



Mallard Pass

Solar Farm

Mallard Pass Solar Farm

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

February 2022

Mallard Pass Solar Farm

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – Stage One

Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. About us	2
3. General	4
4. The proposal / technology.....	9
5. Impacts	13
5.1. Landscape and visual	13
5.2. Ecology.....	16
5.3. Recreational	18
5.4. Traffic and transport.....	19
5.5. Flood risk and hydrology	20
5.6. Health.....	21
5.7. Socio-economic.....	22
6. Contact us	23



Write to us at:
FREEPOST MALLARD
PASS SOLAR FARM



Email us at:
info@MallardPassSolar.co.uk



Call our Freephone information line:
0808 196 8717



Visit our website at:
www.MallardPassSolar.co.uk

Introduction

Purpose of this document

Through Stage One of our community consultation for Mallard Pass Solar Farm, we asked for questions and feedback on our early-stage proposals. All comments received have been recorded and regard will be given to them as we develop our proposals.

This FAQs document is intended to answer the most frequently asked questions raised during our Stage One consultation. Alongside the [publication of our latest community newsletter](#) (which includes a summary of the feedback we received at Stage One), this provides a good overview of where the proposals for Mallard Pass Solar Farm currently stand, and what to expect next as we move forward in the planning and consultation process.

Next steps

We are now going through the process of developing a more detailed design, considering consultation feedback as well as our ongoing environmental and technical assessments.

We appreciate that by starting our consultation early, there were many questions we could not answer in full during Stage One. In the spring, when we start our Stage Two statutory consultation, we will be able to share more detail on Mallard Pass Solar Farm, including how feedback has shaped our proposals.

In the meantime, our communications lines remain open for any further comments or questions. Our telephone number is 0808 196 8717, our email address is info@MallardPassSolar.co.uk, and our Freepost address is FREEPOST MALLARD PASS SOLAR FARM.

About us

During our Stage One consultation, we received questions and comments regarding Windel Energy and Canadian Solar Inc., the partnership between the developers and their respective experience and background. The following information is designed to further introduce both companies to those interested in the Mallard Pass Solar Farm.

If you would like to learn more about either company, further information is available on their websites at www.WindelEnergy.co.uk and www.CanadianSolar.com. Representatives from both companies will also be available at future consultation events.

Who are the developers behind the project?

The developers for the project are Windel Energy and Canadian Solar Inc. Together they have appointed a professional project team comprised of experienced companies to provide specific support during the development of the Mallard Pass Solar Farm. Together, all members of the Mallard Pass project team have significant experience of working across solar and Development Consent Order (DCO) projects.

Founded in 2018, Windel Energy is a privately held company that specialises in the development and asset management of renewable energy projects and low carbon technologies. With more than 3 gigawatts (GW) of clean, renewable power and battery energy storage in various stages of development, Windel is at the forefront of low carbon technologies including solar, energy storage, and onshore wind, and are helping to pave the way to achieve the UK's net zero target by 2050. Windel Energy is committed to responsible land use and believe that the development and delivery of a large-scale solar farm can be achieved in harmony with its surroundings.

Canadian Solar was founded in 2001 in Canada and is one of the world's largest solar power companies. It is a leading manufacturer of solar photovoltaic (PV) modules and provider of solar energy solutions and has a geographically diversified pipeline of utility-scale solar power projects in various stages of development.

Canadian Solar is listed on the NASDAQ (NASDAQ: CSIQ) stock exchange since 2006 and has production facilities in Canada, China, Thailand, and Vietnam.

How does the partnership between Canadian Solar and Windel Energy work?

Windel Energy partnered with Canadian Solar Inc. in January 2021 to co-develop 1.4 gigawatts (GW) of solar projects in the UK. Windel are responsible for early-stage development of the solar projects, with Canadian Solar providing funding, support and procurement of Power Purchase Agreements.

Both companies share the common goals and objectives of co-delivering clean and affordable energy and building long-term, sustainable relationships with landowners and communities.



What kind of experience do we have developing solar projects at this scale?

Can a list of similar projects that have successfully been completed be provided?

The UK's need to develop a significant number of large-scale solar projects means that the industry is developing rapidly. If consented, Mallard Pass Solar Farm would be one of the largest projects Windel Energy has delivered to date.

Being one of the world's largest solar power companies, Canadian Solar Inc. has considerable experience delivering projects of this scale, such as the Garland (272 megawatts (MW)) and Tranquility (257 MW) solar farms in California, USA. It is envisaged that Canadian Solar would deliver the infrastructure for Mallard Pass Solar Farm and would prefer to be the long-term owners of the project.

Windel Energy is a small family business but is very proud to have a project of this size going through the Development Consent Order (DCO) process. The team at Windel recognises the importance of working in partnership with Canadian Solar to develop a project of this scale and has appointed an external project team, organised by Pinsent Masons, who between them have significant experience of promoting solar projects and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs).

Where will Canadian Solar source the infrastructure for Mallard Pass from?

No decision has yet been made on where the equipment for Mallard Pass Solar Farm will be sourced from. This will depend on when Mallard Pass Solar Farm's construction is expected to begin.

Canadian Solar Inc. is one of the largest solar manufacturers in the world, founded in Ontario, Canada in 2001 and listed on the NASDAQ (NASDAQ: CSIQ) stock exchange since 2006.

