

## **Statement of Community Involvement**

Yardley Road Solar Farm Land near Yardley Gobion, West Northamptonshire, NN12 7TT

April 2025





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### 1. Executive Summary

This statement has been prepared in support of the submission of the planning application for the development of Yardley Road Solar Farm on land either side of Yardley Road, between Potterspury and Yardley Gobion (hereinafter 'the proposal'), by renewable energy developers, Yardley Road Solar Farm Ltd, a joint venture between Solar2 and Recurrent Energy.

Early engagement on the proposal commenced in 2021, when we presented initial ideas to Potterspury Parish Council and Yardley Gobion Parish Council. We then commenced a period of engagement with the wider local community in February, March and April 2025, which provided a number of ways for local residents and stakeholders to find out more about the proposal and provide feedback.

We wanted to ensure the whole community had the opportunity to get involved. We posted a leaflet via Royal Mail which arrived on or after the 10<sup>th</sup> March to all 1,350 households and businesses in the parishes of Potterspury and Yardley Gobion and emailed it to key local stakeholders. We launched a project website in August of 2018 with information about the proposal. We held a drop-in community consultation event in each of the parish spanning the afternoon and evening on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025, to provide opportunities for all members of the community to attend taking into account possible commitments. 147 people in total attended the two consultation events, with a number of people attending both. We invited feedback via the website and the drop-in event, for us to consider as we developed the proposal.

Since the consultation event the project team also attended a Parish Council Meeting in Yardley Gobion on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2025, as a direct response to requests from attendees at the consultation event.

We received 39 written feedback submissions during the community engagement period.

#### Overview of feedback

In the feedback submissions received, most respondents commented on the choice of site for the proposal, the potential visual impact and raising concerns about food security and the public rights of way. In addition, concerns were raised reading traffic management for the access route during construction.

Regarding the proposal, 59% of those who provided a feedback submission said they were either strongly or somewhat opposed to the proposal; and 20% said they were either strongly or somewhat supportive.

Regarding the information provided, 26% said they were either quite or very dissatisfied with the information provided about the proposal; while 39% said they were either very or quite satisfied.





Respondents could provide further comments about the proposal. The themes of the comments received were as follows:

Theme	No. comments
Impact to footpaths and Public Right of Way	15
Impact on wildlife	9
Visual impact of the fencing	6
Impact on traffic	5
Food security	5
Overall visual impact	2
Impact on property value	2
The overall size of the project	1

Supporting narrative for all the feedback themes are included in Section 5.

#### Outcomes of the community engagement activity

The design has been through a number of iterations, taking into account feedback provided and following initial meetings and contact with the Parish Councils

- Construction access is proposed from the A508 and would not be through the villages of Potterspury or Yardley.
- Land immediately adjacent to Hesketh Road and Eastfield Crescent was removed from the original scheme due to proximity to a residential area. This followed initial conversation and feedback with the Parish Councils in 2021.
- Panels in the southernmost field (Furtho) were removed, due to proximity to the Medieval village.
   To reduce the impact on heritage assets this area will be retained within the red line boundary to provide a buffer to the solar development but will also be used to provide additional Biodiversity
   Net Gain benefit to the scheme.

We will continue to actively engage with stakeholders and inform the local community that the application has been submitted by sending email notification to all stakeholders listed in Section 3 and by updating the project website. Information will be included as to how the planning application can be accessed and commented on via West Northamptonshire Council's website.





### 2. Engagement Framework

The engagement process was developed to accord with the provisions set out in government policy and planning guidance, namely the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) most recently updated February 2025 and the 2011 Localism Act.

It also considered the as set out in the Statement of Community Involvement prepared by West Northamptonshire Council (adopted September 2021)

The community engagement activity was designed with the following principles in mind:

#### <u>Inclusive</u>

Initial engagement with the local parish councils and ward councillors was undertaken in 2021 (we attended two Parish Council meetings at Yardley Gobion and Potterspury). Continued engagement also includes the wider local community, and local stakeholders took place as draft plans for the solar farm were brought forward, following initial environmental assessments. We endeavoured to engage with residents living within the vicinity of the site as well as any local community groups and/or third parties related either by geography or interest.

The consultation activity was open to all, including any residents/stakeholders outside of those that were identified during a stakeholder mapping exercise.

#### Accessible and convenient

We held two drop-in community consultation events on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at Potterspury Village from 3pm to 7pm and Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at The Chapel, Yardley Gobion from 3pm to 7pm to enable local residents/stakeholders to view draft plans, meet our team and provide feedback before plans were finalised. The venue, date and timings for this event were arranged to ensure it was at a time and place convenient to the community.

A dedicated community engagement website enabled residents/stakeholders to view the same information online that was shared at the drop-in consultation event, in their own time and to submit feedback at their convenience. The website is fully accessible and auditable.

A leaflet was sent to local residents and stakeholders to introduce the project and invite them to take part in consultation.

Enquiries and feedback were invited via the website, email and at the events.

#### Genuine and meaningful

Stakeholders were engaged at an early stage in the plans to ensure that feedback could be gathered, and comments considered before the proposal design was finalised. The context, constraints and opportunities the site presents were clearly communicated and feedback invited by the community. This Statement of Community Involvement reports back on the feedback received, key themes and how comments have been considered.

#### Accountable

A full record of feedback was maintained throughout the community engagement period and this Statement of Community Involvement has been compiled and submitted with the planning application to detail the engagement activities and how we have considered the feedback received.





