be carefully considered
- Upon presentation of the proposed transport route for construction traffic, the PC suggested that the traffic sticks to main roads for as much of the route as possible. Members advised that traffic to the site routes from the A120, to the M11, onto the A11, then through Haverhill and down to the site via main A road routes for as much of the way as possible.
- Members noted that historically any benefit money has stopped with Braintree District Council. Asked if this would be ringfenced to the area.

- Requested that the consultation event details are shared with the Council to display.
- Sought further details on the biodiversity measures across the site and how these have been rolled out on other sites.
- Asked if there would be any noise from the site once operational.
- Members were interested in details of the landowner, many of which were confidential
- Asked why this location was selected.
- Asked questions about the impact on the value of the land for agricultural use.
- Sought further information on BSR and the other work that it is involved with.

4.5 Clare Town Council

On 26 August 2022, an email was sent to the Clerk of Clare Town Council to offer to present to the members of the Parish Council as part of their scheduled meeting on 15 September. A follow up email was sent on 8 September, which also included a letter for the Council to inform them of the proposals and consultation. A sample of the letter can be viewed at Appendix E

On 13 September, an email was sent to the Chair of Clare Town Council offering a meeting at a time of the Council's convenience should it be of interest. The Chair confirmed that a meeting would be of interest to the Council.

On 16 September, the Council confirmed their next meeting would be Thursday 29 September and offered a time to present to the Council. On 20 September, an email was sent to the Council confirming that the team was unable to attend the next meeting and offered an alternative meeting, or the opportunity for a preview session ahead of the consultation event on 11 October. It was agreed that Councillors who wished to attend the consultation event would do so in their own time.

4.6 Technical Consultees

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

- Natural England
- Local Highway Authority: Essex County Council
- Dedham Vale AONB and Stour Valley

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 Braintree District Council.

4.7 Other groups

A letter was issued via email on 22 September 2022 offering a meeting to discuss the proposals for Land at Knowl Green to the following groups:

- Eco Essex
- Essex Climate Action
- Essex Wildlife Trust
- Place Based Climate Action network

A sample of this letter can be viewed at Appendix F. No responses were received.

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 September and 16 October 2022 and was advertised in the local community through a community mailing, social media adverts, letters to immediate neighbours and posters issued to Belchamp St Paul Parish Council and Clare Town Council. 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.

Due to the administrative error, which was discovered following the close of the initial consultation period, the consultation was reopened for a further two weeks between 24 October and 11 November 2022. This was advertised through a community mailing to the 300 missed households, the 150 immediate neighbours and on the dedicated consultation website.

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



Image of Community Consultation event on Tuesday 11 October 2022

5.1 Community Mailing

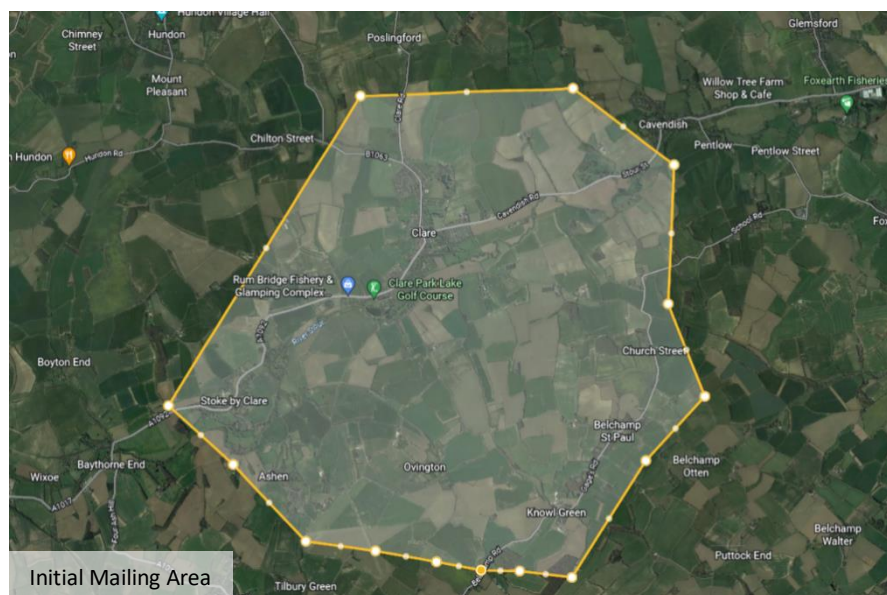
A letter was issued to 150 immediate neighbours via Royal Mail First Class post on 23 September 2022 offering them the opportunity to meet the project team to discuss the proposals should they wish. The mailing area for this letter is outlined below. A copy of this letter can be viewed at Appendix H. Following the issue of the immediate neighbour letter, two residents got in contact to request a site location plan, which was missing from the information shared.

One resident responded seeking a call from BSR to discuss the proposals. This call took place on 3 October. The resident largely raised concerns over a different solar development and was interested in understanding more general information about solar farms. The call covered:

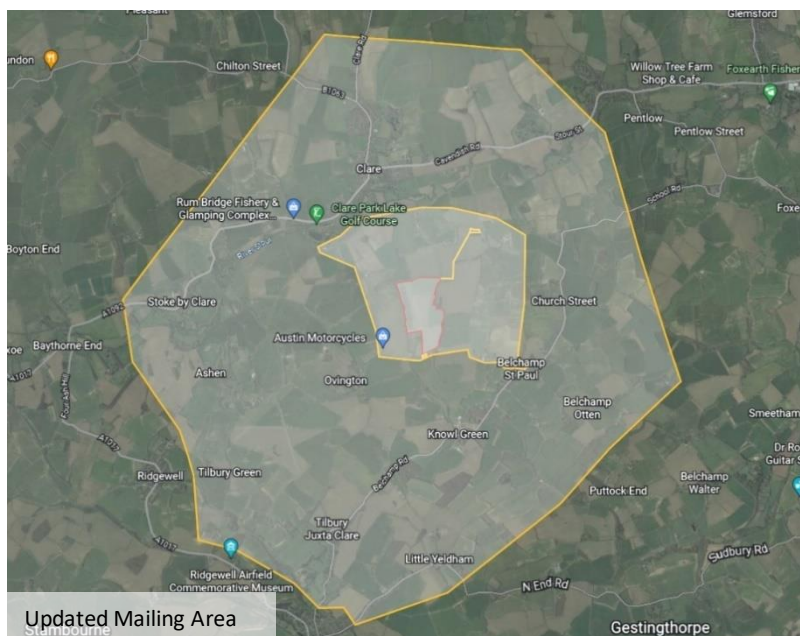
- Concerns over a different solar development
- Concerns over the lack of engagement that had been undertaken by the other solar development
- Not sure this development will affect them too much
- Was keen to understand the planning process and the process for delivery of a solar development in general
- Had some concerns over construction traffic to site on small local roads
- Concerns over property values being negatively affected



A leaflet was issued via GPS tracked hand delivery on 26 September 2022 to 2,250 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 I.



However, the mailing area above was an error and had been updated following initial engagement with political members to include additional areas, as shown below.



A letter was then issued to the 300 missed addresses from the original leaflet drop via Royal Mail First Class post on 27 October 2022 apologising for the error which missed them off the original delivery and informing them of the reopening of the consultation period. Additionally, a letter was issued to the 150 immediate neighbours via Royal Mail First Class post on 27 October 2022 informing them of the reopening of the consultation.

Recipients of the first leaflet were encouraged to attend the in-person consultation events and all recipients of communications were encouraged 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 online survey can be viewed at Appendix J.

5.2 Website

A dedicated project website (www.BSRknowlgreen.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.

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 K.

5.3 Social media

Throughout the initial consultation period, adverts were run across Instagram and Facebook to promote the consultation and the in-person consultation event. These were specifically targeted to the area that received the leaflet drop to ensure that residents who were most likely to have a vested interest in the proposals were informed of the consultation. Throughout the course of the advertisements running, they received 28,182 impressions, resulting in 526 link clicks through to the consultation website.

Screenshots of the Facebook and Instagram advertisements can be viewed at Appendix L.

5.4 Poster circulation

A poster was designed to advertise the consultation and in-person exhibition event and is available to view at Appendix M. This was shared with the following groups for them to display or share:

- Belchamp St Paul Parish Council
- Councillor Peter Schwier
- Cavendish Parish Council
- Clare Town Council
- Stoke by Clare Parish Council

Belchamp St Paul Parish Council responded to confirm that a poster advertising the consultation was on display on the Parish Council's notice board.

5.5 Local Media

A press release was issued to the Braintree & Witham Times, Essex Live, East Anglian Daily Times and Saffron Walden Reporter 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 N.

5.6 In-person consultation event

An in-person consultation event was held on Tuesday 11 October 2022. The event was held from 16:00 – 20:00. Nine exhibition boards were displayed at the event covering the following topics:

- Introduction
- The Proposal
- The Landscape
- Viewpoint 2
- Viewpoint 3
- Viewpoint 9
- Biodiversity
- Construction and Operation
- Have your say

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

The event was held at the Clare Old School Community Centre, as this was the most appropriate second-choice venue. The first choice of venue, given its proximity to the site, the Belchamp St Paul Community House, was closed for refurbishment work at the time of the consultation. The event was held between 16:00 and 20:00 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 38 residents. This represents a turnout rate of 1.68% of those who had been notified directly through the community mailing. This is a relatively low turnout rate 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. Two hard copy feedback forms were received, with one being posted through to us following the event and prior to the close of the consultation period and one 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:

- Concerns over the construction traffic route proposed
- Questions on impact to agricultural land
- Questions on how the site was selected
- Concerns around the use of high-grade agricultural land for solar developments
- Concerns relating to the screening proposed at the site and impact on views
- Concerns over water runoff and potential risk of contamination
- Concerns over diesel generators on site
- Suggestions of further consultees to engage
- Questions regarding the safety of solar panels to the environment / glare / noise
- Questions relating to biodiversity and planting on the site / tree retention
- Concerns over the extension of the site in future
- Questions around community benefit and the community fund more specifically
- Comments of support for green energy and solar developments
- Comments that the Prime Minister is “bonkers” for not supporting green energy / solar development
- General questions around the application – how this is determined / timeframes

5.7 Project email address and phoneline

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.

