

Welcome

Welcome to the public consultation for Stoke Lane Solar Farm, a proposed solar project on land between Swainsthorpe and Stoke Holy Cross.

EDF power solutions is proposing a solar farm with a capacity of roughly 70 MW, generating enough low-carbon electricity to supply around 21,000 homes, using a connection into existing EDF power solutions infrastructure.



WHY WE ARE CONSULTING

We are consulting residents, businesses, parish councils, community groups and other stakeholders to share our proposals and get feedback while the details can still be refined. A planning application will then be submitted for consideration.

Your input will help inform our approach to site access, construction traffic, road management, landscape mitigation, screening, biodiversity, long-term land management and the community benefit fund.



Please ask any questions or let us know what you think using the feedback forms.



THE CURRENT PROPOSAL AT A GLANCE

Category	Details
Location	Around 5km south of Norwich, east of Swainsthorpe and west of Stoke Holy Cross.
Site area	Approximately 84 hectares, with a portion of the site utilised for landscape and ecological mitigation, Biodiversity Net Gain and potential habitat creation or enhancement.
Capacity	Approximately 70 MW.
Project type	Solar photovoltaic generation (solar panels).
Operational period	Temporary permission for 40 years, followed by decommissioning, recycling and site restoration.
Planning route	A full planning application to South Norfolk Council.



ABOUT EDF POWER SOLUTIONS

EDF power solutions develops, constructs and operates renewable energy projects including solar, onshore and offshore wind, battery storage and electric vehicle charging infrastructure, with operational sites across England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

EDF power solutions operates more than 2 GW of renewable energy assets across the UK and Ireland and has delivered more than £10 million of community investment across England, Scotland and Wales to date.



A LOCAL PRESENCE

EDF power solutions already has a local presence through Bloy's Grove Solar Farm and the Norwich Battery Energy Storage System. We will use our existing knowledge of the local area to engage

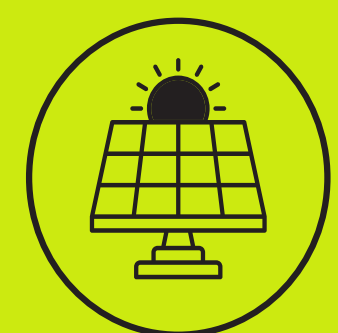
effectively with the community and mitigate potential impacts resulting from the proposed development where possible.

Why renewable energy



Image from EDF power solutions' Bloy's Grove Solar Farm

Solar energy can help provide low-carbon electricity and support a more secure, diverse and resilient energy system.



WHY SOLAR?

- Solar panels generate electricity without producing net greenhouse gas emissions.
- Solar is a well-established technology that can be deployed relatively quickly.
- Land around the panels can be managed for habitat creation, biodiversity and long-term landscape improvement.
- The panels and associated equipment can be removed at the end of the project, allowing the land to be restored.



HOW IT WORKS

Solar panels generate direct-current electricity. Inverters convert this into alternating current, transformers adjust the voltage, and underground

cables carry the electricity to the grid connection point. The panels do not need direct sunshine and can continue to generate power on cloudy days.



THE MAIN COMPONENTS

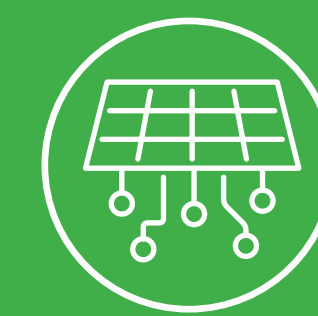
- Rows of ground-mounted solar panels.
- Inverters, transformers and other electrical equipment.
- Internal access tracks and underground cabling.
- Security fencing and CCTV.
- Landscape planting, habitat areas and drainage features.



SAFE AND QUIET OPERATION

Solar technology is well established and subject to planning, electrical and environmental standards. The site would be securely fenced and monitored. Solar farms do not normally

require extensive permanent lighting and, once operational, the site would be very quiet, with only occasional maintenance visits.