Canadian Solar Inc. has production facilities in Canada, China, Thailand, and Vietnam, and have the capability to manufacture both solar modules and solar inverters.

Canadian Solar Inc. currently has manufacturing facilities in the following locations:

- Canada – Guelph
- China – Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Henan Provinces, and the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region
- Thailand – Chonburi
- Vietnam – Hai Phong

A copy of Canadian Solar's 2020 ESG Sustainability Report is available [here](#). As a global company listed on the NASDAQ stock exchange, Canadian Solar is governed by strict laws, rules, and regulations. To get the latest information about Canadian Solar and its activities, please visit www.CanadianSolar.com.

General

How clean is solar?

How will Mallard Pass be effective in combatting climate change?

Government expects that a low-cost, net zero consistent electricity system is likely to be composed predominantly of wind and solar. Wind and solar will be key building blocks of the future generation mix. The UK needs sustained growth in the capacity of these sectors in the next decade to ensure that we are on a pathway that allows us to meet net zero emissions in all demand scenarios.

Electricity generated from solar power has carbon emissions which are near to zero over the lifetime of a project. Solar projects are also quick to construct and operate statically, meaning that they will provide decarbonisation benefits at the earliest opportunity with minimal noise or air quality impacts during operation.

The UK already has over 13 gigawatts (GW) of solar installed and operational ([National Statistics](#), 2022). This has been instrumental in helping the UK achieve a 70+% reduction in carbon emissions from electricity generation versus a 1990 baseline. Solar is already, and is set to continue to be, an incredibly important part of the electricity generation sector.

Why are we using agricultural land? Do solar farms compete with food production?

Concern has been expressed about the potential for loss of agricultural land.

The draft National Policy Statement for Renewable Energy (EN-3) confirms that Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) should not be the predominant test in site selection. Even so, the Mallard Pass team is undertaking an assessment of the quality of agricultural land included in the proposed development. This includes a site-specific ALC survey to identify and map out the soils across the project area. This will inform the next stages of design.

It is also worth noting that the Government has launched Landscape Recovery and Local Nature Recovery schemes which financially incentivise farmers to take land out of production for landscape or ecology improvement. Pilot projects are expected to be circa 500 - 5000 hectares (ha), potentially much larger than that required for even the largest solar projects currently contemplated. In that context, solar offers the potential for land to be used for clean power generation, environmental enhancement, soil quality improvement, and landscape and ecology improvements – without the need for government subsidy or grants.

ALC maps for the area, which are available to view [here](#), indicate that the majority consists of Grade 3 land along with pockets of Grade 2 towards the southern extents of the site area. We are undertaking ground investigations and soil sampling to understand if the Grade 3 land is Grade 3a or Grade 3b. We are also in discussions with landowners and farmers to determine how they use the land and grow their yield. This will establish pesticide and fertilizer use on the land and allow us to develop a more comprehensive idea of baseline conditions and the impacts that may be caused by changing the land use from agricultural to electricity production.

What is our timeline?

To date, we have begun early engagement with local authorities, undertaken our Stage One public consultation (Thursday 04 November – 16 December 2021), and submitted our Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Scoping Request to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). Our Scoping Report was successfully submitted to PINS on Friday 04 February 2022 and is available to view on [their website](#).

We expect Stage Two to take place later in the spring. In the meantime, we are refining our proposals for Mallard Pass Solar Farm based on the Stage One feedback received, as well as the results from our technical and environmental surveys.

Ahead of Stage Two, we will consult with Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) on the draft Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) and then publish our final SoCC. The SoCC sets out our plans for the consultation before it begins so stakeholders and local residents know what we are planning to do and can get ready to participate in our consultation.

As is shown on the timeline on [page 17 of our Stage One Main Document](#), the EIA process is broken down into three main phases; the first is Scoping, the second is the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), and the third is the Environmental Statement (ES). Having recently submitted the EIA Scoping to PINS, we are now working on preparing the PEIR.

EIA Scoping refers to a Report that provides an overview of the development proposed and the environmental baseline surveys that we intend to undertake. It also includes a description of how we will assess any likely significant environmental effects, and the proposed scope and content of the EIA and ES.

The PEIR will build upon the Scoping Report and environmental assessments, as well as feedback received through consultation. It will set out the preliminary findings from the work we are undertaking for preparation of the ES and will provide sufficient information to allow consultees to form an informed view of the likely significant environmental effects of our proposals. The PEIR will be available as part of the statutory Stage Two consultation, allowing stakeholders and the public to develop an informed view of the potential impacts Mallard Pass Solar Farm may have on the local environment.

Our Development Consent Order (DCO) submission is indicatively planned to be submitted to PINS in winter 2022. The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) will then have 28 days to decide whether to accept the application for public examination. If accepted, there is a period of up to 6 months to carry out the public examination. Once the examination closes, which is anticipated to be in autumn 2023, allowing for a 3-month pre-examination period, the examining authority then has a period of 3 months to make a recommendation to the Secretary of State as to whether the application should be granted. The Secretary of State then has another 3 months to review and decide whether to grant the DCO.

This means that the construction of Mallard Pass would begin, at the earliest, in the first half of 2024. For further details, please refer to our timeline [on page 13 of our latest community newsletter](#).

Is Mallard Pass supported by government subsidies?

