

Sunnica Webinar – Sunnica East Site A and Site B (03/10/2020), questions asked and answered during break in recording

What is the purpose of the potential permissive routes?

These are to provide additional recreational opportunities within the Site, connecting existing Public Rights of Way to Isleham or adding to the length of existing routes. Permissive routes are accessible to the public but only last for the duration of the Scheme, which is for a minimum period of 40 years.

Many people myself included are supportive of green energy and would view this more scheme more favourably if Sunnica did something to enable residents of the affected communities to access cheap green electricity. This could easily be achieved through an annual grant e.g. s106 payment managed by Suffolk or Cambridgeshire Community Foundation. Will Sunnica consider a scheme of this sort?

The Scheme will provide electricity directly to the National Grid. As homes are supplied by domestic energy suppliers, this would not be possible.

Will the area under the panels be planted with grasses? How will the grass areas be maintained?

Yes, the intention is for new grassland beneath the panels as well as across the wider field parcels. The Outline Environmental Management Plan (Appendix 10I) sets out preliminary management options of cutting or grazing, which will be confirmed in the Environmental Statement (which accompanies the Development Consent Order application).

Why not show a larger scale map of the area you are talking about?

We have taken this point on board and in subsequent webinars have tried to show the maps in as large a form as we can given the presentation format.

We are happy to provide hard copies of maps at larger sizes on request. If you would like us to post copies to your address please call Freephone 0808 168 7925 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday) or email info@sunnica.co.uk

In addition to this, scalable digital copies of the consultation maps are available to download from our website: sunnica.co.uk/downloads

E11,12 and 13 are at higher levels than the houses on Feckenham Road and will be visible over the grass land

The parameter plans propose new tree planting and hedgerows around the perimeter of E11, E12 and E13 to screen the panels, in combination with the panels being offset from these properties by a minimum 50m of grassland.

Were the local parish councils consulted on the creation of the viewpoints? If not, why not as you advised that the County & District Councils were consulted.

The local parish councils were not approached directly during the process of selecting viewpoints. We have been working with the Local Planning Authorities for some time. The non-statutory and statutory consultation processes provide an opportunity for the parish councils to feedback on the viewpoints.

When will full Environmental information be available, how can we consult about it when we do not have all the information?

Our final Environmental Statement setting out our complete environmental impact assessment (EIA) activity will be submitted as part of our Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

At this stage, we are consulting on our environmental assessments to date alongside our current proposals for Sunnica Energy Farm. The results of these assessments and our proposed mitigation are set out in the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEI Report). The PEI Report is available for you to view on our website: sunnica.co.uk/preliminary-environmental-information-report. The Planning Inspectorate guidance notes that “There is no prescribed format as to what PEI should comprise and it is not expected to replicate or be a draft of the ES (Environmental Statement)”.

We are also providing copies of the PEI Report on USB sticks on request. If you would like one, please contact us by calling Freephone 0808 168 7925 (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday) or by emailing info@sunnica.co.uk

You will be able to read our environmental statement once the DCO application is accepted for examination and it is published on the Planning Inspectorate's website and make representations to the examining authority once we move into the examination phase of our DCO application. We currently anticipate submitting our application in Spring 2021. If we do, following conventional timescales you will be able to register as an interested party and submit your views during Summer 2021.

Why has the routing of E18 changed from the quarry road to the narrowest part of Elms Road to a section whereby HGV access is not permitted? This unclassified road will suffer to roadside furniture damage and a fragile tarmac road surface.

Elms Road is currently classed as unsuitable for HGVs, which means that they are permitted to use the road but that it isn't recommended. Although it is wide enough for HGVs to utilise in its current state, it is recognised that passing places may need to be added. The need for any road levelling, the creation of passing places, and enhancement of visibility splays at junctions will be reviewed at the next stage of the design process as we refine our proposals ahead of submitting our development consent order (DCO) application. The access road and transport routes will be discussed with the county highways prior to submitting the DCO application, which we currently anticipate happening in spring 2021.

The Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEI Report) does not currently refer to the potential for road damage, but it is common for contractors to complete a photographic log of the road surfaces prior to starting construction so that the road surfaces can be repaired and reinstated to their pre-construction state. This would be discussed with the county highways department prior to construction. There would also be a designated individual who the community would be able to contact to provide feedback or complaints during construction, where such matters could be raised if of concern at the time; this is explained in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (Appendix 16C, Volume II of the PEI Report).

It goes right through the centre of Worlington! With a severe T junction by the Walnut tree. This is for Sunnica East Site A.

Please refer to the answer to the above question.

Your brochure mentions a dedicated skills programme to help local people to gain employment on the scheme during the construction period. What will Sunnica do to work with local schools to facilitate this?

We are in the process of engaging with local education providers to explore how the dedicated skills programme could be delivered. To date this has included meetings with West Suffolk College. We are currently exploring opportunities to work with different skills initiatives in Cambridgeshire.

We welcome feedback through the statutory consultation on how our skills programme can best be targeted to meet the needs of the local area.

How many people (not Sunnica people) are on the call?

During the call, the maximum number of unique viewers (not including members of the project team) was 21.

Given that it is mainly digital (online), please explain how the consultation has been advertised online, e.g. by social media.

The consultation webinars have been promoted using targeted advertising on social media (Facebook and Instagram) through the PS Renewables Facebook page (PS Renewables is one of the partners in the scheme). The promoted posts have been targeted at those using the social media platforms within a 10km radius of the scheme. To date, each promoted post has reached between 7,000 and 9,000 people.

In addition to this, the consultation has been advertised online through the Cambridge News and Ely Standard. We have also issued a press release detailing the consultation that resulted in articles online and in print in a number of local media outlets.

Full details of our promotion online and on social media will be provided as part of the Consultation Report that we submit as part of our Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

Paul has just talked about as much information as we need, we do not have a full environmental report.

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Quote from the non-statutory public consultation "we will seek to provide a combination of planting and setting back the scheme from roads between rural settlements, particularly where the scheme is located on both sides of the road reference E19, E20, E1, and E18." What are your mitigation plans for this area?

Mitigation for these areas, as illustrated on Figure 3.1 includes new tree planting adjacent to Elms Road, setting the panels back from Elms Road, siting the panels within the field pattern to retain the pine lines that divide these fields, conserving the existing hedgerows around these fields and supplementing them with new planting, siting the Battery Energy Storage System in E18 due to existing and retained woodland which can provide initial screening.

Are Sunnica members of the "Solar Trade Organisation"?

Sunnica Ltd is not a member of the Solar Trade Organisation at this time.

Why are the maps which can be downloaded so poor in Quality?

The maps that can be downloaded from the website are scalable. We recognise that not everyone can easily read the maps when presented at A4 or smaller and are happy to make A3 copies of the maps available on request.

We encourage anyone with a specific requirement for this to get in touch with the project team by calling Freephone 0808 168 7925, emailing info@sunnica.co.uk or writing to us at Sunnica Consultation, FREEPOST reference RTRB-LUUI-AGBY, c/o Newgate Communications, Sky Light City Tower, 50 Basinghall Street, London, EC2V 5DE

How many attendees to this session today please?

During the call, the maximum number of unique viewers (not including members of the project team) was 21.

How do you propose to create acid grassland conditions when most of site overlies chalk?

Creation of grasslands and associated plant communities which require acidic soils will be based on the localised soil conditions across the Site and particularly in Sunnica East Site B. There are already a number of areas, particularly between Freckenham and Worlington where the soil is sandy, free draining and slightly acidic. In this context, we are referring to acid grassland which is similar to that found in the wider Breckland landscape, not that which may occur in upland areas or lowland heathland. The Scheme will not be converting any soil types, but working with the existing soil conditions to create appropriate grasslands and plant communities.

