

Stonestreet Green Solar

EPL 001 Limited

Statement of Community Consultation

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May 2023





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1. Introduction

EPL 001 Limited¹ (referred to throughout as "EPL 001") is intending to develop a renewable energy generating project, including solar photovoltaic ("PV") arrays and on-site energy storage, together with associated infrastructure and an underground cable connection, on land at Aldington near Ashford in Kent, to be known as Stonestreet Green Solar (the "project").

For the avoidance of doubt EPL 001 is the applicant for the purposes of section 41 of the Planning Act 2008. EPL 001 is a wholly owned subsidiary of Evolution Power Limited, which is the group holding company for all renewable developments of the Evolution Power Group.

EPL 001 welcomes your views on our proposals for Stonestreet Green Solar.

2. The purpose of community consultation and this SoCC

This Statement of Community Consultation ("SoCC") (which supersedes earlier SoCCs published in March 2022 and September 2022) explains how EPL 001 intends to consult with you about a proposed application for development consent for our proposals for Stonestreet Green Solar in accordance with section 47 of the Planning Act 2008 before we submit the application.

This SoCC explains how we have identified who to consult, the consultation methods proposed, the timescales for consultation and how consultees can help shape the project.

The publication of this SoCC is being advertised in local newspapers and is available on the project website (www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk) and at the Deposit Locations listed on page 15 of this document.

EPL 001 will carry out consultation with the local community in accordance with this SoCC. We recognise that local people have a vital role to play at the pre-application stage and that carrying out consultation on the project with the local community will help to inform the development of our proposals. The pre-application consultation provides the opportunity for the local community to engage with and comment on the project as the proposals evolve. We want to listen to your views and work with you to develop our proposals for Stonestreet Green Solar. This will allow us to develop our plans responsibly and in a manner that supports local community and national objectives.

We will use the feedback that we receive during the consultation to help us develop our final proposals for Stonestreet Green Solar before submitting our application.

¹ Company name: EPL 001 Limited; company number: 12444050; registered office address: 2nd Floor, Regis House, 45 King William Street, London, United Kingdom, EC4R 9AN; registered in England and Wales.



3. About EPL 001

EPL 001 is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Evolution Power Group, which is a UK-based, independent solar developer that aims to develop affordable and sustainable renewable energy projects to help the UK meet its legally binding 2050 net zero emissions target. Evolution Power's ambition is to develop innovative, renewable energy projects in the 'right' way and carefully selects sites to minimise local impact and targets sites where it has identified potential opportunities to provide energy to local customers to maximise sustainability, environmental and social outcomes. Our aim is to work with local communities, maximising opportunities for community participation and providing meaningful community benefits.

4. The planning process

As the proposed generating capacity exceeds 50 megawatts ("MW"), Stonestreet Green Solar is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project ("NSIP") under sections 14(1)(a) and 15(1) and (2) of the Planning Act 2008. The project must therefore apply for a Development Consent Order ("DCO") through the Planning Act 2008 process. Consent for the solar PV arrays, on-site energy storage, associated infrastructure and underground cable connection will be included in the DCO if granted.

The DCO application will be submitted by EPL 001 to the Planning Inspectorate ("PINS"), the agency responsible for managing the examination process for NSIPs. If accepted, the application will be examined by an independent Examining Authority at PINS who will review the application and may ask written questions and hold hearings during the examination. Throughout the examination, interested parties (including members of the local community who submit a relevant representation form to PINS) will be entitled to participate in the examination. The Examining Authority will then prepare a detailed report and make a recommendation to the Secretary of State ("SoS") for Energy Security and Net Zero. The SoS will then make a decision on whether to grant a DCO for the project.

Before the application can be accepted for examination, EPL 001 must demonstrate that pre-application consultation has been undertaken. Consultation must be carried out with statutory consultees under section 42 of the Planning Act 2008 and the local community under section 47 of the Planning Act 2008. The proposed application must also be publicised under section 48 of the Planning Act 2008. Before carrying out consultation under section 47 we are required to prepare and publish a SoCC to explain how we will consult the local community. Consultation with statutory consultees under section 42 and publicity under section 48 are outside the scope of this SoCC but will be undertaken in accordance with the Planning Act 2008 and will be reported in the Consultation Report submitted as part of our DCO application.

