



# Sweetbriar Solar Farm

## Statement of Pre-Application Community Involvement



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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The proposed Sweetbriar Solar Farm is a 39 MW solar array on land at Sweetbriar Farm, Ulceby, Lincolnshire.
- 1.2. As a result of COVID-19, Lightrock Power did not feel that it was in the interest of public health to hold in-person public events. Instead, Lightrock Power resolved to adopt a comprehensive and broad approach to consultation, providing as many avenues as possible for members of the public to engage, in an accessible way.
- 1.3. The proposed Sweetbriar Solar Farm was publicly announced on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2021, and a four-week public consultation period followed, with the consultation closing on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021.
- 1.4. Confidential briefings were offered to local community representatives prior to the project being announced to ensure that these key stakeholders were in an informed position to comment publicly and field enquiries from local people once the project had been announced.
- 1.5. An online virtual consultation platform (website) was established (appendix A), which provided information on all the key features of the project, accompanied by an online survey (appendix F).
- 1.6. An information leaflet (appendix B) was sent through the post to 1,129 local residents. In order to address the issue of accessibility – specifically, reaching those who cannot access online information - the letter stated, “If you cannot access our online material, please call or write to us and we can share further details with you by post.”
- 1.7. A press release (appendix C) was issued on 11<sup>th</sup> October to three local news outlets.
- 1.8. All of Lightrock Power’s consultation materials were available in a variety of accessible formats that could be provided on request.
- 1.9. The website received 101 unique views.
- 1.10. 11 people completed the survey.
- 1.11. Two people contacted the team via email.
- 1.12. The survey results showed that 100% of respondents (11 people) said they think it is important for the UK to be generating more of its own renewable energy, and 64% (7 people) are supportive of Sweetbriar Solar Farm specifically.

### Community engagement plan

- 1.13. The overall strategic aim of the community engagement was to ensure that the community, local elected representatives, and planning authority were well informed, and that Lightrock Power understood the concerns of the local community, so that steps could be taken to mitigate these issues within the scheme as far as possible.
- 1.14. Whilst consultation on planning applications of this nature is not currently a statutory requirement, Lightrock Power shared their public consultation plans with the with the Planning Officer at North Lincolnshire Council beforehand and sought advice on any further consultation measures that might need to be incorporated.
- 1.15. The team at Lightrock Power believe that good community and stakeholder engagement is a priority and that this part of the development process is invaluable in shaping and informing the planning application.
- 1.16. Overall Lightrock Power found the exercise helpful and informative and particularly valued the discussions with local residents, who provided useful feedback.

## 2. Engagement with key political stakeholders and Parish Councils

- 2.1. Key political stakeholders and Parish Councils were first approached in confidence via email on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2021 (appendix D). The email contained basic information about the project, a copy of the resident information leaflet (appendix B), and Lightrock Power's contact details. Ward Councillor for Ferry, Cllr David Wells, did not have an email address published, so he received a phone call instead.
- 2.2. Lightrock Power offered meetings at this point in order to equip these stakeholders with any information that they may require prior to their communities getting in touch. Where phone numbers were available, emails were followed up with a courtesy phone call on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021.

### MP for Cleethorpes

- 2.3. Rt Hon Martin Vickers MP's office did not respond to the email.
- 2.4. Lightrock Power followed up with a phone call on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021 and left a voicemail.
- 2.5. Martin Vickers' office called back on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2021 and a meeting was arranged for 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021.
- 2.6. Lightrock Power had a Microsoft Teams meeting with Martin Vickers MP on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021. He confirmed that he is there to represent the people's views, but that he can't imagine he'll be hearing from anyone given positive responses received by Lightrock Power up to this point.

### North Lincolnshire Council

- 2.7. Ward councillors for Ferry, Cllr Peter Clark, Cllr Richard Hannigan & Cllr David Wells, and Portfolio Holder for Environment and Strategic Planning, Cllr David Rose, did not respond to the email.
- 2.8. Lightrock Power followed up with phone calls on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021.
- 2.9. Cllr Peter Clark requested that the email be re-sent to his personal email address.
- 2.10. A message was left for Cllr Richard Hannigan.
- 2.11. Cllr David Wells provided an email address.
- 2.12. Cllr David Rose requested that the email be forwarded to his CPRE email address.
- 2.13. Lightrock Power did not receive any further communication from the above Councillors.

### Parish Councils

- 2.14. Lightrock Power are keen to engage with Parishes across a wide area, not just those in which the site lies.
- 2.15. Lightrock Power identified six Parish Councils which could be affected by the project. These were: Ulceby Parish Council, North Killingholme Parish Council, South Killingholme Parish Council, East Halton Parish Council, Thornton Curtis Parish Council and Wootton Parish Council.
- 2.16. Each of the above Parishes received the information email and follow up phone call, where a phone number was provided.
- 2.17. Lightrock Power received an email from South Killingholme Parish Council on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2021 stating that they had no objections:

*"South Killingholme Parish Council discussed your plans at their Parish Council meeting this Monday and had no objections. South Killingholme Parish Council encourage green initiatives and we welcome the project.*

*I have placed the invitation on the community centre noticeboard for residents to view."*

### 3. Engagement with local residents

- 3.1. Due to public health concerns, and to prevent the spread of COVID-19, in-person public information events were not planned.
- 3.2. The risks of not holding in-person events in the community were evaluated. Lightrock Power felt that there was a risk that some residents might not have been able to engage with the online exhibition, and this was mitigated by sending letters and leaflets to the community, and providing written copies of all their online material on request.
- 3.3. In-person public events could have been arranged had there been desire from the local community, however they were not requested.
- 3.4. Lightrock Power adopted a comprehensive approach to consultation in an attempt to reach as many people as possible. The public consultation included the following activities and measures:

#### Information leaflets

- 3.5. A single-sided, A4 information leaflet (appendix B) was sent via Royal Mail to all households within 2km+ of the proposal and along the local transport route, totalling 1,129 households. The entire villages of Thornton Curtis, Wootton and Ulceby were included. See appendix E for the distribution map. The leaflet was sent via first class mail on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2021.
- 3.6. The leaflet provided information about the project, invited people to view the website (appendix A) and complete the survey (appendix F). Details of the dedicated email address, telephone number and postal address to contact the Lightrock Power team were provided on the leaflet. Members of the public also had the option of requesting printed material to be sent through the post.
- 3.7. Nobody requested printed material.

#### Press release

- 3.8. A press release (appendix C) was distributed to Lincolnshire Echo, Grimsby Telegraph and Scunthorpe Telegraph on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021.

#### Website

- 3.9. The website [www.sweetbriarsolarfarm.com](http://www.sweetbriarsolarfarm.com) was launched on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2021. The content was as follows:
  - Home page – overview of the project, interactive map, contact details, survey link, and link to the online exhibition pages
  - Timeline
  - "Why Solar"

- “Why Lightrock”
  - “Why Now”
  - “Why Here”
  - FAQs
  - Press Section
- 3.10. The online exhibition (appendix G) was representative of that which would have been held in a public meeting proper to COVID-19. Boards were as follows:
- Welcome
  - Site Location
  - Solar Energy
  - Community Benefits
  - Ecology and Wildlife
  - Transport and Access
  - Timeline and Planning Process
  - Frequently Asked Questions
- 3.11. The website received a total of 101 unique visitors. Page views totalled 274.
- 3.12. Of those visits, the online exhibition was viewed 27 times.
- 3.13. Lightrock Power updated the website with community updates throughout the consultation period. See Communication timeline below.

