



Frodsham Solar

Statement of Community Consultation

May 2023



1. Introduction

We are proposing a new solar development situated north of Frodsham in Cheshire.

The solar project will support the urgent need to decarbonise our electricity system by delivering sustainable, homegrown and low-cost energy to the region. The proposals could also enhance the local environment and biodiversity and provide benefits to local communities. The project is called Frodsham Solar.

This document, known as a Statement of Community Consultation (“SoCC”), has been prepared in accordance with Section 47(1) of the Planning Act 2008 and associated guidance¹ to explain how we intend to consult the local community.

The approach to consultation set out in this document has been consulted upon with Cheshire West and Chester Council and Halton Borough Council in accordance with Section 47(2) of the Planning Act 2008. We have had regard to the comments that they have made.

We recognise consultation to be a vital stage in the development of our proposals. We want to receive feedback and work with stakeholders to refine our proposals for Frodsham Solar. This will allow us to develop our plans responsibly and in a manner that supports local community interests.

This SoCC outlines how we will consult during the ‘pre-application stage’ before we submit our Development Consent Order (“DCO”) application for the project to the Planning Inspectorate. We will also be undertaking an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) on the proposals. There is more information on the DCO and EIA process in Sections 8 and 9 of this SoCC and on the Planning Inspectorate’s website².

¹https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/418009/150326_Pre-Application_Guidance.pdf

²<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-infrastructure-planning-guidance>

2. About Us

The applicant for this project will be Frodsham Solar Ltd., which is part of Peel Cubico Renewables.

Peel Cubico Renewables is a joint venture partnership between natural resources and energy business Peel NRE and global renewable energy company Cubico Sustainable Investments (Cubico).

Peel NRE, part of Peel L&P, is at the heart of the nation’s activity around clean growth and the circular economy – helping the UK achieve net zero by 2050 and supporting regions in their actions to achieve climate emergency targets.

Peel NRE has a strong track record of engaging with local communities and is invested in the North West, with strong ties to its communities.

Cubico is one of the world’s largest privately-owned renewable energy companies.

Cubico has nearly 3 gigawatts (GW) of renewable energy projects installed across 12 countries in Europe, the Americas and Australia, with more than 3 GW in construction and development. It brings expertise in financing, route to market, construction and operation.

Our mission is to accelerate change to combat the climate crisis.

Peel Cubico Renewables is dedicated to leading the UK’s renewable energy generation, supporting national net zero carbon targets.



3. Frodsham Solar

The proposals for Frodsham Solar include:

- A ground-mounted solar array (solar panels).
- An anticipated potential output from the solar array of over 50 MW.
- Built infrastructure such as substations, transformers and inverters.
- Electrical connection infrastructure into the existing Frodsham Substation, adjacent to the River Weaver, and to local industrial installations.
- An on-site battery energy storage system (BESS).
- Landscape and ecological Mitigation and enhancement measures, including consideration of new permissive paths during the lifetime of the scheme.
- Other ancillary works including access, fencing, and drainage.

The current proposed site boundary is presented as Figure 2 (on page 6) - this may be refined as the project develops. The proposal is situated on land to the north of the M56, including an area of land beneath the eastern cluster of turbines of Frodsham Wind Farm.

Figure 1: Components of a typical solar project



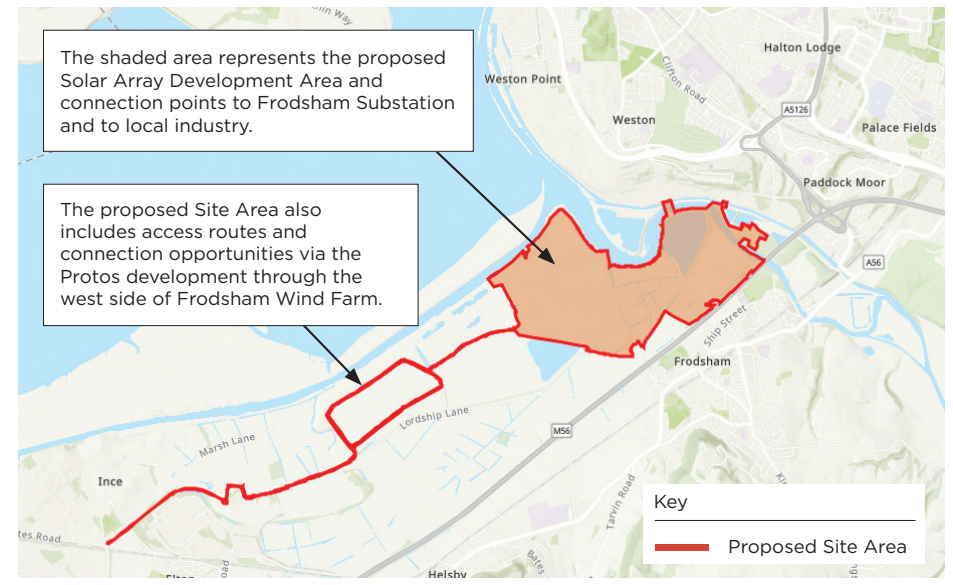
This image is indicative and for illustrative purposes only.