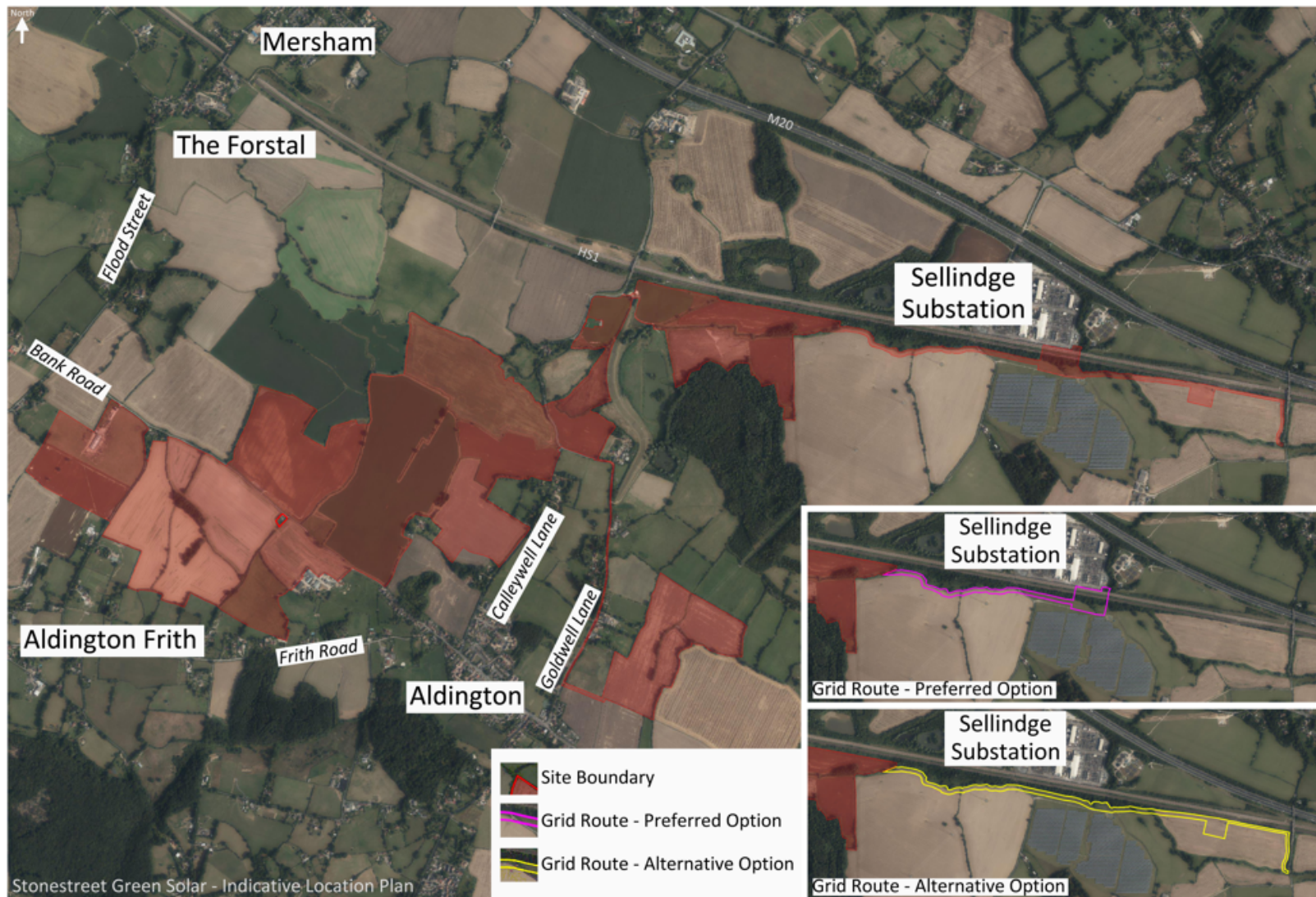
For more information on this process, you can access a short film made by PINS at: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/participating-in-the-process/> or a series of PINS advice notes at: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/advice-notes/>



5. The project

The project will be located approximately 6.5km to the south-east of Ashford Town Centre and approximately 13.7km to the west of Folkestone Town Centre, in the county of Kent. It is situated on approximately 190.57 hectares (470.91 acres) of land to the north and west of the village of Aldington. The project site is within the administrative boundary of Kent County Council, Ashford Borough Council and Folkestone and Hythe District Council. Figure 1 below provides an indicative site location.

