

Here's a detailed 6-page summary of the non-technical aspects of the Kingsway Solar PEIR / stage-one consultation, drawing together what is public so far.

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## 1. Project Overview

### What is proposed:

- **Name & Promoter:** Kingsway Solar, by Downing Renewable Developments. [South Cambs District Council+3kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk+3kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk+3](#)
- **Location:** In Cambridgeshire, to the southeast of Cambridge. Key villages/areas involved include Balsham, West Wrating, Weston Colville, Weston Green, Willingham Green, Brinkley, Carlton, etc. [Cambridge Independent+3kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk+3kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk+3](#)
- **Scale:** The proposal would cover around **1,500 hectares** of farmland (approximately 3,700 acres). [kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk+2kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk+2](#)
- **Capacity:** Up to **500 MW** of electrical generation capacity, to supply about **175,000 homes**. Co-located battery storage is included. [kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk+2Cambridge Independent+2](#)
- **Grid connection:** Approximate 14 km connection to National Grid's planned Burwell South substation (south of the existing Burwell substation). [kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk+2South Cambs District Council+2](#)

### Purpose / Rationale:

- To contribute to the UK's net zero targets by supplying renewable energy; to improve energy security. [kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk+1](#)
- Inclusion of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) means that surplus generation can be stored and/or used to smooth supply (i.e. help with grid stability). [kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk+1](#)

### Status / Process:

- Classified as a **Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP)** because of its size/capacity (>50 MW). It requires a Development Consent Order (DCO) under the Planning Act 2008. [kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk+2South Cambs District Council+2](#)

- A non-statutory / early / stage one consultation has taken place (Oct-Dec 2024). [kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk](https://kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk)<sup>+3</sup>[kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk](https://kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk)<sup>+3</sup>[kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk](https://kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk)<sup>+3</sup>
  - Environmental surveys, site and technical assessments are underway (ecology, hydrology, heritage etc.), to inform the design. [kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk](https://kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk)<sup>+2</sup>[kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk](https://kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk)<sup>+2</sup>
  - Next consultation (statutory) and publication of the PEIR (Preliminary Environmental Information Report) are planned. [kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk](https://kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk)<sup>+2</sup>[South Cambs District Council](https://www.southcambs.gov.uk)<sup>+2</sup>
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## 2. Key Elements & Design Features

### Land / Footprint:

- The site comprises **multiple parcels** of farmland spread over a large area. It is not contiguous in one block. [South Cambs District Council](https://www.southcambs.gov.uk)<sup>+3</sup>[kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk](https://kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk)<sup>+3</sup>
- There is also a **grid connection corridor** of around 14 km. [kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk](https://kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk)<sup>+2</sup>[kingswaysolar.participatr.io](https://kingswaysolar.participatr.io)<sup>+2</sup>

### Infrastructure:

- Solar arrays (photovoltaic panels) with associated supports, fencing, access tracks. Height of panels could be up to ~3.8 metres high based on community reports. [kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk](https://kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk)<sup>+1</sup>
- Battery storage systems (for energy storage). [kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk](https://kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk)<sup>+1</sup>

### Operational Aspects:

- The project is intended to generate during daylight; the battery storage helps manage supply during off-peak periods. [kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk](https://kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk)<sup>+1</sup>
  - Decommissioning and restoration of land are part of the consideration (as is standard for large infrastructure) but full details are yet to be developed. [kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk](https://kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk)<sup>+2</sup>[South Cambs District Council](https://www.southcambs.gov.uk)<sup>+2</sup>
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## 3. Environmental & Landscape Considerations

While detailed environmental impacts are part of the PEIR and technical surveys, the non-technical summary / consultation materials highlight a number of key environmental & landscape issues, as well as design evolution to try to mitigate them.

