

WELCOME

British Solar Renewables (BSR Energy) is bringing forward proposals for a new solar development on land at Bakers Road, Belchamp St Paul. The 49.7-hectare site is located 1km northwest of Belchamp St. Paul Village in Essex. The proposals represent an exciting opportunity to boost green energy generation in Braintree.



Our consultation is running until Sunday 16th October 2022. Details on how to have your say can be found on our Have Your Say board.

Braintree District Council declared a climate change emergency in July 2019. As part of this, the Council stated that it would like to be carbon neutral by 2030, as well as take steps to support the local community to reduce the impact of climate change across the district. This proposal is an important step to achieving those aims and ensuring that we are taking steps to reduce our dependence on carbon dioxide emitting fossil fuels.

This summer has seen the UK experience first hand the impact of climate change, with record breaking heatwaves, and droughts right across the country. It is expected that these previously once in a generation phenomena will become more regular and continue to get worse. Through initiatives such as the proposed solar development on Land at Bakers Road, we can reduce our carbon emissions and take an important step towards reaching the Government's goal of being net zero by 2050.

The cost-of-living crisis that the UK is currently experiencing is being predominantly driven by the rapidly increasing cost of energy. This is in part due to the rising costs of importing the fuel and gas that the UK relies on. By establishing clean and reliable local green energy sources, such as this solar development, we can continue to build up energy security within the UK and help to reduce the cost of household and business energy bills.

We want to work with the local community to ensure we are delivering a project that works for everyone. Your feedback and questions are very welcome, so please speak to a member of our team today or at any point after the meeting by phone or email.

