

Dengie Solar Park consultation FAQs

November 1 2022

About BSR and the project

Who is BSR Energy?

BSR specialises in developing ground-mounted solar PV and energy storage projects, either to deliver power to the grid or to feed the demand of large energy users. We're proud to be part of the UK's green ambitions, while delivering value to the communities we work with.

We find suitable, low-grade farmland for our solar park projects, developing feasibility studies and contacting landowners.

With over a decade's development experience, we're able to see our projects through from inception to construction and beyond. We maintain and monitor our parks to ensure they continue to deliver value and efficiency.

What exactly will be built on the solar park?

The solar park will comprise ground-mounted photovoltaic solar arrays, a substation, switchgear container, inverter/transformer units, site access, internal access tracks, security measures, access gates, other ancillary infrastructure and landscaping and biodiversity enhancements.

What is the lifetime of the solar park?

It is anticipated that the solar park would have an operational life of 40 years. Our planning application would be for the 40 years of the operational lifespan of the project.

What happens after it is decommissioned?

When it's time to decommission our solar parks, we have a 'leave no trace' policy. The site can either be returned to farmland or continue to be a diverse home for wildlife.

How will you ensure the safety of the site?

The solar park will be surrounded by 2.2m high fencing in order to prevent trespassing and vandalism. There will be CCTV cameras installed across the site to monitor safety 24 hours a day.

Benefits

What are the benefits of the project?

- The project will help the UK reach its carbon net zero targets by producing renewable energy to power over 4,700 homes and save over 4,200 tonnes of CO₂ emissions per year.
- It will assist Maldon District Council to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with local and national targets, as well as supporting the Council's strategy for its declared Climate Emergency.
- It will aid the security and robustness of the local electricity supply in Maldon District.
- Ecological enhancements including wildflower and wild bird seed grasslands, and a range of breeding boxes for bats and birds are being considered as part of the application. We anticipate the solar park will demonstrate at least 60% biodiversity net gain.
- New hedgerow planting is proposed to fill in and strengthen existing hedgerows to ensure minimal visual and environmental impact.

- The solar park will connect to the National Grid via an underground cable to a point of connection in an adjacent field, removing the need for a long cable route.
- This is a temporary development (40 years), allowing the solar PV and associated infrastructure to be removed and agricultural use reinstated following decommissioning.
- No Public Rights of Way will be closed during or after construction of the solar park.

What community benefits payments/fund/initiatives are you proposing for the project?

If the project is consented, BSR Energy would create a Community Benefit Fund which will offer a total of £19,000 in grants to support local projects and benefit the local community.

We are in the process of setting up an agreement for the Community Fund with Essex Community Foundation. We are also keen that a local Asheldham and Dengie Parish Councillor becomes a representative on the fund, to ensure it is distributed to important local projects.

Will the project contribute towards offsetting electricity prices for local communities once operational?

The energy produced by the solar park will go directly into the UK's National Grid. Therefore, BSR Energy cannot govern where the energy is distributed as it is controlled by National Grid.

Will local residents impacted by the projects be able to claim discounts on our utility bills?

Not currently - electricity is purchased from suppliers and the costs are regulated by OFGEM.

How many households will the solar park power?

It would produce enough renewable energy to power approximately 4,751 homes annually in the UK.

Will local contractors be used for construction work?

When awarding contracts, we go through a competitive tender process for each part of the works. However, local and regional companies are always well placed to be awarded contracts.

Consultation

How long is the consultation process?

The consultation is live until 15 November 2022. We may take into account feedback received after this date. After the consultation closes we will finalise the project design, taking into account feedback where possible, and submit this as part of our application documents.

What happens to my feedback?

All feedback will be reported to the project team and planners. This will be included in a Statement of Community Consultation (SCI) which is submitted as part of our planning application. We will explain how and where we have taken feedback into account, and if we have been unable to, why not.

Why should I bother to fill in the feedback form as you're going to do what you want anyway - my comments won't change what you do?

Your feedback is important to us. We understand local people have a wealth of knowledge on the area and your comments may alert us to issues affecting project, such as appropriate construction

transport links. The consultation we are running has been designed to give local people a chance to have an influence on the final design of the project.

Do you need planning permission for building the project?

Yes. We will apply for planning permission to Maldon District Council.

Site selection

Where is the site?

The site is located on land off Keelings Road to the southeast of Dengie village in a large section of an existing field.

How big would the solar park be?

Our current proposals are for a 19MW solar park, covering approximately 78 acres, or 32 hectares of land.

Why do we need a solar park at Dengie?

The UK has committed to reducing its carbon emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels. The proposed solar park will deliver 19MW of electricity to the National Grid and save over 4,200 tonnes of CO₂ emissions per year. The park would produce enough renewable energy to power over 4,700 homes in the UK¹.

What is the land currently used for? What quality is the land?

The land is categorised as Grade 3B arable land, meaning it is considered of 'moderate' quality and produces moderate yields. It is currently farmed with arable crops.

Why can't you build the solar park on a brownfield site or rooftop?

The UK government has set carbon targets up until 2050 which create a need for bringing forward renewable energy project quickly. Brownfield land usually has a higher value for housing or industrial development, therefore is not always suitable for solar park projects. There is also the issue of being able to connect to the national grid on site, otherwise a substation has to be built which causes more disruption and a larger environmental and visual impact.