### 3. Stakeholders

The community engagement process was widely publicised to local residents and stakeholders, who are listed below.

#### Local community

We felt it was important to invite all residents of Yardley Gobion and Potterspury parishes to actively engage. All households and businesses in the parishes received a leaflet through the post with information about the draft proposal and how to find out more. This 'consultation area' which was determined by the location of the proposed Yardley Road Solar Farm included 1,350 properties in total.

Initially, a single consultation event was planned in Potterspury as we were unable to find a suitable venue in Yardley Gobion, however having received feedback from the local community that there was an alternative location available that isn't widely publicised that was willing to host the event at the Chapel, Yardley Gobion, we distributed an additional 500 leaflets to notify the community of the additional event which was well attended.

#### **Tenant Farmer**

The team has engaged with tenant farmer Stephen Dring from the earliest opportunity and continues to do so. Mr. Dring has been receiving regular updates from our Project Manager, Harry Whittaker, throughout the development process regarding:

- Site access
- Solar farm plans
- Expected dates for connection and construction

In addition, Harry has been available to answer Mr Dring's queries. Through this relationship, Mr Dring has been very helpful during the planning process, playing a key role in shaping the plans for the solar farm application.

#### **Stakeholders**

We also sent emails to the following stakeholders to share information about the draft proposal and to invite them to take part in the community engagement activity:

#### Political stakeholders

- Member of Parliament for West Northamptonshire Council
- West Northamptonshire Council and Deanshanger Ward Councillors:
  - Leader
  - o Deputy Leader
- Local Parish Councils
  - Yardley Gobion Parish Council
  - Potterspury Parish Council

#### Third party groups

- The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Northamptonshire Hampshire Climate Action Network
- Northamptonshire Natural History Society
- Campaigning For the Countryside Northamptonshire (CPRE)





### 4. Community Engagement Activities

#### Community engagement objective

The objective of the engagement was to share information and plans for the proposal with local residents and stakeholders and provide an opportunity for them to ask questions and make comments. The overarching aim was for us to consider feedback from the community before submitting our planning application to West Northamptonshire Council.

#### **Summary of Consultation Activities**

The table below shows the community engagement programme:

Activity & stakeholders	Date(s)
Stage one - early engagement	
Attend Yardley Gobion and Potterspury Parish Council meetings	2021 & 2025
Launch initial project website	2021
Stage two - share plans and invite feedback	
Launch community engagement:  Send emails to stakeholders  Post leaflets to residents  Issue press release to local media  Updated project website	10 March- 8 <sup>th</sup> April 2025
Hold drop-in community consultations events  • Potterspury Village  • The Chapel, Yardley Gobion	19 <sup>th</sup> March 2025, 3pm – 7pm 20 <sup>th</sup> March 2025 3pm – 7pm
Close pre-application community engagement period (deadline for feedback)	4 <sup>th</sup> April 2025
Attend parish Council meeting	8 <sup>th</sup> April 2025

#### Early engagement

We met with the local parish councils at a very early stage in the planning process to provide an introduction to the proposals, and to discuss the approach to community engagement.

#### Leaflets and emails

A leaflet providing details of the proposals alongside a location map and information about the opportunities for community engagement was posted to all properties in the parishes of Yardley Gobion and Potterspury. An email including the same information and a copy of the leaflet was sent to all the stakeholders listed in Section 3.

#### Website

We launched a dedicated project website to enable residents and stakeholders to view information about the proposal online, including a location map, site layout and visualisations. The website also included full details about the opportunities for community engagement and an online comment form.





#### **Drop-in community consultation event**

The community consultation event was an informal, exhibition-style session, with nine pull-up displays providing information on the draft proposal as follows:

- 1. Why we need more solar information about: West Northamptonshire Council aims to achieve Net Zero and well as Northampton Sustainability Accord
- 2. The site a site location plan and details about why the site has been chosen
- 3. *Proposals* a Landscape Strategy Plan, details about the proposals including energy production, features of the site and project lifespan
- 4. Landscape, Ecology and the Environment information regarding landscape, biodiversity, drainage and flood risk, archaeology and the construction process
- 5. FAQs a list of questions and answers about the proposal
- 6. *Community Benefits* details of community benefits of the proposal including improvements to local footpaths
- 7. About information about Solar2 and Recurrent Energy
- 8. *Timeline and Next Steps* setting out the stages of the project from public consultation to operation of the solar farm

In addition, there was a 3D fly-through model showing views of the proposed solar farm site from the local area. Print-outs of the proposed grid route and construction access route were also available.

Members of our project team were available to discuss the proposal and answer questions, and feedback was invited via comment forms.

#### Follow-up attendance at Parish Council meeting

It was requested that the project team attended the local Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2025 to address questions from both the local Parish Council and small number of local residents regarding the visual impact, the fencing and the community benefit fund. Representatives attended from both Solar2 and Recurrent Energy. We welcomed the opportunity to continue to engage with stakeholders.

A comment form was available on the website and at the community consultation events. It included questions about respondent capacity (i.e. were they responding as a resident, a business owner or in another capacity); level of satisfaction with the information provided about the proposals; sentiment towards the proposals; and suggestions for how the proposed community benefit fund could be used. The comment form also invited any further comments on the proposals.

A central record of all the feedback received was maintained throughout the community engagement period.

#### **Engagement materials**

A copy of all the engagement materials can be found in the Appendices.