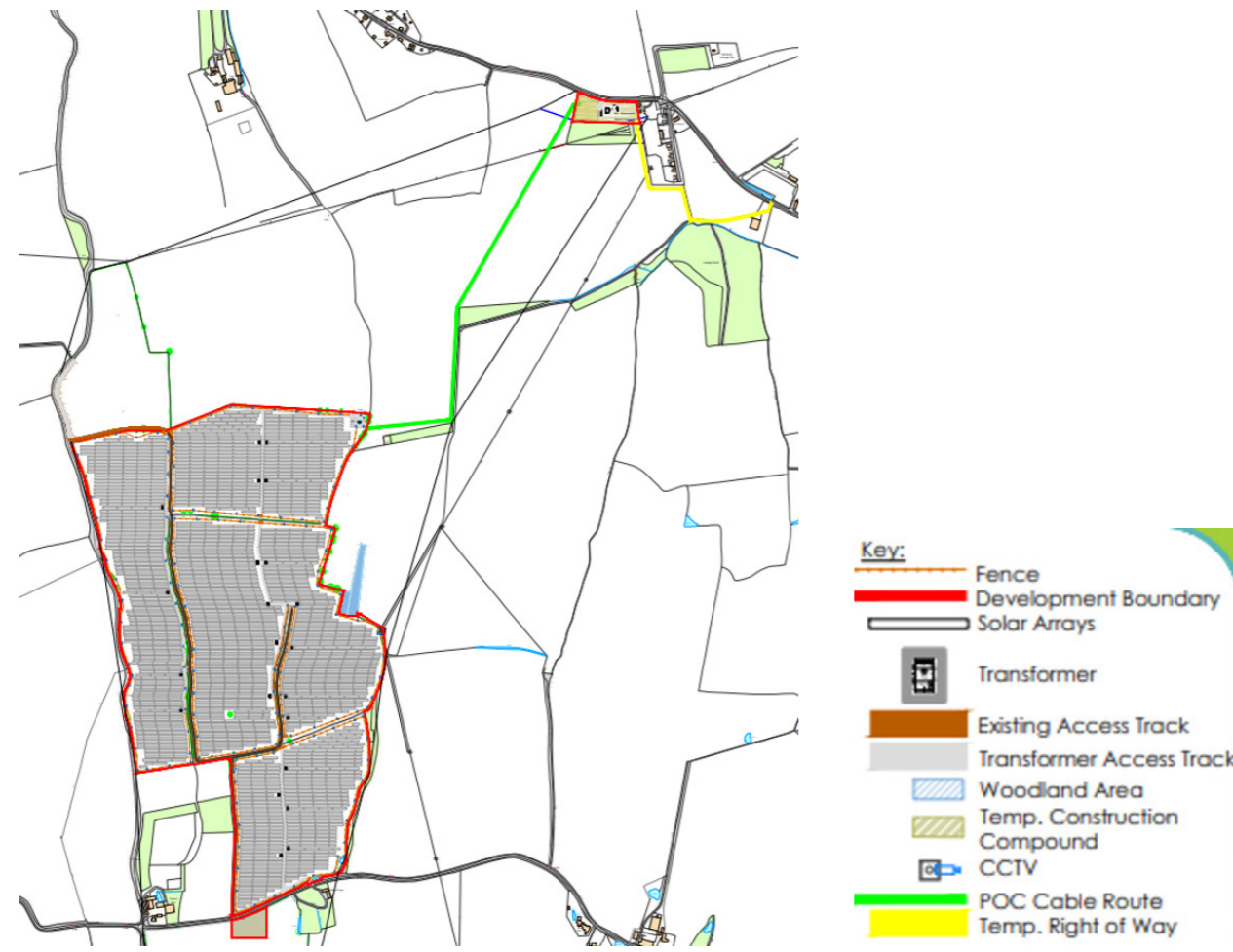


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THE PROPOSAL

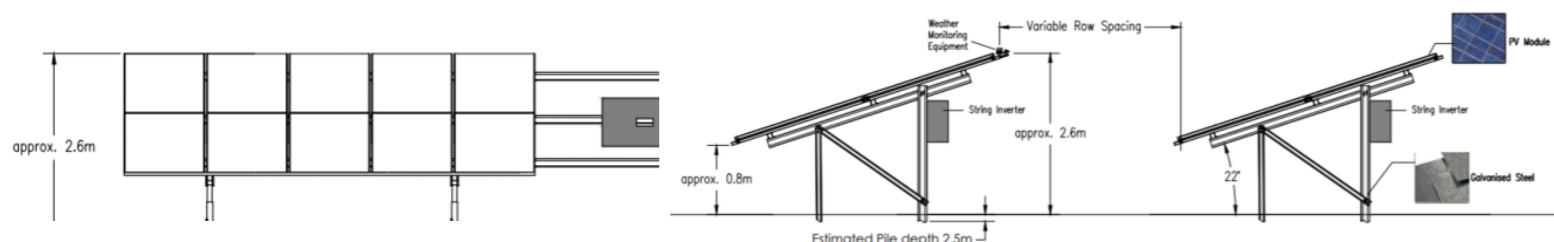
The below site layout plan indicates the proposed location for the solar panels, underground cable connection route, and substation location.



Proposed site layout plan

As the proposals are still being developed the exact number of panels is currently unknown. From similar developments that BSR has brought forward, it is likely that approximately 94,000 Photovoltaic (Solar) panels will be required to generate 49.99MW of power.

The panels will be an industry standard size as demonstrated below.



Indicative size of solar panels

BSR Energy's proposals for Land at Bakers Road would deliver the following:

1. A solar development with a total export capacity of up to 49.99 MW. This is the equivalent energy production to powering 12,501 homes every year, resulting in the reduction of 11,072 tonnes of CO₂ per year being emitted into the atmosphere.
2. The proposed solar development would have an operational lifespan of 40 years, meaning that following the decommissioning the land can be returned to agricultural use.
3. Solar energy is an affordable and efficient form of green energy which is an important part of ensuring the energy independence of the United Kingdom and working towards meeting the Government set target of net zero by 2050, as well as the COP26 targets for keeping global temperature rise below 1.5°C.
4. In addition to needing to take action against climate change, energy security is a significant pinch point in the current cost-of-living crisis. The creation of renewable and local energy sources will be vital in bringing down energy costs and ensuring the UK's energy independence.

BSR Energy would create a Community Benefit Fund, which will offer a total of £49,990 for grants to support local projects and to benefit the local community.

BSR is in the process of setting up an agreement for the community fund with Essex Community Foundation. BSR is also keen to see that a local Belchamp St Paul Parish Council member be a representative on the fund. This is to ensure that the funds are distributed to important local projects by those actively involved in the community.

