

Welcome



Welcome to today's consultation event for the Cressing Solar Farm Extension. In the room today, you will be able to read more about the project on boards like this one, and speak with members of the project team who will be able to answer any questions you may have.

The Cressing Solar Farm Extension is being brought forward by EDF power solutions, a leading developer and operator of renewable energy projects. The team at today's event includes both staff from EDF power solutions and from other firms who are members of the project team.

EDF power solutions received planning permission last year from Braintree District Council, to develop a solar farm in the same area, named 'Cressing'. We always intended to bring forward a project that made the best use of our grid connection and the associated infrastructure, but we have not been able to do so until now.

If approved, the extension would generate up to 25MW of clean, affordable energy to power homes and businesses across the country.

It would connect to the national electricity grid at Braintree Substation via the consented Cressing Solar cable route, meaning we can avoid any additional impact from the extension's cable route on residents in Cressing village.



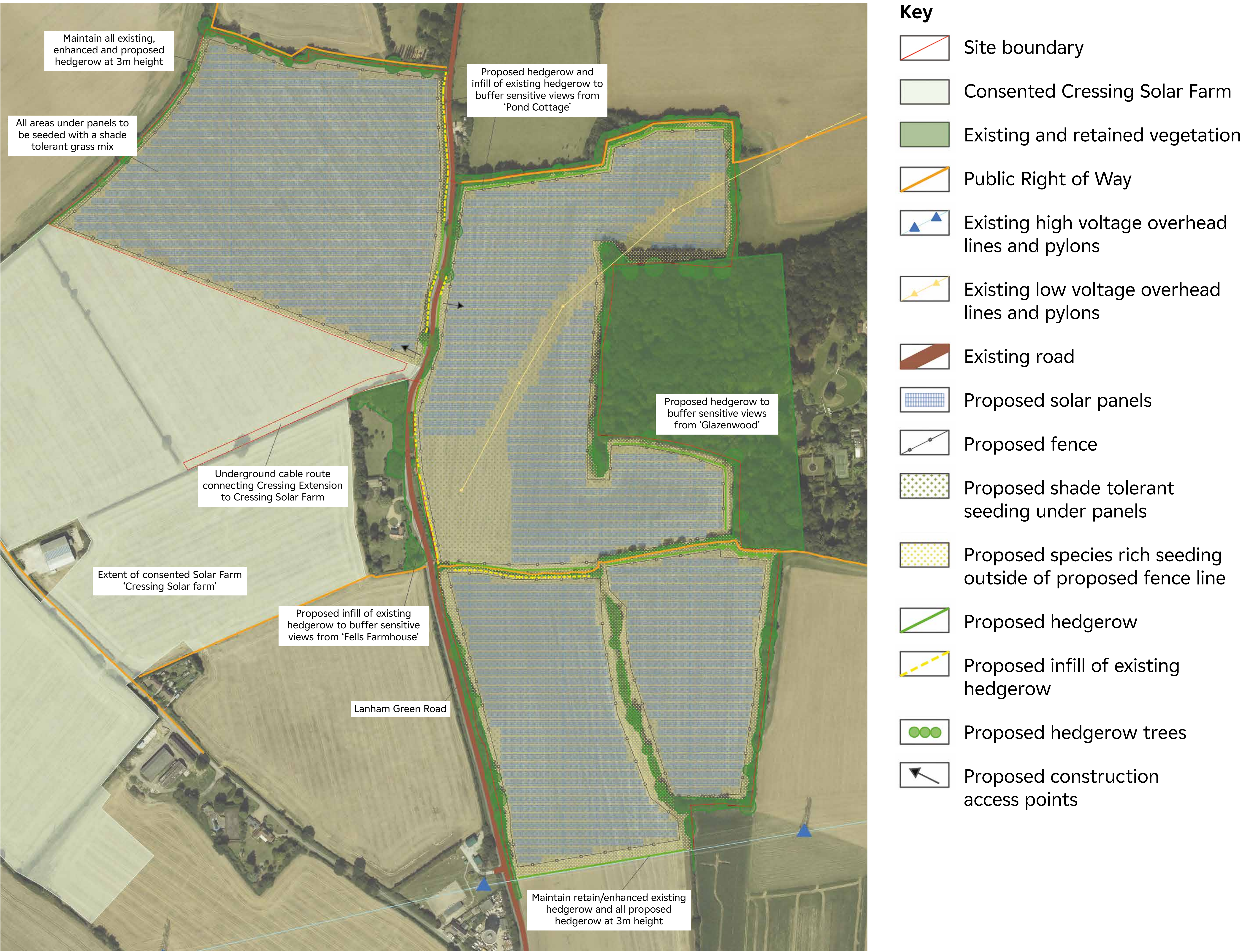
We want to hear from you!

