

Lime Down Solar Park

Stage One Consultation – Webinar Session

March 2024



Disclaimer: Today's webinar session is being recorded and will later be published on the project website. Please make sure to keep this in mind and not share any private information in your questions.

Today's Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Who we are
3. Introduction to Lime Down Solar Park
 1. Our proposals
 2. How a solar farm works
 3. Connecting into the national grid
4. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
5. The development process
6. Have your say
7. How to contact us
8. Your questions

03/04/2024 —

Welcome

Team introductions

- Natasha (Island Green Power) – Project Development Manager
- Graham (Lanpro) – Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Lead
- Chris (Lanpro) – EIA Landscape and Visual Lead
- Alice (Lanpro) – EIA Cultural Heritage Lead
- Beth (Counter Context) – Communications Lead
- Angelika (Counter Context) – Communications Team

Welcome to our webinar session


Thank you for attending today's session and engaging with this initial consultation on our emerging proposals for Lime Down Solar Park – a new solar and battery energy storage project we are proposing to build on land near Malmesbury, North Wiltshire.

The way we consume energy is changing, and the move towards renewables and the transition away from fossil fuels is an environmental and economic necessity.


At the same time, national electricity demand is increasing and expected to double by 2050.

Increasing our solar energy capacity is therefore essential if the UK is to hit its target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 while also meeting demand.

Lime Down Solar Park is anticipated as having a generation capacity of around

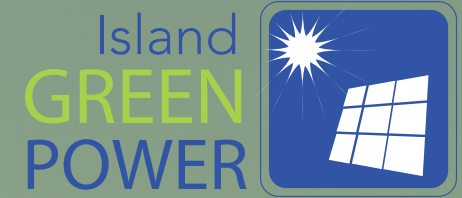
 500 megawatts

For context, this is enough clean, affordable electricity to power

 115,000 homes

Who we are

Island Green Power



- Established in 2013, we are a leading developer of renewable energy projects.
 - We specialise in the development of utility-scale solar projects and battery energy storage systems; overseeing the entire development process from start to finish including sourcing land, securing grid connections, and obtaining planning consents.
 - We have successfully delivered **34 projects worldwide** totaling more than one gigawatt of clean, renewable energy assets.
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- Our mission is to help the UK increase its solar energy generation, making more renewable energy possible whilst drastically reducing carbon emissions.
 - We are equally committed to responsible land use, developing projects that work in harmony with the local community and environment, and delivering bespoke benefits and enhancements best suited to the surroundings.

Working together with local communities

- We believe that those communities closest to a proposed development should benefit from it— with those communities being best placed to recommend what they believe a ‘community benefit’ should be.
- We are committed to working with you to identify and define community benefits and are inviting suggestions of local schemes and community projects we could support.
- These could include:
 - Enhancing new and existing paths and open spaces
 - Providing opportunities for public access and recreation across the site
 - Supporting initiatives to make improvements to existing community amenities such as sports facilities, playgrounds, parish halls
 - Providing electric charging points or provision of subsidised solar PV for domestic installation

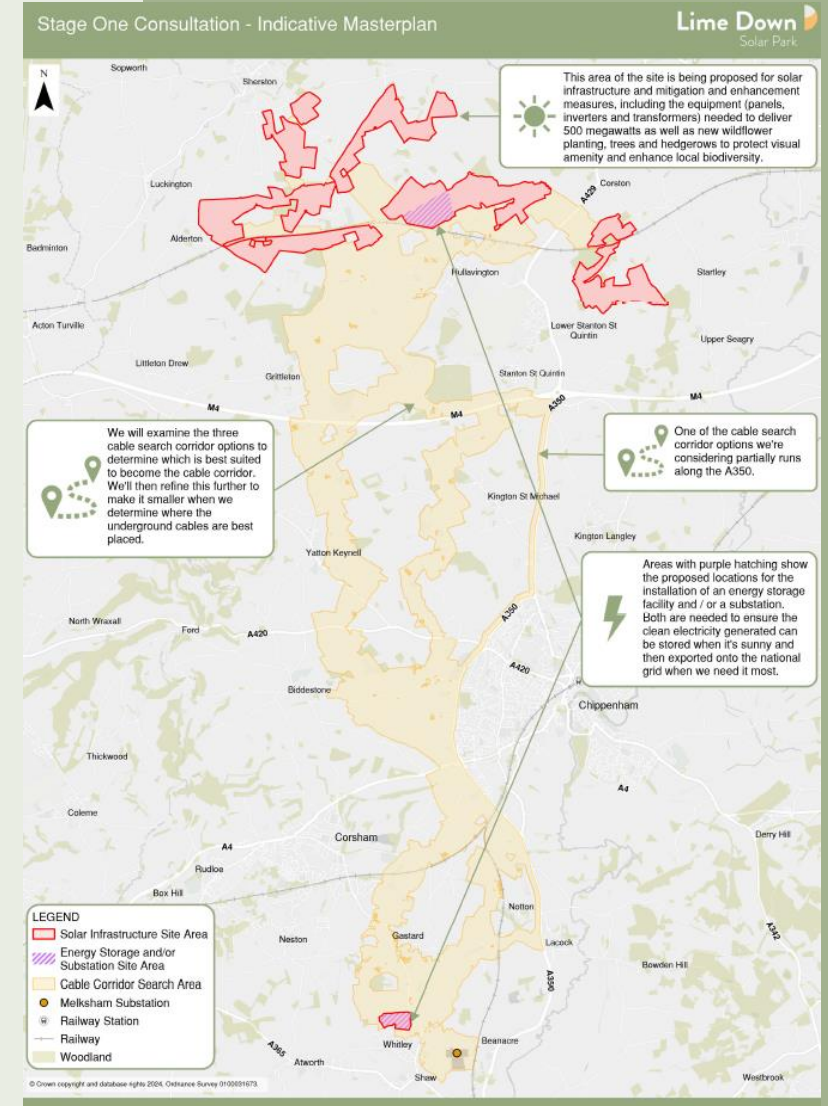
We invite you to suggest any ideas you have for sustainable local schemes and initiatives that you would like us to consider supporting

