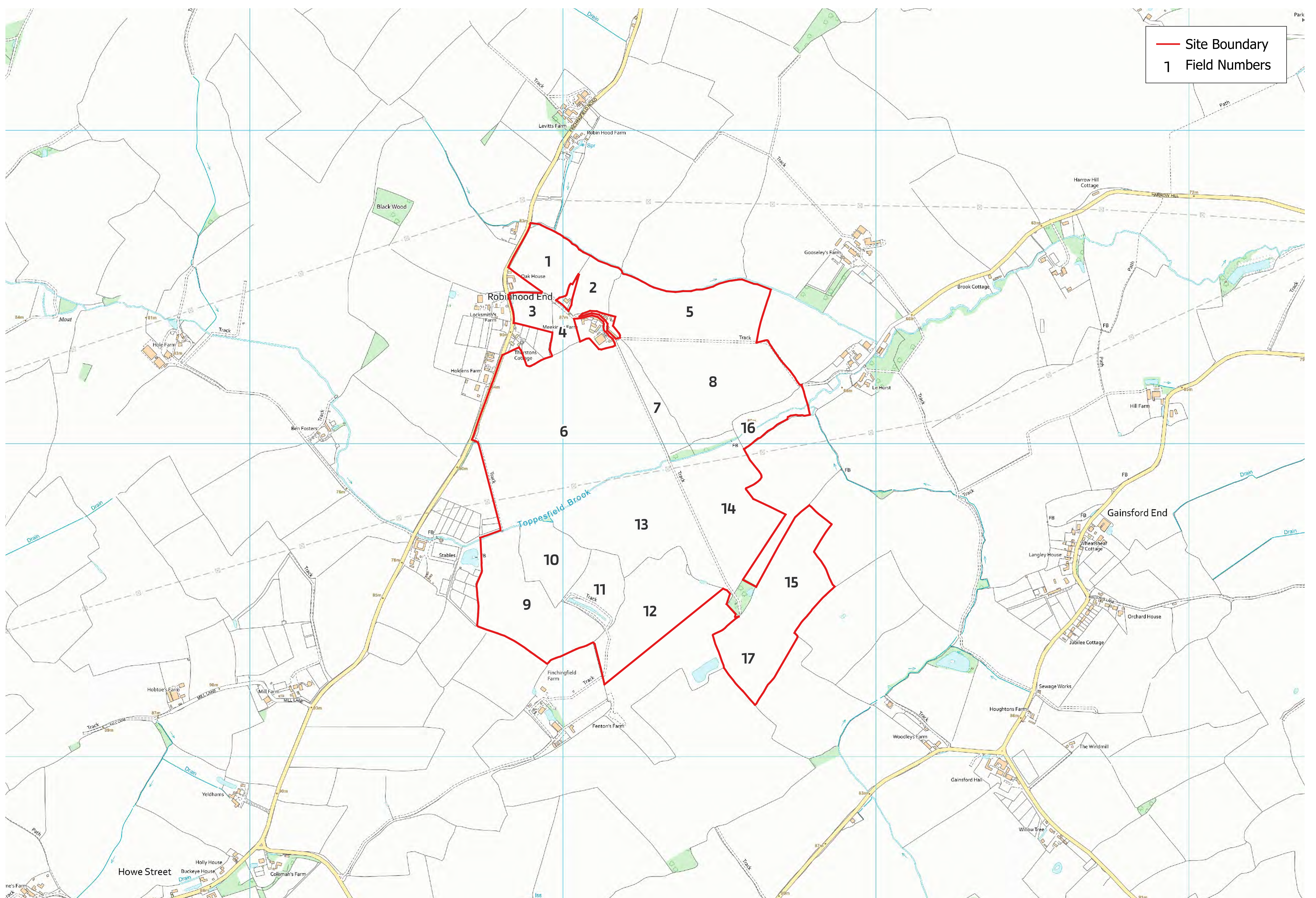




Robin Hood Solar Farm



Qualitas Energy is proposing to develop Robin Hood Solar Farm, a c.60MW (AC) fixed panel solar farm on a site near Robin Hood End, northwest of the town of Braintree in Essex.

The project would generate enough clean, renewable energy to the national grid to power the electricity use of around 16,200 homes, which is the equivalent of 87% of the homes in the town of Braintree.

The site covers approximately 112 hectares or 276 acres and is located across several field parcels in a rural, farmed landscape. The Site lies approximately 3.1 km north east of Finchingfield, 5.5 km south west of Great Yeldham and 11 km north west of Braintree.



About Qualitas Energy

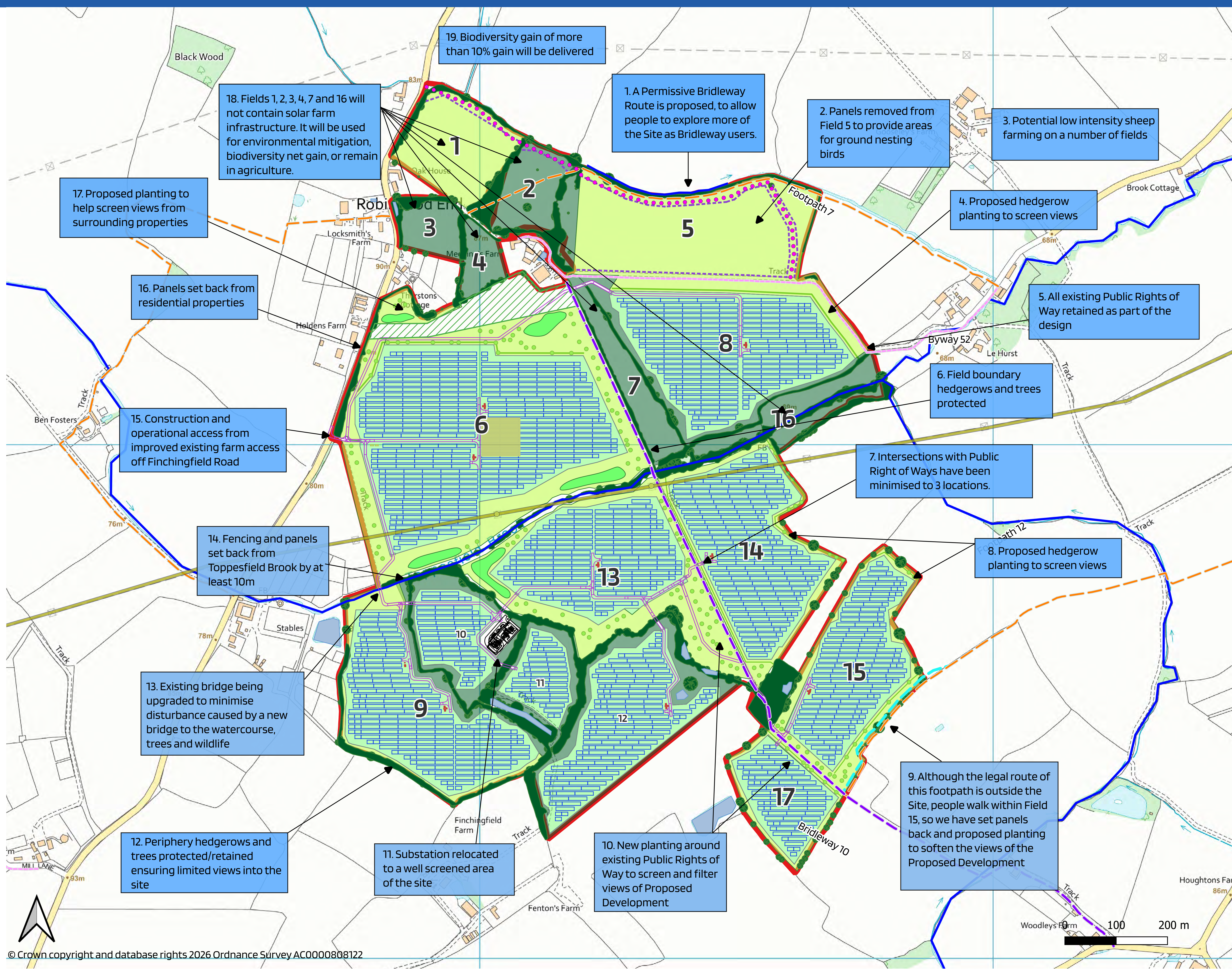
Qualitas Energy's business in the United Kingdom specialises in the acquisition, financing, project development, construction, and operation of renewable energy projects, with a mission to drive the transition towards decarbonisation. We operate in three strategic locations in the United Kingdom: London, Bristol, and Edinburgh.