In total 20 emails were received to info@BSRknowlgreen.co.uk throughout the consultation period. Responses were issued to all queries and all feedback received has been taken into consideration ahead of submission.

6 phone calls were received to the freephone project telephone line.

6. Consultation Responses

6.1 Feedback forms

Throughout both consultation periods, 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 11 October 2022 and on request. A copy of this survey is available at Appendix J.

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, 32 survey responses were received to the consultation, representing a 1.25% response rate of 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, 90.63% of respondents stated that they either 'agree' or 'somewhat agree' that we need to take steps to tackle the Climate Emergency.

A similarly high 77.42% 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 meeting 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?

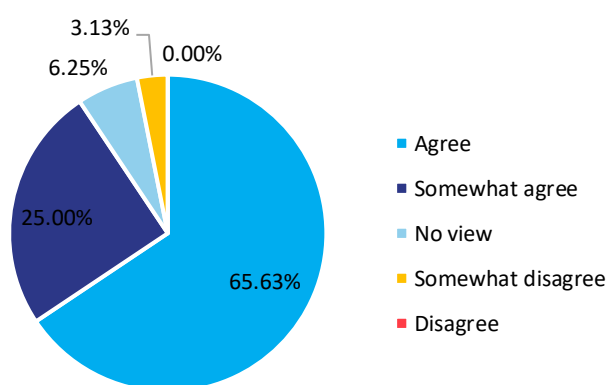
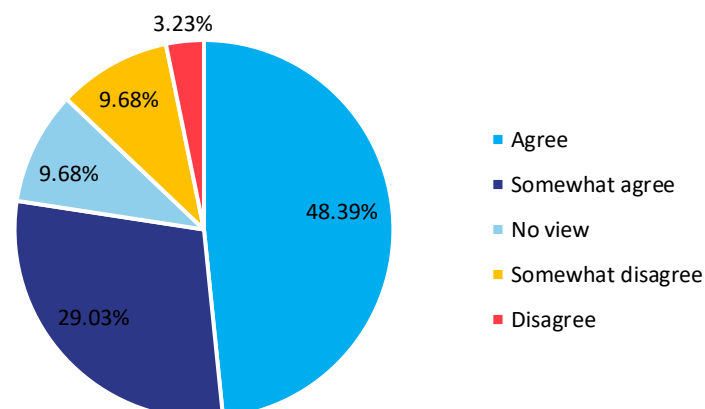


Figure 2: To what extent do you believe that building new solar developments will contribute to reducing carbon emissions and reach the goal set by the Government of being net zero by 2050?



As can be seen from Figure 3, respondents were split on whether they agreed that new solar developments will assist with the current cost-of-living crisis, with 50% 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.

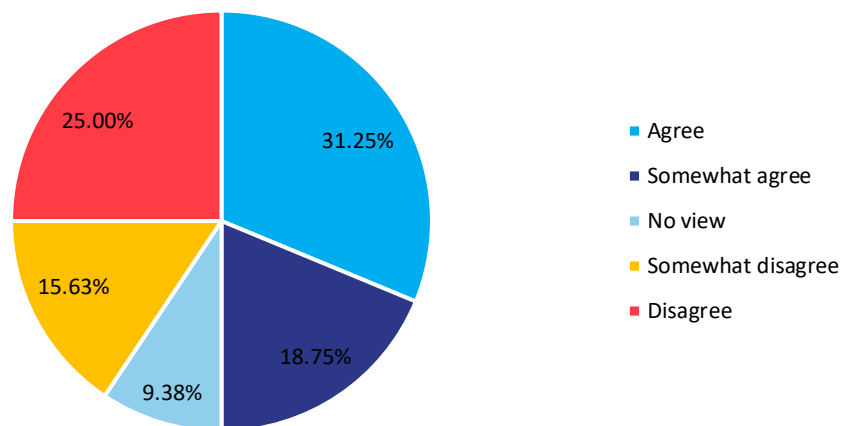


Figure 4 shows the response to the question relating to Biodiversity Net Gain. The proposals providing a minimum 60% Biodiversity Net Gain on site was considered to be of importance to respondents, with 60% considering it as either '1' (very important) or '2' (important).

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 81% 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?

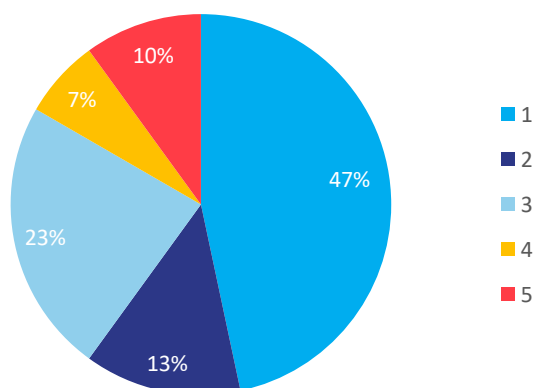
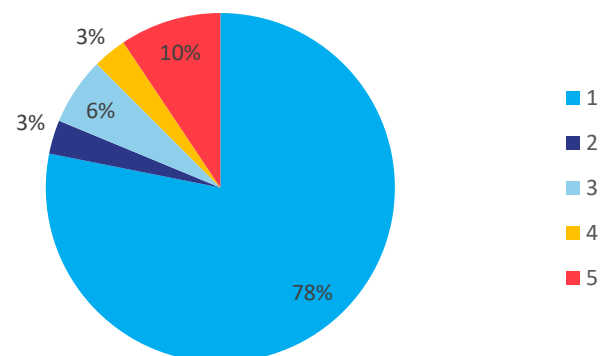
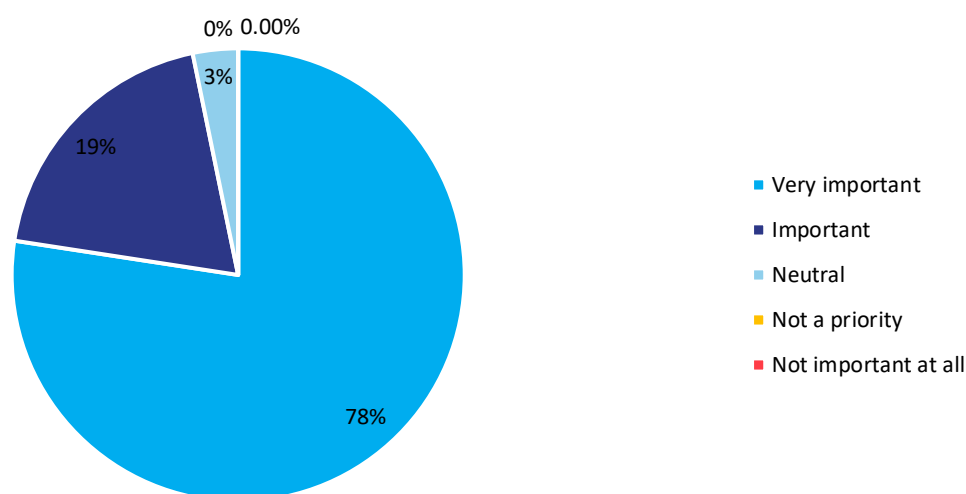


Figure 5: On a scale of 1 - 5 how important is it to you that the site is returned to agricultural use following any solar development being decommissioned?



96.77% 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?



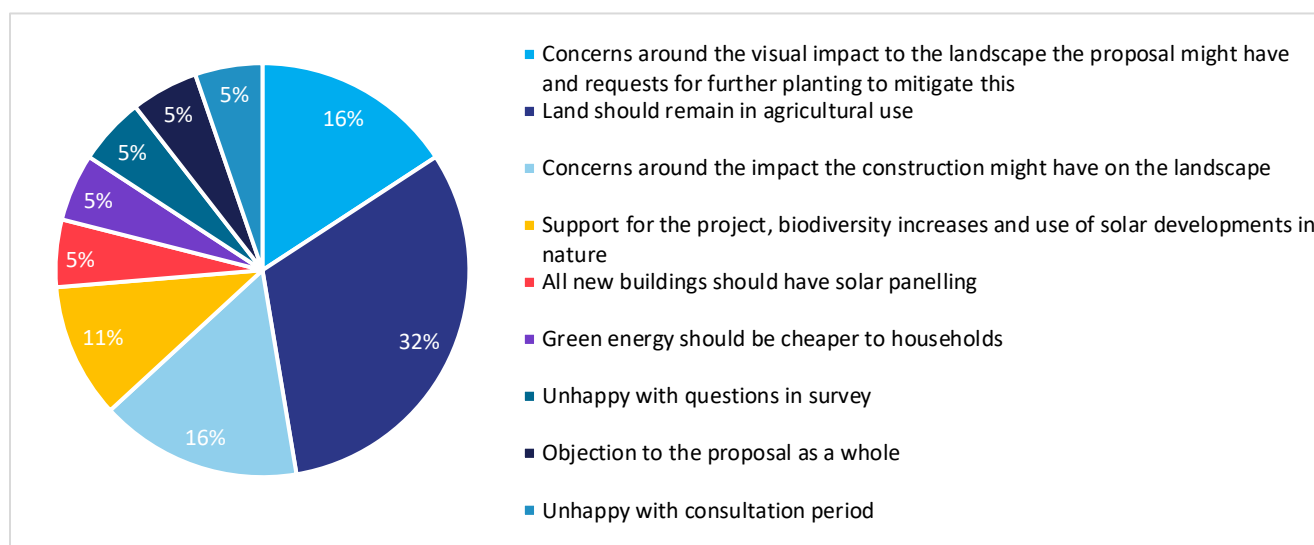
6.1.2 Qualitative feedback

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 chosen as we wanted to receive feedback and be aware of the views of the local community. As is to be expected when receiving feedback, the responses were mixed and did not always keep to the designated theme resulting in comments not always aligning with the 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 provide any further thoughts regarding the landscaping and biodiversity of the site, the majority, 56% of respondents chose not to answer. Those respondents that provided feedback highlighted the belief that the land should remain in agricultural use (32%), concerns around the visual impact to the landscape the proposal might have and requests for further planting to mitigate this (16%), concerns around the impact the construction might have on the landscape (16%) and support for the project, biodiversity increases and use of solar developments in nature (11%). Figure 7 below provides a visual overview of the response to this question.

