CLEVE HILL
SOLAR PARK

Welcome to Our Consultation Event

Our Vision for Cleve Hill Solar Park

We are at the very early stages of developing proposals for the Cleve Hill Solar Park.

Our ambition is to deliver a scheme that helps to address national and local electricity needs by generating renewable and clean energy without the need for government subsidies.

The proposed Cleve Hill Solar Park could have a generating capacity exceeding **350 megawatts** (MW).

If built the project would be able to power approximately **110,000 homes a year**, which is the number of households in Swale and Canterbury districts combined.

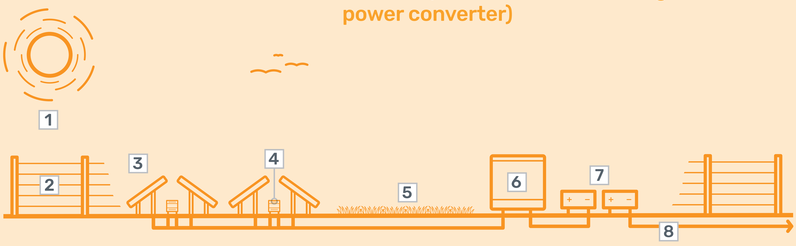
The project aims to use innovative battery storage technology, which will deliver clean energy to the grid when it is needed most.

Why Here?

- The South East of England has the best solar yields in the UK, meaning that more energy can be generated per panel than elsewhere in the country.
- The existing Cleve Hill National Grid substation is adjacent to the site meaning the project can connect in to current infrastucture.
- The site is predominantly classified as Grade 3b which means it is lower grade agricultural land which is not the most productive.

Components of a typical solar farm

1. Solar Energy
2. Fencing
3. Solar Panels
4. Inverter (DC to AC power converter)
5. Landscape Area
6. Substation
7. Battery Storage
8. Underground Cable



Who We Are

Cleve Hill Solar Park Ltd is a joint venture between two solar industry specialists – Hive Energy and Wirsol Energy.

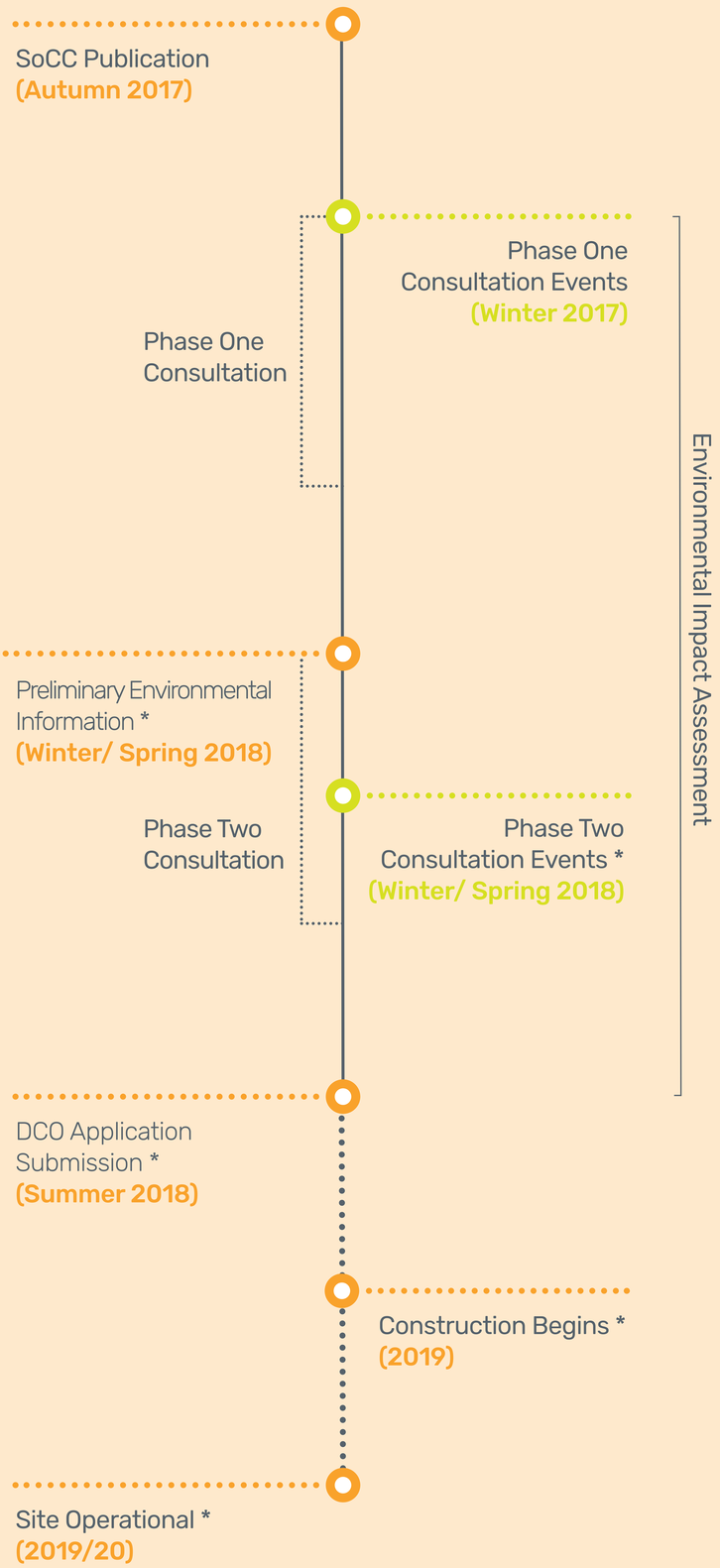
- Founded in 2010, Hive Energy is based in Hampshire.
- Hive has established itself as the second largest developer of solar parks in the UK.
- In the past 5 years, Hive has developed over 26 sites in the UK.

