BMV and NSIP Solar. KSCA August 2026

Overview

Kingsway Solar Community Action (KSCA) has undertaken a mapping exercise to examine the geographical distribution of Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) solar developments approved or in planning across England and their relationship to higher-quality agricultural land. The mapping combines NSIP data from the Planning Inspectorate[1] with the Government's 2026 Predictive Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) map.[2] The Predictive ALC map was published alongside the Government's 2026 Land Use Framework for England.[3] The purpose is to provide a national and regional picture of where large-scale solar development is concentrated, how this relates spatially to Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land, and the potential cumulative implications for agricultural land and food production.

Taken together, the maps indicate that NSIP solar development is not evenly distributed across England, with a marked concentration in the East of England, East Midlands and Yorkshire & Humber. These regions also contain extensive areas identified under Predictive ALC mapping as Grades 1, 2 and 3a, which together comprise BMV agricultural land.

The first three maps illustrate this at different scales.

- The England-wide map provides the national picture, showing the distribution of NSIP solar projects alongside BMV agricultural land.
- Kingsway Solar is then used as a local case study of a proposed 500 MW development.
- The East of England map places Kingsway Solar within the wider concentration of major solar projects across the region.

The remaining regional maps provide a comparison across England, showing how the distribution of NSIP solar development varies between regions.

Together, the maps raise important questions about the cumulative effects of multiple large-scale schemes, including the potential loss of BMV agricultural land from food production. They show the distribution and concentration of NSIP solar development in relation to BMV agricultural land, but do not quantify the amount of BMV land affected by individual projects; this would require analysis of project boundaries alongside detailed, site-specific ALC data.

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[1] Planning Inspectorate. *Register of Applications*. Available at: https://national-infrastructure-consenting.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/project-search?sector=energy [Accessed 15 June 2026]

[2] Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra). *Predictive Agricultural Land Classification Map for England*. 2026. Available at: https://environment.data.gov.uk/dataset/a817d96f-271d-487b-89ad-48d271f931aa [Accessed 15 June 2026]

[3] Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra). *The Land Use Framework for England*. 2026. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/land-use-framework [Accessed 15 June 2026]

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Methodology / mapping notes

- Mapping was undertaken using QGIS, an open-source geographic information system (GIS) platform.
- Red dots are centered on the geographical location of each project, as provided in the NSIP Register of Applications, accessed on 15 June 2026. The dots are scaled according to proposed generating capacity (MW) to provide an indicative representation of the area of land associated with solar panels and related infrastructure. They do not represent the development boundary or precise physical footprint of the project.
- The same MW-to-marker-size methodology has been applied consistently across the national and regional maps, including Kingsway. The MW-to-land-area conversion used was 2 ha per MW.
- Agricultural land is shown using Predictive Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) mapping. Grades 1, 2 and 3a together comprise Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land.
- Predictive ALC provides strategic geographical context and should not be interpreted as detailed or site-specific ALC evidence.

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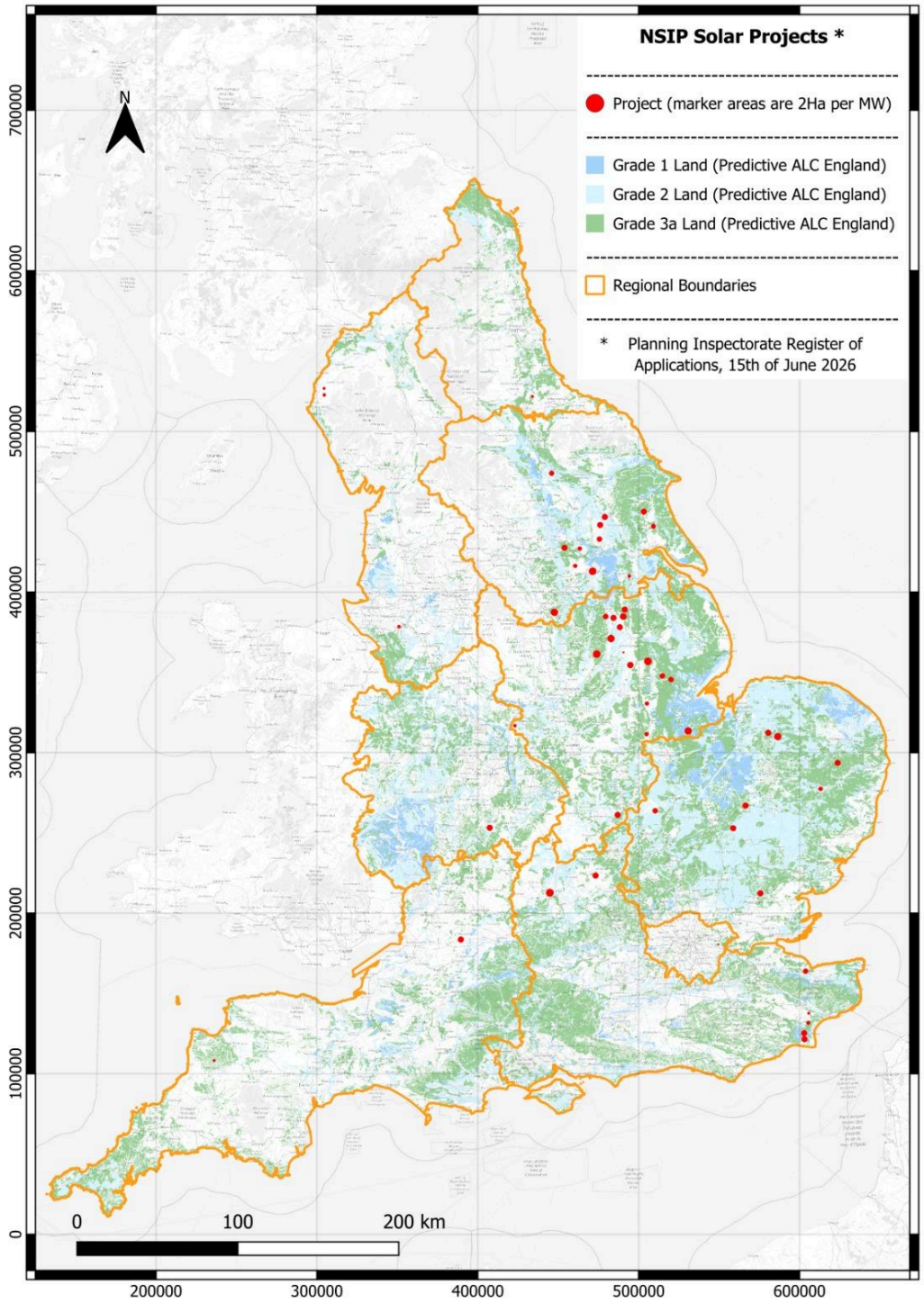
Figure 1: Distribution of NSIP solar projects and Best and Most Versatile agricultural land across England