Covered the stone curlew question- but not why E11 comes up to the back of peoples' houses- why not put a line across with the other grassland and remove the site further from those dwellings on the Freckenham Road?

The panels are offset from these houses by a minimum of 50m of grassland and 20m of new trees, totaling 70m, so the panels would not come right up to the back of people's houses. The siting of panels in E11 is part of the strategy to consolidate the panels between Freckenham Road, Golf Links Road and either side of Elms Road.

The soil around Worlington is very sandy what consideration has been made for dust pollution particularly when dry?

We have undertaken a Dust Risk Assessment. The results of this are outlined in the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEI Report), Chapter 14 (Air Quality).

The Dust Risk Assessment has identified the scheme site as being 'low to medium' risk for amenity and human health receptors, and 'high risk' for ecological receptors. We are proposing mitigation measures to address the identified risk.

Assuming all mitigation measures will be effectively implemented at the level recommended by the Dust Risk Assessment, no significant dust effects resulting from excavation and construction activities are anticipated beyond the project site. Further details of this can be found at sunnica.co.uk/preliminary-environmental-information-report

You stated that the co2 saving was equivalent to taking 5,000 cars off the road. This doesn't sound very much compared to size and scale of the project, not to mention the inconvenience and disruption the villagers and wildlife will have to endure. What are your comments?

The lifecycle greenhouse gas assessment that was undertaken as part of the climate change assessment considers the whole life cycle of the Scheme, including the extraction of raw materials, manufacturing of the products, transportation of the infrastructure, emissions from vehicles and machinery during construction, operation and decommissioning (please see Chapter 6 of

the Preliminary Environmental Information Report, Volume 1). The carbon dioxide savings from the operation of the Scheme were calculated by comparing the operation of the Scheme to the UK energy mix over the Scheme's potential lifetime (i.e. until 2065). The UK energy mix is expected to become increasingly reliant upon renewable energy over the next 45 years, with electricity produced from fossil fuel power stations forming a smaller percentage of the UK's energy mix over time. This comparison has therefore produced a very conservative value for carbon dioxide net savings, based on assumptions that renewable energy will form an increasing proportion of the UK's energy mix. This approach has been used rather than comparing the Scheme's carbon dioxide savings directly to the emission from a fossil fueled power station in order to ensure that the estimate represents the most likely scenario. The latter would have demonstrated a far greater CO₂ saving.

If Sunnica is selling this project on, how can you know all these current environmental proposals will be implemented?

It is intended that Sunnica Ltd will remain involved in the management of Sunnica Energy Farm during construction and for the duration of its operating life.

The construction, operation and maintenance of the scheme will be consented by way of a Development Consent Order (DCO). It will include requirements obliging Sunnica to implement appropriate mitigation measures for the impacts identified by our environmental impact assessment activity. The DCO would be for the benefit of Sunnica only (except for works in relation to the connection into the substation, for which National Grid would have the benefit), and the DCO would set out the specific circumstances in which the benefit (and the obligations) of the DCO could be transferred to another party. In most cases, the Secretary of State's consent would be required for such a transfer, and in all cases the party to whom the benefit of the DCO is transferred would be bound by the obligations and requirements contained within the DCO.

15 years is too long to wait for Screening, Berms and foliage combined would certainly achieve the desired results lot sooner! Why will the desire not make more use of Berms??

Views will be softened to varying degrees from day 1 of the scheme. This is due to the retention of existing hedgerows and trees, in combination with new planting which would range between 1m and 3.5m in height, in comparison to the top edge of a solar panel at 2.5m in height. As this planting establishes from day 1, the softening and screening of views will therefore increase and occur prior to year 15. Year 15 is an assessment timeline for the Environmental Statement rather than a constraint to the growth of new planting; i.e. it is a requirement of the industry guidance for landscape and visual assessment to provide an assessment of the impacts in Year 15. The vegetation will still offer some screening in earlier years.

What guarantee can you give that the land will return to agricultural use and not be put to housing or industrial?

