

# South Brooks Solar Farm

## Preliminary Environmental Information

Volume 2: Environmental Summary

Chapter 14: Socioeconomics

Document Reference: EN0110027  
May 2026  
Blue Planet Solar Limited



## Table of Contents

14	Socioeconomics	406
14.1	What is 'Socioeconomics'	406
14.2	Key Terms	407
14.3	Summary of Points Raised in EIA Scoping Opinion and Project Response	408
14.4	Ongoing Socioeconomic Work	415
	Study Areas	415
	Current socioeconomics results	416
	Future socioeconomics	419
14.5	Important Receptors Identified	419
14.6	Considering Socioeconomics in Design	421
14.7	Preliminary Assessment of Likely Significant Effects	421
	Preliminary Assessment	423

---

## 14 Socioeconomics

### 14.1 What is ‘Socioeconomics’

- 14.1.1 In the context of EIA, socioeconomics is a means of investigating and understanding the likely significant effects of new development on the host community<sup>120</sup>. This involves analysing, monitoring and managing the intended and unintended social consequences (positive and negative) of the Project with the aim of bringing about a more ecologically, socio-culturally and economically sustainable and equitable environment <sup>121,122</sup>.
- 14.1.2 The socioeconomic assessment considers social outcomes at the community level. This responds to the EIA Regulation<sup>123</sup> requirement to consider the ‘population’ related likely significant effects of a Project. Communities are more than just the individuals within them; each community has a unique combination of characteristics, which define its particular societal attributes and sensitivities.
- 14.1.3 In socioeconomic assessment, a community is supported by the three pillars of economic sustainability, social sustainability and environmental sustainability<sup>120</sup>. Change in any one of these pillars can also affect the other pillars. A socioeconomic assessment builds on local data to analyse the impacts and opportunities of a project.
- 14.1.4 The scope of the socioeconomic assessment intersects with other environmental assessment topics, which inform, and are informed by, the socioeconomic assessment. Relevant topics include Noise and Vibration, Landscape and Visual, Cultural Heritage, Air Quality, Land and Groundwater, Agricultural Soils, Human Health, Transport and Access, Carbon and Climate Change and Hydrology.

---

<sup>120</sup> Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP) (2025) Social Impact Assessment in Environmental Impact Assessment in the UK. Available at: <https://www.isepglobal.org/resources/blogs/2025/october/isep-launches-new-guide-on-social-impact-assessment/> (Accessed: 23/02/26).

<sup>121</sup> Vanclay, F. (2003) International Principles For Social Impact Assessment. <https://iaia.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/BEST-PRACTICE-SIA-Principles.pdf> (Accessed: 23/03/26).

<sup>122</sup> IAIA (no date) Social Impact Assessment (online) <https://iaia.org/social-impact-assessment/social-impact-assessment-general-info/> (Accessed: 23/03/26).

<sup>123</sup> HMO (2017) The Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (EIA) Regulations 2017. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2017/572/contents> [Accessed: 23/03/26].

## 14.2 Key Terms

**Table 14-1: Key Terms**

Terms	Definition
Gross Value Added (GVA)	The value generated by any unit engaged in the production of goods and services. It is one measure of overall economic performance.
Displacement	Involuntary loss, movement or change in employment due to external factors.
Leakage	Relates to jobs that are filled from outside of a usual home-based commuting distance, such that not all the benefit of new employment is retained within the area close to the Project.
Population	Groups of individuals who share common characteristics. A population is typically defined in relation to two or more characteristics. For example, the community with a strong stake in a particular economic market (e.g. housing or tourism) has both a geographical characteristic and a market dependence characteristic.
Receptor	For Social Impact Assessment, receptors are the defined communities. Within these communities there will be workforces, residents, visitors, businesses, services, events, neighbourhoods, facilities, assets, sites, routes, habitats and spaces. The community will also be set within a wider context of markets, identity and other societal influences.
Social outcomes	Outcomes on the viability or vitality of the community, acting on its fundamental defining characteristics. This includes considering not only the strength of societal components (e.g. levels of employment), but also the strength of societal connections (e.g. community cohesion).
Societal components	Elements that define a community include the accessibility, quantity and quality of: employment and income; housing and accommodation; infrastructure, services and facilities; and natural spaces. These tie closely to the economic and environmental sustainability pillars.
Societal connections	Connections within a community are influenced by: migration or demographic change; people’s capacities linked to levels of health, education, skills and care responsibilities; people’s outlook (aspirations/anxieties); community interactions, support or social networks; and cultural traditions, identity or place attachments. These tie closely to the social sustainability pillar.

Terms	Definition
Social determinants	Describes the categories of factors set out in guidance that affect social outcomes. Social determinants are scoped into or out of the assessment depending on their potential for likely significant effects on communities.

### 14.3 Summary of Points Raised in EIA Scoping Opinion and Project Response

14.3.1 Comments provided by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) relating to areas to be considered (scoped in) and scoped out of the Socioeconomics assessment are summarised in Table 14-2.

**Table 14-2: PINS Scoping Opinion on Socioeconomics**

Summary of PINS Scoping Opinion	Discipline Feedback	Next Steps
For socioeconomic conditions and housing as social determinants, in relation to all phases, the Inspectorate agrees that impacts associated with upskilling and training, homes or accommodation quality, supply, price or access, relocations or temporary housing, spatial planning and zoning can be scoped out of the socioeconomic assessment.	Agreed.	None.

