



POWER
FOR GOOD

Steeple Renewables Project

Early Informal Consultation Feedback Report

March 2024



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About RES

RES, a British company, is the world's largest independent renewable energy company. At the forefront of the renewable industry for over 40 years, RES has delivered more than 23GW of renewable energy projects across the globe and supports an operational asset portfolio exceeding 12GW worldwide for a large client base. RES employs more than 2,500 people and is active in 14 countries working across onshore and offshore wind, solar, energy storage, green hydrogen, transmission, and distribution.

Need for solar

There is now a widespread recognition that the UK and the rest of the world is in a climate emergency. To help address climate change the UK has committed to reaching net zero by 2050.

The UK Government's Net Zero Strategy (2021) made it clear that solar and wind will be the backbone of securing affordable, low carbon energy. At the time it envisaged at least 40GW of solar to be operational by 2030 to achieve net zero by 2050.

In March 2023 the UK Government released energy security and net zero plans. These stated the commitment to deliver 70GW of solar by 2035. This amounts to a fivefold increase on current installed capacity. It also needs to maximise deployment of both rooftop and ground-mounted solar to achieve net zero.

In November 2023, the Government released new National Policy Statements for Renewable Energy Infrastructure, with National Policy Statement EN-1 emphasising the critical national priority for low-carbon infrastructure. This statement underscores the need for the UK to expand its supply of low-carbon energy rapidly, recognising that achieving energy security and meeting net zero ambitions hinge on the swift and extensive development of new low-carbon sources.

In alignment with these priorities, Policy Statement EN-3 specifically advocates for large-scale ground-mount solar deployment across the UK. This acknowledgment underscores the Government's commitment to the deployment of nationally significant low-carbon infrastructure.

It is evident that the Government now recognises the urgent national need for the provision of substantial low-carbon infrastructure, including solar, highlighting its role in contributing to and addressing this identified national need, aligning seamlessly with the government's strategic goals.

The Project

RES is exploring the opportunity to develop a renewables project on land at Sturton-le-Steeple, Nottinghamshire. We anticipate that the project could include solar energy generation and battery storage, to help store energy for when it is most needed. RES is also investigating the possibility of incorporating other renewable energy technologies into the proposals.

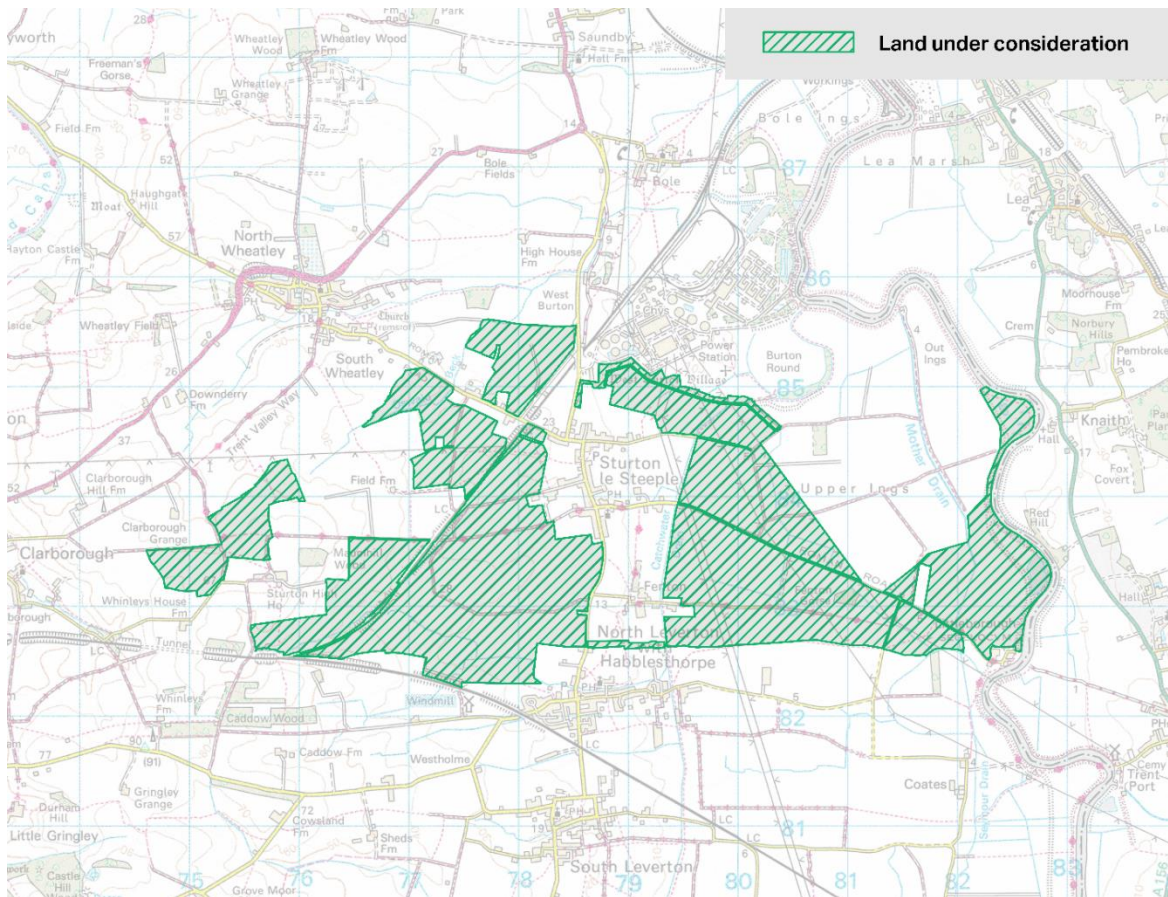
Collectively, the solar farm and battery storage facility could offer a mix of renewable energy generation and storage. The land we are exploring is ideally located for us to utilise grid capacity at the recently decommissioned West Burton Power Station.

It is anticipated that the solar led Steeple Renewables Project could be designed to allow dual-purpose land use, generating clean electricity alongside continued agricultural use of the land, for example via sheep grazing. West Burton Power Station has recently been decommissioned and this has released grid capacity adjacent to the land where we are looking to bring forward a renewables project. We have secured a connection agreement with National Grid to utilise this grid capacity. We believe that our proposals, alongside other energy projects in the local area, present an opportunity for this part of Nottinghamshire to continue its historic role of helping to power the UK.

If consented, it is anticipated that Steeple Renewables Project will be capable of producing clean, green electricity for approximately 156,884 homes every year, around 45% of all homes in Nottinghamshire.

A plan of the land that is under consideration for Steeple Renewables Project is presented below in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Land under consideration for Steeple Renewables Project



At the time of our early informal consultation, the precise configuration and components of the infrastructure at Steeple Renewables Project were still under consideration, the following elements are anticipated to be included in the project:

- Solar PV modules and the associated mounting structures
- On-site supporting equipment including inverters, transformers, and switchgears
- Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)
- Underground cabling within the areas of the solar PV modules and connecting solar PV module areas to the on-site substation
- Supporting infrastructure including access tracks, security measures, gates, lighting
- Opportunities to consider a range of measures to allow for a Biodiversity Net Gain and landscape works upon the site
- Improvements to local footpath network

Approach to consultation

Legislative context

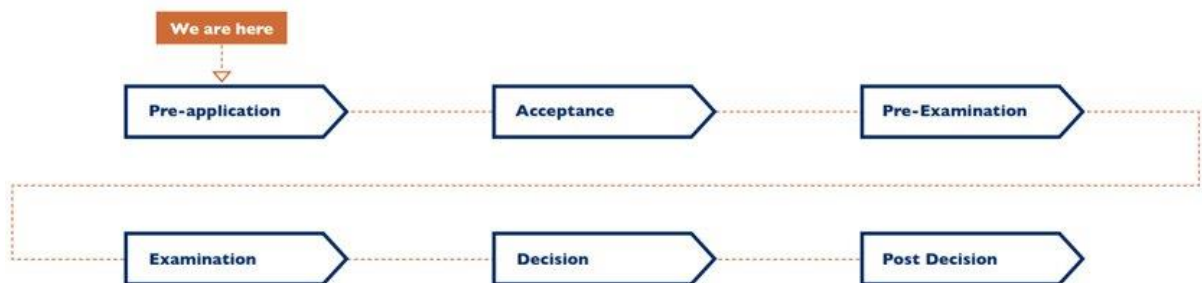
Due to the amount of renewable energy Steeple Renewables Project could generate it is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), meaning to gain consent for the project we will need to prepare and submit a Development Consent Order (DCO) to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS).

The Secretary of State for the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero will make the final decision on whether the project is consented, based on a recommendation made by the Planning Inspectorate.

Effective consultation is a critical element of the DCO process, offering an opportunity for community and stakeholder input into the evolving proposals. The feedback received, in conjunction with technical studies and environmental assessments, will be used to inform and shape the DCO application before it is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate.

The Planning Act 2008 includes the requirement for a statutory consultation prior to application submission, and outlines requirements such as publicity and statutory parties to be consulted. RES has taken a multi-stage approach to consultation, opting to undertake an early informal consultation to help inform the design development, ahead of a statutory consultation planned for 2024. **Figure 2** gives an overview of the key stages of the DCO process.

Figure 2: DCO Stages



Informing our approach

RES is committed to meaningful engagement with the local community, this means ensuring that the communities living and working near to our proposed project have the chance to inform and influence the development of our project from an early stage.

In order to achieve this, we have decided to undertake a two-stage programme of community engagement and consultation. This initial stage has been our early, informal consultation. We will use the feedback from this stage of consultation, alongside our ongoing technical and environmental work to develop our proposals further before presenting consultees and the community with more detailed proposals at our statutory consultation in Summer 2024.

In advance of our early informal consultation (held between 23 October and 6 December 2023), we engaged with key stakeholders, giving them the opportunity to inform our approach to early informal consultation. On 27 July 2023 letters were issued via email and post to key local political stakeholders, including the Council leadership and the local MP, to inform them of the project ahead of the early informal consultation with an invitation to be briefed on the proposals. These meetings were offered at an early stage to introduce RES and the proposals to the stakeholders and establish an open line of communication between stakeholders and the project team.

A list of the stakeholders we contacted on 27 July 2023 is in **Table 1** below:

Table 1: Stakeholders that were contacted on 27 July 2023

Councillor James Naish , Bassetlaw District Council
Councillor Jo White , Bassetlaw District Council
Beverley Alderton Sambrook , Bassetlaw District Council
Brendan Clarke-Smith , MP for Bassetlaw

A copy of the letter that was sent to stakeholders is available at Appendix 1.

As a result of the boundary changes due to come into effect after the 2024 General Election, the land under consideration for Steeple Renewables Project will fall into the Newark constituency that is currently held by Robert Jenrick MP. Subsequently we contacted Mr Jenrick after our initial outreach on Wednesday 23 August 2023.

An additional letter was sent via email and post on 23 October 2023 to give stakeholders notice of the consultation. A copy of this letter is available at **Appendix 2**.

Following on from this initial outreach, similar communications were issued to other local political stakeholders, including Parish Councils, neighbouring ward councillors and the Nottinghamshire County Council division members.

A full list of local representatives that were contacted is in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Stakeholders that were contacted on 23 October 2023

North and South Wheatley Parish Council
Clarborough and Welham Paris Council
North Leverton with Hablesthorpe Parish Council
Sturton-le-Steeple Parish Council
Councillor Tracey Taylor , Nottinghamshire County Council
Councillor John Ogle , Nottinghamshire County Council
Councillor Frazer McFarland , Bassetlaw District Council

As a result, we held meetings, before and during the consultation period, which introduced RES and the proposals for Steeple Renewables Project and our plans for consultation. We have notified key stakeholders ahead of each project milestone and provided opportunities to feed into the process throughout.

Table 3: Stakeholder meetings that have taken place to date

Stakeholder	Meeting Date
Brendan Clarke Smith , MP for Bassetlaw	14.08.23
North and South Wheatley Parish Council	10.10.23
Sturton-le-Steeple Parish Council	11.10.23
Clarbrough and Welham Parish Council	27.11.23
Robert Jenrick , MP for Newark	01.12.23

Engagement with statutory consultees

Although this stage of consultation isn't subject to the requirements of the Planning Act 2008, we contacted statutory parties at the start of our early informal consultation, informing them of our proposals and asking them to comment on the proposals and raise any potential issues. The statutory consultees were sent a letter, consultation newsletter, consultation brochure and feedback form.

The list of statutory consultees we contacted is in **Appendix 3**. The responses from statutory consultees are summarised further in this report.

Tenant engagement

As part of the initial engagement for the project we identified and engaged with the tenants who farm the land we are exploring to potentially become part of Steeple Renewables Project.

Ahead of our initial outreach to political stakeholders, we reached out to the tenants, informing them of the proposals and offering to meet with them to introduce ourselves and discuss the proposals and establish an open line of communication between the project team and the tenants.

To date we have met with all the tenants who could potentially be impacted by the proposals.

Overall approach

Our approach to the early informal consultation endeavoured to ensure our consultation was accessible to everyone.

We adopted a hybrid approach to consultation, including a mix of virtual and in-person consultation methods. This enabled our consultation to reach a broad range of people, allowing easy access to the consultation information to help accommodate for different working patterns and engage with a wider range of audiences.

Crucially this approach ensured that those with disabilities, health and/or mobility difficulties who may not have been able to otherwise access information or attend our events could fully participate in the consultation process.

Recognising that digital consultation may not suit everyone's needs, we held two in-person events where people could find out more information about the proposals and speak to members of the project team.

Feedback could also be provided offline, via hard copy feedback forms and freepost. People could also contact the project team using the telephone information line.

The Consultation

Consultation purpose

The purpose of our early informal consultation was to introduce RES and our proposals for Steeple Renewables Project and get stakeholder and community feedback on our early-stage proposals.

We sought to identify any wider potential local impacts of the scheme in addition to opportunities for supporting local schemes or projects to benefit communities closest to the project.

We anticipated that the feedback we received would help us to refine our proposals for the project whilst ensuring the project is developed sensitively to the neighbouring community.

What we asked

To achieve what we set out above we asked for people's views and feedback on:

- What potential environmental issues in relation to the proposals were most important, such as land quality and use and ecology and biodiversity
- Suggestions for community benefits that RES could deliver as part of the project
- Overall level of support for Steeple Renewables Project
- General comments on their thoughts on the proposals

We also collected the following data to help us to understand any issues that were raised in more detail:

- The respondent's interest in the project, (whether they are a tenant, local landowner local resident, local business owner etc.)
- Address and postcode
- Age range
- Whether they have attended one of our consultation events

To understand how we could improve our consultation, we also asked:

- For overall comments on the consultation
- Whether they have found the consultation informative
- How they found out about the consultation (receipt of project newsletter, word of mouth, social media)

In gathering this information, we gave full regard to General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.

Our early informal consultation ran from Monday 23 October 2023 until Monday 4 December 2023. (The consultation was extended by two days due to a technical issue that caused the website to become inactive for two days. Whilst the website was inactive stakeholders could still submit feedback via the online form as that was unaffected by the website issue. Feedback was still accepted via email, phone and freepost during this time. The final deadline for feedback was therefore Wednesday 6 December 2023).

Promoting the consultation

Our early informal consultation was open to anyone and was widely publicised, via email, newsletters and press releases.

Notification

To notify key stakeholders, we issued letters via post and email to immediate and neighbouring wards and parishes, including:

- MP who represents the site currently and the MP that will represent the site after 2024 election
- Elected members and parish councils representing the immediate and neighbouring wards to the site

A full list of stakeholders that were contacted is available in **Appendix 4**.

Publicity

To ensure that anyone who is interested in the proposals was properly notified of the consultation, we used a number of promotional methods.

- To coincide with the launch of the consultation a community newsletter was distributed to 3000+ homes and businesses identified as living in close proximity to the proposed site, in what was determined the Primary Consultation Zone (PCZ).
- A poster that displayed key information about the consultation including dates of consultation events and deposit locations was sent to North and South Wheatley Parish Council and displayed to advise the community of the upcoming consultation.
- A press release was issued to local media, including key information about the proposals and the consultation. A copy of this press release is available in **Appendix 5**.
- This press release was sent to: Lincolnshire Live, BBC East Midlands, Look North, The Worksop Guardian, ITV Calendar and Nottinghamshire Live. The press release was also sent to a number of trade publications, these are listed in **Appendix 6**. The coverage we received is detailed in **Table 4** below:

Table 4: Newspaper coverage of the consultation launch

<u>RES plans big solar-storage project near West Burton power station</u>	23.10.23
<u>Notts village could be surrounded by 'ludicrously big' solar farm</u>	23.10.23
<u>Plans revealed for £224m power and battery plant in Nottinghamshire</u>	23.10.23
<u>Consultation launched into £224m solar power and battery storage site in north Notts</u>	23.10.23
<u>RES unveils 600MW UK solar, storage plans</u>	23.10.23

Making information available

Consultation materials

As part of our early informal consultation, we produced a suite of consultation materials that provided detail on our proposals for Steeple Renewables Project. We produced several different types of consultation materials to ensure our consultation was accessible to as wide an audience as possible.

We adopted a hybrid approach using a mix of both digital and hard copy consultation materials. To promote the consultation, we posted out newsletters in the first instance that directed people to our website and virtual exhibition and let them know about the consultation events and deposit locations.

Details of our consultation materials are presented in **Table 5**.

Table 5: List of consultation materials

Material	Description
Website: www.steeplerenewablesproject.co.uk (See a snapshot of the website at Appendix 7)	Providing information about the proposals for Steeple Renewables Project, ways to provide feedback and a feature to register for updates on the project. The website also hosted our virtual exhibition.
Consultation newsletter (See Appendix 8)	This was posted out to homes and businesses within the PCZ. It provided a brief overview of the proposals and detail about the consultation events and deposit locations.
Consultation brochure (See Appendix 9)	Providing detailed information about the early proposals for Steeple Renewables Project, how to take part in the project supported by imagery and a project map.
Virtual exhibition (See a snapshot of the virtual exhibition at Appendix 10)	A virtual consultation room that contained the exhibition boards that were present at the consultation events.

Consultation events

During our early informal consultation, we held two public consultation events. These events enabled people to come and learn more about the proposals, speak to members of the project team, ask questions and raise any concerns.

In line with our hybrid approach, we held both in-person and virtual events to ensure the accessibility of our consultation. This meant that those who were unable to attend the in-person consultation events were still given the opportunity to find out more about the project and provide their feedback.

We held our in-person events on different days and times including one on a Saturday. Venues were chosen due to their proximity to the site, their suitability in terms of facilities, disabled access and parking.

We also held an online event in the evening, where members of the public could ask questions of the project team.

Our events were visited by a total of 132 attendees. Details of the events are set out in **Table 6** below.

Table 6: Schedule of consultation events

Date	Time	Location	Attendees
Friday 3 November 2023	2pm-7pm	South Leverton Memorial Institute Town St, South Leverton, Retford DN22	30
Saturday 4 November 2023	10am-2pm	Sturton Hall and Conference Centre Brickings Way, Sturton-le-Steeple, Retford DN22 9HY	98
Wednesday 22 November 2023	6pm-7pm	Online	4

We provided consultation materials at the events including:

- AO exhibition boards (copies of the exhibition boards are available at **Appendix 11**)
- AO OS maps of Sturton-le-Steeple
- A3 printed versions of the site location plan
- Copies of the consultation brochure
- Copies of the feedback form and freepost envelopes

Feedback mechanisms

How people could respond to the consultation

Respondents could provide their feedback to the consultation through the methods set out in **Table 7**.