- Wirsol Energy is a highly experienced solar park developer, constructor and operator across the UK and beyond.
- Wirsol has built and operated 24 solar parks across the UK.
- Wirsol has strong experience in using world-class components and implementing rigorous construction, operation and maintenance processes.

Proposed Timeline

Cleve Hill Solar Park is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) as it is proposed to have a generating capacity exceeding 50MW.

We will be applying for a Development Consent Order (DCO) through the Planning Inspectorate. Any decision to grant the project will be provided by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.



* all dates are indicative and may change

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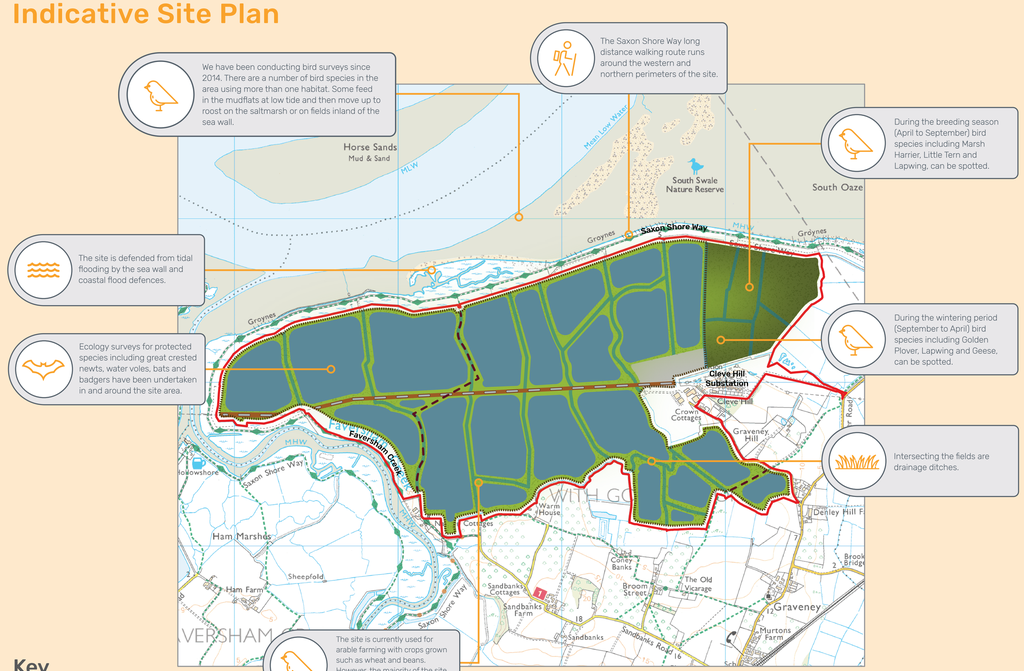
Indicative Site Plan



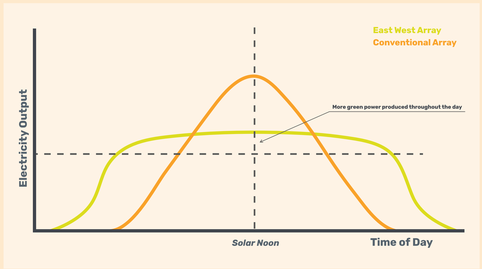
Using Innovative Technology

Currently in the UK, ground-mounted solar panels have typically been angled to face the southern sky in order to capture the maximum level of irradiation from the Sun. This often results in a peak in generation when the Sun is south of the panels around midday.

In order to provide the maximum electricity output at Cleve Hill throughout the day, the most effective use of land is to orientate panels towards the east and west in an arrangement that will form ridges and valleys between panels running north to south.

The panels will also likely be mounted at a shallower angle than has previously been used on UK sites. This will facilitate a more consistent generation of electricity throughout the day, and a greater total generation of electricity from the site area compared to an equivalent south facing array.

Cleve Hill Solar Park will also incorporate battery storage technology into the project design. This will allow clean energy generated by the solar panels to be delivered to the grid when it is needed most.



Key Benefits

This project is **non-subsidised** so will not receive government funding.

Over **£1 million** in business rates is expected to be generated annually for Kent and Swale Councils.

Cleve Hill Solar Park could save **150,500** tonnes of CO_2 per annum, equivalent to the annual emissions of **29,400** cars.

Cleve Hill Solar Park has the potential to power the equivalent of **110,000 UK homes** per annum.

Environmental Impact Assessment

What we will do:

In parallel to the public consultation we will be undertaking extensive environmental surveys and consulting with a range of statutory and local stakeholders.

Since 2014, we have been undertaking surveys and developing a greater understanding of the local environment.

Ecology surveys

To date we have undertaken surveys for the following:

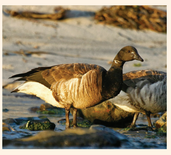
- Amphibians
- Badgers
- Bats
- Invertebrates
- Phase 1 Habitat
- Reptiles
- Water vole

We have held meetings onsite with Natural England and Kent Wildlife Trust.

Ornithology surveys

Ornithological surveys were undertaken across the site and surrounding area between January 2014 and October 2016, with further surveys ongoing.

We have held meetings with Natural England, Kent Wildlife Trust and discussed the proposals with the RSPB.