### 5. Community Engagement Feedback

#### Level of participation

Over 1,350 leaflets and more than 59 emails were sent to invite local residents and stakeholders to take part in the community engagement activities. 147 people attended the community consultation event, with a small number attending the public gallery for the Parish Council meeting in Yardley Gobion, and 39 written feedback submissions were received during the community engagement period.

Whilst this represents a good level of participation (based on previous experience of community engagement exercises), it should be noted that 11% of all those leafleted attended the public consultation event and that the majority of those contacted about the proposal chose not to take part. This could signal a level of ambivalence, neutrality or support towards the proposal within the local community.

#### Channels of participation

39 written submissions were received as follows:

- Comment form completed at the drop-in event: 22
- Comment form submitted via the website: 17

The comment form posed a series of questions about the proposal and also included space for open comments (with no word or character limits).

#### Comment form feedback

The responses to the questions on the comment form were as follows:

#### Question 1. About you

- I am a local resident (living within approx. 10km/6 miles of the proposed solar farm site (please confirm which community you live within)
- I am a local business owner (operating within approx. 10km/6 miles of the proposed solar farm (please confirm below which community your business is located within)
- I am a community council member (please confirm below which community council you are a member of)
- I am a local council representative (please give further detail in the box below)
- Other

All 39 written submissions included a response to this question. All 39 specified that they are a local resident living within approximately 10km/6 miles of the solar farm site. Three of these said they are also a local business owner operating within approximately 10km/6 miles of the site.

Question 2. How satisfied are you with the information provided about Yardley Road Solar Farm?

- Very satisfied
- Quite satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Quite dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied





All 39 respondents who completed a feedback form provided an answer to this question. The results were as follows:

Response	No.	% of
	responses	responses
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	14	35%
Quite satisfied	10	26%
Quite dissatisfied	7	18%
Very satisfied	5	13%
Very dissatisfied	3	8%

Question 3. Which of the following best describes your view of the proposals for Yardley Road Solar Farm?

- Strongly supportive
- Somewhat supportive
- Undecided
- Somewhat opposed
- Strongly opposed

Again, everyone who completed a feedback form provided a response to this question.

Response	No.	% of
	responses	responses
Strongly opposed	16	41%
Undecided	8	21%
Somewhat opposed	7	18%
Strongly supportive	4	10%
Somewhat supportive	4	10%

The final question on the comment form was as follows, inviting open feedback on the proposals:

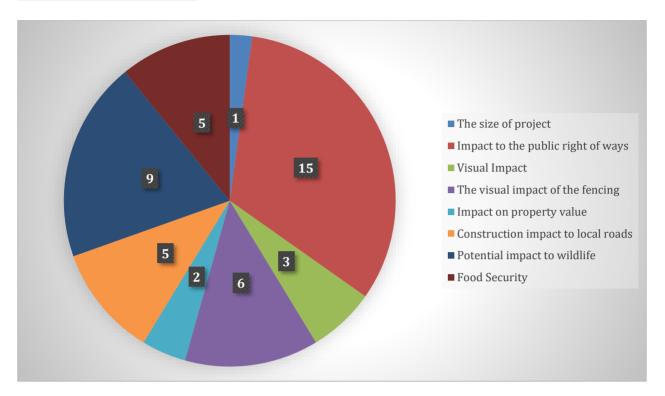
Question 6. Do you have any further comments regarding Yardley Road Solar Farm you would like to share?

30 respondents provided further comments in response to this question. The themes of the responses to this question are categorised and shown on the following page.





#### Overview of feedback themes:



#### Impact on footpaths and public rights of way

15 respondents made comments regarding concerns about the public rights of way and footpaths and the potential impact of the project could have on these.

#### Potential impact on wildlife

9 respondents voiced concerns about the potential impact of the proposal on local wildlife.

#### Potential visual impact of the fencing surrounding the site

6 respondents said they were concerned about the visual impact of the fencing surrounding the proposed project.

#### **Construction Traffic Impact**

5 respondents said there were concerned about the increase in traffic in the local area and on the small country roads.

#### **Food security**

5 respondents made comments about the potential impact of the proposal on food security, suggesting that the land should remain in agricultural use for growing crops for food.

#### Visual impact

3 respondents raised concerns that the proposal would have a negative impact on views of the village and surrounding countryside.

#### The size of the project

1 respondent raised concerns about the overall size of the project.





### 6. Responding to Feedback Themes

Our response to all the comments received during the community engagement period can be found below.

#### Impact on foot paths and regarding public rights of way

Whilst there will be some disruption to footpaths and public rights of way during the construction phase of the project for safety purposes, this will be managed and kept to a minimum. The footpaths and public rights of way will be fenced on either side and additional native planting to increase biodiversity and provide screening. The management of hedgerows will be outlined in the landscape ecological management plan, to be secured by condition.

#### Potential impact on wildlife / Biodiversity of the project

Potential impacts on wildlife have been a key consideration as we have developed the solar farm proposal. Areas of the site will be set aside for ecological and biodiversity enhancement measures as well as screening as set out in the submitted Landscape Mitigation Plan. In addition to generating clean energy, we are proposing a suite of features to benefit the local environment and encourage wildlife.

- The solar panels themselves will be enclosed within a deer fence for safety and security.
- Sheep will be allowed to graze beneath the panels if this is what the landowner/farmer chooses.
- We are exploring the provision of beehives to help biodiversity, increase the bee population in the UK and produce local honey which is found to have health benefits. This was requested in one of the written feedback submissions.

