Welcome to the Public Information Event

ScottishPower Renewables

Welcome to the Public Information Event for the proposed Oldhouse Solar Farm; a ScottishPower Renewables (SPR) project.

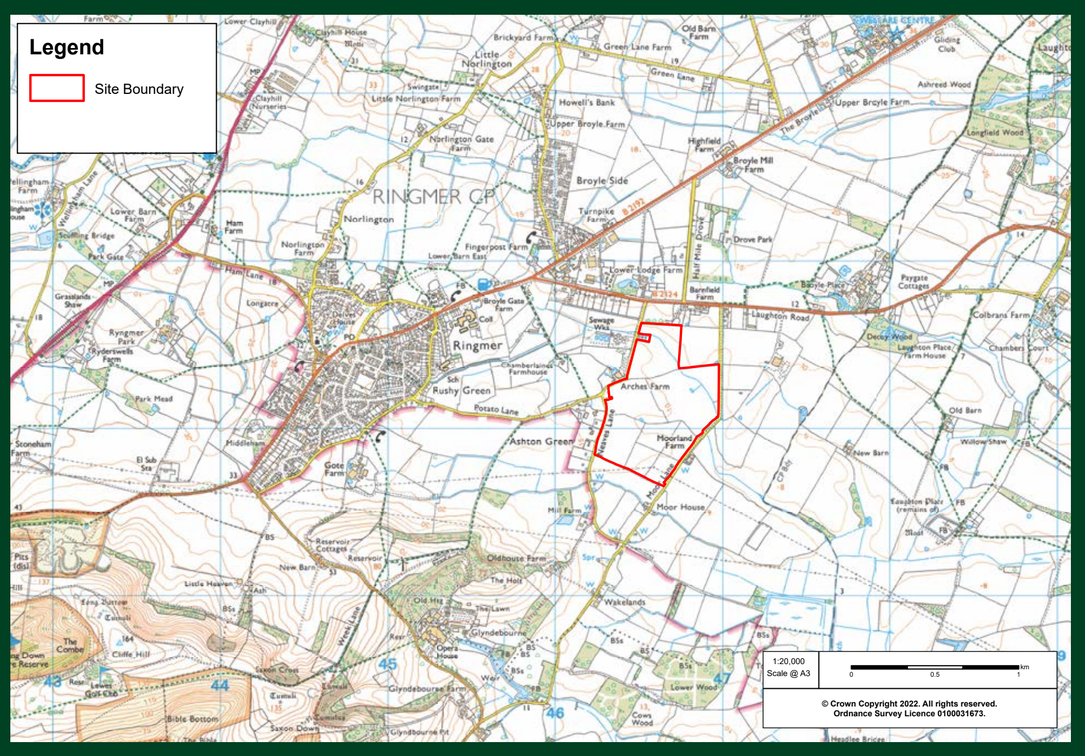
ScottishPower Renewables is investigating the potential for a renewable energy development located approx. 1 kilometre (km) east of Ringmer. We are committed to meaningful consultation with the local community in the development of our projects and throughout the development process, to ensure local communities and stakeholders are given the opportunity to provide feedback and are kept informed of project progress.

SPR is part of the ScottishPower group of companies operating in the UK under the Iberdrola Group, one of the world's largest integrated utility companies and a world leader in wind energy. ScottishPower, the first integrated energy utility in the UK to generate 100% green electricity, is already investing a total of £10 billion over five years – £8 million every working day, focusing on wind energy, solar energy, smart grids and driving the change to a cleaner, electric future.

At SPR, we are committed to developing renewable energy responsibly. We strive to be a good neighbour in all aspects of our work and are committed to maximising the opportunities for local communities to benefit from our projects. We aim to find the best balance of environmental factors; to minimise impacts resulting from our developments; and to demonstrate that the benefits of our projects are of real value, wide-reaching and shared with the community.

SPR is at the forefront of the development of the renewables industry through pioneering ideas, forward thinking and outstanding innovation. Our ambitious growth plans include expansion of our existing onshore wind portfolio, investment in new large-scale solar deployment and innovative grid storage systems including batteries.

A detailed map showing the location of the proposed Oldhouse Solar Farm is shown below.