Qualitas Energy is committed to accelerating the energy transition in the UK. Everything that we do, we do it believing in our purpose which is to enable a more sustainable and greener future for the generations to come.

Qualitas Energy is delivering a substantial portfolio of UK renewable energy schemes. It is currently constructing its first UK solar farm near Melton Mowbray (50MW) and is actively progressing six solar farm planning projects around the country together with onshore wind projects and a biomethane gas generating business with two operational plants and three consented plants being progressed into development.

We are committed to building a strong relationship with the community near the Robin Hood Solar Farm site and we are determined to be good neighbours.

The proposals



Legend

- Site Boundary

PV Modules

Temporary Construction Compound

Fence Lines

132kV Substation Compound

Transformer and Inverter stations

Spare Parts Containers

Post and Rail Fence

Internal Access Tracks

Footpath

Bridleway

Byway Open to All Traffic

Footpath - Walked Route

Proposed Permissive Bridleway

132kV Overhead Lines

132kV Towers on site

Waterbodies

Existing Watercourses

Existing Hedges, Trees and Woodland

Existing Grassland to be retained

Proposed Species Rich Grassland

Proposed Meadow Grassland

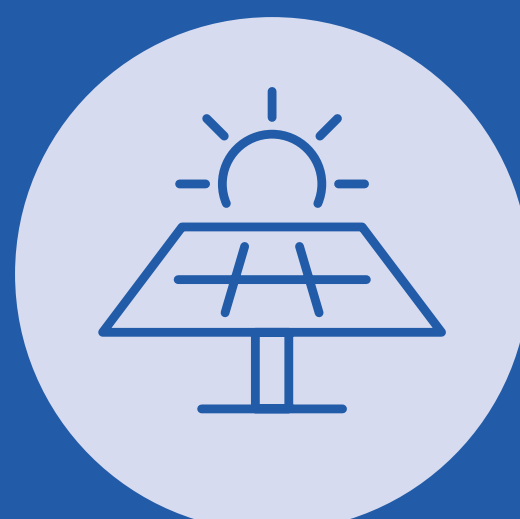
Proposed Trees

Proposed Woodland Structure Planting

Proposed Hedges

Area to be retained for ongoing farm management purposes

The site is located across 17 field parcels on a site near Robin Hood End, northwest of the town of Braintree in Essex. The proposals comprise:



A solar farm producing up to c.60MW (AC) of renewable electricity



Onsite grid connection to an overhead 132kV line via an existing pylon



Environmental enhancements including significant benefits for wildlife

We continue to engage with Braintree District Council in relation to planning and EIA matters, Essex County Council in relation to highways, Public Rights of Way and archaeology, the British Horse Society and Essex Bridleways Association in relation to the Public Rights of

Way on site, the potential for permissive routes and how to ensure safety of those using the local roads. We have also been engaging with the local community, parish councils and elected members since end of May 2026.

Feature	Description
Solar Panels & Frames	Pile-driven steel frames (no concrete foundations), panels up to approximately 3m high with 0.8m ground clearance to facilitate low-intensity sheep grazing. Located across 10 fields (approximately 54% of the site area).
Inverters & Transformers	Centralised inverters have been selected as they are quieter than string inverters and can be located away from dwellings. Inverters are 2.2m high and transformers up to 3m high.
Substation	Maximum height of the components within this are 6m, with two control rooms up to 3.4m high. Communications tower up to 15m high. Perimeter security fencing will be provided around the substation.
Security	2.4m-high deer-proof fencing around the solar arrays and inward-facing CCTV cameras.

Feature	Description
Lighting	No lighting is proposed during operation.
Site Access	Construction and operational access from Finchingfield Road.
Surface Water Drainage	Sustainable drainage measures, including swales where appropriate are currently being designed.
Landscaping, Biodiversity and Agriculture	Significant landscaping and habitat enhancement, including native woodland, meadow grassland, species-rich grassland and new native hedgerows. Some livestock grazing may continue. Area extends to 7 fields, some 46% of the site.
Public Rights of Way	All existing Public Rights of Way to be retained within wide planted areas, with a proposed new permissive bridleway through Fields 1, 2 and 5.

Why has this site been chosen?



This site has been selected for several key reasons:



It benefits from existing grid infrastructure, including pylons and power lines, with confirmed spare capacity to accommodate the full output of the proposed solar project. Using existing grid infrastructure is efficient, less disruptive to local communities, more sustainable than building new grid transmission infrastructure and, overall, helps control the costs of electricity to the customer.



Planning and environmental feasibility work indicate it's likely to be an appropriate site, with impacts capable of being appropriately mitigated.



Sufficient land available to accommodate the scale of infrastructure needed to meet the spare capacity on the local grid network, and delivery of farm diversification benefits.