For infrastructure as a social determinant, in relation to all phases, the Inspectorate agrees that impacts associated with public and social services, community facilities and their financial revenues and public	Agreed.	None.
--	---------	-------

Summary of PINS Scoping Opinion	Discipline Feedback	Next Steps
<p>utilities can be scoped out of the socioeconomic assessment.</p>		
<p>For people as a social determinant, in relation to all phases, the Inspectorate agrees that impacts associated with migration or demographic change, people’s capacities to engage in society linked to levels of health, education, skills, care responsibilities or human rights and people’s outlook can be scoped out of the socioeconomic assessment.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>For connectedness of community as a social determinant, in relation to all phases, the Inspectorate agrees that impacts associated with connectedness of community: community cohesion, severance and social networks, community interactions linked to safety, hazards, security and crime and intergenerational participation can be scoped out of the socioeconomic assessment.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>For culture as a social determinant, in relation to all phases, the Inspectorate agrees that impacts associated with cultural identity, including linked</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>	<p>None.</p>

Summary of PINS Scoping Opinion	Discipline Feedback	Next Steps
<p>to buildings, structures and events can be scoped out of the socioeconomic assessment.</p>		
<p>For culture as a social determinant, in relation to all phases, the Inspectorate agrees that impacts associated with place identity, including wider cityscape, seascape or landscape aesthetics can be scoped out of the socioeconomic assessment provided these impacts are considered in the landscape and visual chapter.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>For culture as a social determinant, in relation to all phases, the Inspectorate agrees that impacts associated with minority languages protected in policy, e.g. Gaelic, Cornish or Welsh can be scoped out of the socioeconomic assessment.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>For nature as a social determinant, the Inspectorate advises that ‘social change due to impact on biodiversity and natural capital affecting experiences of wildlife and natural habitats’ should be scoped into the assessment of socioeconomic effects due to the potential for altered interaction</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>	<p>‘Social change due to impact on biodiversity and natural capital affecting experiences of wildlife and natural habitats’ will be scoped into the ES Socioeconomic chapter. The approach would include a qualitative assessment informed by the ES Biodiversity chapter.</p>

Summary of PINS Scoping Opinion	Discipline Feedback	Next Steps
<p>and perception of nature in the local study area.</p>		
<p>For nature as a social determinant, in relation to all phases, the Inspectorate agrees that impacts associated with community gardens and parks (quantity, quality and access) affecting attitudes to and levels of engagement with nature can be scoped out of the socioeconomic assessment.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>For nature as a social determinant, in relation to all phases, the Inspectorate agrees that impact associated with natural resource availability, or traditional knowledge can be scoped out of the socioeconomic assessment provided that the effects to best and most versatile agricultural land are considered in the agricultural soils chapter.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>For living environment as a social determinant, in relation to all phases, the Inspectorate agrees that impacts associated with pollution or nuisance affecting the quality of the local living environment can be scoped out of the socioeconomic assessment provided the issues</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>	<p>None.</p>

Summary of PINS Scoping Opinion	Discipline Feedback	Next Steps
<p>of pollution and nuisance are scoped in for the noise and vibration and hydrology and hydrogeology chapters (where these issues are scoped in).</p>		
<p>For living environment as a social determinant, in relation to all phases, the Inspectorate agrees that impacts associated with wider living environment quality due to climate change or the circular economy can be scoped out of the socioeconomic assessment provided the issues are considered in the carbon and climate change chapter.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p>The Inspectorate notes that the study area is not clearly defined and the baseline conditions simultaneously refer to the site, the local area, districts, the Southeast region, and the nation as a whole. The ES should clearly describe an appropriate study area and where appropriate, illustrate this on a figure.</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>	<p>The study areas are clearly defined in Section 14.4 and illustrated in <b>Figure 14-1: Site Specific Study Area and District Level Study Area</b> and <b>14-2: County Level Regional Study Area</b> within this chapter. These study areas will be applied in the ES when setting out the baseline conditions and assessment of socioeconomic effects.</p>
<p>With regards to sensitivity of receptors, the Inspectorate requests that criteria defining</p>	<p>Agreed.</p>	<p>The methodology for Community Sensitivity Criteria as set out in the Scoping Report (Table 16.3) and defined in ISEP</p>

Summary of PINS Scoping Opinion	Discipline Feedback	Next Steps
receptor values and sensitivity needs to be outlined in the ES.		guidance <sup>124</sup> will be set out in the ES Socioeconomics chapter.
The Inspectorate notes that the ES should identify potentially affected tourist attractions as receptors and assess significant effects where they are likely to occur, such as Romney, Hythe, Dymchurch Railway Visitor Centre. These should be cross referenced with other ES Chapters, such as landscape and visual amenity.	Agreed.	Relevant tourism attractions, including as businesses relating to the tourism and visitor economy, will be identified and considered in reaching conclusions as to the socioeconomic effects on community social outcomes within the ES Socioeconomics chapter.

14.3.2 In addition to the PINS Scoping Opinion, engagement has been and continues to be undertaken with relevant stakeholders. A summary of comments raised during consultation with statutory consultees in relation to Socioeconomics is provided in Table 14-3.

**Table 14-3: Summary of Ongoing Comments and Feedback With Consultees**

Summary of Relevant Stakeholder Consultation Comments	Consultee	Discipline Feedback	Next Steps
Concerns raised by community consultees focused on the amenity value of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) to the visitor economy, including:	Community	PRoW amenity will be assessed under the social determinant of 'social change due to impact on public access to outdoor spaces and	The impact of changes in visual amenity for the tourism sector at relevant receptors and

<sup>124</sup> Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP) (2025) Social Impact Assessment in Environmental Impact Assessment in the UK. Available at: <https://www.isepglobal.org/resources/blogs/2025/october/isep-launches-new-guide-on-social-impact-assessment/> (Accessed: 23/02/26).