1. Fencing
2. Mitigation and enhancement area
3. Solar panels
4. Inverter (DC to AC power converter)
5. Substation
6. Battery storage
7. Underground cable

Frodsham Solar has the potential to:

- Export approximately 100 megawatts (MW) of clean electricity to SP Energy Networks, who are responsible for distributing electricity across Cheshire and Merseyside. For context, 100 MW is equivalent to powering approximately 34,000³ homes.
- Export electricity directly to local industry, in addition to the regional network.
- Bolster UK energy security with the use of a battery energy storage system (BESS) to store electricity and discharge when it is needed.
- Support regional ambitions and commitments, such as the Net Zero North West Industrial Cluster and Invest Net Zero Cheshire.
- Support the Government’s vision for the delivery of low-carbon infrastructure to support industrial decarbonisation by 2030 and contribute to the Government’s commitment to ensure the UK is net zero by 2050.
- Showcase the level of innovation locally, as seen within the Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zone.

Figure 2: Proposed Site Boundary



³Based on Ofgem’s estimation that the typical household in Britain uses 2,900 kWh of electricity.

4. Our Public Consultation Process

We are undertaking an iterative consultation process for Frodsham Solar. The feedback and information we receive will help inform the design of the project that we submit to the Planning Inspectorate for approval.

Any feedback on our methods of consultation is encouraged and will be considered by our team. Comments on our community consultation are best provided to us for consideration in the first instance, so that they can be addressed when designing future consultation activities. When we submit our DCO application, Local Planning Authorities will be invited to provide an Adequacy of Consultation Representation.

What will we consult on?

The aim of our pre-application public consultation is to ensure that both community and technical consultees have a chance to understand and influence our proposal. We will seek feedback to help develop our proposal. This will include potential issues such as, but not limited to:

- Temporary impacts during construction, such as traffic and noise.
- Operational impacts, such as upon wildlife, landscape, and views.
- Benefits, such as the opportunity for biodiversity and recreational improvements.

Details to inform responses on these topic areas – such as visual plans, descriptions of design parameters, and proposed mitigation measures – will be presented through the materials and activities described in Section 6.

Our consultation will consist of at least two phases:

- A Phase One community consultation, lasting six weeks, which will be held from Thursday 1 June 2023 to Thursday 13 July 2023.
- A Phase Two community consultation, which will also last longer than the statutory minimum of 28 days, planned for Winter 2023.

This SoCC applies to both phases of consultation.

Phase One consultation

(Thursday 1 June 2023 to Thursday 13 July 2023)

This consultation will introduce our early-stage proposals for Frodsham Solar to the community. We are looking to receive feedback on our concept plan and input based on the community's knowledge of the local area, allowing us to refine our proposals.

The feedback received, together with information from our environmental and technical surveys and discussions with technical stakeholders, will further inform the development of our design.

At the start of Phase One consultation, we will also be submitting our EIA Scoping Report to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), who will be running a 42-day consultation, in parallel with our Phase One consultation. PINS' consultation will involve technical stakeholders, local planning authorities and parish councils to gather feedback on the Applicant's proposals for how it intends to carry out its EIA, to form their Scoping Opinion. This is further outlined in Section 9 of this SoCC.

Phase Two consultation

(anticipated to be Winter 2023)

This statutory consultation will allow us to update the local community and stakeholders on our proposal for Frodsham Solar, as well as those land interests we have identified through the land referencing process. We will consult on our more developed proposals together with the results from the ongoing environmental and technical surveys that have been carried out to date, which will be published in our Preliminary Environmental Information Report ("PEIR").

More specific details of Phase Two consultation will be publicised through the appropriate channels listed in Section 6. We will consider feedback we receive from Phase One consultation on the consultation process when designing our Phase Two consultation.

