

Welcome

Welcome to the Picts Lane Solar Farm and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) consultation

At EDF Renewables we're committed to tackling climate change. Our ambition is to create a net zero future where clean, green, energy powers every aspect of our lives.

This consultation is designed to show our initial proposals for a new solar farm and battery energy storage system in Cowfold, which could provide enough energy to power 10,000 homes a year.

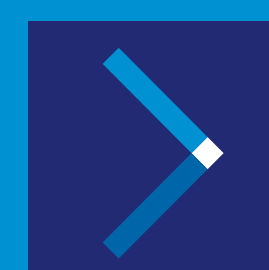
Read on to learn more about the plans: we've provided information on what is planned, including environmental impacts and options, and have responded to the feedback we have already had.

Please let us know what you think, and the team is on hand to answer any questions.

LOCATION OF PROPOSED SCHEME



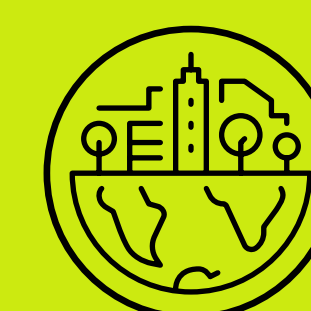
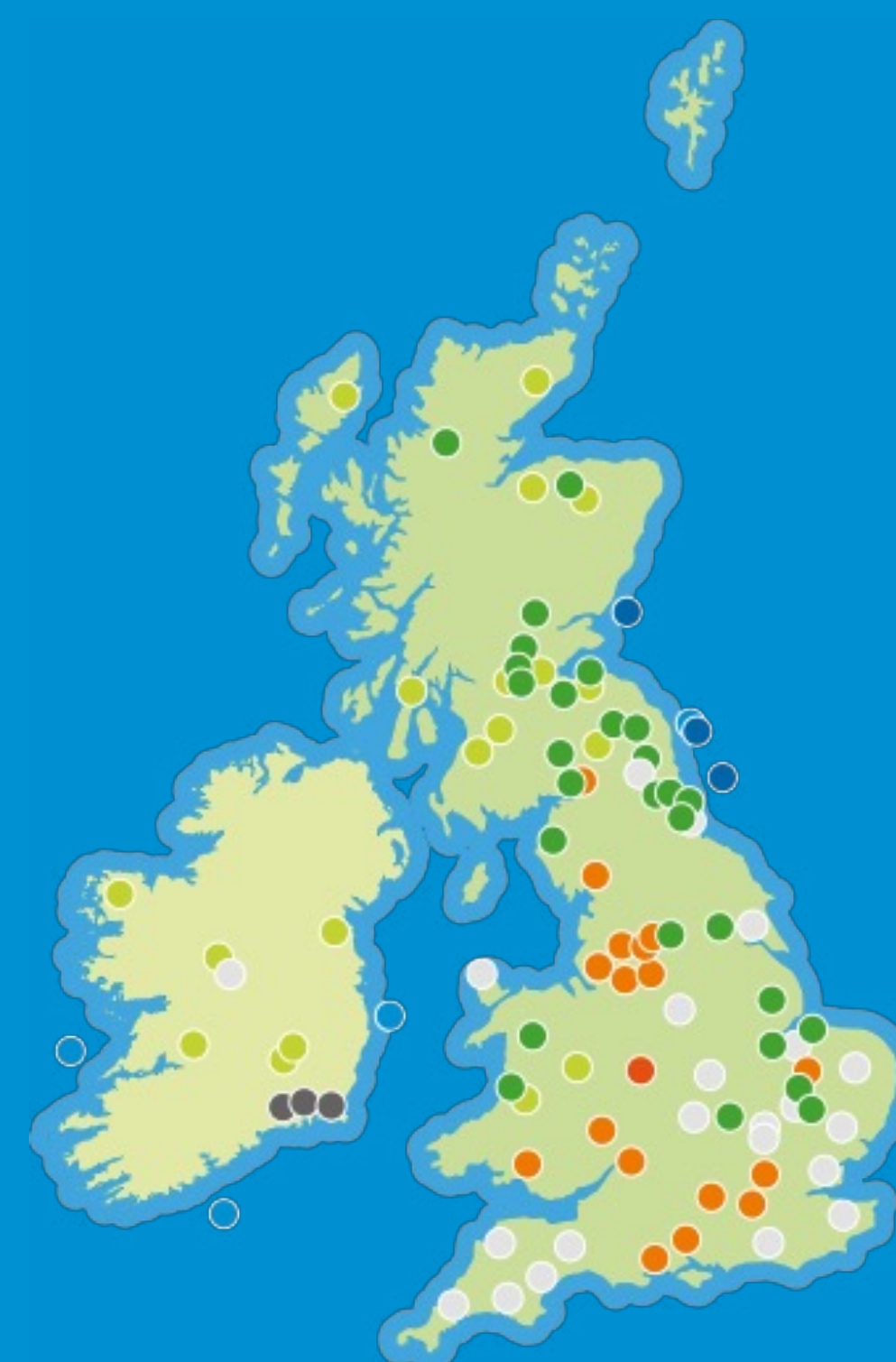
 Project boundary  No build area



