

Tillbridge Statutory Consultation - 30 May to 11 July 2023 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Tillbridge-specific FAQs

Why is Tillbridge Solar needed?

The UK has set ambitious climate change targets to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and to ensure that the energy supply remains secure, reliable, and affordable. Together with legally binding commitments such as these, the government has further set out how the deployment of renewable technologies such as wind, nuclear, solar and hydrogen will be accelerated in its latest Energy Security Strategy.

In this strategy, a key aim is to increase the UK's solar capacity five-fold by 2035, which would increase the total generation capacity from 14 gigawatts (GW) today to around 70GW in the future. Tillbridge Solar would make a significant contribution towards achieving these targets and help provide a reliable source of affordable energy.

The release of Powering Up Britain (March 2023) marked a clear statement from the Conservative Government on its commitment to making net zero a reality and reiterated the need to maximise deployment of both rooftop and ground-mounted solar to achieve national targets.

Tillbridge Solar would connect into the National Grid at Cottam Substation. The decommissioning of the previous coal-fired power station on this site has provided additional spare grid connection capacity and the opportunity for the region to play an important role in renewable energy generation in years to come.

Where is the Scheme located?

The Scheme would be located approximately five kilometres to the east of Gainsborough and approximately 13km to the north of Lincoln. It would involve two distinct elements, which are:

- 'The Principal Site', which would be built on primarily agricultural land contained within a single red line boundary. This would be where the ground mounted solar PV, electrical substations and energy storage facilities would be located and covers an area of approximately 1,400 ha on land to the south of Harpswell Lane (A631), to the west of Middle Street (B1398) and largely to the north of Kexby Road and to the east of Springthorpe.
- 'The Cable Route Corridor', which is approximately 16km long and would involve the construction of underground electricity infrastructure to connect the Principal Site to National Grid's Cottam substation. This is an initial search area across the

administrative areas of West Lindsey District Council and Bassetlaw District Council.

We are currently presenting a wider search area for our Cable Route Corridor than what would be required. This is to allow for the completion of environmental surveys to set out potential constraints allowing the cable route to be refined to minimise impacts. Whilst the intention will be to refine the extent of the Cable Route Corridor down further as part of the ongoing environmental assessment work, it will still need to be of sufficient width for flexibility to ensure that localised constraints can be sensitively dealt with.

A map showing the Principal Site and Cable Route Corridor can be found on our website at: www.tillbridgesolar.com/the-scheme

Given other solar Schemes in Lincolnshire, why is Tillbridge Solar situated here?

The decommissioning of EDF Energy's Cottam Power Station in 2019 freed up around 2,000 MW (2 GW) of generating capacity in this area of Lincolnshire. Tillbridge Solar would play an important role in replacing this former generation capacity and supporting the region's transition to producing more renewable energy.

The availability of grid connection in this area, together with our site selection exercise, has helped to identify preferred areas for development, based on a number of environmental and planning factors.

We are aware there are a number of other proposed solar developments in the area. Lincolnshire is fast becoming the UK leader in solar energy, playing an important role in the transition away from relying on coal and imported oil and gas, towards home-grown renewable energy that ensures self-sufficiency. However, we understand that the rate and pace of different Schemes may cause uncertainty for some about the impacts these Schemes would have for local communities.

Tillbridge Solar is a responsible developer and wishes to work with the local community to ensure that its Schemes cause as little disruption as possible for local people. This will help us understand how these can be delivered collectively and efficiently, whilst reducing potential cumulative impacts to local communities.

We have been and will continue to work constructively with other developers to make sure that local residents are fully informed about each of the different solar proposals. Our discussions so far have also centered around cable route installation, to ensure as little disruption to the local community as possible.

What is the potential cumulative and landscape impact?

We are aware of the other solar schemes coming forward in the local area. Our landscape and wider environmental teams are undertaking landscape and visual appraisal work to address cumulative impacts. If there are impacts, mitigation will be designed into the Scheme. This could include the provision of landscape buffers, such as woodland planting.

What is the impact on biodiversity?

Our terrestrial and aquatic ecology teams are currently carrying out habitat and species surveys allowing us to identify any potential biodiversity impacts of the Scheme. These surveys include, but are not limited to, breeding birds, wintering birds, bats, reptiles, amphibians, invertebrates, water voles and otters. Where there are potential impacts, we will look to provide appropriate mitigation in consultation with Natural England.

What is the impact on agricultural land in the area?

We will be submitting an Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey as part of our final DCO application, which will determine the grading of land within our Principal Site. A baseline ALC assessment of the Cable Route Corridor will also be undertaken.