This map shows the distribution of solar projects within the NSIP system across England, overlaid on Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3a land, which together comprise BMV agricultural

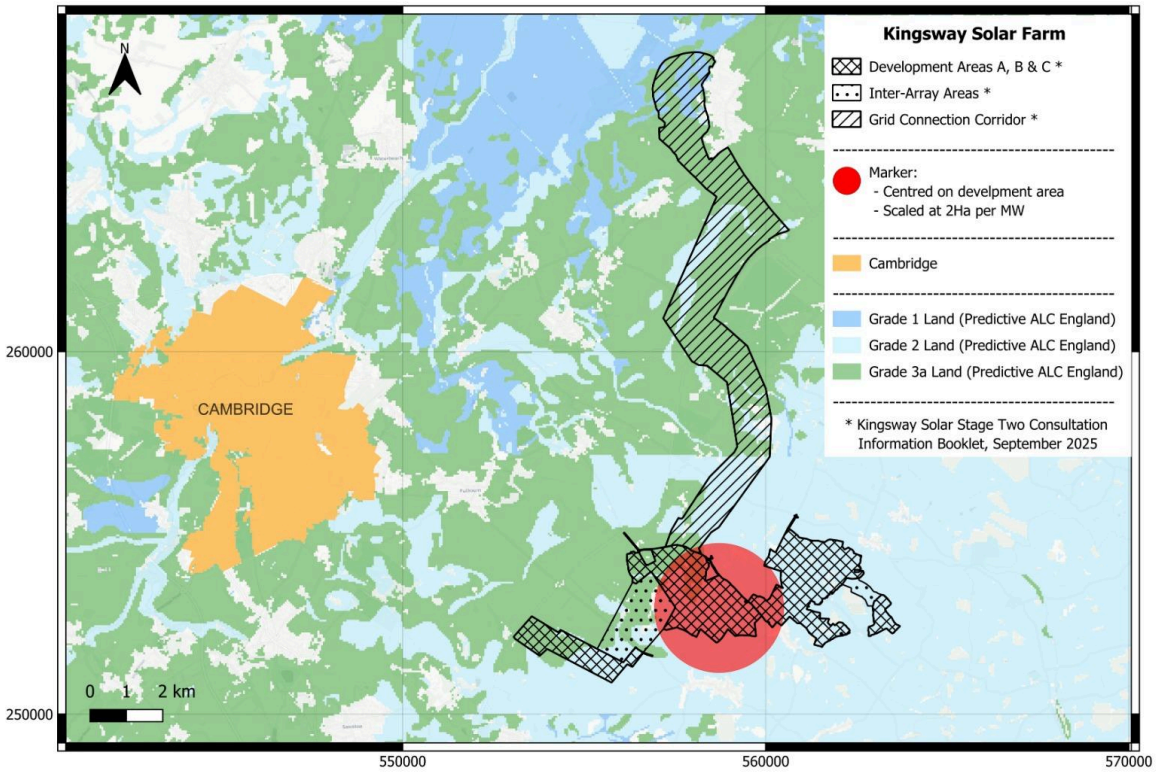
land, as identified by the Government's 2026 Predictive Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) map.[2]

The red dots represent the location (approximate centroid) and generating capacity of each solar project. Larger dots represent projects with greater proposed generating capacity (MW). They do not represent the development boundary; however, the marker size is proportional to the proposed generating capacity and therefore provides an indicative representation of the area associated with solar panels and related infrastructure.

The Predictive ALC data provide a broad indication of the distribution of higher-quality agricultural land. Detailed, site-specific ALC surveys undertaken in accordance with the appropriate methodology may differ from the predictive mapping and should take precedence when available.

The map illustrates the uneven distribution of NSIP solar development across England, with particularly high concentrations in the East of England, East Midlands and Yorkshire & Humber.