#### **Landscape / visual impact:**

- The sheer scale of the development is a major concern; it will transform rural landscapes over large areas, be visible from various viewpoints. [kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk+3CambridgeIndependent+3kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk+3](http://kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk+3CambridgeIndependent+3kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk+3)
- Impact on heritage landscapes / historic character of the countryside, loss or alteration of views, etc. [kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk+1](http://kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk+1)

#### **Agriculture / Land Use:**

- Much of the land proposed is currently productive agricultural land. There are concerns about loss of good quality farmland. [Suffolk News+1](http://SuffolkNews+1)
- Questions about soil health, restoration after decommissioning, and whether lower quality land might be preferable. [kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk](http://kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk)

#### **Ecology & Biodiversity:**

- Potential impacts on wildlife habitats, species of flora and fauna. Ecological surveys being undertaken (e.g. for birds, bats etc.). [kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk+2kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk+2](http://kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk+2kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk+2)
- Interest in preserving or enhancing ecological corridors, buffer zones etc. in design. Community groups are concerned about this. [kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk](http://kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk)

#### **Other Environmental Matters:**

- Hydrology & drainage: impact on surface water flows, flood risk, water resources. Surveys are being undertaken. [kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk](http://kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk)
  - Visual intrusion, noise, light from construction & operation; traffic impacts during construction. [Cambridge Independent+1](http://CambridgeIndependent+1)
  - Storage & safety of battery systems (fire risk etc) raised as concerns by local stakeholders. [kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk](http://kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk)
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## 4. Community & Planning / Public Consultation

### Consultation to date:

- Stage one (non-statutory) consultation: ran from **31 October to 12 December 2024**. [kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk](https://kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk)<sup>+2</sup>
- Public exhibitions / events held in various local villages (Balsham, West Wrating, Great Wilbraham etc.). Also webinars. [kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk](https://kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk)<sup>+1</sup>
- Document library of materials available: maps, environmental constraints, heritage, hydrology, environmental approach etc. [South Cambs District Council](https://southcambsdistrictcouncil.co.uk)<sup>+3</sup>

### Feedback & Issues Raised by Local Stakeholders:

- Concerns over size and proximity to rural housing. The scale is seen as very large / industrial. [Suffolk News](https://www.suffolknews.co.uk)<sup>+1</sup>
- Effect on views, character, rural tranquillity. [kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk](https://kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk)<sup>+1</sup>
- Traffic & access: use of narrow country lanes, construction traffic etc. [Suffolk News](https://www.suffolknews.co.uk)
- Health, safety, environmental risks (battery storage, noise, etc.). [kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk](https://kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk)
- Loss of agricultural land; potential effect on food production and land value. [Suffolk News](https://www.suffolknews.co.uk)

### Local Authority / Planning Bodies:

- South Cambridgeshire District Council is engaged; will respond to consultations. Cambridgeshire County Council is involved. There is a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) envisaged/being developed. [South Cambs District Council](https://www.southcambsdistrictcouncil.co.uk)<sup>+1</sup>
- The application, when submitted, is expected around Spring 2026. [South Cambs District Council](https://www.southcambsdistrictcouncil.co.uk)

### Community groups / opposition:

- “Kingsway Solar Community Action” is a local group opposing the proposals. Key themes: protecting landscape, agricultural land, local character. [kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk](https://kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk)<sup>+1</sup>

- Strong interest in ensuring public involvement in the statutory consultation stage; ensuring mitigation measures are baked in; ensuring local benefits etc.  
[kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk](http://kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk)
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## 5. Potential Benefits & Mitigations

Based on what the promoters have said, and what feedback suggests is being considered, here are the likely benefits, and some of the mitigation / design evolution under discussion.

### Potential Benefits:

- Large scale renewable energy generation (500 MW) to help with decarbonisation.  
[kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk](http://kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk)
- Contribution to energy security, smoothing demand with battery storage.  
[kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk](http://kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk)
- Possible ancillary benefits: habitat creation/restoration, biodiversity enhancements (depending on design), possibly local jobs during construction. (Though these are not fully detailed yet in the non-technical summary).