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Introduction to Lime Down Solar Park

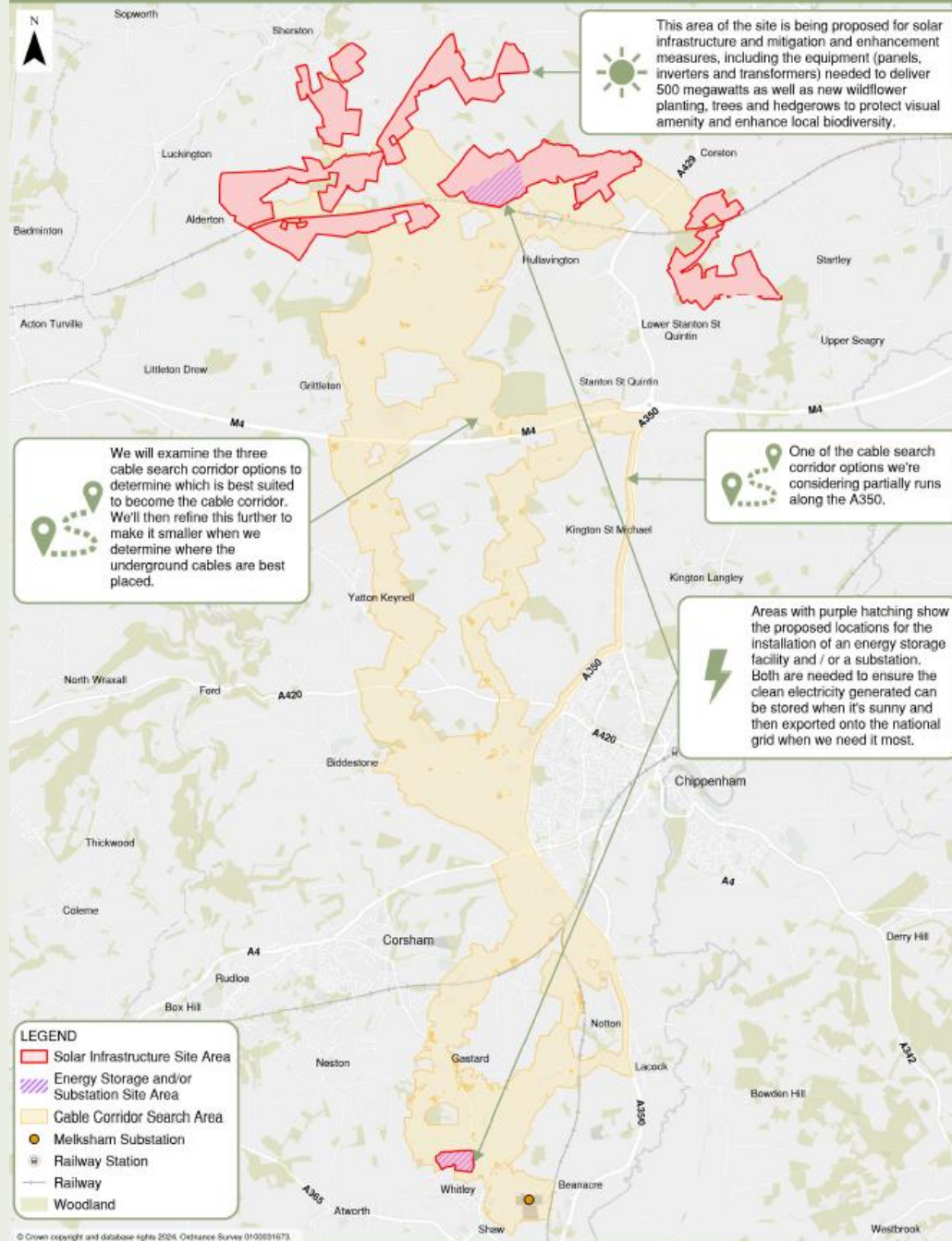
Our proposals: What we're consulting on


- Lime Down Solar Park would comprise the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and an on-site battery energy storage system (BESS), plus infrastructure to connect the scheme to the national grid at Melksham substation.
- We are at the early stage of developing our proposals.
 - We still have to identify where equipment would be located and how we could reduce the effects of the scheme on the surrounding area and environment.
- Assessments are being carried out to identify areas that could be set aside to:
 - Create new or enhance existing habitats for biodiversity net gain,
 - Implement buffer zones to maintain a respectful distance between infrastructure and existing homes, landscape, ecological features, and Public Rights of Way.
- The design and layout for the scheme will evolve based on the findings from the environmental surveys we are conducting, as well as feedback submitted to this consultation.





Our proposals: Location


- The scheme is entirely located within the administrative boundary of **Wiltshire Council**.
- The solar park element is proposed as being built across five sites comprising agricultural land of approximately 857 hectares (2,118 acres).
 - This is located to the north of the M4, southwest of Malmesbury.
- A sixth site is located on land near Melksham substation, approximately 20 kilometres away from the solar development sites.
 - This site has been identified as the potential location for a Battery Energy Storage System.
- In line with UK Gov policy on new renewable energy projects, these sites were selected in consideration of:
 - Distance from the available grid connection at Melksham substation
 - Suitable levels of irradiation (sunlight)
 - Distance from existing dwellings
 - Quality of the agricultural land
 - Accessibility
 - Located in Flood Zone 1 (low risk)
 - Existing hedgerows, tree belts and woodland for screening



 This area of the site is being proposed for solar infrastructure and mitigation and enhancement measures, including the equipment (panels, inverters and transformers) needed to deliver 500 megawatts as well as new wildflower planting, trees and hedgerows to protect visual amenity and enhance local biodiversity.

 We will examine the three cable search corridor options to determine which is best suited to become the cable corridor. We'll then refine this further to make it smaller when we determine where the underground cables are best placed.

 One of the cable search corridor options we're considering partially runs along the A350.

 Areas with purple hatching show the proposed locations for the installation of an energy storage facility and / or a substation. Both are needed to ensure the clean electricity generated can be stored when it's sunny and then exported onto the national grid when we need it most.