Figure 2: Kingsway Solar Farm and Best and Most Versatile agricultural land

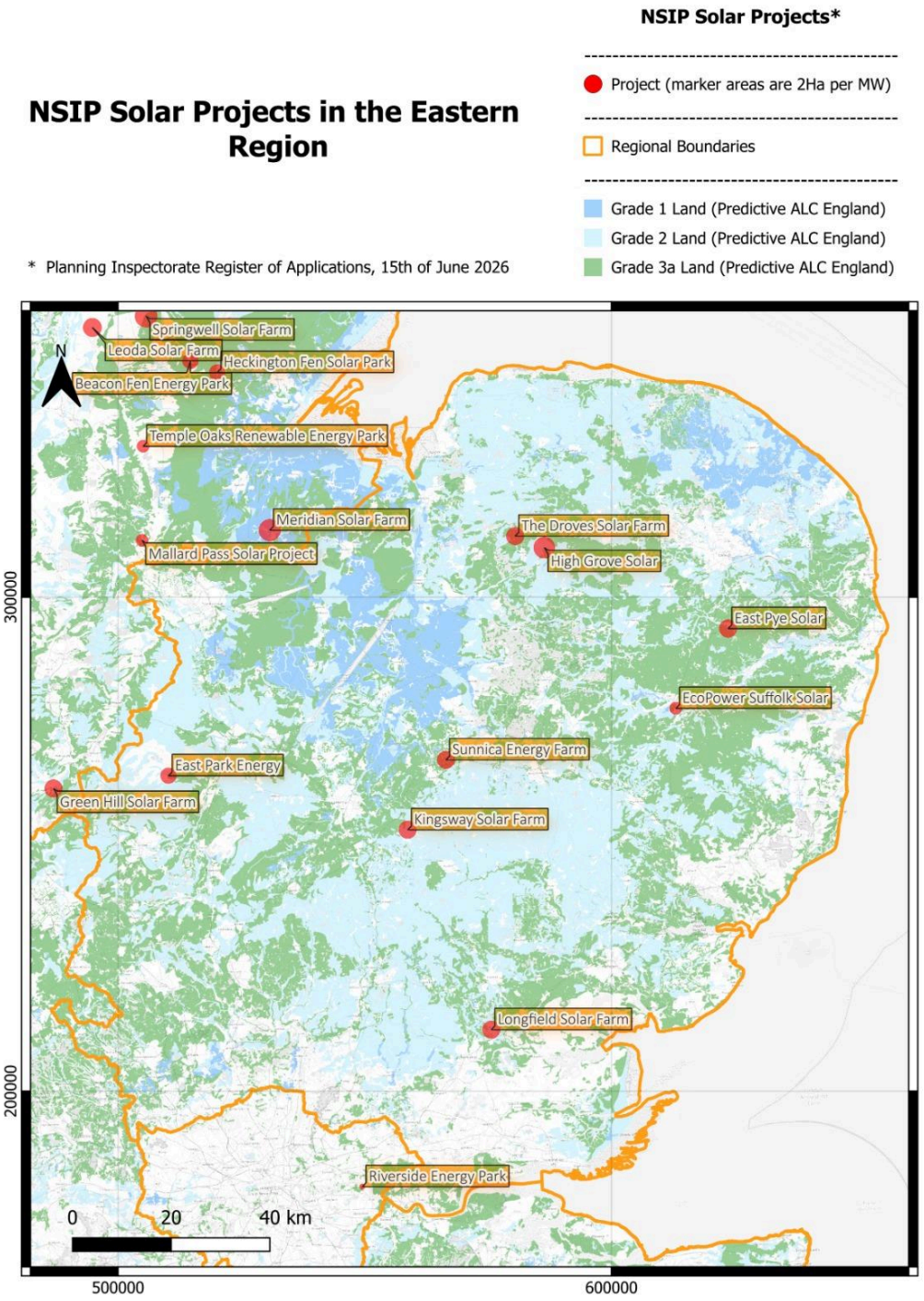


This map shows the proposed Kingsway Solar Farm in relation to Cambridge and the surrounding agricultural land, overlaid on 2026 Predictive Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) data for Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3a land.

The hatched areas show the proposed solar panel arrays, inter-array areas and grid connection corridor. The red circle provides a visual representation of Kingsway Solar Farm's proposed generating capacity of 500 MW, with its size scaled according to energy output by a factor of 2 ha per MW. As a circle, it does not represent the physical extent or development boundary of the project, but the scaling factor has been chosen so that the area of the marker is a realistic indication of the area of land directly affected by solar panels and related infrastructure.

Although detailed ALC surveys have been carried out for Kingsway, the Predictive ALC grades have been retained for consistency with the England-wide and regional maps, and show the agricultural land quality that would have been apparent when the site was selected.

Figure 3: NSIP solar projects and Best and Most Versatile agricultural land in the East of England



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This map shows the distribution of NSIP solar projects across the East of England, overlaid on 2026 Predictive Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) data for Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3a land.

The red dots indicate the location and proposed generating capacity (MW) of individual solar projects, with larger symbols representing greater proposed energy output. The areas of the markers are proportional to the proposed generating capacity and therefore provide an indicative representation of the relative areas of land associated with solar panels and other infrastructure, but do not represent the exact physical size or development boundary of each project.

The map places Kingsway Solar Farm within a wider concentration of major NSIP solar projects across the East of England, including Sunnica, East Pye and East Park, alongside the distribution of higher-quality agricultural land. Predictive ALC mapping provides broad geographical context and does not replace detailed, site-specific ALC survey evidence.

Figures 4-11: Regional maps: NSIP solar projects and Best and Most Versatile agricultural land