Summary of Relevant Stakeholder Consultation Comments	Consultee	Discipline Feedback	Next Steps
<p>Direct visual impacts on South Brooks B and E deterring tourists and resultant local economic growth. South Brooks C is in close proximity to the local tourist and historic site of Romney Hythe and Dymchurch Railway.</p>		<p>routes, including sports, play and recreation’. The influence on tourism linked to change in local outdoor amenity will be assessed under the social determinant ‘change due to impact on structural economic factors, including traditional industries or foundational economy (including impact on tourism-based livelihoods)’.</p>	<p>local businesses will be reported in the Socioeconomics chapter of the ES. This will be submitted as part of the DCO application.</p>
<p>The visual impact of the solar array is considered industrial and detrimental to local hospitality businesses reliant on open space across the Local Area.</p>	<p>Community</p>	<p>The Project’s design has continued to be reviewed, including with evaluation by the socioeconomic assessment team, with South Brooks E amended as a landscape and biodiversity enhancement area only, with no above ground infrastructure required within this parcel; the buffer zone between South Brooks C and properties at Greatstone and Dymchurch Railway has been increased; and South Brooks D has been approximately halved in size.</p>	

14.3.3 **Appendix 1-2: Key Policy and Legislation** provides details on the legislation, policy and guidance that has informed the approach to the socioeconomic assessment.

## 14.4 Ongoing Socioeconomic Work

### Study Areas

14.4.1 The study areas for the Project have been reviewed and the site-specific area remapped to Medium Layer Super Output areas (MSOAs) rather than Output Areas (OAs) described in the Scoping Report. This supports consistency with the Human Health chapter, where public health data is now only published down to the MSOA level. It also reflects a larger area supported by socioeconomic statistics to which the socioeconomic benefits can be focused and within which to target mitigation to reduce any adverse socioeconomic effects. The revised study areas are therefore:

- **Site-specific study area**, covering populations of the MSOAs within the Site and surrounding communities of Rother 002 (E02004393) and Folkestone and Hythe 011 (E02005112), Folkestone and Hythe 012 (E02005113), and Folkestone and Hythe 013 (E02005114);
- **District level study area**, covering the local population within the administrative areas of Folkestone and Hythe District Council and Rother District Council;
- **Labour Market Focus Area**, covering the majority of the existing workforce in the site-specific study area and indicative of the primary target area for practice activities to encourage local employment and skills development. The Folkestone & Hythe, Rother, Ashford and Hastings Districts are combined to form the Labour Market Focus Area. The Office for National Statistics Travel to Work Areas (TTWAs) of Folkestone and Hythe, Ashford, and Hastings have been considered in the assessment of employment effects where applicable;
- **Labour Market Area**, encompassing the wider population within the administrative boundaries of Kent (made up of 12 district or borough councils), East Sussex (being made up of five district or borough councils), and the unitary authorities of Brighton and Hove and Medway;
- **Regional study area**, covering the wider population of South East England including Kent, Sussex, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Surrey, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire; and
- **National study area**, representing the national population of England in relation to public benefits of renewable energy security.

14.4.2 The relevant study areas are shown in **Figure 14-1: Site Specific Study Area and District Level Study Area** and **Figure 14-2: County Level, Labour Catchment and Regional Study Area**.

### Current socioeconomics results

- 14.4.3 Baseline socioeconomic data was collected via a desktop search of data published by the Office for National Statistics on “Nomis” on several issues: demographic characteristics and trends as well as those on the local economy, employment and labour market<sup>125</sup>.

#### *Economic activity status*

- 14.4.4 Table 14-4 provides an overview of economic activity status across the study areas. This indicates that the site-specific study area has the lowest percentage of economically active residents sitting below the regional average (60.1%) and national average (58.6%), although this accounts for the lowest percentage of unemployment (2.2%) across all geographical scales. Employment within the wider district and labour market catchment area also falls below the regional and national average. Note, these unemployment data reflect those looking for work but not necessarily in receipt of unemployment social security benefits. Full-time students are excluded from these data.
- 14.4.5 In terms of economic inactivity, the largest proportion within the site-specific study area are retired (36.2%), which is notably higher than the regional and national averages. The site-specific study area also has the highest percentage of long-term sick or disabled and lowest proportion of students compared to all other geographical scales. This provides insight into the age and health profile of the local population, which may have implications for the proportion of the construction and operational workforces which could be sourced from the immediate local area.
- 14.4.6 When compared to regional and national levels, the site-specific study area and relevant districts are more heavily reliant on employment in a small number of sectors. In 2024 the largest employment sector in the site-specific study area was accommodation & food services (16.6% of the working population), followed by mining, quarrying & utilities (including energy) (12.9%) and agriculture (excluding farm agriculture<sup>126</sup>) employed the lowest proportion of the population (0.9%)<sup>127</sup>. Construction made up 7.9% of site-specific study employment in 2024, higher than the proportion at district, regional, and national scales.

---

<sup>125</sup> Office for National Statistics (2025) Local Indicators. Available at: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/explore-local-statistics/indicators> [Accessed 23/03/26].

<sup>126</sup> Farm agriculture (SIC subclass 01000) is excluded from MSOA-level data in the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) because the data is not considered to be statistically robust or disclosure-safe at very small geographies. Farm agriculture is included in the statistics across the wider geographies.

<sup>127</sup> Business Register and Employment Survey (2024) BRES: open access. Available at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/select/getdatasetbytheme.asp?theme=27> [Accessed: 2 April 2026].

**Table 14-4: Economic activity status (%), Census 2021**

Economic activity status		Site-specific study area	District level study area	Labour Market Focus Area	Labour Market Area	Regional study area	National study area
Economically active	In employment	45.6	49.2	52.9	55.2	57.6	55.7
	Unemployed	2.2	2.5	2.7	2.7	2.5	2.9
Total		47.8	51.7	55.6	57.9	60.1	58.6
Economically inactive	Retired	36.2	32.0	27.2	23.6	22.5	21.5
	Student	2.8	3.2	3.5	4.9	5.1	5.6
	Looking after home or family	4.6	4.4	4.7	4.7	4.4	4.8
	Long-term sick or disabled	5.1	4.5	4.7	3.9	3.1	4.1
	Other	2.5	2.8	3.0	2.9	2.7	3.1
Total		51.2	47.0	42.9	40.0	37.8	39.1

**Qualifications**

14.4.7 Table 14-5 provides an overview of qualifications across the study areas. While fewer people within the site-specific study area have level 4/5 qualifications in the site-specific study area (22.3%) than at all other spatial scales, there is a relatively higher proportion of apprenticeships (7.1%). The South East represents the highest levels of educational attainment across the study areas, with the lowest percentage of the population with no qualifications and higher proportion with level 4-5 qualifications, both of which demonstrate better attainment than the national average.