Please read through the consultation materials in your own time, and let us know if you have any questions.

We have printed feedback forms to supply your feedback on the proposals. You can also get in touch by phone, email or Freepost.

Our proposals

The site is located between Cressing and Bradwell, on fields to the east and west of Lanham Green Road.



Illustrative masterplan

The project is an extension to the Cressing Solar Farm, and one of the fields containing panels for the extension adjoins the consented solar farm directly.

Since receiving consent for the Cressing Solar Farm, the team have been working to discharge the planning conditions and have been undertaking onsite surveys to help inform the detailed design and construction methods.

The extension includes three field parcels to the east of the road, and one to the west. It would have an overall generating capacity of up to 25 megawatts – enough electricity to power about 10,000 UK homes.¹

The two sites will share a cable route to the Braintree substation. As the cable route already has planning permission, this means that any extra disruption connected to laying a new cable route for the extension can be eliminated.

If approved, the extension would be a temporary, time-limited development, with a lifespan of 40 years. It would take approximately 12 months to construct.

We’re conscious of the potential for too much construction work taking place at the same time to have a negative impact on residents in the local area. As such, we plan to construct the two elements separately.

The original parts of the Cressing Solar Farm, which already have planning permission, will begin construction in the winter of 2027-28, with full electricity generation expected to begin in 2029. The extension would not begin construction until 2029.

Timeline



¹ Calculated by dividing estimated annual electricity generation of the extension, by the typical household electricity consumption in the UK. Methodology consistent with DESNZ ‘Estimating renewable generation and homes powered’ guidance.