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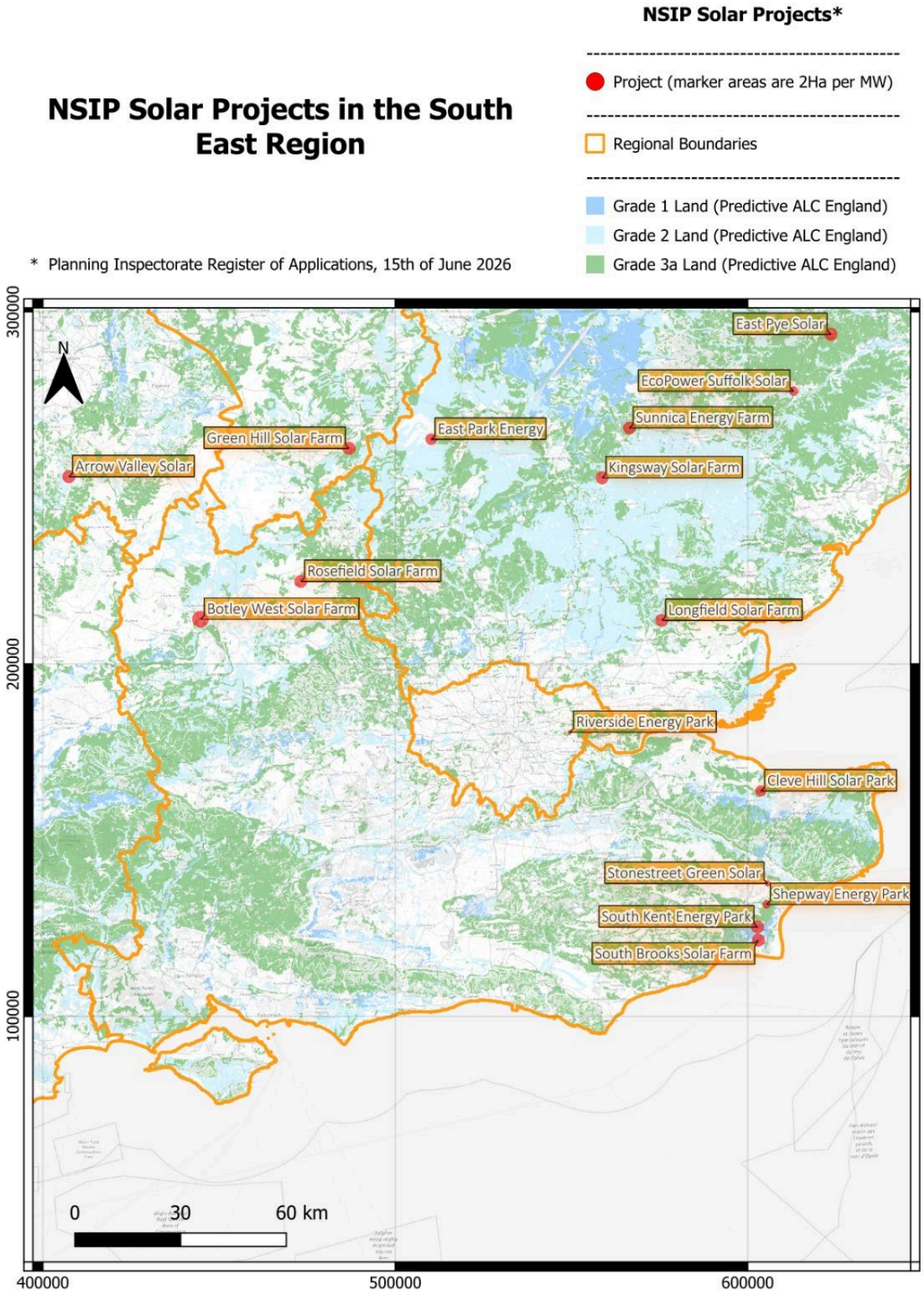
NSIP Solar Projects in the South East Region

* Planning Inspectorate Register of Applications, 15th of June 2026



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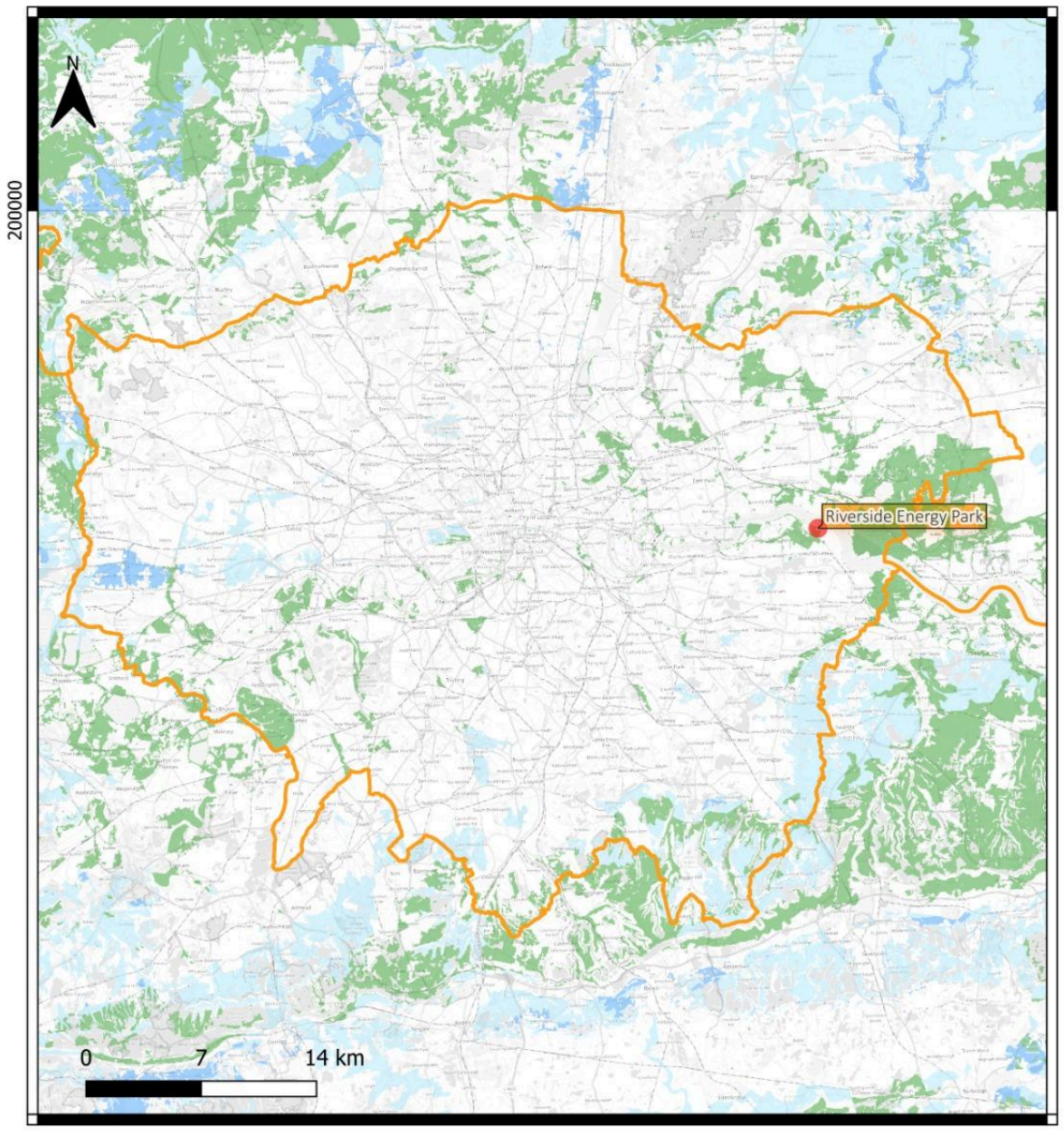
NSIP Solar Projects in the London Region