Figure 1: Indicative site location plan





The project comprises the proposed construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of a renewable energy generating project. The project will include solar PV arrays and on-site energy storage, together with associated infrastructure and an underground cable connection to the existing UK Power Networks ("UKPN") Substation at Sellindge. The development will be split between various parcels of land which will minimise any visual impact.

The following provides a summary of the project:

- Solar PV modules;
- PV module mounting structures;
- On-site electrical stations including inverters, transformers and switchgear;
- On-site and grid connection cabling with a maximum voltage of 132 kilovolts;
- Project substation, consisting of a private-side project owned substation and a UKPN adopted substation;
- On-site energy storage;
- Two spare parts storage containers;
- Boundary fencing and closed-circuit television security measures; and
- Access tracks.

There are two options for the proposed grid connection arrangement: a Preferred Option and an Alternative Option. The indicative site location plan at Figure 1 includes the land required to deliver both options. The Preferred Option would connect directly to the existing Sellindge Substation. The Alternative Option would instead connect to the existing Sellindge Substation via an existing nearby tower. As shown on Figure 1, the Alternative Option requires additional land, of which approximately 350m of cable route, a switching station adjacent to the tower and approximately 510m of access track would be located within the administrative boundary of Folkestone and Hythe District Council. The exact point of connection for the project is subject to final confirmation from UKPN and, at this stage, it is considered appropriate to include both the Preferred Option and the Alternative Option as part of the project. If a route can be confirmed with UKPN prior to submission then a single route only will be included in the application.

The energy storage will be provided by batteries accommodated in containerised units distributed throughout the site adjacent to the inverter stations. A heating, ventilation, and cooling system will be integrated into the containers to ensure efficiency and safe performance.

Stonestreet Green Solar will provide a range of benefits including:

- The project is expected to have a generating capacity of around 165MW of renewable energy. The agreed grid connection for the project will allow the export and import of up to 99.9MW of clean, renewable electricity to the national grid at any time, contributing to the UK's 2050 net-zero target.
- The generation of renewable electricity from the project will displace the generation of electricity from other conventional power sources, including fossil-fuel reliant sources, resulting in a saving of approximately 34,500 tonnes of CO₂ per annum.



- The project will include energy storage on-site, which will enable the storage, import and export of electricity to and from the grid.
- The project will generate subsidy-free electricity, without public financial support.
- The project will provide an inflation-linked community benefit fund for the lifetime of the project to be used locally for social and environmental projects.
- During the lifetime of the project, the biodiversity of the site will be greatly enhanced and the soil condition will be improved.

6. Who will we consult?

In accordance with this SoCC, we will consult with the local communities in the vicinity of the land to which the proposed DCO application relates. We also welcome feedback from anyone who may be interested in or in any way feel impacted by our proposals for Stonestreet Green Solar.

People can register their interest at the project website (www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk – use the 'Contact Us' tab) to receive regular updates on the project.

We will also consult relevant parish and town councils, community groups, organisations representing local businesses and communities and tourist organisations. In addition, we will also be consulting on our proposed project with a range of other statutory and non-statutory consultees.

Core Consultation Zone (see Figure 2)

A core consultation zone has been defined to cover a 4km radius from the centre of the site. The zone centres on the proposed development site in Aldington and extends outwards to include the nearby surrounding villages of Bilsington, Bonnington, Brabourne Lees, Kingsnorth, Mersham and Smeeth. All elements of the project (as described in Section 5 of this SoCC) will be located within this core consultation zone. Residents and businesses within the core consultation zone will receive our leaflets and newsletters directly.

Wider Consultation Zone (see Figure 3)

EPL 001 recognises that there will be some people who do not live within the core consultation zone but are nevertheless interested in our proposals. We want to ensure that these people are aware of our proposals and the opportunities to get involved. Therefore, we will use tools such as media relations and advertising to notify residents and businesses within a wider consultation zone about the consultation, covering a 10km radius from the site.

Together, the core consultation zone and the wider consultation zone comprise our consultation area.

EPL 001 will be visiting areas within the consultation area throughout the development of the proposals to meet with communities, provide information and listen to feedback on the proposals.