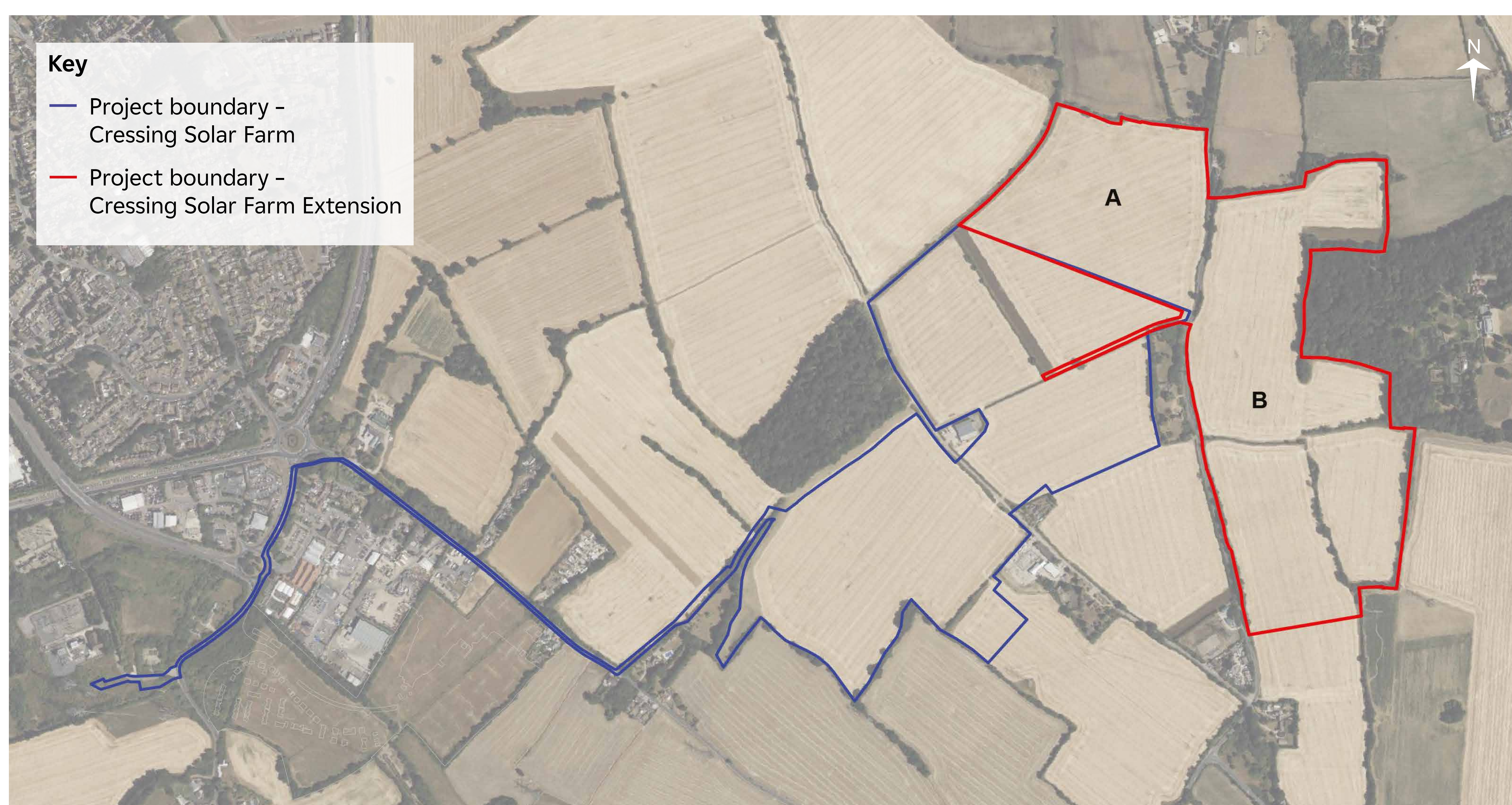
The site

The extension site is located on approximately 34 hectares of land, 0.54km north of Cressing, and 2.88km to the east of Braintree town centre.

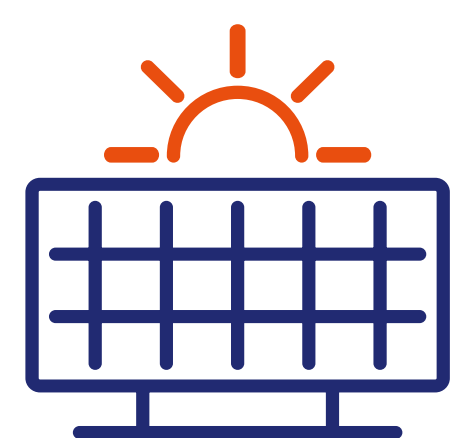
The main land use in the immediate vicinity is agricultural, with scattered settlements nearby including Cressing, Bradwell, Tye Green, Silver End, Perry Green and Hawbush Green. To the west of the site, the A120 lies between the proposed development site and Braintree.

The field containing Area A is surrounded by hedgerows to the north, east and west, with a drainage ditch located by the north-west boundary. During construction, this field will have a temporary access from Lanham Green Road. Following construction, this access will be removed, and operational access will be via the entrance to the Cressing Solar Farm (Lanham Farm Road).

The three fields which contain Area B are separated by trees and hedgerows. It is surrounded by farmland to the north and south, with woodland to the east, and Lanham Green Road to the west. A 400kV overhead electricity line is located beside the southern boundary. Both construction and operation access to these fields will be from Lanham Green Road.



