

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT



Stonestreet Green Solar

Stonestreet Green Solar comprises the proposed construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of a renewable energy generating project on land to the north of Aldington. The development will export up to 99.9 megawatts ('MW') of clean, renewable electricity to the national grid. This will contribute to the UK's 2050 net zero target and is sufficient to power around 48,000 homes, saving around 37,000 tonnes of CO₂ per annum.

The project is in its early stages and this consultation process is being undertaken to secure the local communities initial views on the Proposed Development.

About Evolution Power

Evolution Power Limited is a UK-based independent solar company established to develop affordable and sustainable renewable energy projects that will help the UK meet its legally binding 2050 net zero emissions target.

The Directors of Evolution Power have installed and/or financed more than 50 UK solar photovoltaic ('PV') projects, including four of the five largest solar projects built in the UK during the renewable obligation certificate subsidy period.

Evolution Power is committed to developing projects that help address the climate emergency, as well as benefitting the local areas in which they are located.

Climate Change Emergency

In June 2019, the UK Government declared a climate emergency.

In 2021, the Climate Change Act was amended to set a target to achieve 'net zero' emissions by 2050 compared to a 1990 baseline. The UK Government's strategy to achieve net zero by 2050 requires a dramatic increase in electricity generation from renewable resources.

In October 2021, the UK Government confirmed its target to decarbonise the electricity system by 2035 and secure a home-grown clean electricity supply.

To reach net zero the UK will need to transition to a much more widespread use of renewable electricity generation, the use of electric heat pumps in the home and the use of electric vehicles. The UK will need to generate significantly more electricity and the type of generation will need to change from fossil fuels to renewables.

The development of solar as a renewable energy generation is supported by national and local energy policy – in addition to the UK Government position, Ashford Borough Council, Folkestone & Hythe District Council and Kent County Council have publicly acknowledged the climate emergency and are adjusting their supply chains to achieve net zero.

The development of domestic renewable generation will reduce the UK's exposure to global energy markets and its current reliance on importing energy from potentially unstable parts of the world, resulting in more stable supply and lower energy bills.



2. THE PLANNING PROCESS



As the Proposed Development has an expected energy generating capacity in excess of 50MW, it constitutes a ‘nationally significant infrastructure project’ (‘NSIP’).

NSIPs are major infrastructure projects (such as large scale solar farms), which require a type of consent known as ‘development consent’ under procedures governed by the Planning Act 2008. Accordingly, Evolution Power needs to make an application for a Development Consent Order (‘DCO’) to authorise the Proposed Development.

Applications for a DCO are examined by the Planning Inspectorate who then make a recommendation (to approve or refuse an application) to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. The Secretary of State will then decide whether to grant or to refuse development consent.

The DCO process is split into the following six stages:

- 1) Pre-application
- 4) Examination;
- 2) Acceptance;
- 5) Decision; and
- 3) Pre-examination;
- 6) Post-decision.

Further information on the process can be found on the Planning Inspectorate website: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/>.

Evolution Power is intending to submit its DCO application in late 2022.

The Site

The site is located approximately 2.4km to the south-east of Ashford and approximately 13.7km to the west of Folkestone, in the county of Kent. It is situated on approximately 189 hectares (467 acres) of land which is currently predominantly in agricultural use.

The Proposed Development will include solar PV arrays and on-site energy storage, together with associated infrastructure and an underground cable connection via the existing National Grid Substation at Sellindge.

The site has been carefully selected to provide energy close to where it can be exported to the electricity grid, in a way that minimises local impact and maximises sustainability, environmental and social outcomes. The Proposed Development will generate green electricity and will have the capability to export and import up to 99.9MW of electricity at any time. This is enough to power around 48,000 homes.

The Stonestreet Green Solar site has been selected as it meets all the key criteria for a development such as this.



1. Access to a nearby grid connection at Sellindge that has available capacity for a project of this size;
2. High levels of sunlight (irradiation) given its South-East location means that the land required for the same output is less than it would be in other parts of the country;
3. No statutory landscape, or ecological designations or Scheduled Ancient Monuments on the site. No significant cultural designations;
4. Topography and existing hedgerows will help to minimise the visual impact of the project from Aldington and other viewpoints;
5. Adjacent to pre-existing infrastructure including HS1, the M20, the Sellindge electrical substation and overhead lines;
6. Proximity to local large energy users provides the opportunity for a direct connection to provide renewable power locally;
7. Predominately lower grade agricultural land. Removal of this land from intensive farming use will reduce nitrate impact on the East Stour River and surrounding waterways; and
8. Good access, being located close to the M20/A20.