- ✓ The Site is bordered by well established, mature hedgerows and trees limiting views into the fields
- ✓ The Site is not within a designated or protected landscape
- ✓ The Site is not a protected wildlife site
- ✓ The Site offers significant opportunities to provide additional planting and improved habitats
- ✓ The Site does not contain any designated historic assets, with minimal archaeology present
- ✓ The Site is not at risk of flooding
- ✓ The Site is Grade 3a agricultural land, the lowest of the Best and Most Versatile categories
- ✓ The Site can continue to be used for livestock grazing (low intensity sheep grazing)

- ✓ The Site offers opportunities to deliver additional walking, equestrian and cycling routes
- ✓ The Site offers a farm diversification opportunity at a time when managing viable farming businesses is increasingly challenging
- ✓ The Site is sufficiently far from local homes to ensure it will not be audible
- ✓ The Site offers a safe access point for construction and operational traffic
- ✓ Construction traffic routing and management measures will ensure users of the local road network will be kept safe

Environmental considerations



Wildlife

As for any site in a rural location, there is the potential for protected species to be present. We have undertaken an extensive and robust programme of ecological surveys to understand the wildlife that is living within and using the site. Our design reflects the findings of these by:

- Providing a large open area (Field 5) for ground nesting birds such as sky larks.
- Providing a 10m offset between new infrastructure and watercourses. The single exception to this is where an existing bridge will be upgraded for access purposes. No new works within the watercourse will be required, thereby minimising watercourse/wildlife impacts.
- Providing 10m buffers around ponds. We will apply to Natural England's District Level Licensing scheme for Great Crested Newts, to offset any impact on these.
- Minimising hedgerow loss and retaining trees.
- Providing buffers around tree root protection areas and using existing tracks and sensitive construction methods.
- We will include mammal gates in the fencing around our solar array areas for small mammals to pass through.
- Planting meadow seed to increase the biodiversity on the site, which in turn will support insects and the animals which use them as a food source.
- Planting new hedgerows and trees, providing more habitat within the site.
- Our construction work will be undertaken in accordance with a construction environmental management plan (CEMP) which will set out the working practices on site which must be adhered to.

Robin Hood Solar Farm represents an opportunity to deliver significant ecological and biodiversity enhancements. The proposals will deliver **at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain** (BNG), in accordance with national requirements. Typically, solar farms deliver well in excess of this and we expect this to be the case for Robin Hood Solar Farm.¹



Landscape and visual effects

The site is generally well screened and enclosed from public viewpoints by existing mature planting, any gaps in which will be filled.

We are undertaking detailed assessment of the landscape and visual effects stemming from the proposals, and are identifying key locations from which photographs will be taken to demonstrate the effects of the proposed solar farm. We will include computer generated images to demonstrate how the proposal will look from certain viewpoints.

In our design we have:

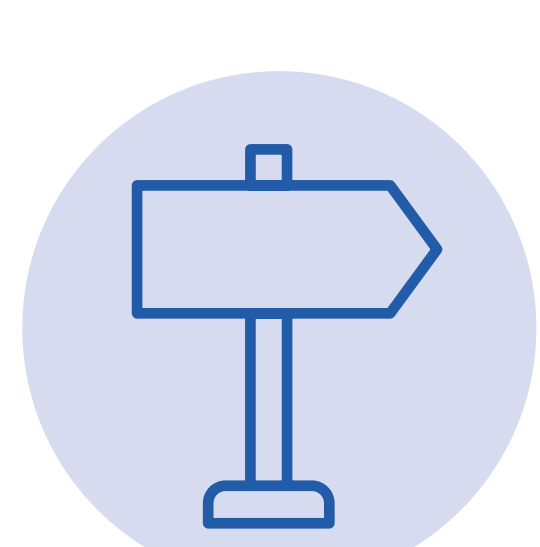
- Offset the solar panel areas from surrounding residential receptors.
- We are creating a landscaping strategy to screen the proposal from public viewpoints and private viewpoints as much as possible.
- Provided offsets from public rights of way and are including planting around these to create attractive, biodiverse areas and reduce the visual effects of the proposals whilst ensuring views of open countryside are retained where possible.
- Located the substation in a well screened area of the site, not close to any Public Rights of Way or residents.



Heritage and archaeology

There are several listed buildings in the vicinity of the project including Thurstons Farmhouse, Locksmiths Farmhouse, Brook House, Robin Hood Farmhouse and Barn, Meekings Farmhouse and Le Hurst Farmhouse and Barn. Assessment of these has concluded that setting effects can be suitably mitigated through locating panels away from these and screening through existing hedgerows or planting new ones.

We have undertaken a geophysical survey to help identify any archaeology on the site. Preliminary results indicate little archaeology is present. There are potential archaeological artefacts beneath the ground associated with a plague pit in field 15, and we are discussing the approach to construction in this area with ECC. It is currently proposed to use 'concrete shoe' foundations, which are concrete blocks which sit on the ground thereby not disturbing the underlying archaeology. They are non-intrusive and can be easily removed at the end of the operational period.



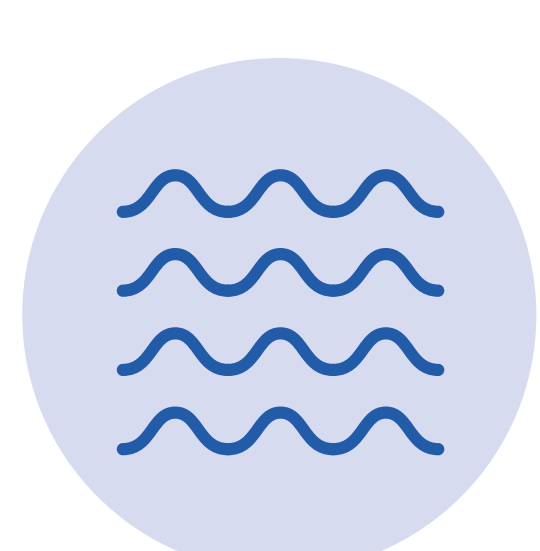
Public Rights of Way

There are four Public Rights of Way (PROW) which cross the site including Bridleway 10, which runs on a north to south alignment through the approximate centre of the Site. Byway 52 and Footpath 7 both run east to west within the northernmost parts of the Site. Footpath 12 runs along the boundary of Field 15. We will retain these and have minimised our crossing points with them through sensitive design of internal access tracks.

In addition, our solar panel areas are offset from the Public Rights of Way and we have included planting in the areas around these to create attractive, biodiverse areas and reduce the visual effects of solar array areas.

We are also proposing a permissive Bridleway Route in fields 1, 2 and 5.

