South Brooks Solar Farm

Preliminary Environmental Information
Volume 1: Project Overview

Document Reference: EN0110027
May 2026
Blue Planet Solar Limited

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1 Project and Design Summary

1.1 Purpose of this Volume

1.1.1 This Project and Design Summary Document sets out the design evolution that has occurred since Phase One Consultation (the initial phase of consultation on the early plans for the Project held between 18 September – 30 October 2025) and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping for South Brooks Solar Farm, a proposed 500MW solar and associated infrastructure project (the 'Project'). Following the introduction of the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025, the legal requirement to carry out formal statutory consultation (Phase Two Consultation) (the consultation of updated plans and proposals, carried out in accordance with a Statement of Community Consultation ("SoCC") and relevant legislative requirements) and to publish Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI) has been removed. However, the Applicant (see Section 1.2) recognises the value of pre-application consultation and engagement with local authorities, technical and environmental bodies as well as the local community, and is committed to meaningful engagement with these groups prior to the submission of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

1.1.2 The Applicant has intentionally adopted an approach which provides sufficient information at this stage of the Project, so that local communities and other stakeholders can readily understand the work undertaken to date, potential environmental effects, and next steps. This approach aligns directly with the intent of PINS Advice Note 7[1], supporting effective and inclusive engagement throughout the pre-application stage by presenting information in a manner that is easy to follow and accessible to both specialist and non-specialist audiences. Further information on the role of consultation and engagement is provided within Section 2.2 of this document.

1.1.3 Volume 1 and Volume 2 of the PEI have been produced for the purposes of this Phase Two Consultation on the updated plans for the Project, which is running between 28 May – 9 July 2026. The details that have been provided as part of this summary are not considered to be the final design of the Project but represent the current phase of project design since the previous consultation phase. The Environmental Statement (ES) will set out information on the design that is submitted for consent as part of the DCO application.

1.1.4 The purpose of Volume 1 is to:

[1] Planning Inspectorate (2025), Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects - Advice Note Seven: Environmental Impact Assessment: process, preliminary environmental information and environmental statements [Online] available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-advice-note-seven-environmental-impact-assessment-process-preliminary-environmental-information-an

- Provide further detail on the key phasing, construction, operation and decommissioning, and early mitigation components that define the Project at this stage of design development;
- Explain the need for solar farms such as the Project and how the Site was identified as an appropriate location to meet that need, as well as the evolution of the Project's design and illustrative masterplanning;
- Present the indicative development timeline, outlining anticipated programme milestones;
- Summarise updated elements of the design that are being consulted upon, ensuring stakeholders understand how feedback and new information have informed refinements to date; and
- Set out the key next steps for the Project as it progresses towards submission of the DCO application.

1.1.5 Volume 2 is a separate document, submitted as part of the Phase Two Consultation, and should be read in conjunction with this document. The purpose of Volume 2 is to:

- Summarise the environmental constraints and opportunities across the Site, and detail how environmental measures inform the design of the Project;
- Detail the EIA process in relation to the Project;
- Provide sections for each technical environmental topic which focus on the preliminary work undertaken to date to understand the likely significant environmental effects of the Project, at this point in time, during its construction, operation (including replacement of infrastructure) and decommissioning phases;
- Explain the next steps required to inform the ES;
- An overview of cumulative developments identified at this stage of the Project; and
- An overview of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) process which is ongoing alongside the EIA aspects of the Project.

1.1.6 Volume 2 will also be supplemented by additional technical factsheets where relevant, to provide further detail on key environmental constraints and opportunities. Where relevant, draft versions of environmental management plans have also been provided. These management plans are the early basis to which certain environmental aspects will be delivered and secured following submission

of the DCO application. Management plans would be secured through the DCO requirements (similar to planning conditions for smaller projects), which are legally enforceable. Publishing these early draft management plans at this stage is in response to feedback received during Phase One Consultation, providing further information on how Project commitments will be enforced.

1.2 The Applicant

1.2.1 The Project is being promoted by Blue Planet Solar Limited ('the Applicant'). This is a joint venture between EDF power solutions UK and Ireland, and PS Renewables. The companies have worked together for over five years to develop ground-mounted solar farms, including Longfield Solar Farm which received government consent in 2023.

1.2.2 EDF power solutions UK and Ireland develops, constructs, and operates onshore and offshore wind farms, solar arrays, battery storage, hydrogen innovations, and electrical vehicle charging infrastructure. The Applicant operates over 2 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy assets across the UK and Ireland, including the Teesside Offshore Wind Farm (450MW), Burwell Solar Farm (49.9MW) and will soon be commencing construction of Longfield Solar Farm (400MW) in Essex.

1.2.3 PS Renewables is a highly experienced UK renewable energy developer, established in 2012, with over 1.35GW of consented projects to date and a further 7GW of projects in development today. PS Renewables has extensive Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) experience including the consented Sunnica Energy Farm (500MW), and Longfield Solar Farm (500MW), as well as Rosefield Solar Farm (>50MW), One Earth Solar Farm (740MW) and Clean Air Solar Farm (500MW) all currently in various stages of the DCO process. The Applicant is committed to ensuring that their presence contributes to sustainable growth and development, helping to support the UK in meeting its legally binding net zero targets and benefitting the communities in which it operates.

