

Stoke Lane Solar Farm

FAQs | August 2026

Introduction

EDF power solutions is proposing Stoke Lane Solar Farm, a new solar project between Swainsthorpe and Stoke Holy Cross, south of Norwich. The project would generate low-carbon electricity and support the UK's transition to cleaner energy, while making use of a grid connection through existing EDF power solutions infrastructure.

This FAQ document explains what is currently proposed, what is not part of the proposal, what is still being assessed, and how local feedback will help shape access, landscape, screening, biodiversity, construction management and community benefit before any planning application is submitted. If you have a question not covered below, please email: stokelanesolar@cratus.co.uk

About the project

What is Stoke Lane Solar Farm?

Stoke Lane Solar Farm is a proposed solar farm project on approximately 84 hectares of land near Stoke Holy Cross, Norfolk, NR14 8QA. The proposal is for a solar PV installation of approximately 70 MW, subject to design refinement, surveys, consultation feedback and the planning process. Associated infrastructure would include cable routing, inverters and transformers, fencing, CCTV, access and landscaping.

The project is still being developed. The design will be informed by technical surveys, environmental assessments, feedback from statutory consultees and local consultation.

Where would the solar farm be located?

The site is located around 5km south of Norwich, east of Swainsthorpe and west of Stoke Holy Cross. The A140 is to the west, Dunston Hall Hotel Spa and Golf Resort is to the north, existing field boundaries to the east, and woodland, hedgerow and the River Tas to the south.

Stoke Lane bisects the site, forming two principal field parcels.

Who is bringing the project forward?

The applicant is Pivoted Power LLP, part of EDF power solutions UK and Ireland. 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 operates over 2 GW of renewable energy assets across the UK and Ireland, including the NnG Offshore Wind Farm, Burwell Solar Farm and Longfield Solar Farm, which is due to commence construction. The business has delivered more than £10m of community investment across England, Scotland and Wales to date.

How large would the project be?

The proposal is for approximately 70 MW on a site of approximately 84 hectares, subject to design refinement, survey findings, consultation feedback and the planning process. The final layout and installed capacity may change as the project is refined.

Why has this site been selected?

This site has been identified because it has access to a nearby grid connection through the neighbouring battery site on the other side of Ipswich Road / A140. The design is being developed in response to the specific site, including existing screening, the surrounding landscape, local roads, geography and environmental survey work.

We recognise that communities in the Stoke Holy Cross, Swainsthorpe and Dunston areas have seen several renewable energy projects. 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.

Is this the same as Bloy's Grove Solar Farm or the Norwich Battery Energy Storage System?

No. Stoke Lane Solar Farm is a distinct solar proposal and is not part of existing projects in the area. It will connect into the nearby battery storage system.

EDF power solutions has an existing local presence through Bloy's Grove Solar Farm and the Norwich Battery Energy Storage System and recognises that residents may view Stoke Lane in that wider local context.

Consultation materials will set out clearly what is part of the Stoke Lane proposal, what is separate, and how lessons from nearby schemes are informing the project approach.

Does the project include battery storage?

No. Stoke Lane Solar Farm is being brought forward as a solar proposal and there is no battery infrastructure included in the plans, and no plans to introduce new battery storage.

The project would connect to the grid at the consented EDF power solutions battery storage facility to the west of the A140 and north of Hickling Lane.

Will there be new overhead lines?

No new overhead lines are proposed. The cable route is expected to be underground and short, crossing the A140 and, depending on final routing, potentially part of Stoke Lane. Remaining sections are expected to cross private land.

How long would the solar farm operate for?

Permission is expected to be sought for a temporary development period of 40 years, reflecting the expected operational lifespan of the infrastructure. At the end of the operational period, equipment and cabling would be dismantled and removed, with the site restored to a condition comparable to its current agricultural baseline.

Planning and consultation

What planning process will the project follow?