At this stage in project development, it is anticipated that Mallard Pass Solar Farm will not require public subsidy. One of the benefits of solar compared to some other forms of renewable energy generation is that, provided the site selected is commercially viable and that costs are not greater than normal, it can be viably delivered by private investment.

How is the duration of public consultation determined?

Developers are required to undertake a statutory consultation which must last a minimum of 28 days, and which allows the local community and stakeholders to comment on proposals. One of the key parts of the Development Consent Order (DCO) pre-application process is engagement with local communities and stakeholders. The developer has a duty to have regard to each comment received to its consultation.

One of our key principles is to engage openly with communities and make use of local knowledge to improve our project. That is why we chose to undertake two public consultations rather than one. We also want to run our consultations beyond the minimum 28-day period. Our non-statutory Stage One consultation lasted for a period of six weeks (42 days). During this period, we are pleased to have received over 900 comments, all of which have been helpful and are being duly considered as we move forward in the design and planning process. We expect our Stage Two consultation to run for eight weeks.

How can I have my say throughout the development process?

Is my feedback ignored when it's not submitted during Stage One or Stage Two?

No – all comments received to our consultation will be recorded. We have a responsibility to consider them all and to show how we have had regard to them when we submit our application for development consent. All of the feedback received and what we have done in response will be set out in the final Consultation Report that is submitted with the Development Consent Order (DCO) application. The DCO planning process is more stringent than most, requiring developers to consider each comment received to its consultation and to be able to demonstrate how it has been taken into account in the planning and design process.

We are currently considering all the feedback we received during Stage One on our early-stage proposals and feeding this into our development design process. During our Stage Two consultation, indicatively scheduled for spring 2022, we will seek feedback on more detailed proposals for Mallard Pass and on our Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR). We want to make sure local communities and stakeholders have further opportunity to provide their feedback on our proposals.

Once we have completed our consultation and submitted our DCO application to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), indicatively planned for the end of 2022, there will be further opportunities for members of the public to get involved should our application be accepted for examination. For more details on how you can get involved in the examination process, please visit the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) [website](#).

Are there going to be more in-person consultation events?

Yes – we are seeking to hold another round of in-person consultation events for our Stage Two public consultation, subject to COVID-19 (or any other unanticipated) restrictions at the time.

As was done in Stage One, our Stage Two consultation will feature community webinar events to further ensure that the community and anyone seeking to participate are able to learn more information about our proposals and have their say.

Further, if COVID-19 regulations do not permit face-to-face events in spring 2022, we will increase the amount of community webinars correspondingly to ensure that the public is not hindered from participating in the public consultation process.

Accessibility is important to us, and we will always allow for online and offline methods of engaging with us and providing feedback.

What is the lifespan of the project? What will happen afterwards?

The operational life of the Mallard Pass Solar Farm is not proposed to be specified in the Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

Although the installed solar infrastructure will have an initial lifespan – which could increase with improvements to technology – this is not considered to be a planning limitation and therefore we are not proposing at this stage to apply for a time limited consent. During the operation of Mallard Pass, onsite activities would include routine servicing, and maintenance and replacement of plant and equipment, as well as management of vegetation. These activities will support the continued operation of the project.

However, we do need to prepare for the decommissioning of Mallard Pass Solar Farm in the future, so that this can be appropriately planned and managed. For the purposes of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), we are proposing to base the decommissioning assessment on a 40-year operational life span for the solar infrastructure. The assessment does not assume that the operational phase will be limited to 40 years as the solar infrastructure may continue to be operating successfully and safely beyond this period.

As such, although no time limit will be set for the implementation of a decommissioning plan, one will be required to be prepared. Indeed, the DCO application will include a framework decommissioning plan as well as a requirement to provide detailed plans for decommissioning and restoration at an appropriate time. The decommissioning plan will include details for safe removal of solar infrastructure from the site and a plan to restore the landscape to its previous state, usually agriculture.

At this stage, Mallard Pass Solar Farm would like any planting and mitigation areas put in place to be permanent, but ultimately this will be a question for the landowners and Mallard Pass will not have any ongoing control of these areas after the solar farm has been decommissioned.

When will more detailed maps, photomontages and visualisations be made available?

We are planning to publish photomontages of Mallard Pass Solar Farm during our Stage Two consultation. These were not available at Stage One because our early-stage proposals were not developed enough to include the level of detail needed to create computer-generated visual images (“CGIs”). This is an important part of the process that will also inform the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) which will accompany the Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

When CGIs are produced during the next stage, we will do so from a selection of vantage points, which we will engage with the local authorities on to ensure that there is information on what the proposals will look like from a number of views. We want to ensure that we manage the landscape appropriately and mitigate negative impacts wherever we can.

Producing visualisations is also a part of the LVIA and it requires photomontages showing the proposals on Day 1, and a photomontage showing the proposals at Year 15, when the proposed vegetation will have matured.

In the meantime, we have presented a range of maps that are available to [download from our website here](#), as well as an interactive map which is [available here](#).

The proposal / technology

What kind of solar panels will be used?

The exact technology and type of solar array to be used for Mallard Pass Solar Farm has yet to be decided. At this time, the exact layout of the panels has also yet to be designed, as this will partly depend on which photovoltaic (PV) technology will be chosen.