#### Social Media

- 3.14. Lightrock Power monitored local public groups on social media but found no discussion of Sweetbriar Solar Farm.

#### Phone calls

- 3.15. Lightrock Power identified three close neighbours to be contacted via phone for a more in-depth introduction to the project.
- 3.16. In total, five telephone conversations were had with these neighbours, three supportive and two where concerns were raised.

*“I don’t think we’d have any concerns”*

*“I don’t think it would bother us”*

*“[the landowner] should be able to do what the business needs”*

- 3.17. The key concerns from the close neighbours were property values, visual impacts, Electro Magnetic Fields (EMFs) and increased traffic. These are discussed further under section 6: Key Themes.
- 3.18. Another close neighbour maintains a relationship with (and receives updates from) the landowner, but knows that Lightrock Power are available should he wish to discuss further. This neighbour is supportive of the project.

### Contacting the project team

- 3.19. The leaflet and press release clearly detailed ways for the public to contact the team by email, telephone, survey, and post. Three people emailed, and nobody aside from the close neighbours mentioned above telephoned or wrote in. There were 11 responses to the survey. Feedback is incorporated in section 5. Survey and section 6. Key Themes below.
- 3.20. Early feedback, via email and survey responses, suggested that the local community had a number of questions and concerns. Lightrock Power responded quickly and added a community update to the website addressing these on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021 (appendix H).
- 3.21. To Lightrock Power's knowledge every query via email and phone was answered.
- 3.22. Each key theme from the survey response was addressed either in the Frequently Asked Questions section of the website or in a community update.
- 3.23. Further details of the survey results are detailed in section 5. Online Survey.

### Community meetings

- 3.24. Lightrock Power were not invited to any community meetings.

### Website Updates

- 3.25. Updates to the project website are summarised below

October 2021	
19 <sup>th</sup> October 2021	<p>Thank you for engaging with us. We've received some really positive feedback and are looking forward to more conversations over the coming weeks.</p> <p>We've answered some of the questions that you've been asking here.</p> <p>There is still time to get in touch and let us know your views. You can email us here, complete our anonymous survey here, or phone us on 0114 286 6217.</p>
November 2021	
8 <sup>th</sup> November 2021	<p>Thank you for your feedback, it has been really helpful.</p> <p>Our initial community consultation period has now come to an end, but we are still here. You can contact us using the following details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Email: <a href="mailto:sweetbriar@lightrockpower.com">sweetbriar@lightrockpower.com</a></li><li>-Telephone: 0114 2866217</li><li>-Write to us: Lightrock Power, Electric Works, 3 Concourse Way, Sheffield, S1 2BJ</li></ul>

## 4. Engagement with groups and societies

- 4.1. Lightrock Power are delighted to have a corporate partnership with the RSPB, who provide advice on biodiversity enhancement.
- 4.2. Lightrock Power were not made aware of any local groups or societies. Local statutory consultees will be involved at the stage of application.

## 5. Online survey

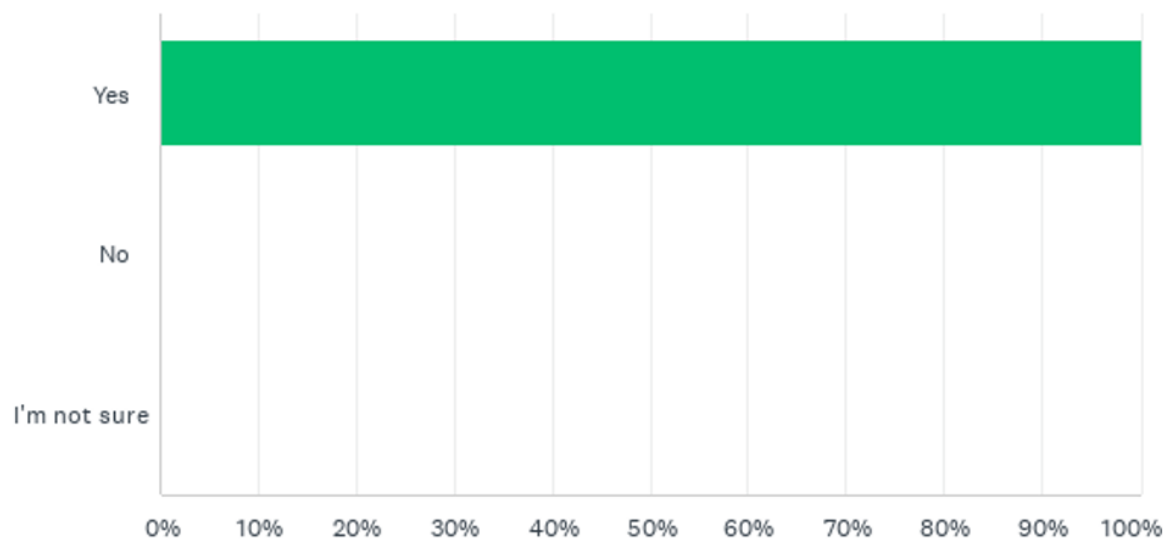
- 5.1. A summary of the open-ended questions has been incorporated into the Key Themes section below.

### Online survey feedback

- 5.2. The online survey (appendix F) comprised eleven questions, a mixture of multiple choice and open-ended questions. 11 people responded to the online survey. Some of the questions have not been summarised here as they were for internal use only, for example, questions relating to the usefulness of the exhibition and on whether respondents wished to be kept updated about the project.
- 5.3. Results are representative of surveys completed up to 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021.
- 5.4. 90% of the respondents (10 people) indicated that they lived locally.
- 5.5. Participants were asked direct questions about climate change, solar, and specifically about the proposal: 64% (seven people) indicated that they were supportive of Sweetbriar Solar Farm.
- 5.6. These results indicate that there is significant support for the project in the community.
- 5.7. Responses to each question are detailed below. A detailed look at the issues raised is provided under section 6. Key Themes.

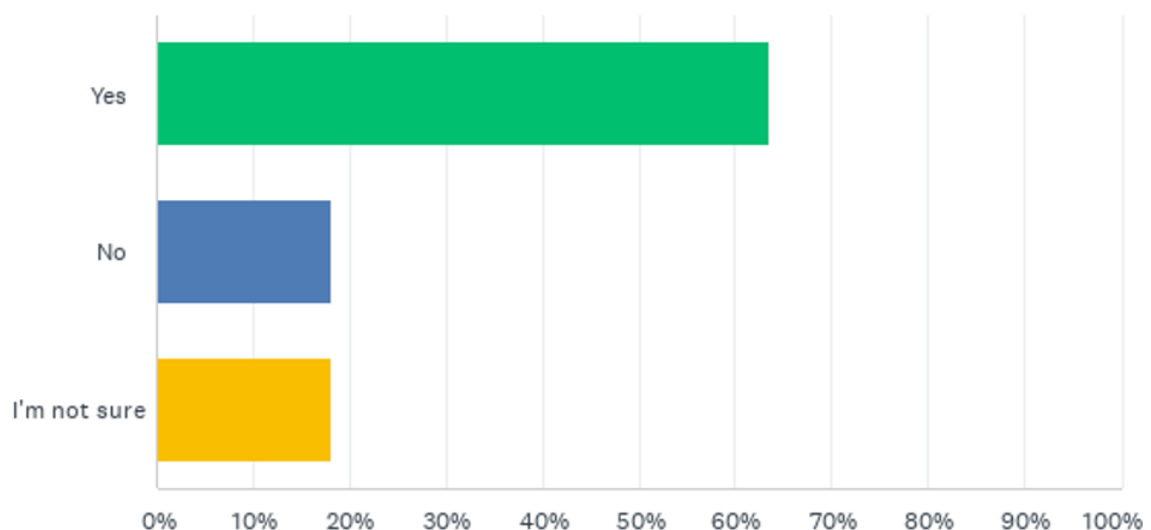


Do you think it is important for the UK to be generating more of its own renewable energy?



