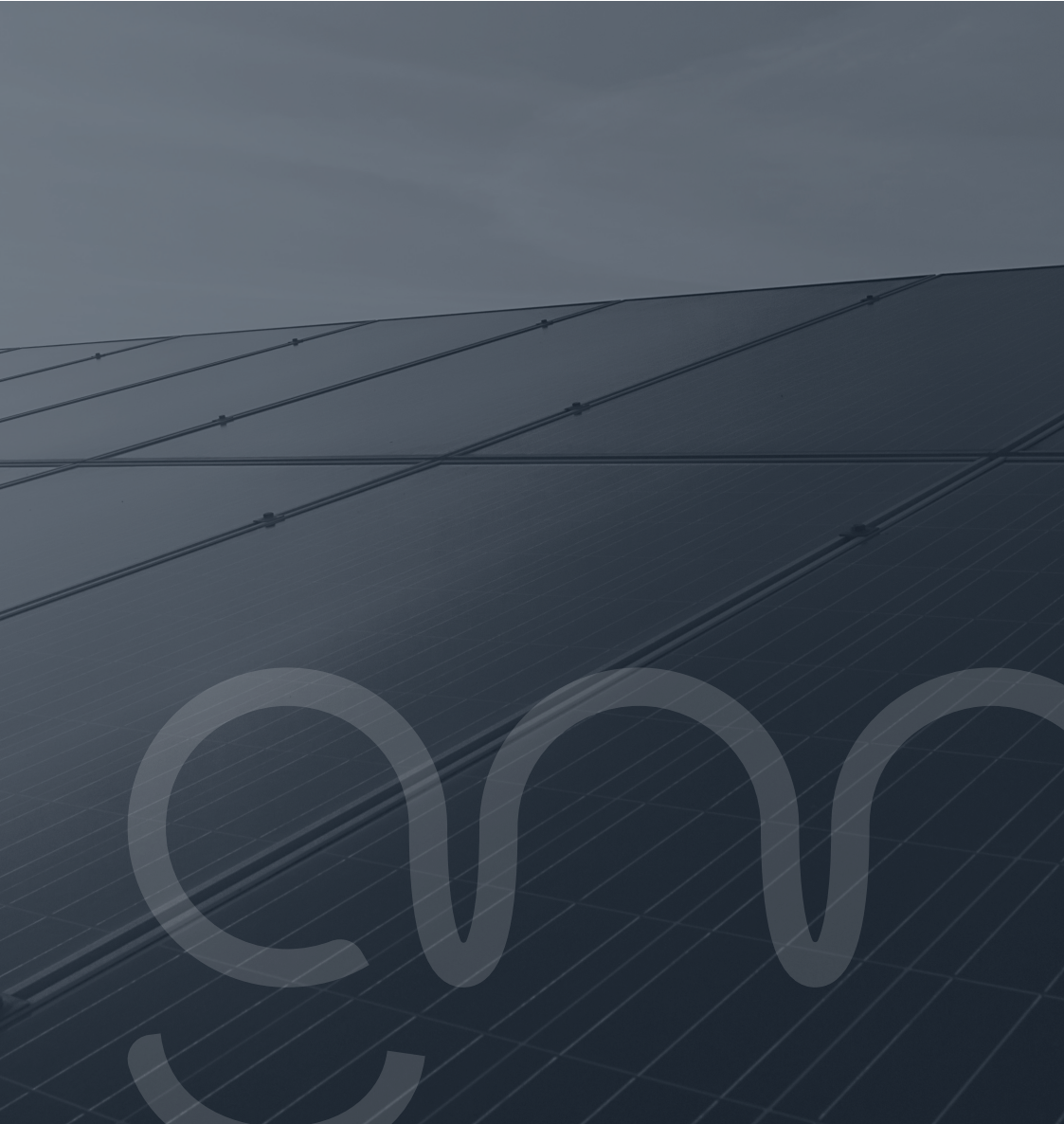


Great North Road Solar Park
Community Newsletter and
Phase One Consultation Summary Report



July 2024



Introduction

Elements Green is developing proposals for a solar and energy storage park located to the northwest of Newark-on-Trent, Nottinghamshire.

With a potential generation capacity of around 800 megawatts (MW) AC of solar energy, the scheme has the potential to provide enough clean, affordable energy to meet the power needs of approximately 400,000 homes.

This newsletter provides an overview of the feedback we received during our Phase One Community Consultation and how we will use this feedback to help shape a strong set of proposals that are sensitive to and respect concerns of local communities.