3. WHAT IS PROPOSED?



The Proposed Development will include the following key infrastructure:

- Solar PV modules;
- PV module mounting structures;
- On-site electrical stations including inverters, transformers and switchgear;
- On-site and grid connection cabling with a maximum voltage of 132kV;
- Project substation, including high voltage switchgear and control equipment;
- An energy storage system;
- A spare parts storage building or enclosure;
- Boundary fencing and closed-circuit television ('CCTV') security measures; and
- Access tracks.

The layout and design of the Proposed Development will evolve as the application is prepared to take account of the consultation feedback from the local community and statutory consultees and to reflect the technical results of the Environmental Impact Assessment ('EIA') process.

The technologies proposed (solar PV and energy storage) are rapidly evolving and the application will propose that some flexibility is maintained to ensure the latest technology can be utilised at the point of construction to maximise the Proposed Development's benefits. Any flexibility sought will be defined within the DCO.



Indicative example of solar panels



Indicative example of fencing

Solar PV Infrastructure

Solar PV modules convert sunlight into direct electrical current ('DC'). Individual modules are typically up to 2.5m long and 1.5m wide, with cells located below a layer of toughened glass. Each panel is enclosed in a module frame, typically built from anodised aluminium or steel.

Modules are mounted on a metal frame which is attached to galvanised steel piles that are driven up to 3m into the ground. The distance between each row of frames is typically 3.2m to limit shading and to allow for movement of maintenance vehicles. Sufficient light passes through panels and between panel rows to allow a grassland habitat and to protect the soil surface from erosion. The maximum height of the panels from the ground is expected to be approximately 3m. The lowest point of the panels will be approximately 800mm above the ground to allow smaller livestock such as sheep to graze and pass below and between rows.

The electrical output from the solar panels will be exported by low voltage cabling to a dedicated inverter station. The electricity is then exported to intermediate on-site substations and then finally to the main project transformer substation. From there, it is exported from the site at 132kV via the UKPN substation at Sellindge and then to the electricity grid.

Energy Storage Infrastructure

The energy storage provided on the site will enable the maximum benefit to be obtained from the renewable energy produced and provide vital 'grid balancing' services to the electricity grid. It is expected that the energy storage facility will typically be charged using electricity generated by the solar PV modules but it will also be possible to import electricity from the grid for storage on-site. The stored electricity can then be exported back to the grid at times of high demand which is often in the evening.

The energy storage will either be located in a single compound or distributed throughout the site, adjacent to the inverter stations. This will be finalised prior to the submission of the DCO application.

Grid Connection

The site will connect to the National Grid by underground cabling via an existing substation at Sellindge. The voltage for the cable connection will be up to 132kV. The grid connection route will be included in the DCO application.



4. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

 Stonestreet
Green Solar

The DCO application will be accompanied by an Environmental Statement ('ES') which will set out the results of the assessment of the potential impacts of the Proposed Development on the environment and any mitigation required in response.

The Environmental Impact Assessment ('EIA') process can be broadly summarised as consisting of three main elements that take place prior to the submission of the DCO application:

- **EIA Scoping:** the project applicant requests a formal Scoping Opinion from the Planning Inspectorate which confirms the impacts that will need to be assessed as part of the EIA of the project;
- **Consultation:** the project applicant is required to conduct pre-application consultation. A Preliminary Environmental Information Report ('PEIR') will be produced which will provide an initial statement on the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Development. Feedback will be sought from the local communities and other stakeholders on the PEIR; and
- **ES Preparation:** the ES is prepared taking into account the responses to the consultation process. It will advance the content of the PEIR and incorporate the responses from the consultation and the results of the surveys undertaken. It will also describe any changes made to the project and any mitigation measures that need to be implemented. The ES will form part of the DCO application.