The closing date for responses was Monday 4 December 2023 at 11:59pm, this was clearly stated throughout all consultation material. However, due to a technical issue the website was down on the closing date and to accommodate for this downtime the deadline for responses was extended until Wednesday 6 December 2023 at 11:59pm, this extension was clearly advertised on the project website.

Postal feedback was accepted up to a week after the closing date.

Table 7: Feedback Mechanisms

Feedback Method	Details
Digital feedback form (See a snapshot of the feedback form Appendix 12)	Fill in and submit the feedback form via the project website
Hard copy feedback form (Appendix 13)	Fill in and submit the response via post or at a consultation event
Freepost	Post the feedback form or other comments to the freepost address: FREEPOST STEEPLE RENEWABLES PROJECT
Email	Email comments or a completed feedback form to info@steeplerenewablesproject.co.uk
Project information line	Call and speak to a member of the communications team and leave your feedback or request hard-copy materials. (0115 718 2070)

Feedback

Feedback overview

Number of responses received

In total, 118 responses were received during the consultation and included 111 from the local community and 7 from statutory consultees. The feedback comprised of:

- 9 emails
- 80 digital feedback forms
- 21 paper feedback forms
- 7 statutory consultee responses
- 1 postal submission

Feedback coding and analysis

At the end of consultation, the team undertook a review of all the feedback received and coded this feedback in line with the themes raised by those who responded to the consultation.

Key themes identified

A range of stakeholders provided feedback on our early proposals for Steeple Renewables Project, all this feedback has been processed and analysed and will be used to inform the development of Steeple Renewables Project. Summaries of the key issues that were raised during the consultation, by topic are below.

Size and scale

Concerns were raised about the size and the scale of the proposals for Steeple Renewables Project and the appropriateness of a project of this scale surrounding a village.

Environment

Concerns included the impact of Steeple Renewables Project on the local wildlife and habitats, including the effect of fencing on the movement of local wildlife. The potential loss of agricultural land for food production was also raised, in addition to soil quality and erosion and lasting impacts on the land after decommissioning.

Farmers livelihoods and local farming culture

A major concern raised by local residents was the loss of local farms and the livelihoods of the local farmers. Many comments noted that the farmers were an integral part of the village and were worried about how the loss of these farms would impact the local lifestyle and culture.

Heritage and archaeology

Concerns were raised by residents and statutory consultees about the impact of the project on local heritage assets, and that there are several listed buildings and scheduled monuments locally whose environment would be affected by Steeple Renewables Project.

Concerns were also raised about the potential for archaeological remains to be discovered on site during construction, due to the sensitive archaeological character of the area under consideration.

Location of the site

Concerns were raised about the location of the project on farmland in Sturton-le-Steeple, respondents were concerned about the location of the site on agricultural land and the cumulative impact of the proposals alongside other projects locally. Statutory consultees raised concerns about the project's proximity to local electricity network assets.

Suggestions were made to locate the project nearer to the electricity network with alternative sites suggested at West Burton, High Marnham, and Cottam.

Traffic access and construction

Issues were raised about the potential loss of local footpaths, bridleways and other local walking routes. Safety of horses alongside construction traffic was also flagged as a potential problem. Respondents were also concerned about the suitability of local roads for construction traffic, with one comment suggesting that RES use the railway line into West Burton to transport materials rather than the local roads.

The need for solar

Whilst some responses indicated a recognition of the need for the UK to develop more renewable technology, a number of comments stated that they do not feel that solar projects of this scale are necessary. Comments cited the West Burton STEP project as to why they don't see the need for an increase in ground mounted solar in the UK.

Concerns were raised about the efficiency of solar panels as a renewable technology, with respondents doubting the suitability of the UK climate for effective solar energy generation.

Consultation

Concerns were raised about the level of detailed information that was available at the early informal consultation events, respondents noted that the information that was available at the events was no different to the information on the website. Comments requested that there be more detailed information available during the next round of consultation.

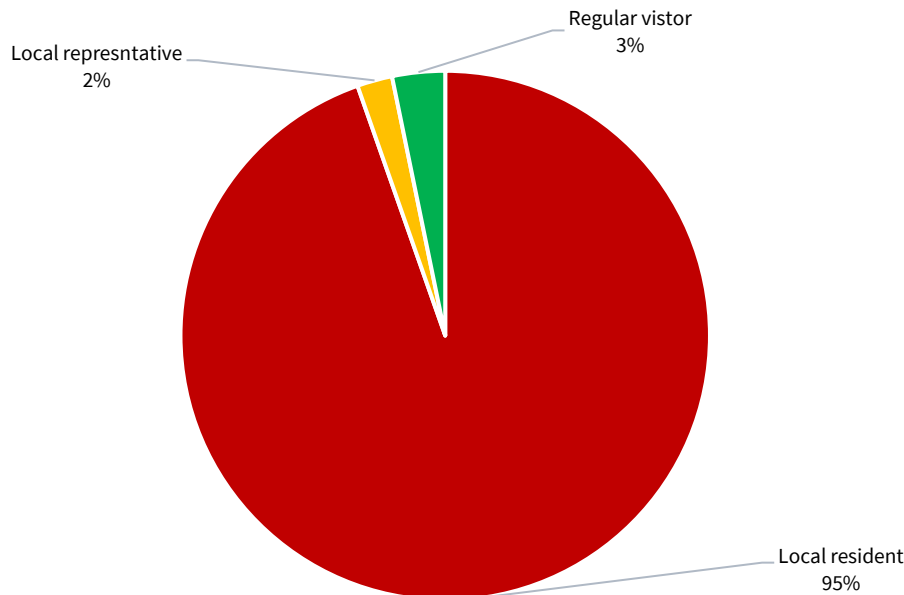
Additional considerations involved promoting consultation events more widely and improving the staff's level of knowledge. A favourable remark commended the good quality of the consultation.

Themed summaries of feedback were circulated to the wider project team alongside full consultation responses to enable them to have regard to consultation feedback in further developing our proposals. A table that presents the key issues raised by the public and stakeholders, and how RES has had regard to these comments can be found in the response to comments section further on in this report. All personal data received as part of the consultation was processed in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.

Overview of feedback form responses

The below graphs and summaries give an overview of the tick box questions that formed part of our early informal consultation feedback form. The free text answers have been analysed and are summarised in the feedback responses section of this report.

Q1. How would you describe your interest?

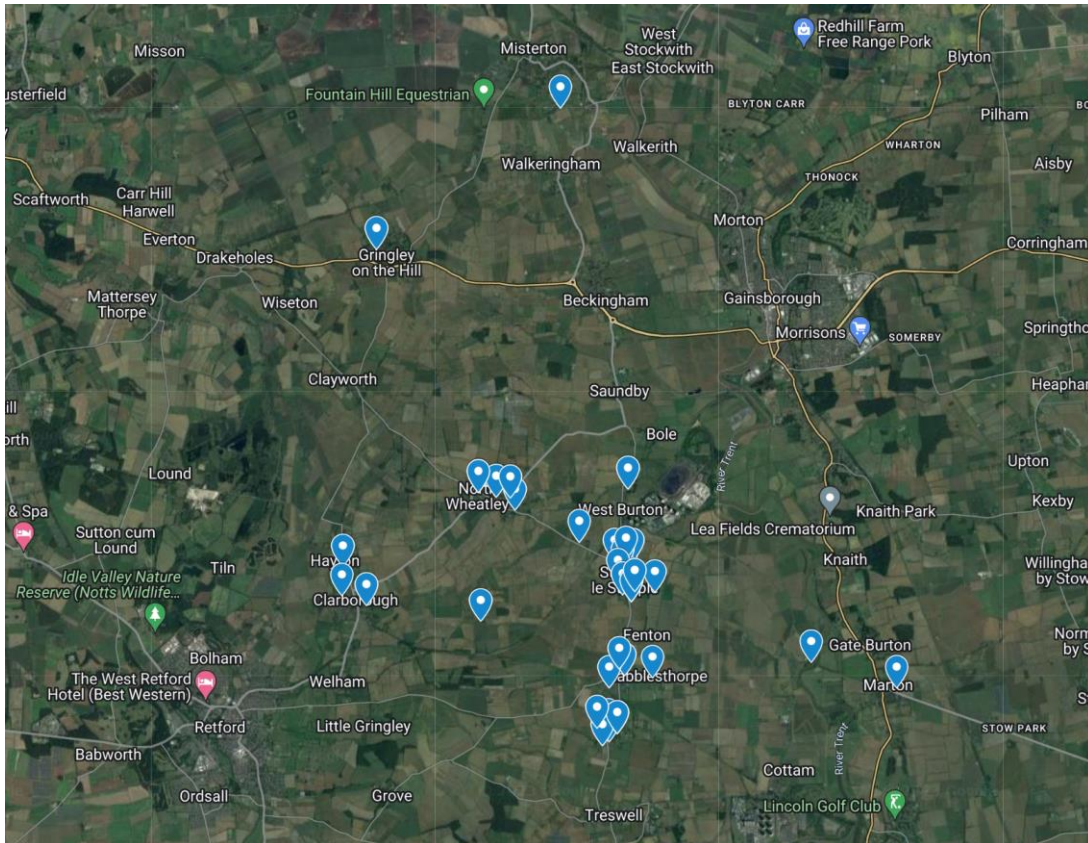


Question 1 asked respondents to describe their interest in the proposals for Steeple Renewables Project, 95% of respondents identified themselves as a local resident.

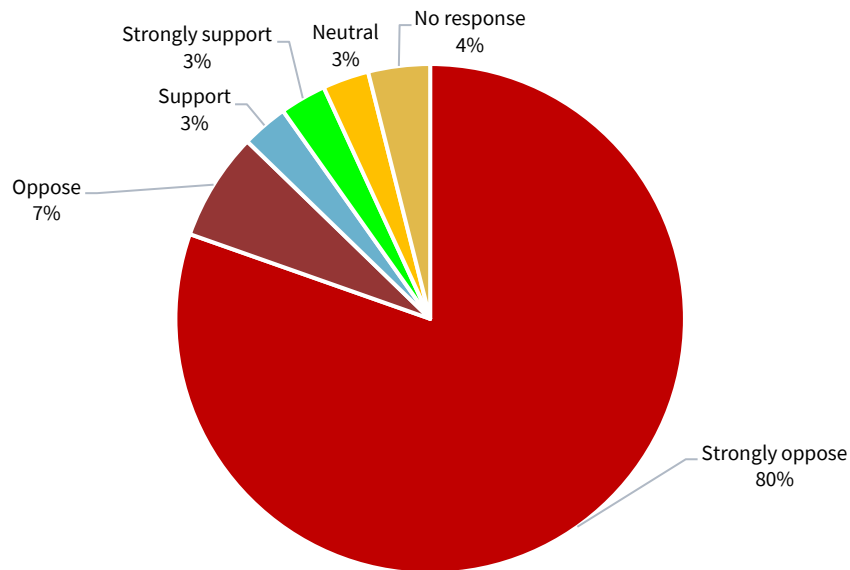
The majority of responses to our early informal consultation for Steeple Renewables Project came from those who live within close proximity to the land under consideration for the proposals. This localised response highlights the significance of the proposals to the local community and the disinterest in the proposals from those in the wider locality.

Figure 3 displays the locations of those who responded to our consultation.

Figure 3: Map of consultation responses (by postcode)¹



Q2. Based on the information we have presented as part of our early informal consultation how supportive are you of our emerging renewable energy project, to utilise the grid connection at West Burton Power Station to generate clean, affordable energy and help the UK to reach its decarbonisation targets?



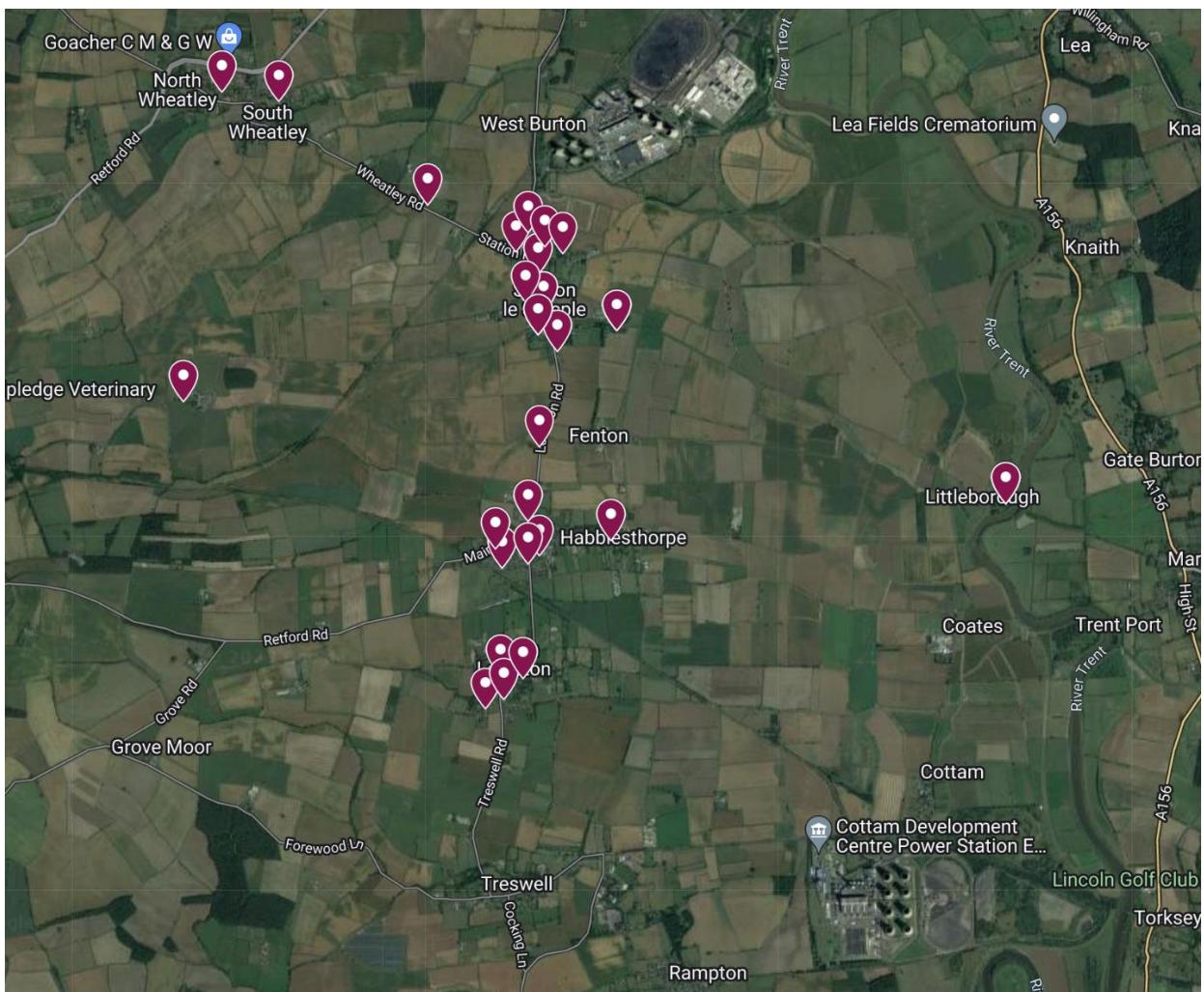
¹ This map points to the postcode areas we received responses to and does not point to specific addresses of respondents.

Question 2 asked respondents to state their level of support for the emerging proposals for Steeple Renewables Project and then for them to explain why.

97 out of 101 respondents answered this question with the majority stating that they are opposed to or strongly opposed to the proposals for Steeple Renewables Project. Considering that the early informal consultation newsletters were distributed to over 3000 local homes and businesses, the opposition, while significant, represents a small fraction of the broader local population.

Figure 4 displays the locations of the respondents who stated that they are opposed to the project.

Figure 4: Map of respondents who oppose the proposals (by postcode)²



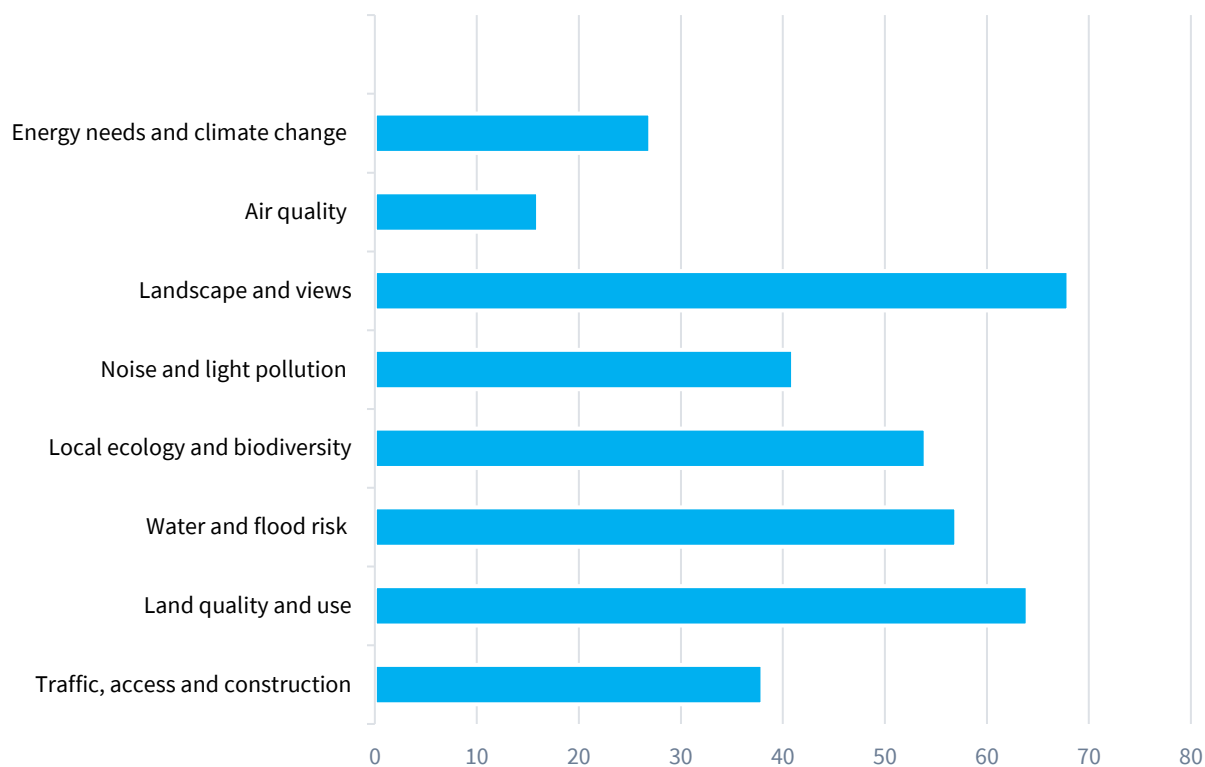
Question 2 had two parts, with the second part allowing respondents to provide their comments on the options they had selected in a free text box. The themes that were discussed by respondents in these free text answers and the frequency which they appeared are listed in the table below.