Planning application boundary



How does a solar farm work?

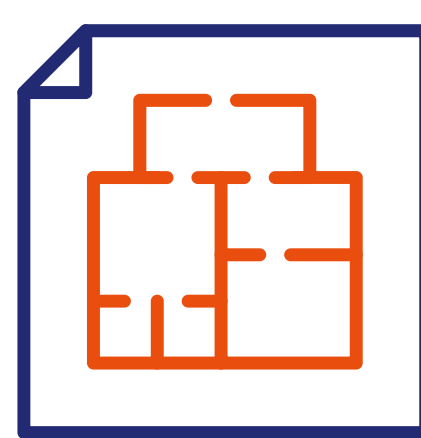
Solar farms use photovoltaic (PV) panels to generate electricity from the sun. These panels will be mounted on the ground in rows.

The panels will be mounted on a frame and set at an angle of around 20 degrees. Taken together, the panels will be no more than 3 metres in height. There will be gaps in the rows to allow us to access and maintain them.

The panels require several pieces of infrastructure to support them. These include:

- **Inverters:** these convert the direct current (DC) electricity collected by the panels to the alternating current (AC) used in transmission
- **Transformers:** these control the voltage of the electricity generated
- **Switchgear:** a combination of electrical disconnect switches, fuses or circuit breakers used to control, protect and isolate electrical equipment.

The site will be surrounded by deer fencing with inward facing CCTV cameras for health, safety and security reasons. There will be no permanent lighting within the site.



A well-designed solar farm

We will refine the layout using the environmental and technical survey findings, feedback from this consultation, and advice from Braintree District Council.

The design is expected to include buffers between development and nearby residences, roads, public rights of way and more sensitive environmental features. The location and extent of these buffers will be informed by the environmental assessments, public consultation, and the characteristics of different parts of the site.

In addition to the technical components that are needed to collect and transport energy, solar farms also include open spaces around and between the panels.

We will incorporate best practices to ensure that the extension is a well-designed solar farm, which works with the landscape, reduces the impact on local residents, and maximises the benefit of these green spaces:

- Areas under and around the panels would be planted with a mix of native species, including grasses and wildflowers, to support insects, birds, and other pollinators.
- To help blend in with its local surroundings and to help screen views from nearby residences, new trees and hedges would be planted to create a visual barrier.

Assessing the issues

As part of the work to prepare a planning application, we are assessing the impact that the extension could have, across a large number of topic areas.

This work includes surveys and desk-based reports, some of which have been completed already, and some of which will continue until we submit an application to Braintree District Council.



Ecology

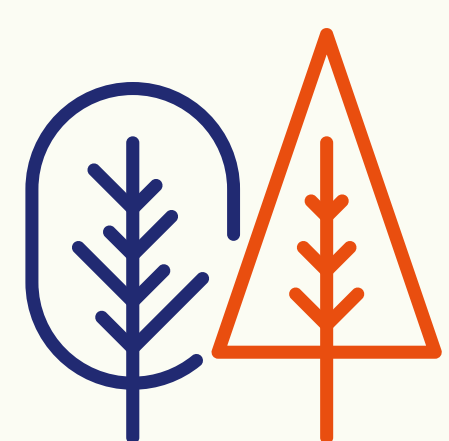
We have assessed the wildlife and habitats which exist in and around the application site, including surveys to identify the presence of any protected species. Some of the surveys completed to date include habitat surveys, breeding bird surveys, bat surveys, and Great Crested Newt surveys.

The results of these surveys will help us to design the extension in an appropriate way, and to include mitigation measures which will ensure no adverse impact on habitats, ecological sites or protected species during construction and operation.

Appropriate buffers will be implemented to areas of woodland, hedgerows, and individual trees.

EDF is committed to improving the local environment. The proposal would create and improve habitats so that the site supports at least 10% more biodiversity than it does before development.