Figure 2: Core Consultation Zone Map

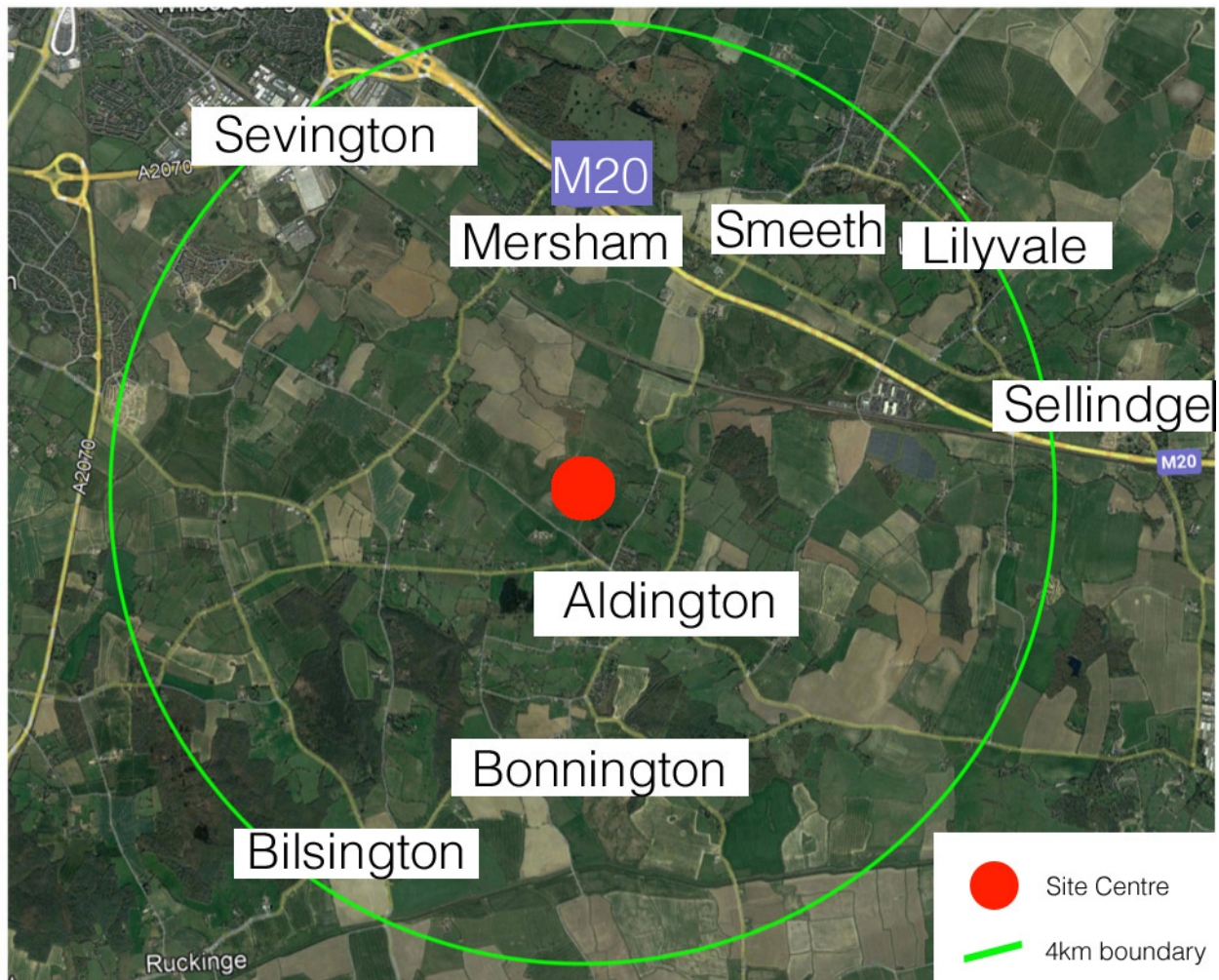
