

# Public Consultation – Questions and Answers.

On behalf of Novergy and Recurrent Energy.

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## Document Management.

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# Contents.

Answers to Your Questions..... 1

## Thank You.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to engage with the pre-application consultation event for the proposed Fosse Way Solar Farm. The pre-application consultation period has now expired. The responses are greatly appreciated and will be taken into consideration when finalising the design of the proposals.

Following the event, the project team have been collating the feedback from the local community. Many questions were received during the event and we would like to take the opportunity to address these. This 'questions and answers' document has been prepared in response to community queries on the project.

Your responses to the consultation event will now inform the design of the proposals we submit to Warwick District Council. Please check our website ([www.fossewaysolarfarm.co.uk](http://www.fossewaysolarfarm.co.uk)) periodically to keep up-to-date with the progress of the submission.

The project team will continue to engage and hope to work positively with community throughout the process. Please also be aware that a formal consultation period will be undertaken by the Local Planning Authority once the application is submitted and validated.



## Answers to Your Questions.

Question	Answer
How long will construction take?	Construction is expected to last approximately 12 months, based on experience of solar farms with a similar scale.
When will construction commence?	Given the many uncertainties surrounding the planning process it is difficult to accurately predict a construction start date. However, if the planning application is approved by the local authority, the developer's target commencement date is January 2026
Will local residents receive any benefit as a result?	A community benefit fund will be made available for use within the local community. This is not a material planning consideration but would provide a benefit as a result of approval of the development. This would be agreed with the local Parish Council outside the scope of the planning application and would be determined later in the process.
How will local residents be kept up to date with progress?	The project website ( <a href="http://www.fossewaysolarfarm.co.uk">www.fossewaysolarfarm.co.uk</a> ) will be kept updated as the planning submission progresses. Once the application is submitted, Warwick District Council will upload all of the submitted documents onto their website under a planning application reference number. A separate statutory consultation process will be undertaken by Warwick District Council following registration of the application. All neighbour and consultee comments will also be published on the Council's website along with any additional information submitted throughout the process by the Applicant.
Where will the solar farm be visible from?  What will be done to reduce the impact of the development on surrounding views?	In support of the application, a Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA) will be prepared by Pegasus Group. The aim of an LVIA is to assess the impacts of development upon the surrounding landscape. The LVIA follows a standardised approach which considers the individual impacts of the proposed development upon the baseline landscape, and will take into account potential cumulative impacts when viewed in the context of any recently approved developments in the surrounding area. The LVIA has not yet been completed but will be submitted as part of the planning application and will be accessible to members of the public through the Council's website.
How long will the solar farm be in place?	The application seeks permission for a solar farm for a temporary period of 40 years. After this period has elapsed, it is proposed that the land would be returned to its previous agricultural use.
What will happen to the existing public rights of	All existing public rights of way (PROWs) will be retained and will remain open for public access during both construction and operational phases. It is also proposed to retain a number of the well-trodden

<p>way that pass through the site?</p> <p>Will I still be able to walk through?</p>	<p>informal pathways around the development where possible, allowing members of the public to continue using them.</p>
<p>Will construction have a significant impact on the local highway network?</p>	<p>The planning application will be supported by a Transport Statement prepared by specialist consultants PFA Consulting. The Transport Statement will assess the impacts of the development during both construction and operational phases. A Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) will be required to be submitted to the Council before development is allowed to start, if the planning application is approved. A CTMP would identify suitable measures to minimise the impact of (e.g. routing construction traffic away from local villages). It is not anticipated that the operation of the development will have any tangible impact upon the local highway network.</p>
<p>What will happen to the solar panels come to the end of their life – will they be disposed and/or replaced?</p>	<p>If approved, the solar farm would be permitted for a temporary period of 40 years, after which it would be decommissioned and the land restored to agricultural use. In accordance with the waste hierarchy, component parts will always be recycled where possible.</p>
<p>Where will the equipment be purchased from?</p>	<p>The exact specifications for the equipment have not yet been determined and relies on a number of factors, with final sourcing of equipment being decided nearer the time of construction.</p>
<p>What evidence is there that the scheme will deliver a positive environmental impact?</p>	<p>Solar (PV) power is a renewable source of energy, which results in minimal life cycle emissions and is far less polluting than fossil fuels, which are traditionally used for energy generation. The UK is transitioning to a low-carbon economy and has legally binding obligations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to "net zero" by 2050. A commitment has been made by the Government to generate 70GW of power from solar energy. In 2019, Warwick District Council declared a climate emergency and adopted an Action Plan in 2023 which aims for the district to be carbon neutral by 2030. Based on a 49.99MW AC capacity export, the solar farm will result in a reduction of approximately 13,954 tonnes of CO2 each year. The solar farm would meet the energy needs of approximately 20,651 homes (based on an average consumption of 2,900 kWh/annum). As such, the proposed development would support the Council in achieving the ambition to become carbon neutral. In addition to the reductions to greenhouse gas emissions from the utilisation of a renewable source of energy, the development will deliver on-site biodiversity benefits, resulting in a net gain exceeding the legal 10% requirement. Full details of the biodiversity net gain will be included within the planning application.</p>