* Planning Inspectorate Register of Applications, 15th of June 2026



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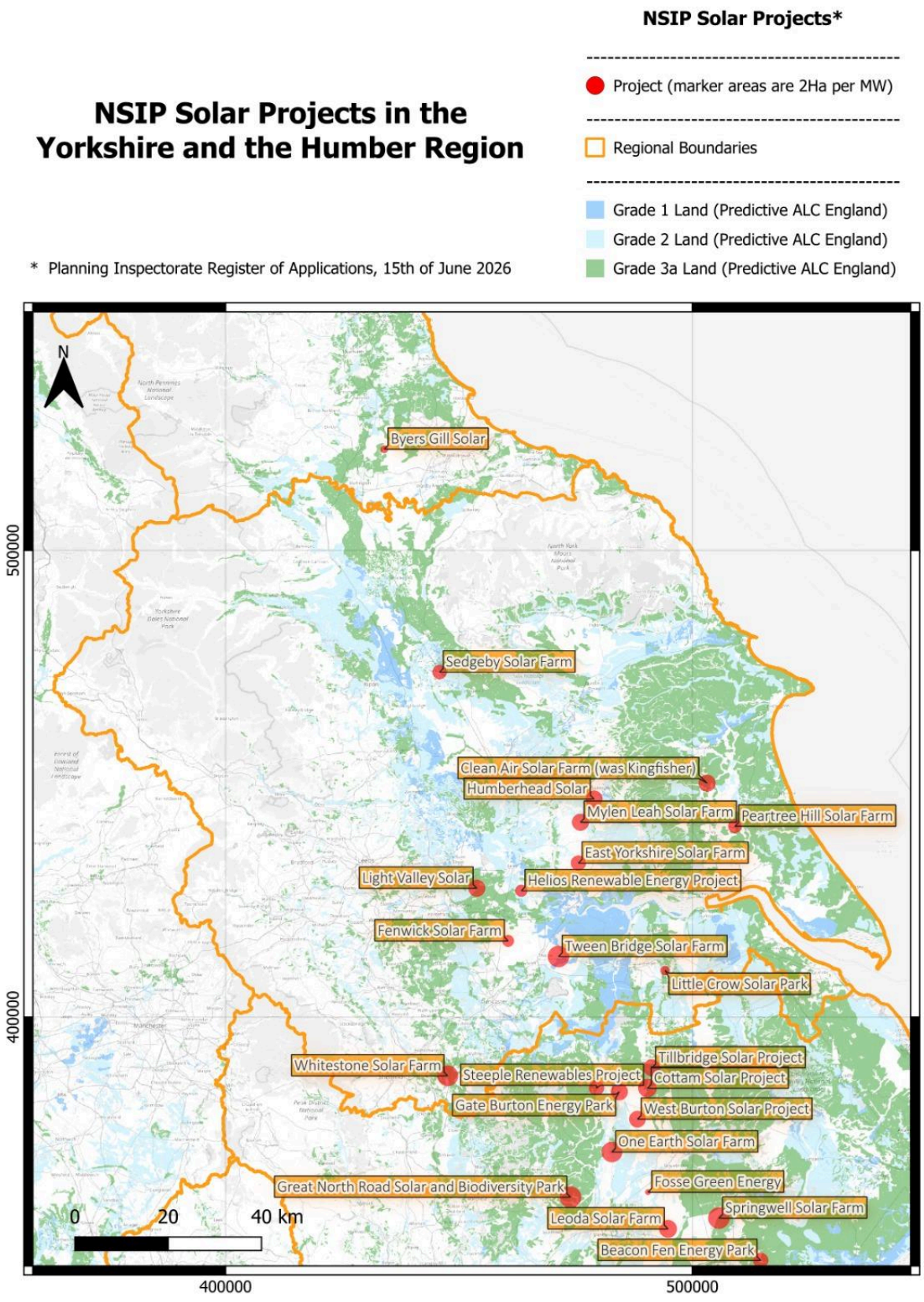
NSIP Solar Projects in the Yorkshire and the Humber Region