We are considering multiple layout options, including fixed south-facing panels or tracker technologies which follow the sun, and may retain the option to choose between these layouts within our Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

We are considering retaining this layout flexibility in order to submit an application that will allow Mallard Pass to select that which is most effective at the time of detailed design. As solar technologies are developing rapidly, this guarantees that the technology chosen at the time of construction is that which best meets project objectives and will deliver the best possible results for the environment.

What kind of battery storage infrastructure / technology will be used?

Will safety measures form a part of our plans?

Energy storage technology will be an important part of the solution to help the grid shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy, and battery storage technology forms an important part of the proposals for Mallard Pass Solar Farm.

Battery storage technology is proposed to be used at Mallard Pass to support the utilisation of the renewable energy it will generate by storing energy when it is generated, and exporting it to the grid when it is most needed; a management process known as “load shifting”. By acting to smooth the supply of renewable energy to the national grid, battery storage will play a key role in enabling an integrated low carbon energy supply.

The exact type of battery storage to be used for Mallard Pass has yet to be decided. However, potential impacts on the health and safety of the local community will be identified and appropriately mitigated against through the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process. The results of this process will be reported within the Environmental Statement (ES), which is submitted in support of the Development Consent Order (DCO) and duly considered by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) when considering whether or not our application will be accepted for examination.

Battery safety measures form a part of our plans. An outline Battery Safety Management Plan (oBSMP) will be prepared and submitted with the DCO, and this will ensure that safety concerns around the battery energy storage system element of our proposals are appropriately addressed.

Additionally, as part of our pre-application process, we will engage with statutory organisations and stakeholders, including the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the NHS Commissioning Board and Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue, who will be provided the opportunity to comment and shape proposals for Mallard Pass Solar Farm.

Is the equipment recyclable, and manufactured in a sustainable way?

The exact type of technology for Mallard Pass Solar Farm has yet to be determined; however, most solar equipment materials are recyclable and reusable, such as aluminium and steel.

Constructing Mallard Pass will involve sourcing materials, manufacturing components, transporting them to the site and installing them; all of which will create carbon emissions. Our Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will also consider the carbon emissions associated with the construction and operation of Mallard Pass Solar Farm. Whilst varying from project to project, it is estimated that solar developments generally pay back their construction emissions in 2 - 3 years. For projects located in the northern UK, this is estimated to take around 6 years. For more details, please visit [this link](#).

What kinds of measures will be implemented in mitigation and enhancement areas?

Our initial concept plan for Mallard Pass Solar Farm showed that approximately 38% of the site will be used for mitigation and enhancement purposes. These are spaces that will not include any solar panels or associated infrastructure and could be used to deliver biodiversity improvements and landscape and environmental enhancements; for example, new or enhanced hedgerows and planting. Other examples include the retention of land in agricultural use, or areas that we are not developing on to protect residential or visual amenity. Specific mitigation and enhancement measures have yet to be formally decided and will be made on a site-specific basis.

Mitigation and enhancement measures will be decided following consultation with local community members, local authorities, and landowners. Through engagement with these groups, we will be able to further identify specific ways that our proposals can respond sensitively to the local context of the area and implement measures best suited to the site.

As part of the Development Consent Order (DCO) process, we must also consult with statutory consultees such as the Forestry Commission and Natural England, who will help inform which measures are most appropriate and beneficial for the site. The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process as a whole will also significantly inform which measures we propose, helping us identify potential impacts and ways to mitigate these appropriately.

Hedgerows are a good example of the type of enhancements currently under consideration. Many existing hedgerows across the site area do not have particularly wide margins along their sides, or have been damaged and / or grubbed up over the years. We could therefore increase the height of these existing hedgerows, identify and plant up any gaps that might exist, as well as introduce additional planting where necessary to serve as screening. We might also examine the existing hedgerow margins and consider appropriate planting where necessary, again doing so on a site-specific basis. Some areas may be better suited for wildflower planting for example, whereas others – such as drainage ditches – may be better suited for the introduction of new species to improve the overall biodiversity value of our proposals.

One of our key aims in undertaking these mitigation and enhancement measures is to find ways to improve the environment through biodiversity enhancements and land management measures specifically targeted to benefit particular species of flora and fauna. For example, we may enhance green infrastructure connectivity by introducing new wildflower planting, or by creating new and strengthening existing links between blocks of woodland. These types of measures will help us achieve our aim of delivering a biodiversity net gain across the site.

We are also considering enhancements below the panels themselves, in the areas marked for potential solar development. The potential for dual use of the land for both electricity development and agriculture will be explored during the development of our proposals and through dialogue with landowners – livestock grazing may potentially form part of a land management plan. For example, some UK solar farms use the land below the panels to graze sheep, or for beekeeping.

Will the panels cover the whole site?

No – the nature of solar development is typically such that a large proportion of the site is free of panels, due to row alignment in relation to the irregular shape of the site boundary as well as pre-existing factors, such as ditches and / or Public Rights of Way (PRoWs). In addition to this, large areas of the site are not proposed for panels at all, but instead would be used for biodiversity or retained in their existing use to protect residential amenity. The initial concept plan for Mallard Pass Solar Farm presented at Stage One showed approximately 38% not containing panels or infrastructure.