Brent Goose

Lapwing

We will develop a comprehensive site-wide biodiversity and landscape management plan in consultation with stakeholders to secure opportunities to protect and enhance biodiversity onsite.

What's Next?

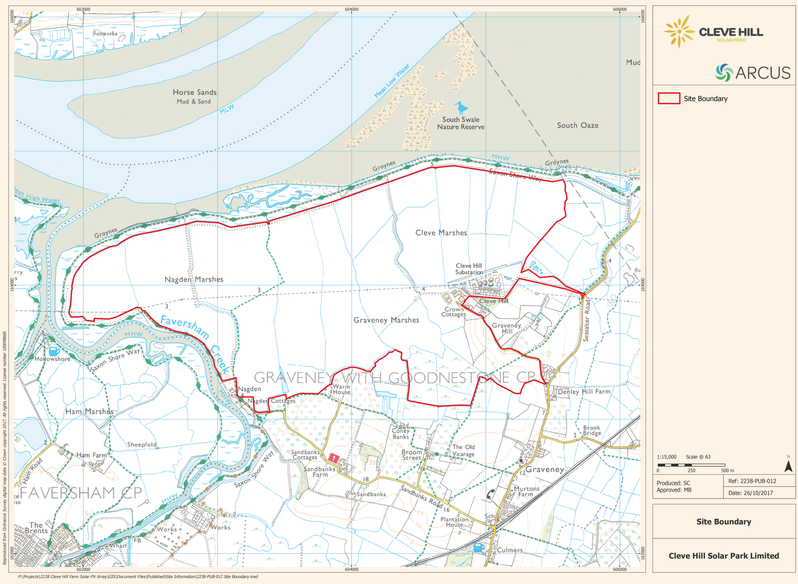
- Further surveys are being undertaken for wintering bird species this winter (2017/18).
- We will continue to consult with stakeholders on our proposals to develop a strategy to ensure that effects on birds and other species as a result of the proposals can be appropriately mitigated.
- We will be setting aside areas of the park specifically for wildlife and land management.

Traffic and Access

We are aware of the concerns raised locally regarding the construction of the existing Cleve Hill substation.

We are considering all potential options for accessing the site.

Currently, consideration of the environmental impact of access for construction suggest a preferred delivery route by road from the A299 via Head Hill Road and Seasalter Road, to access the site via the existing Cleve Hill substation entrance.



The number of panels is dependent on the site layout, which is still being developed based on our ongoing consultation with stakeholders and the local community. Therefore, it is not yet known how many construction related traffic movements will be required to build the solar park.

We are learning the lessons from the construction of the Cleve Hill substation and want to hear the views and experiences of local residents.

We will produce a comprehensive Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) which sets out how we aim to control traffic movements throughout the construction period. The local community will be given the opportunity to comment on the CTMP before it is finalised.

There will be flexibility in how the solar park is constructed and we welcome your views.

Please let us know your thoughts in our feedback form.

Community

Being a good neighbour is the most important part of delivering a successful project.

We make a promise to our neighbours to build long-term and meaningful relationships and to always operate in a transparent and respectful way.

The changing world we live in demands us all to reduce our carbon emissions and move to a cleaner and more secure energy mix, including renewable energy generation like solar.

We want to engage early with people in the local area to seek feedback on our proposals. We will use local knowledge to inform and refine our approach wherever possible. We value the opinions of the local community and will work hard to minimise any disturbance as much as possible.

We want to understand the issues that are important to you, as well as any suggestions you have as to how we can make improvements.

Our initial ideas include:

- Ways to enhance the public rights of way, including the Saxon Shore Way
- Improved land management practices to support biodiversity
- Educational visits once the solar park is operational

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Viewpoint 9

Viewpoint 8

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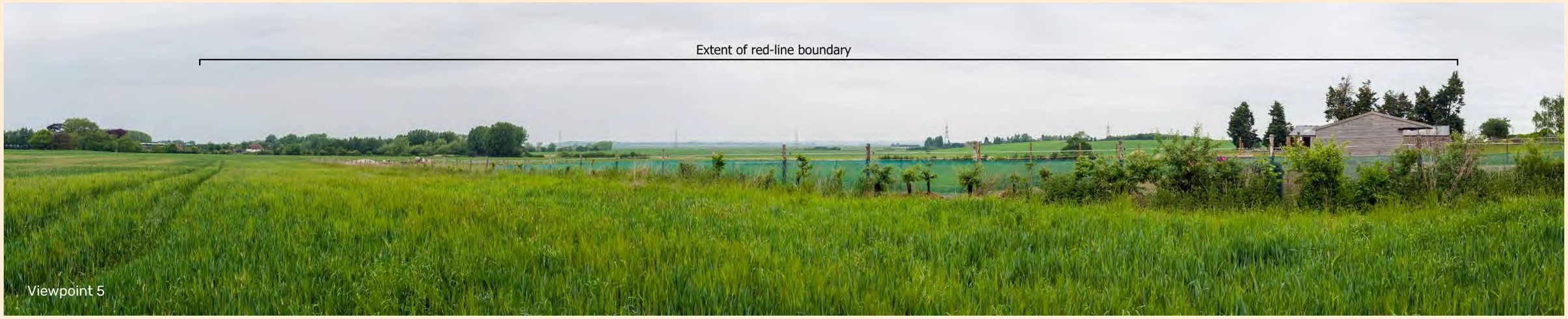

