Shepway Energy Park

Public Consultation Brochure
Summer 2025

Contents

Introduction to Shepway Energy Park

Energy security and climate change are two of the biggest threats our society faces. We need to act now, by investing in clean energy solutions for everyone's future.

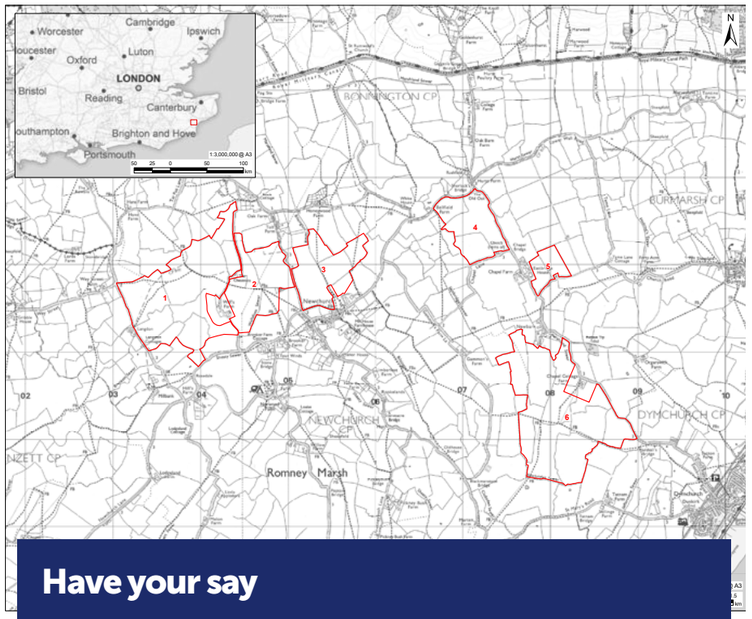
At SSE Renewables we're committed to supporting a home-grown, resilient energy system: helping the UK meet its net zero targets, protecting the environments we work in and supporting local communities.

Shepway Energy Park is a proposed solar and battery development that would deliver circa 200 megawatts (MW) of renewable electricity and 400 MW of battery storage capacity. That means our solar panels will generate enough carbon-free electricity to power approximately 73,000 homes and save on average 49,000 tonnes of CO_2 per year.

The site is located within Romney Marsh, north of Newchurch in Kent and is made up of six distinct areas. More details can be found on page 4 to 7, including an overview map of our proposals.

The proposed energy park will generate low carbon electricity from solar photovoltaic (PV) panels, and a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) will allow the storage, import, and export of electricity to/from a new substation proposed by National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET).

Our proposals to generate more renewable power in the UK will make a significant contribution towards the UK meeting its net zero targets and will deliver against Ashford Borough Council, Folkestone and Hythe District Council, and Kent County Council's priorities around tackling climate change and generating more electricity from renewable sources.



Have your say

We're sharing our initial proposals, and we want to hear from the local community and other interested individuals or organisations. Your comments are important to us, and all responses received during the consultation period will be considered. **See page 17** for more details on how you can respond to this consultation.

Who is SSE Renewables?

- We're experienced in successfully delivering major renewable energy projects across the UK. We've been developing, constructing and operating renewable energy projects for over 80 years, including onshore wind, offshore wind, and pumped hydro.
- We specialise in solar and battery storage projects and are a leading developer and operator of renewable energy generation. We're committed to progressing the delivery of a 1.2GW pipeline of solar and battery projects across the UK and Ireland and have an aim to provide solar projects across the UK to accelerate progress towards the UK governments net-zero ambitions.
- We support the communities where we operate our renewables energy projects across the UK and Ireland, providing significant levels of community funding and positively contributing to the social, environmental and economic well-being of local communities. We know this region well, having operated the Medway Power Station since 1995.

Why are we consulting?

We're committed to achieving meaningful engagement with local communities and want to hear your thoughts and ideas for the project. Our plans for Shepway Energy Park are still at an early stage, so we are looking for your comments to help inform our ongoing design work.

We're sharing our initial proposals, and we want to hear from the local community and other interested individuals or organisations. We'll consider your thoughts and ideas, and where practicable, we'll use these to inform our proposals and designs. Your comments are important to us, and all responses received during the consultation period will be considered.

This is our first consultation for this project. When we've progressed our design, including considering feedback to this consultation, there will be another public consultation allowing plenty of opportunities to have your say and comment as the project progresses. You can find out more on our 'Indicative timeline and next steps' page (page 16).

Scoping Report

Alongside this public consultation, we have also submitted our Scoping Report to the Planning Inspectorate (see page 15 to read more about the Planning Inspectorate and the planning process).

The Scoping Report is a technical report which sets out the proposed scope and detail of the environmental assessment we will undertake ahead of submitting our application and the Planning Inspectorate will provide its opinion on the suitability of our proposed approach. The Planning Inspectorate will consult a number of specific organisations – such as the Environment Agency, Natural England, and relevant parish councils – on this report but it is available to view by anyone on the project's page on the Planning Inspectorate's website.

You can find out more about our approach to environmental assessment on page 10 and, as part of this consultation, we'd like your thoughts on this and areas of the local environment you think are important.