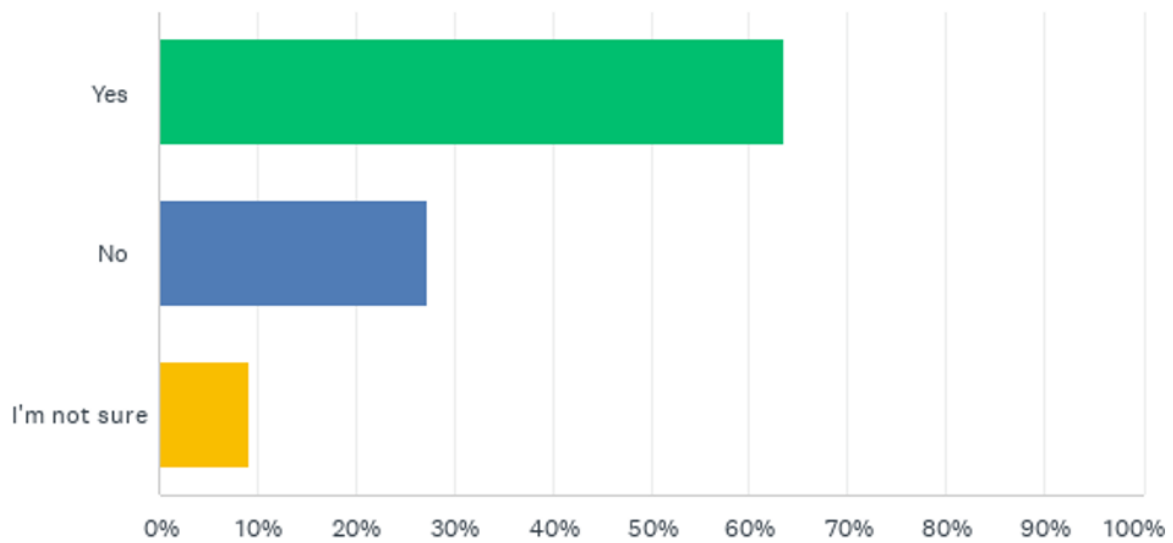
5.8. There was strong support for the UK to generate more of its own renewable energy, with 100% (11 people) answering yes.

Solar farms are low maintenance, quiet, and enable the land to continue to be farmed. Do you think solar is a good option for renewable energy generation in this area?



5.9. There was significant support for renewable energy generation in the area. 64% (seven people) indicated that they think it is a good option, with 18% (two people) answering 'unsure', and two answering 'no'.

### Are you Supportive of Sweetbriar Solar Farm?

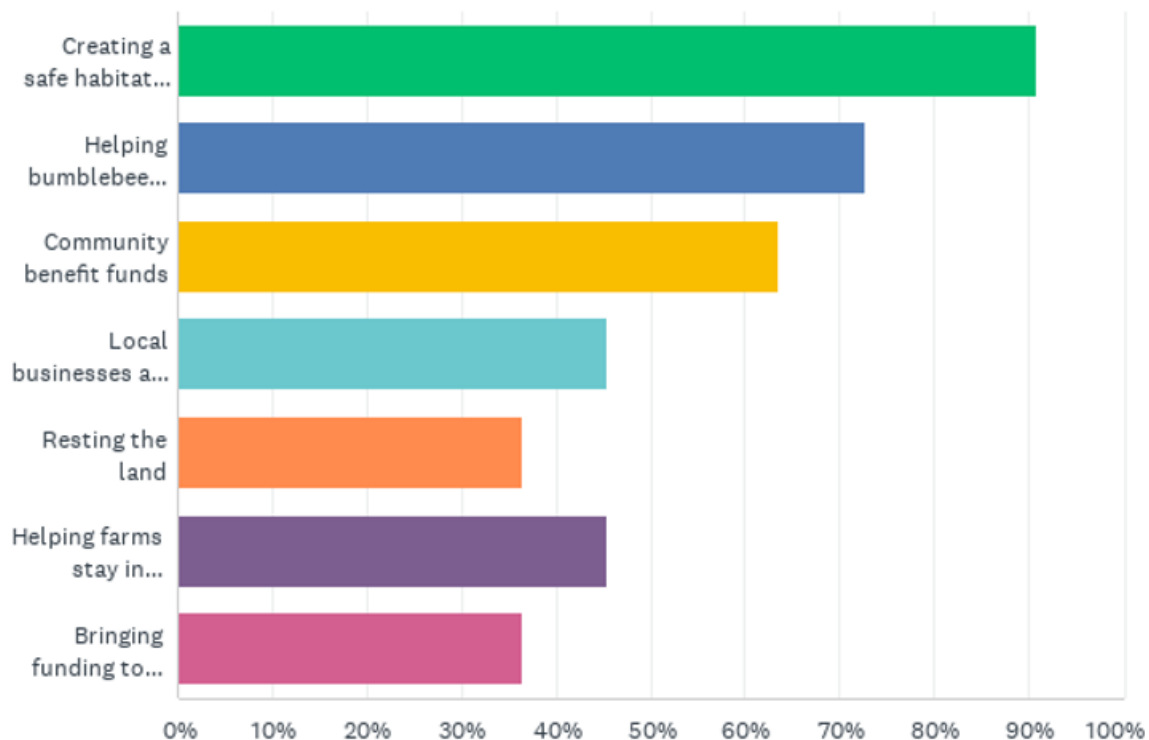


5.10. 64% (7 people) responded with Yes, 27% (3 people) with No, and 9% (1 person) with I'm not sure.

### Can you explain why you answered question 5 the way you did?

5.11. Nine people provided a response to this question. Their responses are incorporated under section 6. Key Themes.

Solar farms can help with all of the following. Which ones are important to you?



5.12. This question was designed to better understand personal motivation and the importance people attached to some of the benefits that solar farms can bring to a site or the area. All categories listed were important to a good proportion of respondents. Creating habitat at the site, helping bumblebee populations, and community benefit funds were the most important factors for respondents.