* Planning Inspectorate Register of Applications, 15th of June 2026



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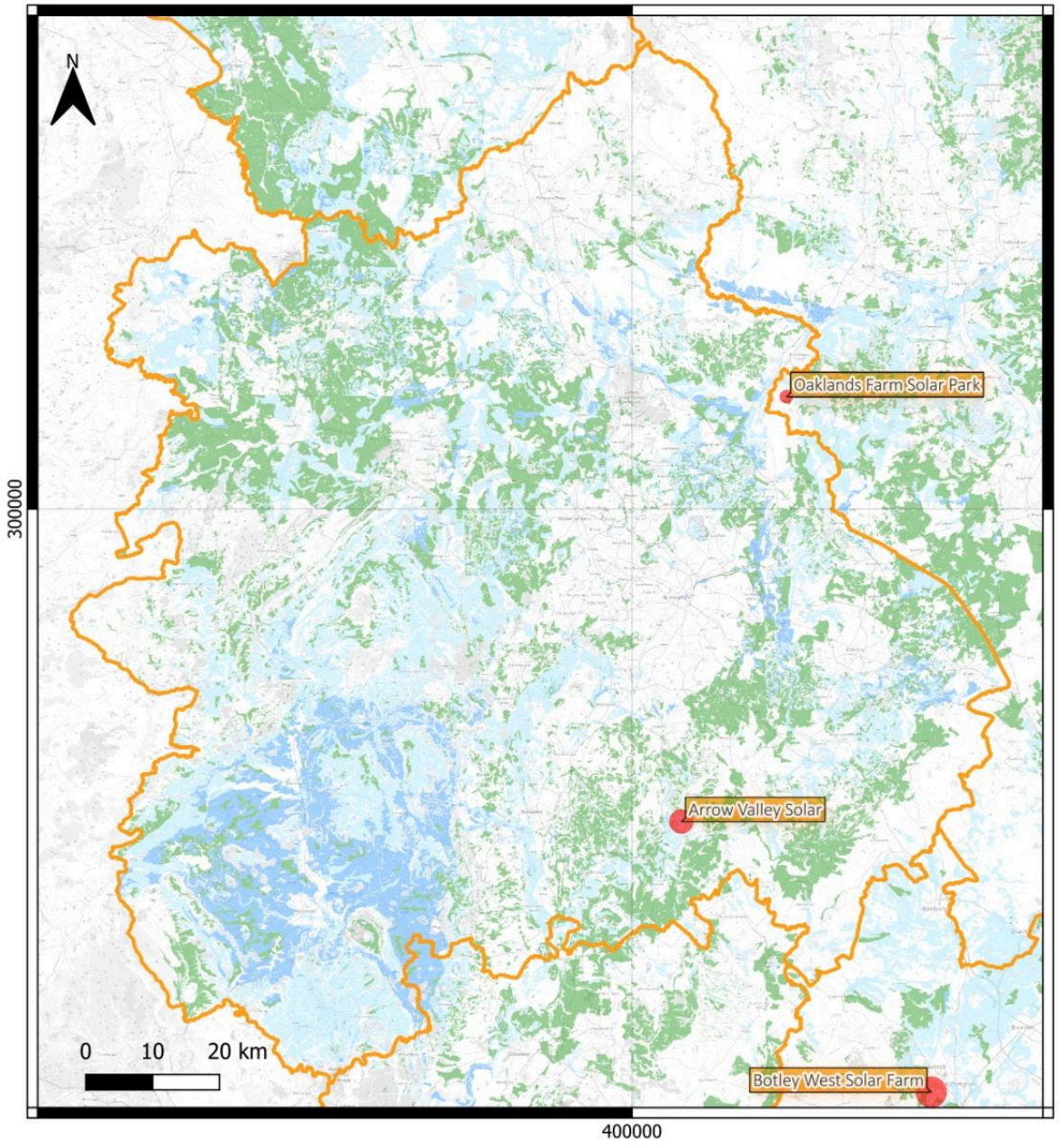
NSIP Solar Projects in the West Midlands Region

* Planning Inspectorate Register of Applications, 15th of June 2026



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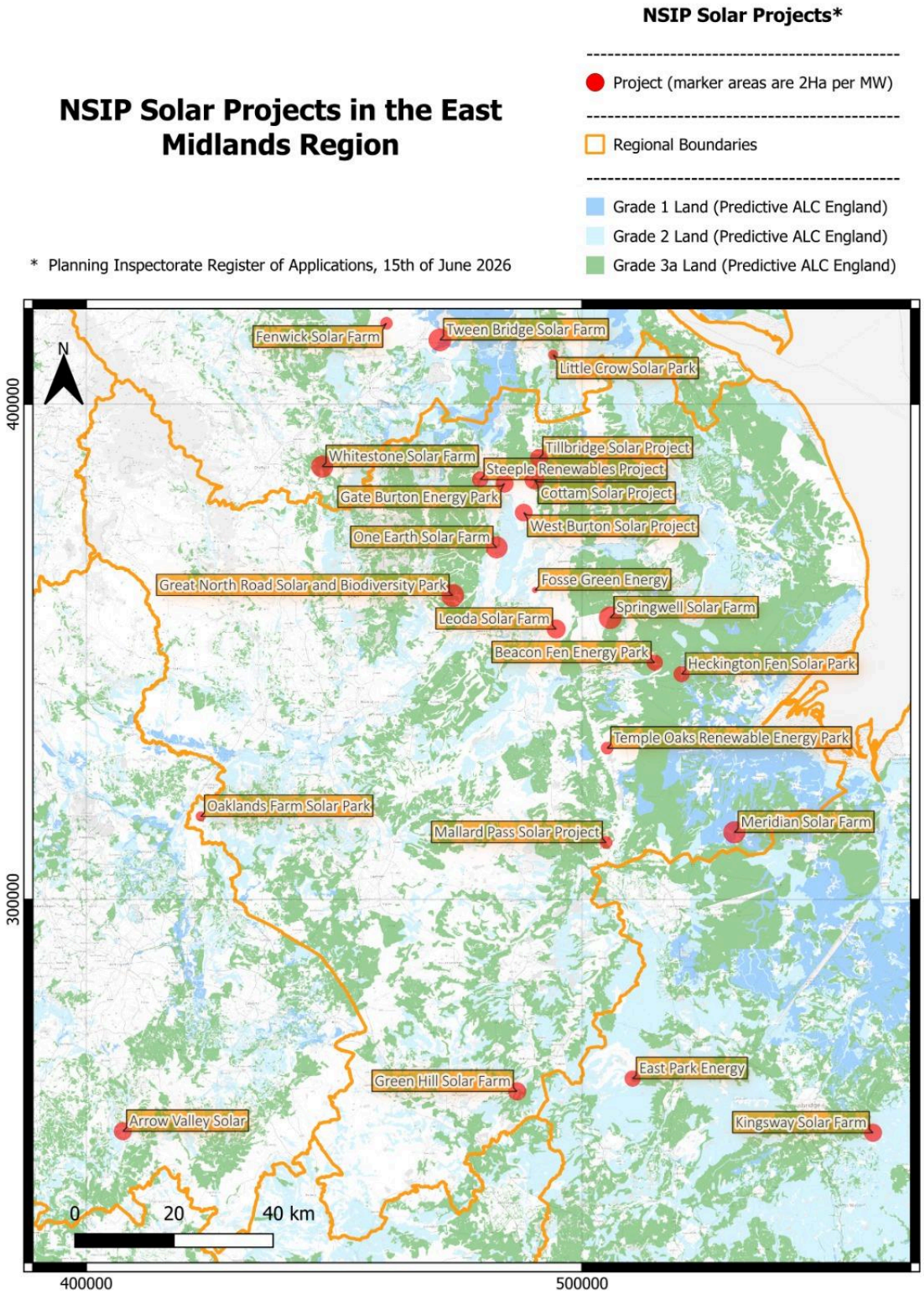
NSIP Solar Projects in the East Midlands Region