Improving the biodiversity of the site is a key element of the proposal. Wildflower meadow planting will be proposed to attract birds and insects, whilst enhancing the biodiversity of the wider area. Under The Environment Act (2021), all major developments are required to deliver a biodiversity net gain of at least 10%. However, we aim to achieve a significantly greater gain. Reserving the land from intensive farming will improve soil quality, while providing extensive hedgerow and wildflower planting will enhance local wildlife habitats.

#### Potential visual impact of the fencing surrounding the site

The common consensus was that the fencing would be very industrial looking and not in keeping with the agricultural surroundings. The team clearly explained, that whilst the fencing will be higher than traditional agricultural fencing, the finishing materials will remain in keeping with the agricultural fencing already erected, ensuring that general wildlife would be able to move freely across the site but would exclude deer, for both their safety and that of the equipment.

#### **Construction Traffic Impact**

The area has had a large influx in building planning approval with a new large distribution centre granted planning permission during the public consultation events.

The team explained that a construction traffic management plan had been commissioned, and that construction will be in line with guidance ensuring minimal disruption with the construction traffic route avoiding the villages of Yardley Gobion and Potterspury as well as the wider area.





#### Food security / Potential impact on the agricultural business that farms the site

The site can remain in agricultural use throughout the lifespan of the solar farm - sheep will be allowed to graze beneath the panels if this is what the landowner/farmer chooses. At the end of the project's lifespan, the solar farm will be decommissioned. The panels will be removed and recycled and the land returned to its original use with the addition of 40 years of biodiversity enhancements and significant soil improvements by virtue of not being intensively farmed throughout the operational phase of the development.

#### Visual impact

We recognise that views surrounding the solar farm site are important to local residents. The site is well-screened with opportunities to provide further landscape and biodiversity enhancements and is a suitable distance from nearby homes. To mitigate visual impact upon the surrounding area, the proposal includes a range of additional screening such as tree planting and hedgerow infill, as set out in the Indicative Landscape Strategy Plan that has been submitted with the planning application.

#### The size of the project

We recognise that the land required for a large-scale solar project appears to be vast, however it's important to understand that the size is directly linked to its potential to generate significant renewable energy. This will make a meaningful contribution towards the UK's urgent need for energy security and help toward meeting the UK's ambitious climate targets. This scale is not simply about land use; it's about strategically investing in infrastructure that can tangibly reduce our reliance on volatile global energy markets and accelerate the transition to a sustainable and secure energy future for the nation.





### 7. Conclusion and Next Steps

We have taken an inclusive and meaningful approach to engaging the local community and stakeholders in the development of the proposal, and we are grateful for the valuable feedback received.

The feedback received from local residents and stakeholders during the community engagement process has been listened to and addressed in the planning application where possible to ensure that local views are heard, responded to and that the solar farm is a good neighbour.

As detailed in Section 6 we have made amendments to the site layout in direct response to community feedback.

#### **Next Steps**

The applicant will inform the local community and stakeholders that the application has been submitted by sending email notifications to all stakeholders listed in Section 3 and by updating the project website.





## Appendix 1 - Leaflets to Local Residents and **Businesses**

#### Yardley Road Solar Farm



#### Public Consultation Event

We are holding a public exhibition at Potterspury Village Hall to present Yardley Road Solar Farm. Members of the team will be available to answer any questions you may have and listen to your views. Your feedback is valuable and will be used to help improve the plans before a planning application is submitted to West Northamptonshire Council.

When: Wednesday,19th March 2025 From: 4pm – 7pm

Where: Potterspury Village Hall, 27 Church End, Potterspury, Towcester NN12 7PX







#### About Solar2

We are an independently family-owned UK renewable energy developer with offices across the England, Wales and Scotland.

The team has been operating in the renewable energy sector energy industry in the UK since 1996, originally as West Coast Energy (WCE).

The founders of Solar2, together with the wider team, have a strong track record in the successful development of renewable projects throughout the UK, being responsible for the delivery of in excess of 1GW of renewable energy.

It is important to us that our sites maintain an agricultural use and enhance the local environment, and that we engage and listen to the local community throughout the planning process.

We are a responsible, considerate developer. As such, we are proposing a suite of measures to improve the local environment, by providing wildflower meadow planting, upgraded animal habitats, and achieving a Biodiversity Net Gain, for the Yardley Road site.

Recurrent Energy is one of the world's largest and most geographically diversified utility-scale solar and energy storage project development, ownership and operations platforms

With an industry-leading team of in-house energy experts, we are a wholly owned subsidiary of Canadian Solar Inc. and function as Canadian Solar's global development and power services business.

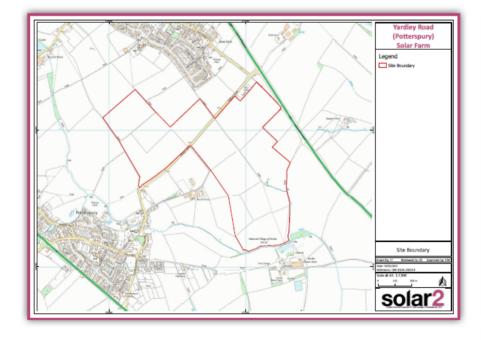
Recurrent Energy has completed the development of 9 gigawatts (GWp) of operating utility-scale solar projects and 3 gigawatts (uvrp) of operating utility-scale solar projects and 3 gigawatt hours (GWh) of energy storage projects across six continents. Recurrent Energy have more than 25 GWp of solar and 47 GWh of battery storage projects under development.

