

Update Newsletter

Introduction

Welcome to this newsletter about the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm. This provides an update on our work since the end of our statutory consultation in December last year.

We are very grateful to those who took the time to provide us with feedback. This has helped us to further refine our design proposals. You can find out more about these proposals on the following pages of this newsletter.

Planning process

Sunnica Energy Farm is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) because its proposed generating capacity is greater than 50 Megawatts of electricity.

NSIPs are major projects which require planning consent through a Development Consent Order (DCO). This is a process established by the Planning Act 2008.

Applications for a DCO are made to the relevant Secretary of State. In this case, the relevant Government department is the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. An independent examining authority will be appointed by the Secretary of State once the application for development consent is made who will be responsible for examining the application. The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) will administer the examination on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Project update

We had originally planned to have submitted our DCO application by this time. We are now proposing to submit our application later in the autumn.

We have spent this additional time considering the feedback that we received during the consultation and carrying out additional engagement and survey activities. We will demonstrate how we have had regard to the consultation responses that we received in our Consultation Report. This will be submitted as part of our DCO application.

Once our application has been submitted and accepted for examination by PINS, the accepted application will be advertised and you will be given the opportunity to make representations and register to take part in the public examination. More information can be found on the PINS website.



Statutory consultation

We held a statutory consultation on our proposals between 22 September and 18 December 2020. We received a significant volume of feedback during the consultation and have spent the first part of this year considering this and updating the design of Sunnica Energy Farm.

The feedback that we received covered topics including:

- The loss of agricultural land;
- Concern at the size of the proposed Sunnica Energy Farm and the potential that this has to cause impacts on the landscape;
- The safety of the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) element;
- Proximity of the solar farm and BESS to people's homes;
- The need to protect local wildlife both during construction and operations;
- The decommissioning phase and how this will be guaranteed at the end of Sunnica Energy Farm's operating life.

Further meetings

Following the statutory consultation we have continued to engage with the local authorities and groups like Natural England and National Grid to refine our design.

This has included meeting with the local fire services to discuss the battery fire design requirements and the preparation of an Outline Battery Fire Safety Management Plan which we will submit as part of our DCO application.

You can find out more about the design changes that we are proposing on the following pages. The final page of this newsletter includes an updated timeline for our DCO application.

Minor changes to Order Limits

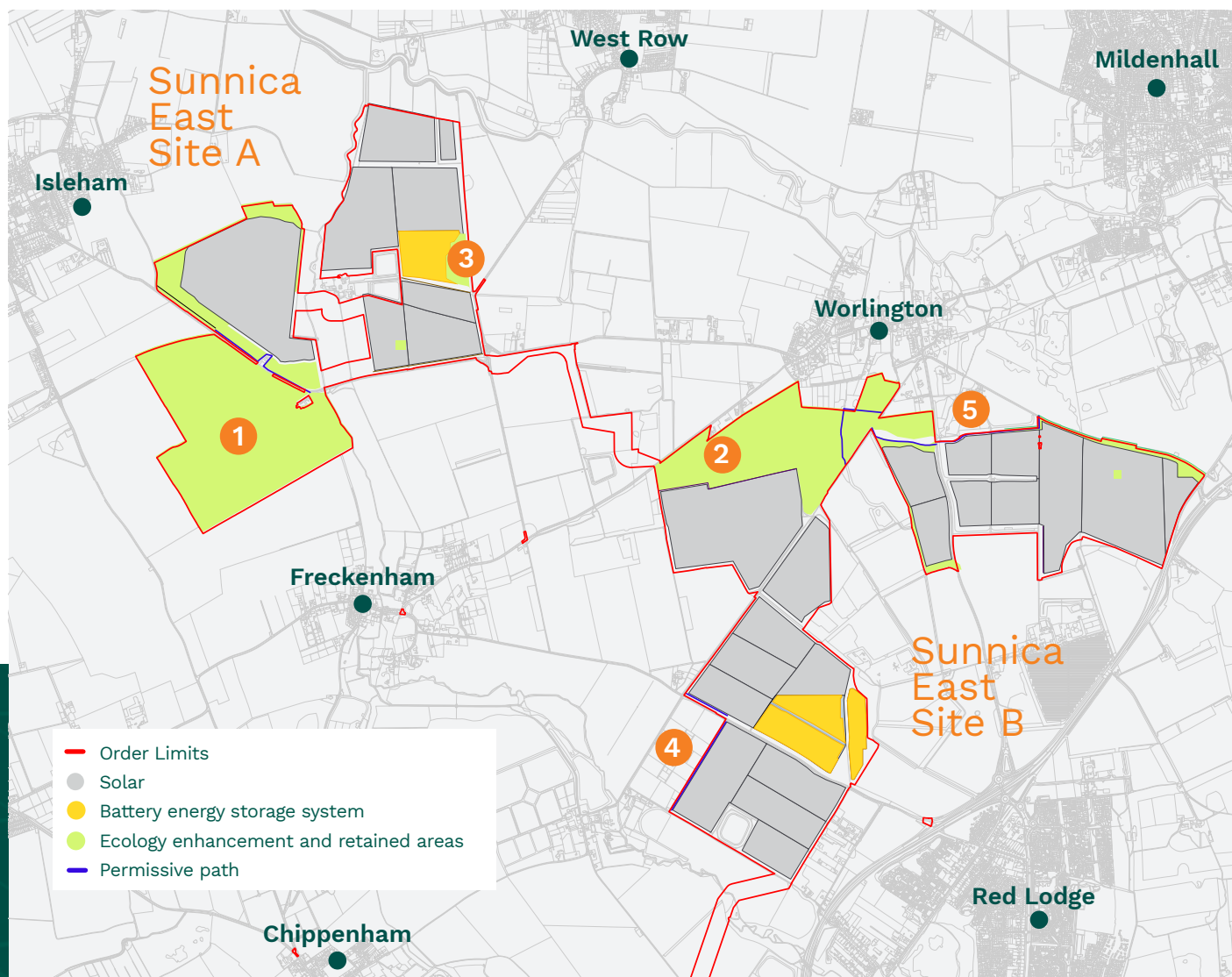
Our design changes have required that we make minor changes to the Order Limits (our site boundary) in some areas. Where this has happened, we have carried out targeted consultation to ensure that the landowners are aware of these changes and are able to give feedback.