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP)

As the solar farm will generate over 50 MW of electricity, the project is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and requires consent by way of a Development Consent Order (DCO) under the Planning Act 2008. The final decision on whether to grant consent for the proposed development is made by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero. More information on the DCO process can be found on page 15.

Our non-statutory consultation will run from 28 May to 23.59pm on 13 July 2025. This brochure explains more about the proposals, the consultation, how the DCO process works, and most importantly how you can have your say.

Why Shepway Energy Park is needed

Energy security

Currently the UK's electricity prices are among the highest in Europe. The majority of our 28 million homes in the UK are still reliant on gas both to generate electricity and provide heat, highlighting the need to generate more affordable, renewable, and clean electricity. Accelerating the shift away from oil and gas is dependent on how quickly we can roll out new renewables in the UK to ensure a much more self-sufficient Britain in the future.

Increased energy demand

By 2050, National Grid anticipates that the UK will be consuming twice as much electricity as we do today. For instance, electric vehicle ownership has increased thirty-fold annually since 2022 and is expected to continue rising, especially with the ban on new diesel and petrol cars by 2035.

Enhancing the environment

During operation, solar power generates no carbon dioxide, unlike electricity produced from fossil fuels. Solar farms offer the opportunity to provide an overall increase in natural habitat and ecological features when compared to arable farming and can eventually become a sanctuary for wildlife.

Net zero transition

The UK is transitioning to zero and low carbon energy sources. With the closure of all coal-fired power stations, there's a growing need to boost energy generation from renewable sources. The UK's climate change goals are set in law and among some of the most ambitious in Europe, specifically the aim to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and to deliver clean power by 2030 and achieve net zero by 2050. This requires large amounts of investment into renewable electricity generation infrastructure to be delivered. Shepway Energy Park will generate up to 200 MW of clean, renewable electricity, making a significant contribution to providing the renewable electricity generation capacity that the country urgently needs.

Food security

We know that food security is a concern. The National Food Strategy, which is an independent review for government, notes that the next big shock to our food supply will almost certainly be caused by climate change in the form of extreme weather events and catastrophic harvest failures. It follows that addressing climate change, including by using solar energy, will improve the security of our food supply. The introduction of solar panels on farmland can also support farmers by creating a new income stream.

The energy park will be a temporary development and, after its operational life, will return to agricultural use. This period may provide opportunities for soil quality to recover over the 40 years it is not in use for agriculture. We're also exploring opportunities to make the land available for sheep grazing.

Did you know?*

To meet the government's net zero target, the 75 to 90 GW of solar required by 2050 would, at most, account for approximately 0.4 – 0.6% of UK land, less than the amount currently used for golf courses.

* Solar Energy UK - Facts About Solar Energy

What is Shepway Energy Park?

Shepway Energy Park will generate low carbon electricity from solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) will be installed allowing the storage, export, and import of electricity from the grid. We've provided more detail below on the type of equipment we need on site.

Shepway Energy Park is made up of six distinct areas (as shown on the map on pages 6 and 7):

- Area 1 is located north of Newchurch and is approximately 118.4 hectare (ha). This site is proposed as the location for the on-site Substation and Battery Energy Storage, and also includes proposed solar panels, and areas of proposed landscape and ecological enhancement.

- Area 2 is located north of Newchurch and is approximately 50.1ha. This area is proposed as the location of solar panels and includes areas of proposed landscape and ecological enhancement. It is also where the existing National Grid Overhead Line is located.

- Area 3 is located north of Newchurch and is approximately 46.6ha. This area is proposed as the location of solar panels. It also includes areas of proposed landscape and ecological enhancement.

- Area 4 is located north of Chapel Lane and is approximately 41.5ha. This area is proposed as the location of solar panels. It also includes areas of proposed landscape and ecological enhancement.

- Area 5 is located north of Church Road and is approximately 14ha. This area is proposed as the location of solar panels. It also includes areas of proposed landscape and ecological enhancement.

- Area 6 is located west of Eastbridge Road and is approximately 135.5ha. This area is proposed as the location of solar panels. It also includes areas of proposed landscape and ecological

During this consultation, we are seeking feedback on our proposals for Shepway Energy Park. There are some elements of the project that are fixed – such as the general look of the panels and the electrical equipment we need – but lots of our design is yet to be finalised. We'd like your thoughts on:

- Our site layout.
- Information that could help us plan for construction, including the use of local roads.
- Opportunities for environmental benefits or areas where you think our work may impact the environment.
- Anything else you think it is useful we understand to help develop our design.

Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Modules

Solar PV modules are made up of multiple PV cells which convert the sunlight into direct current (DC) electricity. They typically have toughened glass fronts and backs, and aluminum frames. They have varying technologies and power outputs.

The best options for this site are currently being assessed and we will provide further information on our proposals in due course.