Users of the PROW will be protected from construction impacts through measures set out in a Construction Traffic Management Plan which must be adhered to, and we are engaging with Essex County Council, British Horse Society, Essex Bridleway Association and the local community to ensure we get this right.



Flood Risk

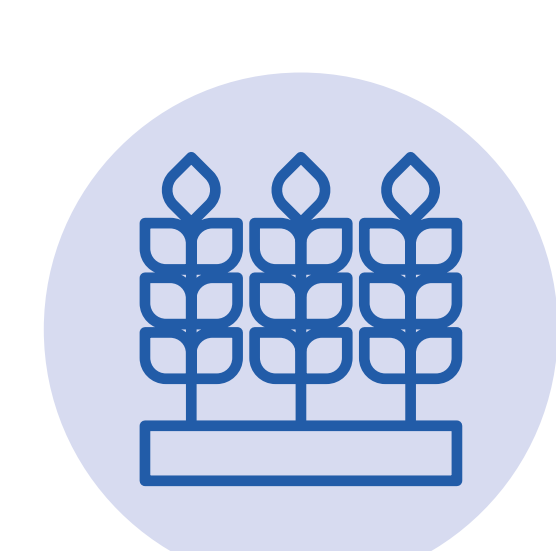
The site is almost wholly Flood Zone 1 (lowest risk), apart from a narrow band of flood zone 2 and 3 which follows the Toppesfield Brook which runs on an east-west alignment through the site. The design ensures that no panels, fencing or ancillary equipment are within flood zones 2 or 3, other than an improvement of an existing access bridge.

Solar panels are mounted on frames which are driven into the ground on thin piles, which means that the infiltration of rainwater into the ground will continue. Where hardstanding bases are required (such as for the substation), bespoke drainage designs are being prepared to ensure that surface water will be managed appropriately.

As part of our planning application for Robin Hood Solar Farm, we will be preparing a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy to evidence there will be no net increase in flood risk as a result of our proposals.

¹Solar Energy UK (2025). Solar Habitat 2025: Ecological trends on solar farms in the UK, accessed via: <https://solarenergyuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/SEUK-Solar-Habitat-2025-3.pdf>

Environmental considerations



Agricultural land classification and use

The proposals are on agricultural land which is primarily used for growing wheat & barley for livestock feed. A site specific survey has been undertaken which classifies the site as predominantly Grade 3a agricultural land, save for a small area of Grade 3b in the western part of the site. Grade 3a is classed as 'best and most versatile' agricultural land, but is of lower quality than grade 1 and 2. Our site-specific survey is more accurate than the Government's high level mapping which is not intended to be used at field scale.

Should development consent be granted, our proposals are to have low intensity sheep grazing beneath the panels to help manage and maintain the grassland. As such, the scheme will support the viability of the current farming enterprise and will not be lost to agricultural use.

Solar farms also support the long-term viability of agricultural land by giving time for intensely cultivated land to 'rest' and recover soil nutrients.

Solar farms play an important role in supporting the continued food supply in the UK, primarily through addressing climate change which is one of the biggest threats to food security.² Government climate modelling suggests that under a medium emissions scenario, climate change could reduce the proportion of Best and Most Versatile agricultural land from its current baseline of 38.1% to 11.4% by 2050, a 70% reduction.

The use of this land for solar to help tackle climate change therefore supports and protects the UK's food security, rather than harming it.³ Even with a significant expansion of solar to meet the UK's future clean energy targets, less than 1% of the UK's land area would be required for ground-mounted solar. Parliamentary evidence suggests that around 0.5–0.7% of UK land would be needed to deliver around 70 GW of solar capacity.⁴



Glint and glare

As a solar farm there is potential for glint and glare effects. Our project team are preparing assessments of the project to identify any effects which may arise from glint and glare from the panels. Due to the limited visibility from highways and nearby residential properties and existing mature hedgerows, glint and glare effects from the development are not considered likely to occur.



Noise

Our project team have undertaken surveys and assessments relating to baseline noise in the area around the Robin Hood Solar Farm. We have selected a location for the substation away from residential properties and have chosen centralised inverters (quieter than string inverters), which are also positioned away from the surrounding residential properties.

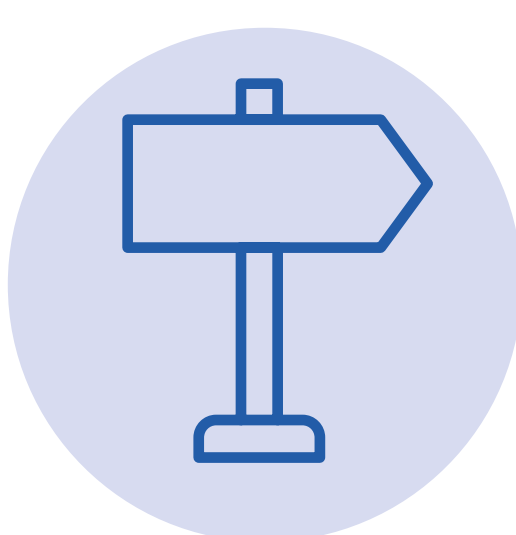
² Met Office (2023), Food security under pressure from climate change, citing the UK Food Security Report 2021: Food security under pressure from climate change - Met Office

³ UK Food Security Report 2021. Available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/united-kingdom-food-security-report-2021>

⁴ Energy Trends: December 2024, special feature article - Land utilised by solar PV - September 2024 - GOV.UK



Public Rights of Way



Public Rights of Way within the site

There are four Public Rights of Way (PRoW) within the site. Access to these PROW will remain open and unimpeded throughout the construction, operational and decommissioning periods. The entrance points to the PRoW and permissive routes will be unobstructed. Fencing will be erected around elements of the site to protect users of the PRoW and permissive routes.