Proposed site location

Site location and description

The Site is located approx. 1km east of the village of Ringmer and 4.2km north-east of Lewes in East Sussex, located within the administrative boundary of Lewes District Council (LDC), and Ringmer and Ouse Valley Parish Council.

The Site comprises approx. 44 hectares (ha) of land currently used for arable farming and rough grazing. The Site's spacious layout will not only facilitate the Proposed Development seamlessly but also thoughtfully set aside areas for proactive environmental enhancement and promoting biodiversity. The Site's ample sunlight, effective screening, and proximity to Lewes grid make it an ideal location for a solar farm.

Moor Lane is situated to the east of the Site, Neaves Lane to the west and the B2124 Laughton Road to the north.

The Proposed Development

We are working on a design that is thoughtfully aligned with environmental considerations. The main component of the Proposed Development will consist of rows of solar panels mounted on metal frames. There will be a 4-5 metres (m) distance between each row of panels, with panels being set at an angle between 15-25 degrees and at a height of approx. 3m above ground level. The development will yield up to 25 megawatts (MW) of electricity, which is enough to power up to 6,350 homes.[1] Security systems (CCTV) and fencing, associated infrastructure including an electrical substation for grid connection, and planting and biodiversity benefits will also form part of the proposal. Existing greenery will provide screening, and additional planting will enrich biodiversity. It is anticipated that the land would continue to be used for sheep grazing, allowing the Site to remain in agricultural use.

Grid connection

A substation compound will be installed and is proposed to be located in the north-eastern area of the Site, adjacent to the site access point off Moor Lane. The existing 132-kilovolt (kV) overhead line crosses the southern corner of Site providing a means for connection onto the National Grid.

[1] Installed capacity (in MW) multiplied by the number of hours in one year (8,760) multiplied by the average load factor for each technology divided by the average annual household energy consumption (3.831MWh) (being the average annual household energy consumption during 2021, 2020 and 2019 as published within Energy Consumption in the UK 2022, BEIS, 2022).

Construction and access

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The Proposed Development will be constructed, owned, operated and maintained by SPR. Site access is proposed off Moor Lane, approx. 480m south from the Moor Lane/B2124 T-junction.

At this stage, construction routes are still being considered in order to determine the best and most viable route. It is expected that there would be approx. 10-15 Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) travelling on to the Site per week at the peak of construction, for approx. four months of an overall nine month build programme.

Sustainable travel and lift sharing between site contractors will be encouraged and enforced as much as possible. Outside of peak construction, it is expected vehicle numbers would be fewer.

The construction period would comprise the following stages:

- Access, onsite tracks and infrastructure – construction of a new access, internal onsite tracks and construction compound
- Mobilisation – delivery of plant, equipment and construction materials
- Assembling of components – delivery of solar panels and other components and installation onsite.

Once operational, the Proposed Development would require ongoing maintenance and site visits, required to check and service the installation, would occur roughly once per month.

Public Rights of Way

There are no Public Rights of Way (PRoW) that intersect with the site; the nearest PRoW is located approx. 65m west of the Site. It is anticipated that there will be no direct impact on this or any PRoW, with access being maintained to all routes at all times.

The need for renewable energy

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Policy at the local, national and global level is changing rapidly to address the threat of climate change. Decarbonisation means we must reduce our consumption of fossil fuels and increase renewable and low carbon energy generation.

Key UK Government policies that showcase the need for renewable energy are outlined below:

- 2008 – The Climate Change Act set a legally binding target to reduce the UK's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 80% by 2050, compared to 1990 levels.
- June 2019 – The 80% target was raised to 100%.
- October 2021 – The Net Zero Strategy was published, setting out how the net zero target would be met, making it clear that solar and wind generation are the backbone to achieving a secure, affordable and low carbon energy supply.

At the local level, Lewes District Council declared a Climate Emergency motion in 2019 and made it clear that it considers tackling climate change to be the District's most important issue.

The UK is still heavily reliant upon fossil fuels for electricity generation and the continued transition towards renewable energy is expected to lead to a reduction in electricity bills and provide greater energy security for all consumers, whilst helping to meet climate change objectives. Solar generation plays an important part in the UK energy mix and along with wind, it is now one of the lowest cost forms of new, large scale electricity generation in the UK.