#### Contact Us

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the proposal the team, please do get in touch by calling our community helpl email, or visiting our website for more information.

Call: 01352 748 300 Email: Info@solar2.co.uk







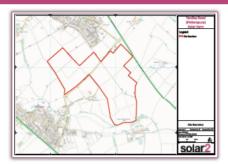
Source: Homes Powered Equivalent calculations from BEIS; "Source: BEIS "all fossil fuels" emissions statistic of 446 tonnes of CO2 per GwH of electricity supplied



www.yardleyroadsolarfarm.co.uk







#### Public Consultation Event

We are holding public exhibitions at Potterspury Village Hall and The Chapel, Yardley Gobion to present Yardley Road Solar Farm. Members of the team will be available to answer any questions you may have and listen to your views. Your feedback is valuable and will be used to help improve the plans before a planning application is submitted to West Northamptonshire Council.

When: Wednesday, 19th March 2025
From: 4pm – 7pm
Where: Potterspury Village Hall, 27 Church End, Potterspury, Towcester NN12 7PX

When: Thursday, 20th March 2025
From: 3pm – 7pm
Where: The Chapel, Chestnut Road, Yardley Gobion, Towcester NN12 7TW











### Appendix 2 - Email to Stakeholders

Email to stakeholders (NB. versions of the below email were tailored according to the recipient)

Dear [stakeholder name],

I hope you are keeping well. I write on behalf of Solar2, an independent, family-owned UK renewable energy developer, who are preparing plans for a solar farm off Yardley Road, between Yardley Gobion and Potterspury.

The attached newsletter has been issued to nearby residents to invite them to a public consultation event, which will be taking place on:

 Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> March between 4pm and 7pm at Potterspury Village Hall, 27 Church End, Potterspury NN12 7PX

We would like to invite you to attend a stakeholder preview, which will be taking place on the same date and at the same venue 3pm – 4pm, where key stakeholders such as yourself will be able to view the materials and ask questions of the project team before the consultation opens to the public. If you are unable to attend the preview event, you are of course welcome to attend the consultation and speak with the project team there as well.

Further information on the proposed development is available at: <a href="https://www.yardleyroadsolarfarm.co.uk">www.yardleyroadsolarfarm.co.uk</a>

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the scheme further, please don't hesitate to get in touch by email or call me on the number below.

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### Appendix 3 - Website Homepage



Solar2 has developed proposals for a solar farm on land located between the villages of Potterspury and Yardley Gobion. The site area is c. 70.5ha.

The site comprises flat agricultural land bisected east west by Yardley Road. Hedges and intermittent trees provide an element of natural screening.

The project will generate clean, renewable energy through photovoltaic (PV) solar panels.

The project will be temporary whilst also providing an enhanced bio- diversity benefit to local wildlife during the life of the project.



Privacy & Cookies Policy

Yardley Road Solar Farm Ltd 111 Park Street, London, Mayfair, W1K 7JF

T: 01352 748 300 E: info@solar2.co.uk

Company Number: 13624381 © 2025 Solar 2 Ltd

SITE DESIGN & BUILD BY VIEW CREATIVE AGENCY

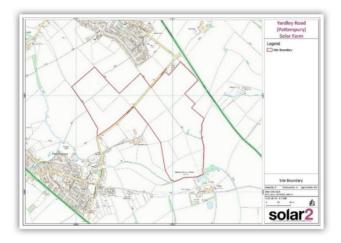




### Appendix 4 - Drop-In Event Pull-Up Banners

### Yardley Road Solar Farm

#### Welcome



Welcome to the Yardley Road Solar Farm public exhibition. The following exhibition banners outline key aspects of the proposed solar farm, which have been subject to extensive review by independent environmental and technical experts.

Take your time to review the information. Key members of the project team are available to answer any questions.

#### About the Applicant

The applicant is Yardley Road Solar Farm, a joint venture between Solar2 Limited (Solar2) and Recurrent Energy.

Solar2 is an independently owned, specialist renewable energy developer, working on a range of renewable energy projects across England, Wales, and Scotland.

Recurrent Energy is one of the world's largest and most geographically diversified utility-scale solar and energy storage project development, ownership, and operations platforms.

#### Meet the Team

Key members of the project team are on hand to discuss the proposed energy park and answer your questions.



Richard Morgan Solar Development Director



John Moisey Project Manager

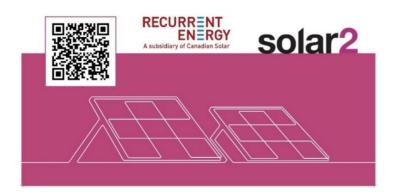


James Sharman Project Manager



Janet Wagstaff PR and Marketing Manager

Scan the QR code to view this information







### **Solution Yardley Road Solar Farm**

#### Why We Need More Renewable Energy

Solar energy is one of the most cost-effective methods of producing reliable, non-carbon-dioxide-emitting power. It helps reduce the UK's reliance on imported electricity and strengthens energy security.

#### Energy Security and Cost of Living

According to intelligence company Rystad, developing new solar energy projects is ten times cheaper than constructing new gas-fired power stations in the long term. This means that new solar farms like Yardley Road can help lower electricity generation costs and address the ongoing energy crisis.

There is a plethora of national policy which provides support for renewable energy projects. The Labour Government has declared a national mission to make the United Kingdom a clean energy superpower. Increasing our renewable energy capacity will also reduce reliance on imported electricity and enhance energy security.