Further, the visual impact of the project is duly considered throughout the Development Consent Order (DCO) planning process, specifically through the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). The undulating character of the site area, comprised of small, wooded stands, woodlands and roadside hedges would help naturally screen the project to a substantial extent, and guarantee that there would be no single ground-level viewpoint from which the entire development would be visible. This could only be possible via an aerial, or bird's eye view, of Mallard Pass.

Although Mallard Pass Solar Farm is still in its early stages of design development, our concept plan and proposals will be shaped by our desire to sensitively respond to existing features in the landscape, such as hedgerows, trees, watercourses, PRoWs and residential properties. We aim to provide buffers and offsets to these features and design a project that will respond to the local context, respect public amenity and have a minimised visual impact. All of these factors will influence where solar panels will be located within the proposed area.

How will the site area be kept secure?

What kind of fencing is being considered?

We recognise that many respondents to our Stage One consultation expressed concerns about fencing. We are considering multiple options for how the site will be kept secure and will make proposals on this topic during our Stage Two consultation. No decisions regarding the type and / or location of fencing have yet been made. When these decisions will be made, this will be done on a site-specific basis.

Certain areas may require stock fencing, a type of fence that is primarily used in agricultural settings and that will therefore easily integrate into the pre-existing landscape. Wooden post and wire mesh perimeter fencing is being considered for areas containing solar panels, and these would include in-built small mammal gates at suitable points. In other areas, hedgerow arrangement may be sufficient to secure the development, and will not require the installation of any fencing. There will be some areas with more sensitive pieces of equipment, which will require a more secure environment than others. This could entail palisade fencing for example, which may be needed around the substation compound.

The visual and ecological impacts of this are duly considered throughout the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, measured against the core purpose of securing assets for energy generation and ensuring the safety of local residents and biodiversity.

The installation of CCTV is the most common way to secure solar developments. Motion sensor-activated CCTV cameras are typically mounted on wooded posts and would be installed around the solar panel perimeter fencing. These would not overlook any public or private areas of land, being orientated towards the panels and equipment for Mallard Pass Solar Farm.

Impacts / Landscape and visual

Where will Mallard Pass Solar Farm be visible from?

We recognise that the potential visual impact of our proposals was a key point of concern for local residents and respondents during our Stage One consultation. The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process ensures the careful consideration of these concerns, comprising a chapter specifically focused on the visual impact that our project may have on the surrounding landscape.

The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) that we must undertake helps us identify potential effects of our proposals, as well as distinguish ways to reduce and mitigate these. Given the relatively low height of solar panels and of the majority of associated infrastructure proposed for Mallard Pass Solar Farm – typically below that of a single-story bungalow – the visibility of solar farms is often relatively limited when compared to other types of developments. Retention of existing planting and proposed new planting will assist in reducing the visibility of the proposals. Indeed, it is our objective as the developer to seek to enhance positive impacts and reduce negative impacts, which can be achieved through project design decisions and through proposing appropriate measures for mitigation. Related mitigation measures could, for example, include tree planting and / or hedgerow screening in appropriate locations.

The LVIA process includes extensive environmental surveys and studies, as well as consultation with a range of statutory and non-statutory stakeholders. We have already undertaken a number of initial site visits to understand the landscape character and visual context of Mallard Pass in relation to local settlements and viewpoints. Several viewpoints were investigated from within and around the project from publicly accessible locations to understand the nature of existing views towards and within the site.

The undulating character of the site area, comprised of small, wooded stands, woodlands and roadside hedgerows help naturally screen the project to a substantial extent, and guarantee that there will be no single ground-level viewpoint from which the entire development will be visible. This could only be possible via an aerial, or bird's eye view, of Mallard Pass Solar Farm.

More detailed information relating to a proposed layout will be available during our Stage Two consultation in spring 2022. At Stage Two we will use tools such as photomontages to provide a visual representation of the potential development. The final viewpoints from which the landscape and visual impacts will be assessed will be agreed to in consultation with the landscape officers at Rutland County Council and South Kesteven District Council. We are also committed to sharing results of the LVIA with local communities throughout the planning and development process.

We recognise that individuals with properties nearing and / or on the proposed boundary for Mallard Pass Solar Farm have strong concerns regarding the effects on views from in and around their homes. We will continue engagement with these stakeholders to ensure that potential impacts are appropriately mitigated against.

Following feedback that we received from near neighbours during Stage One, we will undertake a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA). The RVAA is not required in the Development Consent Order (DCO) application process but can be undertaken by developers to assess a project's visual impact on residential properties with a finer and more specified level of detail than the statutory LVIA would alone.

How high will the panels be?

The height of the arrays has yet to be decided and will be subject to the outcome of ongoing environmental investigations that are being carried out onsite, as well as the selection of the exact technology and type of solar infrastructure to be used for Mallard Pass Solar Farm.

However, typical solar panel height is approximately 2.5 – 3 metres (m), and there is a maximum height of at most 3.5 m above ground-level.

As outlined in the Scoping Report submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), other infrastructural elements of the project (not the panels) could be up to 13 m high. This refers to the primary substation, associated buildings and communications-related infrastructure, for example.

The height of panels and other associated infrastructure will be duly considered throughout the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) process. Our aim is to limit the visual impact of our proposals and not break up existing features in the landscape. By retaining existing hedges and landscape features and planting new screenings where possible, we will ensure that the visual impact of all project-related infrastructure is appropriately mitigated against.

Will the solar farm cause any glint or glare?