Theme	Number of times theme was raised in response to this question
Size and scale	23
Impact on the local landscape	29

² This map points to the postcode areas we received responses to and does not point to specific addresses of respondents.

Visual impact	26
Climate scepticism	10
Agricultural land loss	12
Ecological and wildlife impact	13
Farmers livelihoods	11

Q3. What potential environmental issues in relation to the proposals are most important to you?



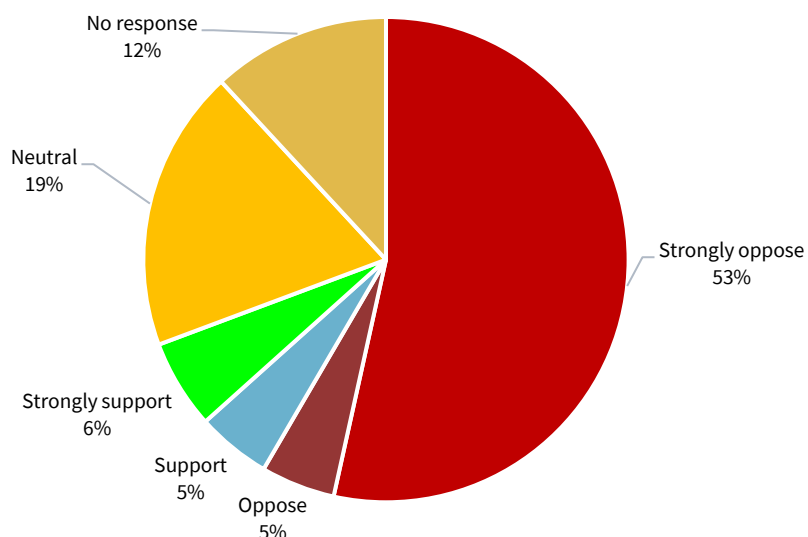
Respondents were presented with a range of choices, enabling them to select some or all the options that were most important to them. Landscape and views was the most frequently selected with 66% of respondents highlighting its importance to them. Land quality and use was the second most selected by 62% respondents. Beyond the two most selected options, respondents attributed varying degrees of importance to the remaining categories, as reflected in the response rates provided:

- Water and flood risk – 55%
- Local ecology and biodiversity – 52%
- Noise and light pollution – 40%
- Traffic, access and construction – 37%
- Energy needs and climate change – 26%
- Air quality – 15%

The comments received in response to the second part of the question were categorised into themes.

Theme	Number of times theme was raised in response to this question
Visual Impact	19
Impact on the local landscape	15
Water and food risk	14
Agricultural land loss	14
Ecological and wildlife impact	14

Q4. We have shared with you our plans for our Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS), how supportive are you of seeing this benefit delivered as part of Steeple Renewables Project?



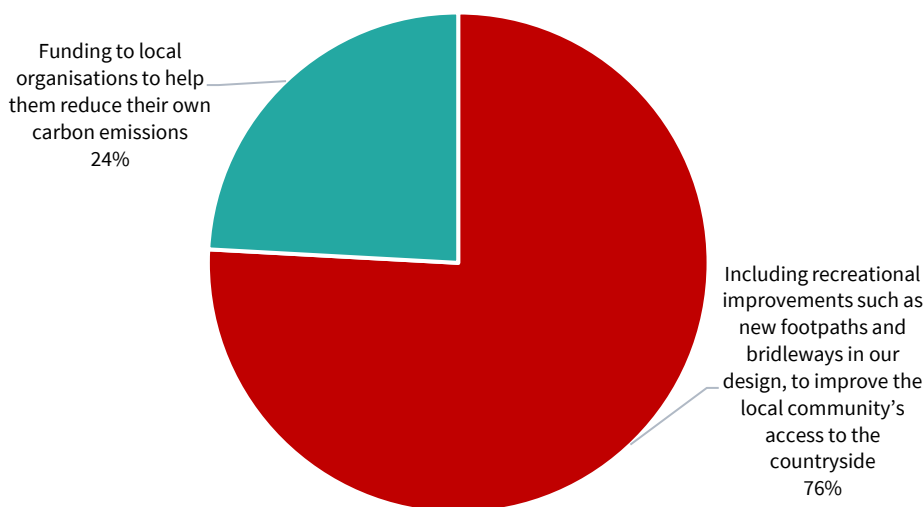
Question 4 invited respondents to share their views on the proposed LEDS scheme presented during the early informal consultation. The majority of respondents expressed reservations about LEDS, with 58% of respondents indicating that they are opposed to seeing this benefit delivered as part of the Steeple Renewables Project. This question received 89 responses which means that 12 respondents who filled out the feedback form chose not to answer this question.

Considering the overall opposition to the proposals it is likely that those who are unsupportive of the proposals overall did not want to show support for any aspect of Steeple Renewables Project, this would explain the lower response rate and opposition to this aspect of the community benefits package that would be available, once the solar farm is operational.

Question 4 asked respondents to explain their selection in the multiple-choice part of the question. The comments received in response to the second part of the question were categorised into themes.

Theme	Number of times theme was raised in response to this question
LEDS isn't enough	37
LEDS is bribery	19
Project is not wanted	11
Doesn't like LEDS	4
LEDS won't compensate for the impact on the local landscape	4

Q5. What types of community benefits or initiatives would you like us to explore as part of our proposals for Steeple Renewables Project?



Question 5 asked respondents what type of community benefits they would like to see as part of the proposals for Steeple Renewables Project, this question received a low rate of response with 29 respondents providing an answer to this question.

This question also asked respondents to list local groups and projects that they would like to see supported as part of the community benefits package, the suggestions we received are below:

- A significant levy should be made payable to the local authority
- Agricultural groups
- Funding to support lessons on map drawing

If respondents ticked the 'other' box in response to this question they were asked to specify, the comments received in response to this of the question were categorised into themes.

Theme	Number of times theme was raised in response to this question
Project isn't wanted	17
Impact on local walking routes	8

Q6. Do you have any further comments on our proposals at this early stage?

Question 6 asked respondents for any further comments on the proposals for Steeple Renewables Project, this question also received a relatively low response rate, with 62 respondents providing an answer.

This question was a free text question and the responses to this question have been categorised into themes.

Themes	Number of times theme was raised in response to this question
Project isn't wanted	33
Wrong location	10
Cumulative Impacts	10

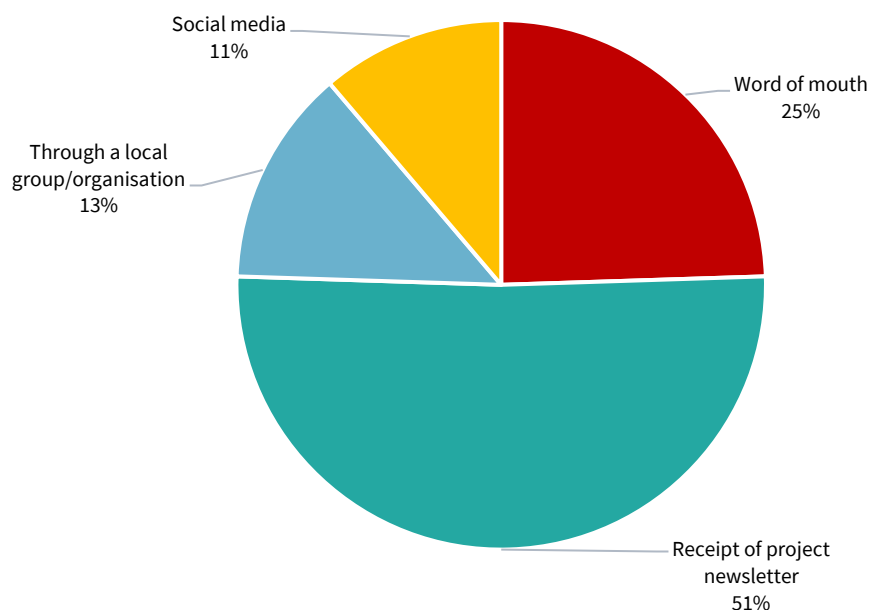
Impact on farmers livelihoods	10
Solar shouldn't be placed on farmland	7

Q7. Please provide any overall comments you have on this early informal consultation and any suggestions you would like us to consider for our future engagement and consultation.

Question 7 asked respondents for any further comments on the early informal consultation for Steeple Renewables Project. This question was a free text question and the responses to this question have been categorised into themes. The top themes and the rate at which they were mentioned are listed below.

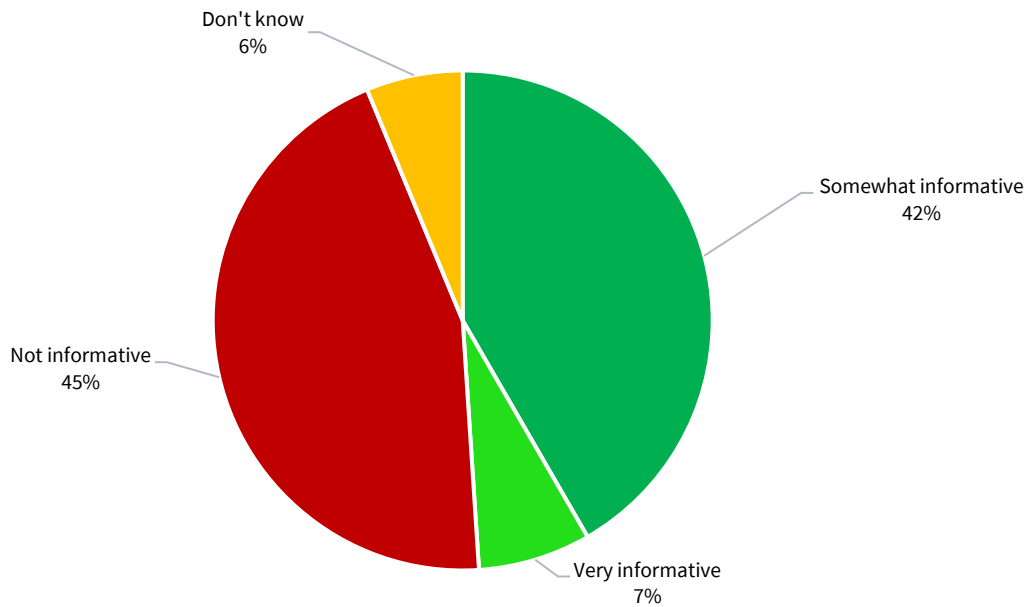
Themes	Number of times theme was raised in response to this question
Project is not wanted	20
More detailed information is needed in the next round of consultation	16
Belief that local jobs from the project will be minimal	12
Staff need to be able to provide more detail	4

Q8. How did you find out about this early informal consultation?



Question 8 asked respondents how they found out about the early informal consultation for Steeple Renewables Project, the majority of respondents stated they found out about the consultation through the project newsletter we distributed to 3000+ local homes and businesses. This response highlights the efficiency of our chosen method in successfully engaging and informing the local community.

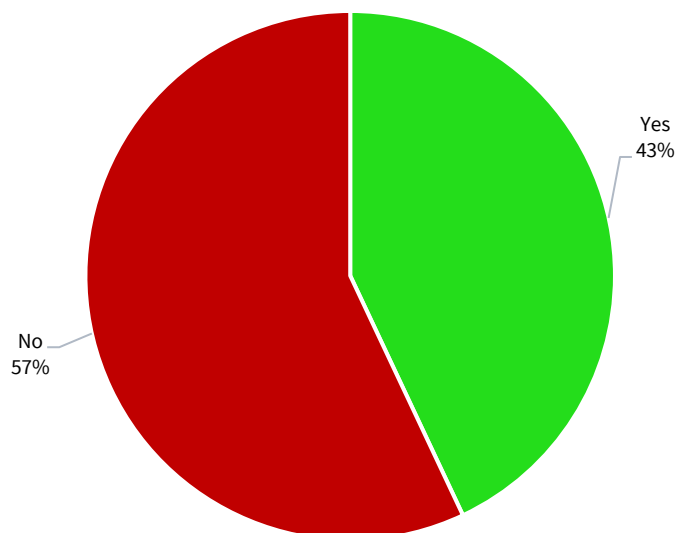
Q9. How informative have you found our early informal consultation?



In response to Question 9, which sought feedback on the informativeness of our early informal consultation for the Steeple Renewables Project, around 50% of respondents said they found the consultation to be either very informative or somewhat informative. However, it is acknowledged a significant portion of respondents did not share this view.

The primary objective of our early informal consultation was to introduce the preliminary project proposals to the local community and to get community feedback on these initial plans. Given the early stage of the project, it is important to note that detailed information about the proposals was limited. Consequently, it is likely that some respondents' perception of the consultation's informativeness stems from the perceived lack of detailed information available at this stage.

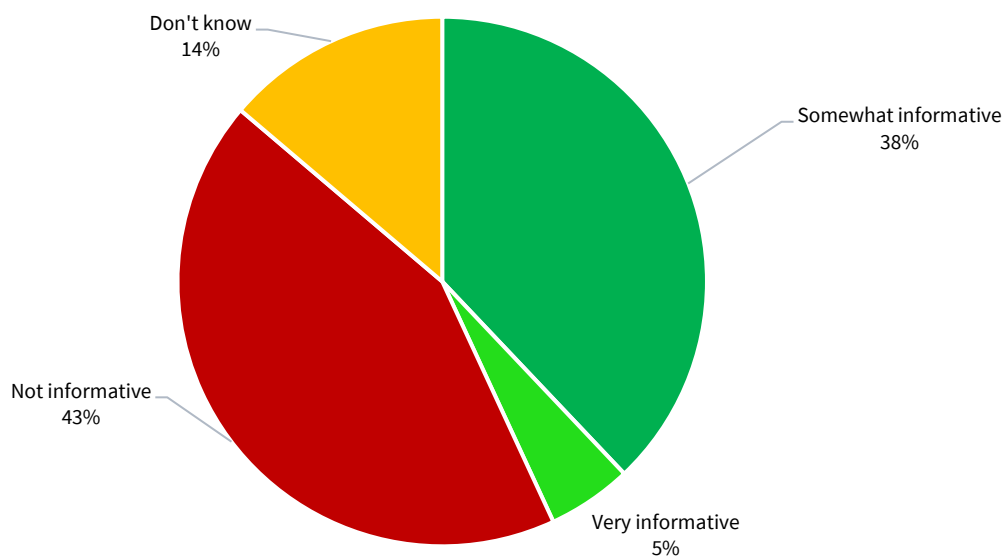
Q10a. Have you attended one of our early informal consultation events?



In response to Question 10a, where respondents were asked if they had attended our early informal consultation events, a significant majority of those who completed the feedback form indicated that they had not visited an event. As the consultation period began on 23 October 2023 and the first event did not take place until Friday 3 November, it is possible that people had given their feedback using the information available on the project website and deposit locations before the consultation events had taken place.

This insight suggests the effectiveness of our online presence in disseminating information to a broader audience, emphasising the importance of diverse communication channels in reaching and engaging the community.

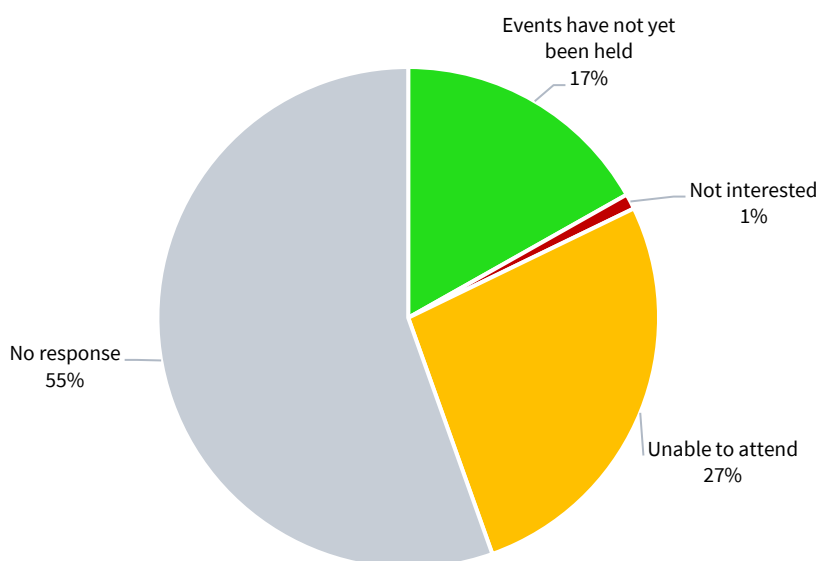
Q10b. If yes, did you find the event useful and informative?



Concerning Question 10b, which aimed to gather feedback on the perceived informativeness of our early informal consultation events from attendees, there's an interesting point to note. In Question 10a, we recorded 43 respondents attending the events, but Question 10b received 55 responses.

It is worth mentioning that the feedback on the events' informativeness is evenly divided. 25 respondents expressed that they did not find the events informative, while another 25 respondents reported finding the events at least somewhat informative.

Q10c. If no, what was the reason?



The majority of respondents did not provide an answer to this question, this is likely to be because they attended one of our consultation events. Of those that did respond to this question the majority were either unable to attend the events or they filled in the feedback form before the events has been held.

Statutory consultee responses

The following seven statutory consultees – stakeholders who RES is required to consult under the Planning Act 2008 - submitted a response to the consultation:

- NATS Safeguarding
- Network Rail
- Northern Power grid
- Southern Gas Networks
- The Coal Authority
- Historic England
- National Grid Energy Transmission

A summary of the responses we received from these statutory consultees is below.

Consultee	Summary of response
NATS Safeguarding	NATS Safeguarding had no specific comments to make on the proposals for Steeple Renewables Project.
Network Rail	Network Rail passed the details of the project onto the town planning team to review and contact the project if necessary. No further communication was received.
Northern Power grid	Northern Power grid had no specific comments to make on the proposals for Steeple Renewables Project as it was outside their operational area.
Southern Gas Networks	Southern Gas Networks is not the operator for gas networks in the area.
The Coal Authority	The Coal Authority confirmed that the project is located outside the Development High Risk Area as defined by the Coal Authority and as such the planning team have no comments to make.