EDF Renewables UK and Ireland has developed a diverse portfolio of operational and future assets.

2GW operational
14GW pipeline

-  Offshore - Pipeline
-  Offshore - Operational, under construction or post-FID
-  Onshore - Pipeline
-  Onshore - Operational, under construction or post-FID
-  Battery storage - Pipeline
-  Battery storage - Operational, under construction or post-FID
-  Solar PV - Pipeline
-  Solar PV - Operational, under construction or post-FID



WHY WE NEED RENEWABLE ENERGY

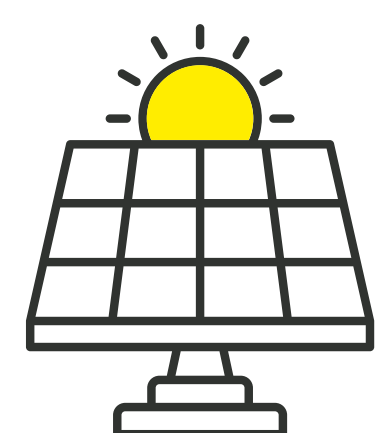
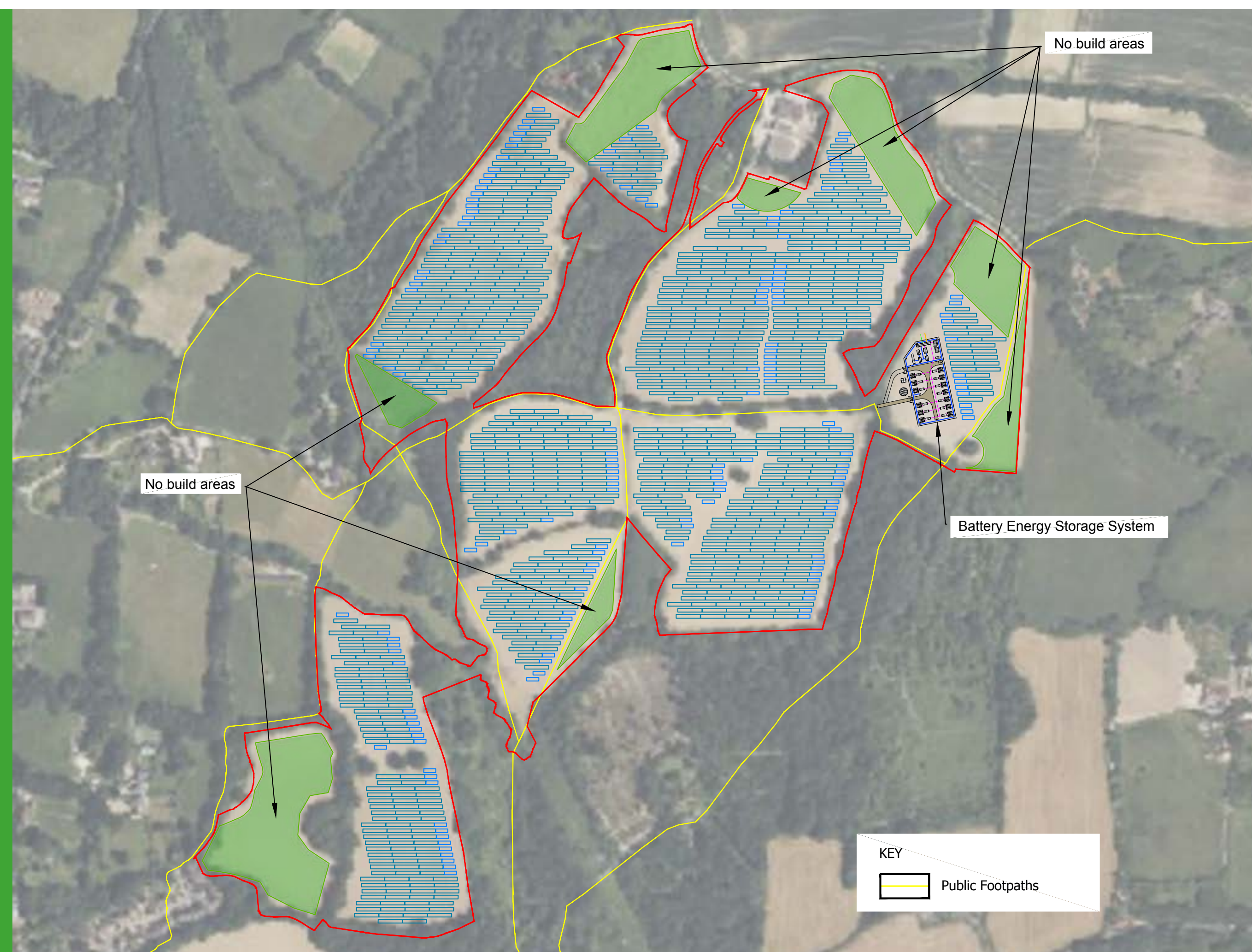
Renewable sources are clean, abundant, and increasingly cost-effective. They help reduce our national dependence on fossil fuels, cut harmful emissions, and mean the UK is not reliant on foreign fuel sources.