### Mitigations / Design Responses Under Consideration:

- Environmental surveys (ecology, heritage, hydrology etc) to understand constraints and inform layout / design. [kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk+1](http://kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk+1)
- Avoiding or reducing impact by choosing locations of panels / battery storage carefully within the parcels, buffer zones around villages / properties, reducing visibility from key viewpoints.
- Managing traffic routes and access during construction to minimise disruption. Using existing roads etc.
- Measures in relation to battery safety, drainage, flood risk, etc.

### Uncertainties / Outstanding Issues:

- Exact layout, appearance, height, fencing etc are not finalised.
- The detailed environmental impact (e.g. noise, visual, ecology) is yet to be quantified fully; surveys are ongoing.

- Compensation, effects on property values, agricultural land restoration etc are not yet resolved.
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## 6. Key Issues & Main Concerns

From the consultation feedback, local media reports, and community groups, these are the main concerns / risks being raised (non-technical):

- 1. Scale & impact on rural character**

The sheer size (1,500 ha) is seen as enormous; concern that it will fundamentally change the rural and visual landscape. Views, heritage, tranquillity, and the sense of openness are at risk. [Cambridge Independent+2kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk+2](https://www.cambridgeindependent.co.uk/news/2023/09/20/2kingswaysolarcommunityaction.co.uk+2)
  - 2. Agricultural land loss & food security**

Concerns that high quality farmland is being used; loss of productive land for food production; implications for long-term land use.
  - 3. Community disruption through construction**

Traffic, noise, dust, access issues during construction; impact on local roads (which may be narrow, not designed for heavy / large vehicles).
  - 4. Environmental & ecological risks**

Potential loss of or damage to habitats, impacts on wildlife, etc. Also risk to water resources, flood risk, etc.
  - 5. Battery storage concerns**

Safety, fire risk, visual impact. Possibly noise or operational risks.
  - 6. Lack of local control / democratic concerns**

Because the proposal is classed as NSIP, the ultimate decision lies with the Secretary of State (via Planning Inspectorate), not directly local councils. Some local people feel their views may be overlooked.
  - 7. Mitigation & monitoring**

Concerns that if mitigation measures are not properly set / enforced, the negative impacts may be greater. Questions over how the land will be restored after decommissioning, ongoing management.
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## 7. Next Steps & Timelines

- The statutory consultation is expected (legal requirement) and will include publication of the PEIR with more detailed environmental info. [kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk+2South Cambs District Council+2](https://www.kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk+2South+Cambs+District+Council+2)
  - The Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC) will be published, setting out how the developer will engage, record feedback, revise design, etc. [kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk](https://www.kingswaysolarfarm.co.uk)
  - Submission of the DCO application is anticipated in **Spring 2026**. [South Cambs District Council](https://www.southcambs.gov.uk)
  - Local authorities (South Cambs, Cambridgeshire CC, East Cambs) are engaging and reviewing. Preparations for examination and responses from consultees will be needed.
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## 8. Overall Assessment (Non-Technical)

Putting together all the material so far, some summary observations:

- **Ambition:** This is a very large project, both in area and capacity. If approved, it will be one of the largest solar farms in the UK / Europe. It presents an opportunity to deliver substantial renewable generation.
- **Trade-offs:** The benefits (renewable energy, carbon reduction, grid stability) are balanced against significant trade-offs in land use, landscape character, visual amenity, ecological impacts, and community disruption.
- **Design matters:** How the project is laid out, how mitigation is built in, how the community concerns are addressed, will make a big difference. Because many details are not yet fixed, there is scope for refinement—this is a crucial phase.
- **Community engagement is central:** Local feedback is strong, and many issues raised are valid. For the project to proceed with social acceptability, the promoter will need to ensure transparent, responsive consultation and design adaptation.
- **Regulatory / policy context:** Because this is an NSIP, certain rules and procedures apply (DCO process, statutory consultees, requirement for PEIR etc). It cannot simply be treated like a smaller solar farm. Also, national / regional policy (on land use, landscape protection, agricultural land, biodiversity net gain etc) will heavily influence how the project is assessed.