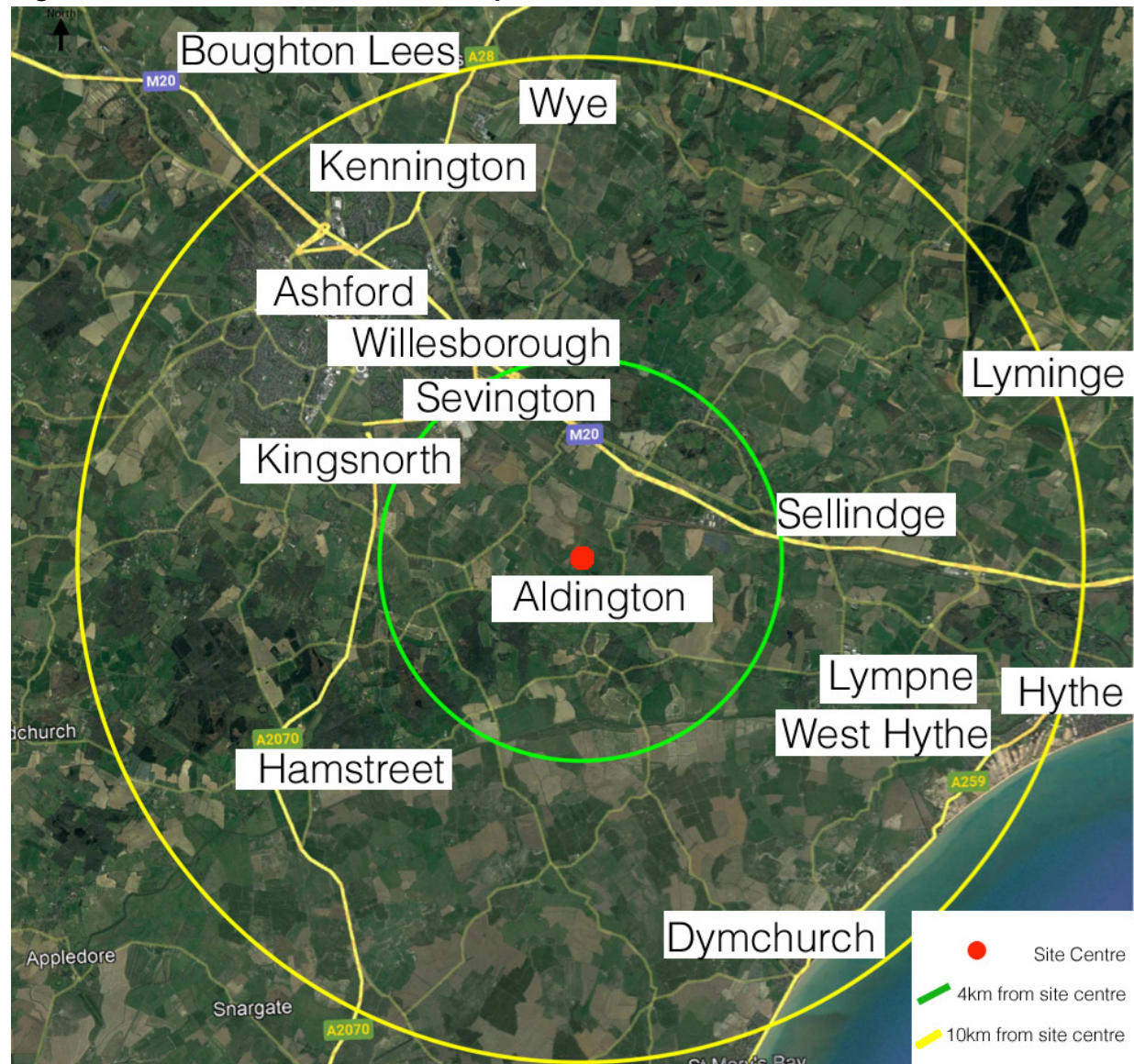