If you think there is a local organisation, project or cause which could benefit from the community benefit fund, please leave details here

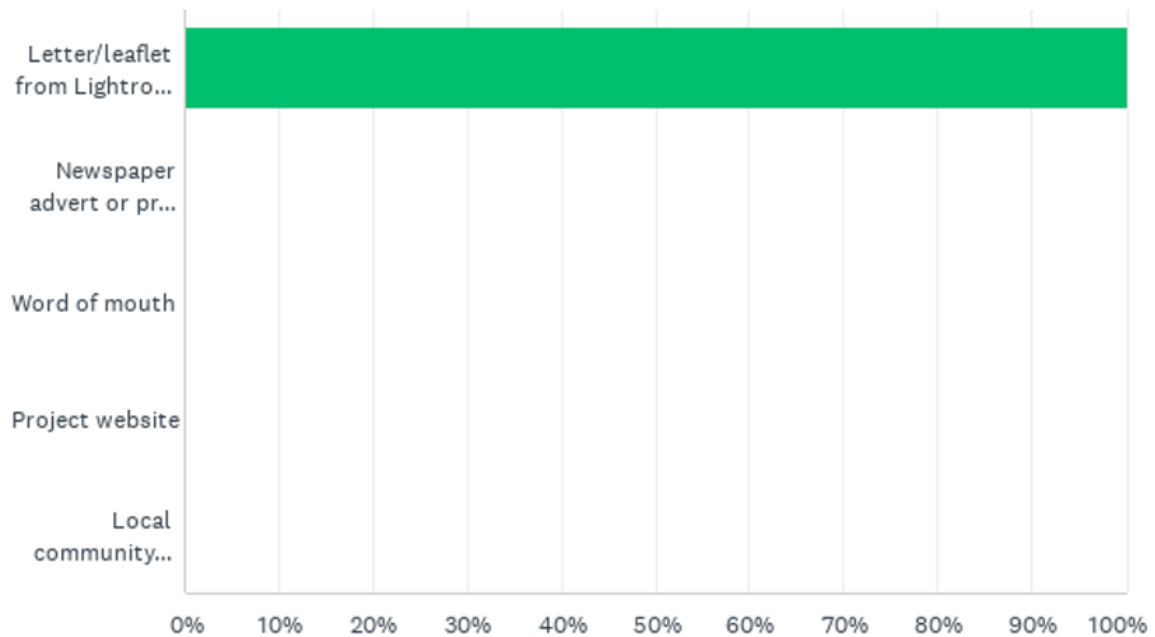
5.13. Three respondents provided useful suggestions:

“Ulceby village hall”

“Local schools”

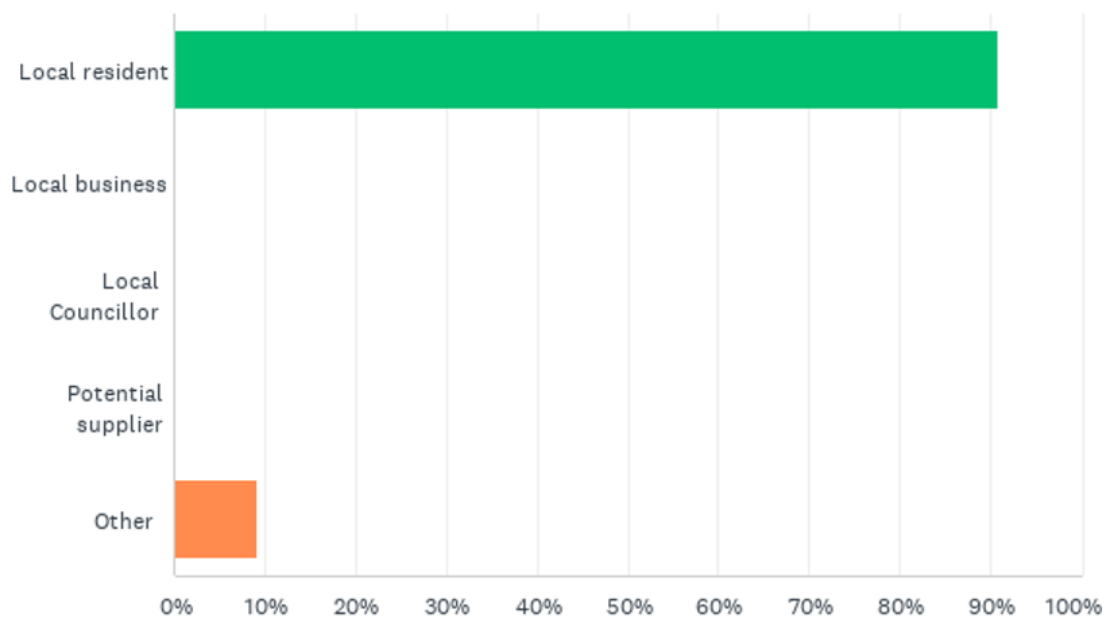
“Amenities for teenagers”

### How did you hear about the solar farm proposal?



5.14. All 11 respondents heard about the proposal via Lightrock Power’s leaflet.

### Please choose one of the following which best describes your interest in the scheme



5.15. The majority of respondents (90%, or 10 people) indicated they were interested in the scheme because they were local residents.

## 6. Key feedback themes, and Lightrock Power's response

- 6.1. Of the 12 written responses to the proposed Sweetbriar Solar Farm - nine via the survey and three via email - the majority (seven) were supportive. Lightrock Power find this encouraging.
- 6.2. The key concerns are illustrated below along with Lightrock Power's response.

### Visual Impact

- 6.3. Some expressed concern about the potential visual impact of the project, and how in their opinion it might spoil the countryside.
- 6.4. Lightrock Power explained its commitment to develop solar projects sensitively, and this includes paying close attention to screening the view from neighbours. Lightrock Power is working with North Lincolnshire Council on the visual screening assessment. The screening plan will be enforceable by the Local Authority.
- 6.5. The following comments are illustrative of feedback received:

*"Prefer the land as it looks now"*

*"It can [...] be seen from the footpath at the north east of the site. Many people walk this circular route from the historic Thornton Abbey and would not want to see fields of metal instead of farmed fields."*

*"The proposed development area can be seen from Carr Road, Cross Road and Crookmill Lane"*

### Construction Process

- 6.6. Construction traffic and noise were mentioned by a couple of local residents.
- 6.7. One resident felt that the road is not wide enough or strong enough for articulated lorries.
- 6.8. Whilst there is some initial construction noise, this tails off over the build process. Solar Farms are quiet once in situ. Inverters are placed well inside the site, and the panels themselves have no moving parts.
- 6.9. Lightrock Power are working with North Lincolnshire Council on a Transport Management Plan, which will be available to view once the planning application has been submitted. This will assess the best route, taking road size, condition and impact on the local community into consideration.
- 6.10. Any damage to the roads caused by the construction process will be repaired.
- 6.11. The following comments are illustrative of feedback received:

*"The noise during construction will have a detrimental effect on our business"*

*"there will be disruption, excess noise stress caused to my horses whilst construction is in process"*

*"The road is mostly single track, and when meeting vehicles the grass verges are used, with the increase in traffic these verges could be ruined"*

*"this road is already cracking and breaking at the edges, and has to be repaired on a regular basis."*

## Wildlife and Biodiversity

- 6.12. Some respondents were sceptical of Lightrock Power's biodiversity claims.
- 6.13. Lightrock Power strive to be industry leaders in designing wildlife-friendly solar farms and are proud of their partnership with the RSPB, who assess their sites to provide conservation and enhancement recommendations. Lightrock Power aim for a biodiversity net gain in excess of 20% - more than double the 10% biodiversity net gain objective set out in Schedule 14 of the Environment Act (2021)<sup>1</sup>.