They are a key tool in combatting climate change, which aside from harming the planet is also the biggest threat to food security. The UK is already seeing

unpredictable weather patterns and more rain due to climate change, which makes it harder to produce crops reliably - renewable energy will help to reduce this impact.

The UK government has committed to ambitious net zero targets of generating 70GW of renewable energy by 2035, 1.1GW of which is required to be solar power and in the south-east of England.

Our vision



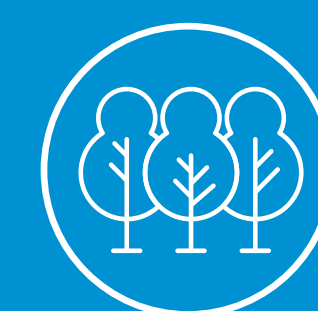
We have been hard at work reviewing the site to see how we can build a renewable energy project that best benefits both the UK energy sector and Cowfold.

We ran a widespread community sentiment survey in May 2025, which has helped us focus our consultation materials today and helped us with our overall vision for the project.



OUR VISION INCLUDES:

- A renewable energy site combining solar generation and battery storage capable of powering around 10,000 homes per year
- A detailed landscape scheme, using landscape buffers and retaining treelines
- Improvements to existing local roads and footpaths
- A focus on environmental improvements to deliver a biodiversity net gain, including habitat creation and planting
- Potential creation of a new public open space close to Cowfold village
- A community fund to support local projects during the site's operational lifetime



SUITABILITY OF LAND

The site is largely grassland with crops to feed birds grown in some areas. Crops here are not currently farmed for human consumption, and the site itself is not of high-grade agricultural land. Therefore, installation of solar and battery storage on this site will not impact UK food production.

The existing trees, hedgerows and the natural topography of the land will help to screen any long-range views of the site and provide a sound buffer for any

minimal noise that may be produced when the site is in operation.