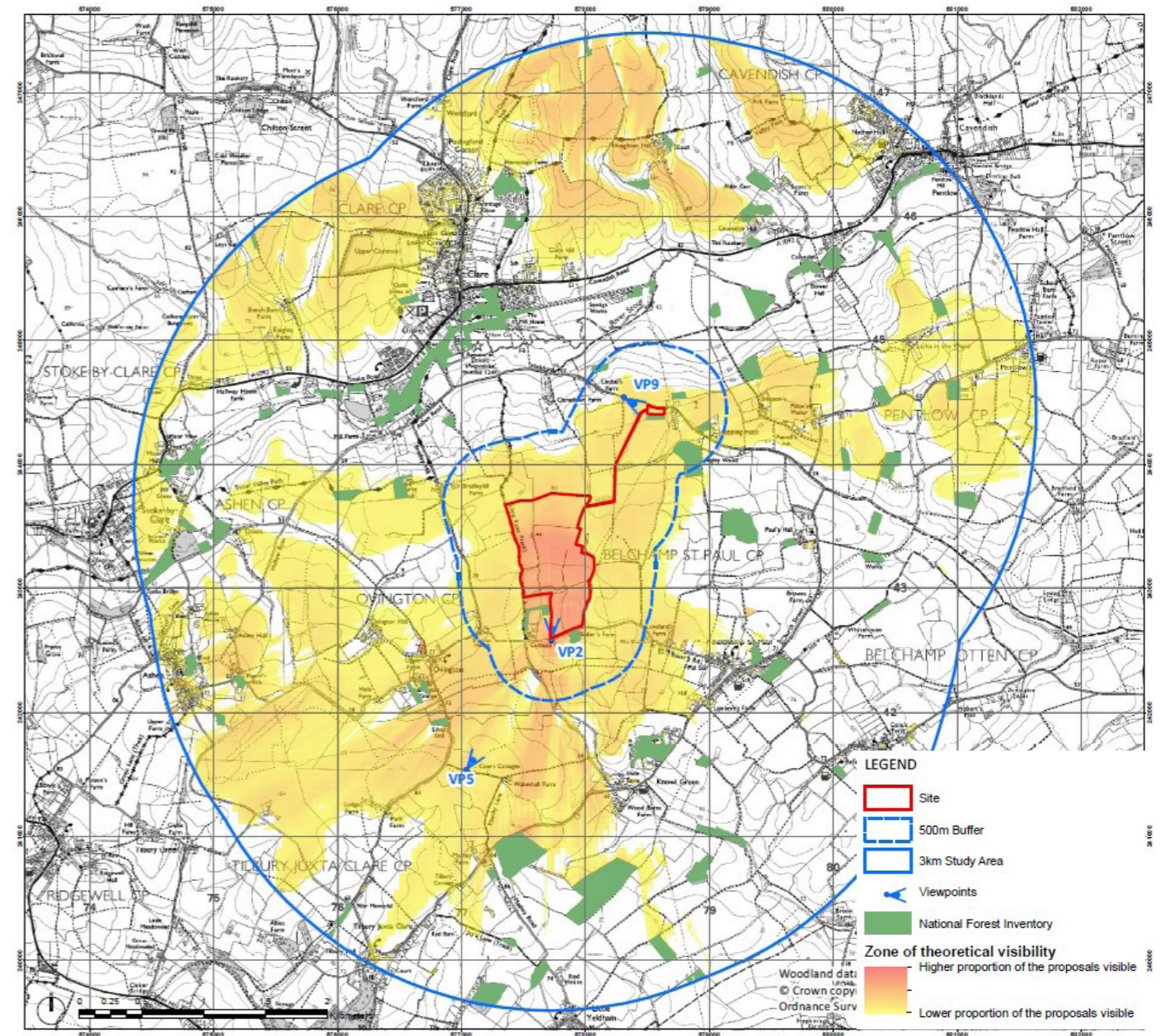


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LANDSCAPE

The below landscape plan on the left highlights the key landscape features of the proposals. While the map on the right highlights the three viewpoint angles for the images covered on the next three boards. We have selected to display viewpoints 2, 5, and 9, as they show a view of the solar panels, a view of the DNO substation, and a vista view of the site.