Figure 7:



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

Land should remain in agricultural use

- "Leave the site as agricultural land and don't develop it. It comes with its own naturally-occurring wildlife."
- "I totally disagree with this proposal. I am 100% against building the solar panel on good agricultural land. And it ruins the local environment. Both for the flora, fauna and for people too."
- "We would also much prefer that it became compulsory for ALL new build housing schemes and ALL new commercial buildings to incorporate solar panelling. This would be far preferable to taking agricultural land out of food production"
- "Growing crops is far more important, taking away agricultural land is a false economy"
- "I totally disagree with this proposal. I am 100% against building the solar panel on good agricultural land. And it ruins the local environment. Both for the flora, fauna and for people too."
- "It is important to find suitable locations to build solar farms ideally using land which cannot be used for intensive agriculture. This land is arable and I think not suitable for pasture."

Concerns around the visual impact to the landscape the proposal might have and requests for further planting to mitigate this

- "My only thoughts would be that the solar panels are hidden by natural hedging i.e. robust hedging to required hight along the main road"
- "Visual impact is critical. These are unsightly in a beautiful countryside. The desert would be better. No visual impact, loads of space and more solar radiation"
- "We would like to see all hedgerows left in place and preferably double planted so that there is a greater density of habitat for wildlife."

Concerns around the impact the construction traffic might have on the landscape

- "The questions do not allow for the damage caused in building site and industrial poisoning of the land"
- "In addition there will doubtless be a major impact on the old green lane leading from Knowl Green to Clare in Suffolk."
- "This site is already naturally landscaped and biodiverse. Putting in a solar farm would be destructive to both. Leave it as it is."

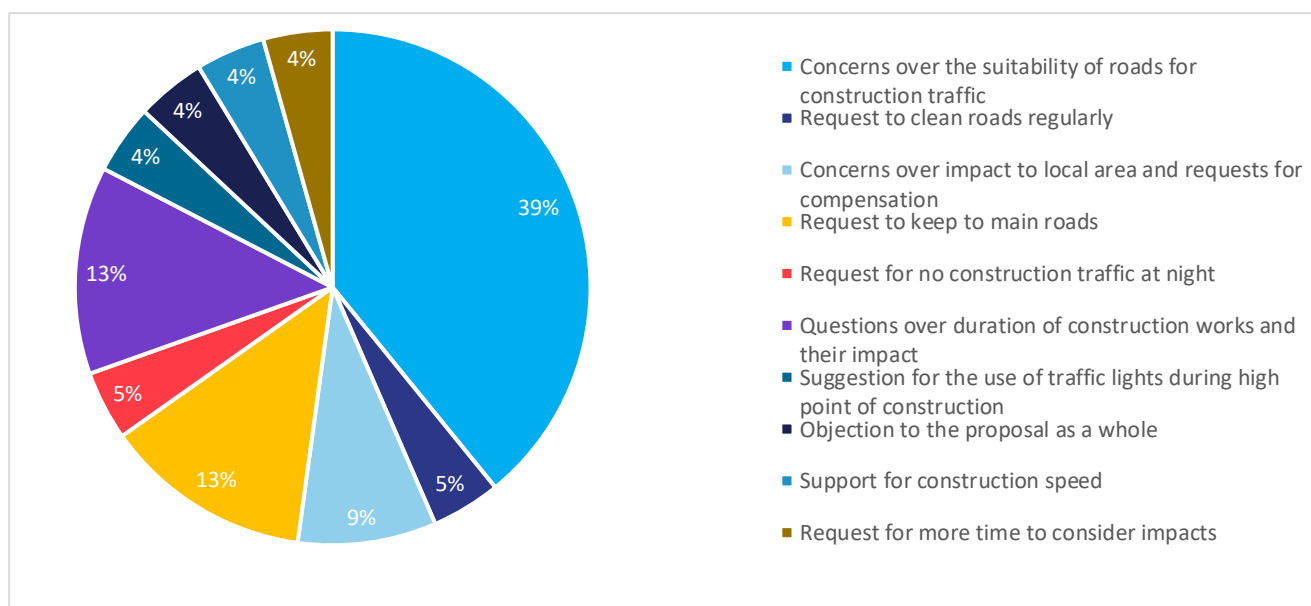
Support for the project, biodiversity increase, and use of solar developments in nature

- "Solar Farms can work in sympathy with the environment"
- "It seems unlikely that the site will be able to be used for animal husbandry as the site is unsuitable, so as long as biodiversity is maintained AND improved-good. I have been assured that the intrusive nature of the development will be kept to a minimum, also assured on archaeological observation."

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, 50% of respondents chose not to answer. Those respondents that provided feedback shared concerns over the suitability of roads for construction traffic (39%), requests to keep to main roads (13%) and questions about the duration of construction works and their impacts (13%). Figure 8 below provides a visual overview of the response to this question.

Figure 8:



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

Concerns over the suitability of roads for construction traffic

- "The road in is nearly single lane and unsuitable. If other lorries use this road at the same time this will block the road and make impassable. Not the right road to site."
- "Transport on this narrow rural lane would be both destructive and intrusive."
- "This will be very disruptive on tiny, rural roads."
- "The route via Tilbury Juxta Clare is not suitable for large vehicles"
- "The roads leading to the site from all directions are not suitable for heavy construction vehicles. Roads are already in a poor state and due to the rural nature of the area are not a priority to the Council"

Request to keep to main roads

- "Keep to the main roads as far as possible"

- “Keep to the main roads where possible and clean mud from local roads regularly”
- “Please don’t bring enormous vehicles through the villages, they always run over my garden.”

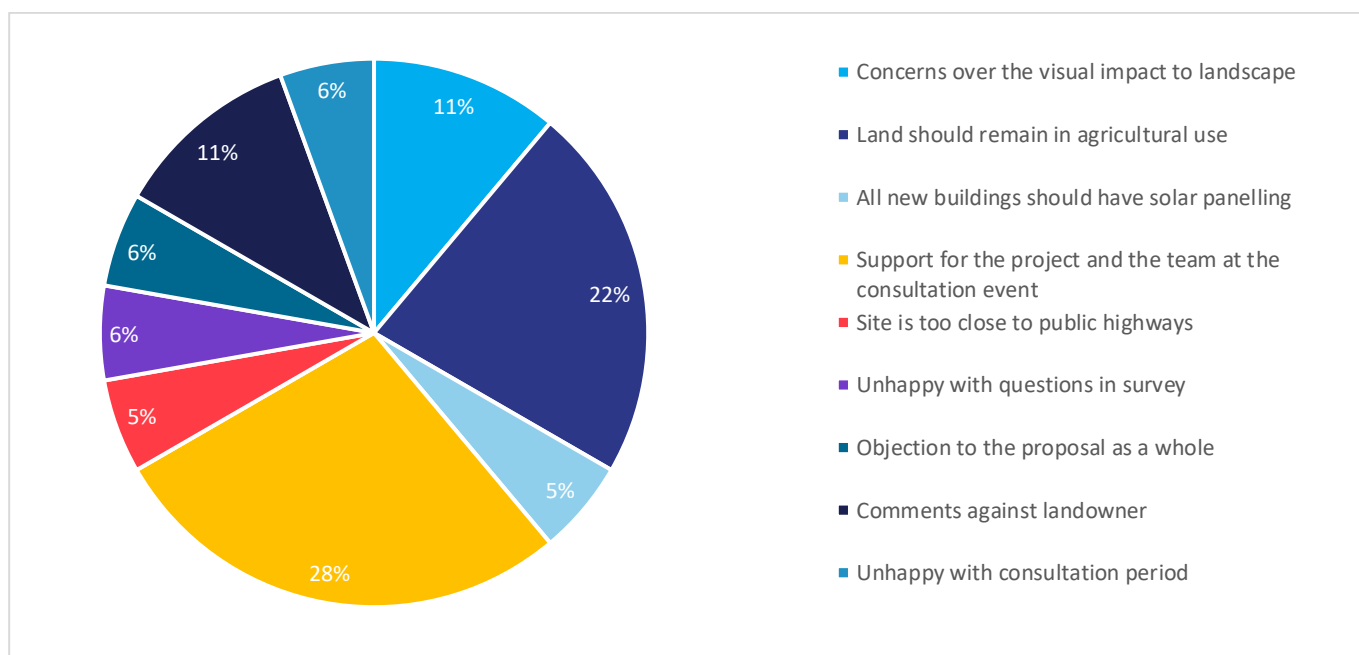
Questions over duration of construction works and their impacts

- “How long is the anticipated work and transport movements going to take”
- “How long will the development take to be fully functional and how the local traffic flow will be affected by this development? Example: road closed, heavy plants movement etc.”

6.1.2.3 Please provide any further comments

Finally, when asked to provide any further comments or feedback, 64% of respondents chose not to provide any further comment. Those respondents who provided feedback expressed support for the project and the team at the consultation event (28%), further reiterated that they wished to see the land remain in agricultural use (22%), expressed objections or negative comments about the project and the landowner (11%) and expressed concerns over the visual impact to the landscape (11%). Figure 9 below provides a visual overview of the response to this question.