**Table 14-5: Highest level of qualification (%), Census 2021**

Highest level of qualification <sup>128</sup>	Site-specific study area	District level study area	Labour Market Focus Area	Labour Market area	Regional study area	National study area
No qualifications	23.0	19.2	18.9	17.4	15.4	18.1

<sup>128</sup> Level 1 equates to 1-4 GCSEs; level 2 equates to 5 or more GCSEs; Level 3 equates to 2 or more A-levels; Level 4 or above equates to degree (BA, BSc) or higher degree (MA, PhD) and other relates to vocational or work-related qualifications. Full definitions available at:

Highest level of qualification <sup>128</sup>	Site-specific study area	District level study area	Labour Market Focus Area	Labour Market area	Regional study area	National study area
Level 1 qualifications	12.5	11.4	11.3	10.5	9.8	9.7
Level 2 qualifications	14.7	14.8	15.0	14.5	13.9	13.3
Apprenticeships	7.1	6.1	5.8	5.4	5.1	5.3
Level 3 qualifications	16.7	16.9	17.0	17.7	17.4	16.9
Level 4/5 qualifications	22.3	28.5	29.0	31.7	35.8	33.9
Other qualifications/ level unknown	3.7	3.2	3.0	2.8	2.7	2.8

### *Index of Multiple Deprivation*

- 14.4.8 The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is the official measure of relative deprivation in England. It defines deprivation to encompass a range of an individual’s living conditions. The assessment is determined through a weighted combination of seven factors: Income, Employment, Education, Skills and Training, Health Deprivation and Disability, Crime, Barriers to Housing and Services, and Living Environment Deprivation.
- 14.4.9 In the latest 2025 dataset, the site-specific study area falls within the 20% to 40% most deprived areas, indicating that the population experiences a higher overall level of deprivation than the national average (shown in **Figure 14-3: Deprivation**). While deprivation is largely driven by the Barriers to Housing and Services and the Education domains, the MSOAs comprising the site-specific study area have relatively lower deprivation in terms of Income, Crime, and Living Environment deprivation.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/census2021dictionary/variablesbytopic/educationvariables/census2021/highestlevelofqualification>

## Future socioeconomics

### *Collection of future socioeconomics data*

- 14.4.10 Building on the baseline conditions included at scoping and preliminary assessment, the ES socioeconomic assessment will update and establish a more detailed baseline position of the population's demographic characteristics and trends, local economy, employment, labour market, housing and relative socioeconomic deprivation of the updated study areas. Publicly available data is taken from the 2021 Census<sup>129</sup>; the Labour Force Survey<sup>130</sup>; Annual Population Survey<sup>131</sup>; Business Register and Employment Survey<sup>132</sup> all of which are published by the Office for National Statistics on "Nomis".
- 14.4.11 In addition to baseline data collection, the socioeconomic assessment will also be informed by an evidence base that draws on: local, regional and national planning policy; surveys with land interests; consultation with the local community; and regulatory standards. Collecting, collating and analysing this evidence is ongoing and will be presented in the ES Socioeconomic Chapter.

## 14.5 Important Receptors Identified

14.5.1 For this assessment, socioeconomic receptors are the defined study area communities. Within these communities there are workforces, residents, visitors, businesses, services, events, neighbourhoods, facilities, assets, sites, routes, habitats and spaces that could experience positive or negative impacts from the Project. Communities are also set within a wider context of markets, identity and other societal influences. Specific groups and areas likely to be affected by the Project include:

- **Residents**, primarily those in the site-specific study area but also in Folkestone and Hythe District and Rother District.
- **Employees** (i.e. people who are already in work) as well as those who are currently unemployed in the Labour Market Focus Area, Regional and National areas. The Project is developing an outline Employment, Skills and Supply Chain Management Plan (oESSCMP) that seeks to proactively deliver local benefits within the Labour Market Focus Area. The aim is to

---

<sup>129</sup> Office for National Statistics (2021) 2021 Census. Available: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/select/getdatasetbytheme.asp?opt=3&theme=&subgrp=> [Accessed 23/03/26].

<sup>130</sup> Office for National Statistics (2025) Labour Force Survey. Available: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/select/getdatasetbytheme.asp?theme=28> [Accessed 23/03/26].

<sup>131</sup> Office for National Statistics (2025) Annual Population Survey. Available at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/select/getdatasetbytheme.asp?theme=28> [Accessed 23/03/26].

<sup>132</sup> Office for National Statistics (2024) Business Register and Employment Survey. Available at: <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/select/getdatasetbytheme.asp?theme=27> [Accessed 23/03/26].

maximise the benefit for local people and minimise the need for workers from further afield. An early draft of the oESSCMP will be published as part of Phase Two Consultation and updated for submission as part of the DCO application.

- **Businesses** (including local tourism and recreational attractions) minimising any displacement or adverse effects in the site-specific study area; and targeting direct and indirect benefits to the Labour Market Focus Area, Regional area and National area.
- **Visitors** to the site-specific study area for leisure/recreation or tourism.

14.5.2 In assessing the sensitivity of a community, relevant characteristics of the community are considered in terms of their value, capacity, scarcity and/or dependency. Characteristics affected may include for example, labour markets, traditional industries, accommodation markets, key public services, key community facilities or amenities, certain population groups, cultural sites, the community setting, protected languages, natural capital or public spaces.