If approved, Oldhouse Solar Farm will provide a source of renewable electricity that, in turn, will assist in reducing carbon dioxide emissions. The Proposed Development has the potential to provide a significant contribution to meeting the climate emergency net zero commitment and contribute to local and national aims of continuing to move towards renewable energy generation. The Proposed Development will also provide job creation in its manufacture, installation and maintenance.

Site selection and design

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The following factors fed into the selection of the site:

- Solar irradiation levels
- Topography
- Field size and shading
- Suitable access for construction
- Agreed grid connection
- Sited in an area that is free from any landscape or ecological designations.

The following factors have been taken into consideration and informed the design and layout of the Proposed Development:

- Appropriate buffers to all hedgerows, woodlands, watercourses and waterbodies
- Location of Flood Risk Zone 2 and 3 (active floodplain)
- Locations of medium and high-risk surface water flooding
- Location of existing residential properties
- Location of heritage assets – there is an archaeological notification area within the site to the north, and a Grade II Listed Building (Arches Farmhouse) located approx. 80m west of the site.
- Existing traffic flows and movements during construction
- Visual effects both from adjacent receptors, including residential properties and the South Downs National Park, located approx. 100m south-west.

Landscape and visual

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Landscape and visual impact

A Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA) is being prepared to consider the potential effects of the Proposed Development on landscape features, landscape character, the special qualities of any landscape designations, and the visual amenity of the area from multiple viewpoints including residential, transport and recreational receptors. The study area will extend to 3km from the site boundary.

The LVA is a key part of the design process for the project, as it helps to determine the optimum size, number, and layout of the solar panels to reflect the landscape of the Site and the surrounding area.

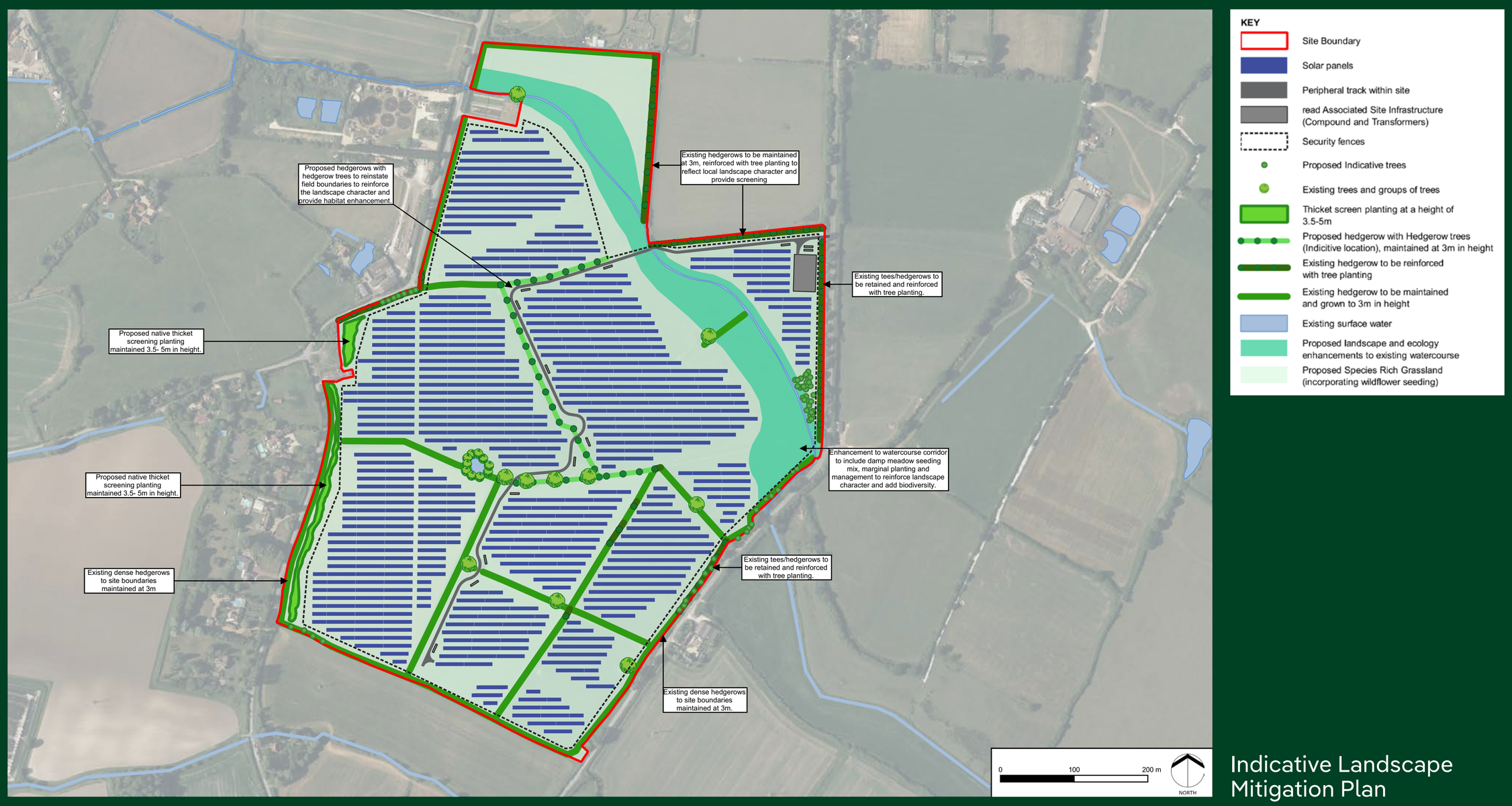
The Site does not fall within any landscape designations; the nearest landscape-designated site is the South Downs National Park which is located approx. 100m southwest of the Site. Neither the Site nor the proposed study area lies within the Green Belt.