Figure 9:



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

Support for the project, project team and the consultation event

- “Good idea, need as much renewable energy as possible”
- “Hope it goes ahead we need green energy”
- “Thank you for answering my questions”
- “Good idea, need as much renewable energy as possible”
- “I generally found it very informative and hope you are successful.”

Land should remain in agricultural use

- “Prime agricultural land should not be lost to solar energy, particularly since this would be to the aesthetic detriment of the surrounding area.”

- “This should not go ahead. It is valuable grade 2 land that should stay in food production”
- “Please liaise with house builders and commercial builders rather than prioritising large plots of productive agricultural land.”
- “Grade two farmland must not be turned over to solar power”

Comments against the landowner

- “The landowner has plenty of other land more suitable to make this project possible. He will stop it happening through being obstinate.”
- “Yes, we need renewables, but not when a development is destructive to the countryside and is for personal financial gain.”

6.2 Email responses

In total, 20 email inquiries and responses were received throughout the consultation. The email responses highlighted a range of questions and concerns regarding the proposals including:

- Questions and concerns around the impact to biodiversity
- Objections to and concerns about the proposal due to the use of agricultural land
- Questions and concerns around the visual impacts of the proposal and screening mitigations
- Support for the project and the increase in biodiversity
- General questions on the proposals or requests for further information

6.3 Phone responses

Six phone inquiries and responses were received throughout the consultation. These consisted of requests for a meeting with the project team from an immediate neighbour, questions about the site location map that was made available, expressing support for the project overall and a question on the location of the proposed new substation.

7. Summary and response to feedback

The low response rate to the consultation 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. Additionally, of the 32 respondents only 9.4% expressed strong views against the proposals, with the majority of respondents either expressing neutral views or support for the proposals.

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 of the area, the impact on and suitability of the local roads 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 along Bakers Road, and the bridleway running along the western side of the site, where it has been identified that there is currently inconsistent or ineffective screening in the form of hedging and trees. For further information on this matter, please refer to the Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) 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 Energy 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 Baker's 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.

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. 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 Energy has committed to providing 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.

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.

7.4 Community Benefit Fund

If the proposals were to be granted planning permission, BSR would establish a Community Benefit Fund worth up to £49,990 (£1,000 per MW installed) that would be managed by the Essex Community Foundation. In the meeting held between the project team and Belchamp St Paul Parish Council on 6 September 2022, concerns were raised about the management of Community Benefit Funds in the past. The Parish Council raised concerns that historically funding was stopped at the Braintree District Council level, meaning there was no guarantee that the communities that are directly impacted by the developments that the fund was established for would benefit from the funding. Additionally, a similar concern was raised by Clare Town Council that despite residents in the Council being directly impacted by the proposals, as they are located in the neighbouring County they would not benefit from the proposed fund.

It was agreed that if planning permission is granted for the proposals, further discussions would take place on how to set up and manage the Community Benefit Fund to ensure that the local community is represented and are the beneficiaries of the funding. BSR will work with the Essex Community Foundation to ensure that the funds are distributed to important local projects. It is also proposed that local representatives be on the fund so that people who are active in the local community have a say in where the funds are directed. BSR is open to further discussions on the management and distribution of the Community Benefit Fund with Belchamp St Paul Parish Council and Clare Town Council, should the proposals receive planning permission.

7.5 Additional consultees and extending mailing areas

Following the meeting with Belchamp St Paul Parish Council on 6 September, a request was made from the councillors to extend the proposed consultation area to include residents of Belchamp Otten and Tilbury juxta Clare to ensure a larger amount of the local community who might be impacted by the proposals during construction or operation were included. The larger consultation mailing zone, shown in Section 5.1 of this report, was produced following discussion with Belchamp St Paul Parish Council. This request was also made by the local ward member for Stour Valley North.

On 21 October 2022, the Clerk of Belchamp St Paul Parish Council contacted the project team to inform them that following the 18 October meeting of the Parish Council it was established that the residents of Belchamp Otten, Tilbury juxta Clare and Little Yeldham had not received the initial consultation leaflet as had been agreed and expected. Following an investigation into this incident, it was established that due to an administrative error with the printing and distribution provider, the map used to deliver the consultation leaflet that was used was the originally proposed distribution area and not the updated larger map. To correct this error and ensure that all residents who wished to be involved in the consultation were able to, the consultation was re-opened for a further two weeks and the original leaflet and a new letter explaining to residents the error and the re-opening of the consultation was sent via first class mail to those who were missed out on 27 October 2022. Additionally, a follow-up letter which included the site outline map was sent to all 150 immediate neighbours informing them of the extended consultation period and allowing them to provide further feedback if they wished.

8. Conclusion

Throughout the community consultation programme, the aim has been to inform members of the local community, members of Braintree District Council (BDC), and other key stakeholders, of BSR's proposed solar development for Land at Baker's Road, Belchamp St Paul prior to the submission of a planning application to BDC.

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 Baker's Road, Belchamp St Paul.

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

The project team has endeavoured to respond to all of the feedback received throughout the consultation and has sought to address the concerns raised by stakeholders. The proposals directly respond to the need for green energy production in Braintree. 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 of letter to Stour Valley North Ward Councillor



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31 August 2022

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Councillor Parker,

Land at Bakers Road, solar development proposals

I am emailing you as the representative for Stour Valley North at Braintree District Council, regarding BSR Energy's emerging proposals for solar development on Land at Bakers Road, Belchamp St Paul. The proposals, which are still at an early stage, seek to provide a 49.99MW solar energy development, which would power the equivalent of 12,501 homes a year and provide a reduction of 11,072 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 recent Energy Security Strategy, which calls for a five-fold increase in solar energy by 2035.

Our proposals for Land at Bakers Road seek to:

- Allow for a **significant opportunity for green energy** production in Braintree
- 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 25% 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

As the local representative for the area, we would like to **invite you to attend a virtual presentation of the proposals on Thursday 8 September 2022 18:00 – 19:00**. We have also written in similar terms to the following Braintree District Councillors:

- Councillor Butland – Leader of the Council
- Councillor Cunningham – Deputy Leader of the Council
- Councillor Schmitt – Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment
- Councillor Spray – Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure

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We have written in similar terms to the above members, but should you feel that there are others at the Council who would benefit from attending the briefing, or would be interested in the proposals, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

We appreciate that given your position as the Vice Chair of the Planning Committee it may be necessary to have Officers in attendance for any meeting and you will be unable to provide any feedback. We of course also respect any decision to not meet with us, given your position.

For your wider awareness, we are due to meet with members of Belchamp St Paul Parish Council on Tuesday 6 September 2022 at 19:00. As part of this meeting with the Parish Council, we also hope to understand members' views of our proposed public consultation activities, which are outlined below for your information.

Our public consultation is scheduled to run from **19th September 2022 to 9th October 2022**. 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 these in advance. We are also seeking to brief Clare Town Council on the proposals.

To launch public consultation, it is intended to issue a leaflet to 2250 households across Knowl Green, Belchamp St Paul, Church Street, Clare, Stoke by Clare, Ashen, and Ovington, inviting residents to view information on our website, and provide feedback using our online feedback form, project specific freephone line (0800 058 4283), and project specific email address (info@BSRknowlgreen.co.uk). 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 on **Thursday 29th September 2022 between 4pm and 8pm** at Clare Town Hall, Market Hill, Clare, Sudbury CO10 8NN. 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 to RSVP to our meeting invite, please do not hesitate to contact Lauren Whipp, or Alastair Fisher from PLMR, our stakeholder engagement consultants, on [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

We can continue to be contacted by residents and other interested parties by email at info@BSRknowlgreen.co.uk and by calling freephone 0800 058 4283.

Yours sincerely,
Sarah Hymas

Project Manager
BSR Energy

ENDS



Appendix B – Sample letter to Braintree District Council members



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T: +44 (0)1458 224 900

31 August 2022

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Councillor Butland,

Land at Bakers Road, solar development proposals

I am emailing you as the Leader of the Council at Braintree District Council, regarding BSR Energy's emerging proposals for solar development on Land at Bakers Road, Belchamp St Paul. The proposals, which are still at an early stage, seek to provide a 49.99MW solar energy development, which would power the equivalent of 12,501 homes a year and provide a reduction of 11,072 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 recent Energy Security Strategy, which calls for a five-fold increase in solar energy by 2035.

Our proposals for Land at Bakers Road seek to:

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- **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

Given your position at the Council and likely interest in this important proposal, we would like to **invite you to attend a virtual presentation of the proposals on Thursday 8 September 2022 18:00 – 19:00**. We have also written in similar terms to the following Braintree District Councillors:

- Councillor Parker – Stour Valley North (the site ward)
- Councillor Cunningham – Deputy Leader of the Council
- Councillor Schmitt – Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment
- Councillor Spray – Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure

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Should you feel that there are others at the Council who would benefit from attending the briefing, or would be interested in the proposals, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

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We can continue to be contacted by residents and other interested parties by email at info@BSRknowlgreen.co.uk and by calling freephone 0800 058 4283.

Yours sincerely,
Sarah Hymas

Project Manager
BSR Energy

ENDS

Appendix C – Sample of letter to Essex County Council



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31 August 2022

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Councillor Schwier,

Land at Bakers Road, solar development proposals

I am emailing you as the representative for Hedingham, Deputy to the Leader, and ECC Climate Czar at Essex County Council, regarding BSR Energy's emerging proposals for solar development on Land at Bakers Road, Belchamp St Paul. The proposals, which are still at an early stage, seek to provide a 49.99MW solar energy development, which would power the equivalent of 12,501 homes a year and provide a reduction of 11,072 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.