1.2.4 The Applicant has received a Gate 2 connection notification from the National Energy System Operator (NESO), subject to receiving development consent, to start generating electricity to the National Grid between 2031 and 2035.

1.3 Why This Project is Required

1.3.1 To secure the UK's domestic supply of electricity, meet rising energy demand, and deliver on legally binding climate change commitments, older and more carbon-intensive forms of energy production need to be replaced with clean, homegrown renewable sources. Solar energy is a key component in meeting this challenge. The

National Planning Statement for Energy (EN-1)[2] which sets national policy, states that there is a "*critical national priority (CNP) for the provision of nationally significant low carbon infrastructure*." Solar energy is reliable, low-carbon and can be deployed more rapidly than many other energy generation technologies. Therefore, the Project (which due to its scale is considered to be a NSIP) forms an important part of meeting wider national clean energy objectives.

1.3.2 Solar farms must connect efficiently into the National Grid to supply the electricity they generate to homes and businesses. This requirement is a primary factor in determining suitable locations. The Project is proposed in proximity to the existing National Grid Dungeness substation, a site with a long-established history of energy generation and associated grid infrastructure. The electricity generated by the Project would reach the National Grid Dungeness Substation via underground cables from the Project substation(s) (discussed in Section 2 below). The Project therefore aligns with the core design principle of maximising the delivery of clean, renewable electricity to the National Grid.

1.4 What is the South Brooks Solar Farm

1.4.1 The South Brooks Solar Farm comprises the construction, operation and decommissioning of a solar photovoltaic (PV) array electricity generating facility across approximately 1,208 hectares (ha) of land (the 'Site'), with approximately 1,157ha of the Site located within Kent and approximately 50ha in East Sussex. The Project includes PV arrays, onsite substation(s), Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) units, power conversion stations, grid connection infrastructure (including underground grid connection cabling to the Point of Connection (PoC) and underground interconnecting cable routes), access tracks, as well as specific landscape and ecological mitigation and enhancement areas across Project parcels. The Site boundary is presented in **Figure 1-1: Site Boundary** below.

[2] Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2026), Overarching National Policy Statement for energy (EN-1) [Online] available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/overarching-national-policy-statement-for-energy-en-1-2025/overarching-national-policy-statement-for-energy-en-1-2025-accessible-webpage

Drawing number
Figure 1-1

Project/Location
South Brooks Solar Farm

Drawing title
Site Boundary

Legend

Site Boundary

0 0.5 1 km

Drawing Notes: The site boundary is for indicative purposes only and requires confirmation on site.

1.4.2 The Project would allow export and import of up to 500 megawatts (MW) of electricity to the Dungeness Substation (PoC), which distributes the electricity to the National Grid. The Project will connect to the PoC through underground 400kV cables, the options for which are discussed in Section 3.1. Each of the PV array parcels will also be connected via underground cabling, about which further information is provided in Section 3.1. The proposed location of the Project is visualised below in **Figure 1-2: Site Location Plan**.

Drawing number

Figure 1-2

Project/Location

South Brooks Solar Farm

Drawing title

Site Location Plan

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Grid Connection Cable Routes
- Interconnecting Cable Routes
- Proposed solar PV, supporting solar infrastructure and landscape and ecological mitigation