<p>Historic England</p>	<p>Historic England made a number of comments on the proposals for Steeple Renewables Project.</p> <p>They recommended that the following issues are taken into account during your assessments (including consideration of the impact of ancillary infrastructure):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The potential impact upon the landscape - Direct impacts on historic/archaeological fabric (buildings, sites or areas), whether statutorily protected or not - Other impacts, particularly the setting of listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas etc., including long views and any specific designed views and vistas within historic designed landscapes. All grades of listed buildings should be identified. In some cases, inter-visibility between historic sites may be a significant issue. <p>The potential for buried archaeological remains Effects on landscape amenity from public and private land Cumulative impacts.</p> <p>Historic England also flagged a number of historical assets that are included in the proposed site area including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Part of scheduled monument ‘Segulocum Roman town’ (National Heritage List for England 1003669). It sits within a wider, broadly contemporary archaeological landscape of settlement and activity along the Roman transport network of river and road, noting, for example, the scheduled Roman fort south of Littleborough Lane to the east of the river (NHLE 1004935) - The Norman Grade I listed church of St Nicholas, which is located adjacent to the scheduled Roman town and has Roman fabric incorporated into the structure - The Grade II* listed Burton Chateau which sits atop a hill with wide views over the river to its west. <p>The illustrative application area is also within the setting of scheduled monument ‘Medieval settlement and open field system immediately south east of Low Farm’ (NHLE 1017741).</p> <p>The scheme has potential to encapsulate the village of Sturton-le-Steeple and hamlet of Fenton, and coalesce the settlements at South Wheatley, North Leverton with Habbleshthorpe and Littleborough, leading to a sense of their visual enclosure and impeding appreciation of these rural settlements and highly graded listed churches therein in their landscape context</p> <p>Historic England also highlighted that the solar panel supports and associated infrastructure including buried cable routes, access tracks, security fencing, substations and landscaping also pose a risk to archaeological remains.</p> <p>Historic England strongly recommends that you contact the county archaeological advisors at an early stage for advice on the formation of a robust program of archaeological assessment to inform the proposals.</p>
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	<p>They stated that they understand that geophysical survey and other investigations have identified extensive further remains of the Roman town beyond the scheduled area - RES should discuss this with the County Historic Environment Team and the District Council's Historic Environment advisor in addition to making a detailed Historic Environment Record consultation.</p> <p>Finally Historic England stated that RES should fully assess the contribution setting makes to the significance of these and other affected heritage assets in order to fully understand any harm that may result from the proposals and ensure that detrimental impacts are minimised.</p>
<p>National Grid Energy Transmission</p>	<p>National Grid Energy Transition (NGET) flagged that the proposed site for Steeple Renewables Project comes into contact with national grid energy infrastructure.</p> <p>NGET has high voltage electricity overhead transmission lines, underground cables and a high voltage substation within the land under consideration area. The overhead lines and substation form an essential part of the electricity transmission network in England and Wales. Existing Infrastructure includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Substation - Overhead Lines - COTTAM - KEADBY 2 - Cable Apparatus - New Infrastructure - North Humber to High Marnham <p>NGET requests that all existing and future assets are given due consideration given their criticality to distribution of energy across the UK. These projects are all essential to increase the overall network capability to connect the numerous new offshore wind farms that are being developed, and transport new clean green energy to the homes and businesses where it is needed.</p>

Response to comments

Below is a summary of the common themes and questions that were raised by the community and statutory consultees in the feedback they provided during the early informal consultation, alongside RES' response. The feedback summarised in the table includes comments received through all available feedback mechanisms, including feedback form, email, and freepost.

Early Informal Consultation Feedback		
General support for the scheme		
Feedback	Consultee	Our response
<p>Comments in support of the scheme and location including citing benefits that the project will support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - net zero - energy security - cheaper energy bills 	Community Feedback	<p>Thank you for your feedback, more information on our proposed community benefits can be found on our project website.</p> <p>www.steeplerenewablesproject.co.uk</p>
Landscape and visual impacts		
Feedback	Consultee	Our Response
<p>Concerns about the size and scale of Steeple Renewables Project proposals. Respondents conveyed their concerns, noting that the project's scale appears excessively large and may be deemed inappropriate, particularly with regards to its impact on surrounding villages.</p> <p>Respondents noted concerns about the project's substantial size, deeming it inappropriate for the development to encircle villages. Critiques centred on the perceived intrusiveness of the project due to its scale.</p>	Community Feedback	<p>We will carefully assess the site's landscape character and its relationship with nearby communities to identify potential effects on the local area. As part of our Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments, we'll recommend suitable areas for panel placement to minimise impacts and visual disturbance. The intention is to, where possible, retain field position and boundary treatments.</p> <p>We aim to set back panels from properties wherever possible. Infrastructure such as sub stations/ generators/ inverters will be grouped together and sited away from residents and screened by either existing or proposed soft landscaping where possible, preserving local views and supporting Steeple Renewables Project's goal of harmonious integration with the surrounding environment and the local community.</p>
<p>During the consultation the community raised concerns about the proximity of Steeple Renewables Project to residential properties.</p>		
<p>Concerns about depreciation in property value.</p>	Community Feedback	<p>There is no firm evidence on whether solar farms do or do not affect house prices. We are aware of residents, close to other renewable energy projects, who value having renewable energy projects close by and think that they add value to their community.</p> <p>Furthermore, this is not a material planning matter this scheme can address. There are however community benefits that local</p>

		residents will benefit from such as potentially lower energy bills.
<p>A number of responses to the consultation expressed apprehensions regarding the visual impact of the proposed project. A significant portion of respondents voiced their concern, describing the project as a potential 'eyesore' and expressing worries about its perceived negative impact on the local scenic views.</p> <p>Concerns were specifically raised about the height of the panels and other necessary infrastructure, with respondents emphasising potential implications for the rural character and landscape of Sturton-le-Steeple.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about the project leading to the industrialisation of the area.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p> <p>Statutory Consultee</p>	<p>We will consider the landscape character of the site and its relationship with nearby communities to identify the potential effects on the local landscape and visual amenity.</p> <p>The solar panels we are proposing for Steeple Renewables Project will be approximately 3.5 metres tall. This height is becoming more common as solar technology becomes increasingly efficient allowing increased generation in a smaller area.</p> <p>The solar panels are also fixed in position. Panels are also angled and associated infrastructure will be grouped together wherever possible. The topography here is relatively flat, existing field patterns and boundary treatments will be retained where possible, strengthened i.e. through gapping up hedgerows and additional soft landscaping provided. Hedgerows could be managed and maintained at a height of 3.5 metres to screen the proposed development. The proposed development is also temporary in nature and use of arable land will not be permanently lost.</p>
<p>Concern about the impact of the project on the local landscape.</p>		
<p>Concerns were raised about potential glint and glare caused by solar panels impacting the villages surrounding Steeple Renewables Project.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>As solar panels are designed to absorb sunlight, they do not have highly reflective surfaces. This stands to reason: the more light a panel absorbs, the more power it will generate. This is why the industry has developed high-tech anti-reflective coatings, and ultra-transparent glass to improve panel efficiency.</p> <p>However, a Glint and Glare Assessment will be undertaken as part of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which will consider potential impacts on roads, Public Rights of Way, rail lines, residential dwellings as well as aviation. Mitigation measures will be proposed where the Glint and Glare Assessment identifies potential impact, such as hedgerow infilling and planting of berms.</p>
<p>A number of respondents questioned whether the light reflecting off the solar panels will create a microclimate around Sturton-le-Steeple.</p>		
<p>Project location and cumulative impacts</p>		
<p>Feedback</p>	<p>Consultee</p>	<p>Our Response</p>
<p>Concern about the location of Steeple Renewables Project, several respondents expressed that they feel it is simply the wrong location for the project.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>With West Burton Power Station being recently decommissioned, this has released grid capacity adjacent to the land where we are looking to bring forward the renewables project.</p> <p>We have secured a connection agreement with National Grid to utilise this grid capacity.</p>

		<p>This proximity to the grid will also help to reduce the amount of new infrastructure that would otherwise be required to access the grid.</p> <p>Identifying suitable sites for solar developments requires a balance between grid accessibility and other factors such as: site accessibility, landscape, ecology, archaeology, and the ability to mitigate impacts on the local area.</p> <p>We believe that the land we are exploring at Sturton-le-Steeple is perfectly placed to deliver a project that can help the UK reach its decarbonisation goals, whilst minimising impacts on the local community. The project also presents an opportunity for this part of Nottinghamshire to continue its historic role of helping to power the UK.</p>
<p>Respondents questioned why the project cannot be located on the West Burton Power Station site or on other power station sites in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire.</p>	Community Feedback	<p>The West Burton Power Station site is being used in its entirety for the STEP Nuclear fusion programme, so unfortunately does not have any available land.</p> <p>We have secured an agreement with National Grid for a 600MW connection at West Burton Power Station. With our connection point being at West Burton placing our project on land at Cottam Power Station would not be appropriate.</p>
<p>Respondents questioned why Steeple Renewables Project and projects like it aren't placed on former coalfield sites. Stating that these are abundant in the Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire.</p>	Community Feedback	<p>Identifying suitable sites for solar developments requires a balance between grid accessibility and other factors such as: site accessibility, landscape, ecology, archaeology, and the ability to mitigate impacts on the local area.</p> <p>Former coalfield sites also come with their own restrictions and potential problems, issues such as ground stability have to be taken into consideration with these type of sites.</p> <p>We believe that the land we are exploring at Sturton-le-Steeple is perfectly placed to deliver a project that can help the UK reach its decarbonisation goals, whilst minimising impacts on the local community.</p>
<p>A number of respondents remarked that they feel the project is not needed as the area has already been selected for the STEP nuclear fusion programme.</p>	Community Feedback	<p>The UK Government has declared a climate emergency and is pushing the country to decarbonise. Whilst projects like STEP are important in our transition towards net zero, they are just one part of the energy mix needed for the country to reach net zero.</p> <p>UK Government's Net Zero Strategy (2021) made it clear that solar and wind will be the</p>

<p>Comments stated that considering the STEP proposals, Steeple Renewables Project is unnecessary.</p>		<p>backbone of securing affordable, low carbon energy. At the time it envisaged at least 40GW of solar would be needed by 2030 to achieve net zero by 2050.</p> <p>In December 2023, the Government released new National Policy Statements for Renewable Energy Infrastructure, with National Policy Statement EN-1 emphasising the critical national priority for low-carbon infrastructure. This statement underscores the need for the UK to expand its supply of low-carbon energy rapidly recognising that meeting net zero ambitions hinge on the swift and extensive development of new low-carbon sources.</p> <p>In alignment with these priorities, one of the policies specifically advocates for large-scale ground-mount solar deployment across the UK.</p> <p>The STEP proposals are also some way off development, as it is well documented that the project will not be operational until the 2040s. STEP also has to go through the DCO process which has not formally begun.</p>
<p>A number of comments expressed that they think there is simply too much going on in the area.</p> <p>Respondents listed the various solar and other energy projects going on in the wider area and stated that this project in addition to all the other proposed projects is simply too much.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>There is now widespread recognition that the UK, and the rest of the world, is in a climate emergency. Renewable energy has a significant part to play in transitioning to net zero to halt the devastating effects of climate change. Solar has an important part to play in reducing emissions and keeping bills low. As well as providing energy security.</p> <p>The proposals for Steeple Renewables Project are being brought forward independently by RES. However, we are aware of a number of other renewables projects currently progressing through the planning process in close proximity to our proposed site.</p> <p>As part of our assessments, we will review and consult on the cumulative effects and inter-relationship of our project in combination with those nearby schemes to ensure that we take account of your views and that it is fully assessed in our application.</p>
<p>Comments asserted that they feel that Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire have done and are already doing their part in helping our transition to net zero.</p> <p>Respondents questioned why these projects are not sited in other regions</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>As part of our assessments, we will review and consult on the cumulative effects and inter-relationship of our project in combination with those nearby schemes to ensure that we take account of your views and that it is fully assessed in our application.</p> <p>There are various solar schemes being brought forward by RES and other</p>

<p>around the UK, for example Yorkshire and Derbyshire.</p>		<p>renewables developers in other areas of the country including Yorkshire and Southern England.</p>
<p>Comments stated that they feel that this project is only being proposed here due to the easy access to the grid at West Burton.</p> <p>Comments expressed that the closeness to the grid reduces costs for the developer and that is why it is proposed for Sturton-le-Steeple.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>Identifying suitable sites for solar developments requires a balance between grid accessibility and other factors such as: site accessibility, landscape, ecology, archaeology, and the ability to mitigate impacts on the local area.</p> <p>With West Burton being decommissioned we have secured an agreement with National Grid to utilise this capacity. The proximity of the land we are considering to the grid, will of course reduce the cost of connecting into the grid, but it will also help to reduce the amount of new infrastructure that would otherwise be required to access the grid if the site was further away from the connection point. This will reduce the disruption caused by the project on the surrounding communities.</p> <p>The proximity of the proposal site to West Burton Power Station also offers a suitable location to develop the proposed Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) which can assist in balancing grid capacity during peaks of energy production.</p>
<p>Comments suggested that RES should try to use the land closer to the Trent to site panels so that they are further away from the village.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>As we are at an early stage in the proposals we have not yet decided the precise layout of the panels that will form the project.</p> <p>We are currently undertaking a number of technical assessments and environmental surveys that will help inform the layout of the site. There are also other material planning considerations to take into account such as ecology and Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land that can impact the site's layout.</p> <p>However, the eastern side of the site that is closer to the Trent is within identified flood zones and as such may not be suitable to host panels. The results of our surveys and site layouts will be available for the community to see during our statutory consultation in Summer 2024.</p>
<p>The project is in close proximity to a number of overhead lines, these are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4DA 400 kV OHL COTTAM - WEST BURTON - HIGH MARNHAM - WEST BURTON 	<p>Statutory Consultee</p>	<p>This information is welcomed and noted. A detailed utility search has been undertaken and its results will be factored into the site design.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4VE 400 kV OHL COTTAM - KEADBY 1 - COTTAM - KEADBY 2 - Cable Apparatus - WBUR4X10K1- HIGH MARNHAM 400KV CABLE A - WBUR4X10K2- HIGH MARNHAM 400KV CABLE 		
Local amenity		
Feedback	Consultee	Our Response
<p>Concerns were raised about how these proposals would impact local walking routes.</p> <p>People questioned whether the project would result in local walking routes being permanently restricted.</p> <p>Comments also questioned whether people would still want to use to local walking routes when the solar farm has been constructed.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>As we develop our proposals for Steeple Renewables Project further, we will consider the relationship of the site with local walking routes and Public Rights of Way and bridleways.</p> <p>Where possible we will aim to preserve local walking routes and we are looking for suggestions on how we can enhance local walking routes as part of our community benefits package.</p>
<p>Several comments stated that there are a number of local people who own and ride horses and questioned how this project would impact these people and their horses.</p> <p>It was also questioned how this will impact the horses' grazing land and local riding routes.</p>		<p>Once we have fully considered responses to consultation and undertaken further environmental studies, we will present our updated plans at our statutory consultation in Summer 2024.</p>
Impacts on local agriculture		
Feedback	Consultee	Our Response
<p>Several respondents commented on the farming culture that is present within Sturton-le-Steeple.</p> <p>Respondents remarked that the area has a strong history of agriculture and expressed concern that this will all be lost if Steeple Renewables Project goes ahead.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>Solar farms are specifically designed to be dual purpose and allow for the generation of clean electricity alongside agricultural purposes such as sheep grazing. Typically, a solar farm does not use all of the land proposed meaning a significant proportion of land is left available for alternative uses such as sheep grazing, habitat re-wilding and bee hives.</p> <p>When a solar farm is installed on land which has been intensively farmed, it enables the ground underneath to recover, regenerating soil quality. Solar farms are therefore helping to ensure the continued availability of high-quality agricultural acreage for future generations.</p> <p>Solar technology has advanced in recent years and is becoming more efficient reducing the land required to generate the same amount of energy.</p>

		<p>In addition to this, because planning permission for solar farms covers a limited period, when they reach the end of their operational life they are dismantled completely, and the site will be returned to agricultural land.</p> <p>It could therefore be said that solar farms ‘borrow’ agricultural land rather than ‘taking it’ and in many instances improve the soil health by allowing the land to rest.</p>
<p>Respondents have raised valid concerns regarding the potential impact on the livelihoods of local tenant farmers in the event of their land being acquired for the project.</p> <p>Several comments have specifically underscored concerns about the risk of financial strain, potential bankruptcy, and the overall jeopardy to the farmers' means of living.</p>	Community Feedback	Specific engagement with tenants will be an ongoing process throughout the project's development.
<p>In response to the suggestion that the project could potentially enable continued agricultural use of the land, some respondents emphasised that the area in question is not a sheep farming area. As such, they expressed that this proposal holds little significance for them.</p>	Community Feedback	<p>We recognise that Sturton-le-Steeple and the wider area is not predominately a sheep farming area.</p> <p>Although the plans incorporate space for sheep grazing beneath the solar panel areas, there are also potential options for agricultural land management. This could provide the opportunity for farmers to continue to work their land in some capacity.</p>
Agricultural land		
Feedback	Consultee	Our Response
<p>Respondents expressed concern about the project's location on agricultural land, expressing the belief that solar farms should not be placed on farmland.</p> <p>Concern was raised about the loss of local farmland to solar projects locally and nationally.</p>	Community Feedback	<p>RES understands that there are concerns regarding the loss of agricultural land locally and nationwide, however only 0.06% of land in the UK is currently taken up by solar and even if the UK had a 70GW solar output this would only take up 0.4% of land nationally.</p> <p>When a solar farm is installed on land which has been intensively farmed, it enables the ground underneath to recover, regenerating soil quality. Solar farms are therefore helping to ensure the continued availability of high-quality agricultural acreage for future generations.</p> <p>Solar technology has advanced in recent years and is becoming more efficient reducing the land required to generate the same amount of energy.</p> <p>In addition to this, because planning permission for solar farms covers a limited period, when they reach the end of their</p>

		operational life they are dismantled completely. It could therefore be said that solar farms ‘borrow’ agricultural land rather than ‘taking it’ and in many instances improve the soil health by allowing the land to rest.
A number of comments stated that they think solar should only be placed on rooftops or brownfield sites.	Community Feedback	RES agrees that solar panels should be present on the rooftops of all new homes and industrial buildings. However, the reality is that rooftop solar is not enough by itself to meet the UK’s energy needs. To keep on track to net zero by 2050, 40GW of solar will be required and there is simply not enough south facing rooftop space to accommodate this. There is significant potential for commercial and industrial rooftop solar systems but not enough to help deliver on net zero.
Concern was raised about how the loss of land will impact the UK’s food security. Comments stated that the UK needs to become more self-sufficient in feeding itself and reduce reliance on imports, which are costly and create CO2 emissions.	Community Feedback	The Independent National Food Strategy Review, which looks at the entire food chain from field to fork, concluded that solar farms do not in any way present a risk to the UK’s food security. According to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, climate change could reduce the UK’s stock of high-grade agricultural land by nearly three-quarters by 2050. As solar farms generate near zero-carbon electricity, they help address climate change. Therefore, the case could be made that solar farms have a role to play in helping to improve the UK’s food security.
Concerns that developments that taking away farmland will actually lead to an increase in CO2 emissions as there will no longer be crops on the land that absorb CO2.	Community Feedback	The renewable energy generated from this project would replace energy currently produced from non-renewable sources. This switch would not only save the energy that would otherwise come from non-renewable sources but also reduce CO2 emissions. Additionally, investing in renewable energy helps meet future energy demand while enhancing security by reducing reliance on non-renewable sources. The proposals will also utilise a natural resource, sunlight, that current falls on the site that negates CO2 generated by transportation of fossil fuels. Additionally planting (grass, wildflowers etc.) would still be provided on site around the panels and field margins to absorb CO2 along with existing hedgerows/trees that would be retained on the whole, strengthened and additional planting provided. The site could

		also use rock dust between the panels to lock up more CO2.
Water and flood risk		
Feedback	Consultee	Our Response
Concerns were raised about the general flood risk in the area and how the project may exacerbate this.	Community Feedback	Solar panels are fixed to the ground by frames so water can easily flow underneath the panels. Solar panels can be placed in an area with up to one metre of flooding and thus this site is appropriate for solar installation.
A number of respondents noted that there are drainage issues locally that cause flooding in Sturton-le-Steeple. Respondents questioned whether excess run off from panels will lead to the drains in the village becoming overloaded quicker thus making the local flooding problem worse.	Community Feedback	The Environmental Impact Assessment will assess any potential flood impact, not only for the overall site but for each land parcel. This assessment will help us to decide which are most appropriate parts of the site for solar development and which parts of the site will be best for biological mitigation and habitat land.
Several respondents stated that the land being proposed for Steeple Renewables Project currently helps with flooding by absorbing some of the excess water. Respondents questioned whether the land would absorb the same level of water with solar panels on the land.	Community Feedback	These assessments will be conducted by flood risk specialists and will include soakaway testing. This will ensure overland flows and greenfield surface water runoff rates will not be affected. If attenuation is required, this will be an improvement to the current situation.
Environmental concerns		
Feedback	Consultee	Our Response
A number of respondents have questioned how the project will affect the local environment.	Community Feedback	Ground-mounted solar panels can deliver major benefits to the environment, in addition to providing clean, green, affordable energy. They can improve local biodiversity by supporting new and existing plant and animal life and hosting a range of habitats including wildflower meadows, hedgerows, nectar-rich areas for pollinators, and woodland. Well designed and well managed solar farms contribute to a range of eco-system services and support sustainable agriculture, regulate air quality, and reduce carbon emissions.
Concerns have been raised about how the project will impact local wildlife such as newts, owls, deer, kingfishers, badgers, foxes, buzzards and other wildlife that is present in the local area. Respondents raised concerns about how the project could lead to the destruction or loss of habitats for	Community Feedback	Solar panels do not present a significant danger to wildlife, however any potential impact on local wildlife will be assessed as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process. RES has appointed specialist surveyors to carry out a number of surveys and assessments as part of the EIA which will look at any potential impacts to local wildlife and ecology. Mitigation and enhancement measures will be proposed to mitigate any