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- **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

Given your position at the Council and likely interest in this important proposal, we would like to invite you to attend a virtual presentation of the proposals on Thursday 8 September 2022 19:30 – 20:30. We have also written in similar terms to the following Essex County Councillors:

- Councillor Bentley – Leader of the Council
- Councillor McKinlay – Deputy Leader of the Council
- Councillor Wagland OBE – Cabinet Member for Economic Renewal, Infrastructure, and Planning

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I hope that this letter is helpful. Should you have any questions or to RSVP to our meeting invite, please do not hesitate to contact Lauren Whipp, or Alastair Fisher from PLMR, our stakeholder engagement consultants, on [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

We can continue to be contacted by residents and other interested parties by email at info@BSRknowlgreen.co.uk and by calling freephone 0800 058 4283.

Yours sincerely,
Sarah Hymas

Project Manager
BSR Energy

ENDS



Appendix D – Sample of letter to Belchamp St Paul Parish Council



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31 August 2022

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Councillor Butland,

Land at Bakers Road, solar development proposals

I am emailing you as the Leader of the Council at Braintree District Council, regarding BSR Energy's emerging proposals for solar development on Land at Bakers Road, Belchamp St Paul. The proposals, which are still at an early stage, seek to provide a 49.99MW solar energy development, which would power the equivalent of 12,501 homes a year and provide a reduction of 11,072 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 recent Energy Security Strategy, which calls for a five-fold increase in solar energy by 2035.

Our proposals for Land at Bakers Road seek to:

- Allow for a significant opportunity for green energy production in Braintree
- 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 25% 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

Given your position at the Council and likely interest in this important proposal, we would like to invite you to attend a virtual presentation of the proposals on Thursday 8 September 2022 18:00 – 19:00. We have also written in similar terms to the following Braintree District Councillors:

- Councillor Parker – Stour Valley North (the site ward)
- Councillor Cunningham – Deputy Leader of the Council
- Councillor Schmitt – Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment
- Councillor Spray – Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure

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





Our public consultation is scheduled to run from **19th September 2022 to 9th October 2022**. 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 these in advance. We are also seeking to brief Clare Town Council on the proposals.

To launch public consultation, it is intended to issue a leaflet to 2250 households across Knowl Green, Belchamp St Paul, Church Street, Clare, Stoke by Clare, Ashen, and Ovington, inviting residents to view information on our website, and provide feedback using our online feedback form, project specific freephone line (0800 058 4283), and project specific email address (info@BSRknowlgreen.co.uk). 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 on **Thursday 29th September 2022 between 4pm and 8pm** at Clare Town Hall, Market Hill, Clare, Sudbury CO10 8NN. 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. Thank you for the opportunity to present our proposals and we look forward to meeting you on Tuesday 6 September 2022. Should you have any questions ahead of our meeting, please do not hesitate to contact Lauren Whipp, or Alastair Fisher from PLMR, our stakeholder engagement consultants, on [REDACTED]

We can continue to be contacted by residents and other interested parties by email at info@BSRknowlgreen.co.uk and by calling freephone 0800 058 4283.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Hymas

Project Manager
BSR Energy

ENDS



Appendix E – Sample of email and letter to Clare Town Council



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 September 2022

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Councillors,

FAO: All Members of Clare Town Council

Land at Bakers Road, solar development proposals

I am emailing you as a member of Clare Town Council regarding BSR Energy's emerging proposals for solar development on Land at Bakers Road, Belchamp St Paul. The proposals, which are still at an early stage, seek to provide a 49.99MW solar energy development, which would power the equivalent of 12,501 homes a year and provide a reduction of 11,072 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 recent Energy Security Strategy, which calls for a five-fold increase in solar energy by 2035.

Our proposals for Land at Bakers Road seek to:

- Allow for a significant opportunity for green energy production in Braintree
- 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 25% 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

Although West Suffolk Council is not the Local Planning Authority for the proposals, given the proximity to the authority border, we wanted to ensure that you were fully briefed on the proposals. We have also written to the Clare, Hundon, and Kedington ward members at West Suffolk Council to seek a meeting to present the proposals. Our public consultation activities will also include residents of Clare.

Our public consultation is scheduled to run from 19th September 2022 to 9th October 2022. The consultation will provide the opportunity for the wider community to comment on the

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proposals. Prior to launching the public consultation, we will be outreaching to our closest neighbours and relevant community groups to brief these in advance.

To launch public consultation, it is intended to issue a leaflet to 2250 households across Knowl Green, Belchamp St Paul, Church Street, Clare, Stoke by Clare, Ashen, and Ovington, inviting residents to view information on our website, and provide feedback using our online feedback form, project specific freephone line (0800 058 4283), and project specific email address (info@BSRknowlgreen.co.uk). 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 on **Thursday 29th September 2022 between 4pm and 8pm** at Clare Town Hall, Market Hill, Clare, Sudbury CO10 8NN. 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 you wish to set up a meeting with the project team, please do not hesitate to contact Lauren Whipp, or Alastair Fisher from PLMR, our stakeholder engagement consultants, on [REDACTED]

We can continue to be contacted by residents and other interested parties by email at info@BSRknowlgreen.co.uk and by calling freephone 0800 058 4283.

Yours sincerely,
Sarah Hymas

Project Manager
BSR Energy

ENDS



Appendix F – Sample letter to other stakeholder groups



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

22 September 2022

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Essex Climate Action Commission,

Land at Bakers Road, solar development proposals

I am writing to you in your capacity as an active community group focused on climate action in Essex, to share with you information regarding BSR Energy's emerging proposals for solar development on Land at Bakers Road, Belchamp St Paul. The proposals, which are still at an early stage, seek to provide a 49.99MW solar energy development, which would power the equivalent of 12,501 homes a year and provide a reduction of 11,072 tonnes of CO2 per year. Something which we thought would be of interest to your organisation. 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 recent Energy Security Strategy, which calls for a five-fold increase in solar energy by 2035.

Our proposals for Land at Bakers Road seek to:

- Allow for a **significant opportunity for green energy** production in Braintree
- 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

Ahead of us launching our wider public consultation activities, we would welcome the opportunity to speak with local community groups such as Essex Climate Action Commission,

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





to discuss this important proposal. We would be happy to meet with members of the Commission at a time and place of your convenience. If you would like to set up a meeting to discuss the proposals, then please do get in touch with us by emailing info@BSRknowlgreen.co.uk or calling freephone 0800 058 4283.

Our public consultation is scheduled to run from **26th September 2022 to 16th October 2022**. 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 11 October 2022 between 4pm and 8pm** at Clare Old School Community Centre, Callis Street, Clare, Sudbury, CO10 8PX. This event will provide a further opportunity to speak with a member of the project team, and review information on the proposals.

For further information on the proposals, please visit www.BSRknowlgreen.co.uk.

I hope that this letter is helpful. Should you have any questions or wish to organise a meeting with the team, then please do not hesitate to get in touch with us by email at info@BSRknowlgreen.co.uk or by calling freephone 0800 058 4283.

Yours sincerely,
Sarah Hymas

Project Manager
BSR Energy

ENDS



Appendix G - Sample of email issued to Braintree District Council members, Essex
County Council Members, and Belchamp St Paul Parish Council following Queen's
passing

RE: Land at Bakers Road, solar development proposals

Suggested Meetings

Dear Councillor Parker,

I am writing to follow up on the email you would have received previously from my colleague Lauren Whipp on behalf of BSR Energy regarding proposals it is bringing forward for a solar development on Land at Bakers Road, Belchamp St Paul.

Due to the passing of Her Majesty the Queen, the decision has been taken to delay the start of the public consultation on the proposals, as well as the consultation event date.

The public consultation will now run between 26 September 2022 and 16 October 2022. The public consultation event will now take place on Tuesday 11 October 2022 at the Clare Old School Community Centre, Callis Street, Clare, Sudbury CO10 8XP from 4pm to 8pm.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact myself, or my colleague, Lauren, via return email, or by calling [REDACTED], respectively.

Kind regards,
Alastair

Alastair Fisher (He/Him)
Senior Account Executive
Built Environment at PLMR

↩ Reply

↩ Reply All

→ Forward

⋮

Fri 16/09/2022 14:24

+ Get more add-ins

Appendix H - Sample of letter to immediate neighbours



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

22 September 2022

The resident
<insert address>

Dear resident,

Land at Bakers 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 Bakers Road, Belchamp St Paul. The proposals, which are still at an early stage, seek to provide a 49.99MW solar energy development, which would power the equivalent of 12,501 homes a year and provide a reduction of 11,072 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 recent Energy Security Strategy, which calls for a five-fold increase in solar energy by 2035.

Our proposals for Land at Bakers Road seek to:

- Allow for a significant opportunity for green energy production in Braintree
- 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

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

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





development and its impact on you. We would be happy to meet with you at a time and place of your convenience. If you would like to set up a meeting to discuss the proposals, then please do get in touch with us by emailing info@BSRknowlgreen.co.uk or calling freephone 0800 058 4283.

Our public consultation is scheduled to run from **26th September 2022 to 16th October 2022**. 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 11 October 2022 between 4pm and 8pm** at Clare Old School Community Centre, Callis Street, Clare, Sudbury, CO10 8PX. This event will provide a further opportunity to speak with a member of the project team, and review information on the proposals.

For further information on the proposals, please visit www.BSRknowlgreen.co.uk.

I hope that this letter is helpful. Should you have any questions or wish to organise a meeting with the team, then please do not hesitate to get in touch with us by email at info@BSRknowlgreen.co.uk or by calling freephone 0800 058 4283.

Yours sincerely,
Sarah Hymas

Project Manager
BSR Energy

ENDS



Appendix I – Sample of consultation leaflet

Have your say on proposals for solar development on land at Bakers Road.





BSR Energy is bringing forward proposals for solar development on Land at Bakers Road, Belchamp St Paul. The proposals, which are still at an early stage, seek to provide a 49.99MW solar energy development, which would power the equivalent of 12,501 homes a year and provide a reduction of 11,072 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 recent Energy Security Strategy, which calls for a five-fold increase in solar energy by 2035.