Solar panels are designed to absorb light and not reflect it. They therefore pose little risk of glint or glare. Testament to this is the installation of solar panels at Gatwick Airport, alongside major roads and beside sports car raceways, such as the 'Top Gear' test track. Another example is Bournemouth Airport, which has solar panels located directly below the approach path as well as near an aircraft runway.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process does nevertheless include a glint and glare assessment that we will be undertaking and submitting with our Development Consent Order (DCO) application, ensuring that potential risks may be appropriately mitigated against if identified.

Will there be any overhead cables?

No – overhead lines do not form a part of our proposals for Mallard Pass Solar Farm. Owing to the proximity of the grid connection, all electrical cables required to serve the development will be buried underground.

What will happen to the land underneath the panels?

How will it be maintained?

Land management is an important consideration for solar projects, and there are a range of options available to ensure adverse impacts are appropriately controlled. The potential for dual use of the land marked for potential solar development in our initial concept plan will be explored during the development of our proposals and through dialogue with landowners. Options include livestock / sheep grazing, beekeeping, and wildflower planting.

As part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, we will produce an outline Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (oLEMP). This document will be formed in response to consultation with key statutory organisations, such as Natural England and the Environment Agency (EA), as well as with local nature and conservation groups, members of the local community and other key stakeholders.

This oLEMP will set out how we will manage the land across the site, including underneath the panels. Our aim is to deliver a biodiversity net gain and make a positive contribution to local biodiversity; and our oLEMP will secure this accordingly. During our Stage Two consultation, we expect to be able to provide more detail on land management measures being considered and proposed.

Impacts / Ecology

What do we mean by biodiversity net gain, and how do we propose to deliver it?

Through the construction of Mallard Pass Solar Farm, we intend to deliver a biodiversity net gain across the site. Biological diversity, or biodiversity, refers to “the variety of life on Earth and the natural patterns it forms,” and includes all living species (humans, animals, plants) ([United Nations Environment Programme](#)). ‘Net gain’ is a term used to describe a specific approach to development that leaves biodiversity in an overall better state than it was in before development was undertaken.

Solar developments are quite often able to deliver significant biodiversity net gains, especially in projects of scale where substantial landscape and environmental improvements can be made. This can be done by changing an area away from semi-intensive farming, removing regimes of herbicides and pesticides, and introducing simple flower mixes which benefit a range of wildlife. Indeed, solar farms allow land to rest without regular ploughing, fertilizing, and spraying with pesticides and herbicides.

Solar farms can also be a great benefit to local wildlife. For example, creating buffering with hedgerows and ditches could create a much larger ecological network in the area. Improving ecological corridors, wildflower planting, and enhancing ecological connectivity are also ways that local biodiversity can be improved. We will be consulting with county ecologists on the scope of ecological surveys to be undertaken, as well as potential impacts on habitats and species to be considered as part of the assessment process.

The Environment Act 2021 has now received royal assent and it includes provisions which relate to the delivery of biodiversity net gain for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). Those provisions are not yet in force, and might not be until two years’ time, but it is expected when they do come into force that a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain will need to be delivered by NSIPs.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process is a crucial part of achieving a biodiversity net gain. It includes a number of environmental and species surveys and assessments that will help us identify all local species and impacts that our proposals may have on them. The findings of these studies will be consulted on with statutory environmental authorities and interest groups and reported in the final Environmental Statement (ES), which is submitted as part of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

Engagement with Natural England and other key statutory stakeholders, as well as community feedback, will help us further refine ways to provide a positive contribution to local biodiversity through the delivery of Mallard Pass Solar Farm.

Will we remove any trees, hedges, or woodlands?

Our first principle and starting point in terms of siting the Mallard Pass Solar Farm in this location is to retain all existing field boundaries, hedgerows, trees and woodland. We are taking these existing features and local context into account in our concept plan, applying a series of setbacks and looking at what land remains to determine our project's capacity.

There could be some instances where our proposals for Mallard Pass may impact these features; for example, we may need to find ways to connect different agricultural fields, or need to remove a small boundary section to put cables in. However, we will do our best to avoid this and will utilise existing gaps wherever it is possible. Further, if such a case does arise, we will examine impacts on a site-specific basis and apply mitigation and enhancement measures accordingly.

Our intention is to retain all existing landscape features and enhance these where appropriate, helping to minimise the overall impact of our project and break up the visual appearance of the development. This is another aim that is accomplished by retaining existing features, such as the railway line or woodland – this helps us ensure that one would not be able to see the whole development from any single vantage point.

How will the project be mindful of local wildlife?

As a major infrastructure project, we recognise the potential impact on wildlife. We appreciate the concerns of Stage One respondents and residents regarding native species, such as birds, deer, and badgers.

Our Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) includes a chapter on ecology and wildlife, and we have already undertaken a number of ecological surveys as part of this process. The results of the ecological surveys carried out to date can be found in the appendices of the EIA Scoping Report, available to view on the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) [website](#). Findings of ongoing and further EIA studies will be shared in our Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) and presented as part of our Stage Two consultation. These results will also be included in the Environmental Statement (ES) that is submitted to PINS as part of our Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

We are confident that Mallard Pass Solar Farm has the potential to deliver significant biodiversity improvements and the retention of existing woodlands, trees, hedgerows, ditches, and other important areas of habitats that support protected species. These existing areas will be retained so far as is feasible, and we will also be proposing new areas for biodiversity enhancements. We intend to deliver a biodiversity net gain across the site.