Anything other than returning the land to its current use would require a separate planning application or development consent order application, in the same way as housing or industrial uses require this consent now. The DCO consent will require the return of the land to its existing use and a Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan will need to be prepared outlining how this will be achieved prior to decommissioning works commencing. It is proposed that ecological enhanced areas will be left and that these areas will not be returned to their existing state by Sunnica Ltd. Sunnica Ltd will be required to abide by the DCO consent (which will secure the Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan) and legislation relevant at the time.

How much carbon saving is there over and above carbon which would be absorbed by crops?

This value has not been calculated as part of the assessment for the Preliminary Environmental Information Report. It is important to note that agricultural land used for growing crops will be associated with a number of activities that will result in carbon dioxide emissions. For example, activities include: the machinery used to cultivate, sow, maintain and harvest crops; the

transportation of crops; refrigeration for storage; and the supply chain to produce products from the raw crops themselves (e.g. ready meals, canned produce, sauces, etc.). A proportion of the food that is produced from these crops is unfortunately often wasted, binned, and/or burned, in many cases releasing the carbon dioxide that was absorbed during the crop's lifetime back into the atmosphere.

Of course, there will be unavoidable emissions during the construction phase of the Scheme – these emissions have been calculated as part of the Climate Change assessment (please see Chapter 6 of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report Volume 1). As part of the Scheme design, the area surrounding and underneath of the panels will be planted with grassland, boundary vegetation will be planted, areas of native grassland and wildflower planting will be created, and existing hedgerows and tree belts will be filled out for screening. This vegetation will be largely left to grow throughout the operational phase of the Scheme (although some mowing will be required around the panels themselves for maintenance), absorbing carbon dioxide and retaining it.

Will there be a funding set aside for the decommissioning of the energy?

A Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan (DEMP) and a Decommissioning Resource Management Plan (DRMP) will be prepared and implemented to manage the decommissioning of the Scheme. These will be produced at least six months prior to decommissioning and will be secured by the DCO ensuring that Sunnica delivers on the commitments it makes in respect of decommissioning.

The DRMP will detail the management of resources during decommissioning, including the planned destinations for reuse, recycling or landfill of materials at the time of this occurring. During all phases of the Scheme, the Waste Hierarchy will be adopted to ensure that reuse and recycling of all materials is prioritised. Section 16.7 of Chapter 16 (Other Environmental Topics) in the PEI Report provides further details.

The Decommissioning Environmental Management Plan will detail the mitigation measures to be adopted by the contractor during decommissioning so as to prevent and / or minimise effects on a range of environmental

parameters during decommissioning. It will be similar in format and function as the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), which will be followed by the contractor during construction. An Outline CEMP has been produced and is provided in Appendix 16C of the PEI Report, which is an example of the type of document that will be produced.

We have the funding to do the dig (the archaeologist has the funding).

This comment has been noted by the project team.

What plans are in place should there be a fire at the battery storage units bearing in mind that the fire service locally is manned by volunteers?

The Scheme will use tried and tested technology, both in the solar PV arrays and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS). Safety will be a key design feature for every element of the Scheme, including the battery storage element.

To ensure adequate protection is provided, the battery storage element will be held in containers that can be isolated and include their own fire extinguisher equipment. If approved, the Scheme would be subject to a Battery Fire Safety Plan, agreed with the relevant authorities, which will include the local fire authorities. They have also been consulted as part of the statutory consultation and Sunnica will be discussing the Battery Fire Safety Plan with them in advance of making the DCO application.

It is very concerning that it may take 15yrs of a 40yr project to achieve screening.

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What consideration have you given to less than two-year-old battery storage that caught fire in Liverpool with toxic fumes escaping taking over 11 hours to extinguish?

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It is not flat along the southern aspect of Feckenham Road please come a see the view from our house and garden. The land rises by at least 2 -3 meters please see ordinance survey.

The landform in this part of the landscape is acknowledged.

Scott Harker is very difficult to hear; is there any way the volume can be turned up? Others are very clear.