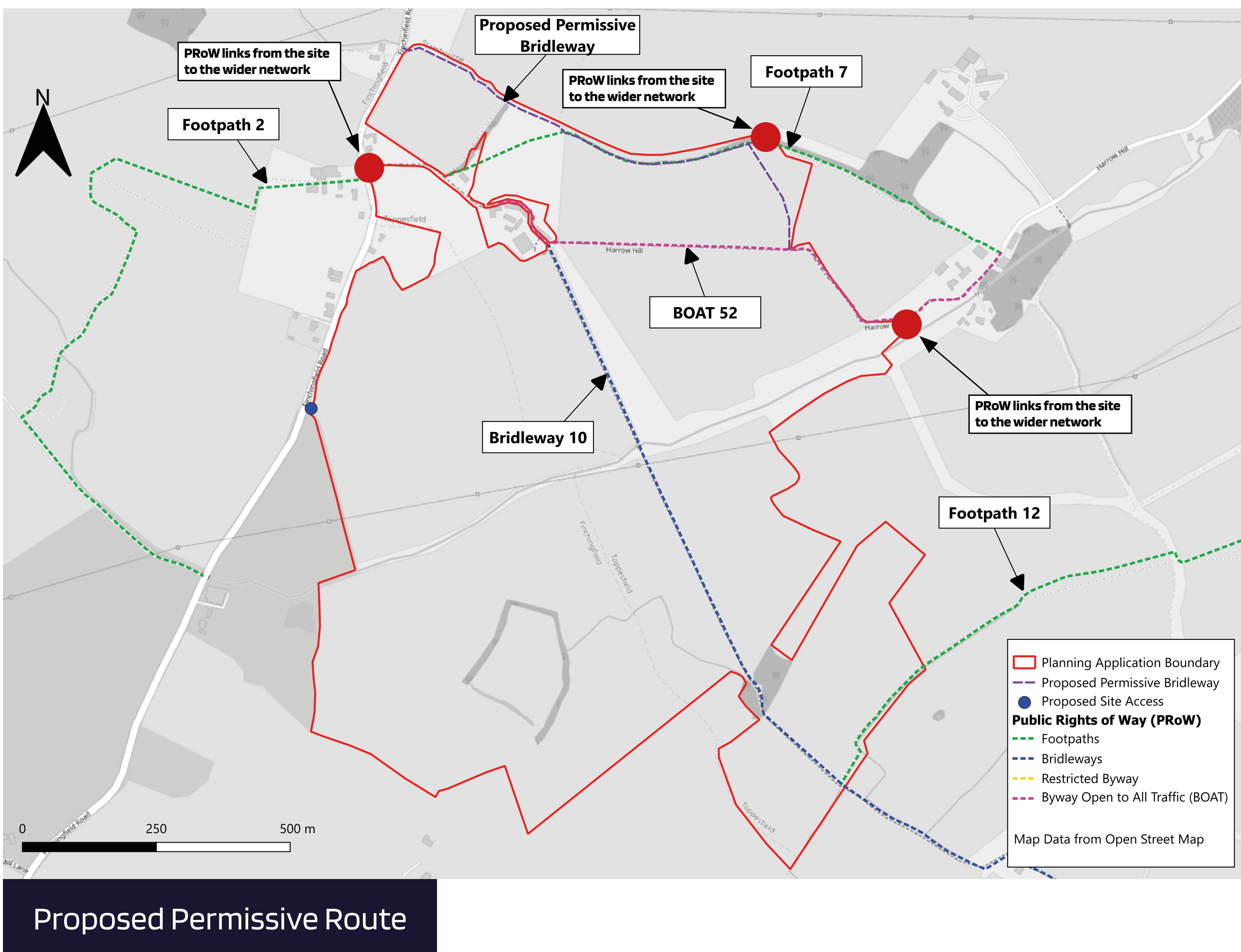
We have designed the project to provide wide buffers from the PRoW on the site, which will be planted with native hedgerows, scattered trees and wildflowers to create attractive areas. The buffers range in width across the site, and are set out below:

- Field 8** – Byway 52 – minimum 25m from the edge of the PRoW to the proposed deer fence
- Field 6** – Bridleway 10 – minimum 30m from the edge of the PRoW to the proposed deer fence
- Field 13** – Bridleway 10 – minimum 12.5m from the edge of the PRoW to the proposed deer fence
- Field 14** – Bridleway 10 – minimum 12.5m from the edge of the PRoW to the proposed deer fence (between Fields 13 and 14, the minimum distance is 25m between the two proposed fencelines)
- Field 15** – Bridleway 10 – minimum 17m from the edge of the PRoW to the proposed deer fence
- Field 17** – Bridleway 10 – minimum 13m from the edge of the PRoW to the proposed deer fence (between Fields 15 and 17 the minimum distance is 30m between the two proposed fencelines)
- Field 15** – walked route of Footpath 12 – minimum 20m from the edge of the route to the proposed deer fence.

During construction banksmen will be located at all intersection points between a PRoW or permissive route and access tracks; construction vehicles will stop on the access track in advance of the PRoW or permissive route and will wait for the banksman to check the PRoW or permissive route is clear of PRoW or permissive route users before proceeding along the access track. The banksman will provide priority to users of the PRoW or permissive route at all times and hold any construction vehicles to ensure the safe passage of users in the event they encounter one another.

Keeping Users Safe during Construction

The construction period is anticipated to last for 15-18 months. A temporary construction compound is proposed in the approximate centre of field 6, which is away from the PRoW on site.



During construction banksmen will be located at all intersection points between a PRoW or permissive route and access tracks; construction vehicles will stop on the access track in advance of the PRoW or permissive route and will wait for the banksman to check the PRoW or permissive route is clear of PRoW or permissive route users before proceeding along the access track. The banksman will provide priority to users of the PRoW or permissive route at all times and hold any construction vehicles to ensure the safe passage of users in the event they encounter one another.

Construction vehicles routeing through the site will be limited to a 10mph speed limit to assist with intervisibility and management between construction vehicles, PRoW and permissive route users, and banksmen.

Appropriate signage would be located along PRoW and permissive routes and access tracks to make PRoW users, permissive route users and drivers of construction vehicles aware of the intersection of the PRoW and permissive route and access track. These signs will also be used during the operational phase.

Informational signage will also advise of details of works being undertaken, dates and hours / days construction is being undertaken and contact details for the site manager.

The Principal Contractor would maintain contact with interested organisations to keep them up to date with the construction works and to maintain good communication.