A proportion of the land will remain free of solar panels and storage systems, allowing us to enhance existing habitats and create new ones. The area with the green boundary on the site map has already been identified as one such area which will remain undeveloped and enhanced for the local community to enjoy.



SUITABILITY OF LOCATION

As part of the site selection process EDF Renewables considered a wide range of environmental factors to determine the suitability of the site.

The site is not subject to any site specific landscape or environmental designations. Importantly, the site is also suitable for solar development due its proximity to

an agreed grid connection at Bolney substation which means a more efficient form of development can be achieved.

The area has high levels of solar irradiation, which represents the brightness of sunlight in any given location, making it a good location for a solar development.

What is a Solar Farm?



BENEFITS

- Solar energy is clean, renewable and low in carbon.
- It is also cost-effective and quick to build compared to other energy sources.
- The land around the panels can be managed to improve biodiversity, creating space for wildflowers, birds and insects.
- Once the panels are removed at the end of the project's life, the land will be returned to its original use.



SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Solar farms are designed with safety in mind and are subject to strict planning and environmental regulations. The technology is well-established and reliable, with no moving parts, making it one of the safest forms of energy generation.

Trained professionals install panels, and sites are securely fenced and monitored. There is no risk of harmful emissions, and the low noise levels mean solar farms are often quiet places to be nearby.



HOW IT WORKS

Solar panels capture energy from sunlight and convert it into electricity using photovoltaic (PV) technology. The panels do not need direct sunlight to work, meaning they can still produce power on cloudy days and during the winter months. The electricity generated at the site will then be sent to the national electricity grid via Bolney substation to help power homes and other buildings across the country.

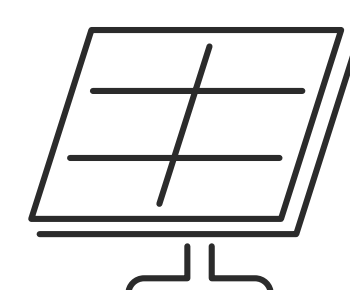
What is a Battery Energy Storage System?



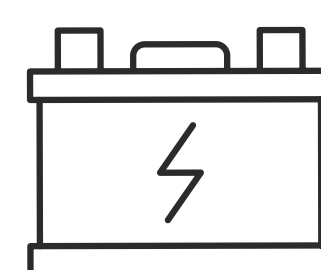
BESS screened by greenery



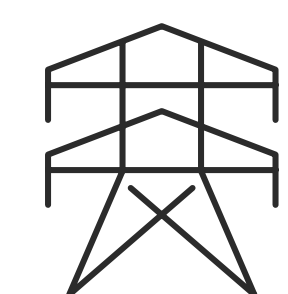
HOW IT WORKS



When more electricity is produced than is needed at that moment, surplus energy is stored in the batteries.



Batteries store electricity much like a large-scale version of the ones in phones or electric cars.



Later, when electricity use is high or generation is low, the stored energy is released back into **the grid**.



BENEFITS

- Battery storage helps make the national energy system more resilient and efficient.
- They support renewable energy generation by balancing natural highs and lows of solar generation.
- Batteries can charge when renewable energy is plentiful and discharge when it is scarce.
- Reduces the risk of blackouts and reduces reliance on fossil fuels.



SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Battery storage systems are built using proven and widely used technology. Thoroughly vetted trained experts install the equipment, the systems are monitored 24/7 and maintained regularly to operate safely and reliably.

The planning process will involve a site-specific Battery Safety Management Plan, outlining any risks and the ways these risks would be prevented or reduced.

This can include measures such as automatic shut-offs in case of high temperatures, flame-retardant batteries,

and containment measures for gas emissions in the unlikely event of an incident.

These plans will be kept up to date throughout the lifetime of the project, updating when new governmental guidance comes forward. We will work closely with the local Fire Service to inform them of our approach.

The Health and Safety Executive considers the current regulatory framework to be “sufficient and suitably robust in relation to lithium-ion batteries.”

Community benefits



FOOTPATHS

We recognise that there are Public Right of Way footpaths through and alongside the site. While the panels and the battery energy storage system will be fenced off for safety reasons,

we are committed to protecting and enhancing the existing local footpaths and finding new ways for the local community to enjoy this site.