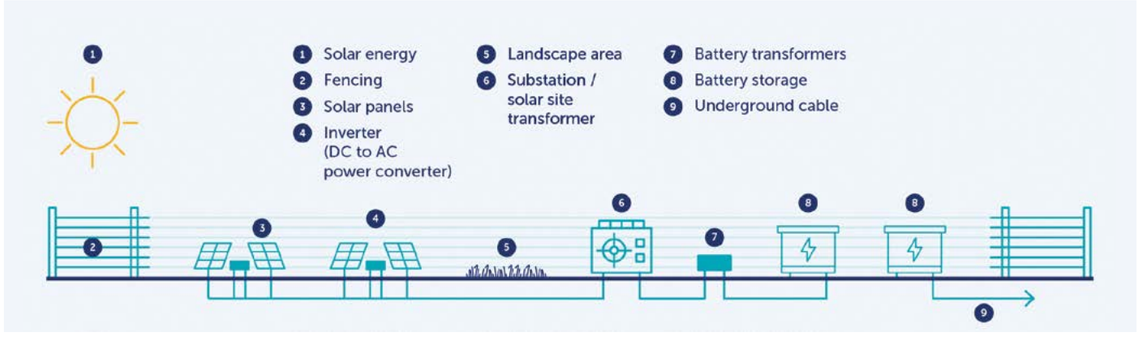
PV Module Mounting Structure

PV modules will be mounted on a metal rack, known as a frame or table. The modules can be mounted onto the table in various configurations (e.g. fixed tilt or single axis tracker) and orientations (e.g. 2 in portrait or 4 in landscape).

The best options for this site are currently being assessed and we will provide further information on our proposals in due course.

Battery Energy Storage System

Energy storage allows electricity generated during times of low demand to be stored and then released to the National Electricity Transmission System (NETS) when required such as peak electricity usage periods. Storage can also help prevent outages on the NETS, ensuring there is spare capacity if something goes wrong with generation elsewhere.



There are a number of different designs for the BESS that will be explored as part of the design process. Batteries will likely be housed within enclosures (also referred to as units). The precise number of enclosures will depend upon the level of power capacity and duration of energy storage that the project will require; investigations are ongoing to determine this.

Inverters

Inverters convert the Direct Current (DC) electricity generated by the solar PV modules and BESS into Alternating Current (AC), so it can be exported to the NETS for use.

Switchgear

Switchgear are used to control, protect, and isolate electrical equipment; to clear faults and to allow maintenance to be done to the site equipment safely.

Transformers

Transformers change the voltage of the electricity generated which makes it more efficient to move over longer distances.

The transformers ensure that the voltage of the energy generated is matched to the voltage of the transmission and distribution networks around the UK.

Substations

Substations are important as they allow us to safely collect and manage the energy exported from the site to the NETS. An on-site substation will be used to manage the energy and the project will connect to a new National Grid substation.

At this time the exact location of a new National Grid substation is unknown, and its proposed development, consultation, and construction will be the responsibility of National Grid Electricity Transmission (NGET). However, it is expected to be located along the existing Dungeness to Sellindge overhead line (OHL). We'll work closely with NGET to determine how the project will connect to the new NGET substation.

Cable corridors

We will use underground cables to connect the six areas to the on-site substation. We are still assessing the routes for these cables between the different areas. We'll also work with NGET to identify a 'cable route corridor' to connect our site and the new NGET substation.

Security

Security fencing will enclose all the site equipment. This will be for the safety of the public, as well as for security of the equipment. Where appropriate, it will be screened from view by planting. The site will also have security cameras which would be aligned to capture only the fence and the area inside the fence.

Lighting may be installed around the site perimeter, and throughout the site located next near to critical equipment. Lighting is expected to be used only in emergency situations, security situations, or during critical maintenance activities. It is not expected that the site will be continuously lit during the operational phase.