*"It is correct that that solar farms can have a negative ecological impact **if not designed well**. This is why we have a corporate partnership with the RSPB and work with other organisations such as Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Buglife, UK Wild Otter Trust, The Barn Owl Trust, and Plantlife to ensure that we get it right."*

- 6.14. The following comments are illustrative of feedback received:

*"there is evidence that solar farms destroy Ecosystems of insects and other land animals and birds."*

*"The area is known for being unspoilt with fantastic wildlife eg deer, birds of prey. This development would be detrimental"*

## Health Impact

- 6.15. One resident queried the health impacts of solar farms, with respect to "hypersensitive waves/electromagnetic waves".
- 6.16. Solar farms are not known to pose any significant health dangers to their neighbours. Unlike fossil fuels, solar farms do not release emissions into the atmosphere so there is no impact from emissions on human health. Replacing fossil fuel power stations with renewable energy alternatives like solar and wind farms means there will be less emissions from fossil fuels in the atmosphere in the longer term – good for human health and the health of the planet.

*"All electrical and electronic devices create electromagnetic fields or EMF around them when used and also emit electromagnetic radiation or EMR. This includes solar panels and solar inverters as well as most electrical devices in our homes – televisions, radios, fridges and mobile phones. It's the level and type of EMR that is important. EMR from solar panels and solar inverters is non-ionizing and is well within national health based"*

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<sup>1</sup> Environment Act 2021 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted>

*guidelines. Refer to the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation (ICNIRP) for more details about EMF and EMR in our daily lives [www.icnirp.org](http://www.icnirp.org).*

6.17. The following comment from a member of the public was received:

*"Having researched the impact of solar farms on human health, solar panels produce hypersensitive waves/electromagnetic waves that has been evidenced of reducing life expectancy and hence I am bitterly against this, not only for our own health but that of my young daughter"*

#### Property Value

6.18. Some of the closest neighbours expressed concern about the value of their property being impacted by the project.

6.19. There is no evidence to suggest that proximity to a solar farm impacts property value.

6.20. The following comments are illustrative of feedback received:

*"most importantly this will de-value our property"*

*"The development of this solar farm would have a massive impact on my ability to recover the investment already made to my property and hence lose out on my retirement fund"*

*"We have built up a successful family run campsite business at [...] which provides most of our household income"*

#### Support for the project

6.21. There was significant support for the project - the following comments are illustrative of feedback received:

*"I have seen first hand the what a pleasant place solar farms are for both humans to work and wildlife to thrive . To produce electricity in such a quiet unetrusive manner and be of benefit to its surroundings is awesome..."*

*"It is vital within the climate change"*

*"Good to see the area been [sic] used for a diverse use"*

*"[...] any eco friendly energy generated is a bonus."*

*"It will help the UK move to an zero carbon country."*

*"We need sustainable energy"*

## 7. Appendices

### Appendix A: Project website





Appendix B: Resident information leaflet

## Sweetbriar Solar Farm



We are writing to introduce ourselves and advise you of a development that we are considering in your local community.

We are a company called Lightrock Power and we develop solar farms across the UK. We focus on wildlife-friendly schemes that can be sensitively designed into the landscape, helping meet national and Local Authority renewable energy targets.

We are currently assessing a new site for a solar farm on land at Sweetbriar Farm, west of the airfield. The 40MW site would cover an area of up to 45 hectares, with the potential to supply power to the equivalent of 12,000 homes, or 15,000 electric vehicles. It could prevent more than 16,800 tonnes of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere every year.

The map above shows the approximate location of the site; we hope to arrange solar panels within the shaded area, but they may not cover all the land.

We pay particular attention to biodiversity on our solar farms by creating valuable wildlife habitats on our sites. We're delighted to have a corporate partnership with the RSPB as well as being supported by the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Buglife, UK Wild Otter Trust, The Barn Owl Trust, and Plantlife. Working with these organisations really helps us optimise the ecological opportunities for local wildlife.

Further details about the proposal can be viewed at our information hub – [www.sweetbriarsolarfarm.com](http://www.sweetbriarsolarfarm.com). We're currently in the very early stages of planning, so our design is still flexible. We'd love the local community to get in touch and help to shape the final project. If you cannot access our online material, please call or write to us and we can share further details with you by post.

The UK has a climate change commitment of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, and solar energy can play a big part. Government statistics from September 2020 show that support for solar energy is at its highest ever at 85%. Solar energy does not mean we have to take land out of production – it just means we can diversify land use, harvesting renewable energy while also supporting wildlife and sheep grazing.



**Contact Us:**

Email: [sweetbriar@lighrockpower.com](mailto:sweetbriar@lighrockpower.com)

Website: [www.sweetbriarsolarfarm.com](http://www.sweetbriarsolarfarm.com)

Phone: 0114 286 6217


Survey: [www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/sweetbriarsolarfarm](http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/sweetbriarsolarfarm) — or access using the QR code

Write to us: Lightrock Power, Electric Works, 3 Concourse Way, Sheffield, S1 2BJ



If you cannot access our online material, please call or write to us and we can share further details with you by post.

Appendix C: Press Release



**Sweetbriar Solar Farm**

The scheme will consist of rows of solar panels mounted on metal frames no more than 2.8 metres in height. The site, which is approximately 45 hectares, is on land at Sweetbriar Farm, North of Uxebay. Access will be from Carr Lane, via the A160 and A1077. A new grid connection will be built, giving access to the local distribution network. As well as helping meet national climate change commitments, Sweetbriar Solar Farm also supports policy aspirations in North Lincolnshire Local Development Framework.

**About the consultation**

Lightrock Power are hosting an exhibition on their website and inviting local people to ask questions and provide feedback online, by email, telephone, or by post. The consultation runs from 11<sup>th</sup> October – 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

- [www.sweetbriarsolarfarm.com](http://www.sweetbriarsolarfarm.com)
- [sweetbriar@lightrockpower.com](mailto:sweetbriar@lightrockpower.com)
- 0114 286 6217
- Chris Sowerbutts, Lightrock Power, Electric Works, 3 Concourse Way, Sheffield, S1 2BJ

All online material is available as a printed copy on request.

**Why Solar?**


Solar is the fastest-growing energy technology in the world. Support for it is the highest it's ever been – it's a clean green energy source for our National Grid. To meet climate change commitments, deal with volatile energy prices, and make our nation more energy secure we need innovative energy solutions and smarter grid systems. Solar energy can play a big part.

Solar energy does not mean we have to take land out of production – it just means we need to use land differently. It's productive in a different way – harvesting renewable energy whilst supporting wildlife and local habitat.

Solar farms generate energy without releasing greenhouse gas emissions – a cleaner way to produce energy.

**For further information**

Visit the press section at [www.sweetbriarsolarfarm.com](http://www.sweetbriarsolarfarm.com) for copies of press releases and images.



**PRESS RELEASE**

11th October 2021

**Harvesting solar energy in North Lincolnshire**

Lightrock Power is proposing a wildlife-friendly solar farm at Sweetbriar Farm, west of North Killingholme Airfield. It could provide enough electricity to power the equivalent of 12,000 homes, or 15,000 electric vehicles, every year.

A number of ecological and feasibility studies have been carried out and Lightrock Power, who have already had a number of positive conversations with community representatives, are now inviting local people for input on the proposal ahead of submitting a planning application in the Autumn.

There is growing concern about climate change and the 40MW Sweetbriar Solar Farm could prevent more than 16,800 tonnes of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere every year, helping meet national and local renewable energy targets. There are also plans to enhance biodiversity on site with measures such as installing bird and bat boxes, providing habitat for reptiles and small mammals, and improving local flora to attract bees and other pollinators. The team at Lightrock Power are delighted to be working in partnership with the RSPB, as well as being supported by the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Buglife, Plantlife, UK Wild Otter Trust, and The Barr Owl Trust. Working with these organisations really helps to optimise the ecological opportunities for wildlife.