The impact of the proposed development will be assessed from a range of viewpoints within the study area from multiple viewpoints in the locality. This will enable the visual impact of the scheme from close and distant viewpoints to be assessed to ensure the development is designed to minimise visual effects. The area of the surrounding landscape that would be theoretically visible from the site (known as the Zone of Theoretical Visibility (ZTV)) has been prepared and is available to view.

Landscape enhancement measures

The LVA will ensure that the Proposed Development seeks opportunities to repair or reintroduce landscape features such as infilling hedgerow gaps, afford protection of trees and woodland, and protect existing landscape character. Existing trees and hedgerows will be retained where possible, and a significant amount of new planting is being proposed to assist in providing visual screening, whilst also contributing to biodiversity.

A number of computer-generated images of the proposed renewable energy development have been prepared using wirelines and photomontages from the agreed viewpoints.



Indicative Landscape Mitigation Plan

Biodiversity

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A range of ecological surveys are being undertaken to assess the presence of habitats and species onsite, understand any potential impacts, and inform the biodiversity and ecological enhancements to be delivered alongside the solar project.

The Site comprises agricultural land currently used for arable farming and rough grazing. There are a number of mature trees and hedgerows onsite, as well as two ponds, several ditches and a main watercourse (Glynde Reach).

The Site is not covered by any ecological designations. There is a designated wildlife verge located at the northern edge of Neaves Lane adjacent to the Site. As access is proposed from Moor Lane, it is anticipated there will be no adverse impacts to the verge. A plan showing the known ecological and other protected designations in proximity of the proposed Oldhouse Solar Farm is located below.