<p>What technology will be used for battery storage?</p>	<p>A Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) is proposed at the site, providing a complementary technology to solar panels which allows for storage of the solar energy. This technology plays an important role in supporting renewable energy production in 'balancing the network'. With solar generation there are peaks on sunnier days, batteries store generated electricity and can react immediately to the requirements of the grid. The exact model of battery will be determined depending on availability at the time of construction.</p>
<p>What is the expected life of the solar farm as a whole, as well as the solar panels, batteries and inverters?</p>	<p>The planning application will seek permission to use the land as a solar farm for a period of 40 years, after which the site would be returned to its previous agricultural use. The solar panels and inverters are usually warranted for 25 years and 15 years respectively, with the batteries being recycled and replaced within a 12 to 15 year period.</p>
<p>What is the risk of battery fire/explosion and what mitigation and contingencies will be in place?</p>	<p>An outline battery safety management plan has been prepared by specialist consultants Abbott Risk Consulting in support of the application and will be accessible through the Council's website once the application has been submitted. The project team has liaised with the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service during the design process to ensure that the layout and placement of the BESS elements eliminates risks of combustion. The proposed layout accords with the requirements of the National Fire Chief's Council on BESS developments.</p>
<p>What is the carbon footprint of the project in its complete lifecycle and how does this compare to current means of energy production?</p>	<p>The majority of the lifecycle emissions for a solar farm are tied to the manufacturing process of the panels and are offset by their clean energy production within the first three years of operation. The lifetime emissions of solar panels electricity generation are 12 times less than electricity generated by gas plants and 20 times less than electricity generated by coal.</p>
<p>How big will the battery storage be? Footprint and MW</p>	<p>The proposed scheme incorporates a small Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) component with a storage capacity of 20MW. The BESS elements are spread around the site to avoid grouping with each battery block covering an area of approximately 380m<sup>2</sup>, meaning an overall footprint of 4180m<sup>2</sup> (1 acre) in total.</p>
<p>Will our energy bills reduce?</p>	<p>It is unlikely that the Fosse Way Solar Farm project on its own will result in a noticeable decrease in energy bills for local people. Given the way that electrical infrastructure is setup, it is not possible for the energy generated by the development to be used solely for connections in the local area. The energy generated will be fed into the National Grid and subsequently is available for use wherever it is needed on the grid. This means that the benefits of increased renewable energy within the system are spread nationally, which in turn this means that the local impact on pricing is diluted. However, Fosse Way Solar Farm is one of many solar farm projects across the country which aim to help the UK meet the national objectives of becoming net zero by 2050. Meeting</p>