This technical issue was noted during the webinar and subsequently resolved.

What plans will put in place should a fire start in the battery storage areas, will you be relying on the local fire service and will specialist equipment be available?

The Scheme will use tried and tested technology, both in the solar PV arrays and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS). Safety will be a key design feature for every element of the Scheme, including the battery storage element.

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consultation and Sunnica will be discussing the Battery Fire Safety Plan with them in advance of making the DCO application.

Why is this Webinar cloak and Daggers, we can see you answering questions, we have no option for rebuttal, you control this meeting, and how it works. This is not consultation!

We do not agree with this assessment. Opportunity for rebuttal is offered during the webinars as we try to take every question submitted and note all of the comments that we receive. It is true that we facilitate the meeting but this would be the case if we were able to hold physical public events.

We do however note that some people may prefer not to engage through the webinars and that is why we have offered an opportunity for people to have a one-to-one telephone conversation with the project team about specific issues of interest. These appointments are targeted at people who may not have access to digital methods of engagement but are also open to anyone who wishes to use this method of speaking to the project team. If people are concerned that they are unable to articulate their questions through the webinar format they are encouraged to take advantage of these appointments by calling Freephone 0808 168 7925.

You kindly mentioned Parish Councils in responses today, but Freckenham PC has not had any written responses to questions submitted to the 15th July and 21st September briefings or its response to the non-stat consultation. Nor was it consulted during the SoCC preparation or about viewpoints. Why is this?

We have subsequently responded to Freckenham Parish Council in writing regarding comments that it had about the statutory consultation.

We responded to questions posed ahead of the briefing with the Parish Solar Alliance of 15 July 2020 at that briefing. We also sought a meeting with the Parish Council, alongside other parish councils, to discuss the issues raised in its response to the non-statutory consultation following that consultation. While this did not occur, we have had subsequent engagement with the Parish Council via the Parish Solar Alliance and do not intend to respond separately in writing at this stage.

What is the best way of getting a member of your team to view the land from my garden and surrounding land to judge topography and visual impact?

The team will not be visiting residential gardens. The potential changes to views are being undertaken from publicly accessible locations. Topography is also judged via these site visits, as well as via reviews of mapping. This approach is standard industry practice for the assessment of visual effects and the publicly accessible locations are considered suitable and accurate for ascertaining the resident's views. Changes to views of residential receptors are set out in Preliminary Environmental Information (PEI) Report chapter 10: Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment and it is considered that a reasonable and proportionate assessment of the likely change to residents' views is included within the PEI Report.

Can you tell us how many people are present at this webinar?

During the call, the maximum number of unique viewers (not including members of the project team) was 21.

How far back will the boundary of solar panels EO7 be from the bridle way walking north from Mortimer Lane?

The panels will be set back approximately 130 metres.

Sorry I don't understand how you can tell people where to drive? They will drive where they want to.

The Framework Construction Transport Management Plan (CTMP) (Appendix 13B, Vol II of the PEI Report) proposes routes for the HGV traffic. This can be implemented several ways – the detail of which would be discussed and agreed with the county highways prior to or following the receipt of DCO consent. Examples on other projects have included penalty clauses in Contractor contracts, leading to financial penalties or removal from the project if their staff fail to comply; this can be monitored through complaints from local communities, CCTV, or trackers on HGVs. It is more difficult to control the routes that staff travel to / from site, however it is possible to advise individuals which routes not to take and this traffic would be expected to use the road outside of peak hours due to the planned 07:00 start time and 19:00 end time. Discussions on any routes that need to be avoided and how this will



be implemented will be discussed and agreed with the local highways authorities.

Would any of you like to have this built in the area you live and also would you be happy to have this as a view from your home?

In our experience, solar farms are quiet neighbours that cause little disruption to the communities that live close to them. We recognise that the local landscape is important and that many local people attach significant value to it. We are proposing extensive visual mitigation through offsets and planting, this will establish over time to soften and screen views into the site.