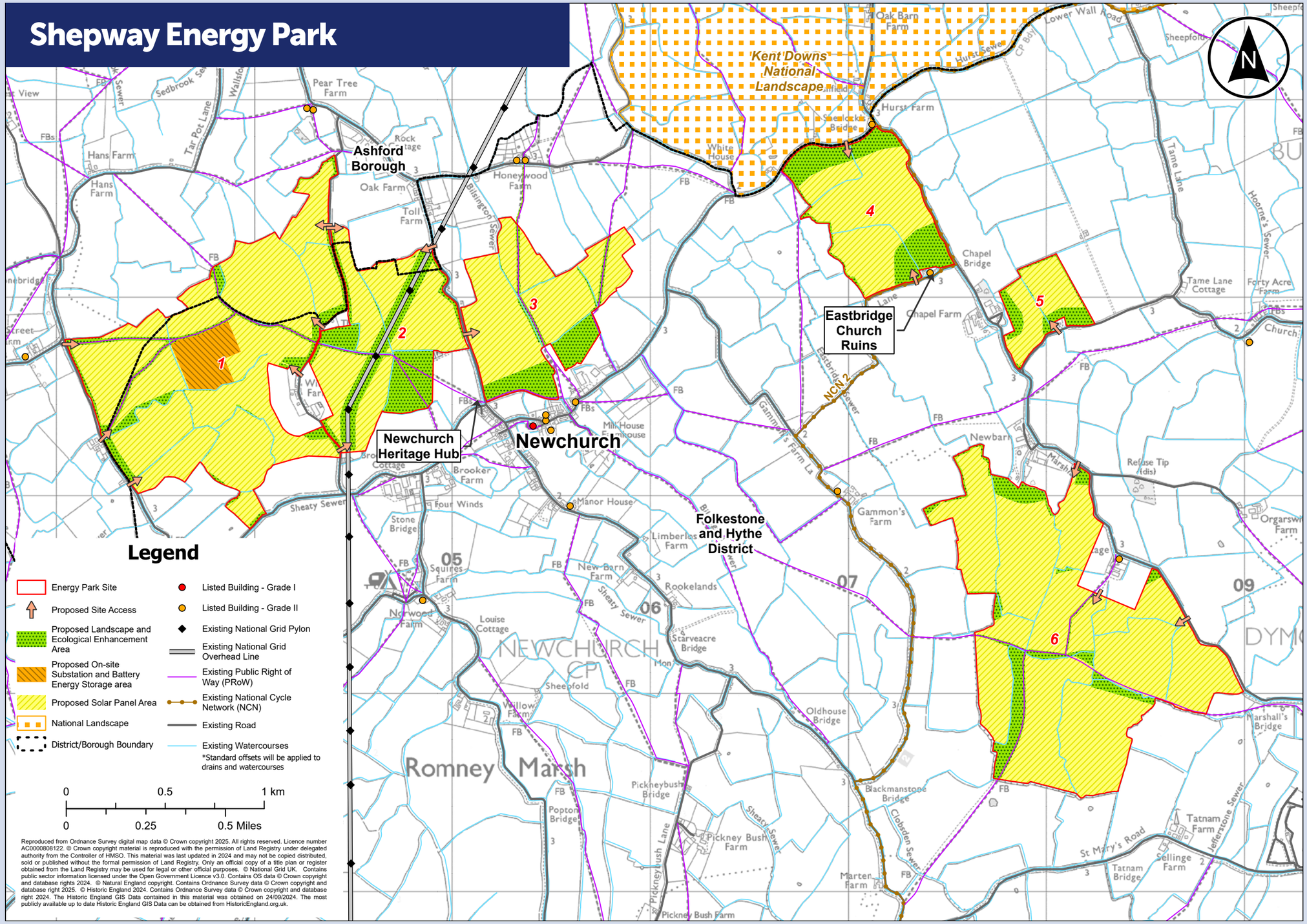
Design

We're still at an early stage of development but we're presenting a proposed layout of the PV modules and the location of the associated equipment on the site, which we are seeking your feedback on.

We've aimed to locate our equipment sensitively to minimise impacts on the local community and environment. While the site is approximately 406.1ha, not all of the land within the site will be developed. Within the boundary, we'll also include:

- 'No build' buffer zones offsetting equipment from the field edges, particularly in areas close to residential or commercial properties.
- Identified areas that have potential to be used for landscaping, habitat enhancement, and biodiversity net gain.
- Consideration for existing public rights of way that cross the site.

A landscape and visual impact assessment will be undertaken to assess the impacts of the scheme and this, along with your feedback to this consultation, will help us further refine the proposed layout.



Why this location?

We have carefully considered the best location for the project, both operationally and in terms of reducing impacts on the community and environment. This has included early desktop work to assess a wide geographical area and identify potentially suitable sites based on a range of criteria and constraints.

There are many factors which make this site ideal for an energy park:

Sunlight and site location

The South - area provides an optimal area for solar development. In fact, the south coast has around 10 per cent more solar irradiance (the measure of the sun's intensity over a given area) than other parts of the county. The land north and east of Newchurch is flat and provides good levels of sunshine all year – ideal conditions for solar PV.

Distance of site to dwellings

The site is situated in a rural area. As we develop our detailed design, we will work to place the PV modules and BESS where they are less visible from neighbouring homes and businesses. We'll also consider suitable planting and other natural barriers to provide screening.

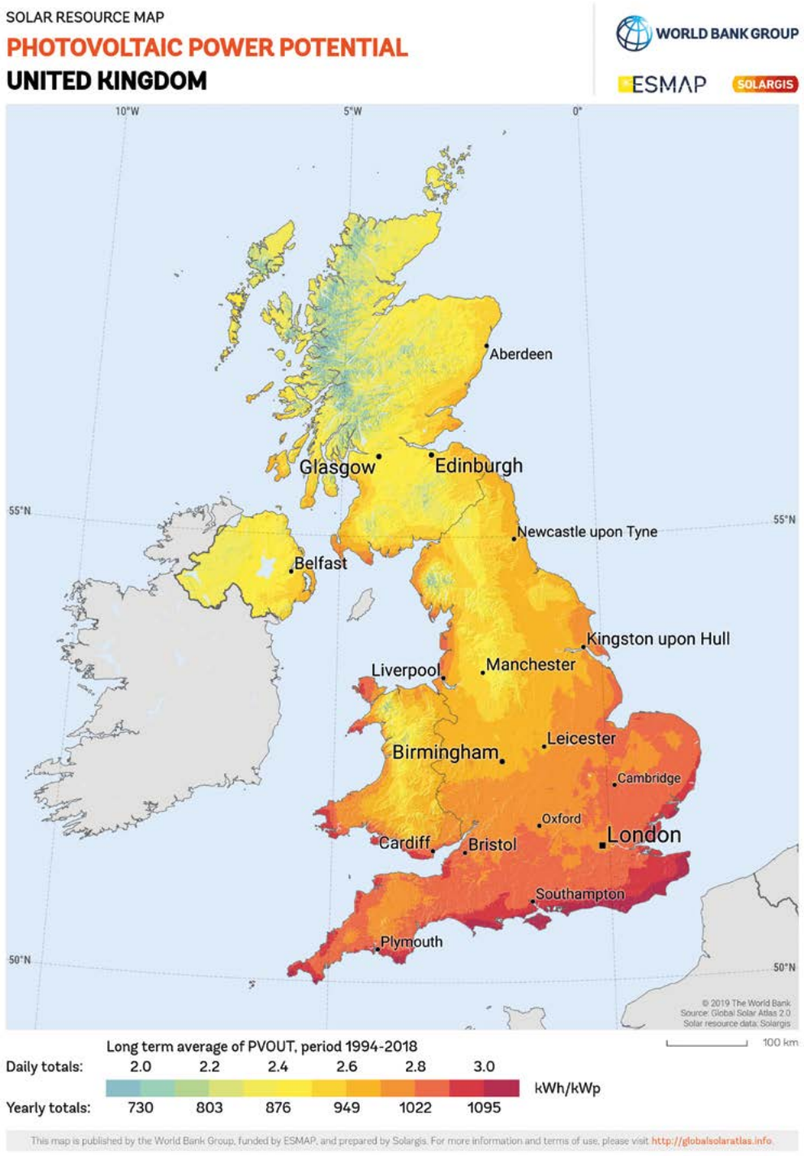
We're committed to designing the scheme sensitively to minimise impacts on local residents.