For more information please visit:
sunnica.co.uk

You can contact us by emailing info@sunnica.co.uk
or by calling Freephone 0808 168 7925

Indicative plans

Sunnica East Site A and Site B



1 2

During the statutory consultation, we received feedback that the solar sites were too close to homes. In response to this, we are now proposing that areas to the south of Isleham and north of Freckenham, which are marked as point 1 on the above plan, and land to the immediate south of Worlington, which is marked as point 2 on the above plan, are no longer used for solar development. These areas will now provide additional habitat for stone curlews and other nesting birds. These changes mean that Sunnica East Sites A and B have moved further away from homes.

Feedback from the statutory consultation expressed views on the potential for Sunnica Energy Farm to impact on local wildlife. We consider that we have now addressed this view through our revisions. In addition, we have continued our engagement with the local authorities, the Wildlife Trusts and Natural England regarding our proposed mitigation measures.

We have also received feedback expressing the view that the solar sites have the potential to impact the landscape when moving between settlements. By removing solar development on the land marked at points 1 and 2 on the plan above we feel that we have also responded to this feedback.

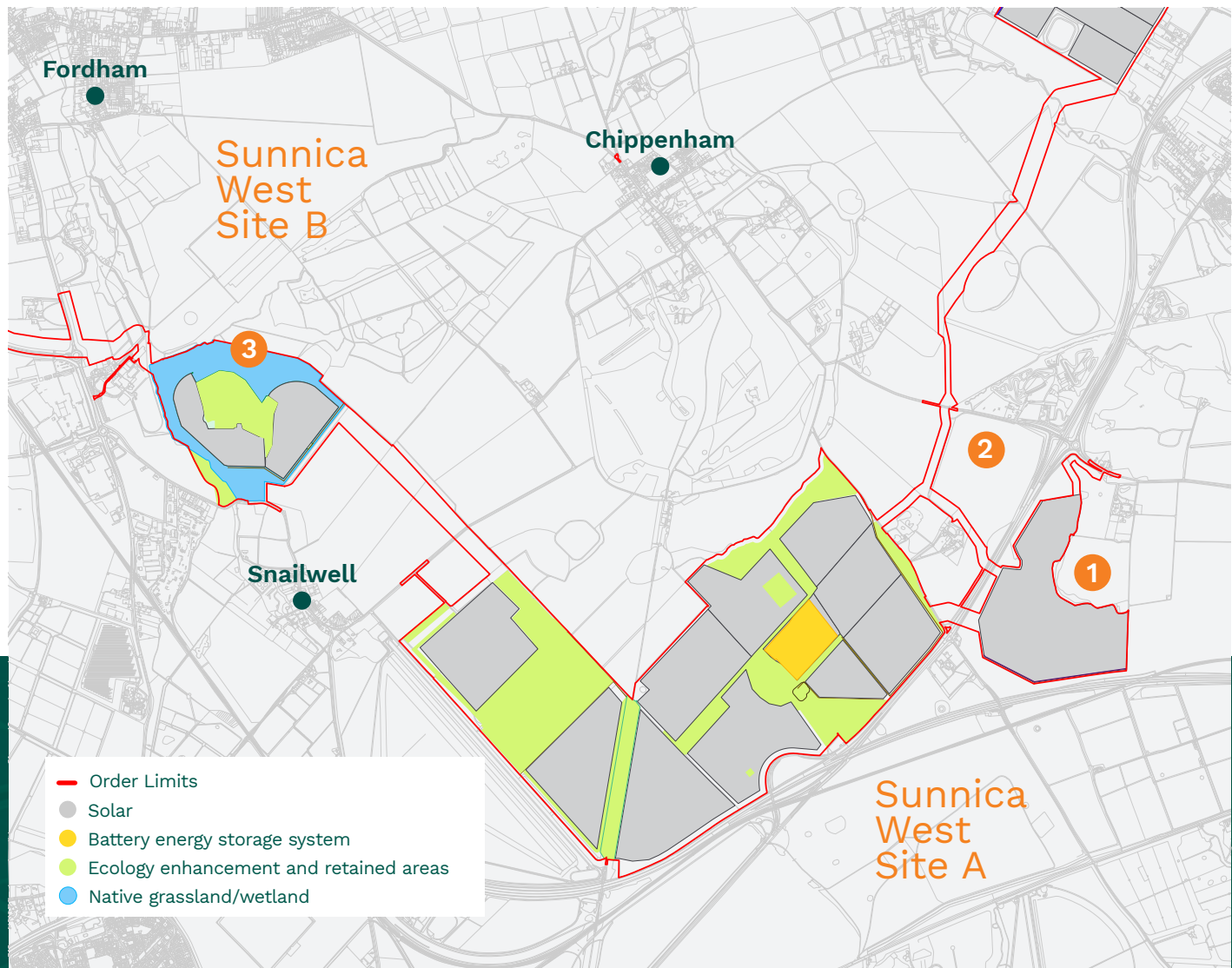
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A number of comments referenced the visual impact of the Battery Energy Storage System (BESS). We have amended our proposals for the BESS at Sunnica East Site A to locate the BESS further away from Ferry Lane and to avoid sensitive archaeology found in this area. This area is highlighted in green on the plan.