#### West Northamptonshire Council Policy

West Northamptonshire Council aims to achieve Net Zero across the district by 2045, five years ahead of the national target.

The Council is currently consulting the public on a new climate change strategy to identify priorities and actions to help the community reduce emissions.

Additionally, the Council has signed the Northampton Sustainability Accord, an agreement resulting from the University of Northampton Sustainability Summit in May 2023. This accord commits the Council to sustainability best practices and a shared set of goals.

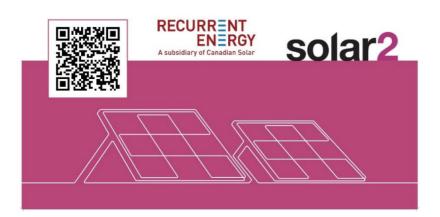
Scan the QR code below for more information



#### Delivering Net Zero

The UK Government has made a legally binding commitment to achieve Net Zero - requiring a power grid free from carbon emissions and a shift away from fossil fuels. This goal necessitates a significant expansion of reliable renewable energy, including solar.

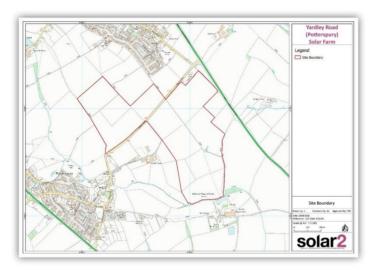
Government ministers have announced plans to triple the UK's solar energy capacity by 2030, which could provide electricity for hundreds of thousands of homes.







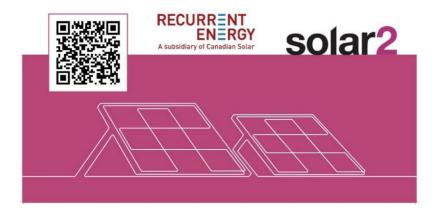
#### The Site



Yardley Road Solar Farm is proposed between the villages of Yardley Gobion and Potterspury. The site is currently farmland, comprising a mix of Grade 3b and Grade 2 land. 65% of the site is graded 3b, meaning it is mostly not classified as Best and Most Versatile (BMV) land.

We believe this is an ideal site for a new solar farm because:

- It has secured a distribution grid connection, which is extremely constrained across the UK, and therefore of significant benefit to this particular site.
- It is well-screened and suitably distant from nearby homes, reducing impact on local residents.
- The area is not restricted by heritage, landscape or ecological designations, such as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) or Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI), meaning the site will not affect protected habitats or wildlife.
- It has safe and suitable access for construction and maintenance.

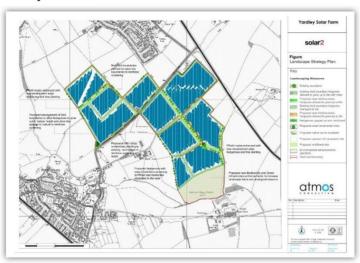






### **OVER SET OF STATE OF SET OF S**

### **Proposals**

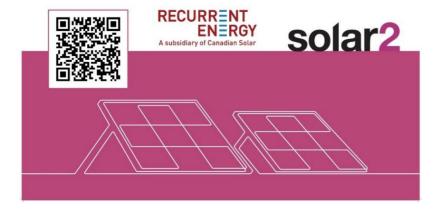


The proposals include a 40MW solar farm, which, if consented, will generate enough clean energy to power 15,000 homes, offsetting 22,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide annually.

The site covers approximately 70 hectares (173 acres), though not all land within the red line boundary will be developed with solar panels. Remaining land will provide opportunities for landscape and ecological enhancements.

In addition to generating electricity, we are introducing several features to enhance the local environment:

- The land will remain usable for sheep grazing.
- Beehives may be introduced to increase local bee population.
- Wildflower meadows could be planted to attract birds and insects.
- After 40 years, the solar farm will be decommissioned, with the panels removed and recycled, leaving behind decades of biodiversity improvements.







### **OVER IT SEED NOT SEED TO SEED**

# Landscape, Ecology, and the Environment



#### Biodiversity

Since the introduction of the Environment Act (2021) all developments must deliver a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), but we aim to achieve over 20% BNG. Allowing the land to rest from intensive farming will help the soil recover, and extensive hedgerow and wildflower meadow planting will improve habitats for local wildlife.

In considering the site suitability we have carried out a wide variety of technical assessments, including ecological and habitat assessments. The findings have identified skylarks so we have adjusted our design to ensure their nesting areas remain free of solar panels. Suitable mitigation and enhancement to their foraging environment will be included in the final design layout.

#### Drainage and Flood Risk

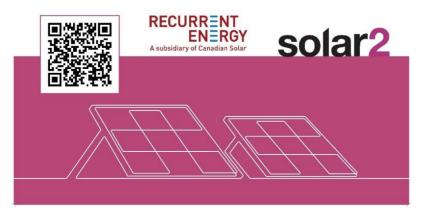
The site is located in Flood Zone 1, which represents the lowest level of risk. Our proposals will offer an improvement on the existing drainage situation.

#### Archaeology

We have instructed archaeological consultants to carry out a site walkover, geophysical survey and we have agreed with the council to carry out trial trenching on the site, where a series of trenches will be dug to establish if there are potential areas or artefacts of archaeological value on the site. If anything of significance is found this would be mitigated to the satisfaction of the County Archaeologist.

#### Noise & Construction

- Noise: Some daytime noise will be generated by electrical components, this will be considered in a full Noise Impact Assessment, which considers all sensitive noise receptors, and will be submitted with the planning application.
- Construction: A Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be agreed upon with the Council to minimise disruption.
- Traffic: Once operational, maintenance visits will be minimal, occurring once or twice a month.