Grid connection

The site is located near to the existing Dungeness to Sellindge overhead line (OHL) corridor. We'll work closely with National Grid when they identify the new NGET substation, and will then identify a suitable 'cable route corridor' in order to connect into this.

Accessibility

The site is easy to access by road to enable the components of the project to be delivered.



Our commitment to the environment

While the project will make a significant contribution to the renewable electricity generation capacity that the country urgently needs all major infrastructure inevitably brings with it some impacts. We aim to avoid, reduce, and mitigate these impacts and we'll be gathering extensive environmental information to identify and assess the likely significant environmental effects of the scheme. This process is known as an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

We're mindful of the site's surrounding environment. We're at an early stage of developing our proposals for the site and are undertaking surveys to make sure we understand potential impacts on several factors, including ecology and biodiversity; landscape and visual, agriculture and land use; flooding; traffic; noise; and cultural heritage.

The EIA will be undertaken alongside our design work and our consultation and engagement, so its findings and conclusions help shape our proposals in a positive way. Through this process we'll identify any "significant effects" and explore opportunities to avoid, reduce and mitigate them.

We'll carry out surveys as part of this process to help us better understand the local environment, such as the habitats, biodiversity, and wildlife around the sites. You may see our surveyors out and about in the area over the coming months. At times we may have to access and survey other land in the area too and we'll be in touch with any landowners in advance of surveys to gain the necessary permission and access to carry these out in a discreet manner.

The preliminary findings of our assessments will be published in a report at our next consultation, and the full EIA forms an important part of our application. You can find out more detail about the application process on page 15.

The stages of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

Stage 1: The first stage of the EIA for the project is 'scoping' where we'll present and agree the anticipated scope and methodology of the EIA, based on field and desk studies of the existing environment, analysis of the proposals and consultation with key stakeholders.

Stage 2: Once scoping is complete, we'll prepare a Preliminary Environmental Information Report which presents early information of the assessments to allow stakeholders and the local community to develop an informed view of the likely impacts of the development before the EIA is complete. We'll publish outcomes from this work in the next formal stage of consultation.

Stage 3: The EIA will then be presented in an Environmental Statement (ES) submitted as part of our application for development consent in 2026.

Other solar developments

We know there are several other proposed solar developments in the wider region. We will work with these developers as far as practicable to manage impacts from developments being carried out at the same time.

Environmental impact and mitigation

Our environmental assessment work is at an early stage. We have identified areas where we think there may be some potential impact as a result of the project. Through further environmental work, technical design and consideration of consultation feedback, we will explore opportunities to mitigate identified impacts.

Below we have summarised some of the potential impacts along with ways we could mitigate these through our design or other methods. More information will be made available in the Preliminary Environmental Information Report we will publish at our next consultation.