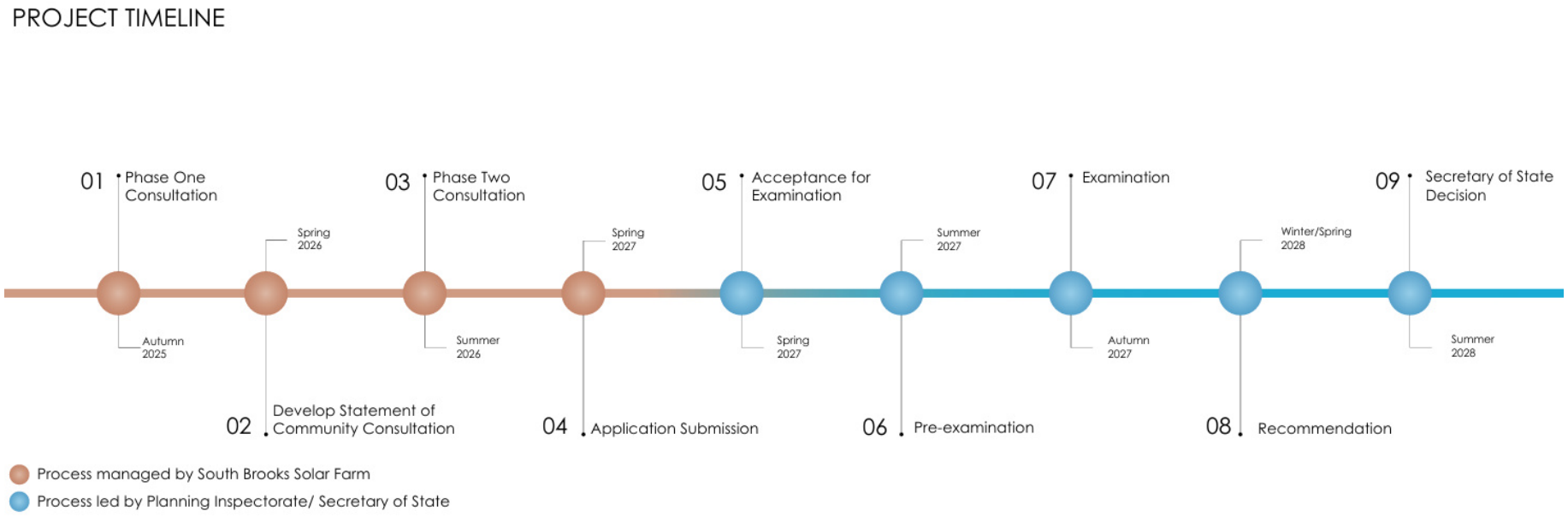
0 0.5 1 km

Drawing Notes: The site boundary is for indicative purposes only and requires confirmation on site.

1.4.3 The Project is classed as an NSIP because of the amount of electricity it would generate (over 100MW). This means that the Applicant needs to submit a DCO application to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) seeking consent to build, operate (and maintain) and decommission the Project. PINS, on behalf of the relevant Secretary of State, will then review and examine the DCO application in public with the input of interested parties like the host local authorities, technical bodies and members of the local community. Following this examination process, PINS will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State who will then make the final decision on whether to grant consent for the Project.

1.4.4 The consenting timeline for the Project is visualised below in **Figure 1-3: NSIP Development Timeline**. Following the DCO application submission in Spring 2027, the NSIP process is then led by PINS and the Secretary of State. On the current trajectory, the Applicant expects to receive a decision by the Secretary of State by Summer 2028. Timings as part of the NSIP development timeline are indicative and are subject to further change as the Project develops.

Figure 1-3: NSIP Development Timeline



2 South Brooks Solar Farm Overview

2.1 Site Selection and Alternative Sites Assessment

2.1.1 A robust site selection process has been carried out for the Project, comprising a number of detailed appraisal stages, to explain the chosen boundary which at the site selection stage comprised the main parcels South Brooks A - F. A summary of the selection and optioneering of the cable corridors and access routes is explained in Section 3.

2.1.2 A full Site Selection Assessment, including the detailed consideration of alternative sites will be provided with the DCO application.

2.1.3 The site selection process is being undertaken in accordance with the guidance provided in EN-3[3], which sets out that applicants should demonstrate how potential sites were identified and assessed, taking account of factors such as irradiance and site topography, network connection, proximity to dwellings, land type and accessibility. The key considerations of the site selection process for the land parcels within the Project include:

- Site topography – land which is flat being less and or equal to a 5 degree slope;
- Network connection – within 15km of the Point of Connection at Dungeness substation;
- On areas outside of built up areas/urban areas;
- Size of land to meet operational and mitigation requirements;
- Sites outside of ecological designations[4] – Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Ramsar; and
- Sites which do not contain another development or Local Plan allocation.

[3] Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2025), Overarching National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy Infrastructure (EN-3), Paragraphs 2.3.1-2.3.10 [Online] available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/695d1368b5c46330350ed9a2/national-policy-statement-for-renewable-energy-infrastructure-en-3-web-accessible.pdf

[4] SSSI are formal conservation designations that form legal protections for land which has valuable wildlife, habitat or geological features in the UK. A SAC is a site which is designated under the Habitats Directive for its highest-value, most threatened habitats and species (excluding birds) of European importance. As part of this national site network, SPAs protect rare, vulnerable and migratory bird species of international importance. Furthermore, a Ramsar site is a designated wetland of international importance, and can often overlap with SPAs.

2.1.4 Alongside this, the Applicant has been considering environmental and planning constraints in line with the policy and legislative protections that are in place for them:

- Best and most versatile agricultural land;
- Other ecological designations;
- Flood Risk;
- Built Heritage;
- Archaeology;
- Accessibility of the sites; and
- Other Policy Compliance issues – National Landscapes, Green Belt, and Open Space/Recreational areas and playing fields.

2.1.5 At this stage, the site selection process is still ongoing, but the land that is the subject of this Phase Two Consultation sets out the Applicant's current view on the preferred sites, taking account of the above constraints. Full details of the process and how sites were selected will be presented in the Site Selection Assessment, including explaining why alternative sites were not taken forward, which will be submitted as part of the DCO application.

2.1.6 The Applicant's structured, multi-stage approach is consistent with NPS EN-1, which requires applicants to demonstrate that they have considered "*reasonable alternatives*" and have selected sites that represent the most appropriate balance between environmental, social, and technical factors. NPS EN-1 also states that applications should be "proportionate and focused, with just the sufficient detail required to clearly identify the likely significant effects from the proposal." The approach also reflects the Government's expectation in EN-3 that applicants will demonstrate how site selection has sought to maximise renewable generation while avoiding or minimising impacts where possible.