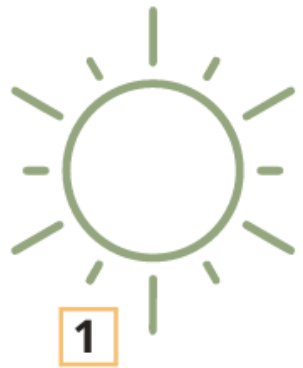
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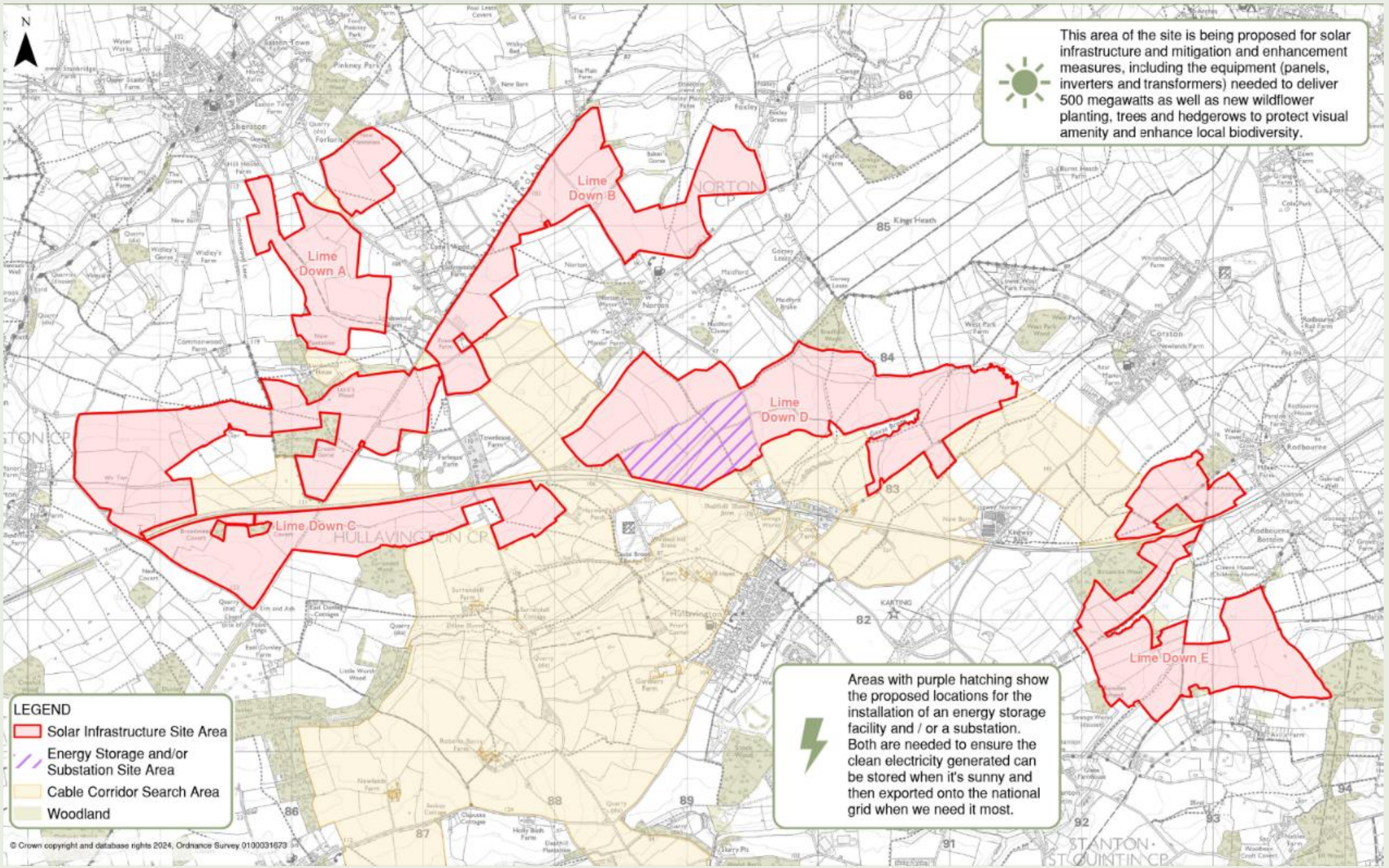
-  Solar Infrastructure Site Area
-  Energy Storage and/or Substation Site Area
-  Cable Corridor Search Area
-  Melksham Substation
-  Railway Station
-  Railway
-  Woodland

Solar PV and energy storage technology is rapidly evolving. The parameters of the application we submit to the Planning Inspectorate for Lime Down Solar Park will therefore maintain flexibility to allow us to use the latest technology available at the time of construction.

1. **The sun:** harnessing sunlight as the Earth's primary source of energy.
2. **Fencing:** to enclose the operational areas of the site along with internal facing CCTV deployed around the site perimeter.
3. **Solar panels:** converting the sun's energy into DC electrical power.
4. **Inverters:** converting direct current (DC) into alternating current (AC).
5. **Landscape area:** trees and vegetation planted across the site to enhance biodiversity and contribute to the overall landscape improvement.
6. **Substation:** safely connecting the solar park to the national grid.
7. **Battery storage:** storing electricity generated by the panels when demand is low, then exporting it on to the electricity transmission system when demand peaks.
8. **Underground cable:** connecting the solar panels and the battery storage to the inverters which in turn connect to the grid transformers. Higher voltage cables will be required between transformers and switchgear and from switchgear to the off-site electrical infrastructure.

How a solar farm works





Proposed Solar Infrastructure Site Area

What is a BESS?