Ongoing engagement

Our free to use communication lines will remain open throughout the pre-application consultation period, so that engagement with stakeholders can continue outside of defined phases of consultation. The project website will also be kept updated with relevant project information and materials. This includes any changes to the project that may or may not require a formal targeted consultation period. We will discuss the details of any further consultations that may be needed with the Local Planning Authorities.

During the pre-application phase we will share a high-level document summarising the responses we have received during the first phase of consultation. This document will be made publicly available on the project website and provided in hard copy by request. Key stakeholders, such as relevant local planning authorities and parish councils, and anyone who has registered to be kept informed will be notified of the document being published.

Consultation reporting

As part of the DCO application to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate, planned for Spring 2024, we will publish a Consultation Report that:

- Describes our consultation process, as well as the ongoing engagement with stakeholders and land interests that will take place throughout the pre-application process.
- Explains how we have adhered to legal requirements.
- Details how we have worked with Local Planning Authorities to ensure our consultation is suitable for the area through the proposals set out in this SoCC.
- Details the feedback and consultation responses we have received.
- Responds to the feedback we have received, including explaining how we have had regard to feedback and how it has influenced our proposals.

Examination

Additionally, anybody can formally comment on our proposals for Frodsham Solar when the DCO application is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. The Planning Inspectorate will invite the public's views on the proposal and those who wish to will be able to register and submit their views for consideration during the examination. Guidance on the process can be found on the Planning Inspectorate's website at:

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice>

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Throughout the pre-application consultation period, all stakeholder personal details will be stored in compliance with the GDPR by Counter Context, acting on behalf of the Frodsham Solar project team, and will not be shared with any third parties.

5. Who Will We Consult?

Our consultation process is open to anyone who may be interested in, or in any way feels impacted by, our proposals for Frodsham Solar.

We are seeking to actively engage with the widest possible range of individuals and groups. We want our consultation to be accessible for everyone to respond, regardless of their personal circumstances.

The local community

Figure 3 shows a Consultation Zone, which centres on the proposed site and extends to nearby towns, villages and settlements considering existing infrastructure and boundaries. The zone comprises over 11,000 addresses. Properties within the Consultation Zone will directly receive a consultation postcard (set out in Section 6) to notify them of upcoming consultation from us in the post. Information events will be held at locations within the Consultation Zone, and relevant organisations, such as parish councils and community groups, will be notified of consultation opportunities.

Other interested stakeholders

We recognise that there may be some interested individuals or parties who are not within the Consultation Zone. We are committed to ensuring that these interested parties still have an opportunity to view our proposals and have their say. We will publicise consultation opportunities to communities beyond the Consultation Zone by advertising in local media (as described in Section 6) and maintaining a register of interested individuals. Informative consultation materials will be published online and available to view and either be collected or sent to parties via our contact details, as explained in Section 6.

As well as our two phases of community consultation, we will be engaging with a range of statutory and non-statutory consultees on Frodsham Solar throughout the consultation exercises and beyond, including:

- Owners, tenants and occupiers of the land included within the DCO application.
- MPs, Local Planning Authorities and Parish Councils.
- Statutory stakeholders, such as Natural England, the Environment Agency and Historic England.
- Local interest, community and environmental groups

Town and Parish Councils within the Consultation Zone who we will engage with include:

- Frodsham Town Council
- Helsby Parish Council
- Ince Parish Council
- Elton Parish Council
- Sutton Weaver Parish Council
- Alvanley Parish Council
- Dunham-on-the-Hill and Hapsford Parish Council
- Hale Parish Council

Seldom Heard groups

We have developed our consultation with the intention of being accessible to all groups in the community. We recognise that some individuals or groups may have difficulties taking part in the consultation process for a range of reasons. We have identified a number of ‘gateway organisations’ representing potentially seldom heard groups in the consultation area. These organisations will be contacted ahead of both phases of consultation to ensure that our approach best meets the needs of their members. These identified groups are listed in Table 1.