Chris Sowerbutts, Co-Founder and Director at Lightrock said: "This is an excellent site for Solar. The area has lots of sunshine and is nice and flat so we can maximise daylight hours. We are pleased to be able to enhance local biodiversity through our ecology programme, and welcome further suggestions from the local community. Sweetbriar Solar Farm will help the UK meet its 2050 net zero targets."

Lightrock Power has now written to residents inviting them to find out more about the project and provide feedback. The consultation runs from 11<sup>th</sup> October to 8<sup>th</sup> November, and an online exhibition detailing the plans is available on the [Sweetbriar Solar Farm website](http://www.sweetbriarsolarfarm.com). Subject to consultation and further site assessments, the company intends to submit a planning application in the late Autumn.

**Ends**

**Notes for Editors**

**About Lightrock Power**

Lightrock Power are a small and experienced team based in offices around the UK. They develop solar farms across the country and have delivered a number of successful operational projects. They focus on schemes that can be sensitively designed into the landscape, helping meet national and local authority renewable energy targets. They want to make a difference and are passionate about doing the right thing for our planet, communities and natural habitats.

Appendix D: Stakeholder email

Sweetbriar Solar Farm - Message (HTML)

File Message Help Tell me what you want to do

Delete Archive Reply Reply All Forward Move Move to: To Manager Team Email Mark Unread Categorize Follow Up Read Aloud Immersive Reader Translate Zoom Send to OneNote

Sweetbriar Solar Farm

Sweet Briar Solar Farm  
To: [redacted]

Sweetbriar - resident leaflet.pdf  
265 KB

Dear [redacted],

We wanted to introduce ourselves and advise you of a solar project that we are considering in your community.

Ben and I founded Lightrock Power in 2017 having worked in solar development since 2010. Lightrock was created with the determination to develop solar farms in the right way – implementing all the gains to ecology, environment and education that they can bring. Lightrock is purposefully structured as a small development team with a flat structure – if you call us, you will be able to speak with either Ben or me directly, we listen to feedback and implement it wherever we possibly can. Solar energy can help our society transition electricity generation away from fossil fuels, but it must be done sensitively; we want to develop projects that optimise the benefits to the locations that are home to our projects. We pride ourselves on being transparent and acting with integrity, not only with our landowners and funders but also, crucially, with the communities that we join.

We are writing to you now because we are assessing a site for a new solar farm at Sweetbriar Farm, west of North Killingholme Airfield. It is our intention to submit a planning application in late Autumn 2021, but before we do, we wanted to share some introductory details with you, advise you about the development, and provide you with our contact details in case you have any questions about the scheme.

The proposed development is for a solar farm, small substation and associated infrastructure. The main part of the development would consist of ground mounted solar PV panels. The intended generating capacity is 40MW, providing power to approximately 12,000 homes or 16,800 electric vehicles. The development is in the early stages, as are discussions with North Lincolnshire Council, so the information we have available at present is high-level, with further detail becoming available as the project progresses. Our current location plan can be found here <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1UPMhNIAz8IO8ULOUfy-cWIMwvc-ocaSX&usp=sharing>

We will be carrying out a pre-planning application consultation over the next couple of months which will include online and offline resources for local residents and businesses to use. Local residents will receive the attached information leaflet, inviting them to view our exhibition, which will be held online at [www.sweetbriarsolarfarm.com](http://www.sweetbriarsolarfarm.com) for a minimum of four weeks, from 11<sup>th</sup> October – 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021. There are a number of ways to get in touch with us via the website and we welcome early feedback. All online content can be made available to those without internet access via post.

As councillor for the area, if you wish to discuss any element with me at this early stage in the process, please get in touch. You can contact me as detailed below.

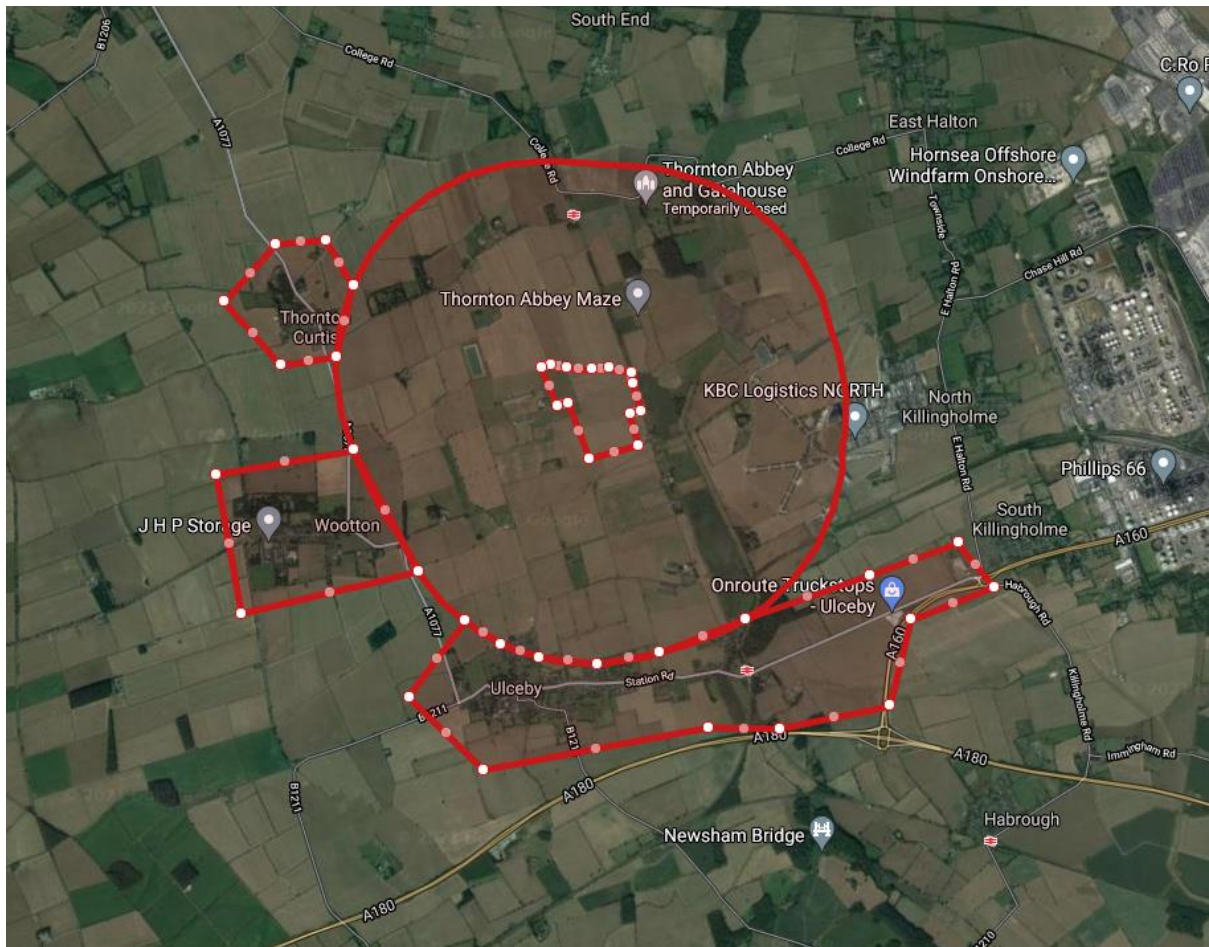
Yours sincerely,

**CHRIS SOWERBUTTS**

E: [sweetbriar@lightrockpower.com](mailto:sweetbriar@lightrockpower.com)  
T: 0114 286 6217  
W: [www.sweetbriarsolarfarm.com](http://www.sweetbriarsolarfarm.com)  
A: Lightrock Power, Electric Works, 3 Concourse Way, Sheffield, S1 2BJ



Appendix E: Leaflet distribution map



## Appendix F: Survey



### SWEETBRIAR SOLAR FARM

This survey is about Sweetbriar Solar Farm. Your feedback will help inform the proposal. We may analyse the question responses to help inform us but at no point will we share personal details. For more information on how Lightrock Power manage data, visit our website, [www.sweetbriarsolarfarm.com](http://www.sweetbriarsolarfarm.com).