Viewpoint 5

Viewpoint 18

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Viewpoint 2

Viewpoint 3

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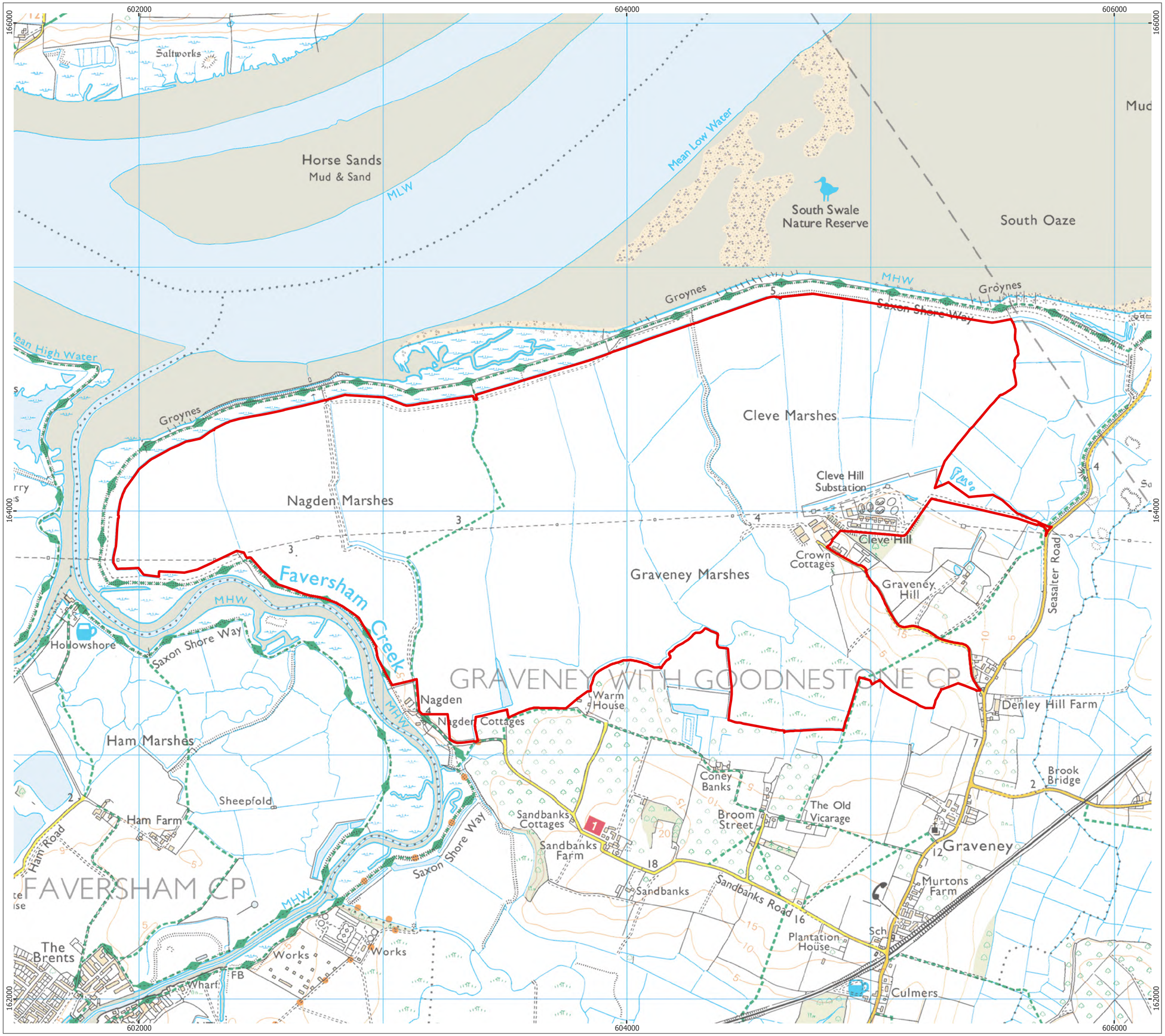
Viewpoint 27