4 5

We were pleased to receive feedback on our proposals for permissive routes during the operating life of Sunnica Energy Farm. Having considered these, new paths are proposed at Sunnica East B and revisions have been made to the previously proposed permissive paths. These are highlighted in blue on the plan and marked 4 and 5.

Sunnica West Site A and Site B



1 2

Sunnica West Site A has also been amended to move the solar sites further away from homes and the edge of villages. Fields that were within our site boundary are now no longer proposed for inclusion within the Order Limits. These areas are marked by the numbers 1 and 2 on the plan. This change means that the sites have moved further away from Chippenham and Kennett.

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At Sunnica West Site B we have removed narrow strips of solar to make the mitigation buffer a contiguous area. This has increased the wetland and native grassland to provide additional buffering to Chippenham Fen.

Cable Route

The path of the cable route is broadly similar to that which we presented at the statutory consultation. It has been refined, and the width reduced, in a number of areas in light of landowner discussions, engineering constraints and the results of our environmental surveys.

Our survey activity

We have carried out a number of additional surveys following the statutory consultation. You may have seen us working on these surveys while out in the area. These surveys have included:

- Additional archaeological trenching to identify any below ground heritage assets within the Order Limits;
- Additional ecology surveys to identify species in the area and to guide the mitigation that we are proposing;
- We have carried out geophysical surveys along the cable route.