WHY WE NEED RENEWABLE ENERGY

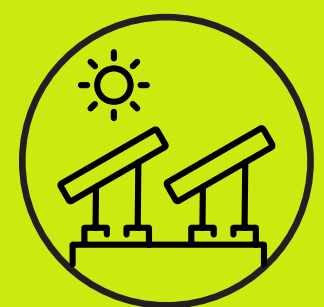
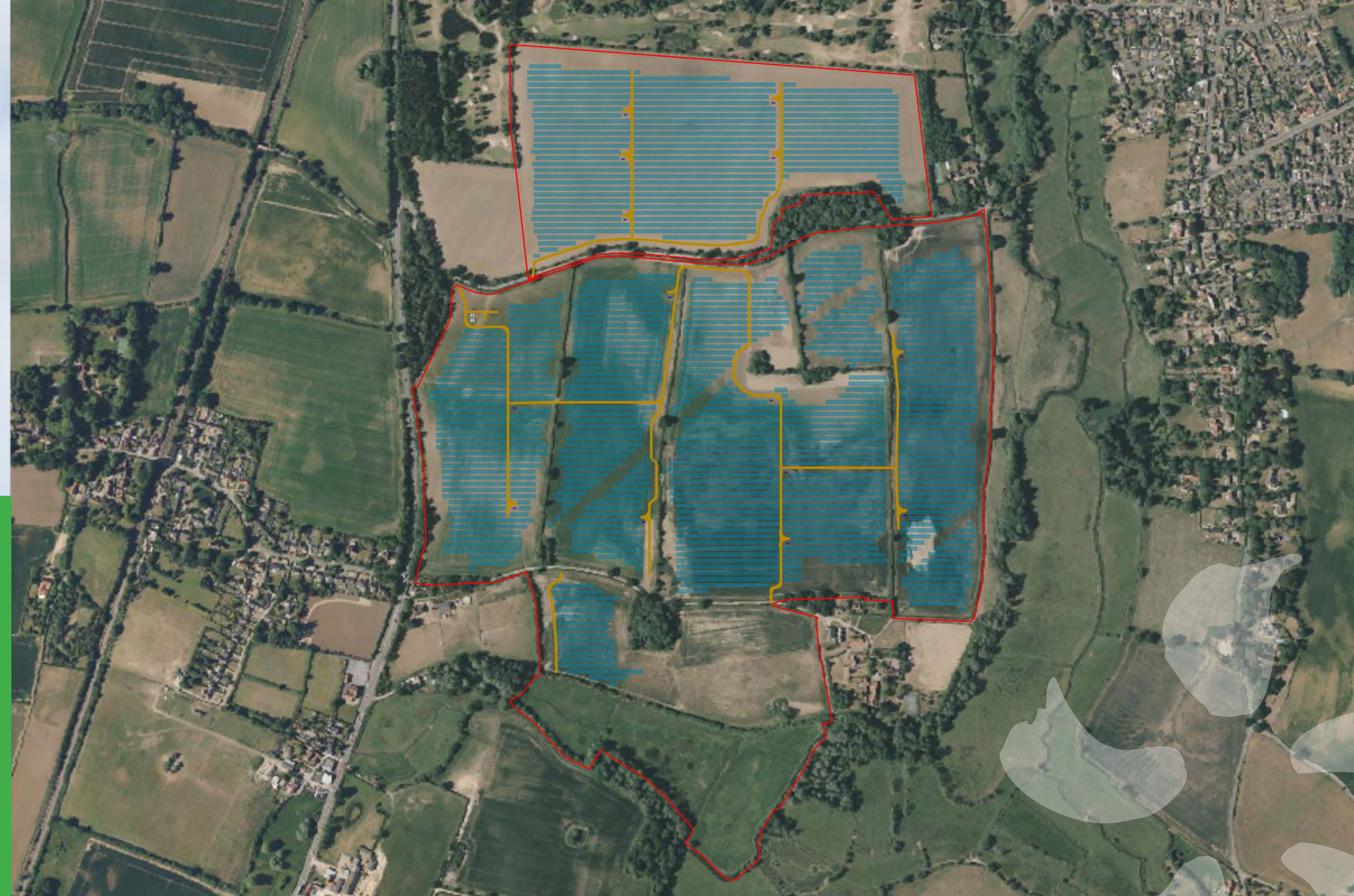
Renewable energy sources are clean, widely available and increasingly cost-effective. Expanding their use would reduce the UK's dependence on fossil fuels and imported energy, while cutting harmful emissions.

Renewables are also essential to tackling climate change, which threatens

both the environment and the UK's food security. Increasingly harsh and unpredictable weather can make it harder for farmers to produce crops reliably. By reducing greenhouse gas emissions, renewable energy can help protect the natural environment and support the UK's long-term food security.

Our vision, the site and grid connection

Stoke Lane Solar Farm is being developed as a bespoke renewable energy project, shaped around the specific landscape, local roads, environmental surveys and community feedback.



OUR VISION INCLUDES

- Approximately 70 MW of solar generation, subject to design refinement, survey findings, consultation feedback and the planning process.
- A carefully tailored design that responds to village geography, existing screening and local views.
- A short underground cable connection, making the most of existing infrastructure.
- Landscape and ecological mitigation, supported by a Biodiversity Net Gain strategy.
- A managed construction approach covering routes, working hours, road conditions and communication.
- A community benefit fund shaped by local priorities and governed transparently.