The proposals for Land at Bakers Road seek to:

- Allow for a significant opportunity for **green energy** production in Braintree;
- 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;
- **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**.

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 October** and we want to hear from you. For more information and to have your say:

Visit www.BSRknowlgreen.co.uk
Email info@BSRknowlgreen.co.uk
Phone **0800 058 4283**

Come and see us in person

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

Tuesday 11 October 2022

4pm until 8pm

Clare Old School Community Centre,
Callis Street, Clare, Sudbury,
CO10 8PX.



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.BSRknowlgreen.co.uk



The project team can be reached on **0800 058 4283** or info@BSRknowlgreen.co.uk should you have any questions or wish to request hard copy materials and/or accessible formats.

Appendix J – Consultation Survey



Knowl Green Solar Farm, Belchamp St Paul
Consultation Feedback Survey



Takes 4 minutes

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

☐ A Agree

☐ B Somewhat agree

☐ C No view

☐ D Somewhat disagree

☐ E 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?

☐ A Agree

☐ B Somewhat agree

☐ C No view

☐ D Somewhat disagree

☐ E 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.

☐ A Agree

☐ B Somewhat agree

☐ C No view

☐ D Somewhat disagree

☐ E Disagree

OK ✓

- 4 → On a scale of 1 - 5 how important is it that the proposals provide a minimum 60% biodiversity net gain on the site? (please circle below)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Very Important

Not important

OK ✓

- 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? (please circle below)

☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5

Very Important

Not important

OK ✓

- 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?

☐ A Very important

☐ B Important

☐ C Neutral

☐ D Not a priority

☐ E Not important at all

OK ✓

- 7 → 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?

Type your answer here...

Shift ⌘ + Enter ↵ to make a line break

OK ✓ press Enter ↵

- 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?

Type your answer here...

Shift ⌘ + Enter ↵ to make a line break

OK ✓ press Enter ↵

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

Type your answer here...

Shift ⌘ + Enter ↵ to make a line break

OK ✓ press Enter ↵

10 → Full Name:

Type your answer here...

OK ✓

press **Enter** ↵

11 → Email address:

name@example.com

OK ✓

press **Enter** ↵

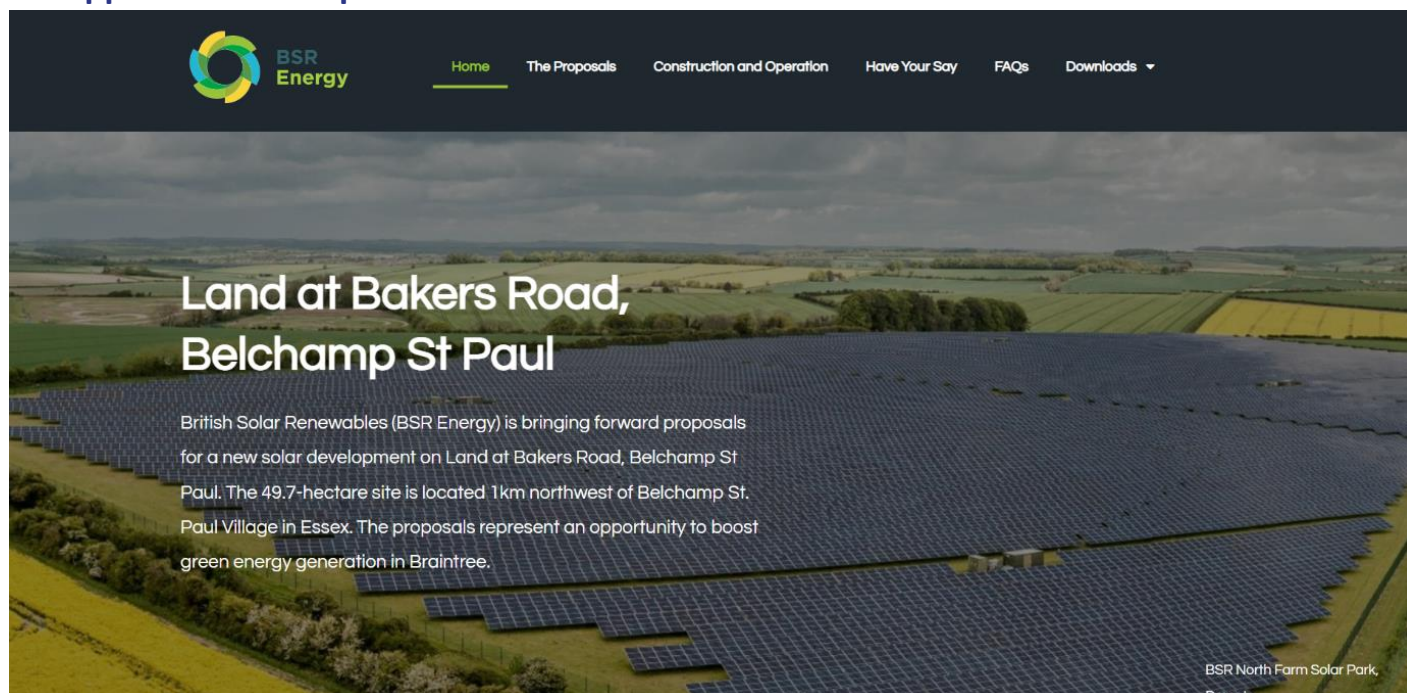
12 → Postcode:

Type your answer here...

Submit

press **Ctrl + Enter** ↵

Appendix K – Sample of consultation website



Given the current cost of living crisis, which includes soaring energy prices and concerns around energy security, providing locally sourced clean, green, and reliable energy production is more vital than ever. Additionally, Braintree District Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and the central Government has set out ambitious targets to ensure the United Kingdom is net zero by 2050. In order to meet this target and to address the climate emergency, the shift away from polluting fossil fuel sources towards green energy production options, such as solar developments, is needed urgently.

BSR Energy is passionate about playing its part to help the UK make the change towards renewable sources. We have all seen first-hand this summer the impacts that climate change is having, from the hottest day on record being recorded, to official drought declarations. The time to take action and mitigate against any further damage to our planet is now.



Aerial red line site outline plan

BSR's proposals would deliver a solar development with an export capacity of up to 49.99MW. This energy would be fed directly into the grid via an underground cable route and substation connection.

BSR is keen to hear from the local community as these plans are progressed, to ensure we understand any concerns at this early stage in the development of the proposals. Further information on how you can get involved in our consultation can be viewed [here](#).

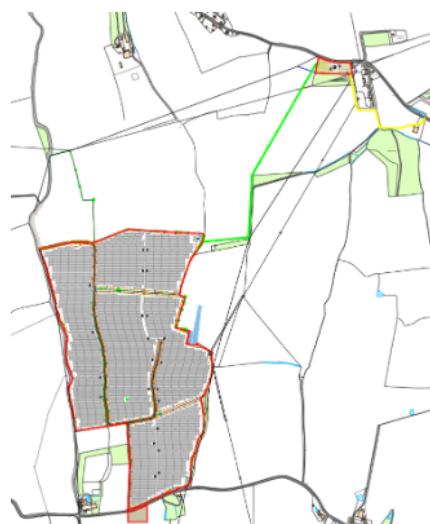
[Home](#)[The Proposals](#)[Construction and Operation](#)[Have Your Say](#)[FAQs](#)[Downloads](#) ▼

The Proposals

BSR Barton Close Farm Solar Park, Devon

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

- A solar development with a total export capacity of up to 49.99 MW. This is the equivalent energy production to powering 12,501 homes every year, resulting in the reduction of 11,072 tonnes of CO₂ per year being emitted into the atmosphere.
- 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 and along the By-Way and Public Right of Way (PROW); and
 3. The creation of species rich grassland across the entire site, including rough grassland along the bases of existing vegetation.



Proposed site layout plan

- The proposed solar development would have an operational lifespan of 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 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.
- 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.
- Secure the future of a local family run farm, allowing them to continue to be used for food production for the foreseeable future.
- A Community Benefit Fund will be created, offering a total of £49,990 (£1,000 per MW) in grants available to directly support local projects and benefit the local community.
- The creation of jobs through installation, ongoing maintenance, and decommissioning, helping to further support the local economy.

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

The global climate is changing faster than we have ever seen before, evidenced by the UK experiencing the hottest day on record this summer, to official drought declarations as a result of the uncharacteristically hot, dry weather. Conditions which are set to continue and worsen if we don't act now to make the transition to clean and renewable energy sources. By supporting renewable energy schemes, such as the one we are proposing at Knowl Green, 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.



Construction and Operation

Throughout construction and operation of the proposed solar development on Land at Bakers Road, Belchamp St Paul, BSR Energy is committed to ensuring that the impact to the local road network, and the local community is kept to a minimum.

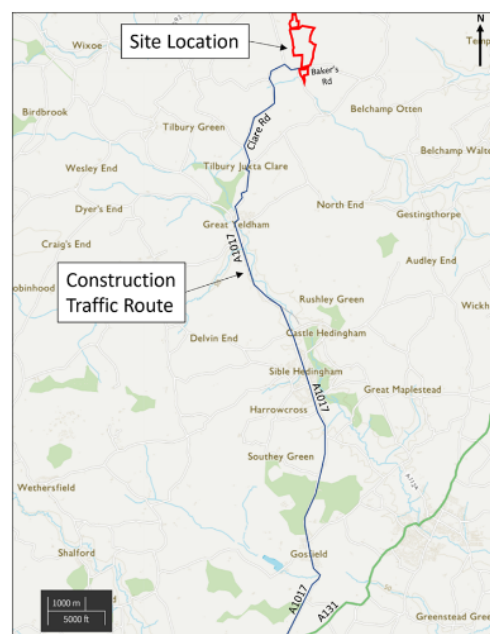
Construction is expected to take approximately six months, within this time the peak traffic movements in and around the site would be during months one to four. During the peak of the construction period, there are expected to be approximately 15 two-way HGV movements a day during month three as a worst-case scenario.