* Planning Inspectorate Register of Applications, 15th of June 2026



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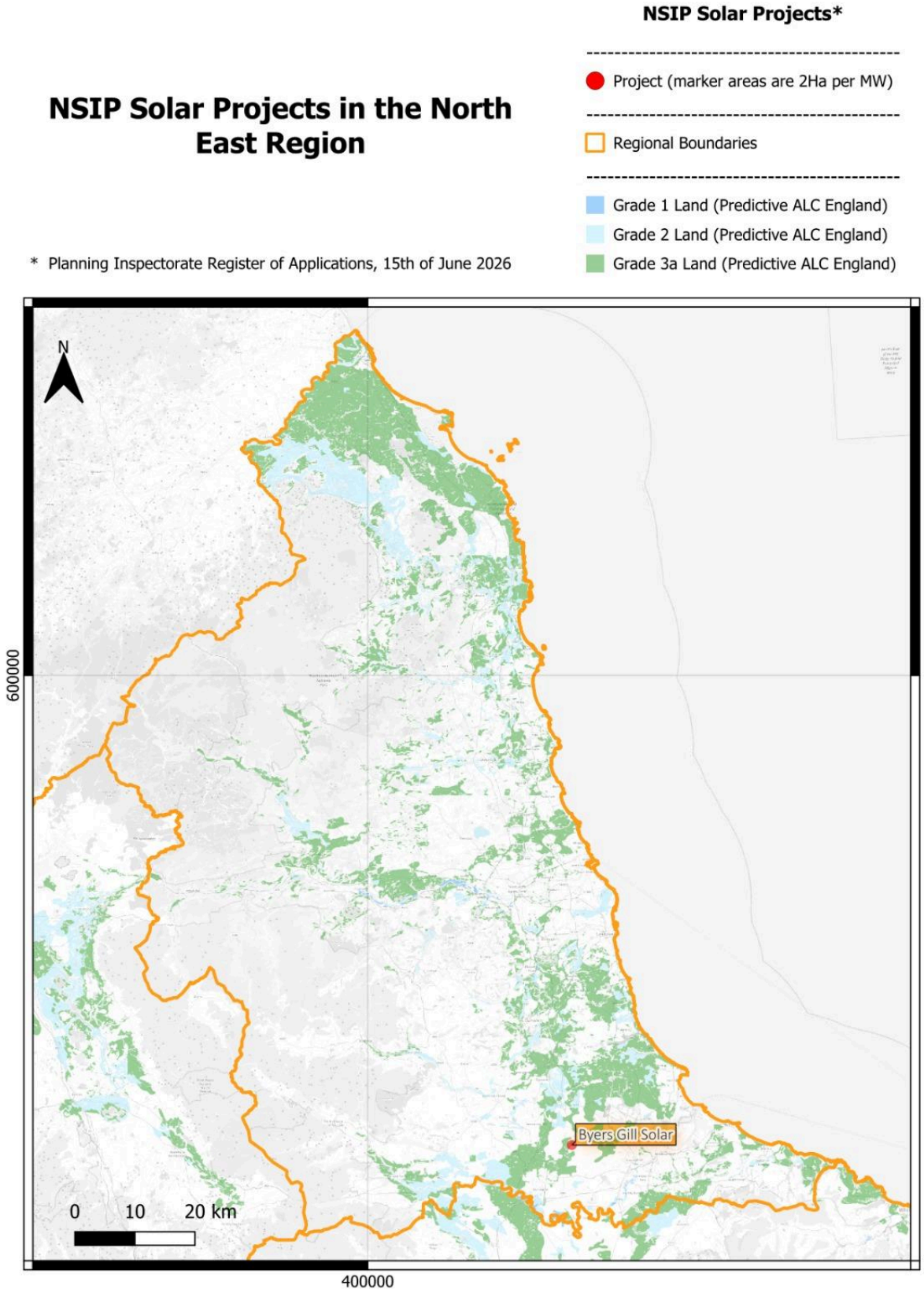
NSIP Solar Projects in the North East Region