An Ornithological Assessment, Ecological Assessment, Arboricultural Assessment and Biodiversity Statement will be submitted with the application.



Landscape and visual

A full Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) will accompany the planning application. A chartered landscape architect has visited the site and surrounding area. Viewpoints for photography have been selected and images (photomontages) will be prepared to illustrate what the proposed solar farm could look like from these locations. These will be submitted with the planning application.

Existing screening, such as hedgerows and trees, will be retained and further planting is proposed to help further screen the solar farm from nearby views.

We recognise that there are Public Rights of Way through and alongside the site. While the solar panels will be fenced off for safety reasons, the existing local footpaths will be retained and enhanced with planting.



Use of agricultural land

National Agricultural Land Classification mapping indicates that farmland in this area may be Grade 2, which is defined as very good quality agricultural land. A detailed soil survey would be undertaken to confirm the agricultural land quality within the site.

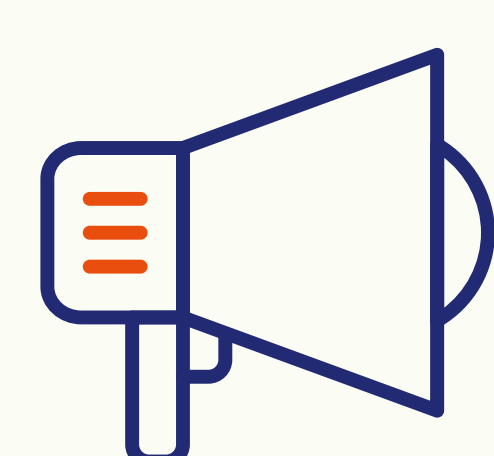
A Construction Environmental Management Plan would set out measures to protect soils during construction. These would include the careful handling, separate storage and appropriate replacement of topsoil and subsoil to minimise potential effects on soil quality and structure.

The extension would be a temporary development, with an operational lifespan of 40 years. At the end of that period, the solar panels and associated equipment would be removed and the site restored, meaning that the land would not be permanently lost to agricultural use.

Where land has been subject to intensive arable cultivation, a break from regular ploughing and reduced use of fertilisers and pesticides may allow soil health to recover and carbon storage to improve.

The planning application will assess the temporary use of agricultural land in the context of the project's wider benefits, including its contribution to energy security and climate change mitigation.

Assessing the issues

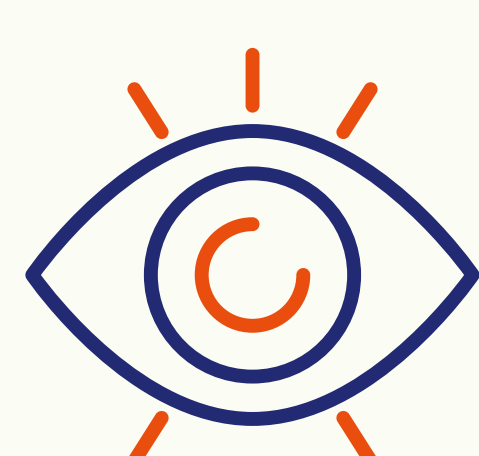


Noise

Background noise levels were measured for the approved Cressing Solar Farm. Computer modelling will be carried out to ensure that noise from the proposed extension would remain at acceptable levels and to identify any measures needed to reduce noise if required. The assessment will also consider noise from other renewable developments in the surrounding area.

During the construction phase, there may be some short-term impacts as a result of construction works i.e. noise from plant and noise from vehicles. A Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) will be submitted to and agreed with Braintree District Council to ensure that any noise and vibration impacts during construction are appropriately managed and kept to a minimum.

Once the extension is operational, there will be low levels of noise produced from moving parts in the machinery, such as inverter/transformer fans. These pieces of infrastructure will be located away from homes, and any noise levels will comply with national guidance.



Glint and glare

Solar panels are designed to absorb light, rather than reflect it. As such, the potential for glint and glare from projects like the Cressing Solar Farm Extension is low.