<p>these species and how this will impact local biodiversity.</p>		<p>negative impacts. These measures could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Buffers - Hedgerow maintenance - Tree planting - Habitat creation etc. <p>The results of these surveys and assessments will inform the final design of the project and ensure any negative impacts are mitigated against and the project achieves an overall biodiversity net gain of at least 10%.</p>
<p>Questions were raised about the safety of local bird species. Respondents questioned whether the panels present a safety risk for birds potentially flying into the panels.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>RES has appointed specialist surveyors to carry out a number of surveys and assessments as part of the EIA which will assess look at any potential impacts to local wildlife and ecology. These surveys will include assessing the potential impact of the proposals on local bird populations.</p> <p>Mitigation and enhancement measures will be proposed to mitigate any potential negative impacts caused by the proposals on local bird populations.</p>
<p>Concerns were raised about developing the land near to the Trent on the eastern side of the site. Respondents stated that this land is a hub for biodiversity and should be protected.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>The project will be designed sensitively so that existing wildlife is retained and enhanced where possible. We are, and we will continue to, undertaking surveys to establish the habitats present on-site, their potential to support protected and/or priority species, and the potential impact of Steeple Renewables Project on surrounding sites of ecological importance.</p> <p>After the collection of baseline ecological information, the extent and significance of ecological effects will be assessed. Mitigation measures will be devised including avoidance, compensation and enhancement to reduce any identified potential significant effects from the construction, operation or decommissioning of Steeple Renewables Project on ecological features.</p> <p>Once any likely significant effects have been mitigated, opportunities for ecological enhancement will be identified to achieve 'biodiversity net gain'. Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is the term used to describe the process of increasing the overall biodiversity value of a given site. The provision of BNG is not currently a legal requirement for NSIP projects, but it is expected to be from 2025.</p>
<p>Respondents raised concern about how the security fencing will impact</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>Security fencing is only required for the substation and will not be present around the perimeter of the site. Other fencing around the perimeter of the site will be in the form of</p>

<p>local wildlife, particularly deer populations.</p>		<p>deer fencing and will incorporate mammal gates/gaps of 100mm to ensure that local wildlife can still move freely around the landscape.</p>
<p>Climate change, net zero and solar energy</p>		
<p>Feedback</p>	<p>Consultee</p>	<p>Our Response</p>
<p>A number of respondents expressed scepticism about the UK's net zero goals, with some comments stating that they would have preferred that West Burton Power Station had remained active.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>The UK Government's Net Zero Strategy (2021) made it clear that solar and wind will be the backbone of securing affordable, low carbon energy. At the time it envisaged at least 40GW of solar is required by 2030 to achieve net zero by 2050.</p>
<p>Respondents expressed support for the development of renewable energy project, recognising the need for the UK to decarbonise and bolster our renewable energy capacity.</p>		<p>In December 2023, the Government released new National Policy Statements for Renewable Energy Infrastructure, with National Policy Statement EN-1 emphasising the critical national priority for low-carbon infrastructure. This statement highlights the need for the UK to expand its supply of low-carbon energy rapidly recognising that meeting net zero ambitions hinge on the swift and extensive development of new low-carbon sources.</p> <p>In alignment with these priorities, one of the policies specifically advocates for large-scale ground-mount solar deployment across the UK.</p> <p>It is evident that the government now recognises the urgent national need for the provision of substantial low-carbon infrastructure, including solar, highlighting its role in contributing to and addressing this identified national need, aligning seamlessly with the Government's strategic goals.</p>
<p>Concern was expressed about the carbon emissions created during the solar panel manufacturing process; respondents questioned if the emissions creating during manufacture means that the project is not green.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>As with all manufactured products, some carbon is emitted in the manufacture of solar panels. Research has shown that the average carbon payback period for solar panels is 1-4 years. This means that over their lifetime, typically 40 years, each panel will generate zero-carbon and zero-pollution electricity for decades after any carbon emitted in its production has been paid back.</p> <p>For Steeples Renewables Project we may propose further environmental enhancements, such as tree or hedgerow planting, which would actively remove carbon from the atmosphere. This will also contribute to the offset of any carbon emissions created when manufacturing the panels.</p>

<p>A number of respondents questioned solar as a renewable energy source. Respondents questioned whether solar produces enough energy to be worth the loss of land locally.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>In order for the UK to achieve net zero by 2050, it will need to quadruple its low carbon electricity generation. Solar is a great resource to assist in this transition, as it is a free and inexhaustible resource.</p> <p>Solar energy enables electricity generation without reliance on imports and is not subject to sudden price fluctuations or the uncertainty of global markets. Large scale solar, alongside onshore and offshore wind is now the cheapest source of electricity generation and is an important part of the energy mix required if the UK is to meet net zero targets and fight climate change.</p>
<p>Concerns were raised about onshore wind potentially being made part of the Steeple Renewables Project.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>We are currently exploring the opportunity to develop a renewables project on land at Sturton-le-Steeple. The project could consist of up to 400MW of solar energy generation and 200MW of battery storage, with the capacity to include other renewable technologies. The technologies under consideration do not include onshore wind.</p>
<p>Traffic and access concerns</p>		
<p>Feedback</p>	<p>Consultee</p>	<p>Our Response</p>
<p>A number of respondents raised concerns about how traffic would access the site during the construction phase.</p> <p>Respondents have questioned how many vehicles will be going to and from the site during construction and how this will impact the village roads.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>We will undertake a Transport Assessment which will assess the potential impacts of Steeple Renewables Project on the local and strategic road network in the surrounding area. This will set out the proposed sustainable transport measures that can be implemented during the construction and operational phases of Steeple Renewables Project to minimise disruptions to local roads and communities.</p>
<p>Concerns were raised about existing traffic issues in the village, the main crossroad in the village between Church Street and Springs Lane has been raised as a particularly difficult junction.</p> <p>Respondents want reassurance that the existing traffic problems will not be made worse.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>As part of our assessment, a detailed access review is being undertaken to develop suitable access points and routes for the site. This will be consulted on with Bassetlaw District Council.</p> <p>Our assessment will include cumulative impacts from other known projects.</p> <p>We will try and avoid using roads through neighbouring settlements and it could be possible to time deliveries so if they are passing a local school main pick up and drop off times are avoided.</p>
<p>Concerns were raised about the impact construction traffic will have on the old village roads and some small load bridges.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>We will undertake a transport assessment which will assess the potential impacts of Steeple Renewables Project on the local road network, including small load bridges.</p>

		As part of our assessment, we will seek to find the most appropriate routes for construction traffic to travel to and from site. This will also include exploring the opportunity to take construction traffic off the public highway as soon as possible and construction of temporary roadways.
Respondents suggested that the railway line into West Burton Power Station should be used to transport materials during construction to reduce the impacts on local roads.	Community Feedback	Alternative delivery methods will be reviewed as part of the transport assessment.
Heritage and archaeology concerns		
Feedback	Consultee	Our Response
Respondents raised general concern for how the project would impact on local heritage assets and the overall historical character of the area.	Community Feedback	The Cultural Heritage and Archaeology assessment will identify the likely significant effects Steeple Renewables Project may have on the local historic environment, including identified and potential archaeology and cultural heritage features such as listed buildings, scheduled monuments and conservation areas. This will be achieved through desk-based research, site visits and consultation with key stakeholders, such as Historic England.
Potential for archaeological remains to be discovered within the proposed site areas.	Community Feedback Statutory Consultee	
Responses to the consultation indicated concern for how the proposals have the potential to impact a number of designated heritage assets and scheduled monuments, including: Segecolum Roman Town, The Norman Grade I listed church of St Nicholas, the Grade II* listed Burton Chateau which sits atop a hill with wide views over the river to its west. The land under consideration area is also within the setting of scheduled monument ‘Medieval settlement and open field system immediately south east of Low Farm’. Statutory consultees also highlighted that there are the remains of a Roman town that are present within the area under consideration.	Community Feedback Statutory Consultee	
It was highlighted that there are non-designated archaeological remains present along the floodplain of the River Trent, which is an area of high archaeological sensitivity and landscape importance.	Statutory Consultee	
Concerns were raised that the scheme has potential to encapsulate the village of Sturton-le-Steeple and	Statutory Consultee	

<p>hamlet of Fenton, and coalesce the settlements at South Wheatley, North Leverton with Hablesthorpe and Littleborough, leading to a sense of their visual enclosure and impeding appreciation of these rural settlements and highly graded listed churches therein in their landscape context.</p>		
<p>Geophysical survey and other investigations have identified extensive further remains of the Roman town beyond the scheduled area – this should be discussed with the County Historic Environment Team and the District Council's Historic Environment advisor in addition to making a detailed Historic Environment Record consultation.</p>	<p>Statutory Consultee</p>	
<p>Community benefits</p>		
<p>Feedback</p>	<p>Consultee</p>	<p>Our Response</p>
<p>A number of respondents stated that they were unsure about the LEDS scheme as there was not enough detail provided on it.</p> <p>Respondents stated that they were unsure if the scheme would benefit them as there was no information on the catchment area and how it would be calculated.</p> <p>Questions were also raised about the monetary value of the scheme, and whether it would offer real benefit.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>In consultation with the local community, we will explore the possibility to deliver RES' Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS) as part of a tailored community benefits package, once the solar farm is operational. Developed in response to research and feedback from local communities around RES' operational wind farms, LEDS has been operating for over 10 years and offers an annual discount to the electricity bills of those properties closest to a participating project, without the need to change energy provider.</p>
<p>A number of respondents have questioned whether the LEDS scheme will be included as part of the final project, with comments stating that the scheme is not guaranteed and will not go ahead.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>Once we have developed our proposals for Steeple Renewables Project further, we will be able to begin to identify the qualifying area in which the discount will be applicable. We will provide the community with more information on LEDS during our statutory consultation in Summer 2024.</p>
<p>Some concerns were raised about the credibility of the LEDS scheme, emphasising the requirement for participants to sign up to the scheme and the direct payment of funds to their electricity providers instead of being directly disbursed to the individuals.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>If Steeple Renewables Project is consented, the qualifying properties within the eligible area will be contacted at the relevant time and offered the opportunity to apply for the annual discount which would be paid directly to their electricity provider.</p>
<p>Some comments simply stated that they do not like the proposals presented by RES for LEDS.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	

<p>Several respondents stated that they would prefer to pay the same for electricity and not have the project.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	
<p>Several respondents have characterised the proposed LEDS and other community benefits as bribery, expressing reservations about their effectiveness and describing them as insufficient to compensate for the potential drawbacks associated with the project’s development.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>RES seeks to be a power for good in communities that neighbour our projects by working openly and constructively to ensure tangible local benefits.</p> <p>Community benefits are not bribery and are encouraged by the Government. They are not necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms but RES is fully committed to ensure the community benefits from the proposed development that they are hosting.</p> <p>We believe that Steeple Renewables Project would provide direct, lasting benefits to the local community and there are a number of ways that this can be achieved.</p> <p>If consented, Steeple Renewables Project could deliver a number of lasting benefits to community in Sturton-le-Steeple and the surrounding areas including:</p> <p>Community benefits package - We take a tailored approach and will work directly with the community to understand how Steeple Renewables Project could support the local area and help to secure long-term economic, social and environmental benefits. This approach will help to deliver a tailored community benefits package that is aligned with the priorities of the local community.</p> <p>Direct job creation - The proposed solar farm will create and support direct jobs, covering a wide range of skills, during the construction, operational and decommissioning stages. Where possible, RES is committed to local recruitment and is also exploring the possibility of supporting local apprenticeship opportunities.</p> <p>Indirect job creation - It is anticipated that through the creation of direct jobs, Steeple Renewables Project will also support indirect job creation in the local economy. This will include jobs in local industries providing goods and services to the solar farm’s direct employees, e.g., jobs at shops and hotels.</p> <p>Gross Value Added (GVA) - The solar farm will provide a boost to the regional economy during construction, throughout operation and during the decommissioning phases. This boost to GVA will be the result of increased spending in the local economy.</p>

		<p>Annual Business Rates - Throughout its operation, the solar farm will generate annual business rates which will be payable each year to Bassetlaw District Council.</p> <p>Permissive paths - Once the solar farm is operational, the proposed incorporation of permissive paths will also improve local access through the site, enhancing existing routes and linkage as well as the possible introduction of new routes.</p>
<p>A number of comments stated that they feel that LEDS doesn't go far enough, and that the community should receive free electricity.</p>	Community Feedback	<p>If consented, Steeple Renewables Project would generate approximately 400MW of clean, green, renewable energy. This is enough to power approximately half of the homes in Nottinghamshire.</p> <p>This represents a significant contribution to local and national climate commitments, by helping to decarbonise our energy mix, reduce bills and improve the UK's energy security.</p>
<p>A number of respondents questioned whether the jobs that will be created will be for local people, with some respondents stating that it is likely that workers will be brought in from elsewhere and local jobs will be minimal.</p>	Community Feedback	<p>Construction activity on site as well as civil engineering works for the solar farm are likely to be sourced locally. Other opportunities for local suppliers relate to contractors for aggregates, landscaping supplies, haulage as well as plant hire. Construction staff are also likely to use local accommodation and shops / restaurants. Once operational, the solar farm does not require any permanent staff, however there will be a need for ongoing monitoring, cleaning, landscape maintenance and general maintenance over the course of the lifetime of the project.</p>
<p>Respondents made suggestions about how the community benefits package should be used, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create new woodland and do more planting locally - Create new local footpaths - Create new riding routes for the local horse riders - To stop unnecessary flights from the local airfield 	Community Feedback	<p>Thank you for your community benefit suggestions, we will continue to work with the community to see what benefits they would like to see delivered by Steeple Renewables Project once it is operational.</p> <p>We will take on board your suggestions as we develop our proposals and present an update as part of our statutory consultation in Summer 2024.</p>
Community consultation		
Feedback	Consultee	Our Response
<p>Concern was expressed about the project newsletter being referred to as a community newsletter, comments suggested that this made it seem like the proposals came from</p>	Community Feedback	<p>Thank you for your feedback.</p> <p>The newsletter was titled 'community newsletter' as it was intended for the local community to inform them about our early proposals for the project. We apologise for any confusion this may have caused.</p>

<p>the Parish Council or another local organisation.</p>		
<p>Comments expressed dislike of the name of the project as Steeple Renewables Project as the grid connection point is at West Burton Power Station.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>The project has been named Steeple Renewables Project due to the project's location in and around the village of Sturton-le-Steeple.</p> <p>As there is already a West Burton Solar Project, we were unable to name the project after the grid connection so instead chose to name it based on its geographical location.</p>
<p>Concern about the lack of detailed information that was available during the early informal consultation for Steeple Renewables Project.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>The consultation we held between October and December 2023 was our early informal consultation. The intention of this first phase of consultation was to introduce our early proposals to the community, gain initial feedback and open discussion about the types of community benefits people would like to see delivered by the project, if consented.</p>
<p>Requested that further consultation should take place at the next stage as the proposals develop.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	
<p>A number of respondents requested that there are more opportunities for face-to-face engagement during the next round of consultation.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>We are now taking the time to review the feedback that we received and are using this alongside ongoing surveys and assessments to develop our proposals further before presenting you with more refined and detailed proposals in our statutory consultation in Summer 2024.</p> <p>For our statutory consultation we will be taking a similar approach to our early informal consultation. We will ensure there are opportunities for the community to meet with members of the project team and discuss the detailed proposals. We will take the feedback we've received regarding number of events on board and consider hosting more public events during our statutory consultation.</p>
<p>Requests that there is better promotion of the public consultation events in the next round of consultation.</p>	<p>Community Feedback</p>	<p>For our early informal consultation phase, we promoted our public events through a newsletter distributed to over 3000 local addresses, via our project website, and through press releases to local and trade publications.</p> <p>This approach will be replicated for our formal consultation round. Complying with the Planning Act 2008 requirements, we will also publish notices with information about the statutory consultation through adverts in both national and local newspapers. These notices will precede the consultation events to ensure sufficient notice is given to the community.</p> <p>Additionally, we are committed to extending the reach of our events by distributing</p>

		posters to local venues for display. This comprehensive approach aims to keep the community well-informed and engaged throughout the consultation process.
<p>Requests that there are more staff present at the next round of consultation events.</p> <p>Respondents also requested that there were more staff present with intricate knowledge of the scheme, in particular members of the team with knowledge of the environmental aspects of the scheme.</p>	Community Feedback	<p>We would like to thank the community for attending our early informal consultation events; as this was our early stage of consultation, we did have a smaller team staffing our events.</p> <p>During our next round of consultation, we will have a larger number of staff members present to help explain the technical details of the proposals that will be available at this stage.</p>
<p>Attendees expressed satisfaction with the events, noting the effectiveness of the setup and feedback mechanisms. However, there were concerns raised about the accessibility of the events for older individuals and how their feedback will be collected.</p>	Community Feedback	<p>We would like to thank the community for attending our early informal consultation events and taking part in our early informal consultation.</p> <p>We took a hybrid approach to consultation to ensure that our consultation was accessible to as many groups of people as possible. We used a mix of both in-person and online mechanisms as well as also having the project phonenumber which could be used to provide feedback and request hard copies of the materials. If you have any further feedback or suggestions on how our consultation could be more accessible, please get in touch with us at info@steeplerenewablesproject.co.uk.</p>
<p>Several respondents brought up concerns regarding their experiences with the online feedback form, expressing uncertainty about the potential loss of feedback during the period when the form was inactive.</p>	Community Feedback	<p>We would like to once again apologise for the technical issues that impacted the ability for the community to give their feedback on the proposals.</p> <p>We took steps to rectify this issue and, in the meantime, we provided stakeholders with a link to an offline version of the feedback form where they could still provide feedback whilst the website was experiencing issues. We also extended the deadline date by two days for feedback to 11:59pm on Wednesday 6 December 2023 to take account of the time the feedback form was down.</p>

Next steps

Since the launch of the project in 2023 RES has undertaken an extensive programme of engagement with key stakeholders and those interested in the scheme.

