



# **Mallard Pass**

Solar Farm

## **Mallard Pass Solar Farm**

**Community Newsletter and  
Stage One Consultation Summary Report**

**February 2022**

## Introduction

**Mallard Pass Solar Farm is a new solar farm being proposed by Windel Energy and Canadian Solar either side of the East Coast Main Line near Essendine, partly situated in South Kesteven, Lincolnshire, and partly in Rutland.**

The overall site area of Mallard Pass in the concept plan included in our Stage One consultation is 880 hectares (2,175 acres), although a large proportion (38% at Stage One) of this is not proposed for panels or associated infrastructure. This space could be used for biodiversity improvements, retention of land in agricultural use or land that we are not developing on to protect residential or visual amenity for example.

If approved, the project will generate in the region of 350 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy. 350 MW is the maximum amount of electricity (measured in direct current) that the solar farm would generate, although this may be lower depending on a number of factors such as the final detailed design, weather conditions, and efficiency of panels. 350 MW is roughly equivalent to the domestic consumption of electricity in Rutland and South Kesteven combined. More information on the breakdown of these calculations is available on our website.

This newsletter incorporates our Consultation Summary Report (CSR), which provides an overview of the feedback we received during our Stage One consultation and how we will use this feedback to inform the design process moving forward. We will also explain the opportunities for you and your community to engage with the project through the next stage of consultation.

This newsletter also explains that we have now submitted our Scoping Report to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). The Scoping Report asks PINS for their view on how we propose to consider the environmental impacts of Mallard Pass. Read more about what this includes and means on [page 15](#).

***Mallard Pass will support the urgent need to decarbonise our electricity system, deliver reliable and sustainable low-cost energy, enhance the local environment and be a responsible neighbour.***

## Our Stage One consultation

**Our Stage One consultation ran for six weeks, from Thursday 4 November 2021 to Thursday 16 December 2021. We are grateful to everyone who attended our events, provided feedback and asked questions.**

### During our consultation we:



Distributed our community consultation leaflet to over **13,000** local residents and businesses.



Hosted a virtual exhibition to display information on our proposals for Mallard Pass Solar Farm. You can still visit our virtual exhibition at [www.MallardPassSolar.co.uk/virtual-exhibition](http://www.MallardPassSolar.co.uk/virtual-exhibition).



Held three in-person community consultation events in Ryhall, Stamford, and Essendine, where we spoke to **317** attendees.



Held two community webinar events, which were attended by **57** people.



Advertised our Stage One consultation, events and webinars in **local and regional newspapers**.



**Engaged** with parish, district, and county councillors across the area.




Created an **online and physical feedback form** for you to give us feedback on our proposals.

# Consultation Summary Report


Our Stage One consultation provided an opportunity for people to view and comment on our early-stage proposals.

We are pleased to have received a significant volume of feedback and would like to thank everyone who engaged in our consultation. Your comments have helped to improve our understanding of the local area and the aspects of Mallard Pass that you consider important for us to prioritise as we develop our proposals.


## During our consultation we received:



481 feedback forms



460 emails



19 calls

Community input is key to this process, and the majority of feedback we received during Stage One came from individuals living near the site area. Of the **481 feedback forms** submitted, **92%** of respondents identified themselves as local residents.

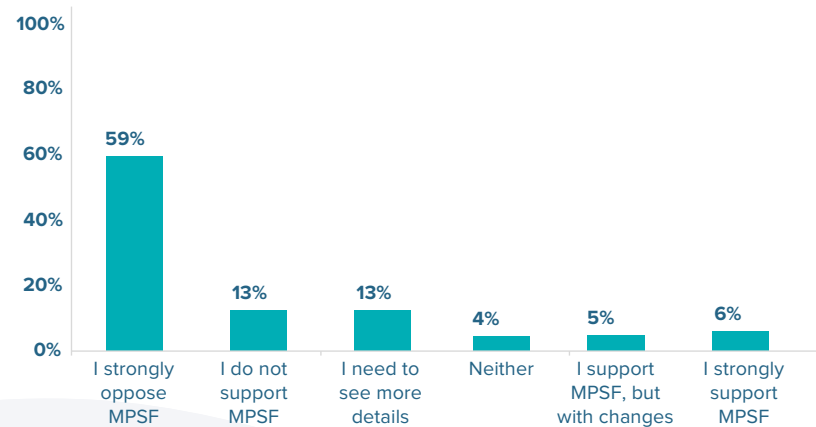
The information below is a summary, but we want to assure those who have responded that we have read all of the responses received in detail. As part of our Development Consent Order (DCO) application we will set out how we have responded to consultation feedback.