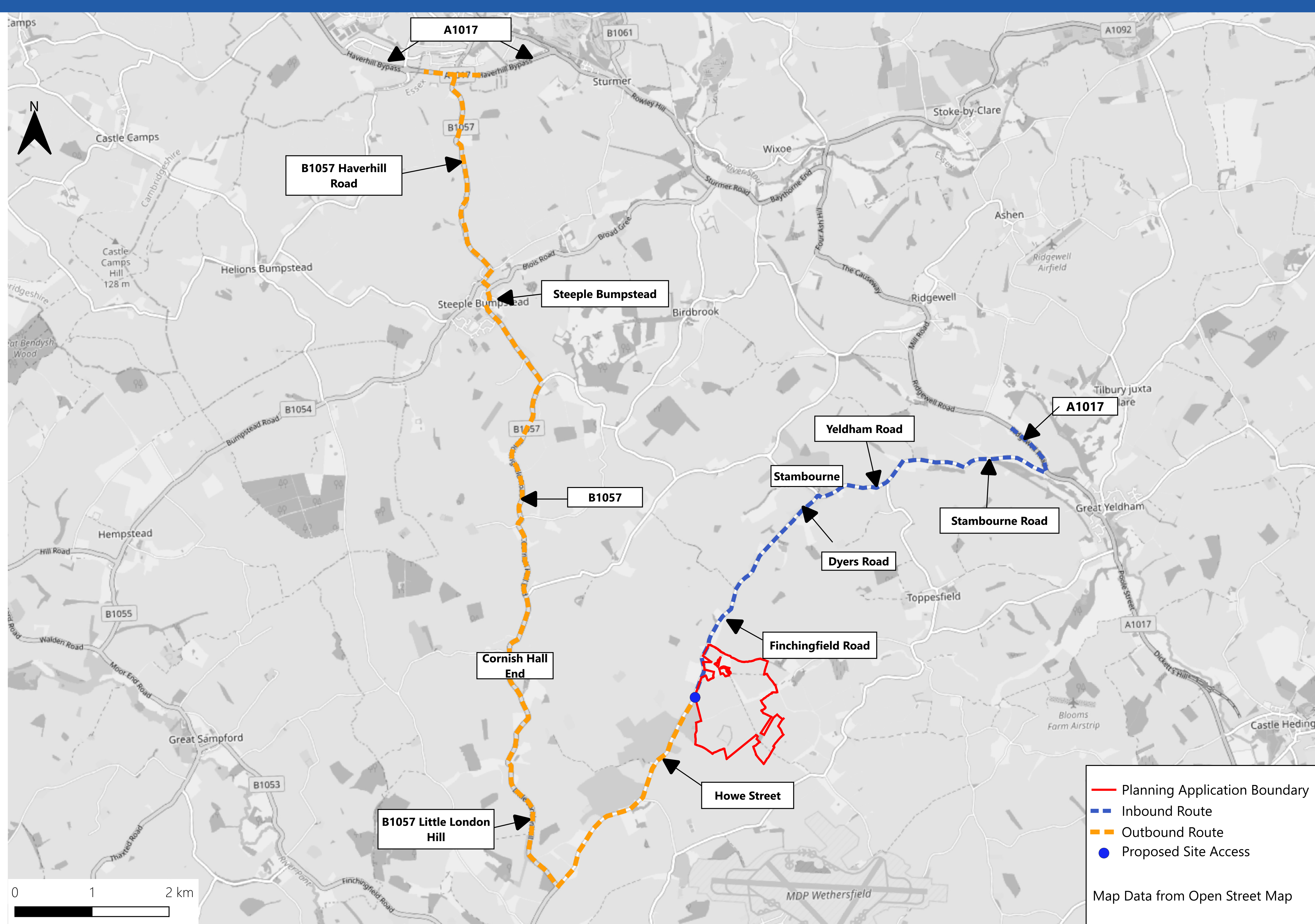


Proposed permissive routes

We are proposing a permissive bridleway route within the site, in fields 1, 2 and 5. This will provide users of the site with an opportunity to use more of the site and, if coming from the north, turn off the road sooner than using the current farm track.



Construction route and traffic



We are proposing to route the construction traffic on a one-way arrival and departure system whereby arrivals would be from the north-east from the A1017 via Stambourne with departures to the west to the A1017 at Haverhill via Howe Street, Cornish Hall End and Steeple Bumpstead.

Access

We are proposing to upgrade an existing field gate, providing a new access junction for the Robin Hood Solar Farm directly onto Finchingfield Road.

Construction traffic

As the designs have progressed, we have undertaken more detailed assessment in relation to construction traffic. Construction traffic will vary throughout the construction phase, with more activity considered likely in the earlier months as the site is set up ready to receive the solar panels, and then at the end of the construction period as the landscaping is undertaken. The overall construction period is likely to last between 15-18 months. Peak construction traffic is expected to involve up to 10 HGV deliveries a day (which is 20 movements overall as each vehicle will arrive (one movement) and then depart (second movement)). The peak construction period is expected to last for approximately 2-3 months. After this, HGV traffic is expected to be approximately 4 HGVs per day (8 movements).

The peak number of staff coming to the Site during construction during construction activity is around 70, however workplace travel planning is expected to reduce staff vehicle trips by at least half (approximately 35 vehicles in and 35 out on a daily basis. The traffic volumes for the decommissioning phase will be similar in volume and nature to construction traffic. The Site will require a transformer delivery – which will be delivered as a single abnormal indivisible load.

The construction management measures have been informed by initial discussions with Essex County Council and the British Horse Society. We will continue to liaise with these organisations, and others, about the proposals.

We are also taking measures to protect users of the PRow within the site and those using the roads around the site.