14.5.3 Key tourist and recreational attractions across the Folkestone & Hythe and Rother District level study area have been identified:

- Romney Marsh is the defining landscape of the area surrounding the Project that attracts leisure and recreational users including walkers, cyclists and birdwatching.
- Rye is a historic Cinque Port town recognised as a heritage destination and principal tourism hub in East Sussex.
- Camber Sands is a beach destination in Rye that has regional significance for coastal recreation and attracts a high number of seasonal visitors.
- Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway is a miniature steam railway with stations in Hythe and Romney Marsh, serving as a major heritage attraction.
- Dungeness RSPB National Nature Reserve is situated on a shingle landscape that offers nature tourism and education.
- Rye Harbour Nature Reserve is a coastal wetland reserve for walking, birdwatching and education.

## 14.6 Considering Socioeconomics in Design

### *Developing design and management plans*

14.6.1 A key activity of the work is the socioeconomic assessment process informing the development of the design and environmental management plans in order to mitigate adverse effects and capitalise on opportunities for socioeconomic benefits.

14.6.2 Example types of input include:

- Environmental measures relevant to socioeconomic effects during the construction of the Project include the outline Skills and Supply Chain and Employment Management Plan (oESSCMP) and outline Construction Environmental Management Plan (oCEMP) and outline Rights of Way and Access Strategy (oRoWAS) secured by planning condition. An early version of the oESSCMP and oCEMP will be published as part of Phase Two Consultation, and the oRoWAS will be submitted as part of the DCO application.
- Environmental measures relevant to socioeconomic effects during operation include the outline Operational Environmental Management Plan (oOEMP), oESSCMP, oRoWAS and outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (oLEMP). An early version of the oLEMP will be published as part of Phase Two Consultation.
- The oESSCMP sets out measures to maximise opportunities to promote economic benefits in relation to skills, supply chains, and employment in the local region, which is required to deliver the Project. In particular, the oESSCMP typically promotes local low-carbon jobs, including targeted measures to support access to opportunities for local groups to be applied throughout all stages of development.

## 14.7 Preliminary Assessment of Likely Significant Effects

### *Approach*

14.7.1 The approach to determine the overall significance of potential socioeconomic effects following the best practice approach and criteria for sensitivity, magnitude and significance from the ISEP (formerly IEMA) 'Social Impact Assessment in EIA in the UK' Guidance <sup>133</sup>.

14.7.2 At this stage of the assessment, the preliminary assessment of potential effects has been guided by professional judgement that takes into account relevant labour

---

<sup>133</sup> Institute of Sustainability and Environmental Professionals (ISEP) (2025) Social Impact Assessment in Environmental Impact Assessment in the UK. Available at: <https://www.isepglobal.org/resources/blogs/2025/october/isep-launches-new-guide-on-social-impact-assessment/> (Accessed: 10 March 2026).

market evidence and context. The impact significance matrix set out in Table 14-6 demonstrates how the significance of socioeconomic effects is determined through professional judgement, using a structured framework that considers both the magnitude of the impact and the sensitivity of the affected population or receptors, within the specific local context. An effect is considered significant where application of the matrix identifies a moderate or major socioeconomic effect on community outcomes.

**Table 14-6: Impact Significance Matrix**

Magnitude	Sensitivity				
		High	Medium	Low	Negligible
High		Major (Significant)	Major or Moderate (Significant)	Moderate or Minor (Significant)	Minor or Negligible
Medium		Major or Moderate (Significant)	Moderate (Significant)	Minor	Minor or Negligible
Low		Moderate or Minor (Significant)	Minor	Minor	Negligible
Negligible		Minor or Negligible	Minor or Negligible	Negligible	Negligible

- 14.7.3 Where a potential socioeconomic effect is identified, enhancement and mitigation measures have been considered to either enhance or secure a significant positive effect or mitigate against a significant negative effect. Mitigation measures can include design or non-design related measures and actions which may be secured through project management plans, such as the oCEMP, oLEMP, oESSCMP and oRoWAS.
- 14.7.4 On this basis, the use of professional judgement to provide a preliminary evaluation of potential socioeconomic effects at this stage is considered appropriate and proportionate.
- 14.7.5 A detailed socioeconomic assessment will be undertaken as part of the ES to accompany the DCO application, informed by a more detailed baseline and the assessment of other ES topics such as Human Health. Engagement with local community representatives (i.e. parish and town councils, local authorities and local infrastructure organisations – i.e. Community Foundations) will be undertaken.
- 14.7.6 Further community comments regarding the socioeconomic assessment, including any further information respondents would like to see in the ES about social

outcomes and community sustainability, would be welcomed. This includes businesses interested in engaging with the **oESSCMP**.

- 14.7.7 The potential effects on social determinants set out by ISEP (formerly IEMA), which are considered to be scoped in for detailed assessment are listed in Table 14-7.

#### **Preliminary Assessment**

- 14.7.8 A summary of the preliminary assessment of likely significant effects on socioeconomics associated with the Project is provided in Table 14-7. In summary, once the recommended mitigation measures are applied, no significant socioeconomic effects are expected to occur at any stage of the Project's lifetime.

**Table 14-7: Potential Likely Significant Socioeconomic Effects**

Phase	Activity	Receptor	Preliminary Assessment	Potential Significant Effect(s)	Next Steps
All phases	Generation of temporary and permanent employment and GVA.	Social change due to impact on jobs and GVA created, safeguarded or lost.	<p>The Project is expected to generate new temporary and permanent employment opportunities during construction, operation and decommissioning that would lead to positive social outcomes linked to new economic activity. Expenditure on construction and operational materials, goods and other services will also generate benefits associated with GVA for both the local and regional economy as their effects filter down the supply chain.</p> <p>To maximise local employment and skills benefits, the oESSCMP sets out measures to optimise the proportion of employment taken up by people in the Labour Market Focus Area and minimise</p>	Minor beneficial (not significant) effects on social outcomes within the Labour Market Focus Area, Regional and National study areas.	Potential effects on employment and GVA, together with measures to enhance local benefits, will be assessed in full within the Socioeconomic chapter of the ES that will accompany the DCO submission. The detailed assessment will include estimates of net employment, taking account of displacement from other sectors and leakage to wider area, as well as projected financial benefits locally, regionally and nationally presented in terms of GVA.