EDF power solutions intends to submit a planning application to South Norfolk Council under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. South Norfolk Council will consider the application in line with relevant planning policy and the evidence submitted with the application.

Is this a nationally significant infrastructure project?

No. Stoke Lane Solar Farm is being brought forward through a planning application to South Norfolk Council, not through the Development Consent Order process which is required for nationally significant infrastructure projects which produce over 100 MW of electricity.

Will an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) be required?

An EIA Screening Report was submitted to South Norfolk Council to enable them to decide whether a full Environmental Impact Assessment was required, with the Council determining that an EIA is required for this project.

What technical reports will support the planning application?

The planning application is expected to include technical material such as a Transport Statement, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, Noise Impact Assessment, Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy, Glint and Glare Assessment, Agricultural Land Classification Report, Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain Statement. These reports will inform the design and mitigation package.

How will local people be consulted?

EDF power solutions informed local councillors, parish councils, neighbouring businesses and local residents before wider consultation began. This local-first approach was intended to give key local stakeholders early information and the opportunity to raise questions before public consultation material was finalised.

The wider consultation is utilising a mix of formats, including two public exhibitions, a pop-up exhibition, business engagement, online information, online feedback collection and postal notification.

What will local feedback help shape?

Local feedback will help inform the details of access, landscape mitigation, screening, biodiversity, construction management and community benefit before any planning application is submitted. We will be clear about what is confirmed, what is under assessment and what remains to be decided as we move through the consultation process.

How can I give feedback?

Feedback can be provided using the feedback form on the Stoke Lane Solar Farm project website www.edf-powersolutions.uk/our-sites/stoke-lane-solar

Feedback can also be provided at our in-person consultation events using a paper feedback form.

If you or a family member, neighbour or friend cannot attend our consultation event and are unable to provide feedback using our online form, please contact us at stokelanesolar@cratus.co.uk or call us on 07883 731491, where we will be happy to assist you with an alternative feedback method.

Traffic, access and construction

How long would construction take?

Construction is expected to take approximately 18 months in total, including site preparation, construction and commissioning. Construction effects are expected to be temporary and managed through detailed plans.

Which roads would construction traffic use?

The site is adjacent to the A140. Construction traffic is expected to use the A140, with access to the site likely to take place via Stoke Lane. Further work, including swept path analysis, visibility splay work and routing assessments, will be undertaken and discussed with the relevant highways authorities as the design develops.

Will the cable route affect local roads?

The cable route is expected to be underground and short. It is expected to cross the A140 and, depending on final routing, may involve part of Stoke Lane, with remaining sections across private land. Traffic mitigation measures associated with the cable route are expected to be limited to a short period of time, as the A140 crossing is short.

How will road disruption be managed?

A Transport Statement and Construction Traffic Management Plan will be prepared, and EDF power solutions will agree routing, working hours, road-condition safeguards and communication protocols with the relevant highway authorities before any construction takes place.

The project team will also consider how construction activity can be best mitigated to allow for school-run periods, buses, deliveries to local businesses, cyclists, walkers and everyday village traffic. Affected local businesses or residents will be spoken to.

Will construction damage local roads?

We know good road conditions are important for local residents. EDF power solutions will discuss road-condition safeguards with the relevant highways authority and local stakeholders before construction. The planning application will explain how road condition, monitoring and reporting routes would be managed where relevant.

Will there be noise or dust during construction?

Some temporary noise, vibration and dust can occur during construction of any infrastructure project. These effects would be managed through a Construction Environmental Management Plan agreed with the council prior to commencing construction and good-practice mitigation, such as controls on working hours, dust suppression, appropriate construction techniques and monitoring where required.

How much traffic would there be once operational?

Once operational, solar farms generate almost no additional traffic. No permanent on-site presence is expected, and maintenance would be limited to occasional visits using small vehicles.