The survey begins with some questions about renewable energy and then moves onto questions about the site. We are grateful for your feedback so please complete as much of it as you can. It will only take a few minutes. Thank you for your time.

1. Do you think it is important for the UK to be generating more of its own renewable energy?

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure

2. Solar farms are low maintenance, quiet, and provide a safe habitat for local wildlife. Do you think solar is a good option for renewable energy generation in this area?

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure

3. Solar farms can help with all of the following. Which ones are important to you?

- Creating a safe habitat for local wildlife
- Helping bumblebee populations
- Community benefit funds
- Local businesses and supply contracts
- Resting the land
- Helping farms stay in business
- Bringing funding to local amenities through business rates

Other (please specify)

4. If you think there is a local organisation, project or cause which could benefit from the community benefit fund, please leave details here.

5. Are you supportive of Sweetbriar Solar Farm?

- Yes
- No
- I'm not sure

6. Can you explain why you answered question 5 the way you did?

7. How did you hear about the solar farm proposal?

- Letter/leaflet from Lightrock Power
- Newspaper advert or press piece
- Word of mouth
- Project website
- Local community website/social media group

Other (please specify)

8. So we understand where feedback is coming from, please give us the first section of your postcode e.g. GU10.

9. Please choose one of the following which best describes your interest in the scheme.

- Local resident
- Local business
- Local Councillor
- Potential supplier
- Other

10. If you have seen our project website, was it helpful?

- Yes
- No
- Needs more information (please specify below)

11. Any further comments or questions? Please leave details here and we'll answer as many as we can on our website.

Done

Powered by  
 SurveyMonkey  
See how easy it is to create a survey.

Appendix G: Online exhibition

**Sweetbriar Solar Farm** LIGHTROCK POWER

## Welcome

Thank you for visiting our online exhibition for **Sweetbriar Solar Farm**.

Lightrock Power develops wildlife-friendly solar farms: we put environment, ecology, and education at the heart of everything we do. We pride ourselves on being transparent and acting with integrity, not only with our landowners and funders but also, crucially, with the communities that are home to our projects. We develop responsibly and thoughtfully and strive to go above and beyond the planning targets set out to us. The site being considered here covers an area of approximately 48.5 hectares and aims to harvest enough renewable energy to power approximately 12,000 homes or 15,000 electric vehicles. It could prevent more than 16,800 tonnes of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere every year.

We have produced some information boards which you can read and download. We do not currently feel that it is in the interest of public health to hold an in-person exhibition, but please get in touch with us if you would like a virtual meeting and we will be happy to arrange this.

All our online material is available as printed copies on request.

VIA OUR SURVEY [www.sweetbriar.south.uk](http://www.sweetbriar.south.uk)  
 EMAIL US [info@sweetbriar.south.uk](mailto:info@sweetbriar.south.uk)  
 PHONE US 0121 286 1217  
 WRITE TO US [Sweetbriar@lightrockpower.com](mailto:Sweetbriar@lightrockpower.com)

**Sweetbriar Solar Farm** LIGHTROCK POWER

## Site Location

Any site selected by Lightrock Power has been through an appraisal process, testing its feasibility before the planning authority or the local community are approached for their views.

**Finding a good location takes time. We assess:**

- The land and its classification.
- Local planning designations.
- Access to a substation or national grid connection.
- Local ecology, landscape, and heritage constraints.
- Daylight hours that can be achieved at the site.
- The topography, and how the project will blend in with the landscape.
- Road access to the site.

This site meets all our requirements, which is why we're keen to progress a solar farm here.

Click the map to open a further location detail.

- The fact that the site has been classified as pre-community grade 3, we can ensure that the land continues to contribute to the natural beauty, while letting it rest and recover for future generations to work.
- The **South Gloucestershire Local Development Framework (LDF)** provides the policy context for the site. Being in a unique position to be at the heart of the growing low carbon and green economy - a renewable energy capital. Policy CDB confirms that the council will support renewable sources of energy in appropriate locations.
- A new grid connection will be built on local land, giving access to the local distribution network.
- Our planning specialist, Arcus Consulting, is undertaking a series of surveys and reports, the results of which we hope to be able to share with you soon.
- The land is flat, allowing daylight hours to be maximised. We have designed the site for minimum visual impact, but will be able to reinforce the existing screening by planting native trees and hedgerows.
- Access to the site will be via Carl Lane, approached from the A160 and A47, subject to our Construction Traffic Management Plan.

**Sweetbriar Solar Farm** LIGHTROCK POWER

## Solar Energy

Support for solar is the **highest it has ever been** - it's a clean energy source for our National Grid.

Our solar farms are quiet, safe, natural friendly and produce no emissions. They are designed with local topography in mind to have minimal visual impact, and these panels can be seen in our previous schemes in the form of native trees and hedgerows.

There will be a 5m gap between the site border hedge and our fence, and our panels are then a further 6m from the fence. So the panels will be about 11-12m from any nearby roads or paths.

Solar energy does not mean we have to take land out of production - it just means we can diversify land use, harvesting renewable energy whilst supporting wildlife and conservation grazing. We welcome beekeepers to get in touch to help diversify the land use even further. Solar farms give the land beneath them an opportunity to rest, improving soil quality for when the land is returned to agricultural use.

Our panels are ground mounted, installed using pile driven technology which limits the impact on the soil. They're installed 80-100cm off the ground at the base with a soil height of no more than 2cm. Keeping the panels off the ground allows sheep or other small flocks to be grazed underneath them. As well as benefiting local ecosystems, conservation grazing helps to control the height of the undergrowth surrounding the panels, meaning less machinery is needed for maintenance.

1 Some panels are made of metal but are protected from rust with a zinc coating. The zinc coating is made from a natural process and is safe for the environment. 2 A general information leaflet containing our Local Wildlife Mitigation Plan is available on our website.

**Sweetbriar Solar Farm** LIGHTROCK POWER


## Community Benefits

Our commitments to your community are:

- We will be sensitive to local protected habitats and nature conservation sites, and we welcome opportunities to enhance the ecological value of the land.
- We will minimise visual impact where possible and maintain regular screening throughout the lifetime of the project, to ensure the ecological value of the land.
- We will provide a number of areas for small-scale in touch - small, sunny, alfalfa and pigs.
- We will engage with the community in advance of submitting a planning application.
- We will do as much as we can to be being and employing locally as possible.
- At the end of the project we will return the land to its former use and the solar panels will be removed if requested.
- We will set aside land for educational purposes - maybe for environmental groups and local schools.
- We will offer a community benefits fund to local organisations and charities which can be used to improve local projects and interests.