2.2 The Role of Consultation and Engagement

2.2.1 The Applicant views consultation as an integral part of the development process of the Project, with feedback already helping to shape the proposals that are being presented for Phase Two Consultation. The Applicant remains committed to conducting a transparent, inclusive and thorough programme of consultation and engagement on its proposals for the Project. A summary of the outcomes of Phase One Consultation, as well as the next steps as part of ongoing engagement, is provided below.

2.2.2 The Applicant carried out Phase One Consultation in September and October 2025. This primarily consisted of the publication of a Project website, with a launch leaflet sent to all properties (8,786) within the parishes of Lydd, New Romney, Old Romney, Camber and Ivychurch, and the publication of consultation materials including a 36-page consultation booklet, exhibition banners, consultation maps and a questionnaire. Prior to launch, meetings were held with the Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) including Kent County Council, East Sussex County Council, Folkestone and Hythe District Council and Rother District Council. Five public exhibitions at locations around the Project were held to provide information on the early layout of the Project. During the Phase One consultation feedback window, formal responses were received from local residents, stakeholder groups and other local organisations.

2.2.3 As part of the Phase One Consultation process, a number of near neighbour meetings also took place where these specific meetings were requested due to the sensitivity or proximity of these stakeholders.

2.2.4 Within the process of consultation, the Applicant has sought initial feedback from a number of stakeholders in order to present the early proposals, engage on specific environmental impacts and opportunities as part of the Project, and develop working relationships going forward for ongoing engagement through the DCO process. Feedback and data has included information from, but not limited to:

- Kent Wildlife Trust;
- Natural England (through the Discretionary Advice Service (DAS));
- Environment Agency (through the DAS);
- Romney Marsh Area Internal Drainage Board (RMAIDB);
- The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB);
- Kent Fire and Rescue Service;
- Historic England;
- British Horse Society;
- Hands Off Our Marsh;
- Lydd Airport; and
- Elected representatives.

2.2.5 Following the receipt of verbal and written feedback from public exhibitions, statutory and non-statutory stakeholder feedback further updates to the Project masterplan have been incorporated in response.

2.2.6 Further information is provided within Volume 2: Environmental Summary with regard to specific consultation and engagement undertaken since Phase One Consultation, for each environmental discipline.

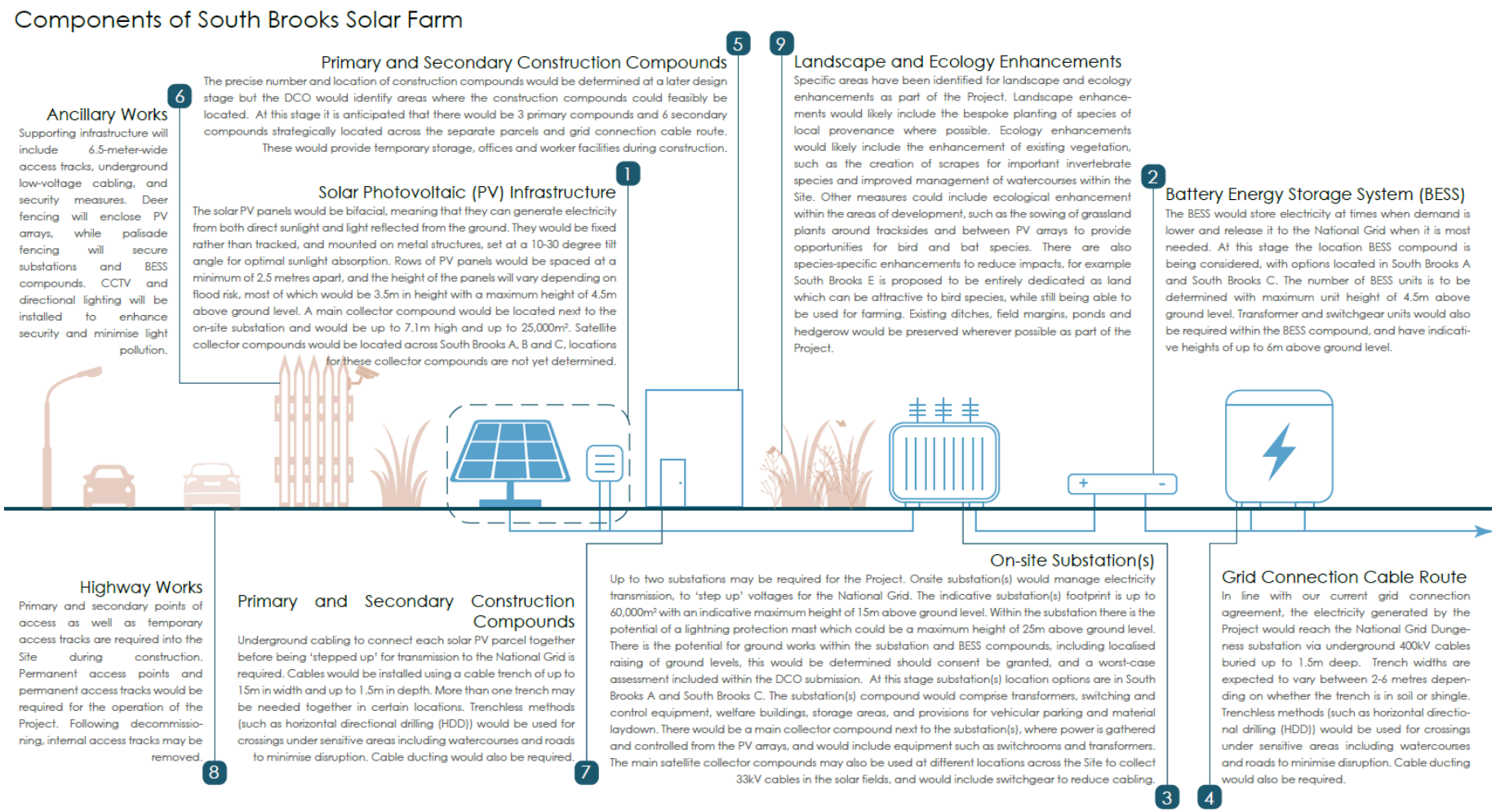
2.2.7 As part of Phase Two Consultation, the Applicant has demonstrated how the Project has evolved in response to the feedback received at and following Phase One. This consultation phase is an opportunity to share views on the updated plans, demonstrate how the Applicant is responding to feedback, and set out what further work is required to inform the design, masterplan and environmental assessment for the DCO application. Engagement on the Project is inherently an ongoing process, to which meetings and dialogue with stakeholders will continue.