THE SITE

The site lies between Swainsthorpe and Stoke Holy Cross. The A140 is to the west, Stoke Lane runs through the site, and the River Tas and associated landscape features lie to the south and east. The site is currently agricultural fields divided by hedgerows and trees.

The site has access to a nearby grid connection through existing infrastructure. It would connect using an underground cable at the consented EDF power solutions battery storage facility west of the A140 and north of Hickling Lane.

The design is being developed around the specific site, including its landscape character, existing vegetation, local roads, nearby homes and environmental constraints.

East Anglia is one of the sunnier parts of the UK and benefits from relatively level, open land and

access to existing grid infrastructure, making it well suited to solar energy development.

We recognise that communities in the Stoke Holy Cross, Swainsthorpe and Dunston areas have already seen several renewable energy projects. We are therefore committed to developing Stoke Lane Solar Farm responsibly, with careful consideration of local communities and measures to minimise potential impacts on those who live and work in the area.

Landscape and views

The layout is being developed to reduce visual effects and respond to the character of the Tas Valley, nearby villages and local viewpoints.

Visual screening - Edf power solutions example



DESIGNING AROUND THE LANDSCAPE

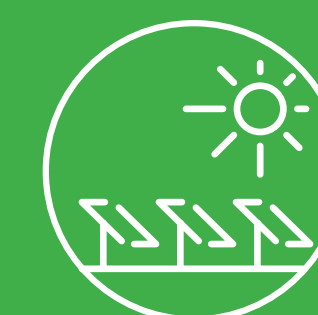
The project team is assessing landscape character, existing screening and views from nearby homes, roads and other sensitive locations.

The final layout will be informed by feedback from the community and a formal Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment.



POTENTIAL MITIGATION

- Retaining and strengthening existing hedgerows and woodland where possible.
- Setting panels back from sensitive boundaries and key viewpoints.
- Creating landscape buffers and new planting to soften views.
- Managing planting and habitats for the full operational life of the project.



WHAT THE SOLAR FARM COULD LOOK LIKE

Visualisations for Stoke Lane Solar Farm will be created as part of the planning process to show how the proposal may be seen from selected local viewpoints.

We will share these visualisations with the Local Planning Authority and local stakeholders once the design of our project is finalised.

The environment

Environmental and technical surveys are shaping the design, helping the project avoid sensitive features, reduce effects and identify opportunities for improvement.



ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

Ecology surveys are assessing habitats and protected species, including badgers, great crested newts, and breeding and wintering birds. The project will deliver at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), creating and enhancing habitats with long-term management. Potential measures at Stoke Lane could include:

- New or enhanced hedgerows and wildflower margins.
- Habitat buffers and improved connections between existing habitats.
- Ponds or species-specific measures where supported by survey findings.
- Protection and enhancement of retained trees, hedgerows and field margins.

Research shows that well-managed solar farms can support biodiversity. An RSPB study found nature-friendly solar farms supported more bird species and nearly three times as many birds as nearby arable farmland, while Solar Energy UK's Solar Habitat 2026 report, covering more than 300 sites, found that well-managed solar farms can provide valuable wildlife habitats.



AGRICULTURAL LAND AND SOILS

The site is currently agricultural land. An Agricultural Land Classification Report will be submitted with the planning application, confirming the grade. Climate change is recognised by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs as one of the most severe and long-term risks to food security. By generating low-carbon electricity, solar farms can form part of the wider response to climate change, while allowing land to return to agricultural use at the end of their operational life.

For this site, soil handling, storage and restoration measures will be set out through the planning process. After 40 years, the equipment would be removed and the site restored to a condition comparable to its current agricultural baseline.



WATER, HERITAGE AND OTHER ASSESSMENTS

The site is predominantly in Flood Zone 1 (low risk), although the southern edge includes higher flood-risk land associated with the River Tas. Built infrastructure will seek to avoid higher-risk areas, supported by a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy. Heritage, archaeology, trees, noise, glint and glare will also be assessed and used to refine the design and mitigation.



Construction and operation

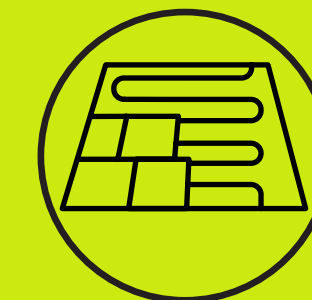


Construction effects would be temporary and managed through detailed traffic and environmental plans agreed before work begins.



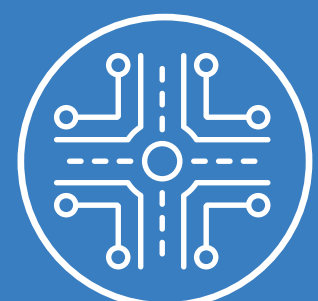
CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME

Construction is expected to take up to 18 months in total, including site preparation, construction and commissioning. The programme and working hours will be confirmed through the planning process.