#### FAQs?

#### What are the benefits of solar energy?

Solar energy is the most cost-effective way to generate electricity, and does not emit carbon dioxide. Solar farms help to provide UK energy security and drive down the cost of electricity, which will be reflected in people's energy bills, in the long term. They are also crucial to delivering on the Government's response to climate change and commitment to reduce Carbon dioxide emissions.

#### Why have you selected this site?

We have a careful site selection process. An ideal site should have:

- A local grid connection
- Be located away from people's homes
- Be free from landscape, heritage and ecological policy designations

#### Will I benefit from this development?

Yes! We are investing in improving the local environment and upgrading the footpaths and we want to use local materials and labour where possible to help the local economy. We will also be offering a community benefit payment.

#### Why are most solar farms built on agricultural land?

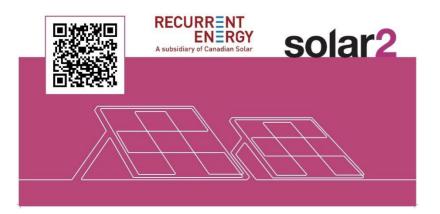
Rooftop solar installations are a great idea, but many roofs are not suitable and rooftop solar alone will not deliver the expansion of renewable energy needed to ensure the UK's energy security, drive down bills, and address climate change. Solar farms help support local farmers by giving them another source of income, whilst helping them rest land and let soil recover, which in the long term will also improve our food security.

#### Will there be disturbance from construction?



We want to manage traffic and disruption to ensure that there is minimal impact on local residents. We will agree a plan with the Council to ensure this is managed properly. Construction is anticipated to take around 12 months and at peak time will involve up to 20 deliveries per day.

If you have questions which are not answered here, please ask a member of the team, who will do their best to help. Alternatively, the answer may be on our website, which you can visit using the QR code below.







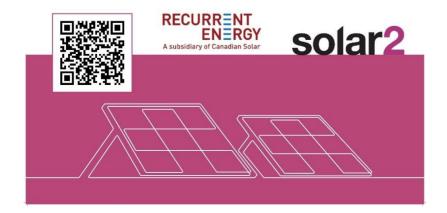
### **Community Benefits**



We want the community to benefit from Yardley Road Solar Farm. The development will provide tangible benefits for local people, enhance the landscape for local wildlife, and will generate funds to be spent on local projects.

#### Benefits will include:

- A community benefit payment will be paid, which can be spent on projects important to local residents.
- Considerable investment in landscape enhancements, including wildflower meadow planting, and new hedgerows.
- Protecting and improving local footpaths, making it easier, more convenient, and more enjoyable to use as a walking route.
- Using local materials and labour where possible. Construction staff are also likely to use local accommodation and shops, providing a boost to the local economy.







### **OVER IT SEED NOT SEED TO SEED**

#### About Solar2 and Recurrent Energy



#### About Solar2

We are an independently family-owned UK renewable energy developer with offices across England, Wales and Scotland. The team has been operating in the renewable energy sector since 1996, originally as West Coast Energy (WCE).

The founders of Solar2, together with the wider team, have a strong track record in the successful development of renewable projects throughout the UK, being responsible for the delivery of in excess of 1GW of renewable energy. It is important to us that our sites maintain an agricultural use and enhance the local environment, and that we engage and listen to the local community throughout the planning process.

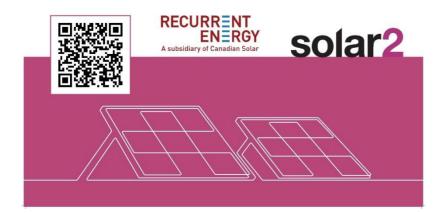
We are a responsible, considerate developer. As such, we are proposing a suite of measures to improve the local environment, by providing wildflower meadow planting, upgraded animal habitats, and achieving a Biodiversity Net Gain, for the Yardley Road site.



A subsidiary of Canadian Solar

#### About Recurrent Energy

Recurrent Energy is one of the world's largest and most geographically diversified utility-scale solar and energy storage project development, ownership and operations platforms. With an industry-leading team of in-house energy experts, we are a wholly owned subsidiary of Canadian Solar Inc. and function as Canadian Solar's global development and power services business. Recurrent Energy has completed the development of 10 gigawatts (GWp) of operating utility-scale solar projects and 3.3 gigawatt hours (GWh) of energy storage projects across six continents. Recurrent Energy has more than 26 GWp of solar and 56 GWh of battery storage projects under development.







### **OVER SET OF SET**

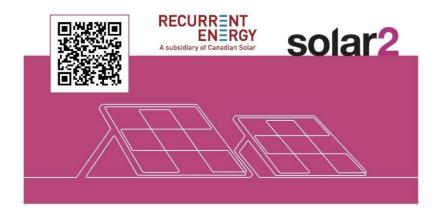
#### **Timeline and Next Steps**



Please take some time today to provide your feedback on the proposals. You can do this by completing the Feedback Form provided, scanning the QR code below or via the tablet.



Please note our pre-submission consultation period closes on Friday 4th April. Please ensure that any feedback is sent sufficiently in advance to arrive before this date.