During construction

Topic	Potential impact	Potential mitigation
Noise	There is likely to be an increase in noise during construction.	Construction working hours will be limited to reduce potential disturbance from construction noise during early mornings and late evenings. The potential effects of noise and vibration during construction will be limited to specific locations within the site and only for short periods. We'll make the community aware when works are likely to take place and details of our limited working hours will be set out in our planning application.
Air quality	The construction and traffic to and from the site may increase dust in the air.	We'll monitor dust from site construction operations, and the vehicles leaving will have their wheels washed where appropriate.
Traffic	There will be an increase in vehicles accessing the site during construction.	Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) will transport materials and equipment to the sites. It is anticipated that the existing local roads will be used, subject to suitability of these roads to carry HGVs. There could be up to a total of 40 heavy goods vehicle movements a day across the project area during the peak construction period. This is a reasonable worst-case scenario and will be reliant on a number of factors, including construction timeline. We'll consult with the local authorities to ensure the site accesses are appropriately located for the area. Any needs for local upgrades will be determined as the scheme designs develop. A construction traffic management plan will be produced in consultation with the local highways authorities to manage construction traffic. Your feedback will also help us understand more about local roads and how we can manage our traffic.
Public Rights of Way (PRoW)	Stop access to PRoWs during construction.	If required, we would only seek to stop access to PRoW as a temporary measure and only as a last resort subject to Local Authority approval. We'll look to maintain existing PRoWs that cross the site as far as possible. This will be part of our ongoing design work, and any changes or improvements to PRoWs will be consulted on at a future consultation. We'd like you to tell us if there is anything we should know to help manage potential impacts on PRoWs or where there may be opportunities to improve existing PRoWs. A PRoW Management Plan is developed as part of the DCO submission which would outline how PRoWs will be managed during Construction / Operation / Decommissioning, developed in consultation with the LPAs.
Agricultural / Land use	There will be temporary disturbance to soil and agricultural land.	We'll implement good practice soil management measures via a Soil Management Plan during construction, operation, and decommissioning so that land is restored to its original condition. There will likely be benefits to long term soil health from a reduction in intensive agriculture and agrichemical use.
Flooding	The entirety of the energy park site is located within Flood Zone 3 (which is indicated as high risk).	We're conducting a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) which will be submitted as part of our application. This will inform how we carry out our construction in a way that manages any risk of flooding. It will also inform the design of the scheme so that it is not at increased risk of flooding or contribute to increased flooding off site.
Landscape and visual	The development of the energy park will introduce a change in the landscape of Romney Marsh and views of it.	With respect to landscape and visual and heritage matters, an initial feasibility study has guided the layout of certain elements of the scheme with the intention of reducing effects on more sensitive receptors. This iterative process will continue through the scheme design, with the objective of limiting significant effects as far as practically possible.

Have your say

We're sharing our initial proposals, and we want to hear from the local community and other interested individuals or organisations. Your comments are important to us, and all responses received during the consultation period will be considered. **See page 17** for more details on how you can respond to this consultation.

During operation

Topic	Potential impact	Potential mitigation
Noise	When the energy park is operational, low levels of noise can be generated by the electrical system, such as from the transformers and inverters, and Battery Energy Storage System. This can sound like a quiet buzz or fan noise, which decreases rapidly with distance from this infrastructure. PV modules themselves do not make any noise.	We will select equipment with low noise emissions, and assess the use of enclosures, local screening, mufflers, and silencers will help to minimise noise emissions across the scheme.
Landscape and Visual	The mounted solar PV modules may be up to 4 m above ground level. The site is located near to the village of Newchurch. While the site is not located within any protected areas, we are aware of its proximity to the Kent Downs National Landscape. While solar panels are made to absorb the light, they may lead to glint and glare.	We'll consider how and where we can sensitively site infrastructure. Where necessary, we'll explore the use of buffer zones and suitable planting to mitigate potential significant effects. Landscape and visual effects have been considered from the earliest stages – this Scheme is a landscape led design. We'll be considering planting in and around the site to provide screening. The modules will also be positioned to reduce any reflection that could impact the roads, residents, or planes. We are also engaging with the Kent Downs National Landscape unit and Natural England to support the identification and mitigation of effects.
Agricultural / Land use	The current agricultural operation within the energy park site will change as the land will not be available for its current arable agricultural uses. Provisional mapping of Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) grading has identified the land as a primarily Grade 2 (with small areas of Grade 1) which falls within the definition of Best and Most Versatile Agricultural Land, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.	We're exploring opportunities to make the land available for agriculture through sheep grazing. The project is temporary and after its operational life it will be decommissioned, and the land returned to the landowner. It is expected that the soil condition will be much improved following four decades of sensitive management.
Flooding	The entirety of the energy park site is located within Flood Zone 3 (which is indicated as high risk).	We're conducting a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) which will be submitted as part of our application. This will allow us to understand the flooding risk associated with the site. We'll incorporate recommended setbacks from any water sources into our design. A detailed operational drainage design will be carried out preconstruction with the objective of ensuring that drainage of the land to the present level is maintained, and that the risk of flooding is not increased by the project.
Culture and heritage	Direct impacts on the built heritage of the area are considered minimal. There are no Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, or Scheduled Monuments within the site. However, we're aware of the Grade II Listed Eastridge Church ruins, scheduled monument, and Orgaswich Church and memorial located nearby, and a number of listed buildings in the village of Newchurch. We're also aware of the area's history as a World War II air strip and the potential for undiscovered archaeological remains. Investigation into buried archaeology is ongoing in consultation with Kent County Council.	The planning application will include a Heritage Assessment that assesses any potential impacts on the setting and character of heritage sites, and the potential for undiscovered archaeological remains. We'll also be carrying out geophysical surveys to inform our understanding of the local environment. We'll consider how and where we can sensitively deliver site infrastructure, highlight the heritage assets and look to include buffers and suitable planting to mitigate potential significant effects.
Ecology and biodiversity	Installation of the panels has the potential to affect existing ecology and biodiversity on the site.	We will be carrying out extensive environmental assessments to understand the existing ecology and biodiversity of the site. The project is likely to involve improvements to field boundaries and planting of seed mixes within the solar PV area. Planting will also be used to provide screening. We will also explore other ecology and biodiversity enhancement options as the project progresses. We'd like you to tell us if there are any particular enhancements you'd like to see. The enhancements and planting would increase biodiversity throughout the landscape and contribute to the project achieving Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) levels greater than the minimum 10% required by the Environment Act 2021. Following construction, a programme of site reinstatement and habitat creation will commence. A Framework Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) will be submitted as part of the DCO application, and this document will set out the principles for how the land will be managed throughout the operational phase, following the completion of construction.