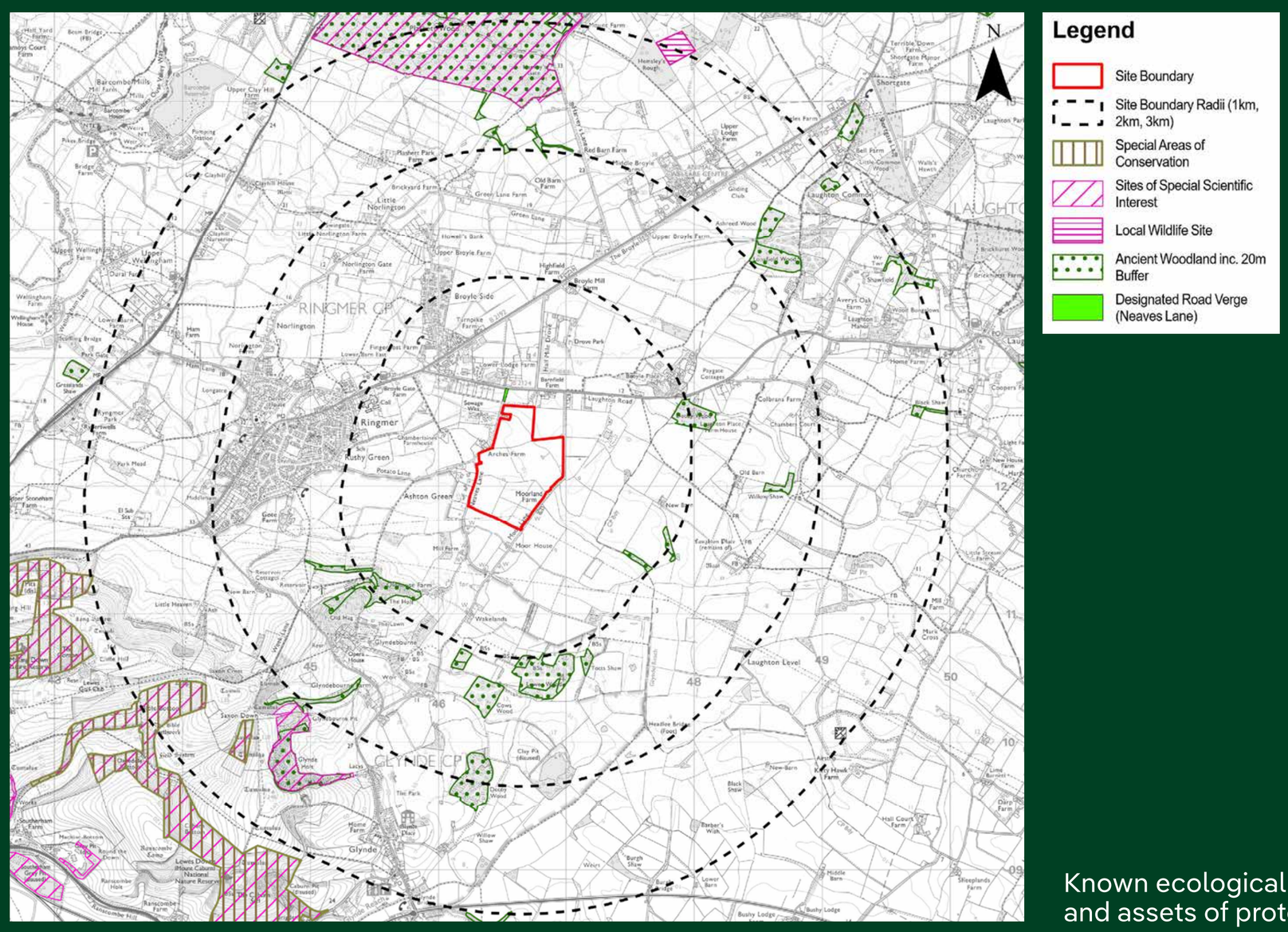
Ecological surveys have been ongoing since May 2023, and results to date have informed the design of the proposed solar farm to reduce the potential impacts on ecology and wildlife. Suitable buffers have been incorporated into the design where necessary, and species will be protected during construction and operation with a programme of mitigation measures to be agreed with Lewes District Council.

The surveys being undertaken include:

- Preliminary Ecological Assessment (Phase 1 habitat survey)
- Great crested newt surveys
- Breeding bird survey
- Aquatics survey
- Bat surveys.

Biodiversity enhancements

We are committed to providing opportunities to deliver biodiversity enhancements, including habitat improvements, and Oldhouse Solar Farm has significant potential to enhance ecological habitats and deliver a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The Site is capable of hosting a range of habitats including wildflower meadows, species-rich grassland, hedgerows, nectar-rich areas for pollinators, and woodland. We endeavour to maintain all existing hedgerow and trees where possible. A BNG Plan and Landscape Mitigation Masterplan will be included in the planning application submission.