We will now be taking the time to consider the feedback that we have presented in this report and use it to develop our proposals alongside our ongoing technical and environmental work. We will continue to provide opportunities for the community and stakeholders to engage with us in regard to Steeple Renewables Project throughout 2024. This engagement will be supported by our statutory round of consultation during which we will be presenting detailed plans and asking for feedback on all aspects of the proposals.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Initial stakeholder outreach letter



Renewable Energy Systems Limited
Beaufort Court, Egg Farm Lane, Kings Langley
Hertfordshire WD4 8LR, United Kingdom
+44 (0)1923 299 200 | info@res-group.com

Brendan Clarke Smith
16 Bridge Place
Worksop
S80 1JS

Sent by email to: brendan.clarkesmith.mp@parliament.uk

27th July 2023

Dear Mr Clarke-Smith,

Meeting request: Renewable energy proposals in Nottinghamshire - IN CONFIDENCE

I write to you as the MP for Bassetlaw, to request a meeting to discuss renewable energy proposals in Sturton le Steeple, Nottinghamshire.

Having undertaken initial feasibility work, we would welcome the opportunity to brief you in person on the details of this renewable energy project and our plans for engaging with key stakeholders and the local community. This will ensure you have background information, should you be contacted by a member of the public.

About RES

RES is the world's largest independent renewable energy developer with operations across Europe, North America and Asia-Pacific. We're a British company with over 40 years of experience in onshore and offshore wind, solar, green hydrogen, energy storage, transmission and distribution.

Project overview

The proposal site we are considering is located immediately to the south of West Burton power station. This strategic location presents an opportunity to utilise the electricity grid capacity made available following the recent decommissioning of the coal fired power station. This renewable energy project, alongside other proposals such as West Burton STEP fusion plant, embraces the historic role that the area has played in powering the UK. We believe there is an opportunity to build on this legacy and ensure that the area continues to play an important role in the UK's future energy generation.

The project would be capable of producing clean, green renewable electricity for approximately 156,884 homes every year¹, over the course of the next 45 years. This amount of energy would power almost 45% of all homes in Nottinghamshire every year. The renewable energy project could include solar energy and battery storage, and we are also exploring the potential incorporation of Green Hydrogen into the plans. Significantly, the proposals would also enable continued alternative agricultural use of the land.

¹ The homes figure has been calculated by taking the predicted average annual electricity generation of the site and dividing this by the annual average electricity figures from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) showing that the annual UK average domestic household consumption is 3,748 kWh (Dec 2021).

Solar projects offer one of the cheapest forms of electricity generation², increasing domestic renewable electricity production, improving the security of supply, and contributing to the UK's Net Zero targets. This renewables project could help to address the possible catastrophic impacts of climate change, the cost-of-living crisis and ensure the UK's energy security.

Community Benefits

We are committed to ensuring that renewable energy projects provide direct, lasting benefits to local communities. Our unique Local Electricity Discount Scheme, which offers an annual discount to properties in close proximity to a participating project, is one of the means of achieving this. RES takes a tailored approach and will be working directly with the community to understand local priorities, needs and community projects that this renewables project could support. This will allow the project to create a positive social and economic legacy in the local area.

We anticipate that the renewables project could generate 400MW of renewable electricity alongside 200MW of energy storage capacity. Due to the amount of renewable electricity that could be generated, the project will require a Development Consent Order (DCO) and the Secretary of State will decide the application. As part of this process, we will be undertaking thorough non-statutory and statutory consultation, supported by detailed environmental and technical work to inform the scheme design.

Next steps

We are committed to meaningful consultation and will be engaging with the local community and key stakeholders as we develop our proposal. This will help to identify issues and concerns, as well as benefits and opportunities, which can be considered in the design development. We have launched a project website (www.steeplerenewablesproject.co.uk) to keep all key stakeholders informed of the project's development, and to provide contact details for the project team. We anticipate holding our first in-person public exhibitions on the plans for the project in Autumn 2023.

Although at an early stage, we have included an infographic alongside this letter highlighting some of the socio-economic and environmental benefits that the scheme could deliver.

I hope that this information is useful, and we look forward to providing you with more detail. Indya Waite, at our communications consultants, Cavendish, will be in touch to arrange an in-person or virtual meeting. If you have any questions in the meantime, Indya can be reached at info@steeplerenewables.co.uk or 0161 359 4104.

Yours sincerely



Will Bridges
Project Manager

² Electricity Generation Costs - Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, August 2020.

Appendix 2: Consultation launch stakeholder letter



Renewable Energy Systems Limited
Beaufort Court, Egg Farm Lane, Kings Langley
Hertfordshire WD4 8LR, United Kingdom
+44 (0)1923 299 200 | info@res-group.com

16 Bridge Place
Worksop
Nottinghamshire
S80 1JS

23 October 2023

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Mr Clarke-Smith,

Early consultation re: Steeple Renewables Project

RES is the world's largest independent renewable energy developer and is exploring proposals for a new renewable energy project in the village of Sturton-le-Steeple, Nottinghamshire. We are writing to let you know that our early informal consultation is now live and will be running for six weeks from Monday 23 October until Monday 4 December 2023.

As you may be aware, Steeple Renewables Project is a new renewable energy project located immediately to the south of West Burton power station. It is anticipated that the project could be capable of producing clean, green renewable electricity for approximately 156,884 homes every year, over the course of the project lifetime. This amount of energy would be enough to power almost 45% of all homes in Nottinghamshire.

Our in-person early consultation events will be held on:

- **Friday 3 November 2pm - 7pm**, South Leverton Memorial Institute, Town St, South Leverton, Retford. DN22 0BT
- **Saturday 4 November 10am - 2pm**, Sturton Hall and Conference Centre, Brickings Way, Sturton le Steeple, Retford, DN22 9HY

We are also planning to host a Webinar to accommodate those unable to make the in-person events. This will be held on:

- **Wednesday 22 November 6pm - 7pm**, people can sign up to attend this webinar via our project website.

We have also established community deposit locations where people can collect copies of the brochures and feedback forms if they are unable to attend our in-person events. These locations are:

- Sturton Hall and Conference Centre, Brickings Way, Sturton le Steeple, Retford, DN22 9HY
- Gainsborough Library Cobden St, Gainsborough DN21 2NG

We have also established our project website, steeplerenewablesproject.co.uk to host our virtual exhibition and provide people with the materials that will be presented at our public events.

The feedback we receive will be used to help us develop and refine our proposals before presenting them to the community for statutory consultation next year.

We hope that you take the opportunity to come and view our early plans for Steeple Renewables Project. If you or a member of the community would like further information on our proposals, have

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any questions or would like to give feedback, you can contact our communications team via email at info@steeplerenewablesproject.co.uk or via phone at 0151 7182 070.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Will Bridges', written in a cursive style.

Will Bridges
Project Manager

Appendix 3: Statutory Consultee List

Health and Safety Executive
NHS England
NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board
Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board
Lincolnshire Community Health Services NHS Trust
East Midlands Ambulance Service
Natural England
Historic England
Historic England - Midlands regional office
Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue
Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue
Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner for Lincolnshire
Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner for Nottinghamshire
Sturton-le-Steeple Parish Council
North Leverton with Hablesthorpe Parish Council
Marion and Gate Burton Parish Council
Knaith Parish Council
Lea Parish Council
North and South Wheatley Parish Council
Gainsborough Town Council
Beckingham cum Saundby Parish Council
South Leverton Parish Council
Clayworth Parish Council
Hayton Parish Council
Clarborough and Welham Parish Council
Gringley on the Hill Parish Council
Upton Parish Council
Kexby Parish Council
Willingham Parish Council
Treswell with Cottam Parish Council
Torksey Parish Council
Rampton and Woodbeck Parish Council
The Environment Agency
The Environment Agency, East Midlands
Secretary of State for Transport
Civil Aviation Authority
D2N2 Local Transport Board
Lincolnshire Strategic Transport Board
Nottinghamshire County Council
Lincolnshire County Council

National Highways East Midlands
Lincolnshire County Council
The Coal Authority
Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board
Isle of Axholme and North Nottinghamshire Water Level Management Board
Canal and River Trust
Public Health England
The Crown Estate
Forestry Commission
Secretary of State for Defence
Network Rail Infrastructure Ltd
The Canal and River Trust
Civil Aviation Authority
NATS En-Route Safeguarding
Royal Mail Group
The Environment Agency
The Environment Agency, East Midlands
Anglian Water
Severn Trent
Cadent Gas Limited
National Grid
Energy Assets Networks Limited
Energy Assets Pipelines Limited
ES Pipelines Limited (part of ESP Utilities Group)
ESP Connections Limited (part of ESP Utilities Group)
ESP Networks Limited (part of ESP Utilities Group)
ESP Pipelines Limited (part of ESP Utilities Group)
Fulcrum Pipelines Limited
GTC Pipelines Limited (part of GTC which is owned by BUUK Infrastructure)
Harlaxton Gas Networks Limited
Independent Pipelines Limited (part of GTC which is owned by BUUK Infrastructure)
Indigo Pipelines Limited
Last Mile Gas Limited
Leep Gas Networks Limited (part of Leep Utilities)
Murphy Gas Networks Limited (part of J. Murphy & Sons Limited)
Quadrant Pipelines Limited (part of GTC which is owned by BUUK Infrastructure)
Squire Energy Limited
SGN
Scotland Gas Networks PLC
Wales and West Utilities Ltd
Northern Gas Networks
Mua Gas Limited

Optical Power Networks Limited
Uniper - Cottam Development Centre
EDF West Burton Power Station
Energy Assets Networks Limited
UK Power Distribution Limited
Fulcrum Electricity Assets Limited
Independent Power Networks Limited
Eclipse Power Network Limited
Energy Assets Networks Limited
Energy Assets Pipelines Limited
Fulcrum Energy Assets Limited
Harlaxton Energy Networks Limited
Independent Power Networks Limited
Leep Electricity Networks Limited (part of Leep Utilities)
ESP Electricity Limited (part of ESP Utilities Group)
Murphy Power Distribution Limited
The Electricity Network Company Limited
UK Power Networks Limited
Utility Assets Limited
Vattenfall Networks Limited
Last Mile Electricity
Northern Power Grid
Indigo Power Limited
Western Power Distribution (East Mids) PLC
Forbury Assets
Mua Electricity Limited
Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trusts
United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust
East Midlands Ambulance Trust
Bassetlaw District Council
West Lindsey District Council
North Kesteven District Council
Newark and Sherwood District Council
Mansfield District Council
Bolsover District Council
East Lindsey District Council
City of Doncaster Council
Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
Rutland County Council
North Northamptonshire Council
Nottingham City Council
North East Lincolnshire Council

City of Lincoln Council
Derbyshire County Council
Leicestershire County Council
North Lincolnshire Council
Office for Health Improvement and Disparities
Health Security Agency
Sturgate Airfield
Vodafone
BT Openreach
Nation Grid Electricity Distribution
Exolum
Aggregate Industries
Historical Railways Estate

Appendix 4: Stakeholders that were contacted at key milestones

Councillor James Naish, Bassetlaw District Council
Councillor Jo White, Bassetlaw District Council
Beverley Alderton Sambrook, Bassetlaw District Council
Brendan Clarke-Smith, MP for Bassetlaw
Robert Jenrick, MP for Newark
North and South Wheatley Parish Council
Clarborough and Welham Paris Council
North Leverton with Habbleshthorpe Parish Council
Sturton-le-Steeple Parish Council
Cllr Tracey Taylor, Nottinghamshire County Council
Councillor John Ogle, Nottinghamshire County Council
Councillor Frazer McFarland, Bassetlaw District Council

Appendix 5: Launch press release



PRESS RELEASE

Immediate release: 23 October 2023

RES launches early informal consultation on nationally significant renewables project near to West Burton Power Station and Sturton-le-Steeple

RES, the world's largest independent renewable energy company has launched informal consultation on early plans for a nationally significant renewable energy project near to West Burton Power Station and in Sturton-le-Steeple, Nottinghamshire. The land under consideration is located adjacent to the recently decommissioned West Burton Power Station, and RES has an agreement in place to utilise 600MW of surplus grid capacity. The project is at an early stage, but it is thought the land could support up to 400MW of solar energy generation and 200MW of battery storage. If progressed, the plans could be capable of producing enough renewable electricity each year to power around half of the homes in Nottinghamshire.

The early informal consultation will run for six weeks from Monday 23 October until Monday 4 December 2023 with in-person events being held on:

- Friday 3 November, 2pm-7pm at South Leverton Memorial Institute, Town St, South Leverton, Retford DN22 0BT
- Saturday 4 November, 10am-2pm at Sturton Hall and Conference Centre, Brickings Way, Sturton le Steeple, Retford DN22 9HY

People who are unable to make the events can view the early proposals at a virtual exhibition at www.steeplerenewablesproject.co.uk from Friday 3 November or sign up to attend a webinar being held on Wednesday 22 November from 6pm-7pm.

Will Bridges, RES Project Manager said: *"Our plans are at an early stage, with ongoing technical work taking place to fully understand the suitability of the site. We want to involve the local community from the outset and are undertaking this early informal consultation to introduce the plans and invite early feedback."*

"This renewable energy project, alongside other proposals, embraces the historic role that the area has played in powering the UK. We believe there is an opportunity to build on this legacy and ensure that Nottinghamshire continues to play an important role in the UK's future energy generation."

"We'd encourage local residents to provide their feedback on our early plans by attending one of our in-person events or visiting the project website."

Printed copies of the informal consultation material can also be collected during opening hours at:

- Sturton Hall and Conference Centre, Brickings Way, Sturton le Steeple, Retford DN22 9HY
- Gainsborough Library, Cobden St, Gainsborough DN21 2NG

The project would represent a £224 million investment during construction creating 400 jobs over the 24-month build programme. RES is also keen to develop a community benefits package tailored to the needs and priorities of the local community, including RES' unique Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS).

[/mf]

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Due to the amount of renewable energy that could be generated, it is anticipated that Steeple Renewables Project will be considered a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) requiring a Development Consent Order (DCO). Formal, statutory consultation is planned for 2024.

Feedback received during the informal consultation will be considered and used alongside ongoing environmental and technical work, to refine and develop detailed proposals to be presented to the community for statutory consultation in 2024. If people would like more information, they can contact the project team by emailing info@steeplerenewablesproject.co.uk or by phone on 0151 7812 070.

ENDS



Notes to editors:

About RES

RES is the world's largest independent renewable energy company and is active in onshore and offshore wind, solar, energy storage, green hydrogen, transmission and distribution. As an industry innovator for over 40 years, RES has delivered more than 23GW of renewable energy projects across the globe and supports an operational asset portfolio exceeding 12GW worldwide for a large client base. Understanding the unique needs of corporate clients, RES has secured over 1.5GW of corporate power purchase agreements (PPAs) enabling access to energy at the lowest cost. RES employs over 2,500 passionate people and is active in 14 countries. Visit www.res-group.com

CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Indya Waite
Tel: 0151 7812 070
Email: info@steeplerenewablesproject.co.uk

Imf

Appendix 6: Trade publications the launch press release was sent to

AZoCleantech (global)
Air Quality News (UK)
Business Green (UK)
Business Live
Cable Technology News (UK) / Energy Projects & Technology
Cleantech Business News (UK)
Clean Energy Pipeline
Freelancer (Climate, Environment and Dev issues)
Climate Home News (global)
Cornwall Insight (UK)
DeSmog UK
Edie.net (UK)
Engerati (UK)
Energy Compass (global)
Energy Digital (UK)
Energy Engineering
Energy Focus (UK)
EnergyFlux
Energy Global
Energy Intelligence (global)
Energy Live News (UK)
Energy Voice (UK)
Envirotec (UK)
Environment Analyst (UK)
Environment Times (UK)
Fleet News
Freelancer
Future Net Zero
GreenBiz
New Power (UK)
Platts
Recharge
Renewable Energy Focus (UK)
Renewable Energy Magazine
RenewablesNow
reNews
S&P Global Market Intelligence
S&P Global Sustainable
S&P Global Engineering Solutions
Sustainable Business Magazine (UK)

Transition Economist
The Carbon Brief (UK)
The Environmental Magazine
The ENDS Report (UK)
The Energyst (UK)
The Energy Industry Times (UK)
Utility Week (UK)
Science Daily (US)
New Energy Update
Renewable Energy Technology
Bioenergy Insight
Carbon Commentary
Climate Home News
Climate News from NTSI
Current News
Earthbound Report
EIC Energy Focus
Electrical Review
Elemental Expo
ENDS Waste and Bioenergy
Energy CIO Insights
Energy Engineering
Energy Monitor
Energy Saving Trust
Energy Saving Trust Blog
Environmental Finance
Farming Monthly National
Fully Charged show
Future Power Technology
Good Energy blog
GREEN ENERGY NEWS (UK)
Green Energy Publishing
IET Renewable Power Generation
Inspiratia
Installer (Online)
Kallanish Energy
Net Zero Investor
NS Energy
PES (Power and Energy Solutions)
Platform
Power Engineering International (PEI)
Power Technology

Powergrid International
Proceedings of the ICE - Energy
Products of Change
REA News
Recharge
Recharge News
Renewable Energy Focus Journal
Renewable Energy Installer
Renewable Energy Installer & Specifier
Renewable Energy World
Renewables Investor
RenewablesNow
Rethink Energy
Sustainable Growth Voice
The ENDS Report
The IET (E&T Magazine)
UK Power News
PV Magazine
PHOTON International
Photovoltaics International
Progress in Photovoltaics
Solar Media (UK)
Solar Power Portal
Solar Power Portal/Solar Media (UK)
Solar Media
Solar and Power Management
Smart Solar (UK&I)
Solar Industry
PV Tech
Solar Energy UK
Solar Power Portal
Energy Storage News
Energy Storage Journal
New Energy Update
Batteries International
Energy Storage Journal
World Battery News
Current+

Appendix 7: Project website (snapshot)

Steeple Renewables Project

RES

HOME THE PROJECT THE SITE PLANNING PROCESS HAVE YOUR SAY BENEFITS FAQs ABOUT RES

RES - the world's largest independent renewable energy company - is looking to bring forward proposals for a nationally significant infrastructure renewables project in Sturton-le-Steeple, Nottinghamshire.

Welcome

****Our early informal consultation has now closed****

We would like to thank the local community for their active participation in our early consultation.

Your valuable feedback plays a crucial role in shaping the development of our proposals for Steeple Renewables Project. We will now be taking the time to consider the feedback we have received and use it to help develop and refine our proposals further before

Click the link below to visit our virtual exhibition

[Virtual exhibition](#)

Appendix 8: Early informal consultation community newsletter



RES is exploring the opportunity to bring forward proposals for a new renewable energy project in Sturton-le-Steeple, Nottinghamshire.