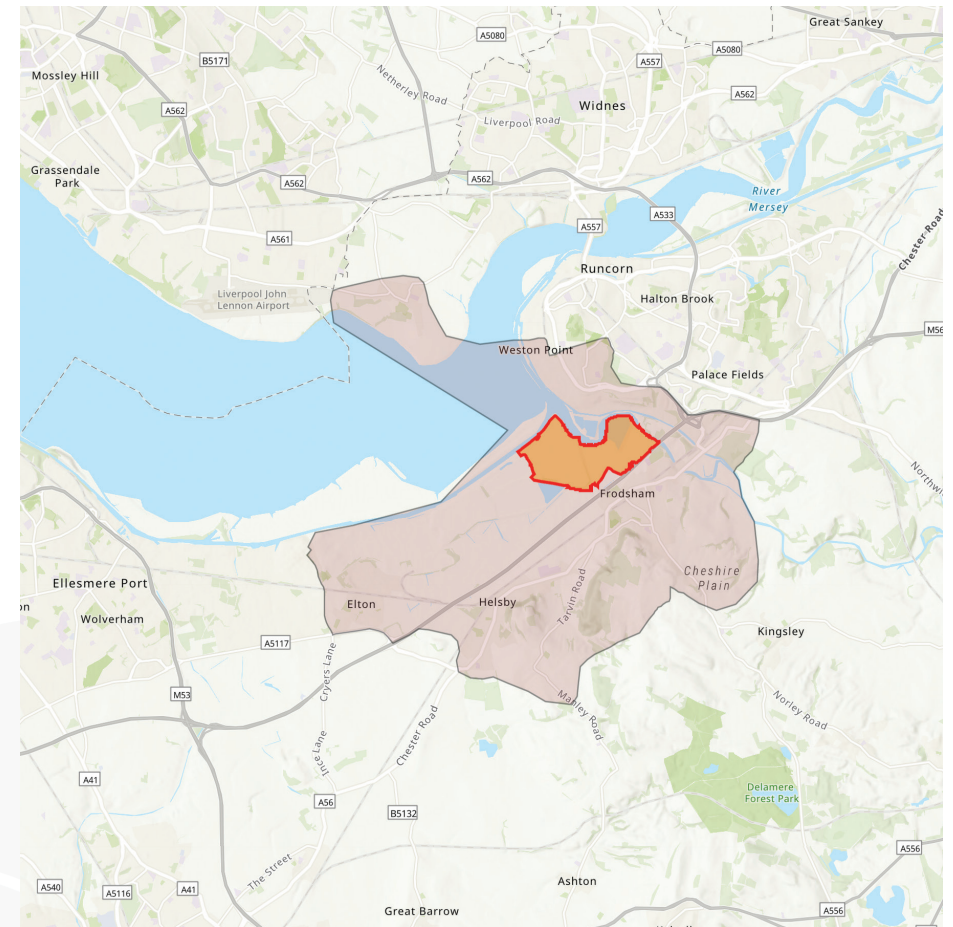
Ongoing engagement

Anyone is welcome to get in touch with us at any point between now and the submission of our application. Our contact details are listed in Section 11 of this SoCC and will remain open throughout the pre-application phase. Through these channels you will be able to speak to a member of our consultation team to ask questions and provide feedback.

Table 1: Gateway organisations representing potentially seldom heard groups

- Cheshire Community Action
- Age UK Cheshire
- Age UK Mid Mersey
- Cheshire Change Hub
- Frodsham WI
- MIND Halton
- Bee Friends Frodsham
- Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Race & Equality Centre
- Cheshire West Communities Together
- The Traveller Movement
- Friends, Families and Travellers
- Leonard Cheshire
- Scouts Cheshire
- Frodsham Primary Academy School
- Frodsham Manor House Primary School
- Frodsham CE Primary School
- British Deaf Association
- Healthbox
- Healthwatch Halton
- Healthwatch Cheshire West
- iMap Centre
- Deafness Support Network
- Making Space
- The Port Men in Sheds
- Cheshire Autism Practical Support
- Halton and St Helens Voluntary and Community Action
- Halton Speak Out (Brookvale Community Centre)
- Vibe UK
- Halton Youth Cabinet
- Elton Primary School and Nursery

Figure 3: Frodsham Solar Consultation Zone



Comprises of over 11,000 addresses within the Cheshire West and Chester and Halton Borough authority areas, including every address within the parish of Frodsham.

6. How Will We Consult?

The consultation activities described in this section of the SoCC ensure inclusive, meaningful and open consultation. The activities include a range of methods to ensure our consultation can be accessed by all members of the community.

Our Phase One consultation, planned to take place between Thursday 1 June 2023 and Thursday 13 July 2023, and our Phase Two consultation, planned to take place in Winter 2023, will be carried out in the following ways:

Meetings and events

In-person information events will be held at locations within the Consultation Zone (see Figure 3). They will be advertised in consultation materials, across local media, and by issuing publicity materials to identified public venues (referred to as local information points). We have organised in-person information events across a range of days and times.