Community benefits

We're committed to supporting the local community throughout the planning, construction, and operation of Shepway Energy Park.

This starts by ensuring we understand potential impacts on the community from our proposals, and identify ways we can mitigate these through careful design. Your feedback to our consultations will play an important role in achieving this.

In planning for construction, we'll look at how we can use the local workforce, supply chain, and services.

We're also committed to setting up a Community Benefit Fund. Although it is too early in the development process to confirm exactly how this would operate, its use would be locally led and would total several million pounds over the project's operational life.

We're proud of our track record of working with communities close to our assets, both as a responsible developer and through Community Benefit Funds. You can read about some of the ways we have done this at: **https://www.sserenewables.com/communities/**

Have your say

We're sharing our initial proposals, and we want to hear from the local community and other interested individuals or organisations. Your comments are important to us, and all responses received during the consultation period will be considered. **See page 17** for more details on how you can respond to this consultation.

Construction and decommissioning

We'll provide more details on the potential timing of construction work and the scope of construction activities, such as the number of vehicle movements, as our design develops.

We'll let local residents and businesses know of the planned construction work, including when and where they're due to take place, in advance. This will help reduce the disruption caused by construction work and allow communities to plan ahead accordingly.

Construction management

We'll seek to avoid and reduce any disruption from our construction work and our plans for doing this will be outlined within a series of management plans that we'll prepare and publish as part of our application for development consent. This will ensure we work in line with best practices and that activities that create disruptive impacts such as noise and dust will be carefully managed and controlled (more information about this is provided in the environmental impact and mitigation section on pages 10 and 11). These plans will also include a traffic management plan to help limit disruption to local roads during construction and also ensure collaboration with emergency services.

During the construction phase some temporary changes may be required in the areas surrounding the work:

- Temporary construction compounds will be needed to provide welfare facilities for construction workers, and to store materials and equipment.
- Access tracks may need to be created in some areas where off-road access is required – Where these tracks are to be temporary, the land where these tracks are created will be restored once work is complete.
- We'll also agree with the local highways authorities which roads will be available for construction traffic to use.

The construction phase of the Shepway Energy Park will create local employment opportunities, and we will seek to use local businesses whenever possible. Additionally, the land will become subject to business rates, providing the council with increased revenue to invest in the area.

How long will the project take to build?

Subject to being granted development consent and following a final investment decision, the earliest construction could start is in Summer 2030 and construction will require an estimated two to three years. The Environmental Statement will provide further details of the construction activities, their anticipated duration, and indicative programme of each phase of construction work.

How will the project be built?

Construction activities are likely to be carried out in sequence, with construction teams responsible for specific type of works moving from one area to the next. In this case the works would start with fencing, followed by frame installation, then panel installation, then cabling and connection. It may be possible to generate power from some plots whilst others are being built, providing the onsite substation and cabling is in place, as well as other safety and security measures. This means that, while the overall construction programme is 2-3 years, we won't be working in each location for the full period.

Decommissioning process

The design life of the project is expected to be 40 years. When the operational phase ends, the project will require decommissioning. All PV modules, mounting poles, inverters, transformers, switchgear, BESS, buildings, and fencing would be removed from the site and recycled or disposed of in accordance with good practice and market conditions at that time. It will then be returned to its original condition after decommissioning.

The consenting process

The Development Consent Order (DCO) process

As the electricity generating capacity from the solar PV for the proposed Shepway Energy Park is greater than 50 megawatts (MW), it is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). Under the Planning Act 2008, NSIPs are developments which require a Development Consent Order (DCO) to be granted by the relevant Secretary of State. We will work closely with the Local Authorities, Ashford Borough Council, Folkestone and Hythe District Council and Kent County Council, as key consultees with an important role to play during the development of the Scheme.

Ultimately, we'll submit our DCO application to the Planning Inspectorate, who review and examine applications for development consent on behalf of the Secretary of State. In the case of solar projects, the final decision on a DCO application will be made by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero. This is the process as of May 2025.

The DCO process is governed by the Planning Act 2008, and the key stages are detailed in the timeline below.

1 Pre-application (no set timescale)

First public consultation (non-statutory) *We are here*

- A consultation on the proposals will be held to hear the views of the local communities.
- We'll present the findings of the consultation and how the feedback's been considered in our Consultation Report.

Project development and Environmental Impact Assessment

- We'll use the consultation feedback to further develop our plans and continue our ongoing engagement with key stakeholders such as local authorities, landowners and environmental bodies to help shape the development of the Environmental Statement (ES) which we'll submit as part of the DCO application.
- Environmental surveys will be carried out by the team to understand the potential environmental impacts. The survey results will inform measures that need to be taken to avoid, reduce, mitigate and compensate for potential impacts.

Further public consultation (statutory)

- A further public consultation will be held to present more detailed plans and gather feedback from members of the public and key stakeholders.
- We'll present the findings of this consultation and how the feedback's been considered to further develop our plans, in our Consultation Report.