Rooftops must be strong enough to withstand the added weight of solar panels which restricts the rollout of panels across many buildings in the UK.

What was your site selection process?

We selected the site based on the local National Grid connection available, which removes the need for a low cable route, land quality, low human and environmental impact and the potential for creating biodiversity net gain. As a company, we do our best to avoid SSSIs and the highest quality land.

Construction/Traffic

When will construction take place?

¹ Based on an annual average domestic consumption per household (Great Britain) of 3,799 kWh. Source BEIS, Regional and Local authority electricity consumption statics 2018.

If the project is consented, construction will take place in 2023.

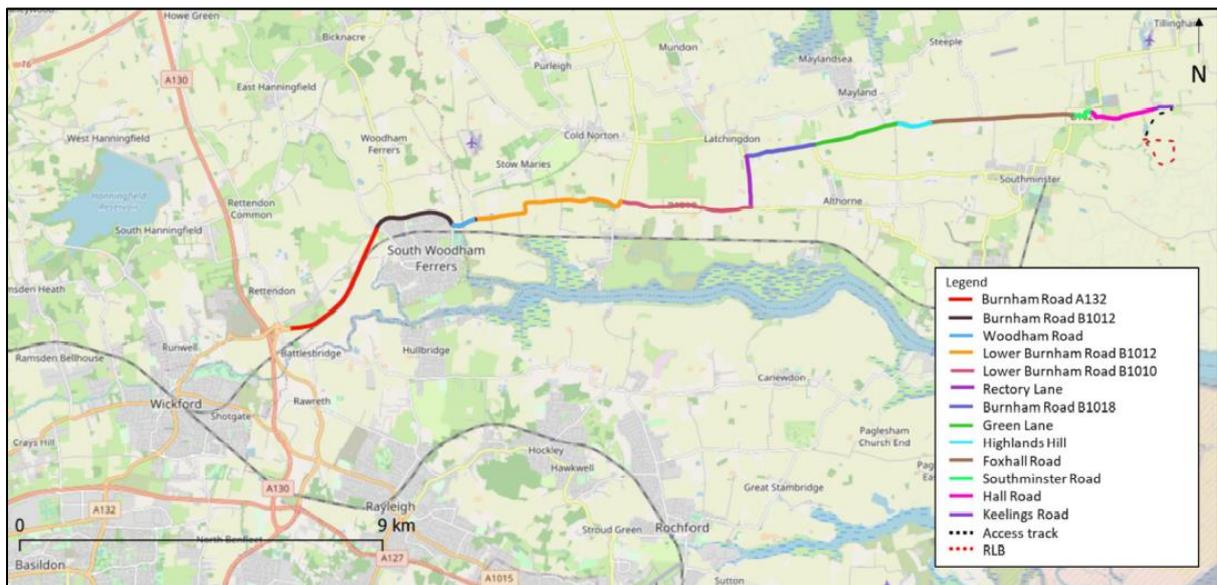
How long will construction take?

Construction should last approximately six months.

How will you access the site?

Access to the site is from an existing track from Keelings Road to the north of the site. Keelings Road is a rural single carriageway running in an east-west direction, connecting to Hall Road to the west and to Bridgewick Road to the east.

What is the proposed construction route?



Refer to above map for proposed construction route.

What are the impacts of construction/operation on local highways?

The construction phase is likely to last for approximately 6 months. At its peak there would be an average of around 9 HGVs to the site each day. Once operational, the solar park will encounter low traffic levels with an anticipated one or two visits per month for maintenance and inspection purposes.

When will the solar farm be operational?

After construction in 2023.

How have you taken into account access roads for construction vehicles?

A Highway Statement and Construction Traffic Management Plan were produced in May 2022 (and will be submitted alongside the application). We have considered the feasibility of access for construction vehicles taking into account other developments and road movements in the area. Road size was taken into account.

Visual/environmental impact

How will the solar park be screened?

The solar park will be surrounded by a 2.2m fence that will be screened by hedgerows to create minimum visual impact. Existing hedgerows will be reinforced and gaps filled. New planting would supplement any existing vegetation already present.

Will the solar park increase flood risk?

The risk of flooding is categorised as very low as the area is fortified with flood defences. We have undertaken a Drainage Strategy which confirms the development will not give rise to increased on-site drainage or surface run-off issues once constructed. However, some drainage features will still be required to promote infiltration across the site. The drainage details are included within our Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, which will be submitted alongside the application.

Will there be noise generated from the solar park?

A Noise Impact Assessment has been carried out, with the report concluding there would be no adverse impact with regards to noise levels. The Report summarises that whilst the predicted levels from the development are initially shown to exceed the background levels (in accordance with BS 4142:2014), it should be noted that this is more indicative of the particularly low background levels in the area rather than any substantial noise output from the site.

What environmental surveys have you carried out?

A number of surveys have been carried out. These include a Landscape and Visual Appraisal, Heritage Assessment, Flood Risk Assessment and Outline Drainage Strategy, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Agricultural Land Classification. These have informed the site selection and layout. The proposed project design has been informed by the site's opportunities and constraints.

How will this impact animals that currently use the land e.g. birds, deer?

The fencing panels will provide access for animals along their foraging routes. We plan to create a biodiversity net gain of at least 60% on the site, which will benefit local wildlife.

What if the solar park catches fire?

This has never been an issue at any of our other sites. UK standard health and safety regulations will be followed at all times to ensure the safety of the site.