Figure 3: Wider Consultation Zone Map





7. What will we consult on?

We will be seeking feedback on all aspects of our plans for Stonestreet Green Solar. We will encourage the local communities to give their views about how our proposals may affect them or their area. For example, we will be seeking feedback to help develop our proposals regarding impacts such as, but not limited to:

- Short term, temporary construction impacts, such as upon wildlife and local residents.
- Long term, operational impacts, such as upon wildlife, landscape and views.
- Benefits, such as contributing towards low carbon energy production and providing security of energy supply.

8. Environmental information

In accordance with Regulation 12 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, we confirm that the Stonestreet Green Solar development is an Environmental Impact Assessment ("EIA") development as defined in those regulations and that we intend to publicise and consult on preliminary environmental information. We will be undertaking an EIA for Stonestreet Green Solar in accordance with Regulation 5 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017, including the preparation of an Environmental Statement ("ES").

Scoping

In May 2022, we obtained a Scoping Opinion from PINS (on behalf of the SoS) on the scope and level of detail of the information to be provided in the ES. EPL 001's request for that Scoping Opinion included a Scoping Report that described the project and explained our initial analysis of the anticipated likely significant environmental effects and the scope of technical assessment required. PINS sought feedback on this from consultation bodies before issuing the Scoping Opinion. A copy of the Scoping Report and the Scoping Opinion are available on the PINS project website under the 'Documents' tab (<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/south-east/stonestreet-green-solar/>) and on the project website (www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk/Consultation).

Preliminary Environmental Information

Following the publication of the Scoping Opinion, we prepared a Preliminary Environmental Information Report ("PEIR") which provided a preliminary statement of the environmental information compiled by EPL 001 for the Stonestreet Green Solar study area. EPL 001 consulted on the PEIR as part of the 2022 Statutory Consultation (see Section 9 of this SoCC). EPL 001 is currently considering the feedback received from that consultation, and the results of further studies/surveys, and is preparing further preliminary environmental information (which will take the form of a "PEIR Addendum") that will be consulted on as part of the 2023 Statutory Consultation (see Section 9 of this SoCC). Together the PEIR and the PEIR Addendum will enable consultees to develop an informed view of any likely significant environmental effects of the development.



Environmental Statement ("ES")

The ES will advance the content of the PEIR and the PEIR Addendum. In preparing the ES, consideration will be given to the responses to the 2022 Statutory Consultation and the 2023 Statutory Consultation and results of the studies/surveys undertaken. It will also describe any changes made to the project and any mitigation measures that need to be implemented. The ES will form part of the DCO application.

Details of when the above documents have been or are expected to be published can be found in Section 10 of this SoCC, which displays the indicative consultation timeline.

9. The consultation process

The consultation process for Stonestreet Green Solar will be an iterative one as the design of the project develops in response to the consultation. The following consultation process shapes the indicative consultation timeline, as presented in Section 10 of this SoCC.

Stakeholder briefings – Spring 2022

We introduced community members to our proposals for Stonestreet Green Solar in spring 2022 through initial meetings with members of the community and stakeholders.

Non-Statutory Consultation - 25 March to 29 April 2022

Non-statutory consultation and local information events took place between 25 March and 29 April 2022. These provided interested members of the local community with the opportunity to view the initial proposals and submit feedback. A consultation leaflet was also delivered to all residents and businesses within the core consultation zone. The feedback received to this non-statutory consultation is helping to shape the proposals for Stonestreet Green Solar.

2022 Statutory Consultation – 25 October to 29 November 2022

Statutory consultation, in accordance with section 47 of the Planning Act 2008, took place between 25 October and 29 November 2022. This provided detailed information about the project, including in the PEIR (as described in Section 8 of this SoCC), and sought consultation comments from the local community. Local information events and a public presentation were held. Details of the consultation were publicised through adverts in the local press and on social media, via a newsletter to residents and businesses in the core consultation zone, via email to local parish councils, via the project Twitter feed and via the project website, in advance of the consultation starting. Notices about the statutory consultation were placed in local and national newspapers and at the site.

2023 Statutory Consultation

A further round of statutory consultation, in accordance with section 47 of the Planning Act 2008, will take place in 2023 in advance of the DCO application being submitted. The consultation will be carried out over a period of five weeks. The consultation materials will



provide information about the project as updated following consideration of the feedback received from the 2022 Statutory Consultation and the results of further studies/surveys, and will seek consultation comments from the local community. It will provide information in particular on topics including (but not limited to):

- A summary of the key themes in the responses to the 2022 Statutory Consultation and how that feedback has been taken into account in shaping the project
- The anticipated landscape and visual impacts of the project, including information on glint and glare
- The anticipated impacts on ecology including the proposed biodiversity net gain as a result of the project
- The anticipated impacts on cultural heritage
- The proposed alterations to the Public Rights of Way network
- Mitigation measures that are proposed to seek to address the project impacts (including proposed landscaping approach)

Details of the consultation will be publicised through adverts in the local press and on social media, via a newsletter to residents and businesses in the core consultation zone, via email to local parish councils, via the project Twitter feed and via the project website, in advance of the consultation starting. Notices about the statutory consultation will be placed in local and national newspapers and at the site.

Ongoing engagement

Anyone interested in our proposals is welcome to get in touch with us at any time during the pre-application process. Our contact details are listed at the end of this SoCC. We will consider the feedback and comments we receive on an ongoing basis. You will also have the opportunity to comment on our proposals for the project when the DCO application is submitted to PINS.