COMMUNITY FUND

EDF Renewables is committed to improving the environment but also to providing support to the local communities near our energy projects.

As part of the project at Picts Lane, a community fund will be provided to support local projects and initiatives throughout the lifetime of the solar project.

The funding can support a wide range of local priorities from small projects like school garden schemes to larger efforts such as improving community spaces.

At our Beck Burn Wind Farm the fund has been running since 2018, and has provided funding for new sports pitches,

a community café, new windows for the village hall, and a goose tagging project with the local Wildlife and Wetland Trust.

Our Sutton Bridge Solar Farm became operational in 2024 and recently celebrated the award of its first grants to local initiatives in the area, including to the local foodbank and the Bowls Club. The funding enabled both organisations to continue providing important services and opportunities for social interaction to those in the area.

We would love to hear about groups or initiatives that could benefit from this fund in Cowfold - let us know.



ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

We understand local roads are congested and narrow with poor surfacing in places. We are liaising with West Sussex County Council to agree a

series of road improvement measures that provide appropriate access, and that the community will also be able to benefit from.



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Picts Lane Solar Farm will create a range of job opportunities during planning, construction, and ongoing operation.

EDF Renewables works with engineers, environmental specialists, and local contractors wherever possible, helping to boost the local economy.

The environment



ENHANCING NATURE

Our ecologists are developing ideas in line with the Local Plan and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy to create a richer habitat for wildlife and an area for the community to enjoy. This may include:

- Enhancing woodland areas by expanding tree cover and improving habitat quality
- Establishing habitat corridors and landscape features to support biodiversity
- Creating spaces for wildlife such as nightingales and other locally valued species



IMPROVING HABITATS

Good habitat management helps ecosystems thrive. Across the site, we will:

- Focus on boosting biodiversity in margins and between panels
- Restoring and extending hedgerows and meadows for green corridors
- Supporting pollination, species movement, and long-term ecological health



BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

We aim to deliver at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), which may include:

- Improving soil health and allowing the soil an extended break from pesticides and fertilisers
- Creating and restoring wildlife habitats across the site
- Managing land to encourage more plants, birds, and insects



ECOLOGICAL SURVEYS

Several ecological surveys are underway to fully understand the wildlife currently present. This information will help guide how we protect and enhance habitats as part of the scheme. Before any work begins, we will:

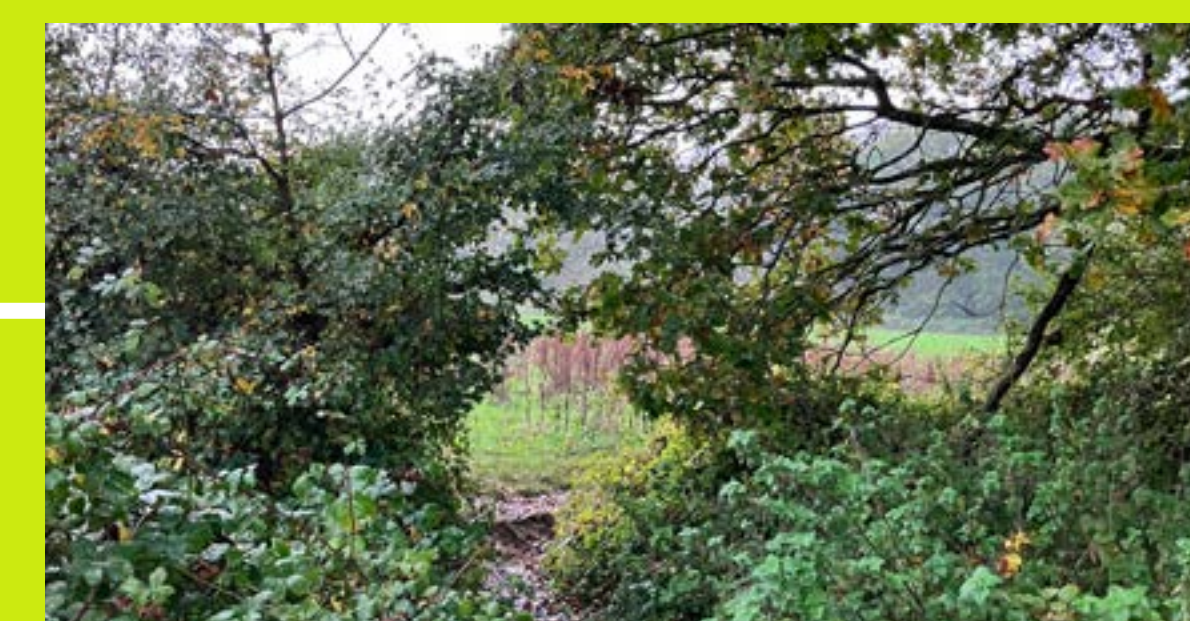
- Carry out detailed ecological surveys led by trained professionals
- Use findings to guide our design and environmental commitments
- Continue monitoring over time to respond to changing conditions and maximise benefits.