* Planning Inspectorate Register of Applications, 15th of June 2026



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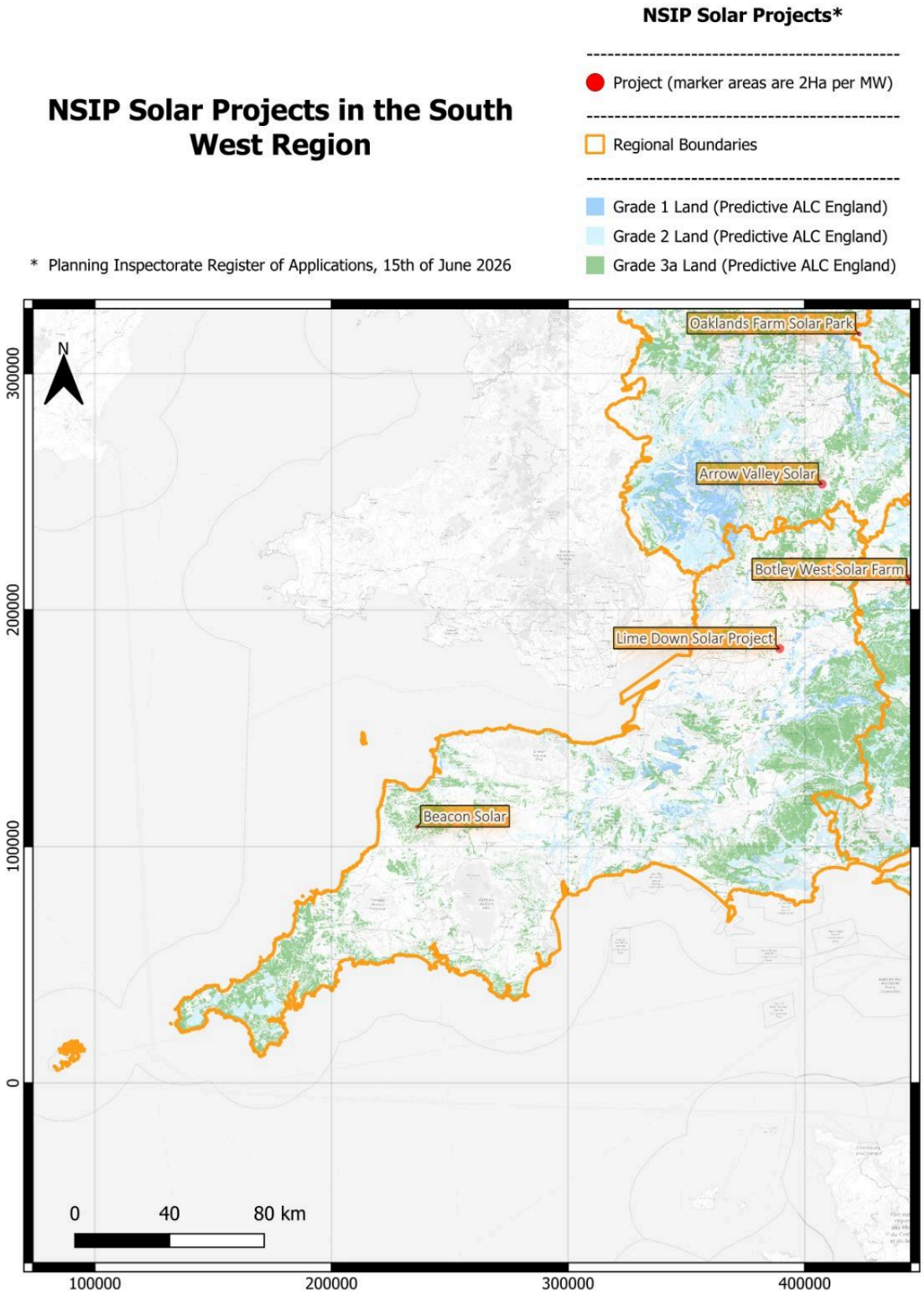
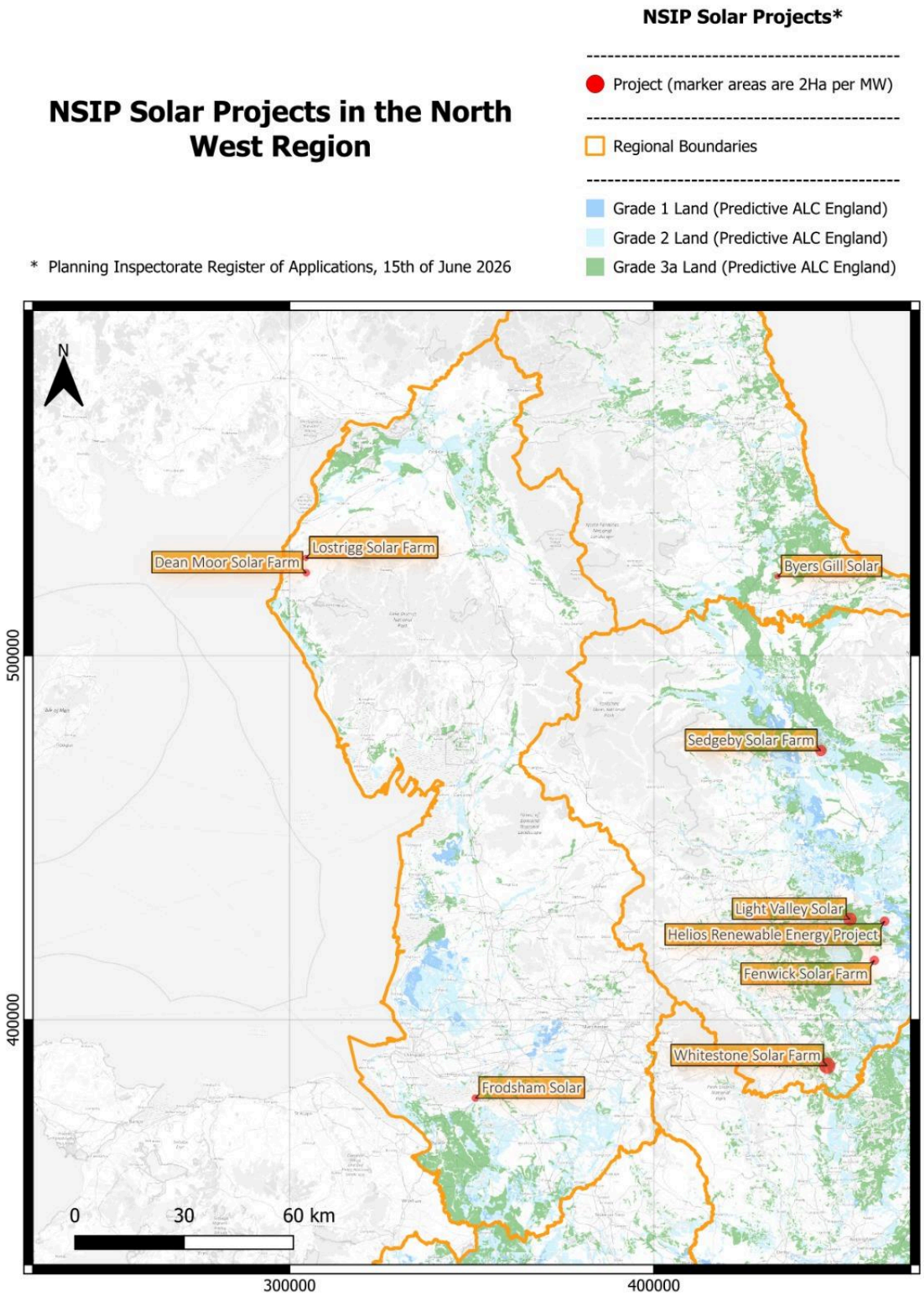
NSIP Solar Projects in the South West Region

* Planning Inspectorate Register of Applications, 15th of June 2026



BMV and NSIP Solar. KSCA August 2026

NSIP Solar Projects in the North West Region

* Planning Inspectorate Register of Applications, 15th of June 2026