Location	Date & Time
Helsby Community Centre Lower Robin Hood Lane, Frodsham, WA6 0BW	Saturday 17th June 12pm - 4pm
Christchurch Hall Sandy Lane, Weston Point, Runcorn, WA7 4EU	Tuesday 20th June 3pm - 7pm
Frodsham Community Centre Fluin Ln, Frodsham, WA6 7QN	Wednesday 21st June 2pm - 7pm
Elton Community Centre School Lane, Elton, Chester, CH2 4PU	Thursday 22nd June 11am - 4pm
Frodsham Community Centre Fluin Lane, Frodsham, WA6 7QN	Friday 23rd June 2.30pm - 7pm
Online Community Webinar Zoom	Monday 26th June 5.30pm - 7pm

Members of the Frodsham Solar team will be at these events to answer questions and discuss the proposals in more detail. Project materials setting out the proposals (as they stand at each phase) will be displayed and available to take away.

A Webinar will be held for any member of the public to join via internet or telephone during Phase One consultation and will be considered at Phase Two. Participants will be invited to submit questions. Members of the Frodsham Solar project team will respond to the questions put forward during the webinar whilst the webinar is carried out. A recording of the webinar presentation will be made available on the project website.

Meetings and briefing sessions may be arranged with local parish councils, elected members and key local stakeholder groups during and in-between the two phases of community consultation.

Literature

Consultation postcards will be sent to properties within the Consultation Zone, to notify local residents and businesses of the proposal and consultation opportunities, including how to access the project website and communications channels and details of information events.

Consultation leaflets will be produced and made available at the start of each phase of consultation. These leaflets will be available online, by collection from Community Access Points, and available to take away from our information events.

These leaflets will publicise the Phase One and Phase Two consultation opportunities and summarise the information being consulted on. This will include the details of the consultation period and the activities being undertaken, such as dates, times and locations of information events.

Feedback forms will be made available for community members to respond to the consultation. This also includes those outside the Consultation Zone who wish to provide feedback. These will be available online and in hard copy at Community Access Points, information events, and by request. Feedback forms will be able to be returned free of charge using the Frodsham Solar FREEPOST address (**FREEPOST FS PCR CONSULTATION**).

Communication Channels

As well as through the feedback form, written feedback can be made to the following project communication channels during consultation periods:

Email: info@frodshamsolar.co.uk

Freepost Address: FREEPOST FS PCR CONSULTATION

During consultation periods, questions and requests for more information can be made to the communication channels above, as well as through calling the project's freephone information line on 0808 175 4004 (open 09:00-17:00, Monday-Friday. A voicemail service will operate for out of office hours).

Our project website and online information

A dedicated project website (www.frodshamsolar.co.uk) is live and will host consultation materials. The website will be kept updated for stakeholders to find out more information and provide their feedback.

Consultation material will be presented digitally, providing information consistent with that available at events and through hard copy materials.

Advertising and local notices

- **Local press adverts** will be placed in the Chester Chronicle and Chester Standard to inform local communities of phases of consultation. Adverts will include contact information and information event dates, times and locations. For Phase Two consultation, formal notices will also be placed in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act 2008.
- **Local information points** such as village halls, places of worship, shops and civic buildings will be provided with posters containing consultation information for each phase of consultation.

Parish councils will be provided with digital materials to enable them to advertise and promote the consultation via their own websites, social media and online community forums.

Local media engagement

We will be promoting our phases of consultation by engaging with local media outlets, including The Chester Chronicle and Chester Standard. This will promote the consultation to a wider audience and further ensure that interested individuals and parties have an opportunity to comment on our proposals.

Should any changes to our consultation activities be required due to unforeseen events outside of our control, new details will be publicised in line with the methods set out in Section 6 of this SoCC.

7. Community Access Points

Hard copies of this document and relevant Phase One and Phase Two consultation materials, will be available at the following locations:

Location	Date & Time
Frodsham Library Princeway, Frodsham, WA6 6RX	Mon – Fri: 9am – 6pm Sat: 9:30am – 1pm
Helsby Library Lower Robin Hood Lane, Helsby, WA6 0BW	Mon and Fri: 9.30am – 5pm Tues and Weds: 9.30am – 7pm Saturday: 9.30am – 1pm
Ellesmere Port Library Civic Way, Ellesmere Port, CH65 0BG	Mon, Thurs and Fri: 9am – 7pm Tues and Weds: 9am – 5pm Sat: 9am – 1pm

Due to varying reasons, some public buildings may be accessible by appointment only, or opening times may vary. Please check with venues for up-to-date information.