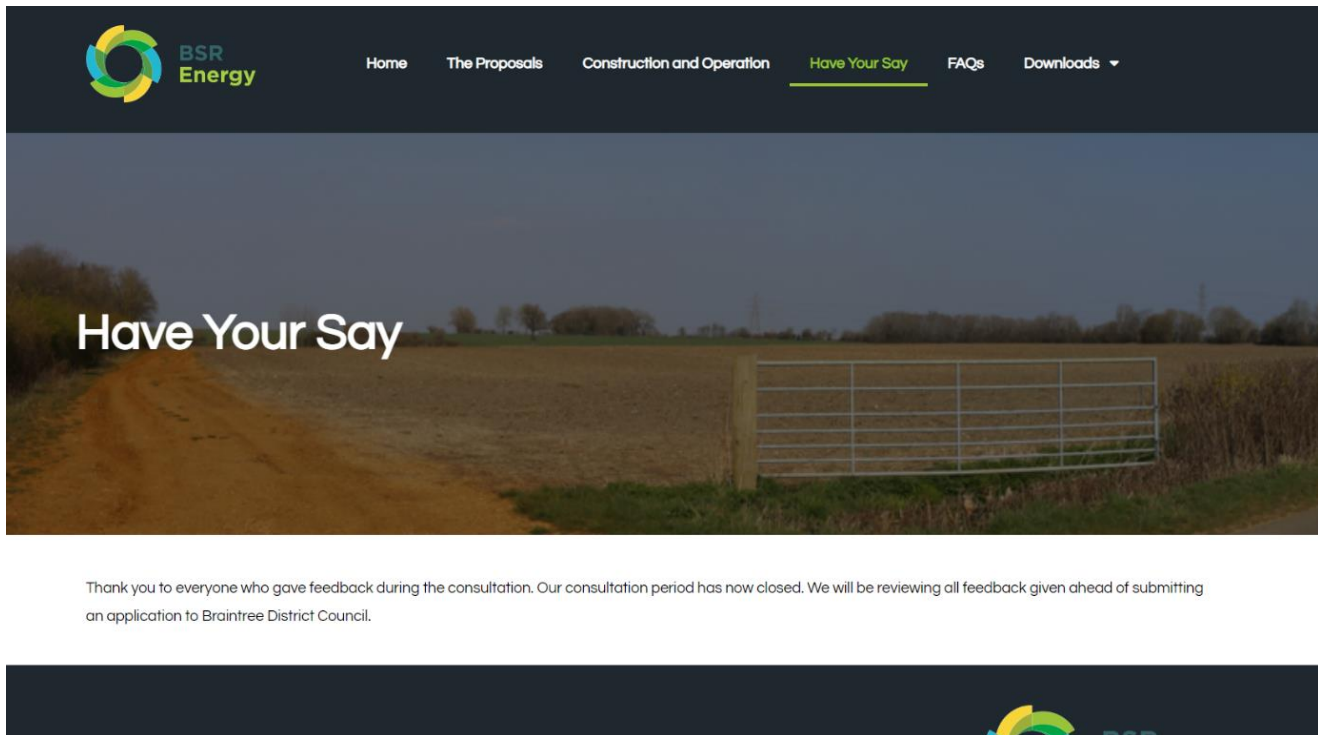
Access to the site is proposed to be from Bakers Road, located to the south of the main site. The A131, which is located 8.5km east and 15km south of the site, would be the primary route for construction traffic accessing the development. Construction traffic is expected to leave the A131 at High Garrett and turn onto the A1017 and follow this for 12km before turning right onto Bridge Street. Traffic would then follow the road round onto Tillbury Road before turning left onto Clare Road, and continuing for approximately 4km before reaching Bakers Road, where the site access would be located. The route is outlined on the Traffic Route Map below.

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](#).

Existing Public Rights of Ways (PROW) will be maintained to ensure that as far as possible throughout construction, there is safe passage for those accessing these. We will be implementing screening mitigations where required along PROWs to ensure the proposed solar development would not have a negative impact on these.

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.







FAQs

BSR Barton Close Farm Solar Park, Devon

▲ [Where is the site?](#)

Land at Bakers Road, Belchamp St Paul is located 1km northwest of Belchamp St. Paul Village in Braintree, Essex. The village of Belchamp St. Paul is 1km to the southeast of the site and the hamlet of Knowl Green is 1.2km to its south.



▲ [Why is the solar farm needed?](#)

In 2019 Braintree District Council declared a climate emergency, and central Government has also set out commitments for the United Kingdom to reach net zero by 2050. Additionally, the United Kingdom is facing a cost-of-living crisis, fuelled largely by concerns around energy security and rapidly rising costs of wholesale fossil fuels.

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

Land at Baker's Road Statement of Community Involvement

▲ What are the benefits of the proposal?

Our proposals for Land at Bakers Road seek to:

- Allow for a significant opportunity for green energy production in Braintree
- 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
- Provide a Community Benefits Fund with a total funding allocation of £49,990 to support local projects and the local community
- Allow the land to be returned to agricultural use following decommissioning with an operational lifespan of 40 years

For more information on the benefits of the proposal and to view further details, please see 'The Proposals' page of the website by clicking [here](#).

▲ How will the land be used once the solar development reaches the end of its operational lifespan?

The proposals would have an operational lifespan of 40 years. Following this the solar farm would be decommissioned and the land could be returned to agricultural use.

▲ Will this impact biodiversity on the site?

Our proposal will result in 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.

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.

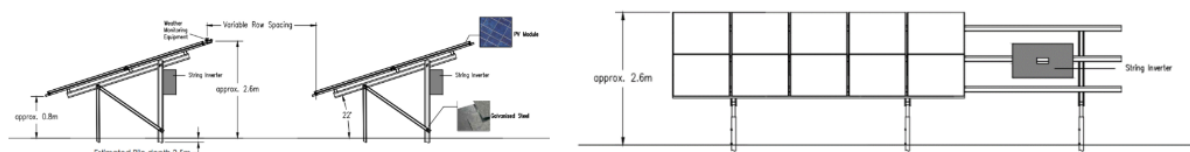
We will also ensure that improvements are made to the condition of existing habitats, as well as facilitating the creation of new habitation which will enhance biodiversity on site. This could include:

- The creation of new native hedgerows where required;
- Infill hedgerow planting where gaps occur in the existing vegetation, for betterment of the existing landscape and along the By-Way and Public Right of Way (PROW); and
- The creation of species rich grassland across the entire site, including rough grassland along the bases of existing vegetation.

▲ 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?

Whilst the proposals are still being developed the exact number of panels is currently unknown. From similar developments that BSR has brought forward, approximately 94,000 Photovoltaic (Solar) panels will be required to generate 49.99MW of power.

The panels will be an industry standard size as demonstrated by the images below.



Land at Baker's Road Statement of Community Involvement

▲ 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?

There is currently an urgent need for alternatives to expensive, and polluting fossil fuels in the UK. The need for solar development, and other forms of renewable power across the UK is crucial for the UK's future energy security. As such, there is a need for solar development to come forward on a number of sites across the country.

The development of solar can help to support local farmers with additional income, offering a level of additional financial security to allow them to continue to grow crops and rear livestock. As such, the two elements complement and support each other. Solar development also allows for the land to be returned to agricultural use after the project lifespan. As such, should better renewable technology exist at this time, the land can be returned to its original use with no long-term detrimental impacts.

▲ How can I take part in the consultation?

Consultation is running until Sunday 16th October 2022 and there are a number of ways to have your say. These are as follows:

- Fill out our questionnaire available on the 'Have your Say' page by clicking [here](#). (hard copies can be posted out on request)
- Call us on 0800 058 4289 (freephone)
- Email us on info@BSRknowlgreen.co.uk
- Visit us – we will be holding a public engagement event, which will provide an opportunity to speak directly with members of the project team and discuss any concerns / ask any questions in person:

Date: Friday 11th November

Time: Drop in any time from 4pm – 8pm

Location:

Clare Old School Community Centre, Callis Street, Clare, Sudbury, CO10 8PX

- Fill out the Contact Us form [here](#).

▲ How can I get in contact?

If you have any questions about the proposals or need to speak with a member of the project team, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us by:

Calling 0800 058 4283 (freephone)

Emailing info@BSRknowlgreen.co.uk

By completing the Contact Us form available on the 'Have Your Say' page [here](#).

Appendix L – Sample of social media advert

**BSR Energy - Knowl Green Solar Farm**Sponsored · 🌐...

British Solar Renewables is proposing a 49.99MW solar development on Land at Knowl Green.

 The UK is currently experiencing a cost-of-living crisis and energy security concerns. With soaring gas and electricity prices, people are being forced into fuel poverty. Projects like the proposed solar development on Land at Knowl Green can help the UK to reduce the cost of energy and secure a reliable supply.

 For more information, please click the button below to visit our web... **See more**



BSRKNOWLGREEN.CO.UK **Local Clean, Green and Affordable Energy is coming to Braintree!**[Learn more](#)

Appendix M – Poster advertising consultation event

**Have your say on proposals
for solar development on
land at Bakers Road.**



British Solar Renewables (BSR Energy) is bringing forward proposals for a 49.99MW solar energy development, which would power the equivalent of 12,501 homes a year and provide a reduction of 11,072 tonnes of CO2 per year on Land at Bakers Road, Belchamp St Paul.

Our consultation will run until
Sunday 16th October.

For more information,
please visit our website
by scanning the
QR code or visiting:

www.bsrknowlgreen.co.uk



Or you can contact the project team on:

Email info@BSRknowlgreen.co.uk
Phone 0800 058 4283



In person

Tuesday 11th October 2022

4pm until 8pm

Clare Old School Community Centre, Callis
Street, Clare, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 8NN.