The broad area we are considering is located immediately to the south of West Burton Power Station. This strategic location presents an opportunity to utilise the electricity grid capacity made available following the recent decommissioning of the coal fired power station. This renewable energy project, alongside other proposals embraces the historic role that the area has played in powering the UK. We believe there is an opportunity to build on this legacy and ensure that the area continues to play an important role in the UK's future energy generation.

At this stage, we are considering the type and mix of renewable technologies that could be included in the project. Our present thinking is that the project would include solar energy and battery storage with the potential for the addition of other renewable technologies. Significantly, if the project were to progress it would enable continued agricultural use of the land.

Early informal consultation

We want to understand the views of the local community on our early plans for the proposed renewables energy project. We will be undertaking an early consultation for six weeks from Monday 23 October until Monday 4 December 2023. This early consultation is taking place in advance of formal pre-application statutory consultation on the detail of our proposal which will take place in 2024.

You can learn more about the proposals we are considering on our dedicated project website at www.steeplerenewablesproject.co.uk or at one of our in-person early consultation events detailed on the back page of this newsletter. The project website will host a virtual exhibition replicating the information that will be available at our in-person events.

Providing feedback during our early consultation

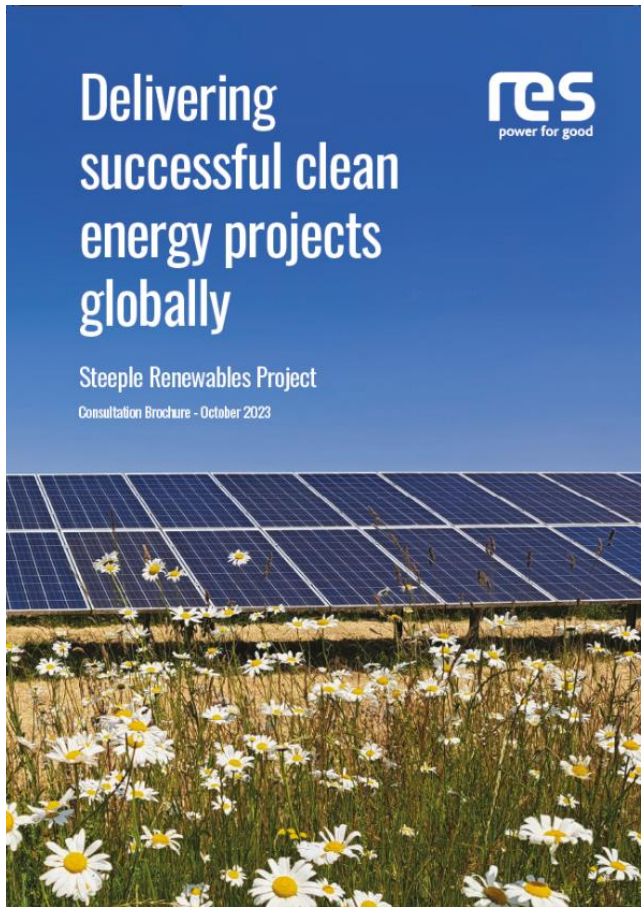
You can let us know your thoughts on the proposals by:

- Attending one of our events and completing our feedback form
- Visiting the virtual exhibition and completing an online copy of our feedback form. The virtual exhibition will be live from **Friday 3 November**
- Emailing your comments to Info@steeplerenewablesproject.co.uk
- Writing to us via our Freepost address at **Freepost Steeple Renewables Project**

If you have any questions you can speak with a member of the project team on our Information line: **0115 718 2070**.



Appendix 9: Early informal consultation brochure



Introduction

Welcome to our early informal consultation on proposals for a nationally significant infrastructure renewables project near to West Burton Power Station and Sturton-le-Steeple, Nottinghamshire.

Whilst the UK has been making leaps towards decarbonisation and reducing reliance on fossil fuels, its energy system is still reliant on global gas supplies for electricity and heating. Globally gas prices have risen, and this has only been exacerbated by the war in Ukraine. The UK needs to invest in renewable technology both to play its part in reducing climate change and to decrease reliance on the volatile global gas markets to improve domestic energy security.

Steeple Renewables Project would make an important contribution to the UK's energy transition.

Our early informal consultation aims to introduce our initial proposals to the community and stakeholders across a large geographic area and invite feedback. This feedback will be used alongside ongoing environmental and technical studies to develop our proposals ahead of formal statutory consultation in 2024. We would also welcome suggestions from the community about what schemes or initiatives they think could be supported or facilitated through the project as part of the tailored community benefits package that would be delivered when the project is operational.

Our early informal consultation will run from **Monday 23 October for six weeks until Monday 4 December.**

This consultation brochure provides an overview of the project we are considering and provides more information about how you can respond to our early informal consultation.

Feedback can be provided via our project website, by completing and submitting a feedback form, or by getting in touch with us via our project email address, info@steeplerenewablesproject.co.uk.



Who is RES?

RES, a British company, is the world's largest independent renewable energy company.

At the forefront of the industry for over 40 years, RES has delivered more than 23GW of renewable energy projects across the globe and supports an operational asset portfolio exceeding 12GW worldwide for a large client base. RES employs more than 2,500 people and is active in 14 countries working across onshore and offshore wind, solar, energy storage, green hydrogen, transmission and distribution. You can find more information at www.res-group.com

ACTIVITIES




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WIND



SOLAR



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TRANSMISSION & DISTRIBUTION



GREEN HYDROGEN

Project overview

RES is exploring the opportunity to develop a renewables project on land at Sturton-le-Steeple, Nottinghamshire. We anticipate that the project could include solar energy generation and battery storage, to help store energy for when it is most needed. RES is also investigating the possibility of incorporating other renewable technologies into the proposals. Collectively, the solar farm and battery storage facility could offer a mix of renewable energy generation and storage.

The land we are exploring is ideally located for us to utilise grid capacity at the recently decommissioned West Burton Power Station.

Typically, solar energy generation uses approximately just 5% of the total ground area of a site. It is anticipated that a solar led Steeple Renewables Project could be designed to allow dual-purpose land use, generating clean electricity alongside continued agricultural use of the land, for example via sheep grazing.

Identifying suitable sites for solar developments requires a balance between grid accessibility and other factors such as site accessibility, landscape, ecology, archaeology, and the ability to mitigate impacts on the local area.

The opportunity

As you may be aware, West Burton Power Station has recently been decommissioned. This has released grid capacity adjacent to the land where we are looking to bring forward a renewables project. We have secured a connection agreement with National Grid to utilise this grid capacity. We believe that our proposals, alongside other energy projects in the local area, present an opportunity for this part of Nottinghamshire to continue its historic role of helping to power the UK.

If consented, it is anticipated that Steeple Renewables Project will be capable of producing clean, green electricity for approximately 156,884 homes¹ every year, around 45% of all homes in Nottinghamshire.

Why solar?

There is now widespread recognition that the UK, and the rest of the world, is in a climate emergency. To help address climate change the UK has committed to reaching net-zero by 2050, requiring us to quadruple our low-carbon electricity generation.

Solar energy enables more electricity to be generated domestically without reliance on imports and is not subject to sudden price fluctuations or the uncertainty of global markets. It can therefore play an important role in improving the security and diversification of the UK's energy supply.

Government forecasting places solar as the cheapest source of new electricity generation for the coming years. This means investment in solar projects like Steeple Renewables Project is not just good for the environment but also for the consumer.

1. The homes figure has been calculated by taking the predicted average annual electricity generation of the site and dividing this by the annual average electricity figures from the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) showing that the annual UK average domestic household consumption is 3,748 kWh (Dec 2021).

Our proposals

The proposed site we are exploring comprises a series of land parcels near the village of Sturton-le-Steeple, Nottinghamshire. We anticipate that Steeple Renewables Project could consist of up to 400MW of solar energy generation and 200MW of battery storage.

As the plans are still at an early stage, the exact layout of panels and infrastructure across the site is still being developed and will be informed by ongoing environmental technical work as well as feedback from this informal consultation with stakeholders and the local community.

The electricity generated from this project would connect into the substation at the decommissioned West Burton Power Station. RES has secured a connection agreement with National Grid for 600MW of electricity generation.

Steeple Renewables Project could:

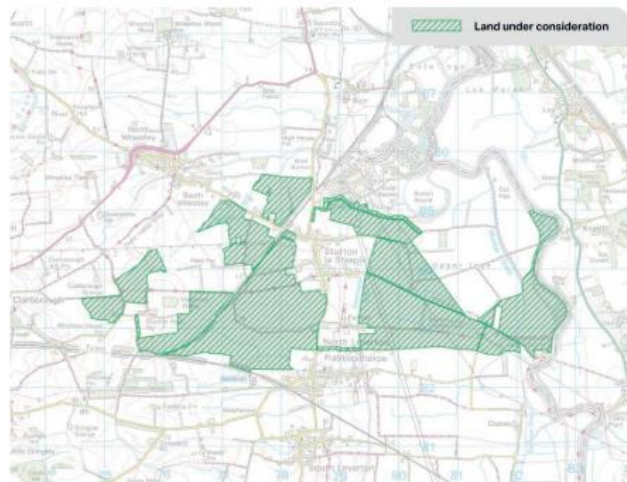
-  Generate up to 400MW of renewable energy, enough to power around half of the homes in Nottinghamshire, every year
-  Support the UK's targets to reach net-zero by 2050
-  Utilise electricity grid capacity made available from the decommissioning of the adjacent West Burton Power Station
-  Provide a community benefits package tailored to the needs and priorities of the local community, including a Local Electricity Discount Scheme
-  Deliver £224 million of investment into the construction of the scheme, providing a boost to the local construction sector²
-  Create 400 jobs over the 24-month build programme, supporting skills and employment in the local community³
-  Enable continued agricultural use of the land alongside the renewable energy project

² Based on information provided by the client, a value of £560,000 per MW has been used to calculate construction cost. This cost per MW is multiplied by 400MW, an approximate figure for the generation capacity of the project, to reach a total construction cost of around £224 million.

³ Based on previous experience of other solar farms, the construction phase could support around 1 job per MW during the peak of the construction phase, therefore Steeple could support in the region of 400 jobs.

Land under consideration

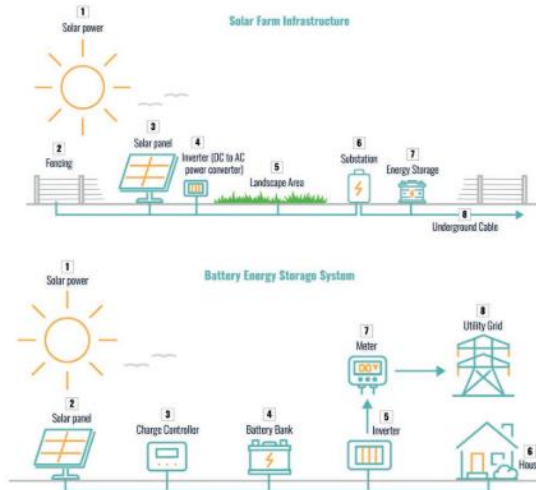
The below plan is indicative and the precise boundaries of the final application area, which could include or exclude parcels from those shown in green, will be developed as we continue with the detailed design of the proposal.



What does a solar farm with battery storage look like?

While the precise configuration and components of the infrastructure at Steeple Renewables Project are still under consideration, the following elements are anticipated to be included in the project:

- Solar PV modules and the associated mounting structures
 - On-site supporting equipment including inverters, transformers, and switchgears
 - Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)
 - Underground cabling within the areas of the solar PV modules and connecting solar PV module areas to the on-site substation
 - Supporting infrastructure including access tracks, security measures, gates, lighting
 - Opportunities to consider a range of measures to allow for a Biodiversity Net Gain and landscape works upon the site
 - Improvements to local footpath network
- Please note that these details are subject to confirmation and may be subject to adjustments as the project progresses.



www.steeplerenewablesproject.co.uk | 7

How does battery storage work?

Energy storage is the capture of energy for use at a later time, and a Battery Energy Storage System is a form of energy storage.

Battery energy storage has a variety of useful applications, such as balancing energy demand and supply for either the short or long term. This ensures the grid operates more efficiently. Plus, batteries are able to respond to changing supply or demand levels within a second.

How solar works and recycling

Solar PV panels are typically made from silicon, which is a great semi-conductor, installed in a metal panel frame with a glass casing.

The sun gives off light, even on cloudy days, and when these light particles, or photons, hit the thin layer of silicon on the top of a solar panel, they knock electrons off the silicon atoms which creates a direct current (DC) of electricity. This is captured by the wiring in the solar panels.

This DC electricity is then converted to alternating current (AC) by an inverter which is then funnelled into the grid network. AC is the type of electrical current used when you plug appliances into normal wall sockets.

Bifacial modules have two sides of solar cells, enabling additional energy generation from the diffuse light reflected off the grass, on the rear-side of the panels.

In most cases solar panels are recyclable and there are well established industrial processes to do this. There are organisations around the UK and Europe specialising in solar recycling, such as PV Cycle and the European Recycling Platform.

They are working with solar developers to minimise electrical waste and recycle old panels in line with the Waste from Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) regulations.



The planning (DCO) process

Due to the amount of renewable energy the project could generate, we anticipate that it will be classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). This means that to gain consent for the project after this early informal consultation, we will begin preparations for the formal stage of the pre-application process and move towards submitting a Development Consent Order (DCO) application to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS).

The DCO process involves several stages:

1. Pre-application stage:

The developer engages in consultation and prepares a detailed application, including an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and other supporting documents.

2. Submission:

The developer submits the application to the Secretary of State (via the Planning Inspectorate). The Planning Inspectorate shall act on behalf of the Secretary of State, which examines the application as the 'Examining Authority'.

3. Examination:

The Examining Authority shall then conduct an examination process, including public hearings, to assess the application's merits, environmental impact, and public opinion. The Examining Authority then prepares a Recommendation Report to the Secretary of State.

4. Decision:

The Secretary of State reviews the examination report and makes a decision to grant or refuse the DCO. This decision is based on the project's national significance, environmental impact, and other relevant factors.

Commitment to community consultation

RES is committed to meaningful engagement with the local community

To achieve this, we want to ensure that there is ample opportunity for local input and are undertaking a two-stage programme of community engagement and consultation. This stage is early and informal consultation. Once we have developed our proposals for Steeple Renewables Project further, we will be undertaking formal statutory consultation on the detail of our plans in 2024.

Ahead of our formal statutory consultation in 2024, we will be publishing a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) for the proposals. This will outline how we intend to engage with stakeholders and local residents throughout the onward development of Steeple Renewables Project. It will also set out how we will consider feedback as part of our formal statutory consultation. The formal statutory consultation will also include findings of our Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR).

EIA Assessment Categories

As part of our early informal consultation, we want to understand what issues and impacts relating to the project are important to you.

We are currently in the process of commencing early baseline environmental work, including ecology assessments. At this stage, the matters that may be considered could include those topics set out below.

- **Environmental statement assessment, scope and methodology**
- **Order limits and environmental context**
- **Scheme Description - The proposed development**
- **Alternatives and design iteration**
- **Relevant policy considerations, including consideration of climate change**
- **Landscape and visual amenity**
- **Residential Amenity**
- **Ecology and ornithology**
- **Hydrology, flood risk and drainage**
- **Ground Conditions**
- **Minerals**
- **Cultural Heritage**
- **Socio-Economic**
- **Noise and vibration**
- **Transport and Access**
- **Air Quality**
- **Soils and Agricultural Land Classification**
- **Glint & Glare**
- **Waste**

Are there any impacts you might have questions about, based on the information we are presenting as part of this early consultation? We will carefully consider and review all feedback received and alongside the results of our ongoing technical assessments, and we will use the feedback to help develop our proposals further.

Community benefits

RES seeks to be a power for good in communities that neighbour our projects by working openly and constructively to ensure tangible local benefits. If consented Steeple Renewables Project could deliver a number of lasting benefits to community in Sturton-le-Steeple and the surrounding areas including:

Direct job creation

A solar farm could create and support direct jobs, covering a wide range of skills, during the construction, operational and decommissioning stages. Where possible, RES is committed to local recruitment and is also exploring the possibility of supporting local apprenticeship opportunities.

Gross Value Added (GVA)

A project of this type could provide a boost to the regional economy during construction, throughout operation and during the decommissioning phases. This boost to GVA will be the result of increased spending in the local economy.

Indirect job creation

A scheme of this nature could result in the creation of indirect jobs. This will include jobs in local industries providing goods and services to the project's direct employees, e.g., jobs at shops and hotels.

Annual Business Rates

Throughout its operation, a project of this type could generate annual business rates which will be payable each year.

Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS)

In consultation with the local community, RES will explore the possibility to deliver its Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS) as part of a tailored community benefits package, once the project is operational. Developed in response to research and feedback from local communities around RES' operational wind farms, LEDS has been operating for over 10 years and offers an annual discount to the electricity bills of those properties closest to a participating project, without needing to change energy provider.

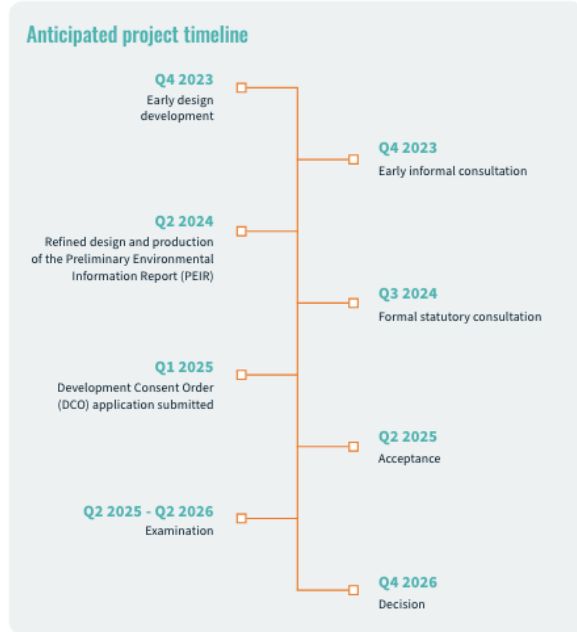
For Steeple Renewables Project we would identify a catchment area which incorporates properties closest to the project. The qualifying properties within the catchment area will be contacted at the relevant time and offered the opportunity to apply for the annual discount which would be paid directly to their electricity provider.



Neighbouring projects

The proposals for Steeple Renewables Project are being brought forward independently by RES. However, we are aware of a number of other renewables projects currently progressing through the planning process in close proximity to our proposed site.

As part of our assessments, we will review and consult on the cumulative effects and our inter-relationship of our project in combination with those nearby schemes to ensure that we take account of your views and that it is fully assessed in our application.



Consultation events and feedback channels

We are committed to working closely with the local community throughout the development of the project. Our early informal consultation will run for six weeks starting on **Monday 23 October 2023** until **Monday 4 December 2023**. We will be holding two in-person early informal consultation events on:

Friday 3 November	2pm-7pm	South Leverton Memorial Institute, Town St, South Leverton, Retford DN22 0BT
Saturday 4 November	10am-2pm	Sturton Hall and Conference Centre, Sturton-le-Steeple, Retford DN22 9HY

These events will provide the opportunity to learn about the initial proposals we are exploring and provide feedback. We encourage anyone with an interest in the project we are exploring to come along and meet the project team.