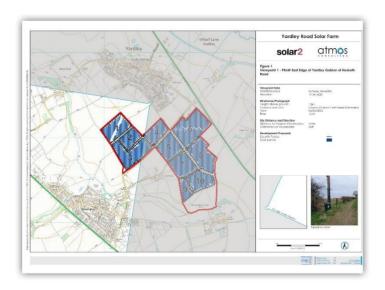




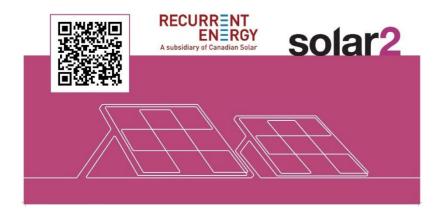


### Viewpoint 1

Public Right of Way East Edge of Yardley Gobion off Hesketh Road





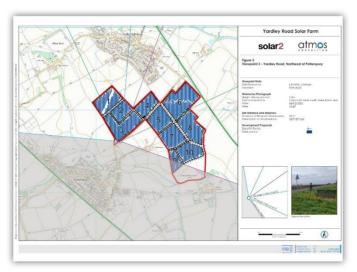




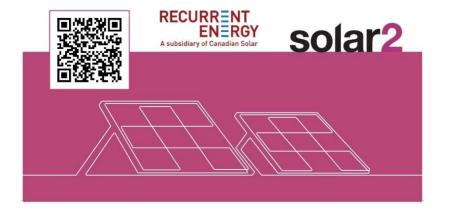


### Viewpoint 3

Yardley Road, northeast of Potterspury











## **Appendix 5 – Parish Council Presentation**





## Yardley Road Solar Farm

## **Yardley Road Solar Farm**





### Yardley Road Solar Farm - Overview

- Proposed solar farm with an export capacity of up to 40MW
- Covering 70.5 hectares (174 acres)
- In excess of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain
- Community Benefit Fund









Yardley Road Site Boundary & Design



## Yardley Road Solar Farm





### **Public Consultation**

- 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> March 2025 public consultations via exhibitions at Potterspury and Yardley Gobion.
- 147 local residents attended the public consultations
- 37 feedback forms received

27% either quite or very dissatisfied with the information provided 35% neither satisfied or dissatisfied with the information provided 38% either quite or very satisfied with the information provided















### Public Consultation - Feedback Results

62% either strongly or somewhat opposed



22% raised concerns regarding the foot paths over the land



19% either

strongly or somewhat

supportive

16% raised concerns regarding an increase of traffic



16% raised concerns regarding food security



38% raised concerns regarding the impact on rural views, wildlife and biodiversity

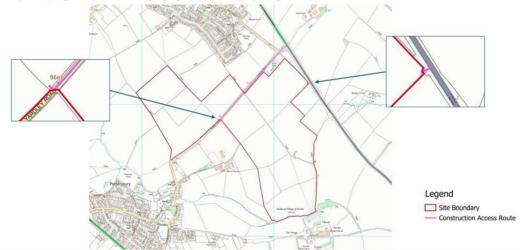


## Yardley Road Solar Farm





### **Construction Access Route**











### **Proposed Grid Route**



## **♥** Yardley Road Solar Farm





## **THANK YOU**





### **Appendix 6 - Comment Form**

## Yardley Road Solar Farm

#### Yardley Road Solar Farm - Feedback

To ensure that your views are taken into account during the planning process for Yardley Road
Solar Farm, please complete the below questionnaire.
1. About you
☐ I am a local resident (living within approx. 10km/6 miles of the proposed solar farm site
(please confirm which community you live within)

☐ I am a local business owner (operating within approx. 10km/6 miles of the proposed solar

$\ \square$ I am a community council member (please confirm below which community council	uncil you are
a member of)	

$\square$ I am a local council representative (please give	further detail in the box below)
--	----------------------------------

farm (please confirm below which community your business is located within)

_	Outer		

Please expand your answer here:

2.	How satisfied ar	e you with t	the information	provided about	Yardley Road Solar Far	m?
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Quite satisfied				
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Very dissatisfied

3. Which of the following best describes your view of the proposals for Yardley Road Solar Farm?

☐ Strongly supportive

□ Somewhat supportive

☐ Undecided

Somewhat opposed

☐ Strongly opposed





Scan the QR code for the electronic verison of this feedback form Solar2





4. If proposals for Yardley Road Solar Farm are approved, Solar2 is committed to providing a community benefit fund. We would like to hear suggestions from the local community about local priorities and projects for this fund.
Community council managed community benefit fund
A locally elected community group managed community benefit fund
$\square$ The community benefit fund distributed for the use of reducing energy bills
☐ The community benefit fund used towards residential renewable energy technology
Other (please specify below)
5 If you have other suggestions on how the community benefit fund can be used, please let us know in the box below.
Do you any further comments regarding Yardley Road Solar Farm that you would like to share?



Scan the QR code for the electronic verison of this feedback form Solar2







We collect your email address for the sole purpose of providing you with further information about Yardley Road Solar Farm.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey.

Please return completed hard copy surveys to:-

Yardley Road Solar Farm

Solar2

Linden House

Mold Business Park

Mold

Please find below information regarding our privacy policy.

The Personal Information that we collect are used for providing and improving the Service. We will not use or share your information with anyone except as described in this Privacy Policy.

The terms used in this Privacy Policy have the same meanings as in our Terms and Conditions, which is accessible at wind2.co.uk, unless otherwise defined in this Privacy Policy. Our Privacy Policy was created with the help of the Privacy Policy Template and the Terms and Conditions Template.



Scan the QR code for the electronic verison of this feedback form Solar2