Additionally, we will be applying appropriate mitigation for these features where appropriate. This may include offsets and buffers that will allow for the protection and continued use of these areas by protected species during the construction, operational and decommissioning phases of the project.

Impacts / Recreational

Will the public still be able to use footpaths (PRoWs; bridleways; byways)?

Yes – we will not permanently close the Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) that currently cross the site. It is possible that, during the construction of the project, pathways may need to be temporarily closed; however, we will do our best to avoid this, and if unavoidable, will provide convenient diversions to ensure that use of the PRoW is still possible.

We recognise that these pathways in and around the site area are a recreational amenity of great importance to the local community, as was highlighted in the feedback received during Stage One. Specific locations used for walking, cycling and horse riding will be considered in the design development process, and our intention is to retain these wherever possible and implement mitigations wherever necessary.

How big will 'buffer zones' be, and what will they entail?

What is the minimum distance from people's homes?

'Buffer zones' have been applied to features within the site, such as hedgerows, trees, woodland, Public Rights of Way (PRoWs) and watercourses. These will also be included in proposals for Mallard Pass Solar Farm to distance the project from other local receptors, such as residential properties. These areas will not be developed, and will be managed for either agricultural, ecological, and / or visual screening purposes.

There is no legally required minimum distance from people's homes that Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) must abide by. Since each buffer zone varies in size dependent on the feature in question, a bespoke design response is taken when applying buffers to nearby residential properties.

As Mallard Pass is still in early stages of design development, the specific size of buffer zones has yet to be determined. Setback-related decisions will be made on respective site-specific bases, as local context can significantly change which measures are most appropriate. For example, homes situated on the side of the road may already have hedges screening their view of adjacent fields. Here, solar farms may be able to be located closer to residential properties than in places with no screening.

We will also undertake a Residential Visual Amenity Assessment (RVAA), which is not required in the Development Consent Order (DCO) application process, but which will allow us to assess the project's visual impact on residential properties with a finer and more specified level of detail than the statutory Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) would alone.

If there is a specific area of concern, we encourage you to respond to the consultation and to be as location specific as possible.

Impacts / Traffic and transport

How will the project impact traffic locally?

We have noted the concerns expressed regarding the potential impacts that construction traffic may have on local residents and wildlife. The impacts of Mallard Pass Solar Farm on local traffic and transport will be assessed as part of our Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). We will be consulting with Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to establish a construction traffic routing strategy that will be supported by an outline Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP), which will be submitted as part of the Development Consent Order (DCO).

This CTMP will be informed by baseline traffic information, professional experience, and data from other projects. It will also provide an expected number of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) movements to be associated with the offshore works for the project.

We have already also begun traffic survey data to assess the impact of our proposals and use these studies to ensure the least amount of traffic disruption is caused by Mallard Pass. The impact is largest during construction and is expected to be negligible during operation. More detailed information regarding traffic and transport will be available during our Stage Two consultation.

How will the site be accessed during, and after, construction?

Site access is an important consideration for us as we refine proposals for Mallard Pass Solar Farm. The Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) ensures that we develop an appropriate access strategy that will seek to avoid and minimise impacts on the highway network. This will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) as part of our Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

As part of our Stage One consultation, we consulted the local highways authority, Lincolnshire County Council, and National Highways to seek their feedback on our proposals. These and other statutory stakeholders will help inform the scope of further assessment work and analysis that we need to ensure that the transport implications from the project are properly considered, and that suitable mitigation, where appropriate, are identified.

In addition to initial site visits, we have also undertaken an assessment of the suitability of existing access points, taking into consideration numerous factors such as: weight restrictions; visibility splays; size of access' proximity to existing junctions; and mature vegetation and utilities.

The existing access options are currently agricultural access points that can accommodate large, heavy agricultural machinery. There are also weight restrictions in place on a few of the smaller local roads, that allow local access. This early-stage information, along with further survey work, will help us prepare temporary and permanent access options for the construction, operation, and decommissioning phases of Mallard Pass Solar Farm; all with a view that seeks to minimise and mitigate the impacts of construction traffic on local communities.

Impacts / Flood risk and hydrology

Is there a risk of flooding onsite?

Will there be any additional runoff or increased risk caused by our proposals?

Evidence from other well-designed solar projects is that developed solar has a negligible impact on flood risk. This is because the ground underneath and between solar panels remains permeable, making it so that runoff does not collect in one place. This means that rainfall will still be evenly distributed in volume across the site.

Permeable grass and establishing wildflower mixes underneath the panels and across the site may also help to reduce runoff. Compared to other cultivated agricultural field types, this may actually provide a benefit and slow runoff because runoff typically decreases when land is not being regularly ploughed. An additional benefit is that since we will not be using fertilizers, herbicides or pesticides, there will be a decrease of these in runoff into local watercourses.

In keeping with good practice and industry standards, we have undertaken initial flood risk assessments to inform our project design and ensure a safe and appropriate layout of Mallard Pass Solar Farm. More information on this topic will be available in the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), which we will present at the start of Stage Two, indicatively scheduled for spring 2022.