A Glint and Glare Study will be carried out to identify the potential for the proposed extension to affect sensitive receptors including residences. The assessment methodology will follow industry best practice and, if required, will identify any mitigation measures to be incorporated into the design such as screening, anti-glare materials, or adjustments to surface orientation.



Heritage

There are no designated heritage assets within the site. There are a number of Grade II listed buildings including Fells Farmhouse and those associated with Withies Green Farmhouse near to the site.

A heritage consultant has undertaken desk studies in addition to a site visit to understand any potential impacts on the setting of nearby heritage assets. The findings of the assessment will help to shape the final design and any measures needed to protect heritage features. Some of these measures may include buffers around heritage assets, strengthening of existing hedgerows and further planting where required.

A geophysical survey will be carried out to better understand the site's archaeological potential. The findings will inform the design and identify any further investigation or mitigation required.



Illustrative image of a solar farm

Construction

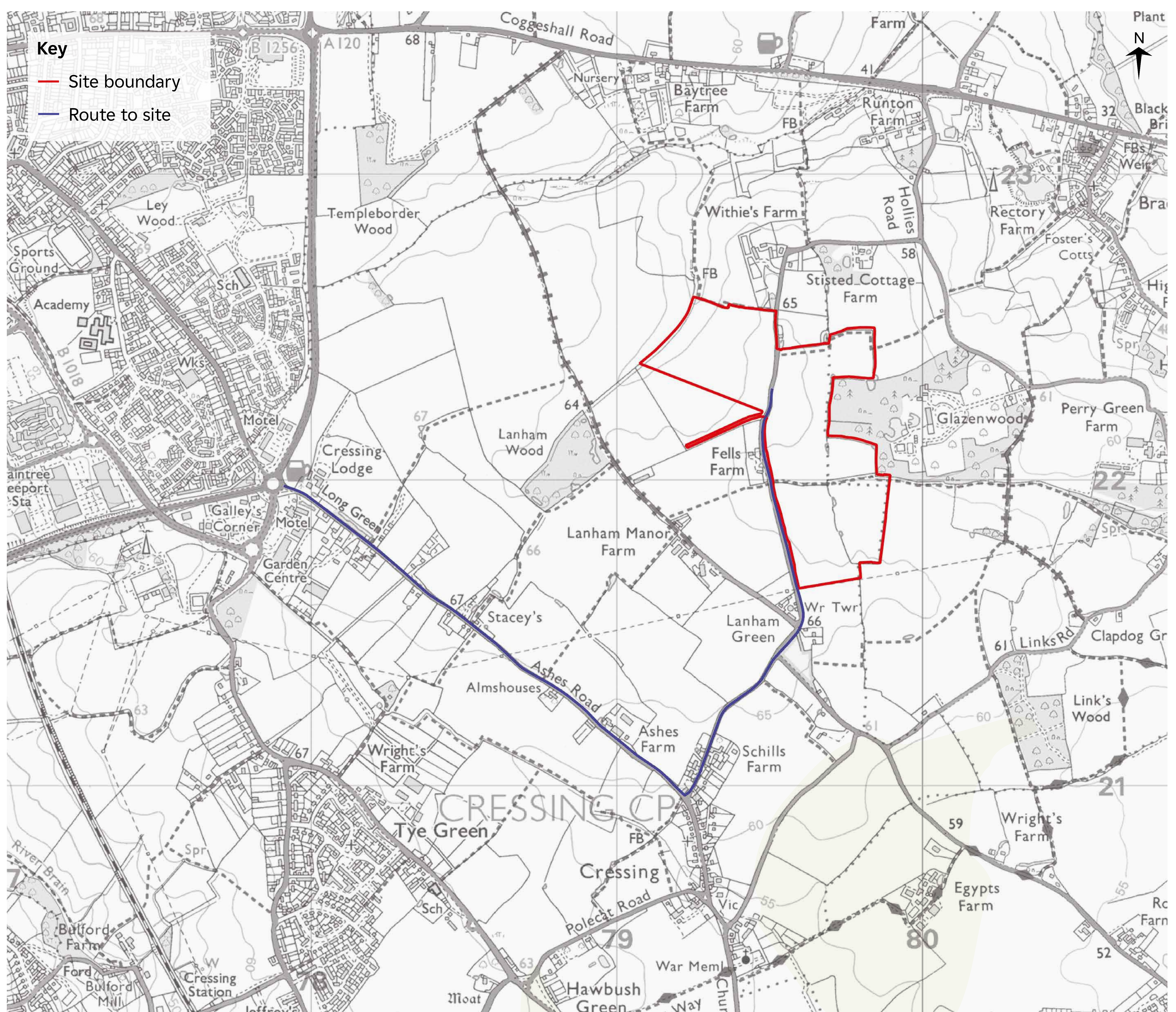
The Cressing Solar Farm Extension would be constructed over a period of approximately 12 months. As it will share a cable route with the Cressing Solar Farm, which already has planning permission, any extra disruption connected to laying a new cable route for the extension can be eliminated.