Appendix N – Press release issued to local media



PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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



Site location plan

6 October 2022

British Solar Renewables (BSR Energy) is bringing forward proposals for a new solar development on Land at Bakers Road, Belchamps St. Paul 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 October includes an in-person drop-in event at Clare Old School Community Centre on Tuesday 11 October 2022, between 4pm and 8pm.

The 49.7-hectare site, which is located 1km northwest of Belchamps St. Paul village in Essex, represents an exciting opportunity to boost green energy generation in Braintree. BSR Energy 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 49.99MW, which will be fed directly into the grid. This is equivalent to powering 12,501 homes every year, which will result in the reduction of 11,072 tonnes of CO2 per being emitted into the atmosphere.

The proposals will:

- Allow for a significant opportunity for green energy production in Braintree;
- 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;
- Provide a minimum increase of 60% in biodiversity net gain, far exceeding the 10% target outlined in the Environment Act 2021;
- Creation of new, and improvements to existing, habitats to enhance biodiversity on site;
- Secure the future of a local family farm, supporting ongoing agriculture in the area;

- Secure the future of a local family farm, supporting ongoing agriculture in the area;
- Provide a Community Benefit Fund with a total value of £49,990 to support local projects; and
- Allow the land to be returned to agricultural use following decommissioning with an operational lifespan of 40 years.

Sarah Hymas, BSR Energy Project Manager, 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 not only join the fight against climate change, but generate clean, green, and affordable energy for the UK."

"Both Braintree District Council and Essex County Council have 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 quickly 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.bsrknowlgreen.co.uk, email info@bsrknowlgreen.co.uk, call 0800 058 4283, or visit the project team in person on Tuesday 11 October 2022, between 4pm and 8pm at Clare Old School Community Centre, Callis Street, Clare, Sudbury, CO10 8PX.

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.

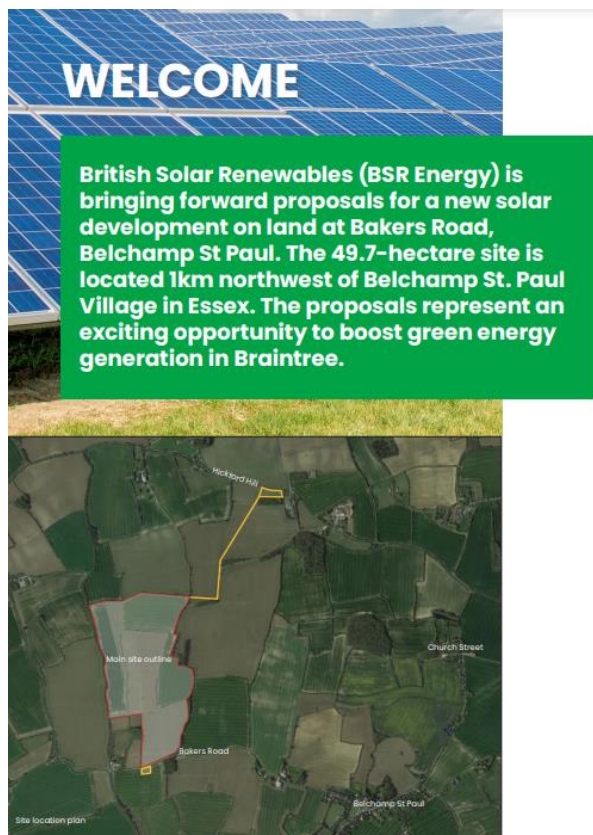
With over a decade's experience, we've successfully developed nearly 1GW of solar PV and Energy Storage plants. All of our projects are self-originated, which ensures the connections with the communities that we work in starts right at the beginning of the development journey and is able to continue 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.bsrknowlgreen.co.uk for available imagery.

Appendix O – Exhibition boards from consultation event



Our consultation is running until Sunday 16th October 2022. Details on how to have your say can be found on our Have Your Say board.

Braintree District Council declared a climate change emergency in July 2019. As part of this, the Council stated that it would like to be carbon neutral by 2030, as well as take steps to support the local community to reduce the impact of climate change across the district. This proposal is an important step to achieving those aims and ensuring that we are taking steps to reduce our dependence on carbon dioxide emitting fossil fuels.

This summer has seen the UK experience first hand the impact of climate change, with record breaking heatwaves, and droughts right across the country. It is expected that these previously once in a generation phenomena will become more regular and continue to get worse. Through initiatives such as the proposed solar development on Land at Bakers Road, we can reduce our carbon emissions and take an important step towards reaching the Government's goal 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 importing the fuel and gas that the UK relies on. By establishing clean and reliable local green energy sources, such as this solar development, we can continue to build up energy security within the UK and help to reduce the cost of household and business energy bills.

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

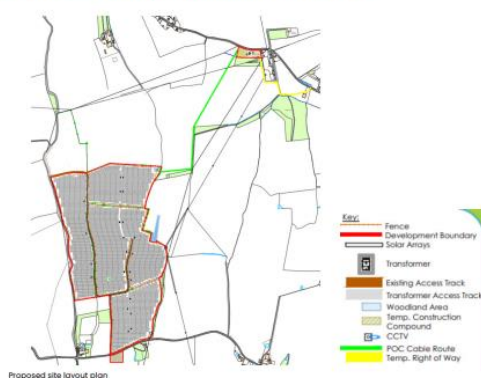


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THE PROPOSAL

The below site layout plan 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 approximately 94,000 Photovoltaic (Solar) panels will be required to generate 49.99MW of power.

The panels will be an industry standard size as demonstrated below.



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

1. A solar development with a total export capacity of up to 49.99 MW. This is the equivalent energy production to powering 12,501 homes every year, resulting in the reduction of 11,072 tonnes of CO2 per year being emitted into the atmosphere.
2. The proposed solar development would have an operational lifespan of 40 years, meaning that following the decommissioning the land can be returned to agricultural use.
3. 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.
4. In addition to needing to take action against climate change, energy security is a significant pinch point in the current cost-of-living crisis. The creation of renewable and local energy sources will be vital in bringing down energy costs and ensuring the UK's energy independence.

BSR Energy would create a Community Benefit Fund, which will offer a total of £49,990 for grants to support local projects and to benefit the local community.

BSR is in the process of setting up an agreement for the community fund with Essex Community Foundation. BSR is also keen to see that a local Belchamp St Paul Parish Council member be a representative on the fund. This is to ensure that the funds are distributed to important local projects by those actively involved in the community.



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The below landscape plan on the left highlights the key landscape features of the proposals. While the map on the right highlights the three viewpoint angles for the images covered on the next three boards. We have selected to display viewpoints 2, 5, and 9, as they show a view of the solar panels, a view of the DNO substation, and a vista view of the site.



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VIEWPOINT 2

The images below show how Viewpoint 2, from Bakers Road looking north towards the site looks now, and how it will look in one year, and in 15 years, should planning permission be granted.

Present day:



Year 1:



Year 15:



VIEWPOINT 5

The images below show how Viewpoint 5, from PRoW EX/62/29, looking north-west towards the site looks now, and how it will look in one year, and in 15 years, should planning permission be granted.

Present day:



Year 1:



Year 15:



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VIEWPOINT 9

The images below show how Viewpoint 9, from PRoW EX/62/4, looking south-west towards the site looks now, and how it will look in one year, and in 15 years, should planning permission be granted.

Present day:



Year 1:



Year 15:



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BIODIVERSITY

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

1. The proposed solar development's operational lifespan would be 40 years, meaning that, following the decommissioning, the land could be returned to agricultural use with no impact to the land's agricultural grading.
2. Throughout the lifespan of the solar development, there is a significant opportunity for biodiversity to 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.
3. 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.
4. Improvements to the condition of existing habitats, as well as facilitating the creation of new habitats. This could include:
 - The creation of new native hedgerows where required;
 - Infill hedgerow planting where gaps occur in the existing vegetation, for betterment of the existing landscape and along the By-Way and Public Right of Way (PROW);
 - A range of breeding boxes for bats and birds;
 - Improvements to the two existing on-site ponds; and
 - The creation of species rich grassland across the entire site, including rough grassland along the bases of existing vegetation, and wildflower and wild bird seed grasslands.



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CONSTRUCTION

During the construction phase we will ensure that disruption is kept to a minimum.

Throughout construction the site will be accessed through the existing access point off Bakers Road, with a temporary construction compound being introduced on the opposite side of Bakers Road to the south of the site. Once the development is operational, the land used for the construction compound will be returned to agricultural use.

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 15 two-way HGV movements a day during month three as a worst-case scenario.

Access to the site is proposed to be from Bakers Road, located to the south of the main site. The A131, which is located 8.5km east and 15km south of the site, will be the primary route for construction traffic accessing the development. Construction traffic is expected to leave the A131 at High Garrett and turn onto the A1017 and follow this for 12km before turning right onto Bridge Street. Traffic would then follow the road onto Tillbury Road before turning left onto Clare Road, and continuing for approximately 4km before reaching Bakers Road, where the site access is located. A map of the proposed route is included on the right.

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.



Example construction traffic route map

OPERATION

Throughout the operation of the solar development, the site will be accessed from the existing point of agricultural access off Bakers Road.

This runs along the southern boundary of the solar development. The site's access will be maintained for the lifespan of the solar development.

The proposed new substation, to the northeast of the development, will be accessed off Hickford Hill, using the existing field entrance.

During the operation phase there are no permanent onsite staff. Access will be required regularly by light vehicles for maintenance and repairs but this is expected to have very little impact on local traffic.

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



Existing site entrance off Bakers Road



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HAVE YOUR SAY

Our consultation is running until Sunday 16th October 2022. We want to hear from the local community as we develop our proposal for Land at Bakers Road, to ensure we understand any concerns.

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 4283** (freephone)
- Email us on info@BSRknowlgreen.co.uk
- Fill out the [Contact Us form](#) on our website www.BSRknowlgreen.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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