2.2.8 Feedback from Phase Two and continued engagement will inform the scope of environmental assessments and final design details which will be submitted as part of the DCO application. Information about how the Applicant has carried out its programmes of consultation and engagement, and how it has considered the feedback received, will be detailed in a Consultation Report submitted as part of the DCO application.

2.3 Key Components of South Brooks Solar Farm

2.3.1 **Figure 2-1: Indicative Components of South Brooks Solar Farm** below sets out the key engineering parameters associated with each of the proposed infrastructure elements at this stage of the Project.

Figure 2-1: Indicative Components of South Brooks Solar Farm

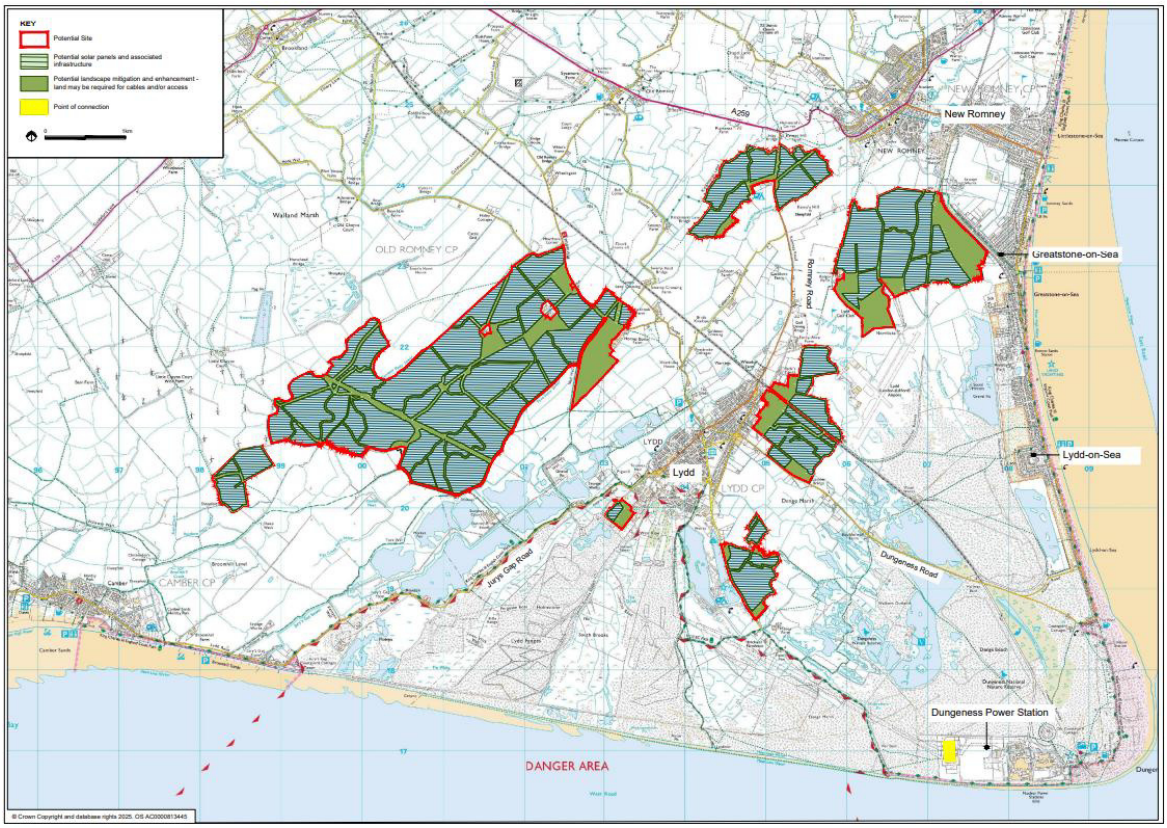


3 Updates to the Illustrative Masterplan

3.1 Summary of illustrative masterplan updates

3.1.1 At Phase One consultation, the Applicant presented the first version of the illustrative masterplan for the Project. This is presented in **Figure 3-1: Phase One Consultation Illustrative Masterplan** below:

Figure 3-1: Phase One Consultation Illustrative Masterplan

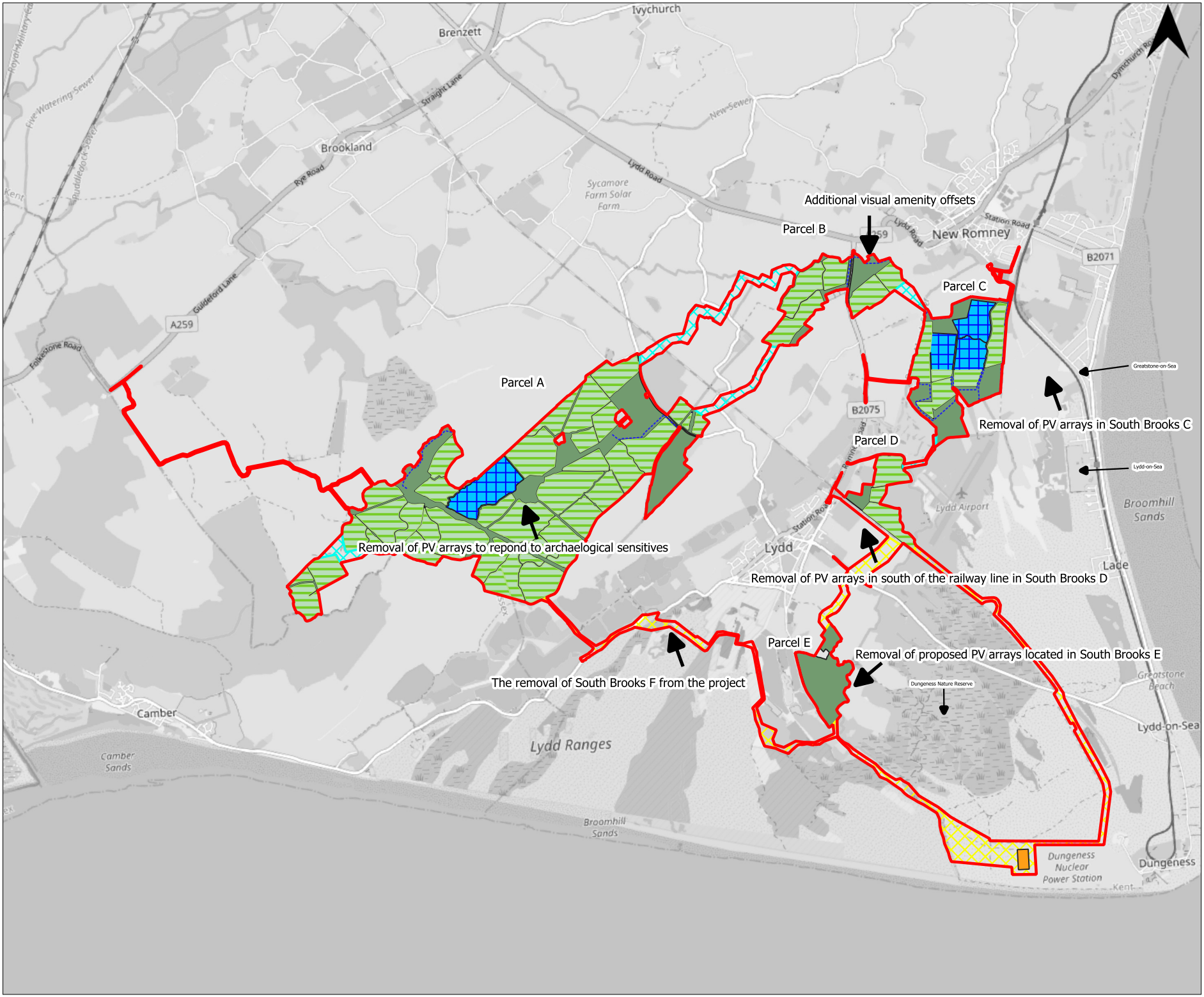


3.1.2 **Figure 3-2: Illustrative Masterplan** below presents the current illustrative masterplan of the Project. Following Phase One consultation, further amendments have been made including:

- A 20% reduction in the developable area between Phase One and Phase Two Consultation;
- 322ha hectares of land would be used for landscaping and ecology (a 25% increase from Phase One Consultation);
- Removal of half of South Brooks D and all of South Brooks F to increase distance from Lydd;

- All land east of the disused railway line (South Brooks C) has been removed from the Project;
- South Brooks E to be managed for biodiversity (no above ground infrastructure);
- 9.3km of permissive walking routes proposed to connect up the existing footpath network;
- Overhead lines to Dungeness Substation discounted to reduce visual impact and shingle disturbance;
- Introduction of interconnecting cable corridor options; and
- Substation(s) and BESS location options.