While the information in this newsletter is a summary, we want to assure everyone who responded to our consultation that we have read all of the responses received in detail. As part of our Development Consent Order (DCO) application, we will be setting out how we have considered all consultation feedback when developing our proposals.

This newsletter also outlines the further opportunities for you and your community to comment on our updated proposals and how they have evolved since this initial phase of consultation. To read more about our upcoming Phase Two Consultation, please turn to page 10.

Our Phase One Consultation

Our Phase One Consultation ran for six weeks, from Tuesday 16 January to Tuesday 27 February 2024. We are grateful to everyone who took part. This includes attending one of our events, contacting our communications channels, and providing feedback.

During our consultation we:



Distributed our community consultation postcard to over 5,800 residential and businesses properties in the vicinity of the project.



Held two community webinars and six in-person exhibition events, with over 550 attendees.



Advertised our Phase One Consultation, exhibition events, and webinars in regional newspapers.



Engaged with parish, district and county councillors across the project area.



Invited feedback through an online and hard copy feedback form, completed by over 200 people.



Hosted free-to-use communications channels – including phone, post and email – for anyone interested in our proposals to submit questions and comments to our team.



Published all consultation materials online via our dedicated project website, visited by over 4,000 people since the start of consultation.




Consultation Summary Report

Our Phase One Consultation provided an opportunity for people to view and comment on our early-stage proposals for Great North Road Solar Park.

Community input is key to this process, and we are grateful to have received useful feedback at this early stage. Your comments have helped to improve our understanding of the aspects of Great North Road Solar Park that you consider important for us to prioritise as we develop our proposals.

During our consultation, we received a total of 276 feedback responses, including:


233
Feedback
Forms

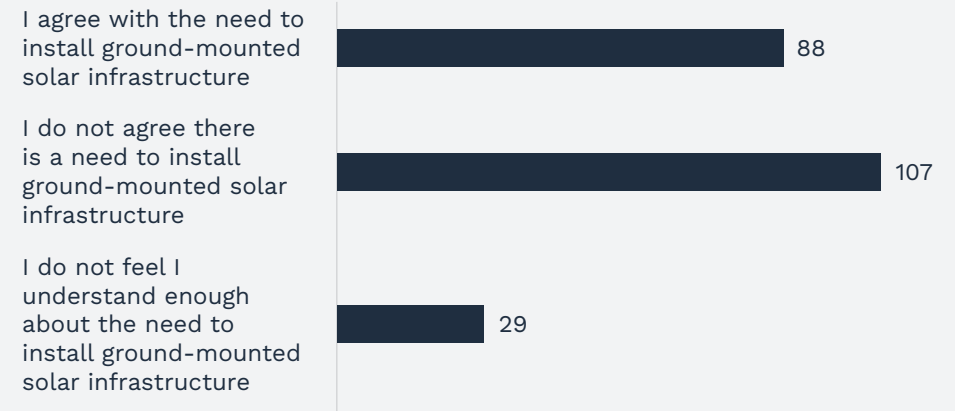

43
emails containing
feedback

How would you describe your interest in Great North Road Solar Park?

The majority of feedback we received during Phase One Consultation came from individuals living near the site area. Of those who responded to this question, 97% of respondents identified themselves as local residents.

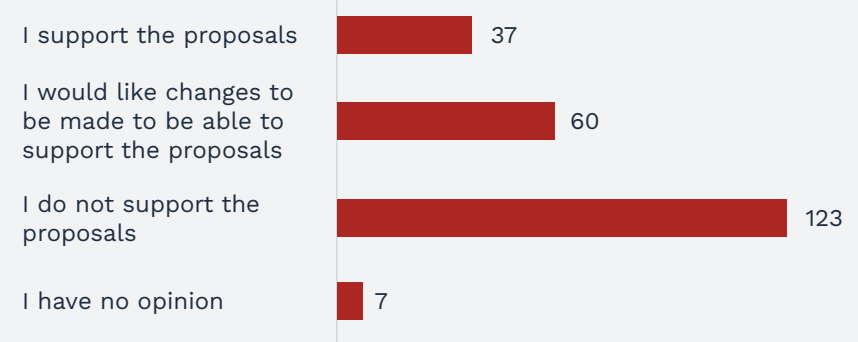
We asked a range of questions to develop our understanding of respondents' views on the installation of ground-mounted solar infrastructure and our early-stage proposals for Great North Road Solar Park.