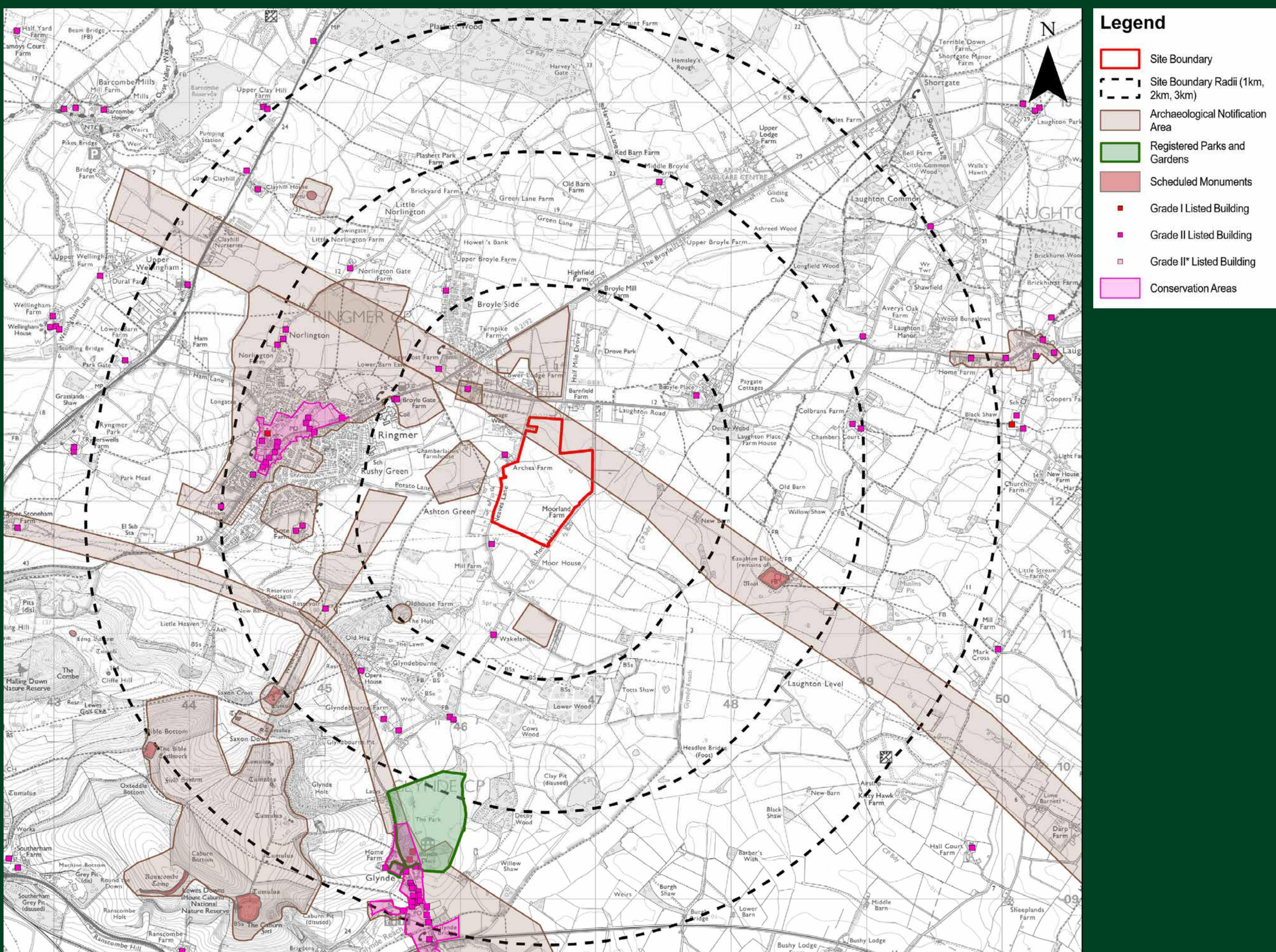
Known ecological designations and assets of protected designation

Heritage and archaeology

An assessment of the potential effects of Oldhouse Solar Farm on heritage and archaeology is currently being prepared and will inform the final design and planning application.

There are no statutory heritage assets within the Site. An Archaeological Notification Area, a local heritage designation, is present onsite due to the Roman Road, which is located on the northern part of the Site; no development is proposed on the Roman Road itself. Designated heritage assets in proximity to the Site include eight Grade II Listed Buildings located within 1km, with the nearest being 'Arches Farmhouse', located approx. 80m to the west of the Site. The 'Ringmer Conservation Area' is located 1.5km to the west. All heritage assets within the 1km study area are shown on the plan below.

Oldhouse Solar Farm is being designed to minimise impact and avoid negatively affecting any of these assets. Should the Proposed Development be granted consent, a programme of archaeological fieldwork will be agreed with Lewes District Council and its archaeological advisers before construction starts. This will ensure that heritage assets are protected, and any discoveries made during construction are recorded, and all findings published.