We don't plan to begin construction on the extension until 2029, after the Cressing Solar Farm has already been built (commencing winter 2027-28).

Construction vehicles would use the same route from the A120 as the approved Cressing Solar Farm. Instead of turning onto Lanham Farm Road, construction traffic for the extension would continue on Lanham Green Road to access the site.

Before construction begins, a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) would be submitted to and agreed with Braintree District Council. It would set out the routes and access arrangements for construction vehicles to limit disruption to local communities.

Once the solar farm is operational, 4x4 vehicles and small vans would visit the site occasionally for inspections and maintenance.



Proposed construction traffic route to site

Benefits

The Cressing Solar Farm Extension is one of a number of renewable energy projects being developed around the country, to increase our energy security, deliver cheaper power for homes and businesses, and reduce our contribution to human-made climate change.

Recent years have shown the impact that increases in global fossil fuel prices – and gas in particular – can have on the cost of electricity in this country. At the same time, the UK currently imports a large share of our electricity from other countries.

Developing UK-based renewable energy sources can help to bolster our energy security and limit our reliance on foreign fossil fuels.

The Government has also set a target of reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. This means that we need to phase out older forms of power generation like coal and find new, renewable, sources of energy.

The extension will be capable of producing up to 25 megawatts of renewable electricity, enough to power up to 10,000 homes.²



Community benefits

We are committed to working closely with the local community to ensure that the extension delivers long-term benefits. The Cressing Solar Farm, which will commence construction in the winter of 2027-28, will come with a community benefit fund of £10,000 per year of operation. This will be matched by a fund for the extension.

We would like to see the fund allocated by the local community, and should we receive planning consent, we will discuss this with community representatives.



Illustrative image of a solar farm

² Calculated by dividing estimated annual electricity generation of the extension, by the typical household electricity consumption in the UK. Methodology consistent with DESNZ 'Estimating renewable generation and homes powered' guidance.

Next steps

Thank you for taking the time to attend this afternoon's event. We appreciate you considering our proposals for the Cressing Solar Farm Extension and look forward to your feedback.

The public consultation for the extension will be open until Sunday 4 October.



Share your views

To provide feedback on the project, please use one of the following methods:

- Speak to a team member at today's event
- Fill in a feedback form in the room today
- Complete our online questionnaire
www.edf-powersolutions.uk/our-sites/cressing
- Contact us at
020 3667 4506
- Reach out by email to **creasing@secnewgate.co.uk**
- Write to us at
**FREEPOST SEC NEWGATE UK LOCAL -
CRESSING EXTENSION**

Following the end of the consultation, we will take your feedback on board, and may get in touch with you directly to discuss the design of the extension.

We plan to submit a planning application to Braintree District Council by the end of this year. Once we do, the council will carry out their own public consultation on our plans.

Thank you!



Illustrative image of a solar farm