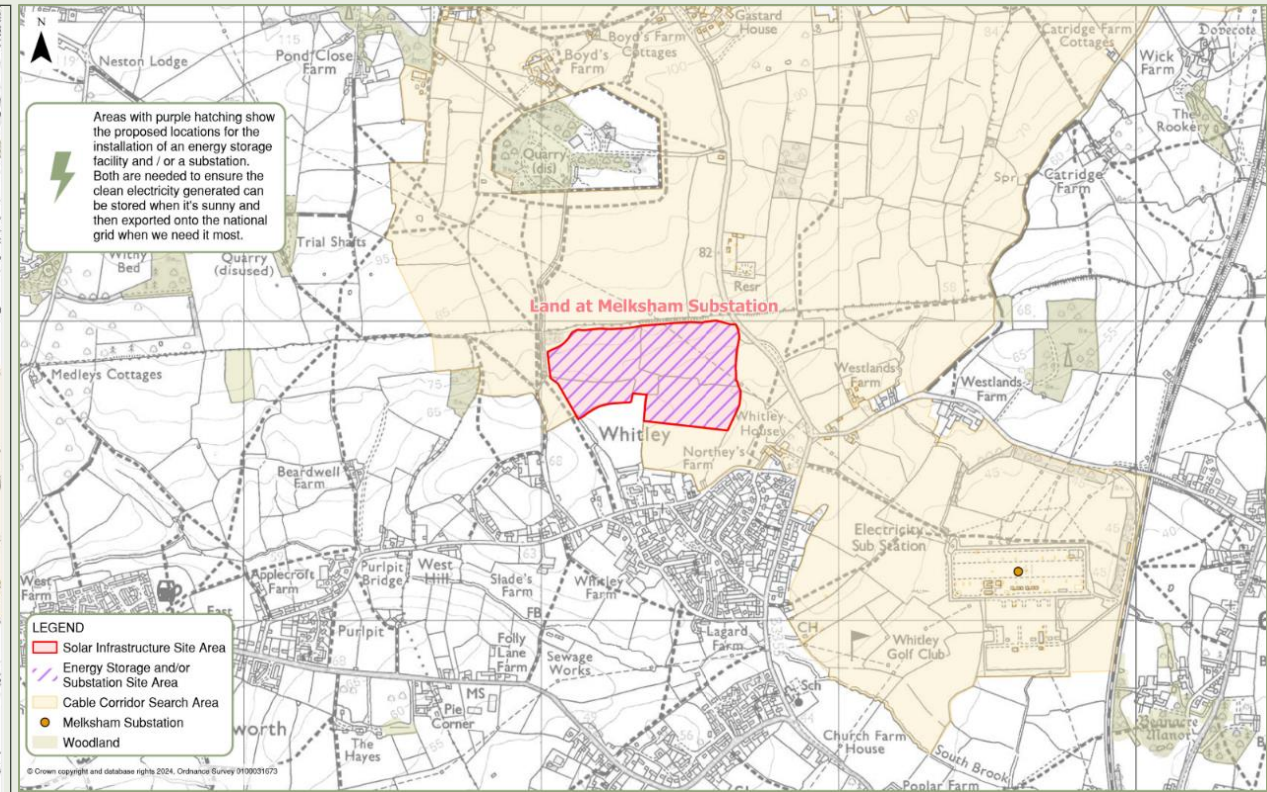
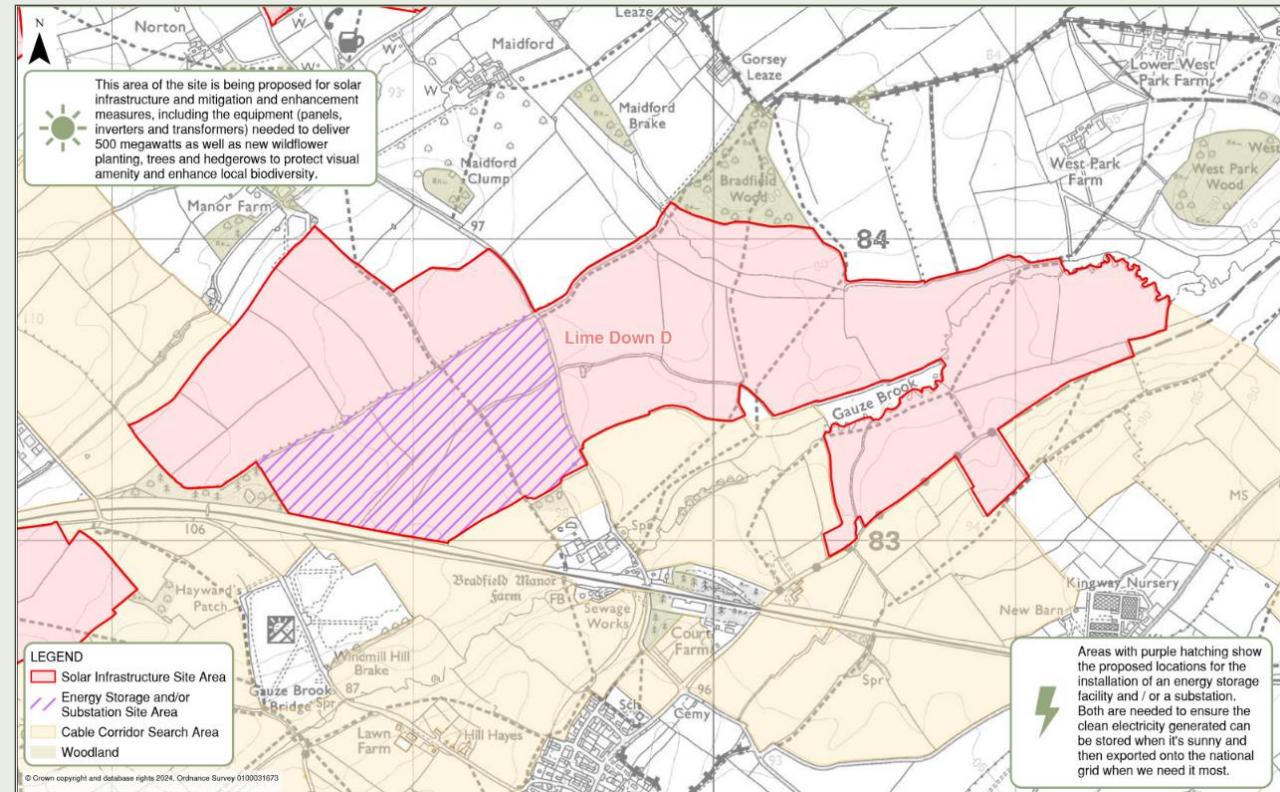