Phase	Activity	Receptor	Preliminary Assessment	Potential Significant Effect(s)	Next Steps
			<p>leakage of benefits to wider areas. An early version of this plan has been published as part of Phase Two consultation.</p> <p>The preliminary assessment also recognises the potential for adverse socioeconomic effects linked with displacement, for example some agricultural jobs. The net employment effect of the Project, taking account of displacement and leakage of opportunities will be calculated in the Socioeconomic chapter of the ES.</p> <p>At this stage of the assessment, before the potential to maximise the benefits has been fully developed and calculations of estimated employment and GVA have been undertaken, the preliminary assessment is of a minor beneficial (not</p>		<p>Opportunities and synergies with Dungeness B decommissioning are also being considered to further support local jobs and the sustainability of local communities.</p>

Phase	Activity	Receptor	Preliminary Assessment	Potential Significant Effect(s)	Next Steps
			significant) effect on social outcomes.		
	Alteration of visual amenity at visitor attractions.	Social change due to impact on structural economic factors, including traditional industries or foundational economy.	Without the application of appropriate mitigation measures, there is the potential for an impact on tourism footfall and viability of the visitor economy where the visual amenity of attractions is reduced during construction, operation and decommissioning. This includes visitor attractions near the Site boundary within the site-specific study area. Dungeness, Greatstone, Old Romney, New Romney, Lydd, Rye and Camber are examples of local communities with important tourism-based livelihoods whose sensitivity to structural economic change is being reviewed. For example, South Brooks E is now provided as a	Minor adverse (not significant) effects on social outcomes within the district level study area.	Potential effects on visual amenity, together with the mitigation required to minimise significant effects, will be assessed in full within the Socioeconomic chapter of the ES that will accompany the DCO submission. The landscape and visual impact assessment, alongside published evidence on the relationship between presence of solar farms and tourism will inform professional judgement regarding this effect.

Phase	Activity	Receptor	Preliminary Assessment	Potential Significant Effect(s)	Next Steps
			<p>landscape and biodiversity enhancement area only, with no above ground infrastructure required within this parcel, to remove visual amenity effects at the adjacent Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) reserve, which acts as a local tourist attraction.</p> <p>To minimise further potential effects, a sensitive layout and approach to screening and access that acknowledges the existing low-lying topography and limited existing screening is required. An early version of the oLEMP has been published as part of the Phase Two Consultation.</p> <p>Through embedded design, management plans and mitigation measures reducing adverse effects on visual amenity, the preliminary assessment is that significant adverse effects on social</p>		<p>The socioeconomic assessment will inform the development of the oLEMP as well as feedback received from ongoing consultation, particularly regarding ecological screening associated with relevant visitor attractions.</p>

Phase	Activity	Receptor	Preliminary Assessment	Potential Significant Effect(s)	Next Steps
			<p>outcomes would be avoided, supporting sustainable communities.</p>		
<p>Construction and decommissioning</p>	<p>Potential for the workforce to influence demand on temporary accommodation</p>	<p>Social change due to impact on homes or accommodation on quality, supply, price or access.</p>	<p>The temporary workforce has the potential to influence demand for accommodation during the construction and decommissioning phases, dependent on the relative proportion of home-based workers from the Labour Market Focus Area and non-home-based workers from further afield.  The timing of construction labour demand and the proportion of roles taken-up by local people would determine the direction of the socioeconomic outcomes, for example there is potential for positive outcomes through use of local accommodation that has low occupancy out-of-season, as well as competing</p>	<p>Minor beneficial or minor adverse (not significant) effects on social outcomes dependent on the relative proportion of home-based workers within the Labour Market Focus Area.</p>	<p>Potential effects on demand for accommodation will be assessed in full within the Socioeconomic chapter of the ES that will accompany the DCO submission. The detailed assessment will consider seasonal demand pressures and estimated proportions of non-home-based workers expected in the local area.</p>

Phase	Activity	Receptor	Preliminary Assessment	Potential Significant Effect(s)	Next Steps
			<p>demand for temporary accommodation during peak tourism season.</p> <p>The preliminary assessment expects that significant adverse effects on social outcomes would be avoided and a minor beneficial (not significant) effect may arise from use of out-of-season accommodation.</p>		
All phases	Access to nature	Social change due to impact on biodiversity and natural capital affecting experiences of wildlife and natural habitats.	<p>Without the application of appropriate mitigation measures, there is the potential for construction, operation and decommissioning activities to impact social outcomes dependent on access to wildlife and perceptions of nature.</p> <p>Activities associated with the Project can cause local changes (i.e. noise, disturbance, visual and</p>	Minor adverse (not significant) effects on social outcomes in the site-specific and district level study areas.	<p>Potential effects on social outcomes associated with access to nature will be assessed in full within the Socioeconomic chapter of the ES that will accompany the DCO submission.</p> <p>The detailed assessment will be informed by the ES Biodiversity and</p>