As a principle, what is your view of installing ground-mounted solar infrastructure in the UK?



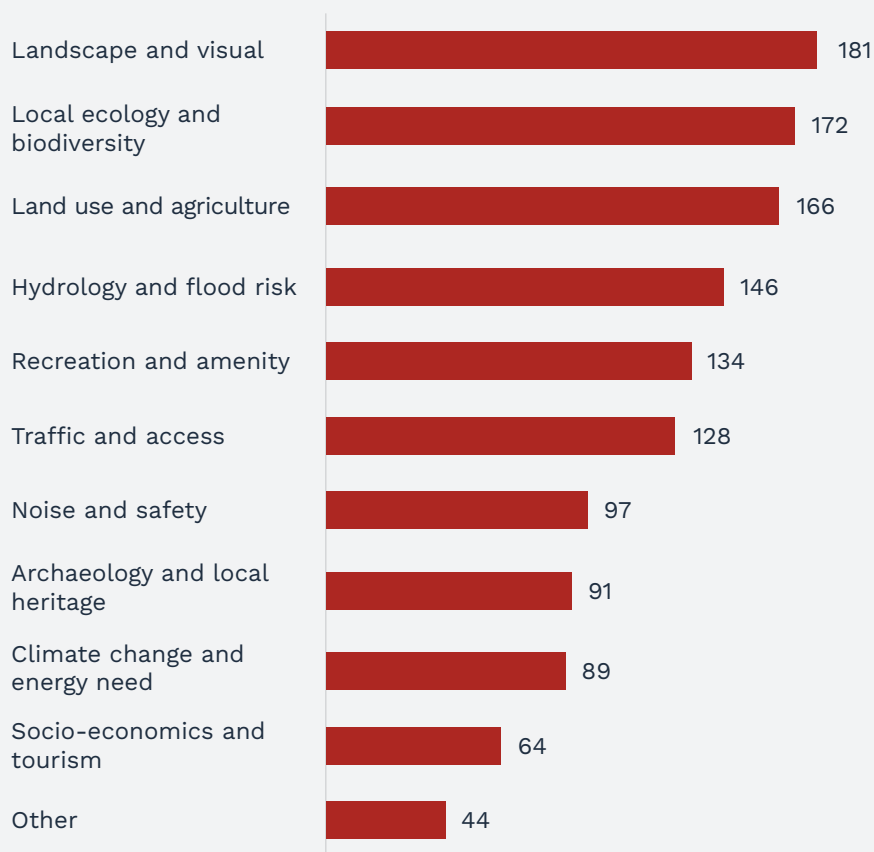
Of the 224 people who responded to this question, 39% of people agreed with the need to install ground-mounted solar infrastructure in the UK.

Based on our early-stage proposals, what are your views on Great North Road Solar Park?



Of the 227 people who responded to this question, 16.3% indicated support for the project, 26.4% wanted changes to be made to the project in order to support it, 54.2% indicated opposition to the project, and 3.1% had no opinion.

Which aspects of the project are most important to you?



Of the 227 people who responded to this question, the four aspects most frequently identified as being most important were:

- **Landscape and visual impacts** and how we can screen the solar farm from particular viewpoints;
- **Local ecology and biodiversity**, such as protecting existing wildlife and exploring opportunities to improve ecology and biodiversity across the site area;
- **Land use and agriculture** and how we can best manage the land during the operation of the solar farm;
- **And hydrology and flood risk**, such as the interaction between the solar farm and existing watercourses, particularly how this could impact existing flooding issues.

How we're listening

The following pages summarise the key themes from the comments we received and how our team is considering them in the development of the design for Great North Road Solar Park.

Your comments	How we are considering this
Landscape and visual impact	
<p>A common theme within the comments received was the proposed size of Great North Road Solar Park.</p> <p>Concerns were raised that this could result in the loss of visual amenity of countryside views valued by the community.</p>	<p>Projects of this scale are required to meet UK Government solar PV targets.</p> <p>The scheme has been carefully designed to confine panels within a limited number of well screened fields, rather than as one homogenous block.</p> <p>In March we published early visual amenity changes to the design in response to feedback. In most cases this involved panels being removed and in one case a substation has been relocated.</p> <p>We are also proposing to plant around 50,000 trees and 25km of additional hedgerow planting, which will help to screen the solar park.</p> <p>Indicative visualisations will be published as part of our upcoming Phase Two Consultation, and further comments on this topic will be invited.</p>
Local ecology and biodiversity	
<p>Respondents expressed concern about the perceived impact of the project on the local environment and wildlife. Bird life was noted as being of particular importance, with references made to abundant and diverse populations present in the area.</p> <p>Many respondents wished to know more about the measures that will be taken to enhance biodiversity.</p>	<p>We are committed to achieving a significant net gain in biodiversity. This means that there will be substantially more wildlife across the site area during the operation of Great North Road compared to today.</p> <p>We are looking to achieve this through a range of measures, including woodland creation, permanent wild bird feed, grassland, hedgerow gapping, wetland creation, skylark plots.</p> <p>We will be publishing more details on this as part of our upcoming second phase of consultation.</p>