Interested in our community benefit fund?  
 Email your contact details to [sweetbriar@lightrockpower.com](mailto:sweetbriar@lightrockpower.com)

# Sweetbriar Solar Farm - Statement of Pre-Application Community Involvement


Sweetbriar Solar Farm 


## Ecology and Wildlife

Solar farms can boost biodiversity by creating wildlife habitats and pollinator meadows in the middle of farmland.

Here are some of the ways we plan to manage and enhance wildlife and landscape character at Sweetbriar Solar Farm.






Sweetbriar Solar Farm 

## Transport and Access

Subject to planning permission being granted, construction of the solar farm is expected to take approximately 4-6 months, with traffic becoming lighter after the first eight weeks.

- We appreciate that traffic movements to and from a construction site can be a cause for concern, we are keen to keep traffic movements to a minimum and avoid passing through villages whenever we can.
- We estimate that for the first couple of months of construction there will be ten deliveries to the site per day. Over an eight-hour day this averages out to around one articulated lorry every 24 minutes.
- COVID-19 advice permitting, our contractors will seek to minimise highway movements by vehicle sharing in vans and minibuses.
- Once the site has been installed, the operation and maintenance team will visit the site less frequently - on average twice a month and usually just in one A4.
- Our current proposal is for construction vehicles to access the site via Car Lane, via the A80 and A077 leading gateways and entrances will be used.
- We have asked our transport specialist to design a Construction Traffic Management Plan. We hope to be able to share this plan with you soon.

The map below shows our current proposed access routes from the A80 in orange.



Sweetbriar Solar Farm 

## Timeline and Planning Process

**FEASIBILITY: Spring/Summer 2021**  
Initial conversations with Local Planning Authorities and other key stakeholders such as Parish Councils. Our Design Consultants begin work on surveys and reports such as Ecology Surveys, Landscape and Visual Impact Assessments, and Traffic Management Surveys.


**LISTENING: Early Autumn 2021**  
Sharing our initial ideas through websites, leaflets, and exhibitions, and listening to the feedback. Meeting with members of the community, encouraging debate, discussion and scrutiny. Our plans are high level at this point so that the community can help shape the final design.

**INSTALLING: Autumn 2022**  
We hope to submit our planning application in Autumn 2021. Subject to that permission, we will begin construction, operation and maintenance contracts and hope that the site will be installed by February in mid 2022. We expect construction to take 4-6 months.

**HARVESTING: July 2023**  
Once the site is operational, we want people to continue to engage with the project through community events, and we want to continue to support those projects that begin with our advice.

- The Local Planning Authority (LPA) for this development is North Ayrshire Council. They will review our planning applications in line with their policies.
- As part of the pre-planning application consultation process Lightrock Power will engage with them, and your Ward and Parish Councils, seeking their feedback and views.
- We will also write to other interested parties. These include statutory consultees who need to be consulted as part of the planning process, and local organisations and groups.



Sweetbriar Solar Farm 

## Frequently Asked Questions

**What makes a good site for a solar farm?**

We consider many key drivers when planning a solar farm, including the following:

- Proximity to a grid connection point.
- No environmental planning policy or heritage constraints.
- A local planning authority that is supportive of Renewable Energy Projects.
- Access from a public highway.

**What happens to the land after the solar farm is removed?**

There is a legal requirement that the land is returned to its original condition at the end of our lease and money is set aside to ensure this can happen. Our panels are mounted on pile-driven frames that cause minimum disturbance to the land and can be easily removed.

**What happens to the panels at the end of their life?**

Like any other electrical waste, solar panels need to be disposed of responsibly. In Europe over 70% of PV manufacturers take part in a global [PV Cycle](#) that helps producers meet the legal obligations of the [Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment \(WEEE\) Directive](#) legislation. As members of this initiative, producers are actively engaged in the sustainability of their products during manufacturing and throughout its lifespan. Components of the panels are broken down and recycled, not just disposed of.



Appendix H: Community update – 19th October 2021

## **Community Update, 19th October 2021 – FAQs and key concerns**

### **There is evidence that Solar Farms destroy ecosystems for insects, mammals and birds**

It is correct that that solar farms can have a negative ecological impact **if not designed well**. This is why we have a corporate partnership with the RSPB and work with other organisations such as Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Buglife, UK Wild Otter Trust, The Barn Owl Trust, and Plantlife to ensure that we get it right.

We work really hard to lead the way in designing wildlife-friendly solar farms, and are proud to be on target to achieve a biodiversity net gain of 104% at one of our current projects – more than doubling the habitat opportunity in its transition from arable land to solar.

### **Solar panels produce hypersensitive waves/electromagnetic waves that have been evidenced to reduce life expectancy**

All electrical and electronic devices create electromagnetic fields or EMF around them when used and also emit electromagnetic radiation or EMR. This includes solar panels and solar inverters as well as most electrical devices in our homes – televisions, radios, fridges and mobile phones. It's the level and type of EMR that is important. EMR from solar panels and solar inverters is non-ionizing and is well within national health based guidelines. Refer to the International Commission on Non-ionising Radiation (ICNIRP) for more details about EMF and EMR in our daily lives [www.icnirp.org](http://www.icnirp.org).

### **I'm disappointed that you intend to graze sheep on the site. Grazing animals for meat is a major factor in climate change**

We use sheep for conservation grazing on our sites. They help us to manage the grass length, which means we don't need to use machinery, and are kept at a much lower stocking density than traditional herds. The sheep can benefit from the shade and shelter than the panels provide. Plans are led by our expert ecologist who ensures a benefit for local flora and fauna as well as the sheep themselves.

### **What made you decide on this location?**

There are several considerations we make when deciding on the best location for one of our projects:



### **Access to the National Grid:**

The grid at Sweetbriar Farm has capacity to carry the electricity that our solar project would provide. We are currently working with Northern Powergrid to establish the best connection point.

### **Road Access:**

The current proposed access route is via the A160 and A1077 as shown in yellow on the map to the right. We will be discussing our access route with the County Council as part of our traffic management and monitoring work.

### **Local Topography:**

While solar panels do not need direct sunlight to produce electricity, they are most efficient when sited on flat or south-facing, shade free land.

The land at Sweetbriar Farm is relatively flat, allowing daylight hours to be maximised. There is minimal shade, but we will avoid placing solar panels in any shaded areas.

### **Biodiversity Opportunities:**

Solar Farms can create a safehaven for many native animals, including pollinators, small mammals, reptiles, birds and amphibians. We're confident that we can achieve a significant biodiversity net gain here.

### **Local Planning Constraints:**

We are in the process of investigating the planning constraints and opportunities at Sweetbriar Farm.

Our planning specialist, Arcus Consulting, are conducting a series of reports and appraisals, including heritage, geophysical, glint and glare, visual, and ecology. We hope to be able to share the results of these with you soon.

### **Local Planning Designations:**

The [North Lincolnshire Local Development Framework \(2011\)](#) provides the policy context for this site:

"North Lincolnshire is in a unique position to be at the heart of the growing low carbon and green economy – a renewable energy capital".

**Are you proposing an open day?**

We do not currently feel that it's in the interest of public health to have a face to face open day, but please [email](#), or phone us on 0114 286 6217 and we'll arrange a meeting.