You may remember that during the statutory consultation, we published a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEI Report) which set out the preliminary results of our environmental surveys. Our ongoing survey activity has added to the information that we presented in the PEI Report. We are in the process of finalising our environmental assessments to account for these updated surveys and our on-going design work, the results of which will be presented in an Environmental Statement (ES) which we will submit as part of our DCO application.

Construction details

Since the statutory consultation, we have further refined our proposals for construction. This has included updating our framework Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and updating our framework Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) following consultation with the local highway authorities. These updated plans will be submitted with our DCO application and will set

out locations where it is considered that temporary traffic management measures (such as temporary reductions in speed limits or temporary banksmen/traffic management lights) may need to be put in place. This work has also led to some small adjustments and additions to the Order Limits, for example to ensure there is sufficient access widths to enable construction vehicles to access the site safely. Letters have been sent to those parties who hold an interest in the land that has now been included.

If we were to receive consent, we would need to cross a number of roads while laying the electrical cable that will connect the solar sites with one another and to the National Grid substation at Burwell. Wherever possible, we propose to partially close roads at half widths using traffic lights while the work is being carried out. Where roads are particularly narrow, they may need to be closed completely for a short period.

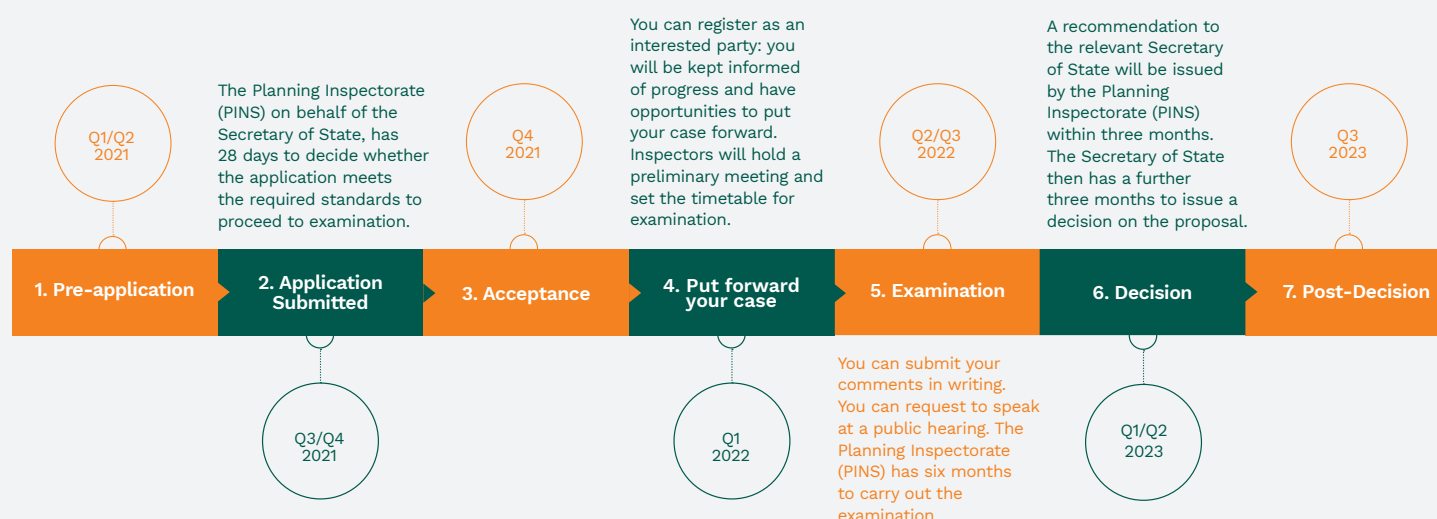
Next steps

We anticipate submitting our DCO application later in the autumn of this year. Subject to our application being accepted for examination, you will be able to register to take part in the public examination facilitated by PINS.

PINS will have six months to carry out an examination of our application. During this time, you will be able to make representations and register to speak at a public hearing.

Following the examination, the examining authority will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy as to whether the application should be approved or refused. The Secretary of State will consider that recommendation and make a final decision on whether the application should be granted or not.

Indicative timeline



Contact us

If you have any questions, you can contact us by calling **Freephone 0808 168 7925** (9:00am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday) or by emailing **info@sunnica.co.uk**

Alternatively, you can write to us at Sunnica, FREEPOST Reference RTRB-LUJJ-AGBY, c/o SEC Newgate UK, Sky Light City Tower, 50 Basinghall Street, London EC2V 5DE.