Landscape, views and nearby residents**What would the solar farm look like?**

Solar panels would be mounted in rows within the site, alongside associated equipment such as inverters, transformers, fencing, CCTV, access tracks and landscaping. The final layout will be developed through an iterative design process informed by environmental surveys, technical work and consultation.

How will views be protected?

The project team is assessing local views, landscape character and existing screening. Design work will consider setbacks, planting, visual buffers and long-term management so the scheme responds to the local landscape and village geography.

The planning application is expected to be supported by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and landscape mitigation proposals. These will consider local viewpoints, nearby homes, the A140, Dunston Hall Hotel Spa and Golf Resort, and the surrounding landscape character.

Will the site be lit at night?

Solar farms do not normally require extensive permanent lighting. Any lighting needed for safety or security would be designed to minimise local effects e.g. by using infrared CCTV. This will be further explained through the planning application.

Will there be security fencing and CCTV?

Yes. Fencing and CCTV are expected to form part of the associated infrastructure for safe operation and security. The design will minimise visual effects through layout, positioning and planting where appropriate. CCTV would be infrared to avoid lighting impacts.

Could there be glint or glare from the panels?

Solar PV panels are designed to absorb, rather than reflect, light. A Glint and Glare Assessment will be undertaken, and any recommendations from that assessment will be followed as part of the design process to ensure effects on sensitive receptors are minimised and mitigated where necessary.

Will the solar panels generate any noise?

Once operational, the site will be very quiet. Operational noise would be limited to associated electrical equipment, including inverters and transformers. A Noise Impact Assessment will assess operational noise levels at the nearest sensitive receptors and, where necessary, mitigation measures will be incorporated into the design to keep operational noise within acceptable limits.

Agricultural land, biodiversity and environment

Is the site currently farmland?

Yes. The site has several field parcels currently in agricultural use. Predictive Agricultural Land Classification mapping indicates a mix of Grade 2 and Subgrade 3a agricultural land, and an Agricultural Land Classification Report will be prepared to confirm the position for the planning application.

Does using farmland for solar farms put the UK's food security at risk?

The UK Government Food Security Report says the largest risk to food security is climate change, and one way of combatting climate change is through the use of renewable energy. According to Solar Energy UK, solar farms occupy around 0.1% of UK land, and if they increase to meet the government's net zero requirements, this would rise to just 0.5% of the land currently used for farming (as per a 2022 Carbon Brief Factcheck). The UK's energy security is also bolstered by the use of renewables.

Will the agricultural land be lost permanently?

No. The project is expected to seek temporary permission for 40 years. At the end of the operational period, equipment and cabling would be removed and the site would be restored to a condition comparable to its current agricultural baseline. The land may end up in better condition than before the project – due to a combination of the general biodiversity improvements we will implement, and the fact that reduced cultivation and agricultural inputs have the potential to improve soil structure, increase soil organic matter and reduce compaction.

How will soils be protected?

Soil protection and construction management measures will be set out through the planning application and secured through the Construction Environmental Management Plan. This Plan will be agreed with the Council before construction commences and will explain how soil handling, storage and restoration would be managed once detailed proposals are available.

What biodiversity improvements are proposed?

The project will be informed by ecological surveys and is expected to include habitat creation or enhancement such as hedgerows, wildflower margins, habitat buffers, ponds or species-specific mitigation where appropriate. Biodiversity will focus on practical improvements residents can understand and see, alongside the formal Biodiversity Net Gain calculation.

How will wildlife be protected?

Survey work has been undertaken since 2024 and includes assessments for badgers, great crested newts, bats, breeding birds and wintering birds. The outcomes will inform the design, mitigation and enhancement measures to protect habitats for wildlife.

Research by Solar Energy UK and the RSPB has found evidence of the positive impact that solar farms can have on soil health, invertebrates and ground nesting birds.

Are there protected nature sites nearby?