Land use and agriculture	
<p>Respondents raised concerns regarding the loss of productive agricultural land, with requests to maintain and/or increase the amount of existing crops and local food production.</p> <p>Respondents also expressed concern about the potential impact of the project on food security.</p>	<p>The biggest risk to food security is climate change according to the UN.</p> <p>The temporary loss of arable land is a balance of trade issue, not a food security issue. The UK consumes 75% of the food it produces with the remainder being exported.</p> <p>Although Great North Road Solar Park will not impact food security, in line with policy, areas of the project have been identified to avoid more productive agricultural land where possible.</p> <p>We are undertaking further assessments to confirm this, and will be sharing these results as part of our upcoming Phase Two Consultation.</p> <p>Schemes such as Great North Road Solar Park support farmers in response to these challenges by providing the opportunity to diversify parts of their land to generate a steady income that can be reinvested back into farming</p> <p>Please see link to a fact sheet from Solar Energy UK on solar farms and agricultural land: https://solarenergyuk.org/resource/factsheet-solar-farms-and-agricultural-land/</p>
Hydrology and flood risk	
<p>Respondents expressed concern about the potential impact on flood risk as the area is already prone to flooding.</p> <p>Respondents expressed concerns regarding an increase in perceived flood risk due to water runoff from solar panels.</p>	<p>Great North Road solar park will not increase the risk of flooding.</p> <p>Through feedback we understand there are pre-existing flooding issues in the area, and we have committed resources to explore how we could fund alleviation measures.</p> <p>Our team is currently working with local stakeholders and agencies to further develop our holistic flood alleviation strategy to tackle pre-existing flooding.</p>

Rooftops and alternative energy sources	
<p>Respondents expressed that they would rather see solar panels on rooftops of commercial buildings, barns, houses and industrial estates.</p> <p>Comments were also made in regard to the use of alternative low-carbon and renewable energy sources, such as hydrogen, nuclear, wind power (onshore and offshore), and tidal.</p>	<p>We are committed to developing rooftop solar PV through our energy efficiency programme.</p> <p>However, ground mounted PV is essential to meet the UK's solar targets of 70GW by 2035. It cannot be achieved by rooftop alone.</p> <p>The UK Governments solar PV targets are separate from other forms of renewable energy. Solar PV is recognised as the most efficient and cost effective renewable technology.</p> <p>Following a comprehensive site selection process, we consider the land included within Great North Road Solar Park to be the most appropriate for this technology.</p>
Cumulative impact	
<p>Respondents commented that the cumulative impact of other proposed solar farms in the area must be considered.</p>	<p>Our team is undertaking thorough environmental assessments to understand and manage any potential effects of Great North Road Solar Park.</p> <p>This involves ensuring we don't just consider our proposals in isolation, but also recognise potential cumulative effects when combined with other existing or proposed solar farms and local developments.</p> <p>This approach has been set out in our Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report, and the emerging results will be presented as part of our upcoming Phase Two Consultation.</p>

Next steps

We are continuing to develop our proposals for Great North Road Solar Park based on the feedback we received, alongside environmental studies and technical assessments.

Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC)

Over the summer, we will consult with Newark and Sherwood District Council, Nottinghamshire County Council and Bassetlaw District Council to invite their views on the approach we intend to take to further community consultation. This will be set out in our Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) which will be published ahead of the second phase of consultation.