Phase	Activity	Receptor	Preliminary Assessment	Potential Significant Effect(s)	Next Steps
			<p>structural) that reduce feelings of wellbeing and nature connection, leading to community perception of loss of natural heritage. Through embedded design, management plans and mitigation measures reducing adverse effects outlined in Section 14.4, the preliminary assessment expects that any impact on experiences of wildlife and natural habitats is not expected to be on a scale that could significantly affect community social outcomes.</p>		<p>Human Health chapters.</p>
<p>All phases</p>	<p>Wider socioeconomic effects associated with a change in local PRow and open spaces used for recreation</p>	<p>Social change due to impact on public access to outdoor spaces and routes, including sports, play</p>	<p>Without the application of appropriate mitigation measures, during construction, operation and decommissioning, a change in local amenity such as PRow, Romney Marsh and surrounding open fields has the potential to reduce the</p>	<p>Minor adverse (not significant) effects on social outcomes within the site-specific study area.</p>	<p>The potential effects of visual amenity on local businesses, together with the mitigation required to minimise significant effects, will be assessed in full within the Socioeconomic</p>

Phase	Activity	Receptor	Preliminary Assessment	Potential Significant Effect(s)	Next Steps
		and recreation.	<p>likelihood of visitors to the site-specific study area and any associated socioeconomic effects to local businesses, including employment and earnings. This links with the aforementioned tourism economy effects.</p> <p>The preliminary assessment assumes, based on current proposals to minimise impacts, that all PRow would remain in situ with appropriate buffer zones and screening. Any closures or diversions throughout the Project will be temporary and for reasons of public safety. Permissive paths may be proposed where necessary, acting as appropriate mitigation for PRow access during these temporary diversions. The approach to protecting, retaining, enhancing or temporarily diverting access to</p>		<p>chapter of the ES that will accompany the DCO submission. The socioeconomic assessment will inform the development of the oLEMP, the oRoWAS as well as feedback received from ongoing consultation. An oRoWAS will also be submitted with the DCO application, setting out measures to protect, retain, enhance or temporarily divert PRow users with the principle of maintaining similar levels of access for the public and promoting inclusive access.</p>

Phase	Activity	Receptor	Preliminary Assessment	Potential Significant Effect(s)	Next Steps
			<p>PRoW will be outlined in the oRoWAS submitted as part of the DCO application.</p> <p>To minimise potential effects, a sensitive layout and approach to screening and access that acknowledges the existing low-lying topography and limited existing screening is required.</p> <p>An early version of the oLEMP has been published as part of the Phase Two Consultation.</p> <p>Through embedded management plans and mitigation measures, the preliminary assessment is that significant adverse effects on social outcomes would be avoided, supporting sustainable communities.</p>		

**Drawing number**

Figure 14-1

**Project/Location**

South Brooks Solar Farm

**Drawing title**

Site Specific Study Area and District Level Study Area

**Legend**

-  Site Boundary
-  Site-specific study area
-  District level study area



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



**Drawing number**

Figure 14-2


**Project/Location**

South Brooks Solar Farm

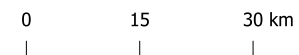
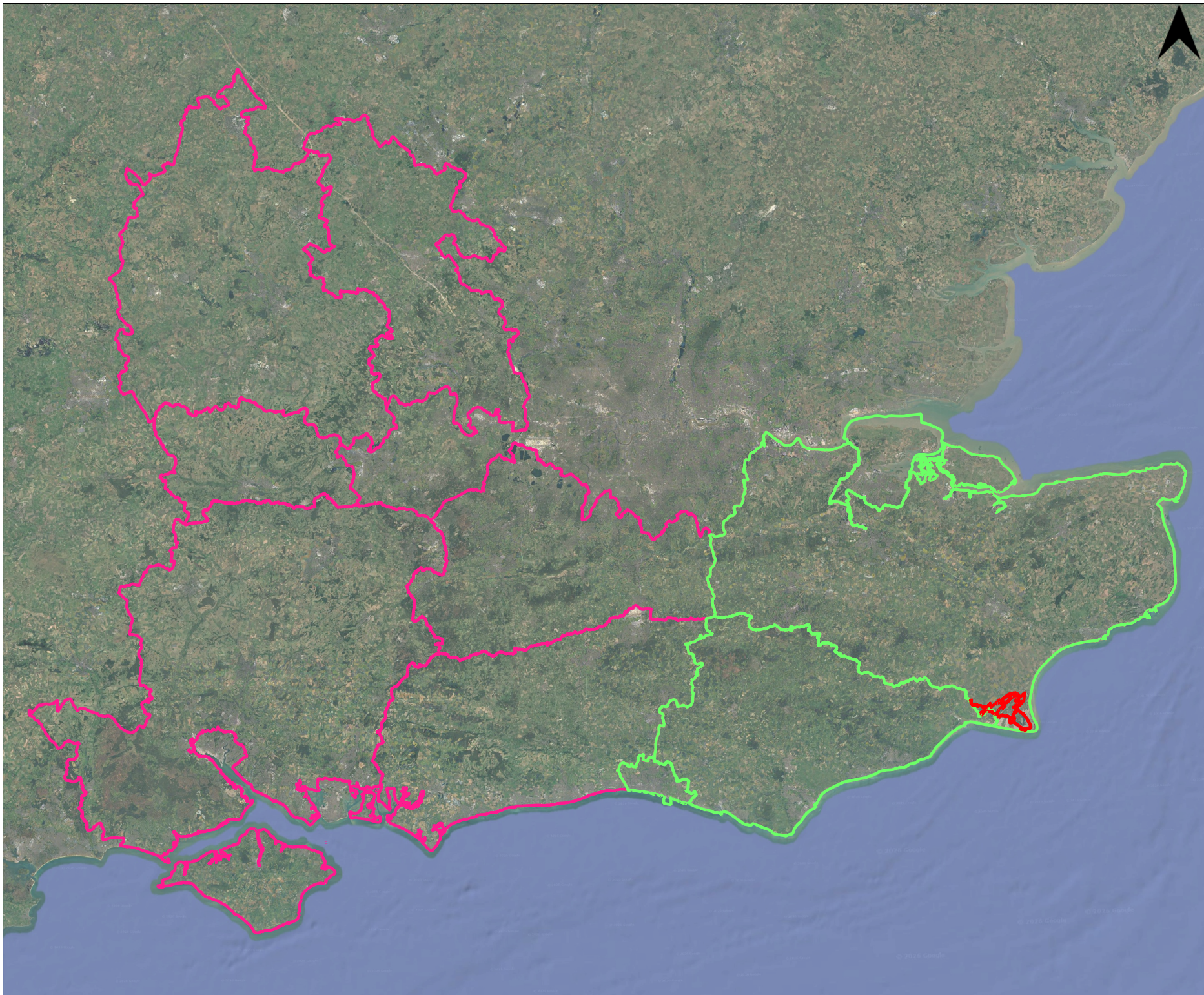
**Drawing title**