Unable to attend our events?

People who are unable to make the events can view the early proposals at a virtual exhibition from **Friday 3 November** at www.steeplerenewablesproject.co.uk or sign up to attend a webinar being held on **Wednesday 22 November** from **6pm-7pm**.

The virtual exhibition will allow you to view all of the consultation materials that will be available at our in-person public events, including our consultation brochure and exhibition boards. You will also be able to leave feedback via our online feedback form.

The virtual exhibition will remain open after the early informal consultation closes, so you will be able to view the information at any time, however the online feedback form will close on **Monday 4 December**.

You can also visit one of our community deposit locations to pick up a copy of our consultation brochure and feedback form and a freepost envelope:

Sturton Hall and Conference Centre Brickings Way, Sturton-le-Steeple, Retford DN22 9HY

Gainsborough Library Cobden St, Gainsborough DN21 2NG

Open Monday-Friday 9am-5pm and Saturday 9am-1pm

How to get in touch

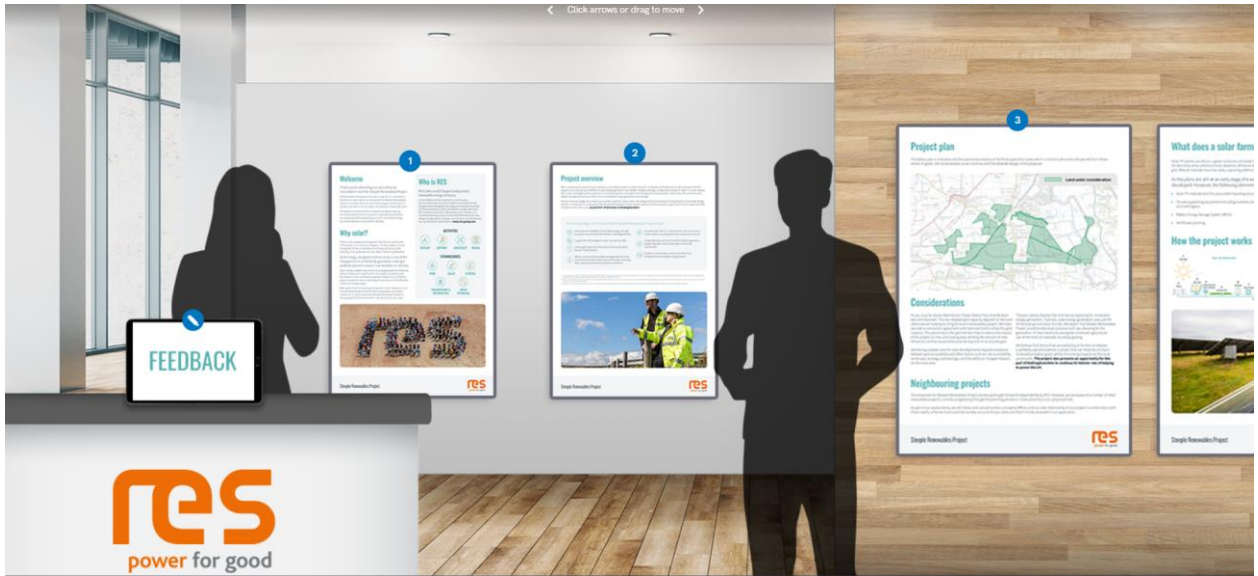
We have set up a dedicated project website, project email and phonenumber for Steeple Renewables Project. Should you have any enquiries regarding the project, please contact a member of the team using the information below.

- www.steeplerenewablesproject.co.uk
- 0115 718 2070**
- Info@steeplerenewablesproject.co.uk
- FREEPOST Steeple Renewables Project**

If you would like this document in large print, audio, braille, or another language please contact us using the details we have set out above.



Appendix 10: Virtual exhibition (snapshot)



Appendix 11: Exhibition boards

Welcome

Thank you for attending our early informal consultation event for Steeple Renewables Project.

Please take the boards and take a copy of our consultation brochure to learn about our proposal for Steeple Renewables Project. Our early informal consultation begins on Monday 23 October and will run for six weeks until Monday 4 December 2023.

All feedback received will be considered alongside ongoing environmental and technical work to help develop and refine our proposals before presenting you with more detail during our formal statutory consultation next year.

Why solar?

There is now widespread recognition that the bulk and thrust of the world's climate change challenge is in addressing energy. Total global climate change in the UK has committed to reaching net zero by 2050, which requires quadrupling our low carbon electricity generation.

Solar energy, alongside onshore wind, is one of the cheapest forms of electricity generation available and is perfectly placed to assist in our transition to net zero.

Solar energy enables more electricity to be generated domestically without reliance on imports and is not subject to sudden price fluctuations or the uncertainty of global markets. It can therefore play an important role in ensuring the security and diversification of the UK's energy supply.

With government reform, solar is becoming the cheapest source of new electricity generation for the coming years, this means investment in solar projects like Steeple Renewables Project is not just good for the environment – but also for the consumer.

Who is RES

RES is the world's largest independent renewable energy company.

At the forefront of the industry for over 40 years, RES has delivered more than 30GW of renewable energy projects across the globe and supports an operational asset portfolio exceeding 1,000 worldwide. Our largest base is in the UK, with RES employing over 3,500 people and is active in 14 countries working across onshore and offshore wind, solar, energy storage, green hydrogen, transmission and distribution. You can find more information at www.res-group.com.

ACTIVITIES

DEVELOP

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CONSTRUCT

OPERATE

TECHNOLOGIES

WIND

SOLAR

STORAGE

TRANSMISSION & DISTRIBUTION

GREEN HYDROGEN

Steeple Renewables Project

Project overview

RES is exploring the opportunity to develop a renewable project on land at Burton-le-Steeple, Huntingdonshire. We anticipate that the project could include up to 40MW of solar energy generation and 100MW of battery storage. It will generate energy for over 100,000 homes. RES is also investigating the possibility of incorporating other renewable technologies into the proposal. Collectively, the solar farm and battery storage facility would offer a mix of renewable energy generation and storage.

At this early stage of considering a number of potential options, the proposed Burton-le-Steeple solar farm and battery storage project, if consented, it is anticipated that Steeple Renewables Project will be capable of producing clean green electricity for approximately 100,000 homes every year, around 400,000 hours a year in Huntingdonshire.

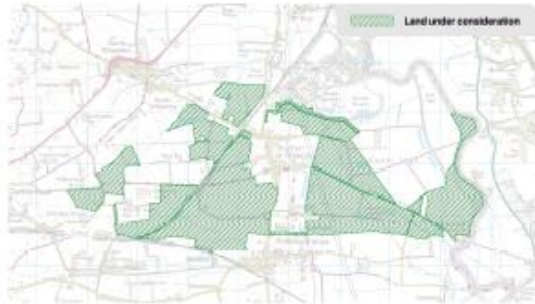
At this early stage it is anticipated that Steeple Renewables Project would:

- Generate up to 100,000 MWh of renewable energy enough to power around half of the homes in Huntingdonshire
- Support the UK's target to reach net zero by 2050
- Utilise grid capacity at the decommissioned West Burton Power Station
- Deliver a community benefits package tailored to the needs and priorities of the local community, including RES' unique Local Electricity Discount scheme
- Provide £1.2M in investment into the construction of the scheme, boosting the local construction sector
- Create 40 jobs over the 36-month build programme, supporting skills and employment in the local community
- Enable continued digital land use of the land alongside the renewable energy project

Steeple Renewables Project

Project plan

The telephone consultation and the printed boundaries of the final applications, which could include or exclude parcels from those shown here, will be developed as we continue with the detailed design of the proposal.



Considerations

As you may be aware, the Sizeton Power Station has recently been decommissioned. This has reduced grid capacity adjacent to the land where we are looking to bring forward a renewables project. We have secured a connection agreement with National Grid to offset the grid capacity. The proximity to the grid will also help to reduce the impact of the project on the surrounding area, limiting the amount of new infrastructure that would otherwise be required to access the grid.

Identifying suitable sites for solar developments requires a balance between grid accessibility and other factors such as site accessibility, landscape, ecology, archaeology, and the ability to integrate into the local area.

The plan above is just a starting point in exploring renewable energy generation. Typically, solar energy generation uses just 5% of the total ground area of a site. We expect that Steeple Renewables Project would enable dual purpose land use, allowing for the generation of an electricity alongside continued agricultural use of the land, for example, sheep grazing.

We believe that the land we are exploring at Sizeton-le-Steeple is perfectly placed to deliver a project that can help to meet its decarbonisation goals, while maintaining a link with the local community. The project also presents an opportunity for this part of Nottinghamshire to continue its historic role of helping to power the UK.

Neighbouring projects

The proposals for Steeple Renewables Project are being brought forward independently by RES However, we are aware of a number of other renewables projects currently progressing through the planning process in close proximity to our proposed site.

As part of our assessment, we will review and consult on the visual impacts and our site relationship of our project in combination with those nearby schemes to ensure that we take account of your views and that its fully assessed in our application.

Steeple Renewables Project



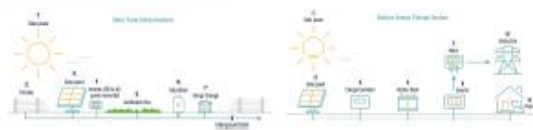
What does a solar farm look like with battery storage?

Solar PV panels use silicon, silver and conductors embedded in a metal frame with glass. Sunlight, even on cloudy days, hits the silicon, generating DC electricity when photons knock electrons off silicon atoms. All they capture this energy. An inverter converts DC to AC and feeds it into the grid. Bifacial modules have two sides, capturing additional energy from reflected light.

As the plans are still at an early stage, the exact layout of panels and infrastructure across the site is still being developed. However, the following elements are anticipated to be included in the project:

- Solar PV modules and the associated mounting structures
- On-site supporting equipment including inverters, transformers, and switchgear
- Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)
- Mid-to-long distance power lines
- Underground cabling within the areas of the solar PV modules and connecting to the PV module areas to the on-site substation
- Supporting infrastructure including access tracks, security measures, gates, lighting
- In-proven sites to hedge grow throughout the site

How the project works



Steeple Renewables Project



The planning (DCO) process

Due to the amount of renewable energy the project could generate, we anticipate that Steeple Renewables Project would be classified as a strategically significant infrastructure project (SIF). This means that to get consent for the project, we will be planning to submit a Development Consent Order (DCO) application to the Planning Inspectorate (PII). The final decision whether the project is consented would then be made by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero.

The DCO process involves several stages:

1. Pre-application stage

The developer engages in consultation and prepares a detailed application, including a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and other supporting documents.

2. Submission

The developer submits the application to the Secretary of State (via the Planning Inspectorate). The Planning Inspectorate shall act on behalf of the Secretary of State, which examines the application as the Examining Authority.

3. Examination

The Examining Authority shall then conduct an examination process, including public hearings, to assess the application's merit, environmental impact, and public opinion. The Examining Authority then prepares a Recommendation Report to the Secretary of State.

4. Decision

The Secretary of State will set the examination report and makes a decision to grant or refuse the DCO. This decision is based on the project's national significance, environmental impact, and other relevant factors.

We are committed to meaningful engagement with the local community

To achieve this, we want to ensure that there is ample opportunity for local input and an understanding of the stage programme of community engagement and consultation. This stage is only a start of formal consultation. Once we have developed our proposals for Steeple Renewables Project further, we will be undertaking formal statutory consultation on the detail of our plans in 2024.



Steeple Renewables Project



Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

As part of our early consultation, we want to understand what environmental issues relating to the project are important to you.

We are currently in the process of commencing early baseline environmental work, including ecology assessments. At this stage, the matters that may be considered could include those topics set out below.

- Environmental statement assessment, scope and methodology
- Order limits and environmental context
- Scheme Description - The proposed development
- Alternatives and design iteration
- Relevant policy considerations, including consideration of climate change
- Landscape and Visual Amenity
- Residential Amenity
- Ecology and Ornithology
- Hydrology, Flood Risk and Drainage
- Ground Conditions
- Minerals
- Cultural Heritage
- Socio-Economic
- Noise and Vibration
- Transport and Access
- Air Quality
- Soils and Agricultural Land Classification
- Glint and Glare
- Waste

Are there any impacts you might have questions about, based on the information we are providing as part of this early consultation? We will carefully consider and respond to your feedback alongside the results of our ongoing technical assessments, we will use the feedback to help develop our proposals further.



Steeple Renewables Project



Community benefits

RSE seeks to be a power for good in our markets that neighbours projects by working openly and constructively to ensure mutual benefits. If successful, Steeple Renewables Project could deliver a number of lasting benefits to our community in Steeple-le-Steeple and the surrounding areas including:

- Direct job creation**
The proposed solar farm will create and support direct jobs, covering a wide range of skills, during the construction, operational and decommissioning stages. Likewise, RSE can assist local residents and is also exploring the possibility of supporting local apprenticeship opportunities.
- Indirect job creation**
It is anticipated that through the creation of direct jobs, Steeple Renewables Project will also support indirect job creation in the local economy. This will include jobs in local industries providing goods and services to the project's direct employees, e.g. jobs at shops and hotels.

Gross Value Added (GVA)
The project will provide a boost to the regional economy during construction, throughout operation and during the decommissioning stages. This boost to GVA will be the result of increased spending in the local economy.

Annual Business Rates
Throughout its operation, the project will generate annual business rates which will be payable each year. We take a take-into account approach and will work directly with the community to understand how the project could support the local area and the provision of long-term economic, social and environmental benefits. This approach will help to deliver a community benefit package that is aligned with the priorities of the local community.

Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS)

In consultation with the local community, RSE will explore the possibility to deliver its Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS) as part of a tailored community benefit package, once the project is operational. If consent is secured, developed in response to research and feedback from local communities around RSE's operational wind farms, LEDS has been running for over 10 years and offers an annual discount to the electricity bills of participating in closest to participating project, without needing to change energy provider.

For Steeple Renewables Project we need to identify suitable enterprises which incorporate people in closest to the project. The qualifying properties within the catchment area will be contacted at the appropriate time and offered the opportunity to apply for the annual discount which would be paid directly to the electricity provider.



Steeple Renewables Project



Anticipated project timeline



Steeple Renewables Project



We really value your feedback

This event is intended to provide the opportunity for you to meet and speak with members of the project team and discuss any questions you may have. Please don't forget to fill out one of the feedback forms provided to submit your response to our early consultation.

Alternatively, you can take one away and return it to us free of charge at FREEPOST Steeple Renewables Project or answer the questions via our project website:

www.steeplerenewablesproject.co.uk

The project website also hosts our virtual exhibition where you can view the information that has been available at this event. We will also be hosting a project webinar, which you can sign up to via our project website, this will be held on:

Wednesday 23 November, from 5pm-7pm

The deadline for providing feedback to this early consultation is Monday 20 December 2022. We will carefully consider all feedback received alongside our ongoing technical assessment, to help us develop the proposal further before presenting you with more refined proposals alongside detailed environmental information in formal statutory consultation next year.



Steeple Renewables Project



Appendix 12: Digital feedback form (snapshot)

Step 4 of 14

20%

More about you

Q1. How would you describe your interest?

- Local resident
- Local representative
- Landowner
- Local business owner
- Regular visitor

Local interest group member (if so, please name)

Statutory organisation/other (please specify)

Previous Next

Appendix 13: Hard copy feedback form

Steeple Renewables Project

Early informal consultation feedback form



Our proposals

RES is exploring the opportunity to bring forward proposals for a new renewable energy project near to West Burton Power Station Sturton-le-Steeple, Nottinghamshire.

The decommissioning of West Burton Power Station has unlocked an opportunity to utilise the existing grid infrastructure and grid capacity at West Burton Power Station, making Steeple Renewables Project ideally located to assist in the UK's transition to net-zero.

The plans could include up to 400MW of solar energy generation and 200MW of battery storage, with the capacity to incorporate other renewable technologies in the future.

We want to hear your views on our early proposals for Steeple Renewables Project, this will help us to understand local views and refine our proposals before we undertake formal statutory consultation in 2024. We are also keen to hear about local needs and initiatives that we could help to facilitate as part of a package of community benefits. We look forward to receiving your feedback throughout our consultation.

To inform your responses to this feedback form, please review the information presented in our consultation brochure, on our project website, or attend one of our in-person events (details of which can be found in the brochure).

Privacy Statement

By filling-in this form you are agreeing that Cavendish Consulting can hold and process your personal data in relation to this public consultation exercise.

We will only share your personal data with RES and the Steeple Renewables project team for planning evaluation purposes. Your identifiable, personal data will not be used for any other purposes without your consent.

We will use your data to:

- Send you updates about the project (where you provide us with your contact details).
- Develop a Consultation Report (or similar document) about this public consultation that will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate or similar body; this will be a publicly available document.

Your comments will be anonymous, and we will not identify you in these reports.

You can respond to this consultation by:

Completing an online feedback questionnaire, available at: www.steeplerenewablesproject.co.uk

Downloading, printing and completing a feedback questionnaire and return it to: Freepost Steeple Renewables Project (no stamp needed)

Writing to the project team at: Freepost Steeple Renewables Project (no stamp needed)

Emailing us at: info@steeplerenewablesproject.co.uk

Your Details*

If you choose not to fill in all parts of this section, we will not be able to include your comments in the consultation process.

Title (Miss/Mrs/Ms/Mr/Other):

First Name or Initial:

Surname:

Postcode:

Your Contact Details*

We will use these details to contact you and update you on the proposals. You don't have to fill in this section if you'd rather we didn't contact you.

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

I confirm I'm over 13 years old and agree to the privacy statement

*PLEASE COMPLETE ALL SECTIONS IN BLOCK CAPITALS

More about you

Q1. How would you describe your interest?

Local resident Local representative Landowner Local business owner Regular visitor

Local interest group member (if so, please name)

Statutory organisation/other (please specify)

Our proposals

Q2. Based on the information we have presented as part of our early consultation how supportive are you of our emerging renewable energy project, to utilise the grid connection at West Burton Power Station to generate clean, affordable energy and help the UK to reach its decarbonisation targets?

Strongly support Support Neutral Oppose Strongly oppose Don't know

Please explain why.

What's important to you?

Q3. What potential environmental issues in relation to the proposals are most important to you?

Traffic, access and construction Air quality Noise and light pollution Water and flood risk

Landscape and views Local ecology and biodiversity Energy needs and climate change

Land quality and use Other (please detail)

Please explain why.

Community benefits

Q4. We have shared with you our plans for our Local Electricity Discount Scheme (LEDS), how supportive are you of seeing this benefit delivered as part of Steeple Renewables Project?

Strongly support Support Neutral Oppose Strongly oppose Don't know

Please explain why.

Q5. What types of community benefits or initiatives would you like us to explore as part of our proposals for Steeple Renewables Project?

Funding to local organisations to help them reduce their own carbon emissions

Including recreational improvements such as new footpaths and bridleways in our design, to improve the local community's access to the countryside

Educational areas in proximity to the site

Providing a community fund to support local groups and projects (please specify the group)

Other (please specify)

Other Comments

Q6. Do you have any further comments on our proposals at this early stage?