3.1.3 Further detail on these changes is provided below.



Drawing number
Figure 3-2

Project/Location
South Brooks Solar Farm

Drawing title
Illustrative Masterplan Updates - PV Arrays and Associated Infrastructure

Legend

- Site Boundary
- Proposed Mitigation and Enhancement
- Proposed PV Panels and Associated Infrastructure
- Potential BESS Substation PV Panels
- Grid Connection Cable Routes
- Interconnecting Cable Routes
- Point of Connection
- Proposed Permissive path

0 0.5 1 km

Drawing Notes: The site boundary is for indicative purposes only and requires confirmation on site.

Solar Panels and Associated Infrastructure

3.1.4 The following amendments, specific to the refinement of PV arrays, have been incorporated into the Project masterplan at this stage, as a result of Phase One Consultation and other ongoing stakeholder feedback:

- Removal of proposed PV arrays located in South Brooks E, to create ecological mitigation and enhancement in-line with survey results and ongoing stakeholder consultation feedback, and to tie-in with the existing SSSI boundary. Further removal of PV arrays has also been incorporated in response to ecological sensitivities identified through continued surveys (South Brooks E), as well as the commitment to remove any above ground infrastructure from within areas of the SSSI;
- The removal of South Brooks F from the Project following further engineering feasibility work which has determined that this parcel was less suitable for Solar PV, BESS and Substation(s) infrastructure in comparison to other parcels, as well as feedback during Phase One Consultation with regards to proximity to Lydd;
- Additional offsets incorporated across all parcels to account for visual amenity from Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and other receptors including offsets to Kingsmarsh Lane and Romney Road;
- Removal of proposed PV arrays from northern sections of South Brooks A to respond to potential impacts to residential setting and views (including the incorporation of feedback from Phase One Consultation), as well as potential archaeological sensitivity following the results of geophysical surveys;
- Proposed PV arrays have been removed from a central area of South Brooks A in response to archaeological and heritage sensitivities. This is associated with a World War II crash landing site;
- The removal of PV arrays to the south of the railway line in South Brooks D, to effectively remove all proposed PV arrays to the east of Lydd; and
- The removal of PV arrays in South Brooks C to account for operational and aircraft safety requirements at Lydd Airport.

3.1.5 Following the completion of Phase Two Consultation, further work would be undertaken to refine the extent of the PV arrays to be incorporated into DCO application. This work would include consideration of specific feedback from local stakeholders, statutory and non-statutory consultees on the location of this infrastructure. Further environmental and engineering survey work would also be completed to inform the decision-making process.

Proposed Substation(s) and BESS

3.1.6 Further design, masterplanning and environmental assessment work has taken place since completion of the EIA Scoping Report, to determine the best possible options for the positioning of Substation(s) and BESS units within the Site boundary. At this stage, two options are presented with one Substation and BESS compound located in South Brooks A, and a second option with compound locations within South Brooks C. One BESS compound is proposed in either Parcel A or Parcel C, whereas the design optionality at this stage includes the potential for up to two substations as part of the Project.

3.1.7 Within the Site, the selection of the proposed locations for BESS has been based on a number of factors, including the minimisation of the proximity to receptors (such as residential and ecological) of any nuisance with the distance to properties maximised where possible. This has the benefit of reducing the visual and noise impacts.

3.1.8 The option locations have been further refined through environmental appraisal work, to understand the key environmental constraints across technical disciplines. As a result, the options presented take into consideration flood risk, Agricultural Land Classification (ALC), cultural heritage, biodiversity, noise, access, land and property as well as key consenting, planning and engineering factors. This will be set out in more detail as part of the DCO application. Since EIA Scoping, further environmental data has also become available, including indicative ALC results, geophysical survey results and also biodiversity data, to further inform the potential locations for Substation(s) and BESS infrastructure.

3.1.9 The Applicant would develop the BESS in accordance with all relevant legislation and good practice in force at the time. The primary guidance to be used is the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) guidance “NFCC Grid Scale Battery Energy Storage System planning – Guidance for FRS- Version 2”.

3.1.10 Following the completion of Phase Two Consultation, further work would be undertaken to determine the best possible option to bring forward into the design approach for DCO application. This work would include consideration of specific feedback from local stakeholders, statutory and non-statutory consultees on the location of this infrastructure. Further environmental and engineering survey work would also be completed to inform the decision-making process.

Cable Routes

Grid connection cable routes

3.1.11 Further design, masterplanning and environmental assessment work has taken place since completion of the EIA Scoping Report, to determine the best possible

options for grid connection and interconnecting cable routes for the Project. At EIA Scoping stage, cable corridor search areas were presented for the cable connection to the National Grid Dungeness substation. This presented the early optioneering work which took into account initial environmental appraisals of potential routes. Early options included both underground and overhead cable route options.

3.1.12 Building on this, further design work has taken place to provide preliminary information on technical feasibility and methods for the type and installation of cabling to connect to the National Grid Dungeness substation. Further environmental appraisal work has been undertaken to refine potential options. Consequently, overhead lines to Dungeness Substation have been discounted to reduce visual impact and shingle disturbance. Therefore, what is presented at Phase Two Consultation is four defined underground options to connect the Project to the National Grid (presented in **Figure 1-2: Site Location** from GC1 to GC4). The key principle of the environmental work is to avoid and limit as much as possible the effects upon sensitive ecologically designated sites, acknowledging that the substation is located in proximity to national and internationally designated sites for ecology and geology.