We acknowledge there was a high level of initial opposition to our early proposals for Mallard Pass Solar Farm from those who responded. This feedback is important as we need to understand the basis for those concerns and to look at how they can be addressed as the project develops further.

Our focus is on providing accurate and honest information to build an understanding of how Mallard Pass Solar Farm can generate low carbon energy, while minimising impacts on the local environment and surrounding communities.

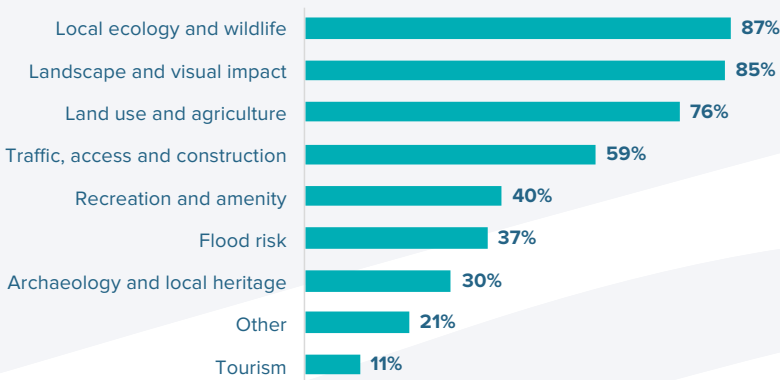
## Respondents' views on Mallard Pass Solar Farm proposals

471 respondents gave us their views on Mallard Pass Solar Farm based on our early-stage proposals.



## Aspects important to the local community

439 respondents told us which aspects of the project are most important to them.



## How we're listening

We recognise the strong level of response to our early proposals for Mallard Pass Solar Farm. Within the CSR, we have identified a number of emerging key themes.

The following pages summarise the comments received on these themes and how we consider them in the development of the design for Mallard Pass. We will seek feedback on our updated design, alongside our Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) at our Stage Two consultation, scheduled for spring 2022.

You can read more about the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process we will be undertaking on [page 14](#).

Throughout the consultation period we also received a lot of frequently asked questions on a number of topics. We have provided further information in response to these questions on our website: [www.MallardPassSolar.co.uk](http://www.MallardPassSolar.co.uk).



Our consultation event at Ryhall Village Hall, 23.11.2021.

The table below is a summary response to your comments at this stage. We will further set out how we have responded to consultation feedback as part of our DCO application to PINS, anticipated to be late 2022.

Your comments	How we are considering this
<b>Water resources and flood risk</b>	
Respondents expressed concerns regarding an increase in perceived flood risk due to water runoff from solar panels.	Our focus is on ensuring Mallard Pass is designed well to respond sensitively to the local environment. We have undertaken initial flood risk modelling to inform our proposals and will continue to assess this as the design develops further.
Respondents stated that the area is already prone to flooding during periods of heavy rain.	We are engaging with the Environment Agency (EA) to ensure a safe and appropriate layout for Mallard Pass Solar Farm.  Well-designed solar projects have a negligible impact on flood risk.
<b>Land use and agriculture</b>	
Respondents stated concern regarding the loss of productive agricultural land, seeking to maintain and/or increase the amount of existing crops and local food production.	We are working to fully understand the agricultural potential of the proposed areas. This involves undertaking site-specific agricultural land classification surveys and engaging with landowners to understand how they work their land to get the maximum yields from their crops. This data will inform the refinement of our proposals for Mallard Pass.