It is anticipated that the ES will include an assessment of the impacts of the Proposed Development on the following:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ● Biodiversity | ● Noise |
| ● Climate Change | ● Socio-Economics |
| ● Cultural Heritage | ● Traffic & Access |
| ● Landscape & Views | ● Water Environment |

Evolution Power has already commenced work on a number of technical matters:

Landscape

A Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment will be undertaken to assess any visual impact from the project and inform the landscape mitigation strategy to minimise visual impacts where reasonably practicable.

The Proposed Development will be sensitively designed to work with existing features in the landscape. It is expected that the landscape strategy will deliver multiple benefits by seeking to retain existing field boundaries, new planting (if required) and improve connectivity (for people and habitats) where possible.

Biodiversity

The lack of farming on the site will help to improve the soil and encourage new flora and fauna to flourish, while it continues to be grazed by sheep.

A biodiversity scheme will be prepared in consultation with stakeholders to ensure that the project contributes to landscape and ecological improvements and provides a biodiversity net gain. This will include protecting existing habitats and creating new habitats to benefit local wildlife, and protecting and enhancing existing hedgerows.

The landscape and ecological strategy is currently being prepared and will be subject to further consultation prior to submission of the application.



Agricultural Land and Soils

A detailed Agricultural Land Classification ('ALC') survey of the site was undertaken in November/December 2021 in accordance with Natural England guidance.

The survey confirmed that 148.53 hectares of land (circa 80% of the total site area) is either lower quality agricultural land (comprising ALC Subgrade 3b land) or non-agricultural land.

Traffic and Access

An assessment will be undertaken to determine whether there are any significant effects arising from the construction of the Proposed Development on the environment with respect to traffic and access. This will include assessing the effects on existing traffic flows and the local road network, with the flows predicted as a result of the construction of the Proposed Development. The likely significant cumulative effects of the Proposed Development's construction traffic with other developments on traffic flow will also be assessed, as necessary.

Construction traffic will be controlled by a Construction Traffic Management Plan ('CTMP'). An Outline CTMP will be submitted with the DCO application and the final version will need to be agreed with Ashford Borough Council.



5. PROJECT STAGES & COMMUNITY BENEFIT



Construction

The construction of the Proposed Development is anticipated to commence in 2025 and span a period of approximately 12 months.

Operation

The Proposed Development comprises a temporary structure with a modelled operational lifespan of up to 40 years.

During the operational phase the activities on-site are expected to amount to limited maintenance activities, including servicing of plant and equipment and vegetation management.

Decommissioning Phase

Following cessation of energy generation and exportation at the site all PV modules, mounting structures, cabling, inverters and transformers will be removed and recycled or disposed of in accordance with good practice and market conditions at that time. It is anticipated that decommissioning will take approximately 12 months.

Community Relations/Benefit

Evolution Power aims to work with local communities in the development of the Proposed Development and to maximise opportunities for community participation, create employment opportunities, and provide meaningful community benefits.