Labour Market Area, Labour Market Focus Area and Regional Study Area

Legend

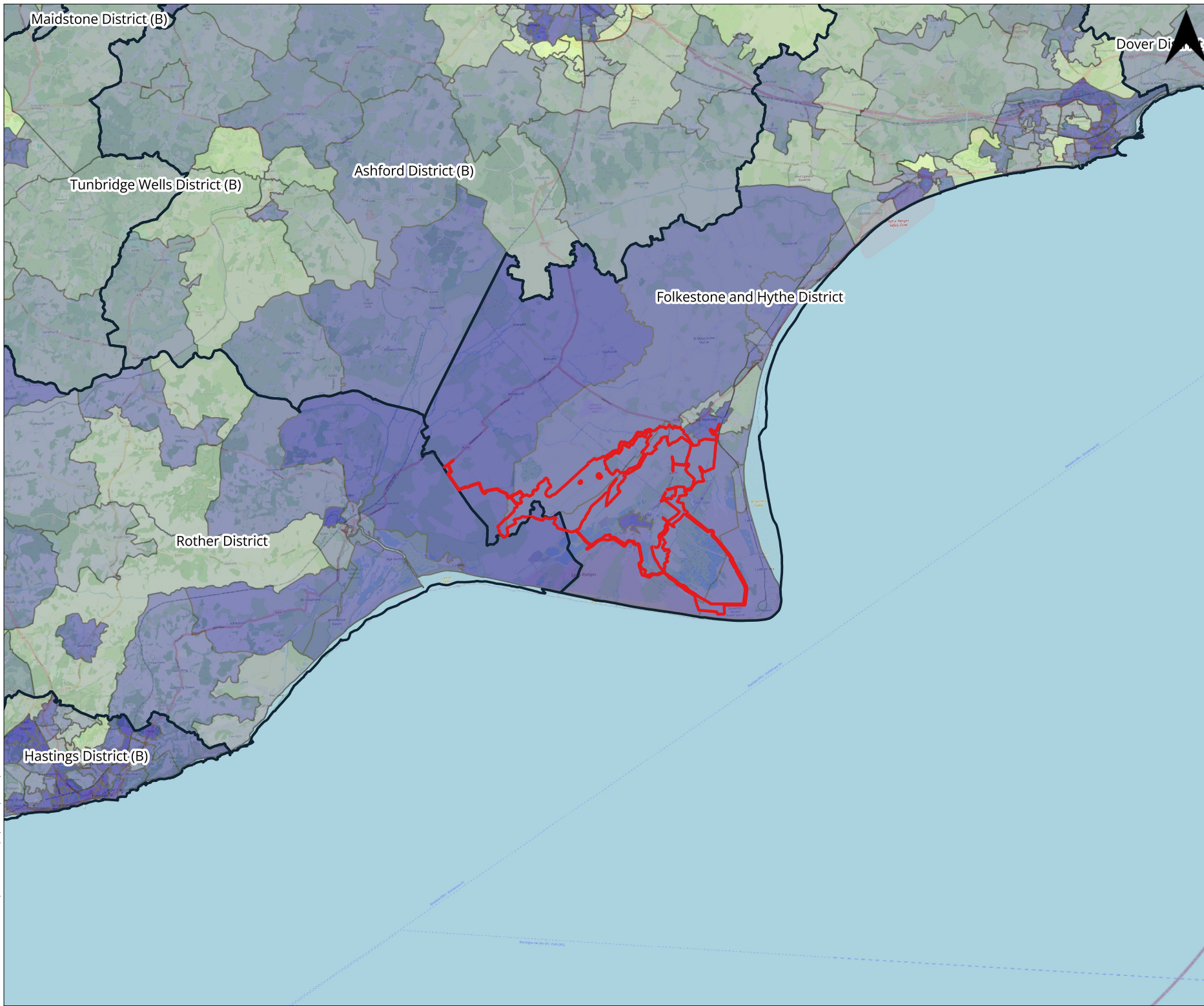
 County level study area

 Regional study area



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

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



**Drawing number**  
Figure 14-3

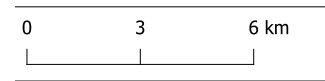
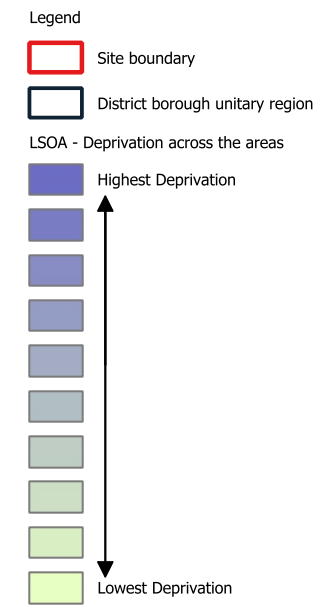
---

**Project/Location**  
South Brooks Solar Farm

---

**Drawing title**  
Overview of Deprivation

---





[www.southbrookssolarfarm.co.uk](http://www.southbrookssolarfarm.co.uk)