In addition to the above, we may also decide to hold further rounds of statutory or non-statutory consultation, including targeted consultation with specific groups, where appropriate.

10. Indicative consultation timeline

Spring 2022: Publication of March 2022 SoCC and stakeholder briefings (completed)
Spring 2022: Non-Statutory Consultation (completed)
Spring 2022: Scoping Report submitted (completed)
Spring 2022: Scoping Opinion published (completed)
Autumn 2022: Publication of September 2022 SoCC (completed)
Autumn 2022: 2022 Statutory Consultation and PEIR published (completed)
Summer 2023: 2023 Statutory Consultation and PEIR Addendum published (indicative)
Summer/Autumn 2023: Finalise ES and DCO application (indicative)
Autumn 2023: DCO application submission (indicative)



11. How will we consult with you?

Local information events

Local information events open to the public took place in spring 2022 as part of the Non-Statutory Consultation and autumn 2022 as part of the 2022 Statutory Consultation. Attendees had the opportunity to view informative materials about the project, discuss the proposals with members of the team and provide their feedback on the proposals. All the materials available at those local information events are available to view on the project website. Regard has been had to all feedback captured from these events.

Non-Statutory Consultation

Local information events as part of our Non-Statutory Consultation were held at the following venues:

- Sellindge Village Hall - Friday 8 April 2022, 3pm - 7pm
- Aldington Village Hall - Saturday 9 April 2022, 11am - 3pm
- Bilsington Village Hall - Tuesday 12 April 2022, 1pm - 5pm
- Mersham Sports Club - Wednesday 13 April 2022, 2pm - 6pm

2022 Statutory Consultation

Local information events as part of the 2022 Statutory Consultation were held at the following venues:

- Mersham Village Hall - Friday 4 November 2022, 3pm - 7pm
- Aldington Village Hall - Saturday 5 November 2022, 11am - 3pm
- Sellindge Village Hall - Tuesday 8 November 2022, 2pm - 6pm
- Bilsington Village Hall - Wednesday 9 November 2022, 1pm - 5pm

A public presentation was also held at Aldington Village Hall on Tuesday 8 November 2022 to enable members of the public to ask questions about the project.

2023 Statutory Consultation

Local information events open to the public will be held as part of the 2023 Statutory Consultation, subject to any Covid-19 restrictions that may be in place at the time, at the following venues or equivalent nearby venues:

- Mersham Village Hall
- Aldington Village Hall
- Sellindge Village Hall
- Bilsington Village Hall

The events will be held during afternoons and early evenings in the week and on one day at the weekend. The dates and times of the events will be publicised through adverts in the local press, via newsletters to residents and businesses in the core consultation zone, via email to local parish councils, via the project Twitter feed and via the project website, before the commencement of consultation. The exhibition materials used at these events will be made available to download on the project website during the 2023 Statutory Consultation. A hard



copy of the 2023 Statutory Consultation documents including the PEIR Addendum will be made available at these events, and members of the project team will be available to answer questions about the project.

Literature

Stakeholder briefing packs were provided to elected members in spring 2022 to introduce the scheme and inform them of how their constituents will be engaged with during the process. Further briefing packs will be provided to elected members in advance of the 2023 Statutory Consultation.

Leaflets and newsletters have been and will continue to be distributed to all residents and businesses within the core consultation zone (as shown in Figure 2 of this SoCC) at key pre-application consultation stages which provide information on the proposals and details of how the local community can have their say. Newsletters will continue to be distributed during the examination stage.

Subject to any measures put in place by the government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, during the pre-application period, copies of this SoCC, leaflets and newsletters, the 2022 Statutory Consultation documents including the PEIR and (from the start of the 2023 Statutory Consultation) the 2023 Statutory Consultation documents including the PEIR Addendum will be available to view free of charge at the following public buildings and libraries ("Deposit Locations"):

- Ashford Borough Council Offices, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford TN23 1PL (Monday to Friday: 9am to 4pm; Saturday and Sunday: closed)
- Folkestone and Hythe Council Offices, Civic Centre, Castle Hill Avenue, Folkestone, Kent CT20 2QY (Monday to Friday: 10am to 4pm; Saturday and Sunday: closed)
- Kent County Council, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XQ (Monday to Friday: 8am to 5pm; Saturday and Sunday: closed) – by appointment only
- Ashford Library, Ashford Gateway Plus, Church Road, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1AS
- New Romney Library, 82 High Street, New Romney, TN28 8AU
- Lyminge Library, Station Road, Lyminge, Folkestone, Kent CT18 8HS
- Hythe Library, 1 Stade Street, Hythe, Kent CT21 6BQ