DCO submission

2 Acceptance (28 days)

Once our application's submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, the Acceptance stage begins. The Planning Inspectorate will check our application meets all the requirements to continue through to the pre-examination stage.

3 Pre-examination (approximately 3-6 months)

The public will be able to register with the Planning Inspectorate to become an Interested Party by making a Relevant Representation. The Planning Inspectorate will also appoint an Examining Authority, and all Interested Parties will be invited to attend a Preliminary Meeting.

4 Examination (up to 6 months)

The Examining Authority has up to six months to carry out the examination. During this stage Interested Parties who have registered are invited to provide written submissions or request to speak at public hearings.

5 Recommendation and decision (up to 6 months)

Following consideration of the application, the Examining Authority will provide a report to the Secretary of State, with a recommendation to either accept or reject the application. This must happen within three months of the examination period closing.
The Secretary of State will then have three months to issue a decision on whether to grant the development consent.

6 Post decision (up to six weeks)

Once a decision has been issued, there is a period of six weeks where the decision can be challenged in court.

You can find out more about the DCO process on the Planning Inspectorate's website **https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/**

Indicative timeline and next steps

Next steps
This consultation will close on Sunday 13 July 2025 at 23:59. We'll then carefully consider all the feedback we've received and review our plans. We'll use community feedback, along with feedback from local authorities, environmental bodies, and other local interest groups to further help shape our plans for Shepway Energy Park. Alongside this, we'll be carrying out lots of environmental assessment and technical work across the site.

This will be followed by another public consultation, allowing a further opportunity to have your say and comment as the project progresses. More information, including a report summarising feedback from this consultation will be shared on our website closer to the time.

Indicative timeline

2025

Spring - Summer 2025 *We are here*
- Public consultation (non-statutory) on Shepway Energy Park 28 May to 23.59pm on 13 July 2025. A chance to engage with the local community and gain valuable feedback on our proposals.

Summer 2025
- Development of the design based on further technical work and feedback from the first consultation.
- Environmental surveys and assessment, and preparation of Preliminary Environmental Information Report.

2026

Early 2026
- Second consultation (statutory) on Shepway Energy Park.

Summer 2025 – Spring 2026
- Completion of the design based on environmental assessment outcomes and consultation feedback.

Autumn 2026
- Submission of our Development Consent Order.

Winter 2026 - Autumn 2027
- Examination period of our Development Consent Order.

2027

Late 2027 - early 2028
- Anticipated decision on our Development Consent Order.

2028

2028
- Final investment decision.

2030

2030
- Construction begins.

2033

2033
- Construction and commissioning is complete.
- Scheme becomes operational.

Have your say and get involved

We are committed to working with local communities and other stakeholders to gather feedback and local information to help develop our proposals.

We're running our first public consultation from 28 May to 23.59pm on 13 July 2025. During this time, you can find out more about the project and provide your input and views.

Speak to the team
We'll be holding three in-person consultation events, where you can find out more about our proposals, talk to members of our team, ask questions and provide your feedback.

Consultation events

Location	Time	Date
Newchurch: Newchurch Village Hall, Newchurch, TN29 0DP	3:30pm – 6:30pm	Wednesday 18 June 2025
Dymchurch: Dymchurch Village Hall, Dymchurch, TN29 0NX	2:30pm – 5:30pm	Thursday 19 June 2025
Newchurch: Newchurch Village Hall, Newchurch, TN29 0DP	10:30am – 1:30pm	Saturday 21 June 2025

The details we share at our consultation events will also be available online. Further information about our events, including venue accessibility information, is available on our website.

Why are we seeking your views?
Hearing from our communities, landowners, and other stakeholders is a central part of the process and we encourage you to get involved. Your comments will help us understand the local area, and any potential impacts our proposals may have on the community and the environment.

After the consultation, we'll carefully consider all the community feedback we've received, as well as input from local authorities, environmental bodies and other interest groups, and take this on board to help shape our plans.

The feedback, and how we've listened to this, will be summarised in a report which we'll publish on our website. We'll be holding another public consultation next year to present our updated proposals and provide another opportunity to have your say on the project.

Find out more

You can find out more about our proposals, and all our consultation materials, on our website **www.sserenewables.com/shepway**.

How to take part
You can provide your comments and feedback to the consultation by:
- **Online:** complete and submit a feedback form on our website: **www.sserenewables.com/shepway**
- **Email:** email your feedback to: **shepway@sse.com**
- **Freepost:** post a feedback form or written response to **Freepost SHEPWAY ENERGY PARK** (no stamp required)

The consultation will run from 28 May to 23.59pm on 13 July 2025.

Any questions?

Contact the team by emailing us at: **shepway@sse.com**

Or by calling and leaving a message on **01233 429013**

Monday to Friday, 9:00 – 17:00 (excluding Bank Holidays).

Accessibility

If you or someone you know has questions about the project and would prefer to speak to someone directly, **please call us on 01233 429013** and leave a message and one of our team will get back in touch.

If you or someone you know requires copies of our consultation materials in accessible formats or an alternative language, please contact us using any of our contact methods. If you'd like a printed copy of our consultation brochure, feedback form or any of our maps, **please leave us a message at 01233 429013.**

To discuss the content of this document, please get in touch:

Email: shepway@sse.com

sse.com

Explore our social media

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