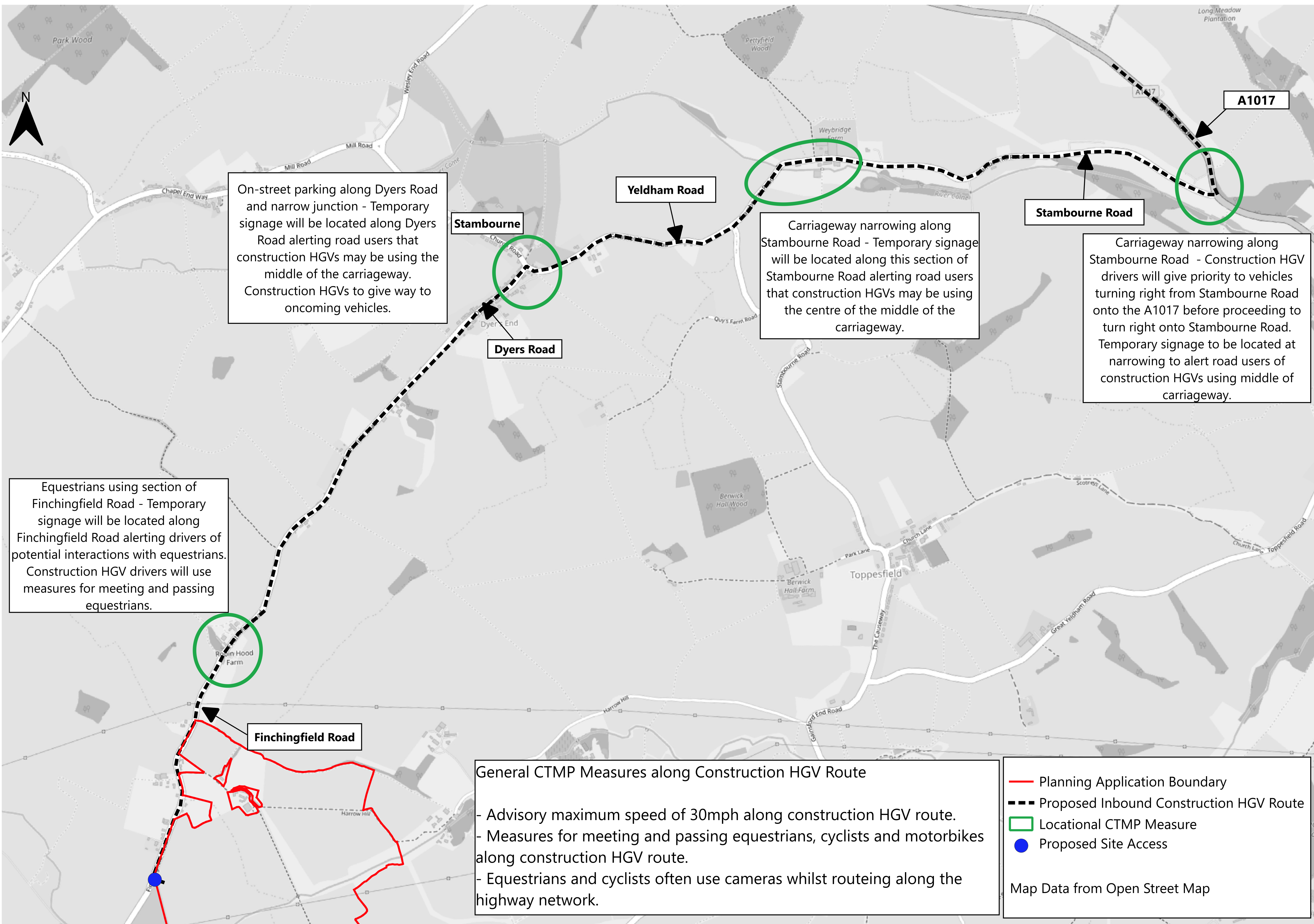
Proposed construction vehicle measures

- Construction vehicles must slow safely to a stop when encountering an oncoming equestrian in the public road and allow it / them to pass before continuing. If it is not safe to stop, the construction vehicle should safely slow to walking speed and pass leaving a minimum separation of 2m.
- If a construction vehicle approaches an equestrian travelling in the public road in the same direction of travel, the construction vehicle should not overtake and should safely reduce its speed to walking speed and follow behind the equestrian leaving adequate separation. If the equestrian rider signals the construction vehicle to pass, then it should do so at walking speed and pass leaving a minimum separation of 2m.
- If a construction vehicle encounters an equestrian at the side of the road waiting to cross or join the public road, the construction vehicle should safely reduce its speed to walking speed and pass leaving a minimum separation of 2m.
- Signage will be located along Finchingfield Road, and any other roads we are made aware of that should be included, to remind drivers of the construction vehicles of the potential interactions with equestrian users and the CTMP measures listed above that they must adhere to.
- Any reports of deviation from the above measures will be investigated by the Principal Contractor and repeat offences will lead to relevant parties being removed from site and the contractor / supplier will be provided with a warning.

Construction route and traffic

Construction traffic management measures

We have carefully considered the traffic management measures that would be required to facilitate safe and suitable access to and from the site, which can be achieved by all construction vehicles.

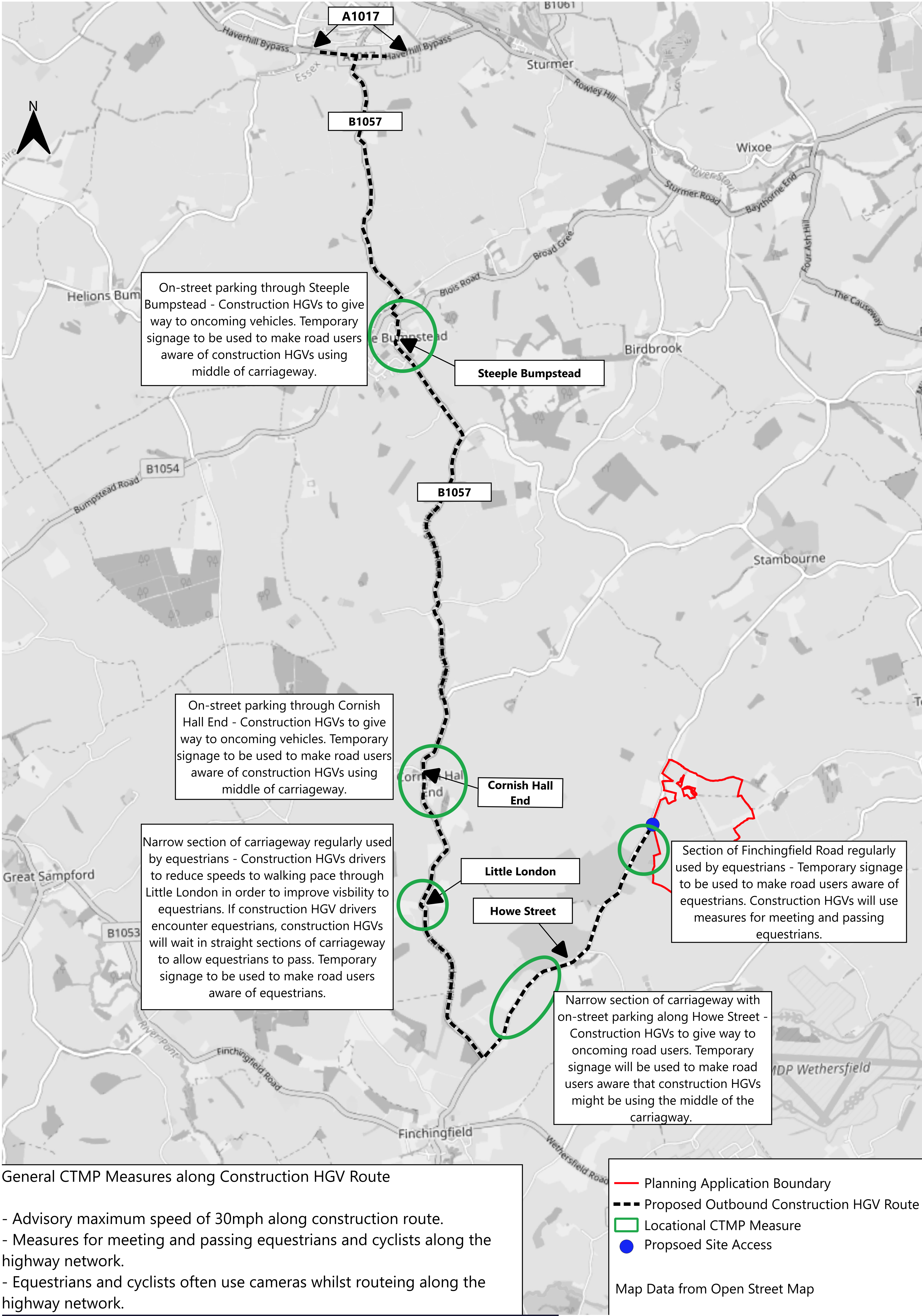


CTMP Management Measures along Proposed Inbound Construction HGV Route

Operational and decommissioning traffic

During the operational period of Robin Hood Solar Farm, approximately 3-4 light goods vehicles are expected per month.