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ARCUS

Site Boundary

1:15,000 Scale @ A3

0 250 500 m

N

Produced: SC Approved: MB	Ref: 2238-PUB-012 Date: 26/10/2017

Site Boundary

Cleve Hill Solar Park Limited

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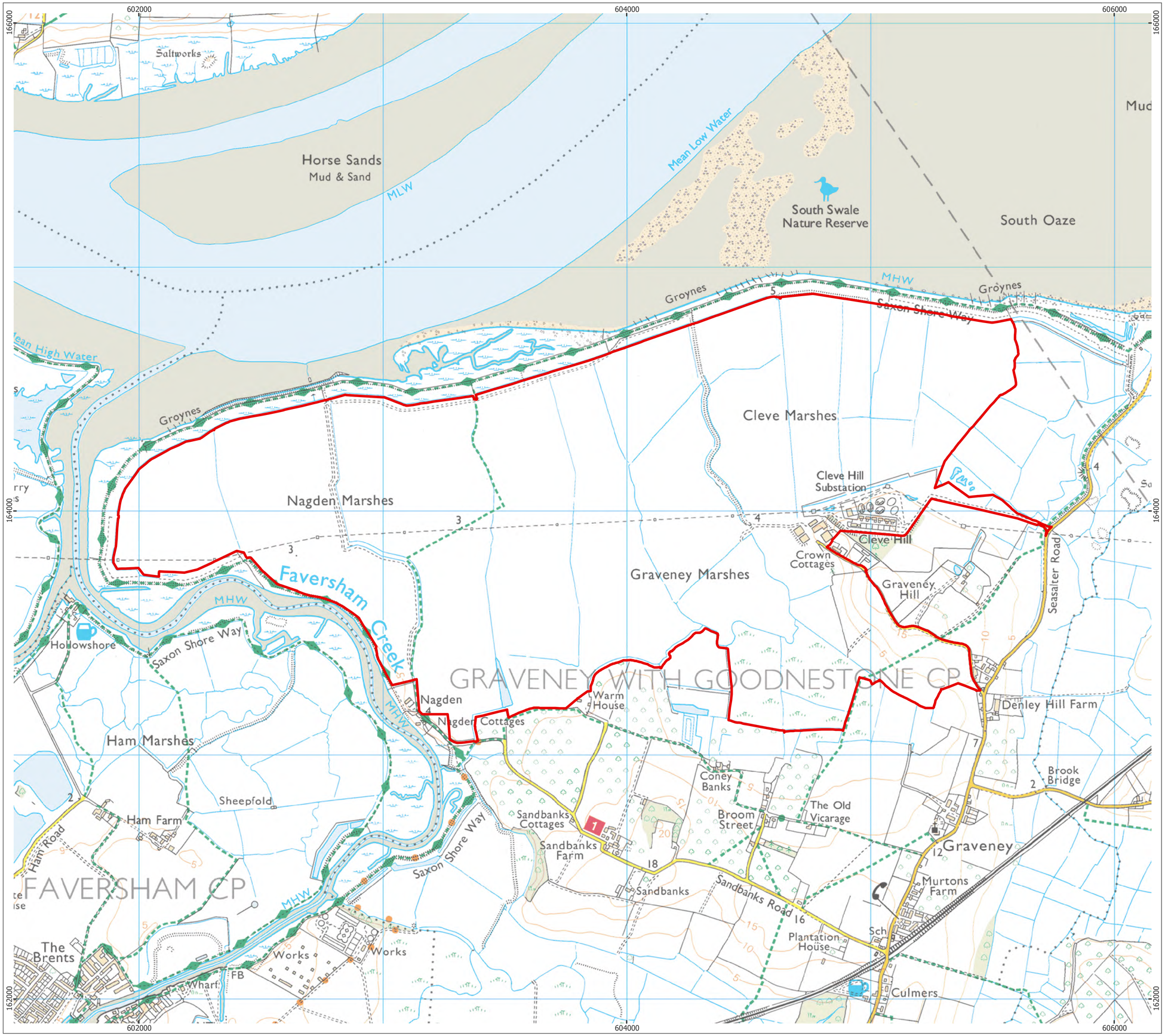

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Site Boundary

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CLEVE HILL

ARCUS

Viewpoint

Site Boundary

1:25,000 Scale @ A3

0 0.5 1 km

NORTH

Produced By: SC	Ref: 2238-PUB-015
Checked By: MB	Date: 13/11/2017

Viewpoint Locations

Cleve Hill Solar Park Landscape

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CLEVE HILL

ARCUS

Viewpoint

Site Boundary

1:25,000 Scale @ A3

0 0.5 1 km

NORTH

Produced By: SC	Ref: 2238-PUB-015
Checked By: MB	Date: 13/11/2017

Viewpoint Locations

Cleve Hill Solar Park Landscape

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FAQs Cleve Hill Solar Park

What is the Cleve Hill Solar Park?
The proposed Cleve Hill Solar Park could have a generating capacity which could exceed 350 megawatts (MW). If built, it will generate clean renewable energy for approximately 110,000 homes a year, which is approximately the number of households in the Swale and Canterbury Districts combined.

How does a solar farm work?
Solar panels are made up of photovoltaic (PV) cells, which capture sunlight (radiant energy) before converting it into electricity. Connecting more of these PV cells together in one solar panel produces a larger amount of power, offering efficient and affordable energy. The PV cells are created from silicon, which has special chemical properties that react with sunlight.

What is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project?
Due to the capacity of the solar park exceeding 50MW, the project is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP).

The development consenting regime for NSIP projects comes under the Planning Act 2008, with this legislation requiring that an NSIP project must be granted a Development Consent Order or 'DCO' in order for it to be constructed and operated. Any DCO for the project would be granted by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

Why do we need the Cleve Hill Solar Park?
A quarter of the UK's energy generating capacity is due to close by 2018 so a new mix of electricity generation is needed to 'keep the lights on'. Also, with the UK's climate change ambitions being amongst the highest in Europe, we will need to significantly increase our renewable energy growth without jeopardising the electricity supply, or increasing costs for consumers.

Will the Cleve Hill Solar Park increase my energy bills?
Government subsidies no longer play a role in solar, so there should be no extra costs passed on to the consumer for new unsubsidised schemes.

Solar power is now one of the most cost-effective sources of electricity generation in the UK. The Government has decided that subsidies should no longer play any role in solar development, which is good news for the consumer. This means that Cleve Hill Solar Park does not require government funding.

Do solar farms compete with food production?
Solar farms are generally installed on lower grade land (3b and below). The land at the proposed Cleve Hill Solar Park site is almost entirely Grade 3b, which means that it is lower grade agricultural land.

The potential for dual use of the land for electricity development and agriculture will be explored during the development of our proposals. Across some solar farms in the UK, land below the panels is used to graze sheep or keep bees for example.

Do solar farms harm the environment?

As part of the DCO application process, a full Environmental Impact Assessment will be undertaken, which will include a number of environmental and species surveys and assessments.

Solar farms allow land to rest without regular ploughing, fertilizing and spraying with pesticides and herbicides. As part of the development process we expect to identify opportunities to improve the environment through biodiversity enhancements and land management measures specifically targeted to benefit particular flora and fauna.