Your comments	How we are considering this
<b>Air quality, noise and vibration</b>	
<p>Respondents expressed concerns regarding air pollution caused by construction traffic and heavy goods vehicles (HGVs).</p> <p>Additionally, a number of respondents raised concerned about noise pollution during the operation of the project.</p>	<p>As part of the application for a DCO, we will be undertaking a construction dust risk assessment to inform appropriate mitigation measures. These assessments will assist the refinement of our proposals to help mitigate such potential effects of our proposals on the environment.</p> <p>A noise survey of the baseline noise conditions has been undertaken; however, we will also be undertaking an operational noise assessment to understand any potential changes to the current noise level caused by the project.</p>
<b>Biodiversity, ecology and bird life</b>	
<p>Respondents expressed concern that the proposals could negatively impact existing local ecology and diverse ecosystems. Bird life was noted as being of particular importance due to the abundant and diverse populations present in the area.</p> <p>Respondents noted that enhancement and mitigation measures regarding local ecology will need to be able to protect or improve ecology and biodiversity. Some respondents also recognise the potential for biodiversity benefits while acknowledging the current use of land for agriculture.</p>	<p>As part of our EIA, we will be undertaking environmental and species surveys to identify the presence of wildlife and habitats. The results of the ecological surveys carried out to date can be found in the appendices of the Scoping Report.</p> <p>Our initial concept plan showed approximately 38% of the site will be used for mitigation and enhancement purposes. The development of our proposals will involve designing and applying appropriate mitigation measures for ecology, such as offsets and buffers, to achieve a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain.</p>

Your comments	How we are considering this
<b>Traffic and transport</b>	
<p>Respondents raised concerns about construction traffic and HGVs increasing congestion on roads which were noted as being currently unsuitable and dangerous. Concerns were raised about the prevalence of narrow roads in the local area and an associated perceived risk of road traffic accidents.</p> <p>Specific roads mentioned include the A6121, B1176, Essendine and Greatford Road, and Braceborough Road.</p> <p>Additionally, respondents noted the importance of roadside verges, such as Ryhall Pasture and Little Warren Verges, with requests for these to be protected from the potential impacts of traffic associated with the project.</p>	<p>As part of our Stage One consultation, we consulted the local highway authority (Lincolnshire and Rutland County Councils) and National Highways to seek their feedback on our proposed traffic surveys and proposals.</p> <p>They will also help to inform the scope of further analysis that we will need to undertake to ensure transport implications and traffic concerns are suitably mitigated.</p> <p>We are listening carefully to the feedback from residents who expressed concerns regarding the potential impacts of construction traffic, particularly on roadside verges. This feedback will be used to inform and develop an outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP). The CTMP will put measures in place to control the movement of traffic between the Strategic Highway Network and the site. An outline CTMP will form part of the application for a DCO.</p>
<b>Archaeology and cultural heritage</b>	
<p>Respondents stated that the area is rich in archaeology and requested that any works are undertaken with extra sensitivity to avoid damaging any potential archaeological finds.</p> <p>Respondents also mentioned various local heritage sites including Essendine Castle, Norman Arch, and Greatford Churchyard.</p>	<p>We will be undertaking field walking and geophysical surveys of the project area to understand the potential of buried archaeology. We will also engage with archaeological officers to determine if trial trenching is required.</p> <p>As we develop our proposals, we are continuing to consider heritage assets, including those raised through feedback. This will inform the assessments and refinements to our proposals for Mallard Pass.</p>

Your comments	How we are considering this
<b>Landscape and visual impact assessment</b>	
<p>A common theme within the comments received was the proposed size of Mallard Pass Solar Farm. Concerns were raised that this could result in the loss of visual amenity of countryside views, which are valued by the community and visitors.</p> <p>Respondents also stated concern regarding the impact of fencing, light pollution, CCTV, and potential glint and glare from solar panels.</p>	<p>The visual impact of the project is being carefully considered during the refinement of our proposals. Effects on visual amenity forms part of the design process. These surveys are being undertaken by the Mallard Pass team in accordance with industry standards.</p> <p>A Residential Visual Amenity Assessment will also be undertaken to assess viewpoints from identified neighbouring properties. The team will continue to look for opportunities to reduce and mitigate the visual impact of the project.</p>
<b>Health</b>	
<p>Respondents expressed concerns about the potential impact on mental health caused by a loss of recreation and visual amenity in area.</p> <p>Another key concern was the safety of lithium-ion batteries used for energy storage and how a potential fire risk would be managed.</p>	<p>Feedback is being appropriately considered to mitigate the potential impacts on recreation and amenity where possible.</p> <p>As part of our DCO application we will prepare an outline Battery Safety Management Plan and consult with The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the local Fire and Rescue Services. The HSE will provide public safety advice to ensure any potential health and safety issues associated with this type of solar array and associated infrastructure are considered.</p>