The site itself does not contain statutory or non-statutory ecological designations. The nearest statutory ecological designation identified in the EIA Screening material is Shotesham Common Site of Special Scientific Interest, approximately 670m to the south-east. Dunston Common Local Nature Reserve is approximately 700m to the north.

Will public rights of way be affected?

There are no Public Rights of Way within the site. Several Public Rights of Way are present within Swainsthorpe, including routes that appear to provide connections to the A140 to the west of the site. Consultation material will explain any temporary construction effects if needed once detailed routing is confirmed.

Is the site at risk of flooding?

The site is predominantly within Flood Zone 1, which is the lowest category of fluvial flood risk, although the southern tip lies within Flood Zone 3 associated with the River Tas and small areas are at surface water flood risk. The project will be supported by a Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy with Sustainable Drainage Systems, and built infrastructure will seek to avoid higher flood-risk areas.

What about heritage and archaeology?

The site does not contain designated heritage assets. Nearby assets include the Grade II listed Swainsthorpe Hall and associated barn to the south, and the Stoke Holy Cross Conservation Area to the east. Archaeological and heritage assessment work will support the planning application.

Community benefit and local partnership**Will there be a community benefit fund?**

EDF power solutions wants local people to see practical benefits from hosting renewable energy infrastructure. The fund is expected to be around £400 per MW, shaped by local input, governed transparently and used to help deliver meaningful local projects.

Is the community benefit fund part of the planning decision?

No. The planning application must be assessed on its planning merits. Any community benefit fund would be separate from the planning decision and would not be a payment for support or a reason for planning approval.

What could the fund support?

Priorities will be shaped locally with residents, parish councils and community groups. Potential areas could include village facilities, recreation, biodiversity and nature projects, energy efficiency, education, community transport, local resilience or other priorities identified by local people.

Cumulative impact and other schemes**Why is South Norfolk seeing so many energy projects?**

The area has existing grid infrastructure, which makes it appropriate from a technical perspective for renewable energy and grid-related projects. 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.

How will cumulative impact be considered?

Cumulative impact alongside other projects will form part of the local authority's decision-making process. The project will provide clear information showing the site boundary, scale, consenting route and connection, and work is being undertaken to minimise visual impact during the relatively short construction and commissioning phase and once operational.

How is Stoke Lane different from East Pye, Tasway or pylons?

Stoke Lane is a separate solar proposal being brought forward through a planning application to South Norfolk Council. It is not part of the East Pye or Tasway proposals and does not propose new overhead lines. Our consultation material provides factual information on the scale, planning route, site boundary, connection and status so that residents can understand the differences.

What lessons have been learned from nearby schemes?

EDF power solutions has an existing local presence and understands that communities south of Norwich have seen several energy proposals. Stoke Lane is being developed as a distinct solar proposal that uses lessons from nearby schemes to help inform engagement plans, provide clearer information and shape the project with local input. Lessons have been learned regarding the importance of open communication with residents, well-organised plans for any traffic impact during construction, and providing additional landscaping and tree planting.

Why can't the solar panels go on roofs instead of farmland?

Both rooftop installations and ground mounted solar farms are needed to meet government renewable energy targets. Solar farms are essential in providing the large-scale renewable energy generation needed to support the net zero transition. A report by CPRE, the countryside charity, indicates that installing solar panels on existing rooftops and car parks could provide at least 40-50 GW of capacity in England by 2035, but the government's target is 70 GW.

EDF power solutions also installs solar panels on commercial rooftops, such as those of Tesco supermarkets.

Next steps

What happens next?

EDF power solutions is continuing its engagement with local parish councils, ward councillors, the Council Leader and relevant Cabinet members, the local MP, neighbouring residents and businesses.

Our wider public consultation is now live, with clear material explaining the site, access, landscape, biodiversity, construction management and community benefit proposals.

After consultation, EDF power solutions will review feedback, consider any changes needed and prepare a planning application supported by the necessary technical reports.