Do solar farms cause any glint or glare?

Solar panels are designed to absorb light and not to reflect it. They pose little risk of glint or glare. Testament to this fact is the installation of solar panels at Gatwick Airport, alongside major roads and beside sports car raceways such as the 'Top Gear' test track.

How many panels will there be?

The project is currently at an early stage and the final number of panels will depend on the site layout, which is being developed through ongoing consultation with stakeholders and the community.

How will the project connect to the grid?

The project will connect into the existing National Grid substation at Cleve Hill, and will also require its own electrical infrastructure and substation which will likely be located adjacent to the existing substation.

How will the site area be kept secure?

The site area will likely be fenced with a natural looking deer fence and secured using CCTV. No lighting will be used.

Will there be any overhead cables?

No overhead lines are proposed as part of the solar farm. Owing to the proximity of the grid connection, all electrical cables will be buried underground.

What is meant by battery storage?

Battery storage is a form of energy storage whereby electrical energy can be stored temporarily prior to being exported to the electrical grid. It does this by storing electricity when the site is generating large amounts of energy. This would allow the site to potentially release energy when there is high demand, or when the site is not generating electricity.

Who will own the project after it is built?

Wirsol Energy, who will construct the project, intend to operate the plant. As an operator Wirsol Energy is committed to being a responsible neighbour in the communities where it works and operates.

Will there be a plan for restoring the site?

A decommissioning and restoration plan is required and will be submitted with the DCO application

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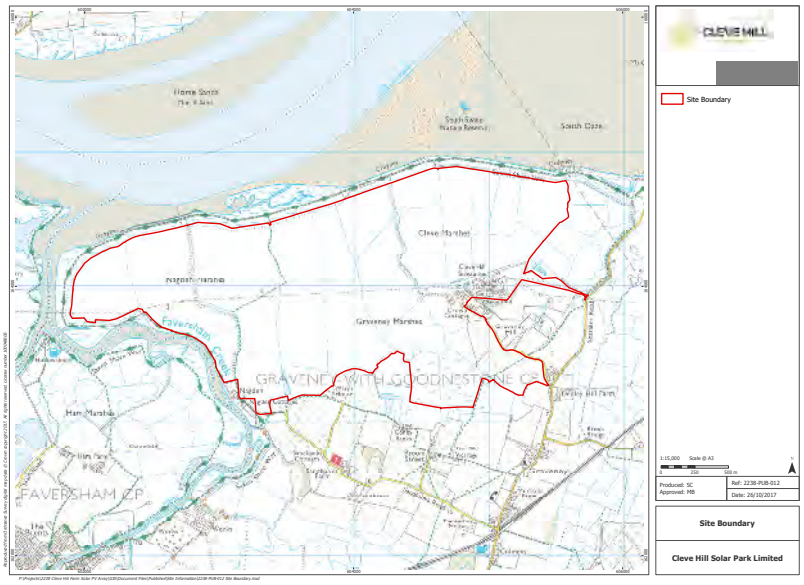
Cleve Hill Solar Park – Access, Traffic and Transportation Impacts

When developing our plans for Cleve Hill Solar Park consideration has been given to how the proposed development will impact access, traffic and transportation in the area.

What have we done to date?

We are aware of the concerns raised locally regarding the construction of the existing Cleve Hill substation. We have therefore considered all potential options for accessing the proposed site at a high level.

These considerations have identified a preferred construction traffic route from the A299 via Head Hill Road and Seasalter Road to access the site via the existing Cleve Hill substation entrance. We undertook automatic traffic count surveys at several locations along this route in late May 2017.



What have we found?

As we do not yet have a detailed project design, we are not in a position to quantify the number of construction related traffic movements that will be required to build the solar park.

From a review of the construction of the Cleve Hill substation, we expect to produce a comprehensive Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) to control traffic movements throughout the construction period. The local community will be given the opportunity to comment on the CTMP before it is finalised.

There is also some flexibility in how the solar park is constructed, e.g. quickly, with higher traffic volumes over a short period of time, or more slowly, with lower traffic volumes over a longer period of time. There are various influences on this, including wildlife, impact on local residents and likely weather conditions.

What do we intend to do next?

As the project design develops, we will begin to obtain more information regarding the likely traffic volumes and timings. This will enable us to consult on our proposals for managing construction traffic.

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Cleve Hill Solar Park – Ecology

When developing our plans for Cleve Hill Solar Park consideration has been given to how the potential project will interact with the ecology of the local area.

What have we done to date?

Since May 2014, we have undertaken a range of ecological surveys and looked specifically into the environments of amphibians, badgers, bats, invertebrates, reptiles and water voles. Alongside these, we have also undertaken a Phase 1 Habitat survey.

We have held meetings on the proposed development site with Natural England and Kent Wildlife Trust.

What have we found?

Below is a list of the various species we have identified in the local area and each heading is representative of the different ecological surveys we undertook.

Amphibians

- Great Crested Newts (GCN) were observed within three waterbodies outside the site boundary, with peak count reaching 10 individuals, meaning only small populations were present.

- Marsh Frog, an invasive non-native species (under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act), was recorded in the drainage ditches on the proposed development site. It is illegal for them to be released into the wild.

Badgers

- During the survey visits, no badger setts were observed within, or were visible adjacent to, the site boundary. No signs of badgers such as runs were observed from within the site boundary or immediately outside the site boundary. During the Phase 1 Habitat survey undertaken in 2015, no signs of badgers were observed.