Your comments	How we are considering this
<b>Socio-economics and tourism</b>	
<p>Respondents raised concerns about the potential impact on tourism due to an anticipated loss of visual amenity.</p> <p>Respondents also commented on the potential impacts on house prices, and the potential for job creation from this development.</p>	<p>As we refine the project design, we will model the visibility of the solar park from key viewpoints and assess this through a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.</p> <p>We will seek to ensure that the chosen viewpoints, including viewpoints from Public Rights of Way (PRoWs), consider the responses we received from members of the public and consultees. These will have to be agreed with your Local Planning Authorities. We will be undertaking a recreation and amenity assessment that will consider the impacts on the PRoWs within and near to the site.</p>
<b>Site selection and use of alternatives</b>	
<p>Respondents proposed alternative site locations for this development, due to concerns about the project being on agricultural land.</p> <p>Alternative sites proposed by respondents include disused airfields, such as Woolfox (depot), North Luffenham (St. George's Barracks), and Cottesmore.</p>	<p>This site offers the potential to deliver a major contribution to the UK's future clean energy supply. Factors that have influenced the choice of site include proximity to the grid connection, topography and the availability of natural screening across much of the site. Long grid connections can effect viability and result in reduced power output and increased impacts on homes and businesses that would be crossed by the connection. We will include an assessment of how alternatives have been considered in our DCO application. In the meantime, we remain committed to listening carefully to local residents and responding to issues they raise.</p>

# Next steps

Over the coming months, we will be developing our proposals for Mallard Pass Solar Farm based on the feedback we received, alongside environmental studies and technical assessments.

On 4 February 2022, we submitted our Scoping Report to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) for consideration. You can view this on PINS’ website <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/east-midlands/mallard-pass-solar-project>.

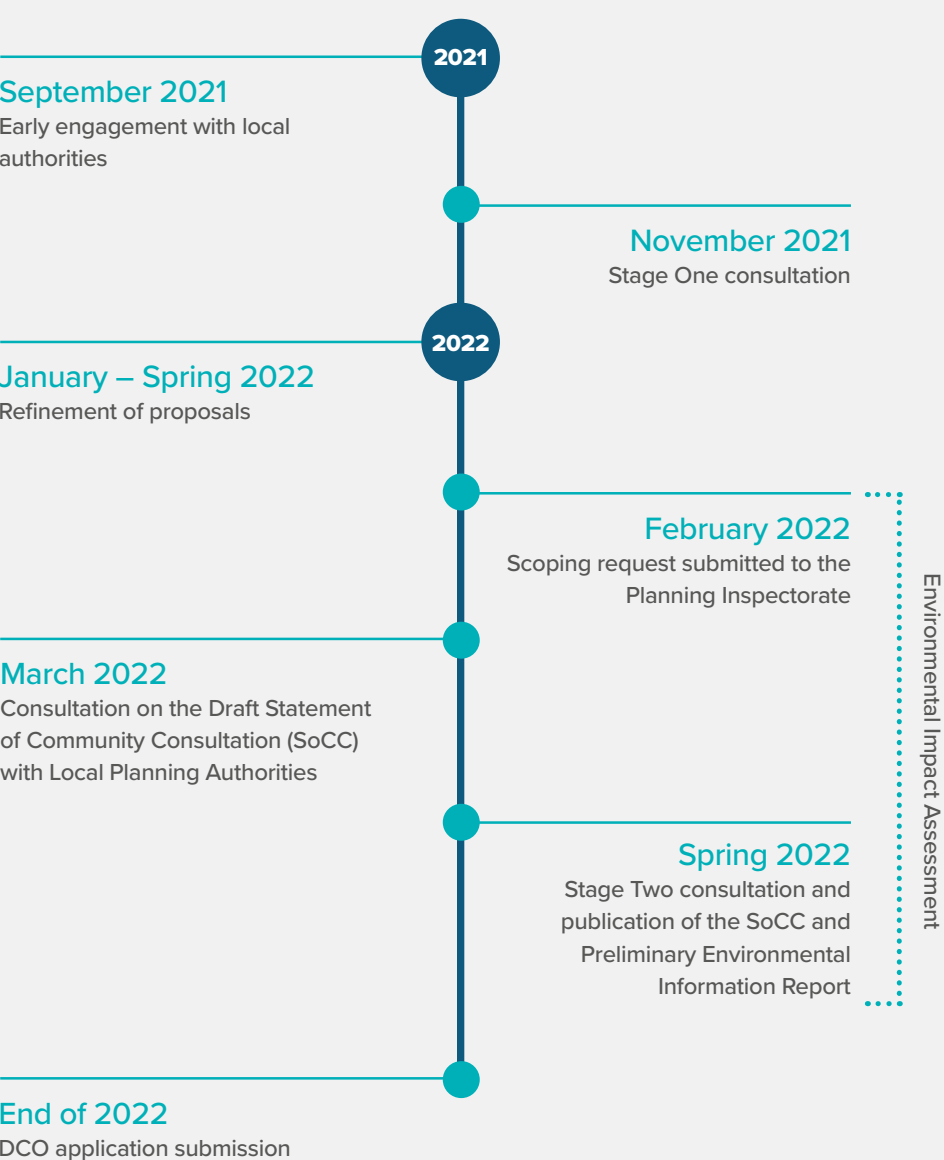
The consideration of the Scoping Report is a specific step in the process where PINS looks at how we propose to assess the environmental effects of Mallard Pass. After PINS consults with all the relevant technical stakeholders on this report, including the host local authorities, they will then respond with a Scoping Opinion, which will be published online. This will inform the environmental impact assessment that will accompany our DCO application.