Information on the opening hours for the libraries listed above can be viewed on Kent County Council's website at: <https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/libraries/visiting-a-library>

Copies of this SoCC, leaflets and newsletters, the 2022 Statutory Consultation documents including the PEIR and (from the start of the 2023 Statutory Consultation) the 2023 Statutory Consultation documents including the PEIR Addendum are also available to access on the project website at www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk



Once submitted, copies of the full DCO application will be available at one or more of the sites listed above (to be confirmed nearer to the time of submitting the application and subject to agreement from the venues listed). Copies of the application documents will also be made available to access on the project website at www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk and on the PINS project website at <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/south-east/stonestreet-green-solar/>.

Direct communication lines

Anyone interested in the project can contact us using any of the communication lines detailed in Section 13 of this SoCC. All project information will be available to download from the project website at www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk

Communications outreach

Across the consultation area we have been and will continue to raise awareness of the project amongst those living or working in this area. As mentioned above, documents providing information about the project are available to view at the Deposit Locations and the 2023 Statutory Consultation documents will be available at these locations from the start of the 2023 Statutory Consultation (subject to any applicable Covid-19 restrictions). This SoCC will also be sent to local community groups as appropriate. We will use a newsletter, posters, social media, the project website and local media to reach out to those within the consultation area to inform them about the 2023 Statutory Consultation (as we did for the 2022 Statutory Consultation).

EPL 001 will also seek to consult with “hard to reach” groups, which are demographic groups that may be less likely to participate in or respond to traditional consultation techniques. They may find it harder to get involved in consultation and need additional support to access materials. As was the case for the 2022 Statutory Consultation, the 2023 Statutory Consultation will therefore include measures to ensure we communicate effectively with these groups and provide an opportunity for them to have their say. This includes making information available across a number of online or offline outlets and in different formats. We will be directly engaging with representative groups in the community. We will ensure our written consultation material is in easy to understand, plain English style. A Freephone number, staffed by our community relations team, will be available to assist people who find it difficult to submit written comments and we will offer a telephone surgery to discuss the proposals if required. Large print and braille versions of consultation documents will also be available on request. A Freepost service will be available for people who prefer to send feedback by post rather than respond online or by email.

Community Liaison Panel

We have established a Community Liaison Panel ("CLP"). The terms of reference for the CLP, along with notes of meetings, can be viewed on the project website at <https://www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk/Consultation>.



12. Consultation feedback

Collection of responses

To capture participant feedback, we will produce a consultation questionnaire for the 2023 Statutory Consultation inviting comments on the proposed Stonestreet Green Solar project, as we did previously for the 2022 Statutory Consultation and Non-Statutory Consultation. During the 2023 Statutory Consultation period, the questionnaire will be made available at the local information events, online through the dedicated project website (www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk) and via post upon request. Consultees will be able to respond by completing the questionnaire online or by returning a completed questionnaire at a local information event or by using the contact details set out in Section 13 of this SoCC during the 2023 Statutory Consultation period.

How will we consider the responses?

Following the end of the 2023 Statutory Consultation, we will carefully consider all the responses that we have received and have regard to this in finalising our proposals for the Stonestreet Green Solar project, ahead of submitting our DCO application. Our DCO application will include a Consultation Report setting out how we have had regard to the responses received. This will:

- describe our consultation process;
- explain how we complied with all legal requirements;
- detail how we worked with the local planning authority to ensure our consultation was suitable for your area;
- provide a summary of all consultation responses (from the local communities, statutory and non-statutory consultees and the general public);
- describe any changes we have made to our application as a result of what you told us; and
- explain why, if any, changes were not made to the application that you told us needed changing.

We will ensure that the Consultation Report complies with data protection legislation including that personal data of individuals is treated appropriately. EPL 001 may be asked to provide a copy to PINS of any or all of the statutory consultation responses that were received and we will ensure that we comply with any applicable obligations under data protection legislation.

13. Communication lines

Send us an email: info@stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk

Call our Freephone information line: 08081 698335

Visit the project website: www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk

Send us a letter: FREEPOST Stonestreet Green Solar

Should you require this SoCC in large print, audio or braille then please contact us using the details provided.

May 2023