Bats

- From the results of both the activity surveys and the static detectors, it is concluded that the site offers foraging and commuting habitats used by at least nine species of bat.

- Key areas utilised for foraging and commuting within the site comprised of the ditch network, the sea wall zone and cattle grazed pastures adjacent to the north of the site, and along the tree lines adjacent to the south of the site. Activity recorded within the arable fields was limited. No habitat suitable to support roosting bats was recorded within the site; however, from the results, it is considered that the site overall provides an important foraging resource within the wider area, utilised by bats commuting into the site from offsite roosting locations.

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Invertebrates

- A total of 172 invertebrate species were found during the survey, which was considered to be a relatively low number for a site of this size. This was attributed to domination of intensely farmed land on the proposed development site.

Reptiles

- Survey visits identified that the site supports two species of widespread reptile, the common lizard and grass snake. During the reptile survey, the maximum adult count for common lizard was eight recorded on 25 September 2015 and the maximum adult count for grass snake was zero, although a juvenile grass snake was recorded on two separate occasions on 23 September 2015 and 9 October 2015. During other ecology surveys, an adult grass snake was observed in May 2014 (during the badger survey) and a juvenile grass snake was seen in August 2015 (during the Phase 1 Habitat survey).

- Based on the advice published by Froglife (1999) the site is considered to support a good population of common lizard and based on the presence of a juvenile, a low population of grass snake.

Water vole

- In total, 22 ditches were surveyed for water vole from within the site boundary. Generally, current water vole activity is abundant and widespread across the site within suitable habitats. Of these ditches, water vole activity was recorded from 10 ditches.

Phase 1 Habitat

- There are eight statutory designated sites for nature conservation within 2km of the site, five of those sites are directly adjacent to the boundaries of the site to the west, north and east.

- The Phase 1 Habitat survey identified that the site was largely dominated by arable fields. Intersecting the fields are drainage ditches with associated rough grassland margins along their length. Other habitats include a small reedbed in the south where a ditch widens out and areas of bare ground used for agricultural machines.

What do we intend to do next?

Although the habitats onsite have altered little since the surveys were undertaken we will carry out some update ecology surveys prior to the submission of the Development Consents Order (DCO) application to ensure the information we use in our Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is up to date.

We will develop a comprehensive site-wide biodiversity and landscape management plan in consultation with stakeholders to secure opportunities to protect and enhance biodiversity onsite.

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Cleve Hill Solar Park – Potential Flood Risk, Land-use and Other Issues

When developing our plans for Cleve Hill Solar Park consideration has been given to any potential flood risk and land-usages associated with the proposed development.

Potential flood risk

What have we done to date?

The site lies within Flood Zone 3a, however it also benefits from coastal and tidal flood protection provided by flood defences which border the western and northern boundaries of the site.

We have met with the Environment Agency (EA) to discuss our proposals and have commissioned a detailed flood modelling exercise to inform our project design.

What have we found?

We are awaiting the outcome of the flood modelling which will inform the project design.

The site is within an area which is currently the subject of a consultation of the Medway Estuary and Swale Strategy by the EA. This strategy sets out how the EA may seek to manage coastal change over the next 100 years. Cleve Hill Solar Park Ltd will engage with this consultation exercise which will conclude in February 2018.

What do we intend to do next?

When we have received the flood modelling results, we will produce a project design which takes these results into account to ensure a safe and appropriate layout.

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Land-use

What have we done to date?

The land is currently under arable cultivation. Land Research Associates carried out an Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) survey in March 2017.

What have we found?

The ALC survey found that:

- 94.2% of the total land area is Grade 3b
- 2.3% of the total land area is Grade 3a
- 0.5% of the total land area is Grade 2
- 3% of the total land area is non-agricultural land

What do we intend to do next?

As part of our Biodiversity and Landscape Management Plan, we will develop our proposals for land management onsite throughout the operational phase of the proposed solar park.

Other issues we are considering

As part of the Environmental Impact Assessment process we will also consider a range of other issues including, but not limited to:

- Noise and vibration
- Glint and glare
- Air quality
- Socio-economics, tourism and recreation (including public rights of way and Sustrans routes)
- Hydrology, hydrogeology and drainage
- Climate change and carbon balance

We have begun to undertake more detailed baseline work in respect of these areas which will inform the project design.

Cleve Hill Solar Park – Landscape and Visual Impact

When developing our plans for Cleve Hill Solar Park consideration has been given to the potential landscape and visual impacts associated with the development.

What have we done to date?

The site lies within the North Kent Marshes Special Landscape Area, a local designation contained within the Swale Local Plan. The nearest nationally designated landscape is the Kent Downs AONB which lies approximately 4km to the south-east of the site at the closest point.

We have undertaken several visits to the site and the surrounding area (up to 10km from the site) to further our understanding of the existing landscape character, and where views of the proposed solar park may be possible. In May 2017, we captured photography from over 20 viewpoints around the site and wider area to understand the nature of existing views towards and within the site.

What have we found?

Visibility of the solar park is likely to be well contained to the immediate boundary of the site through the proximity of the sea wall which acts as a substantial visual barrier to views from the west and north. The Saxon Shore Way which runs along the sea wall will afford views across the solar park and this will be an important consideration in the formulation of the design. To the south of the site, the landscape is more enclosed and developed, with trees, hedgerows, polytunnels and other built forms creating a degree of screening from most viewpoints. To the west, east and north, the flat topography is another important aspect in restricting the potential for clear views across the solar park.