PROTECTING EXISTING SPECIES

We manage our solar farms to support local wildlife and avoid disruption to existing habitats. At Picts Lane, we will:

- Protect species already living on and around the site
- Provide calm, low-disturbance areas that benefit birds, bees, butterflies and mammals
- Use sensitive land management practices to help local species thrive



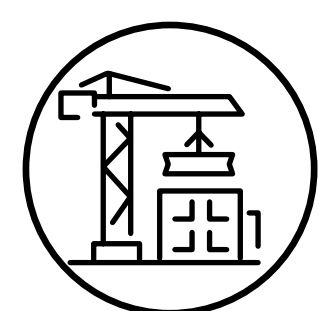
BUFFER ZONES

To protect sensitive areas, we will also include buffer zones between fenland and woodland, helping to reduce construction impact and support long-term ecological resilience.

Construction and operation

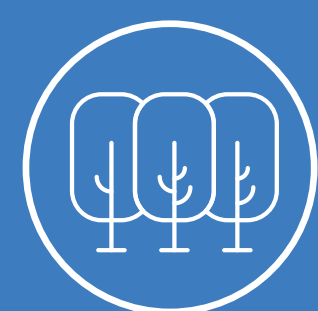


Viewpoint from Picts Lane



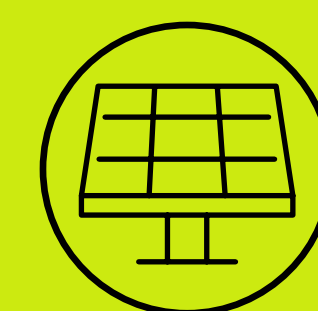
CONSTRUCTION IMPACT ON RESIDENTS AND ROADS

During construction, a traffic management plan will be in place. There will be plenty of signage and construction drivers must navigate to and from the site with care. There will be a Construction Environmental Management Plan agreed with the Council to show how the construction will be managed to minimise negative impacts.



IMPACT DURING OPERATION

Once operational, the site will be very quiet, with minimal noise. The surrounding trees and hedges will provide a buffer, and you would need to listen carefully to hear any sound. We have specifically designed the layout to minimise the visual impact, and planting for extra screening will be considered.



DE-COMMISSIONING PROCESS

After approximately 40 years, the solar panels will be safely decommissioned and removed from the site. 99% of the components of solar panels can be recycled currently, and recycling methods continue to improve. The land itself will be reinstated to its current use.