BESS stands for **Battery Energy Storage System**



An on-site BESS would provide an important **balancing service** for the grid, allowing electricity generated by the panels to be stored at times of low demand, then exported onto the system when demand increases.





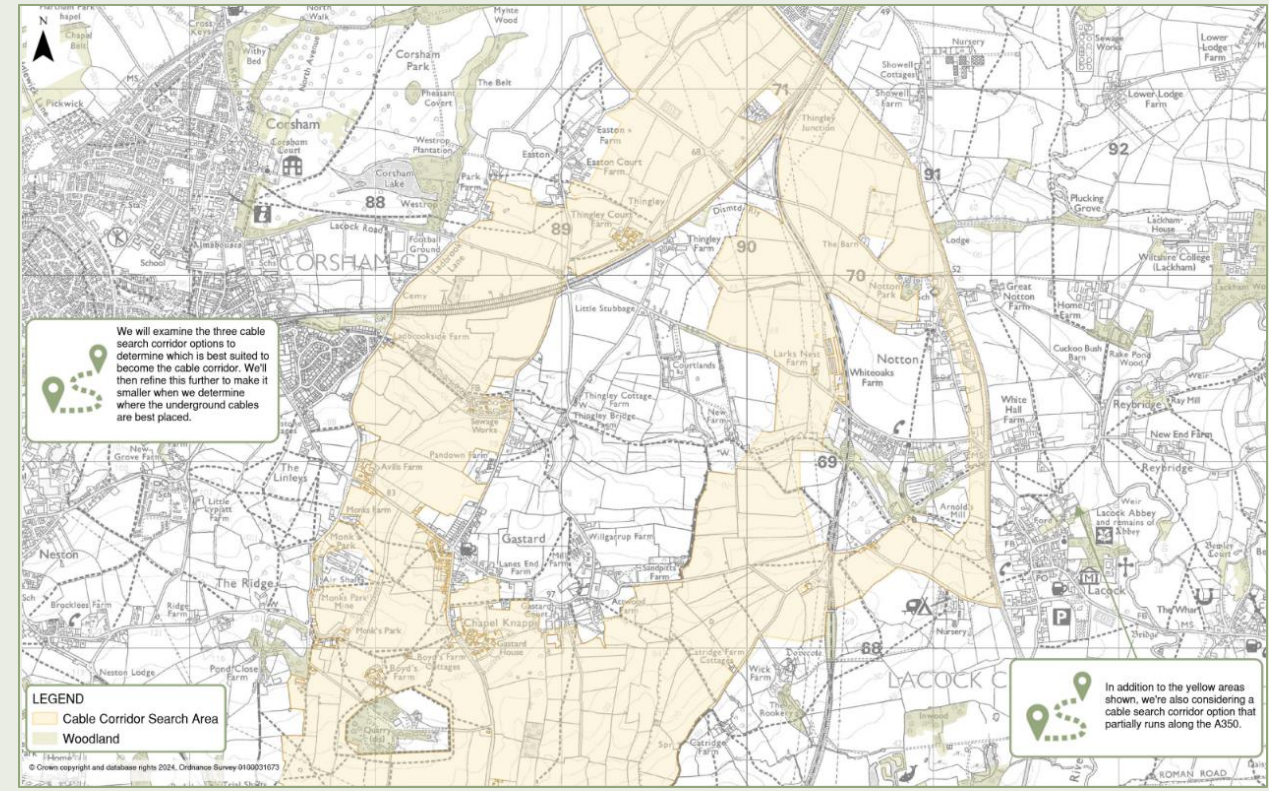
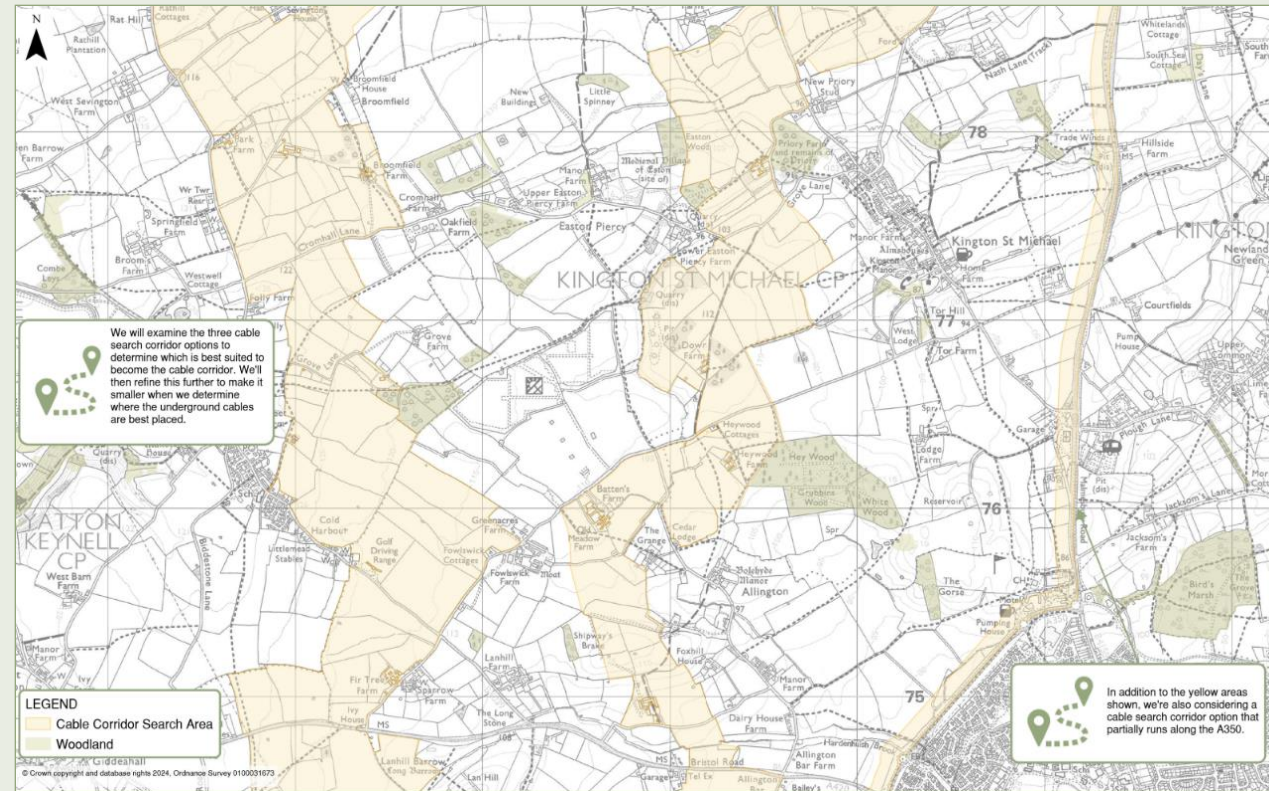
Proposed BESS/Substation Site Areas