After the 40 year operational period, the project will be decommissioned. The traffic associated with this will be similar in terms of the number of vehicles and types of vehicles as the construction traffic.



CTMP Management Measures along outbound Construction HGV Route

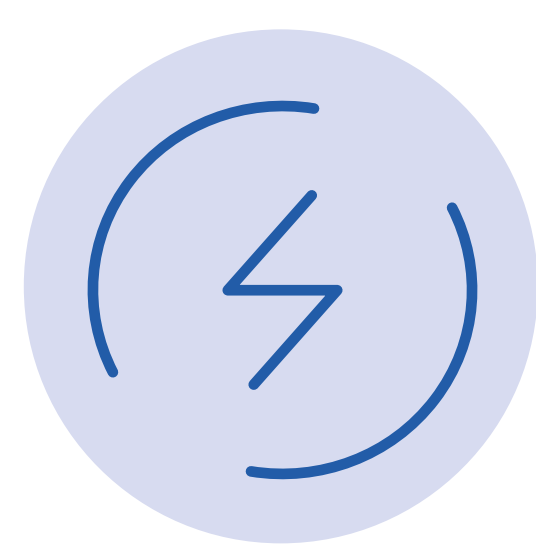
Key benefits

The Robin Hood Solar Farm project will help to secure the UK's energy, assist in addressing the climate emergency and provide community benefits to the local area.



Powering homes

The project would generate enough clean, renewable energy to the national grid to power the electricity use of around 16,200 homes, which is the equivalent of 87% of the homes in the town of Braintree.



Energy security and lower bills

The proposals will deliver a secure supply of clean energy, thereby helping to provide energy security to the UK. The development of clean energy in the UK will enable the shift away from fossil fuels, which are exposed to volatile price changes in the international oil and gas markets. Solar farms create energy that is not subject to finite limits, as is the case for oil and gas. Transitioning to this form of energy generation (and other renewable sources) gives much greater certainty for the long-term future of energy supply to the UK, and helps reduce energy prices in our day to day lives.



Supporting the local economy

The project will deliver meaningful, long-term benefits to the local economy. Beyond generating clean energy, it will create employment opportunities during both construction and operation, helping to support local jobs and skills. We are committed to using local suppliers and contractors wherever possible, ensuring that investment stays within the community and directly benefits local businesses.

The land will remain in agricultural use throughout the life of the solar farm. The solar panel design has been designed to allow for low-intensity sheep grazing

between and beneath the rows, thereby continuing to support agricultural practices. Farm diversification will strengthen the long-term sustainability of the existing on site businesses.



Tackling climate change

The Robin Hood Solar Farm project will contribute towards the UK's transition to a low carbon economy and will help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with local, national, and international targets, including the legally binding commitment to reach Net Zero by 2050.⁵

The proposal would also play an important role in meeting the UK Government's ambition for 95% of the country's electricity demand to be met through clean energy sources by 2030.⁶

The project would make use of existing grid infrastructure by connecting directly to the 132kV overhead line already running through the site. This enables installation of renewable energy generation without the need for costly upgrades to the grid which might take years to deliver.



Biodiversity

Qualitas Energy is committed to ensuring that the impacts on wildlife are minimised and that the project will deliver biodiversity and habitat improvements. The project will deliver meaningful benefits for wildlife through new tree and hedgerow planting, and will seek to deliver more than the required 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) required by UK law.⁷

⁵ M Government (2008). Climate Change Act 2008. Available at: Climate Change Act 2008

⁶ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, Clean Power 2030 Action Plan: A new era of clean electricity, April 2025. Accessed via: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-power-2030-action-plan/clean-power-2030-action-plan-a-a-new-era-of-clean-electricity-main-report>

⁷ HM Government (2021). Environment Act 2022. Available at: Environment Act 2021

Community Benefit Fund

At Qualitas Energy, we are committed to meaningful community engagement and delivering long-term value to the local area surrounding the proposed Robin Hood Solar Farm.

As part of this commitment, we will actively work with local residents, community organisations, and other key stakeholders to gather feedback and better understand how our investment can deliver benefits to the nearby community. The Robin Hood Solar Farm represents a significant opportunity to bring lasting benefits to the area, and ensuring a thoughtful and effective community offering is a top priority for us.

Qualitas Energy intends to establish a community benefit fund worth approximately £500 per installed megawatt of capacity per year, index linked. At 60 MW capacity, the fund would provide £30,000 per year. With an operational life of 40 years, the community benefit fund from the Robin Hood Solar Farm would total approximately £1.2million over the project lifetime. The community benefit fund is entirely separate to the planning application, and is not a material planning consideration.

The Community Benefit Fund will seek to provide financial support for activities and projects within the local area following the construction and energisation of the project.

Our approach is guided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and aims to support initiatives that enhance the local community and promote the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of the area.

The community benefit fund is entirely separate from the planning application, as such it is not a material planning consideration as part of the planning process and it can't influence the planning decision. In the event permission is granted it will be made available after the first year of electricity generation.

For Qualitas Energy's Belvoir Solar Farm in Leicestershire, which is currently under construction, we are working with Grantscape to administer the fund on our behalf. Grantscape is one of the UK's leading charities specialising in the management of community benefit funds. The grants for the Belvoir Solar Farm project will be used to support local projects including improvement works for community buildings and facilities, support for community activities and services, environmental and public space initiatives, sports, recreation and educational projects, and grants to individuals.

Project Timeline and Next Steps



Thank you for taking the time to visit this public exhibition and hear about our proposals. We will be submitting our application for Robin Hood Solar Farm to Braintree District Council in Autumn 2026.

In order to enable us to consider any further comments or feedback we would encourage this to be submitted to us in writing by no later than 21 August using the contact details opposite:

Website: visit the project website www.robinhood-solar.co.uk

Email: write to the project team at consultation@thirty47.co.uk

Feedback forms: available online via the project website or as hard copy by request

Freepost: write to us at FREEPOST TC CONSULTATION (no further address or stamp required)

Freephone: you can call the project freephone information line on 0800 699 0081 and leave a voicemail (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm excluding public holidays)