Further afield there is potential for visibility of the solar park from elevated locations, such as Victoria Wood. However, these views are far away and are within the context of the wider surrounding landscape, which is more complex. This includes large areas of water (sea), polytunnels, vegetation and woodland and other built forms.

What do we intend to do next?

We are currently in consultation with the Council's landscape consultants to seek agreement on the viewpoints which we will present and assess in our Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA). As we obtain more information on the project design, we will begin to model the visibility of the solar park from key viewpoints. This work will feed back into the project design, which will evolve to respond to the LVIA work undertaken.

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Cleve Hill Solar Park – Ornithology

When developing our plans for Cleve Hill Solar Park, consideration has been given to how the potential project will interact with the ornithology of the local area.

What have we done to date?

Since January 2014, we have undertaken a range of ornithological surveys across the site and surrounding area to provide us with an understanding of the importance of the local area for birds. This winter (2017/18), we will be undertaking further surveys for wintering bird species. We have held meetings with Natural England, Kent Wildlife Trust and discussed the proposals with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

What have we found?

To date, the surveys undertaken have identified that the site is used by a range of bird species. Some of the birds observed during the surveys are associated with the adjacent Swale Estuary, which is an area designated at European level for its importance to breeding and wintering birds.

Following consultations with Natural England, they provided advice on the designated ornithological interest in the local area which is paraphrased below.

Breeding species

The Swale SPA citation names certain species in the 'typical assemblage of breeding species' for grazing marsh, some of which are widespread and common. These are:

- Shelduck
- Mallard
- Moorhen
- Coot
- Lapwing
- Redshank
- Reed warbler
- Reed bunting

The assemblage of the breeding species characteristic of the grazing marsh within the Swale also comprises of those associated with the lowland damp grassland SSSI bird assemblage features. This includes breeding ducks, waders, yellow wagtail, marsh harrier and others.

Marsh Harrier

Lapwing

Golden Plover

Brent Goose

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Wintering Species

The Swale includes an extensive complex of mudflats, saltmarsh and freshwater grazing marsh, estuarine channels, shingle, shell and sand beaches and mussel beds. The area stretches from Iwade in the west to Whitstable in the east and lies adjacent to the proposed solar park along its northern border and along Faversham Creek. The Swale has a selection of designations for its bird interest. These include a Special Protection Area (SPA), a Ramsar site and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The most recent (five year peak mean 2010/11 – 2014/15) Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) counts coordinated by the British Trust for Ornithology demonstrate that 20 species currently occur at the Swale in internationally (*) or nationally important numbers and are therefore key to our survey findings and the assessment process. These species are as follows:

- European white-fronted goose
- Shelduck
- Teal
- Shoveler
- Oystercatcher
- Golden plover
- Lapwing
- Dunlin
- Black-tailed godwit*
- Green sandpiper
- Dark-bellied brent goose
- Wigeon
- Pintail
- Little egret
- Avocet
- Grey plover
- Sanderling
- Ruff
- Bar-tailed godwit
- Greenshank

In addition to this, the bird species knot is found in numbers greater than 2,000 in the area and the curlew species has been present in nationally important numbers in some years.

The current five year peak mean for curlew on the Swale is 1,137 (2010/11- 2014/15), which is below the threshold for national importance. However, the previous five year peak mean was 1,413 (2009/10 – 2013/14) which was above the threshold for national importance. Taking into account the poor conservation status of this species and the likelihood that curlew will use functionally linked land for feeding purposes, the curlew is advised to be treated as a 'main component species' within the assemblage. This produces a total of 22 main component species.

What do we intend to do next?

Further surveys are being undertaken for wintering bird species this winter (2017/18). We intend to continue to consult with stakeholders including Natural England, RSPB and Kent Wildlife Trust, on our proposals to develop a strategy to ensure that any adverse effects on birds as a result of the proposals can be appropriately mitigated. This includes consultation on a proposed habitat mitigation area for bird species within the site development area.

Cleve Hill Solar Park – Cultural Heritage and Archaeology

When developing our plans for Cleve Hill Solar Park, consideration has been given to the impact the proposed development may have on the area's cultural heritage and archaeological interests.

What have we done to date?

An Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Desk-based Assessment (DBA) was undertaken in Spring 2017. This report identifies the known archaeological and cultural heritage assets within and around the site, and summarises the potential for unknown archaeology to exist onsite.

What have we found?

This assessment has established that there is some archaeological interest within the development site. This is defined as the potential for the presence of buried archaeological remains. In particular, this relates to World War Two military defences (including two pillboxes (one demolished), possible anti-glider ditches, castellated trenches, and a 'starfish' decoy), nineteenth century and post-medieval remains along with features of currently unknown dates.

Prior to the site's military uses, the development site was used for pasture with natural, semi-natural and manmade drainage channels forming the boundaries of the land parcels. Sheepfolds, sheepwashes, farm buildings and wildfowl decoys are all recorded within the development site dating to the Nineteenth Century and Post-Medieval periods. In addition, historic mapping illustrates that changes to field boundaries also took place during this time and as such below ground remains of these features may survive within the development site.

The setting of heritage assets within and beyond the site boundary will also be considered. These are likely to include; All Saints Church (Grade I), Graveney Court (Grade II) and Sparrows Court (Grade II). In addition, the setting of St Mary of Charity Church in Faversham (Grade I) and a WW2 pillbox located at the southern edge of the site are likely to be considered in more detail.

What do we intend to do next?

The DBA has been issued to Kent County Council Heritage Department ahead of consultation on the next steps to investigate the archaeological and heritage potential of the site.

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