	<p>this goal and providing a significant increase in the UK's solar output is hoped to lead to greater energy security and in turn, lower prices for consumers.</p>
<p>Is the change of use going to mean it is easier for developers to approach the Council for permission to build houses on what was agricultural land?</p>	<p>Permission is sought for the use of the land as a solar farm for a 40-year period. This does not set a precedent for any other forms of development as there are specific local and national policies which apply only to renewable energy developments. Any proposal to develop the site for housing during this period would be subject to the normal planning application process. Once the permission for the solar farm expires after 40 years, the land would be required to return to agricultural use and would be considered as such. The land would not be considered 'brownfield' or 'previously developed' land. Assuming that planning policies which are similar to today's policies exist at the end of the solar farm's lifecycle, the site would not have been made more suitable for housing development, or more likely to be developed for residential purposes by the existence of the solar farm.</p>
<p>Will sheep graze away the plants?  Who will maintain the wildlife corridors?</p>	<p>The development is designed to allow space below the panels to be grazed by sheep. Whilst this would be an option, this is not guaranteed. A scheme for the operation and maintenance of the site will be managed by a company who will be responsible for the maintenance of the landscape and plants as part of a management plan agreed with the ecologists and Council, should the application be approved.</p>
<p>What would happen to the large badger sett?</p>	<p>The planning application will be supported by an Ecological Impact Assessment, prepared by qualified ecologists following months of on-site survey work. The document will explain the ecological baseline of the site, noting which existing habitats and species are present at the site and how the development would impact upon these ecological assets. Badger sett surveys have been commissioned and the project team are aware of their presence on the site. The development has been designed to avoid impacts on wildlife where possible and where necessary to facilitate the proposals, suitable mitigation measures will be implemented including sufficient buffers around existing badger setts. The badger surveys will be sent to the Council as part of the application, but will not be visible on the Council's website once the application is live in order to keep the location of the sett confidential.</p>
<p>Will there be an impact on local mobile phone connections?</p>	<p>Solar Farms are passive in design, harnessing the power of the sun and converting it to electricity at frequencies acceptable to the grid, like the grid lines around the country. There is no evidence to suggest solar farms have any impact upon mobile phone signals.</p>
<p>Will the development have any radiation impacts?</p>	<p>The electricity generated by the solar farm is at a lower voltage with only the high voltage connection to the substation via buried cables, with no evidence to suggest there will be any radiation impacts. These high voltage cables are the same voltage already used to distribute the</p>

	<p>electricity around for the grid and are lower voltage than the typical large overhead pylon power cables.</p>
<p>Is there not a more suitable site of Grade 4–5 soil elsewhere which may be more appropriate?</p>	<p>The Fosse Way site contains 72ha of grade 3b land, 24ha of grade 3a land, and 4ha of grade 2 land, according to an on-site agricultural land classification survey. Grades 2 and 3a are considered best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land. The proposed site layout excludes infrastructure from all grade 2 land. The site will revert back to an agriculture use at the end of the 40-year consent period and sheep grazing could take place under the panels to continue an agricultural use. Therefore, any loss of agricultural land is temporary and reversible, with improved soil quality following decommissioning by virtue of the break from intensive agricultural practices. National policy and guidance seeks to minimise the loss of BMV land but recognises this must be balanced against the benefits of renewable energy developments. Novergy and Recurrent Energy undertake an agricultural land classification assessment before identifying suitable sites for solar farms. There are a multitude of search parameters which must be satisfied in order for a site to be selected for further investigation. The site at Fosse Way performs very well in a number of regards and of paramount importance is proximity to a point of connection to the electricity network with capacity. The site is also at low risk of flooding, has suitable highway access, a low amount of best and most versatile agricultural land, is outside of any National Park or National Landscape designations, is a suitable distance from heritage assets, and has a willing landowner with available land. The proposed site contains a relatively small proportion of BMV land. The temporary loss of this land will be an adverse impact of the development which will need to be balanced against the substantial national and local need for renewable energy sources. The minor adverse impact is considered to be sufficiently outweighed by the benefits of the scheme and this will be addressed in the planning submission.</p>
<p>What impact will this have on flooding?</p>	<p>The planning application will be supported by a Flood Risk Assessment. This document will assess how the development may affect various sources of flooding and (if necessary) propose mitigation to ensure that the development does not increase the likelihood of on or off-site flooding. The FRA is not yet complete, but will be published on the Council's website once the application is submitted.</p>
<p>How large an area does the solar farm cover?</p>	<p>The application site, defined by a red line boundary on the planning application drawings, covers an area of approximately 86ha. As shown on the site layout proposals, not all of the site area is proposed to be covered in solar panels or supporting infrastructure. Much of the land will be left open and treated with ecological enhancements to support the delivery of biodiversity net gains across the site.</p>



Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)  
Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

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