We will be publishing a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC), outlining how we will engage with and seek feedback from the community during our statutory consultation. We will be consulting local authorities on a draft of this document and then publish it in advance of our Stage Two consultation.

Following this, we plan to hold our Stage Two consultation in spring 2022. We will be consulting on a more detailed design for Mallard Pass and our associated Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR). This consultation will be publicised extensively closer to the time.

In the meantime, we will be continuing engagement with stakeholders, including parish, district and county councillors. We will also continue to be available to receive questions and feedback relating to the proposals via our communication lines listed on the back page of this newsletter.

# Consultation timeline



All dates are indicative and subject to change.



# Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

**Mallard Pass Solar Farm is classed as an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development.**

This means we are required to undertake an assessment of the development's likely significant effects on the environment under the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017.

The EIA is used as a tool to identify the likely significant effects our project might have, and how we can reduce and mitigate such impacts on the environment and society.

**The EIA process for major infrastructure projects is broken down as follows:**

1. EIA Scoping
2. Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR)
3. Environmental Statement (ES)

For further information and a more detailed timeline of this process was included on **page 17** of our Stage One Main Document, available at [www.MallardPassSolar.co.uk/documents](http://www.MallardPassSolar.co.uk/documents).

# What is in the Scoping Report?

**Our Scoping Report describes the proposals and the processes we will undertake to assess the likely significant effects of the project on the environment.**

We have now submitted our Scoping Report to the Planning Inspectorate. PINS will seek feedback from local planning authorities and statutory consultees to produce a Scoping Opinion on the project. This Scoping Opinion relates to how the likely significant environmental effects of the project should be assessed, rather than the merits of the project.

The project described in the Scoping Report is consistent with our early-stage proposals that were included in our Stage One consultation, although there have been some tweaks to the overall boundary to include some roads which may require localised improvements for access and cable connections. This is simply a reflection of the stage that we are at in the process and that we are still taking time to consider the detailed design as a result of all of the feedback that we have received.





# Contact us

**Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you would like to find out more information about Mallard Pass Solar Farm.**

You can get in touch with members of our stakeholder engagement team using any of the communication lines listed below.

Should you require any documents in large print, audio or braille, please contact us at the details provided.



**Email:**

[info@MallardPassSolar.co.uk](mailto:info@MallardPassSolar.co.uk)



**Freephone information line:**

0808 196 8717



**Freepost:**

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