Project timeline



ONGOING: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND BENEFITS

- We continue working with the local community throughout the project
- A Community Benefit Fund will be launched to support local initiatives

STAGE 1

SITE ASSESSMENT & EARLY ENGAGEMENT

- Environmental and technical surveys begin
- Early conversations with local councils and stakeholders
- Local community informed and invited to share initial views

STAGE 2

PREPARING THE PLANNING APPLICATION

- EDF Renewables and partners to complete detailed site surveys and finalise designs
- A planning application is prepared and submitted to Horsham District Council, likely by the end of 2025
- Updated information shared, with the community

STAGE 3

PLANNING DECISION PERIOD

- Planning Officers at Horsham District Council will review the application and seek responses from statutory consultees
- Residents and local stakeholders will be able to formally comment
- A planning decision is usually made within 8 to 16 weeks

STAGE 4

POST-DECISION AND NEXT STEPS

- If approved, EDF Renewables will discharge planning conditions and prepare for construction
- Final design updates can then be shared with the community
- A construction timetable covering around 18 months of work will be confirmed and shared locally

Get involved



NAMING THE SITE

We have been referring to the site as Picts Lane Solar Farm, but is there a better name? Add your ideas and the reason or history behind the suggestion to your feedback form.



HAVE YOUR SAY AND KEEP IN TOUCH

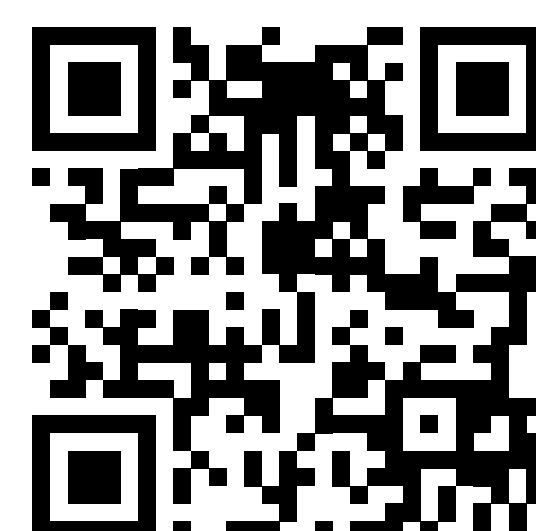
Don't forget to check out our FAQ cards on the next table, then fill out our feedback form with any comments.

All your comments today, and from our initial community sentiment survey, will be taken into account as we create our plans.

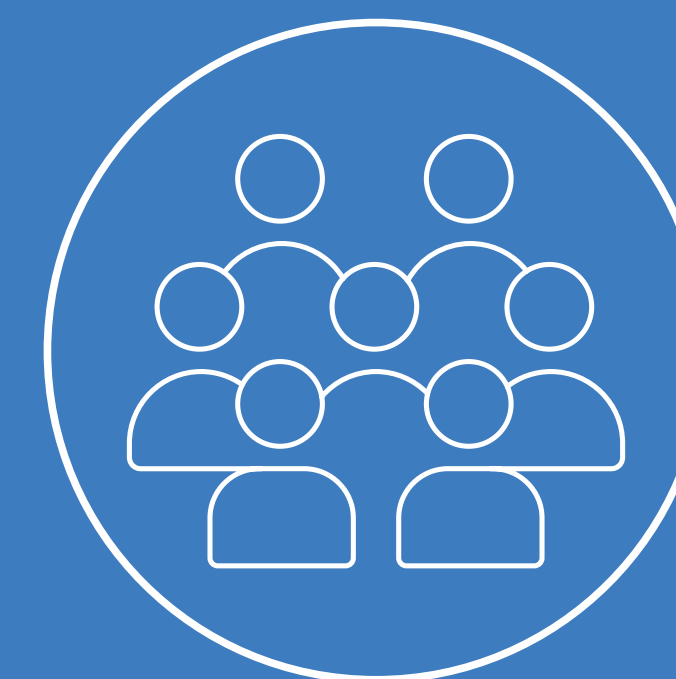
For more information and to keep updated on the plans as they progress, visit:

www.edf-re.uk/our-sites/picts-lane

To get in touch with the project team, please email **pictslane@edf-re.uk**



SCAN FOR WEBSITE



COMMUNITY SPACE

The southern field has been designated as a 'no build' area, and will be open for the community to use.

Below are some potential options for the use of that space.

Pop a sticker on what you'd like to see this space become.



What the farm could look like



Current view from Picts Lane



View after one year of operation



View after ten years of operation



Current view from footpath on South West of site



View after one year of operation



View after ten years of operation



Current view from Picts Lane



View after one year of operation



View after ten years of operation