3.1.13 While the DCO application is expected to be submitted with one defined option for the grid connection cable route (which is largely determined by the Project substation location(s)), it is possible that optionality may still be presented at that stage following further environmental and engineering assessments.

Interconnecting cable routes

3.1.14 With regard to interconnecting cable routes (the proposed cables to connect each of the PV parcels together before being 'stepped up' to the grid connection corridor for transmission to the National Grid), at EIA scoping stage the search areas for this infrastructure were not fully defined, hence not being included within preliminary assessments at that stage. What is currently presented at Phase Two Consultation, is a number of corridors showing how each parcel could connect together from South Brooks A to E, as identified in **Figure 1-2: Site Location** from IC1 to IC4. While the DCO application is expected to be submitted with one defined option for the interconnecting cable route, this is largely determined by the location of the Project Substation(s) which then determines where cabling needs to be specifically directed.

3.1.15 During construction, cabling would be installed using a variety of techniques including trenchless methods (such as HDD) where crossings of sensitive receptors are required such as watercourses.

3.1.16 To determine final cable routes for the DCO application, further biodiversity, geophysical surveys, other engineering surveys and traffic surveys are critical to

fully understand any potential constraints associated with the proposed options. Engagement is already taking place with relevant stakeholders, including Lydd Airport, the RSPB, EDF Energy (the owners and operators of Dungeness B power station), Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Natural England with regard to potential effects and how these can be mitigated. Specific feedback from Phase One Consultation was also sought and subsequently informed the potential options. Engagement will continue to further refine these options. Design refinement will also continue to take place to determine precise crossings, cabling installation and other construction methods and parameters.

3.2 The Indicative Development Timeline for South Brooks Solar Farm

3.2.1 As detailed in Section 1.4.5, a decision on whether the DCO application is granted approval by the Secretary of State is indicatively expected by Summer 2028.

3.2.2 At this stage it is anticipated that the construction phase would be up to 48 months, with an anticipated completion date in 2031 (based upon the most recent available information on the grid connection date). This is based on the assumption that work can take place all year round, subject to relevant seasonal constraints.

3.2.3 The initial Gate 2 connection notification from NESO (subject to receiving development consent) accounts for the Project to start generating electricity to the National Grid between 2031 and 2035. Further details will be available on grid connection date following receipt of the formal offer from NESO.

3.2.4 The operational lifetime of the Project is expected to be up to 60 years. During the operational phase of the Project, onsite activities would include routine servicing and maintenance, as well as the replacement of plant and equipment, and the presence of an onsite security team. Routine maintenance tasks are expected to be carried out by small teams working across the site as needed to inspect, repair or replace equipment. In terms of full time employment numbers, it is expected that up to 600 staff would be needed during construction. Satellite compounds in each larger land parcel may be used to provide local welfare and spares for teams working away from the main operation and maintenance facility (which is expected to be at the project substation). Regular vegetation management and cleaning of PV panels would be carried out to maintain performance. An assessment of the replacement of solar and BESS equipment would be included in the environmental topic chapters and detailed within the Environmental Statement (ES) submitted as part of the DCO application. Site accesses and internal roads used for construction are expected to be retained for use during operation. Details of how these elements will be managed during operation will be set out in the outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (oOEMP) to be submitted as part of the DCO application.

3.2.5 After up to 60 years of operation, decommissioning would commence, and the Site would be returned to its original use as far as possible. Concrete, hardstanding areas and foundations for the infrastructure would be removed to a depth of up to 1m, and would be dismantled and recycled or disposed of in accordance with best practice policy and requirements at that time. Typically, any underground cabling below 1.5m would be left in-situ, unless otherwise agreed with the landowner, provided that in each case the landowner and any occupiers of the land post-decommissioning shall leave any such equipment in a safe condition. This would also be dependent upon the legislation and industry standards at the time of decommissioning. The use of decommissioned materials would follow the waste hierarchy such that they would be reused where possible before recycling and disposal were considered. Further details of how these elements will be managed during decommissioning will be set out in the outline Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (oDEMP) to be submitted as part of the DCO application.

3.3 The Next Steps for Design and Masterplanning

3.3.1 Following Phase Two Consultation and the collection of feedback from statutory and non-statutory consultees, the Project masterplan would be updated to account for this feedback. The process to which the masterplan has been iteratively developed will be detailed as part of the Design Approach Document (DAD) which will be submitted as part of the DCO application. This document will be further informed by the project-specific design principles.

3.3.2 In terms of engineering design, the key next steps are to respond within the design to further environmental survey results and assessment work as part of the ES. Following Phase Two Consultation, the Project engineering team will also respond to feedback where relevant, and furthermore incorporate feedback into the next stage of design development. Engagement will continue with consultees.

South Brooks
Solar Farm

www.southbrookssolarfarm.co.uk