Connecting into the national grid

- A route corridor is a broad ribbon of land through which an electrical connection could be routed. The corridor may vary in width depending on a range of factors including the location of:
 - Built up areas where people live
 - Infrastructure including roads and railway lines
 - Physical landscape features as well as other features that may be sensitive in terms of ecology, heritage or landscape
 - Protected sites including nature conservation areas
- The electricity generated by Lime Down Solar Park is expected to be exported on to the national grid at Melksham substation.

Connecting into the national grid

- An electrical connection between the solar park and the substation will be included in our design for the scheme. We plan to build this connection using **underground cabling**.
- Studies are currently being undertaken to determine the exact route the underground cable could follow.
- At this stage in the process, we have identified **three cable route search corridors** the connection could follow:
 - South from the 400kV substation, going across the M4 near Sevington then to the east of Yatton Keynell continuing to run south across the A420, then west of Gastard and east of Corsham until it reaches Melksham substation.
 - South from the 400kV substation, crossing the M4 near Leigh Delamere, before continuing to the west of Kington St. Michael, across the A420, east of Gastard and West of Norton.
 - A route that broadly follows the A350 road having run south from M4 junction 17.
- Work is underway to refine these corridors and select one which meets the objective of minimising environmental and social impact.
 - We will then determine the exact alignment the cable could take within it.



