



# **Lime Down**

## Solar Park



**Stage One Consultation- Online Community  
Webinar**

**Wednesday 17 April 2024, 17:30pm – 19:00pm**



## Purpose of this document

This document is intended to answer unanswered questions regarding the Lime Down Solar Park proposals and/or Stage One consultation submitted to the project team during the Q&A portion of the webinar session held on 17 April 2024.

To avoid duplication and maximise the usefulness of this document, questions have been grouped together where possible.

1. Will the proposals include direct compensation to local tourism businesses and residents?
2. What previous studies have been done on how house prices may be affected by projects like Lime Down Solar Park? Will residents be compensated if housing values fall?
3. Are there any risks associated to the underground cabling being proposed?
4. What percentage of light reaches the ground to permit growth below the panels?
5. What are the factors under consideration in the site selection process?

## 1. Will the proposals include direct compensation to local tourism businesses and residents?

**A:** Our current (Stage One) proposals for Lime Down Solar Park do not include measures to provide any form of direct compensation to local businesses or residents. However, we are seeking for feedback on a community benefits package and remain open to suggestions.

Island Green Power offers a community benefits package with the renewable energy schemes that it promotes. This is because we believe those living and working closest to the proposed development should benefit from it and that local communities are the best placed to recommend what they believe these benefits should be.

Therefore, as part of this initial stage of consultation we are inviting ideas for local schemes and projects we could support – including both on-site and off-site initiatives.

Off-site initiatives could come in the form of a community benefit fund or grant, should this be of interest to local communities.

Other off-site measures we are considering include the provision of subsidised solar PV for domestic installation, improvements to existing community amenities (such as sports facilities, children's playgrounds, and village halls), or provision of electric charging points.

We are committed to working with you to identify and define community benefits, and encourage feedback from anyone who has ideas on this topic. To find out how to provide feedback please follow this link: <https://www.limedownsolar.co.uk/how-to-provide-feedback>

## 2. What previous studies have been done on how house prices may be affected by projects like Lime Down Solar Park? Will residents be compensated if housing values fall?

**A:** To date, there has not been any academic or Government research into the (long- or short-term) effects of solar farms on house prices in the UK.

However, our first principle is to ensure that we design a project with as little an impact as possible on nearby residential properties, including appropriate screening as well as buffer zones/offsets between proposed equipment and residential properties.

To determine what is most suitable for both public amenities and private properties in the local area we are undertaking a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA).

The LVIA is an assessment we are required to undertake to ensure we have identified any potential visual impacts associated with the development we're proposing and put in place appropriate measures to reduce them.

Where required respective of their proximity to the project, we are also committed to going beyond the requirements and plan to undertake a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment on private views and amenity. Where practicable, we will propose bespoke measures to visually reduce the potential impacts of the development for each of the properties that may be affected.

### 3. Are there any risks associated to the underground cabling being proposed?

**A:** The Development Consent Order (DCO) process is a set process determined by the Planning Inspectorate and requires that a developer must assess any potential risks or impacts from the development proposals, including the cable infrastructure required to connect the project to the National Grid. The Environmental Impact Assessment will include an assessment of risks associated with the cable route. The following National Grid sources provide further information about underground high voltage cables:

- National Grid ['Undergrounding high voltage electricity transmission lines'](#)
- National Grid ['Installation of high voltage underground cables'](#)
- National Grid ['Electric and Magnetic Fields'](#)

### 4. What percentage of light reaches the ground to permit growth below the panels?

**A:** A well-managed solar farm can be a nature reserve – helping boost and protect wildlife and extend biodiversity. As the panels are set on posts with minimal disturbance to the ground, much of the land is available to support plant and animal species. While it is too early to confirm the specific solar panels that would be installed for Lime Down Solar Park, we anticipate that the panels will be a mixture of tracker panels and fixed and the exact distance between rows of panels is yet to be confirmed. The amount of light will depend on these factors and vary depending upon the time of day and the time of year.

From November 2025, there will be a legal requirement for developers of NSIP projects to show their projects will boost biodiversity by a minimum 10 per cent. This means our plans need to ensure that local wildlife habitats are in a measurably better state than before. Lime Down Solar Park could boost local biodiversity through means such as establishing wildflower areas that provide habitats for pollinators and birds, promoting wetland habitats to reduce flood risk and support aquatic and avian life, and restoring hedgerows and native species.

To design Lime Down Solar Park in a way that boots and enhances local wildlife by delivering a net gain in biodiversity, specific examples of benefits we are looking at delivering are listed below:

- Sowing land between and under the arrays as grassland and meadow management with a mix of some areas being grazed.

- Filling gaps in existing hedgerows with additional native species to increase diversity
- Managing hedgerows to enable wildlife to benefit from them year-round.
- Maintaining appropriate vegetated buffers with native planting.
- Installing bird nest and bat boxes on trees to provide opportunities for a range of local species
- The creation of new woodland blocks and belts
- New tree planting where appropriate.

## 5. What are the factors under consideration in the site selection process?

**A:** We have selected the solar development sites after considering Government policy on new renewable energy projects. This includes examining whether they are within a viable distance of an available grid connection, have suitable levels of irradiation (sunlight) and other considerations such as environmental constraints, the distance of the sites from dwellings, agricultural quality of the land, and accessibility.

We have also engaged with landowners who have confirmed their willingness to enter into lease agreements. This explains why the proposals are not spread into much smaller areas/ across a wider expanse of space, but are instead mostly located across fields that are adjacent to one another.

Further to this, the solar park development sites were identified as suitable for a number of additional reasons:

- They comprise arable fields of regular shape.
- Gently undulating topography makes the sites technically suitable for solar development and maximising the efficiency of panels.
- Existing hedgerows, tree belts and woodland around and across the sites mean they are well screened.
- Most of the sites are located in Flood Zone 1 which is defined as having low risk of flooding.
- There are only a small number of residential properties in proximity of the sites and effective landscaping and screening could be employed to offset or reduce any visual impacts.
- There are existing accesses for construction vehicles.

Along with feedback we receive from local communities and statutory stakeholders, these are the factors under consideration as part of the site selection process. We seek to reduce potential impacts on local communities as far as is possible and remain committed to this as we continue to refine our proposals for Lime Down Solar Park.

A Site Selection report will be included in our application for development consent and this document will explain how the areas of land proposed for Lime Down Solar farm were identified and selected.

Economic viability is a key factor in the development of projects but is considered alongside a number of other factors including civil and electrical engineering, suitable and available land and environmental constraints. The site remains economically viable if the battery is located on either Land at Melksham Substation or Lime Down D.

The site selection process for Lime Down Solar Park resulted in the land being in one area, rather than multiple, smaller sites spread out across individual sites located along the cable route corridor. It is important to us to reduce the impact on local communities as far as is possible so the number of sites has been minimised.