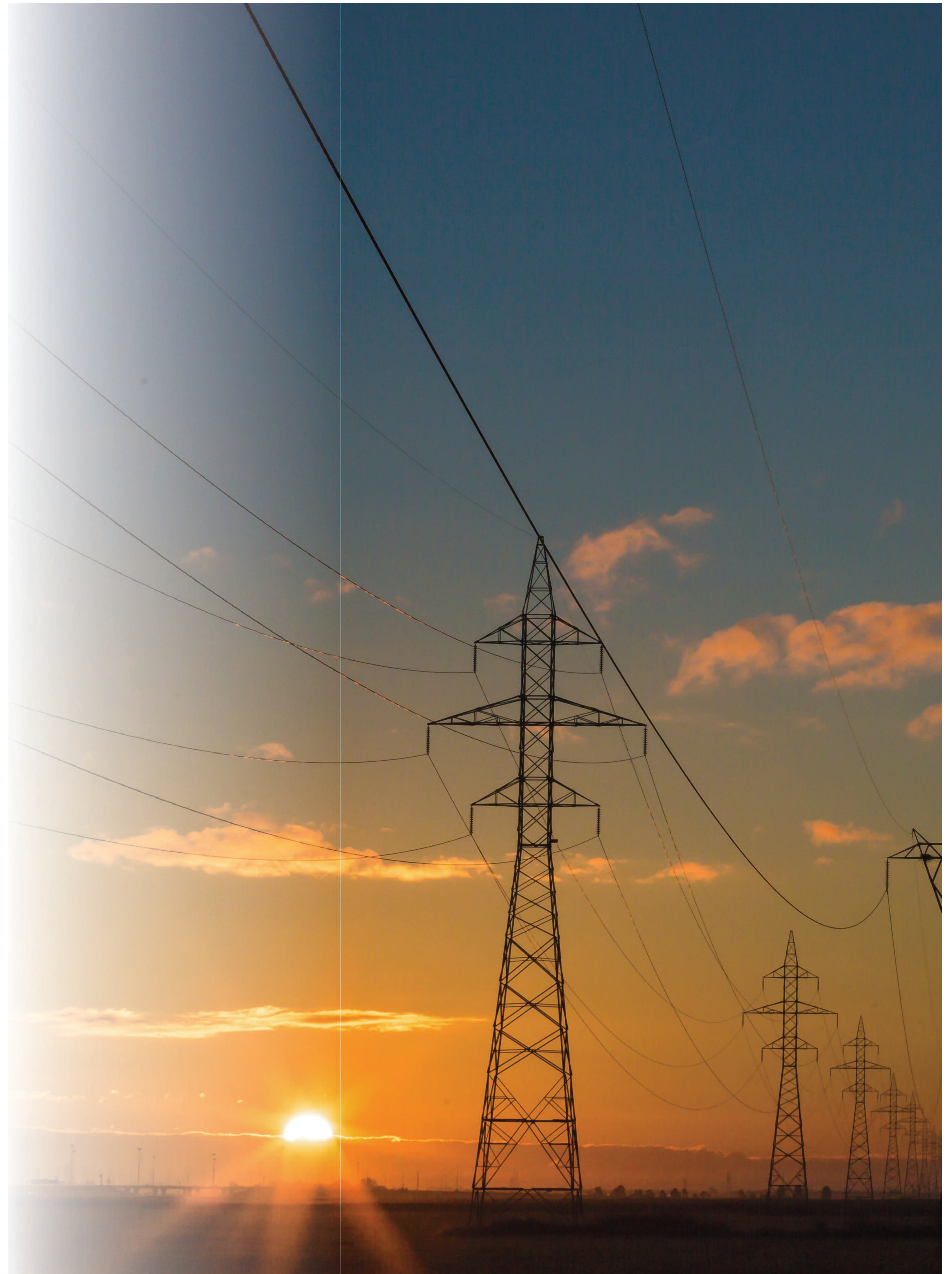
Being a good neighbour is very important to us and we aim to build long-term and meaningful relationships and to always operate in a transparent way.

We want to engage early with people in the local area to seek feedback on our proposals and use local knowledge to inform and refine our approach wherever possible.

We value the opinions of the local community and will work hard to minimise any disturbance as much as possible. We want to understand the issues that are important to you, as well as any suggestions you have as to how we can make improvements.

Our initial ideas include:

- Ways to enhance the footpaths and public rights of way
- Improved land management practices to support biodiversity
- Educational visits once the solar park is operational
- A community benefit fund to be used locally for social and environmental projects



6. INDICATIVE APPLICATION TIMELINE



Indicative Application Timeline

- **Spring 2022: Publication of Statement of Community Consultation**
- **Spring 2022: Non-Statutory Consultation**
- **Spring 2022: Scoping Report submitted**
- **Spring/Summer 2022: Scoping Opinion published**
- **Summer 2022: Statutory Consultation and PEIR published**
- **Autumn 2022: Finalise ES and DCO application**
- **Winter 2022: DCO application submission**

Feedback

Please complete one of the feedback forms that are available at the information events and are also on the project website. Forms can be completed at the event or taken away and sent in via the FREEPOST address below. The deadline for us to receive the feedback form is 29 April 2022.

We will be using the feedback from these events to inform our proposals going forward, so your views are very important to us.

We will be holding a further series of public consultation events later this year.

Contact Details

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like to find out more information about Stonestreet Green Solar.

You can follow us on Twitter at @SGS_solar and you can contact our Community Relations Team by using the details below.

Email: info@stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk

Call our Freephone information line: 08081 698335

Visit our website: www.stonestreetgreensolar.co.uk/Contact+Us

Send us a letter: FREEPOST Stonestreet Green Solar