MANAGING NOISE, DUST AND THE CABLE ROUTE

A Construction Environmental Management Plan will set controls for noise, vibration, dust, surface water and site working practices. The grid connection is expected to use a short underground cable route crossing the A140 and, depending on final routing, potentially part of Stoke Lane. No new overhead lines are proposed.



TRAFFIC AND LOCAL ROADS

Construction traffic is expected to use the A140, with site access likely to be taken from Stoke Lane. A Transport Statement and Construction Traffic Management Plan will set out routing, access arrangements, working hours, road-condition safeguards and communication arrangements.

This Plan will be approved and monitored by South Norfolk Council.

The project team will consider school-run periods, buses, local business deliveries, walkers, cyclists and everyday village traffic. A clear contact route will be provided for construction-related issues.



OPERATION AND DECOMMISSIONING

Once operational, there would be no permanent on-site presence and only occasional maintenance visits using small vehicles. At the end of the 40-year period, the panels would be removed. Up to 95% of the materials in a solar panel are recyclable,

and recycling processes continue to develop. The land itself will be reinstated to its current use.

Community benefits

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



COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND

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 gardens to larger efforts such as improving community spaces.

The fund will be managed by a trusted third-party organisation, with spending shaped by residents, parish councils and community groups.

The community benefit fund is expected to be around £400 per MW.



SEPARATE FROM THE PLANNING DECISION

The planning application will be assessed on its planning merits.

The community benefit fund would be separate from the planning decision and would not be a payment for support or a reason for planning approval.



POTENTIAL OPTIONS

The community benefit fund could support practical projects identified by local people, such as:

- Improvements to community spaces, such as village halls and sports facilities.
- Support for local clubs, foodbanks and community services.
- Biodiversity, landscape and wildlife projects.
- Education, skills and community transport initiatives.

Similar EDF power solutions funds have supported a wide range of projects elsewhere. Since 2018, the Beck Burn

Wind Farm fund has helped fund new sports pitches, a community café, replacement village hall windows and a goose-tagging project with the local Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust. At Sutton Bridge Solar Farm, the first grants were recently awarded to local initiatives including a foodbank and bowls club.

We would like to hear from residents about the groups, projects and local priorities that could benefit from a fund in the Stoke Holy Cross area.



LOCAL EMPLOYMENT AND CONTRACTING OPPORTUNITIES

EDF power solutions employs local people and works with local suppliers, contractors and other businesses where possible to provide a positive local economic impact.

At Bloy's Grove solar farm, we were able to work with a specialist sub-contractor, GenCarbon, to offer work placements to those keen to develop their skills and embark on a career in renewables.

Planning process and project timeline

Stoke Lane Solar Farm would be determined through a full planning application to South Norfolk Council. It is not a nationally significant infrastructure project and will not use the Development Consent Order (DCO) process.



STAGE 1

SURVEYS AND PUBLIC CONSULTATION - WE ARE HERE

Environmental and technical surveys continue. Local stakeholders and the wider community are invited to understand the emerging proposals and provide feedback before the design is finalised.

STAGE 2

REFINE THE DESIGN AND PREPARE THE APPLICATION

EDF power solutions will review consultation feedback, consider changes to the proposal and complete the technical assessments needed for a full planning application.

STAGE 3

COUNCIL ASSESSMENT AND DECISION

South Norfolk Council will assess the application, consult statutory bodies and invite formal public comments before making a planning decision.

STAGE 4

IF PLANNING PERMISSION IS GRANTED

Detailed pre-construction requirements would be agreed, the community would be updated and an approximately 18-month construction programme would be confirmed. We anticipate that the site will be fully operational by 2030.

ONGOING ENGAGEMENT

EDF power solutions will continue to provide project information, respond to questions and work with local communities as the proposal progresses.

If the project is consented, engagement would continue through a dedicated Stoke Lane Solar Farm Community Liaison Group and through the community benefit fund.

Have your say



YOUR FEEDBACK MATTERS.

This consultation is taking place before a planning application is submitted so local comments can help shape the proposal while key details are still being refined.



**Speak to a member of the team today,
and don't forget to fill out a feedback form.**

WHAT YOUR FEEDBACK WILL HELP SHAPE

We welcome views on access, traffic, roads, landscape, screening, biodiversity, land management and the community benefit fund.

FIND OUT MORE AND PROVIDE FEEDBACK

-  www.edf-powersolutions.uk/our-sites/stoke-lane-solar
-  stokelanesolar@cratus.co.uk
-  **07883 731491**
-  **FREEPOST – Cratus Communications**
(no further address details or stamp required)

**Feedback
deadline:**

Friday 18th
September
2026



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CODE