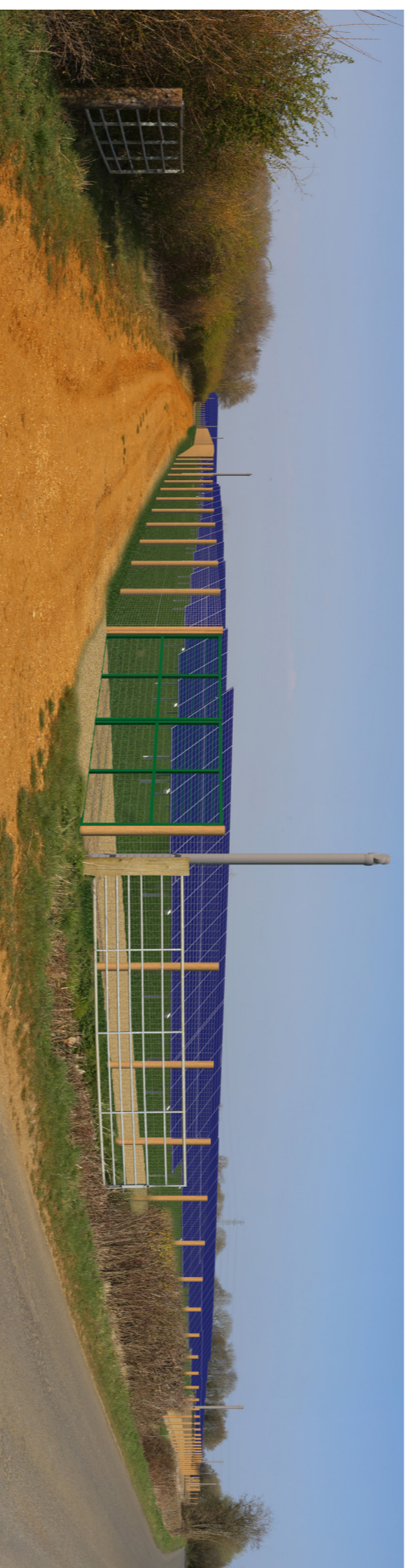
VIEWPOINT 2

The images below show how Viewpoint 2, from Bakers Road looking north towards the site looks now, and how it will look in one year, and in 15 years, should planning permission be granted.

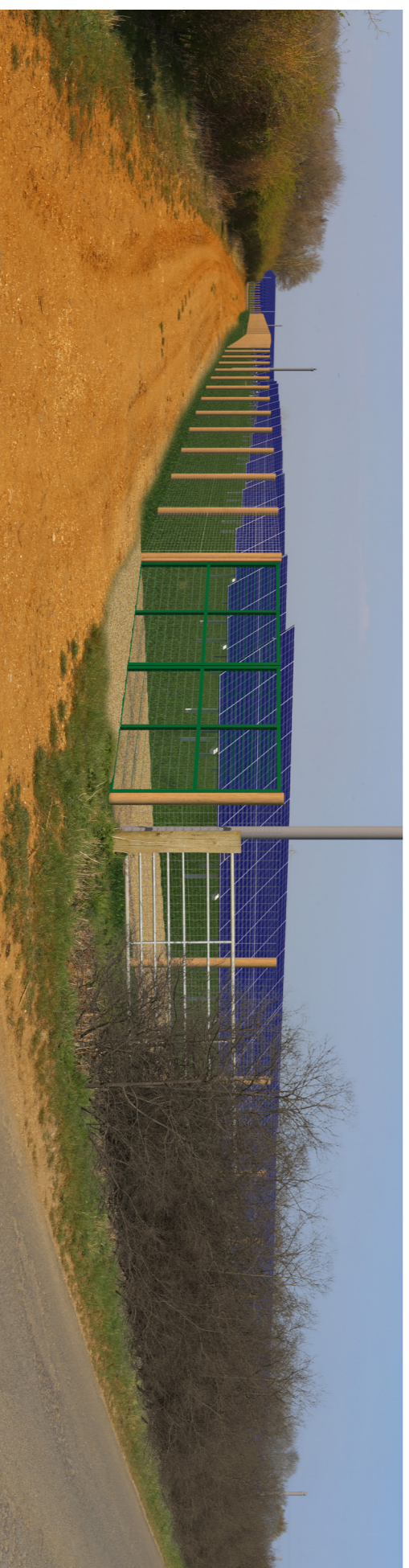
Present day:



Year 1:



Year 15:



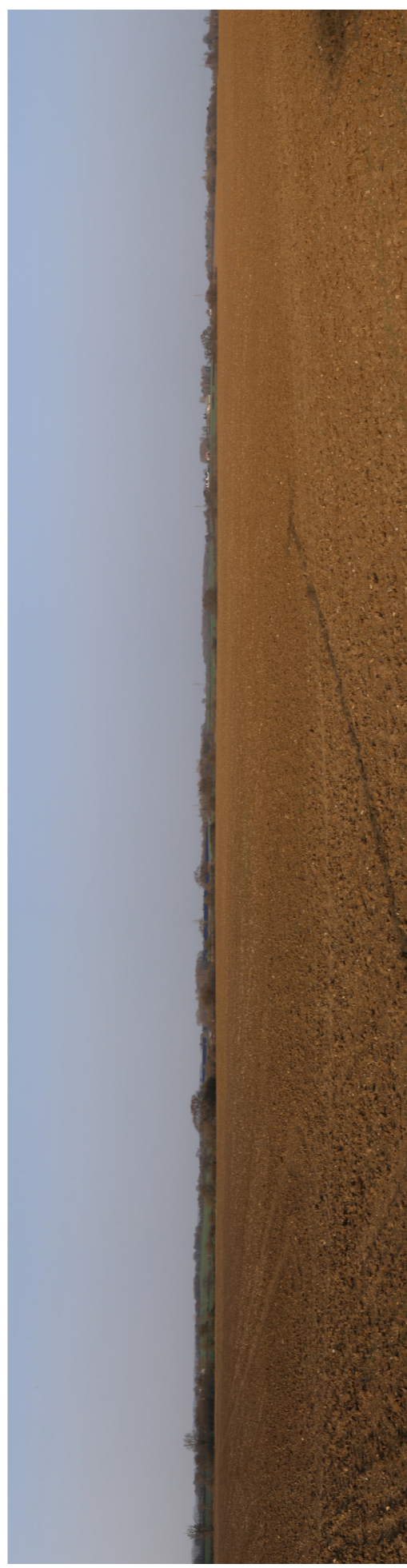
VIEWPOINT 5

The images below show how Viewpoint 5, from PROW EX/62/29, looking north-west towards the site looks now, and how it will look in one year, and in 15 years, should planning permission be granted.

Present day:



Year 1:



Year 15:



VIEWPOINT 9

The images below show how Viewpoint 9, from PROW EX/62/4, looking south-west towards the site looks now, and how it will look in one year, and in 15 years, should planning permission be granted.

Present day:



Year 1:



Year 15:



BIODIVERSITY

In addition to the benefits that the new solar development at Bakers Road could bring to the local community and in helping to tackle climate change, there will also be a significant boost to biodiversity on the site.

1. The proposed solar development's operational lifespan would be 40 years, meaning that, following the decommissioning, the land could be returned to agricultural use with no impact to the land's agricultural grading.
2. Throughout the lifespan of the solar development, there is a significant opportunity for biodiversity to thrive on the site. This is because solar panels only disturb approximately 5% of the ground they sit above, which allows for plants to continue to grow and animals to still pass throughout the site.
3. At least a minimum of 60% increase in biodiversity net gain for the site, this not only meets but far exceeds the minimum 10% target outlined by the government in the Environment Act 2021. As part of this, existing habitats on site will be retained and managed, to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on the existing condition of the habitat over the lifespan of the development.
4. Improvements to the condition of existing habitats, as well as facilitating the creation of new habitats. This could include:
 - The creation of new native hedgerows where required;
 - Infill hedgerow planting where gaps occur in the existing vegetation, for betterment of the existing landscape and along the By-Way and Public Right of Way (PROW);
 - A range of breeding boxes for bats and birds;
 - Improvements to the two existing on-site ponds; and
 - The creation of species rich grassland across the entire site, including rough grassland along the bases of existing vegetation, and wildflower and wild bird seed grasslands.



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CONSTRUCTION

During the construction phase we will ensure that disruption is kept to a minimum.

Throughout construction the site will be accessed through the existing access point off Bakers Road, with a temporary construction compound being introduced on the opposite side of Bakers Road to the south of the site. Once the development is operational, the land used for the construction compound will be returned to agricultural use.

Construction is expected to take approximately 6 months, within this time the peak traffic movements in and around the site will be during months 1 – 4. During the peak of the construction period, there are expected to be approximately 15 two-way HGV movements a day during month three as a worst-case scenario.

Access to the site is proposed to be from Bakers Road, located to the south of the main site. The A131, which is located 8.5km east and 15km south of the site, will be the primary route for construction traffic accessing the development. Construction traffic is expected to leave the A131 at High Garrett and turn onto the A1017 and follow this for 12km before turning right onto Bridge Street. Traffic would then follow the road onto Tillbury Road before turning left onto Clare Road, and continuing for approximately 4km before reaching Bakers Road, where the site access is located. A map of the proposed route is included on the right.

Existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW) will be maintained to ensure that as far as possible throughout construction, there is safe passage for those accessing these.

Overall, our proposed solar development is not expected to result in any significant impacts to the site and surrounding area, and any required mitigations are being carefully considered.

OPERATION

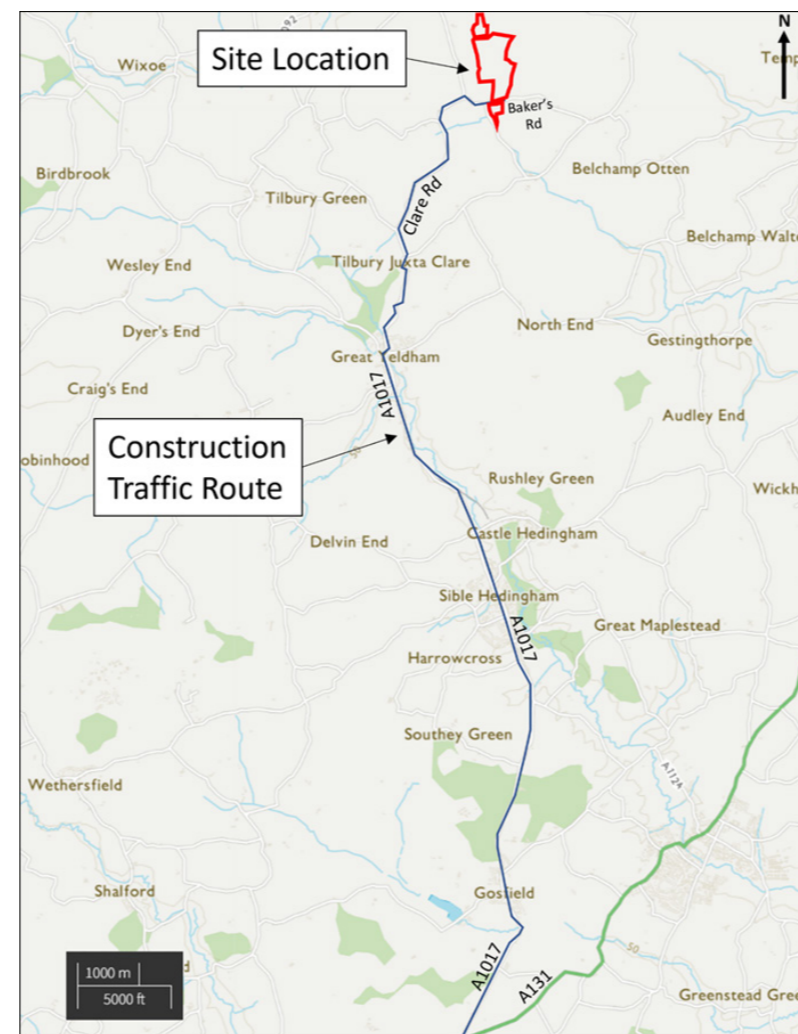
Throughout the operation of the solar development, the site will be accessed from the existing point of agricultural access off Bakers Road.

This runs along the southern boundary of the solar development. The site's access will be maintained for the lifespan of the solar development.

The proposed new substation, to the northeast of the development, will be accessed off Hickford Hill, using the existing field entrance.

During the operation phase there are no permanent onsite staff. Access will be required regularly by light vehicles for maintenance and repairs but this is expected to have very little impact on local traffic.

Similarly, as throughout the construction process, all existing PRoWs within and around the site will remain open. We will be implementing screening mitigations where required along these PRoWs to ensure the proposed solar development does not cause any negative impact.



Example construction traffic route map



Existing site entrance off Bakers Road



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HAVE YOUR SAY

Our consultation is running until Sunday 16th October 2022. We want to hear from the local community as we develop our proposal for Land at Bakers Road, to ensure we understand any concerns.

There are a number of ways that you can provide your feedback, as follows:

- **Fill out our questionnaire** available to fill in at today's event, or on our website
- Call us on **0800 058 4283** (freephone)
- Email us on **info@BSRknowlgreen.co.uk**
- **Fill out the Contact Us form** on our website **www.BSRknowlgreen.co.uk**

If you, or anyone you know, would benefit from hard copy information or accessible formats, these are available on request by using the details listed above.



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