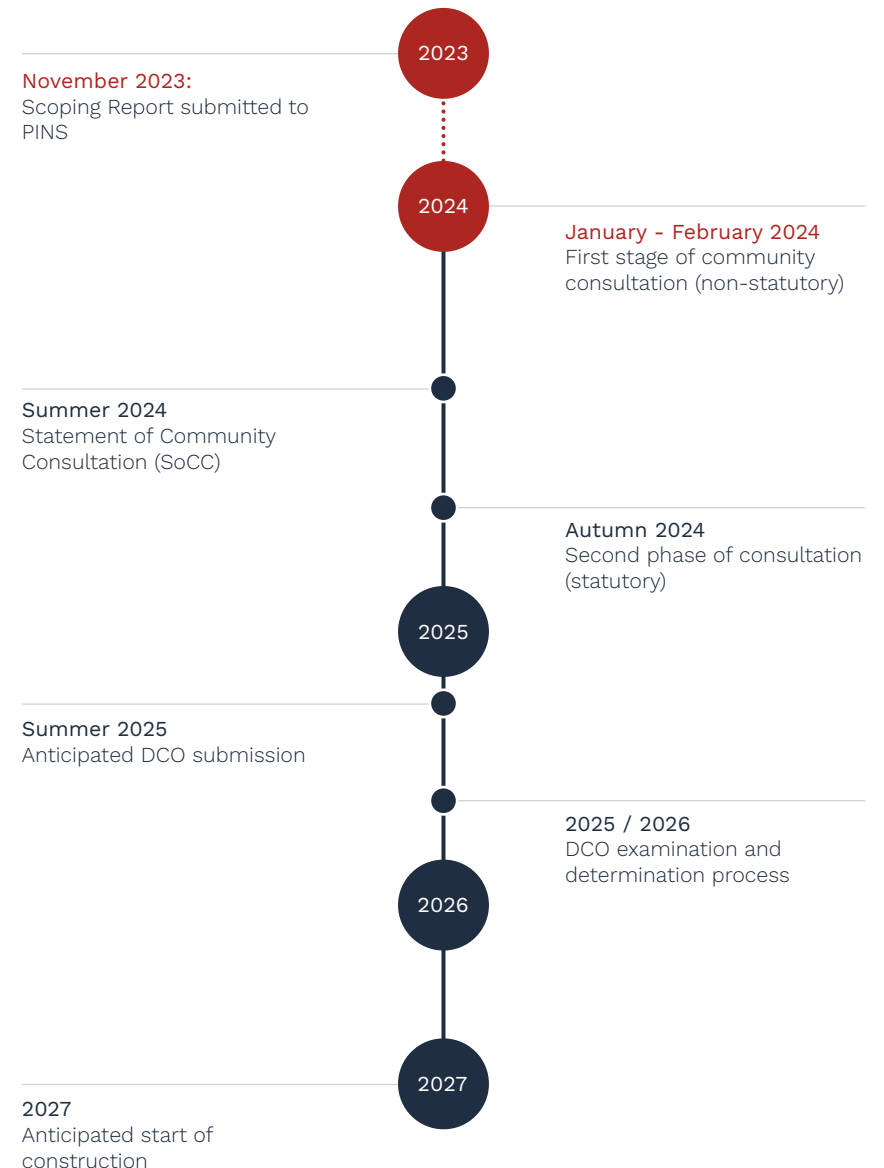
Second phase of community consultation

Following the publication of the SoCC, and continuous development of the project proposals, we will then carry out a second phase of community consultation. This is a statutory phase of consultation that is required by the application process for a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP).

This statutory stage of consultation is intended to give you the opportunity to comment on our updated proposals and how they have evolved since the initial consultation. As part of this, we will be publishing the results of our ongoing assessments in a document known as a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR). This explains the potential effects of Great North Road Solar Park and our plans for mitigating them.

We expect to carry out this second stage of consultation in Autumn of this year. Following this consultation, we will review our proposals in light of feedback received along with the findings from our ongoing assessments so we can finalise and submit our application for development consent to the Planning Inspectorate. As the developer, Elements Green not only have a duty to demonstrate how we have taken your views into account in developing our final application, it is our intention to exceed stakeholder's expectations by way of publishing this Consultation Summary Report and how we continue to consider your feedback.

Project timeline



**Please note this timeline is indicative and may be subject to change*



Contact Us

We want to keep you informed on our proposals for Great North Road Solar Park.

We have established communications lines which will be active for the duration of the development process. You can get in touch with members of our stakeholder engagement team using any of the communications lines listed below:

 **Email:** info@gnrsolarpark.co.uk

 **Call:** Freephone 0808 175 4054

 **Write:** Freepost GNR Solar

 **Visit:** www.GNRSolarpark.co.uk

If you are interested in receiving funding or a grant towards making your home or business energy efficient, please fill out our Energy Efficiency form which can be found on our website at www.gnrsolarpark.co.uk/documents or by scanning the QR code.