From our initial findings, the majority of the project area is located within Flood Zone 1, which is an area classed as having 'low' risk of flooding. The West Glen River, which runs through and adjacent to the area, is designated as a main river and its associated flood plain overlaps with the project area, with areas of the project being located within Flood Zones 2 and 3 ('medium' and 'high' risk).

We have already begun engaging with the Environment Agency (EA) to get their flood data and to understand the volumes in the area, and we will continue to engage with the EA and the local flood authority as we prepare the Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) that will be submitted as part of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application. This will include an outline of our drainage strategy to ensure that the solar farm will not cause an increase in flooding offsite.

All hydrology, flood and / or runoff risks will be identified through the FRA and will therefore be accompanied with appropriate mitigation measures. This could include, for example, swales which will capture runoff and prevent an increase in its speed or runoff during a flood event.

As part of our Stage Two consultation, we will be engaging with statutory stakeholders, including the EA, to discuss our proposals and ensure a safe and appropriate layout of the Mallard Pass Solar Farm. Part of the statutory consultation exercise includes engagement with key local and national bodies, such as the Flood and Water team, Welland and Deepings Internal Drainage Board and Lincolnshire Fire and Rescue service. These are an integral part of the process to ensure that adequate safety measures are met wherever needed.

Impacts / Health

Does solar farm infrastructure impact the health of nearby residents?

How will the health impacts of Mallard Pass Solar Farm be properly assessed and mitigated?

Our Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will consider impacts to public health, and, where necessary, any impacts will be mitigated against in our Development Consent Order (DCO) application. The preliminary impacts and suggested mitigation measures related to public health will be presented in our Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) during our Stage Two consultation.

As part of the EIA process, we must undertake extensive surveys that investigate the potential health impacts of our proposals and are required to consult with a range of statutory stakeholders; including the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the National Health Service (NHS) Commissioning Board (NHS England), the Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group, the East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group, and Public Health England. The results of the EIA will be reported within the Environmental Statement (ES) and submitted in support of the DCO application.

Will there be health impacts from Electromagnetic Frequencies (EMF)?

No – as with all electrical appliances and equipment, the required infrastructure for Mallard Pass Solar Farm will generate electromagnetic fields (EMF). However, the electric field will be shielded in order to remain significantly below guideline EMF levels for public health protection. The view of health protection bodies, based on a wide-ranging health evidence, is that low-frequency EMF is not a cause of health risks and that the guideline exposure standards in place are satisfactory.

As part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process, we must undertake extensive surveys that investigate the potential health impacts of our proposals and are required to consult with a range of statutory stakeholders; including the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the National Health Service (NHS) Commissioning Board (NHS England), the Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group, the East Leicestershire and Rutland Clinical Commissioning Group, and Public Health England. The results of the EIA are reported within the Environmental Statement (ES) and submitted in support of the planning application.

Impacts / Socio-economic

Will Mallard Pass Solar Farm increase my energy bills?

No – the costs of solar power have dropped significantly and solar energy is now the cheapest form of electricity in history ([Carbon Brief](#)). In the context of rising gas prices, it is our aim to deliver a project that uses the best and latest technology available to support affordable energy generation, while also increasing the supply of energy generated in the UK. Mallard Pass Solar Farm will therefore deliver low-cost clean energy to help combat climate change, at no additional cost to the consumer.

How many local jobs will be created?

As part of our Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), we will consider the socio-economic impacts of Mallard Pass Solar Farm. This will include the expected local employment figures during the construction, operation, and maintenance of Mallard Pass. More information on this will be made available as we move forward in the planning and consultation process.

Why can't we exclusively provide the energy generated by Mallard Pass to local residents?

It is the responsibility of the system operator, National Grid ESO, to ensure that sufficient electricity can be transmitted to meet consumption, wherever and whenever that consumption is needed.

In the UK, energy generation is undertaken by the private sector; however, the transmission of electricity is a regulated service undertaken on behalf of the state by National Grid ESO. By exporting directly to the grid, electricity generated by Mallard Pass Solar Farm will deliver the biggest decarbonisation and cost benefit to the UK. Indeed, Mallard Pass will increase the mix of low-cost renewable energy to the national grid through its connection at Ryhall substation.

Contact us



Contact us

We want to keep you informed and hear your views on Mallard Pass Solar Farm.

We have established dedicated communications lines for the project, which will be active for the duration of consultation on Mallard Pass Solar Farm.

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

- Email: info@MallardPassSolar.co.uk
- Freephone information line: **0808 196 8717**
- Freepost: **FREEPOST MALLARD PASS SOLAR FARM**

Keep updated as the planning and consultation process moves forward.

Stage One of our community consultation for Mallard Pass Solar Farm ran for six weeks, from Thursday 04 November 2021 to Thursday 16 December 2021. Our statutory Stage Two consultation is expected to take place later this year, in spring 2022.

In the meantime, please feel free to visit our website www.MallardPassSolar.co.uk, where you can view and download all materials and information regarding Mallard Pass Solar Farm.

Additionally, if you would like to stay up to date on our proposals, please sign up to our electronic mailing list by registering at www.MallardPassSolar.co.uk/Contact.



Write to us at:

FREEPOST MALLARD
PASS SOLAR FARM



Email us at:

info@MallardPassSolar.co.uk



Call our Freephone information line:

0808 196 8717



Visit our website at:

www.MallardPassSolar.co.uk