To date, we have been able to survey approximately 1,200 hectares of our Principal Site (which is approximately 1,400 hectares in total). These surveys show that approximately 94.4% of the area surveyed is classified as 'grade 3b' agricultural land, and approximately 5.6% is classified as 'grade 3a'. An initial report outlining these findings is provided as part of the PEI Report (which can be found on our website) and a full report will be available as part of our DCO application.

How long will it take to build?

Tillbridge Solar is subject to being granted development consent from the Secretary of State for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. Should the Scheme be granted consent, construction could start as early as autumn 2025. We anticipate that it would take two years to build, with the site potentially being fully operational and generating electricity from 2027.

How long will Tillbridge Solar be in operation?

The Scheme is expected to generate clean energy for approximately 40-60 years, with decommissioning expected to commence thereafter.

Who will determine the planning application and what happens next?

The Scheme is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) due to it having a proposed generation capacity exceeding 50MW. We are therefore required to submit an application for development consent to the Secretary of State, in accordance with the Planning Act 2008.

We are planning to submit our application for development consent later this year. Before then, we are required to carry out a statutory stage of consultation.

More information on the national infrastructure planning process can be found on PINS' website: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/the-process/>

This includes details on what comes next in the process after our application is submitted, including Acceptance, Examination and Recommendation and Decision.

Consultation questions

When/where are your events?

Our events and webinars are being held on the following dates:

Venue	Date	Times
Online webinar (registration open from 30 May 2023 here and getting in touch)	Wednesday 7 June	6:30pm to 8pm
Glentworth Village Hall, Stoney Lane, Glentworth, Lincolnshire, DN21 5DF	Wednesday 14 June	2:30pm to 7pm
Willingham Village Hall, High St, Willingham by Stow, Gainsborough, DN21 5JZ	Saturday 17 June	10am to 2pm
Sturton by Stow Village Hall, High St, Sturton by Stow, Lincoln, LN1 2AE	Thursday 22 June	1:30pm to 5:30pm
Corringham Village Hall, 10 Middle St, Corringham, Gainsborough, DN21 5QR	Friday 30 June	12pm to 4pm
Rampton Village Hall, Manor Grounds, Rampton, Retford, Nottinghamshire DN22 0JU	Saturday 1 July	10am to 2pm
Hemswell and Harpswell Village Hall, Maypole Street, Hemswell, Lincolnshire, DN21 5UL	Thursday 6 July	2:30pm to 6:30pm
Online webinar (registration open from 30 May 2023 here and getting in touch)	Monday 10 July 2023	6:30pm to 8pm

How can I provide feedback?

Consultation responses can be made in the following ways:

- Completing the feedback questionnaire online, which can be accessed via the Scheme website: tillbridgesolar.com/consultation
- Attending a consultation event and completing a printed feedback questionnaire, which can be handed to the project team in person, or taken a way and sent to use via freepost (using **FREEPOST TILLBRIDGE SOLAR**). Questionnaires can also be collected from one of our local information points or requested from the community relations team, as detailed in **Table 5.3**.
- Emailing info@tillbridgesolar.com
- Writing to us at **FREEPOST TILLBRIDGE SOLAR** (please note that no stamp is required)

Will this be your final consultation?

We are expecting this to be our final statutory consultation before we submit our DCO application at the end of 2023. We may need to take further rounds of targeted consultation for any minor changes to the Scheme following our statutory consultation.

Will you still listen to comments after the consultation?

It is important to provide your comments and feedback during this consultation to ensure that we can make all relevant changes before submitting our DCO application.

We remain committed to engaging with you after this consultation, and will continue to meet with local stakeholders to discuss our plans for the Scheme, and how they have been refined in response to feedback during our statutory consultation.

General Solar FAQs

Does solar work in the UK?

Solar works well everywhere in the UK. It is radiation from the sun, rather than temperature, heat or direct sunlight, that enables solar PV panels to generate electricity. Solar panels don't need direct sunlight to operate and produce power all year round, accounting for about 4% of yearly national consumption. In the middle of a day, they can produce over a quarter of the UK's power.

Solar Energy UK, the trade body for solar in the UK, have published a briefing setting out the facts about solar and how it works, addressing some misconceptions about solar projects in the UK. You can access this at: <https://solarenergyuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Briefing-Fact-Checker-1.pdf>

What is a battery storage facility?

Battery storage, or battery energy storage systems (BESS), enable energy from renewables, like solar and wind, to be stored and released when customers need power most.

Does land used for solar farms reduce food security?

Solar farms provide valuable income for farmers; they can still be used for grazing and support UK farmers to continue food production on other parts of their land. Some developers consider growing produce under or alongside solar panels.

How much space do solar farms take up?

Even under 2050 Net Zero targets, Solar farms would occupy 0.5% of the UK's land – much less than what is currently used by golf courses.