Underground Cable Corridor Search Areas

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)



The EIA process

- Lime Down Solar Park is classified as an **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development**.
 - This requires us to assess the potential significant environmental impacts of our proposed development.
- EIA is the **iterative process** in which the assessment of environmental impacts is carried out in parallel with the development design process.
 - It is used as a **tool to identify the potential environmental, social and economic effects** our project might have through a series of technical assessments, so we can identify **how we can reduce those impacts**.
- The preliminary findings of these environmental surveys and assessments will be presented in the **Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR)**.
 - This will be made available during the next stage of (statutory) consultation.
- After statutory consultation we will produce an **Environmental Statement (ES)**.
 - The ES will form part of the DCO application.
 - It advances the content of the PEIR and incorporates feedback received during statutory consultation and the outcome of the assessments we have undertaken.
 - The ES will describe those measures we are proposing to implement to reduce, improve or enhance the impacts of the project.

The EIA process

- We will be conducting extensive environmental surveys and consulting with a range of stakeholders to identify the potential impact of our proposed development on a number of topics including:



Landscape and visual



Ecology and biodiversity



Cultural heritage



Transport and access



Soils and agriculture



Hydrology flood risk and drainage



Socio-economics, tourism and recreation



Noise and vibration



Climate change



Air quality



Human health



Glint and glare

- For each of these topics we will assess the impact of the project on them **throughout its lifecycle**, from construction through to operation and decommissioning.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- A well-managed solar farm can be a **nature reserve** – helping boost and protect wildlife and extend biodiversity.
- From 2025, there will be a legal requirement for developers of NSIP projects to show that their projects will **boost biodiversity by a minimum 10%**.
 - This means our plans need to ensure that local wildlife habitats are in a measurably better state than before.
- Measures we're considering to enhance local wildlife and ecology to deliver BNG include:
 - **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 biodiversity
 - **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

We welcome any suggestions you have on how we can enhance the local environment.

The development process

The planning process

- Lime Down Solar Park is classified as a **Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP)** due to it having an anticipated generation capacity that exceeds 50 MW.
- This means we need to apply for a **Development Consent Order (DCO)** to build, operate and decommission the scheme.
- This DCO will be submitted to the **Planning Inspectorate** which acts on behalf of the **Secretary of State for the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ)**.
 - The final decision on whether to grant consent for our project will be made by Secretary of State.
- We expect the development process through DCO submission and examination will take between **two to three years**.
 - We intend to submit our application to the Planning Inspectorate in **early 2025**.
- Subject to obtaining consent, the earliest construction would start is **2027**.

Further information about the DCO application process can be found on the Planning Inspectorate's website: infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk



The consultation process

- This Stage One consultation (**14 March – 26 April**) is the first opportunity for us to share information about our proposals for Lime Down Solar Park.
 - Our aim is to introduce Island Green Power, share information about our emerging proposals for the project, and give you the opportunity to provide us with your views.
 - We want to ensure those communities living and working in proximity of where we are proposing to build the scheme have the chance to inform and influence the development of our proposals.
- We also welcome suggestions on local schemes or initiatives we could support to benefit those communities closest to the project.
- **Your views are important to us.**
 - Helping us to identify and better understand potential impacts, we will use your feedback to inform and shape detailed proposals for the project that are sensitive to, and respect local communities and the environment.
- We will carry out a **second stage of consultation** on the proposals we develop.
 - We will review our detailed proposals in light of feedback from this second consultation, along with the outcomes of ongoing assessments, to finalise and submit our application for development consent to the Planning Inspectorate.



Project timeline*



*All dates are indicative and may be subject to change.

03/04/2024

Have your say



Have your say

After this consultation closes, we will review all the comments we receive. Together with the findings from our ongoing environmental and technical studies, we will use your feedback to help us refine our proposals for Lime Down Solar Park.

- For this consultation we are inviting your views on:
 - The overall project,
 - The location of equipment associated with the solar park,
 - The cable route search corridors a cable connection could be routed along to connect the solar park into the national grid,
 - Local projects and community initiatives we could support, and
 - Anything else you think we should consider as we continue to develop our proposals will be holding a series of consultation activities to enable people to have their say.

All the comments submitted to this consultation will be acknowledged, recorded and taken into consideration as we continue to refine our proposals. To note, we will not be able to respond to you individually.

- You can **submit feedback** to this consultation online and in writing by:
 - Completing the online feedback on our website www.limedownsolar.co.uk
 - Sending an email to info@limedownsolar.co.uk
 - Posting a feedback form or letter to us at **FREEPOST Lime Down Solar**
 - **Printed feedback forms** are available at in-person events and can also be completed and directly handed in to a member of the project team on the day.

The deadline for submitting feedback to this consultation is Friday 26 April 2024.

Contact us

Project information and contact details

- Project website - www.limedownsolar.co.uk
- We have an online registration facility on our website where members of the public can register their details to receive updates directly.
- Dedicated project communications channels on which community relations team available to provide information and address questions, are provided below:
 - **Email** – info@limedownsolar.co.uk
 - **Freephone** – 0808 175 6656
 - **FREEPOST Lime Down Solar**

Your questions