All documents are available on our project website (www.frodshamsolar.co.uk) or USB and hard copies can be posted on request (fees may apply).

8. The Planning Process

Frodsham Solar is classified as a **Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (“NSIP”)** as it has a proposed generating capacity of over 50 MW. As an NSIP we must apply for a DCO.

The DCO application will be dealt with by the Planning Inspectorate, the agency responsible for managing the examination process for NSIPs. If accepted, it will then be examined by an independent Examining Authority, who will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State (“SoS”). The SoS will then review this before deciding whether to grant a DCO.

For more information on this process, or for advice on how to respond to our pre-application consultation, stakeholders can view the Planning Inspectorate’s Advice Note 8 at:

<https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Advice-note-8.0.pdf>

Pre-application

Frodsham Solar must consult with the community and statutory consultees (such as the host Local Planning Authorities) in compliance with the Planning Act 2008. To demonstrate this to the Planning Inspectorate, we will submit a Consultation Report alongside the DCO application, containing details of our method for consulting, the feedback submitted in response to the consultation, and how this has influenced our proposals.



Acceptance

The Planning Inspectorate, on behalf of the Secretary of State, has 28 days to decide whether the application meets the required standards to proceed to examination, including whether our consultation has been adequate.



Pre-Examination

Stakeholders and the public will be notified that the application has been accepted and will be invited by the project to register as an interested party and will be kept informed of progress and opportunities to put their case forward. Inspectors will hold a preliminary meeting and set the timetable for examination.



Examination

Stakeholders and the public can send their comments in writing and can request to speak at a public hearing. The Planning Inspectorate has six months to carry out the examination.



Decision

A recommendation to the Secretary of State will be issued by the Examining Authority within three months. The Secretary of State then has a further three months to issue a decision on the proposal.



Post-decision

Once a decision has been issued by the Secretary of State, there is a six-week period for legal challenge on the decision.

9. Environmental Information

We will undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (“EIA”) for Frodsham Solar. The scope and methodology for this assessment will be informed by feedback from relevant regulatory and environmental bodies.

A Scoping Report and PEIR (explained below) will be consulted on as part of the EIA process and as the DCO application is prepared.

We intend to coordinate the timing of community consultation phases to align with the publication of the Scoping Report and the PEIR. This will allow community members to consider and provide feedback to us directly on relevant EIA information in parallel to statutory consultees. All comments will be considered.

<p>Scoping Report</p> <p>Our Scoping Report is planned to be published in parallel with the Phase One consultation and will outline the processes we will undertake to assess any potential impacts to the existing environment.</p> <p>Feedback on this from statutory consultees, such as Local Planning Authorities, will be provided in a Scoping Opinion, which will be published by the Planning Inspectorate.</p> <p>Both of these documents will be available to view on the Planning Inspectorate’s website.</p>
<p>Preliminary Environmental Information Report (“PEIR”)</p> <p>The PEIR will build upon the findings from the scoping documents and the feedback received through the Phase One consultation and engagement with stakeholders.</p> <p>It will incorporate findings of the surveys and preliminary environmental assessments that have been carried out to date, including assessing cumulative impacts. This will enable consultees to develop an informed view of the likely potential impacts that Frodsham Solar may have on the local environment. In our Phase Two consultation, we will seek feedback on the findings of the PEIR.</p>
<p>Environmental Statement (“ES”)</p> <p>The ES will advance the content of the PEIR and continue to incorporate the responses from the Phase Two consultation, stakeholder engagement and results of the surveys undertaken. It will also describe any changes to the project and any mitigation measures that need to be implemented.</p> <p>The ES will form part of the DCO application for submission.</p>

10. Indicative Consultation Timeline



All future dates are indicative and subject to change.

11. Contact Us

Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you would like to find out more information about Frodsham Solar using any of the methods below.



Email: info@frodshamsolar.co.uk



Freephone information line: 0808 175 4004



Freepost: FS PCR CONSULTATION



Website: www.frodshamsolar.co.uk

Should anybody require any documents in an alternative format, such as translated language, large print, audio or braille, then please contact us at the details provided.

All graphics and maps in this document are for illustrative purposes only.