Heritage and archaelogical assets

Other environmental considerations

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A range of additional assessments are also being undertaken to inform the proposed Oldhouse Solar Farm including the following:

Agricultural land

An Agricultural Land Survey is being prepared to inform the design of the proposed development and accompany the application. This will confirm the quality of agricultural land located on the Site.

The overall aim is to design a layout that has the least environmental impact whilst optimising the renewable energy generation from the Site during the operational life of the project.

Glint and glare

A Glint and Glare Study is being prepared to assess the possible effects of glint and glare from the Proposed Development. The results from this will feed into the ongoing design process, which will enable the panels to be orientated to ensure that there will be no significant impacts on the identified receptors within 1km of the Site, such as road users, residential properties, and nearby aerodromes, including Kitty Hawk Farm, Ringmer Glider Field and Deanland Lewes Airfield.

Noise

A Noise Assessment is being carried out to assess the potential impact of the Proposed Development on the nearest noise-sensitive receptors, including the closest residential properties on Neaves Lane and Moor Lane. It is not anticipated that there would be any significant noise impacts associated within the proposed solar farm. Solar panels are designed to be quiet and emit little noise. The location of the substation and inverters have been carefully sited away from residential receptors to mitigate against potential noise effects and most noises impacts are likely to be during the construction phase of the development, which is temporary.

Flood Risk

The Site is primarily located in an area classed as Flood Zone 1 (low risk), with some area to the north-east classed as being Flood Zones 2 and 3 (medium and high risk). The higher risk of flooding is primarily associated within a main watercourse known as Glynde Reach, which flows north-west to south-east across the Site. No development is being proposed in this area. There is also some surface water flood risk onsite. The impact of the Proposed Development on flood risk is being assessed and will inform the final design.

Conceptual layout

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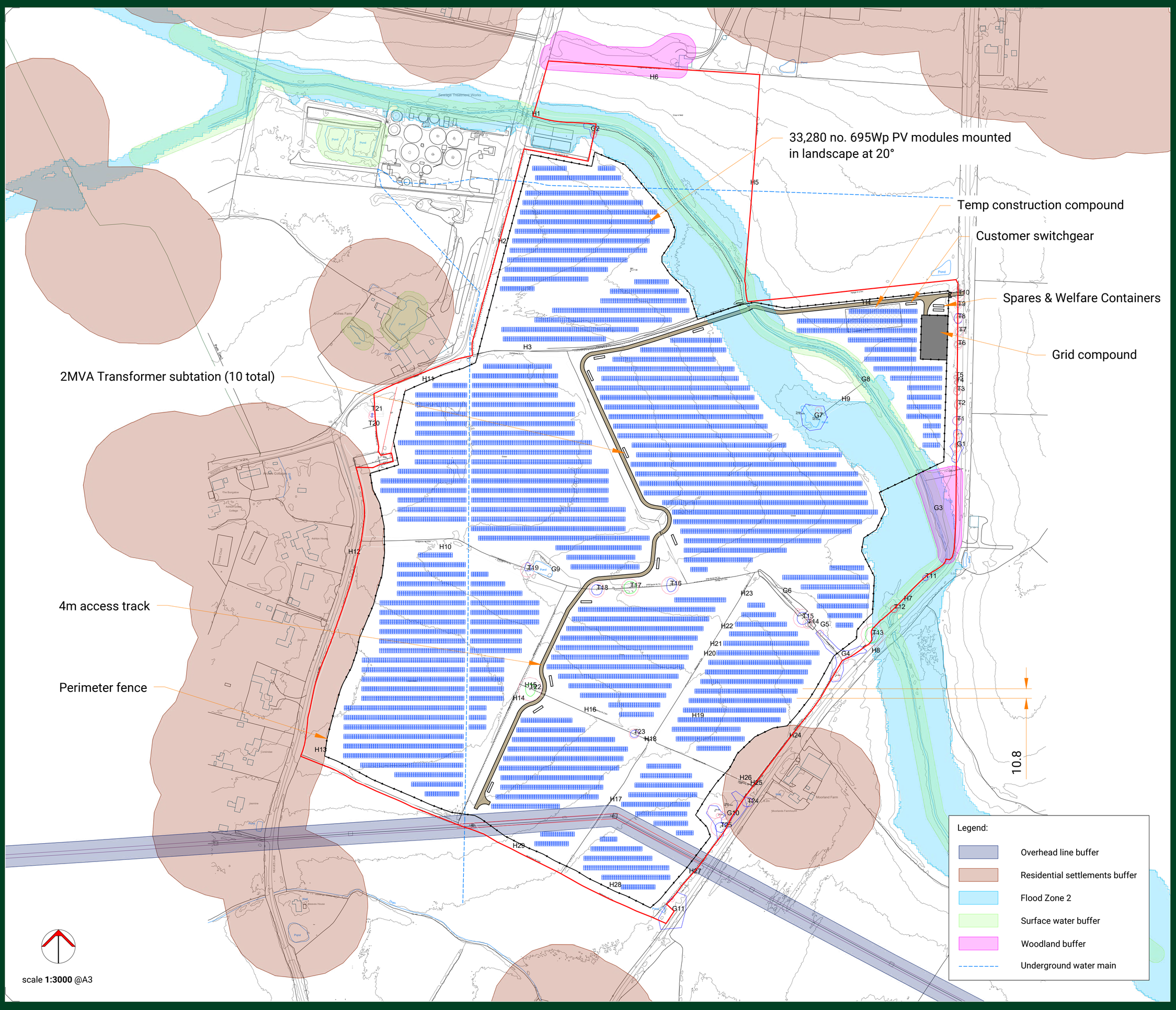
Early design and environmental considerations have informed production of the conceptual layout, displayed below.

Further input from discipline specialists, consultation feedback and assessment work will contribute to finalising a detailed design.



Conceptual layout

Community benefits

SPR has been working alongside communities across the UK and Ireland for over two decades and is committed to being a responsible developer of renewable energy and a good neighbour in the communities where we operate.

We are keen for nearby communities to share in the benefits of our projects and, to date, we have shared over £1.5 million in community benefit funding to communities surrounding our onshore windfarms in England. These communities are empowered to decide how to direct their funds towards local initiatives that best serve the needs of their community. Funds can be used to deliver a wide range of activities and we asks that these sit within one of the following categories:

- Net Zero/emission reduction
- Environmental
- Community facilities and services
- Skills and employment
- Heritage
- Community and local events
- Sport and recreation
- Youth and education.

Communities across the country have used their funding to improve energy efficiency and reduce the running costs of their community buildings by adding solar panels, insulation or by replacing inefficient windows and doors.

Funds from Lynemouth Windfarm, in Northumberland, enabled the local Parish Council to create a community garden (pictured above) on previously derelict land for use by local school children and other community members who are able to visit, enjoy and learn about Lynemouth from information boards that tell the story of the birth of this traditional mining village and its evolution towards hosting green energy generation and all the benefits it brings.

At Coldham Windfarm in Cambridgeshire, funds have been used to deliver a series of environmental activity sessions for adults and children to engage them in their local environment. Activities included pond dipping, bug hunting, animal footprint ID, wildlife-themed games, fire lighting, natural art, fossil hunting and sensory games.

The Parish Council close to Carland Cross Windfarm, in Cornwall, has supported various local sports clubs with upgrades to equipment and refurbishment of club buildings and were able to contribute towards the funding of a new Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) for their young people.

The community benefit projects above, although referring to windfarms, provide examples of potential uses of the Oldhouse Solar Farm community benefit fund. The community benefit fund would consist of a one-off payment once the solar farm is fully operational.

Next steps

We welcome your feedback on our initial proposal to help us refine the details of Oldhouse Solar Farm. You can submit feedback using the feedback forms we have available here today or via the online feedback form on our website.

We will use the findings from environmental surveys, technical studies, and consultation feedback to continue to shape the design of the Proposed Development ahead of submitting an application to Lewes District Council.

Please note that any comments made on the proposals to SPR at this stage are not representations to the planning authority. When the application for consent is subsequently submitted to the Council, statutory consultation will be undertaken. At that time, you will have the opportunity to make a formal representation on the proposal.

You can view more detailed information and ask questions via our website

www.scottishpowerrenewables.com/oldhouse-farm

These contacts can also be used for requests for any further information, submitting comments or asking questions regarding the Proposed Development at any time.

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Thank you for attending the Oldhouse Solar Farm Public Information Event.